



Medicine meets red feminism: Yi Tögyo (1897–1932), a pioneering Korean feminist physician

Vladimir Tikhonov (PAK Noja)

To cite this article: Vladimir Tikhonov (PAK Noja) (2023): Medicine meets red feminism: Yi Tögyo (1897–1932), a pioneering Korean feminist physician, Asian Journal of Women's Studies, DOI: [10.1080/12259276.2023.2256947](https://doi.org/10.1080/12259276.2023.2256947)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/12259276.2023.2256947>



© 2023 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group



Published online: 13 Sep 2023.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)

Medicine meets red feminism: Yi Tögyo (1897–1932), a pioneering Korean feminist physician

Vladimir TIKHONOV (PAK Noja)

Department of Culture Studies and Oriental Languages, Faculty of Humanities, Oslo University, Oslo, Norway

ABSTRACT

This article focuses on Yi Tögyo (1897–1932), a nurse-turned-doctor and one of the pioneering female physicians of colonial-age Korea. I aim to investigate how Yi's medical practice and her understanding of public health and hygiene reflected both the general ideology of "medical modernity" and more specifically Yi's socialist leanings, as well as her quest for a more gender-equal society. Furthermore, the article will explore the meanings of gender equality in Yi's journalistic writings and public utterances, as well as her ways of practicing the ideals of socialist feminism in both personal and public life and her attitudes towards lesbian intimacy and bisexuality. Additionally, the article examines the complicated context of Yi's varied interactions with the Japanese colonial authorities and their press organs and identifies the overlaps between Yi's ideals of socialist "medical modernity" and the modernist public health practices of colonial-period Korea's imperialist rulers. Overall, by focusing on Yi's life, beliefs, writings, and practices, this article aims to improve our understanding of modern socialist feminism, modern medicine, and the interactions between these two domains in colonial Korean society.

KEYWORDS Yi Tögyo; modern medicine; feminism; socialism; Korean Communist Party

ARTICLE HISTORY Received 13 October 2022; Accepted 5 September 2023

Introduction

This article focuses on Yi Tögyo (1897–1932)—one of Korea's pioneering female doctors of the 1920s. She was also an important popularizer of medical knowledge with women as her specific target audience, and one of the leading participants in Korea's nascent socialist women's movement. In the eight years (1924–1932) when Yi was socially active, she published

CONTACT Vladimir TIKHONOV  vladimir.tikhonov@ikos.uio.no

© 2023 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group
This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>), which permits non-commercial re-use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited, and is not altered, transformed, or built upon in any way. The terms on which this article has been published allow the posting of the Accepted Manuscript in a repository by the author(s) or with their consent.

dozens of periodical contributions, dealing with a number of issues pertaining to medicine, hygiene, gender equality, and both heterosexual and homosexual intimacy. Her most significant masterpiece, however, was, in the end, her own life—which this article will attempt to sketch out and analyze with the use of all available evidence.

Despite Yi's importance for both the early history of women in the Korean medical profession and the history of socialist feminism in Korea, no special research, excluding a recent popular article by a major South Korean expert on the colonial-age Communist movement history of Korea (Im, 2019), has been published on Yi Tögyo so far. This is the lacuna which the present article aims to fill. Yi Tögyo was a nurse-turned-doctor and one of the pioneering Japan-educated female physicians in the history of Korea's modern medicine. This article places a spotlight on her role as a groundbreaking women-oriented medical knowledge popularizer with strong and well-articulated socialist feminist views. Concurrently, this article emphasizes Yi Tögyo's practice of revolutionary living: as we will see below, she was, after all, among those few female physicians of the 1920s who ended up sacrificing successful careers and eventually their lives in the service of radical emancipatory causes. This article will attempt to examine how Yi's professional insights into the issues of human psychology, sexuality, or reproduction were related to her vision of radical socio-political and cultural change and her feminist views. It will particularly stress her attitudes toward both hetero-and-homosexual intimacy and married life and will simultaneously explore the complicated patterns of conflict and cooperation between such radicalized local medical practitioners as Yi and the Japanese colonial authorities as the privileged, dominant subject of modern medical and hygiene policies.

The main source materials for this article are Yi's many writings, mostly written for Korean newspapers and journals in the 1920s and early 1930s. One of the main venues through which Yi conducted her campaign for the popularization of medical knowledge was the official mouthpiece of Japanese colonial Government General, *Maeil Sinbo*. Otherwise, Yi's writings—on both medical and gender-and-family-related issues can be found in several privately-run Korean newspapers and journals, including *Tong'a Ilbo* (established in 1920), *Chungoe Ilbo* (1926–1931), *Pyölgöngon* (1926–1934) and *Samch'ölli* (1929–1941).

Generally, popularized contributions by medicine and hygiene professionals were welcomed by modern Korean media, on the understanding that such publications were actively sought after by the public, with its growing interest in more “scientific” approaches to the human body and everyday life. These writings¹ deal with a variety of topics, with a strong emphasis on quotidian hygiene and disease prevention, including professionals' advice on such issues as wearing protective face masks in winter or prevention of gastric cancer.

However, all colonial-period publications had to undergo strict censorship.² They require the use of the technique of feminist reading against the grain (Walters, 1995, pp. 76–79) from a contemporary researcher of Korean feminist thought (such as the author of this paper) for proper analysis. This technique brings researchers' attention to the "vast and complex circuit of articulations" (Walters, 1995, p. 14) which both precede and follow the emergence of cultural texts (including not only written narratives but also visual productions, such as films or television series). It is the intertextual connotations of a particular cultural text or artifact, its place in the contemporaneous debates, and an array of interrelated narratives and discourses that define text's or artifact's eventual meaning (Walters, 1995, p. 18). One must be attentive to the context which the author could only slightly hint at, to the narratives that could not be explicitly deployed and elaborated and only lurk between the lines, and to the choice of the subject matter and emphasis, in comparison to how these choices were made by other authors, for example, more conservative Korean and Japanese males, which could indirectly indicate author's genuine interests and concerns. Other sources used in this article include contemporary reports on Yi's manifold activities, both professional and socio-political, by Japanese police, newspapers, and Korean print media. Taken together, they can help to paint a portrait of an unjustly overlooked female intellectual and activist who combined her professional life with socialist feminist commitments and engaged simultaneously in both anti-colonial resistance and medical practice and popularization under the conditions set by the colonial power.

One of the underlying reasons why an anti-colonial activist of Yi's convictions and stature could cooperate with the colonial medical apparatus lies in the normative understanding of biopolitics which the Japanese colonial state and its socialist opponents, to a certain degree, could share. Foucault's concept of biopolitics refers to the modern state's exercise of power over the biological conditions of its subjects' existence, including everyday hygiene, sexuality, and reproduction. Since the Industrial Revolution, the modern state began to compile relevant statistics while at the same time using its responsibilities for public hygiene, health, and reproduction to legitimize its expanding powers (Foucault, 1997/2003, pp. 242–244; see also Patton, 2016). The socialist movement, modernist as it was, was also in basic agreement with the idea that society—represented, for example, by states claiming the legitimacy of "proletarian dictatorships" should regulate the biological fundamentals of social and personal life in an organized, centralized fashion (Prozorov, 2016). To that degree, the logical connection between the purportedly emancipatory modernist project represented by Yi and the oppressive modernism of colonial authorities was not unimaginable. Additionally, as a socialist feminist, Yi did not limit herself to the realm of medical knowledge and its popularization only, and actively intervened in the issues

of women's everyday lives and rights, gender relationships, and intimacy. Her socio-political activities are yet another focus of the present article. However, before narrating the main events in Yi's life as a medical practitioner and social activist, we need to examine the discourses of socialist feminism and the trajectory of their domestication in 1920s Korea.

Socialist feminism comes to Korea

Socialist feminism emerged in the late nineteenth century as an influential emancipatory approach to the "woman question." This approach came to the forefront as women's emancipatory struggles intensified after the 1880s, amidst rapid growth in female employment and education and an atmosphere of heightened expectations that women too should benefit from the general tendency toward greater inclusion and democratization in the emerging industrial mass society (Hobsbawm, 1987, pp. 200–204). Theoretically, socialist feminism was grounded in Marxist insights on the class-determined nature of marriage institutions which allowed the inheritance of private property along the paternal line, ensuring the husband's domination inside the framework of the bourgeois patriarchal family. Even if such a family was based on formally "free," voluntarily concluded marriage, it was, according to the logic developed by Engels (1820–1895), an important founder of classical Marxism, no freer than the intrinsically unequal relationship of capitalist employment, given men's control over the family's sources of income. While Engels hoped that women's economic independence—their entry into the realm of "public industry" would enable them to pursue relationships with the opposite sex on a more equal footing (Engels, 1884/2004, pp. 65–80), Lenin (1870–1924) went even further, arguing that only "socialization" of household work, the main burden of married women, would provide the necessary preconditions for their liberation (Lenin, 1919/1965, pp. 432–434). This position, grounded in the Marxist views on the primacy of the socio-economic "basis" vis-à-vis the "superstructure" of socio-political relationships and conventions, contrasted, for example, with suffragists' belief in the central importance of women's enfranchisement for their liberation (Mayhall, 2003, pp. 12–24).

The belief in socio-economic determinism did not diminish Marxists' interest in the more intimate side of gender relations. Engels, for example, hoped that economic equality between the sexes would eventually lead to relationships and cohabitation based only on "real love" and easily dissolvable whenever the desire to continue with the relationship disappeared on either side (Engels, 1884/2004, pp. 86–87). In a similar vein, Bebel (1840–1913) envisioned the women of the socialist future to be completely equal to men, fully in a position to freely choose their love objects, concluding and dissolving the bonds of intimacy as they themselves saw fit (Bebel, 1879/1904,

pp. 342–349). Perhaps, though, the most crucial contribution to the Marxist feminist theory of intimacy was made by a Russian female Marxist revolutionary, Kollontai (1872–1952). In the early 1920s, concomitantly occupying positions of importance in the Soviet state and its diplomatic service (she was one of the first female ambassadors in the history of world diplomacy), Kollontai produced several novels dealing, in a rather iconoclastic way, with the issues of revolutionary intimacy. One of these novels, *Vasilisa Malygina* (translated into English as *Red Love*) (1923; see also Kollontai, 1923/1927), featured a fiery story of two Communists' love and marriage, with the eponymous female protagonist, Vasilisa, managing, in the end, to voluntarily withdraw from the existing long-term relationship (despite her pregnancy), on the grounds that her partner had undergone irrevocable ideological and personality changes, making the erstwhile comradesly connection—on which their intimacy was based—no longer possible. The book was translated into Japanese in 1927, into Korean in 1928 and into Chinese in 1929, introducing to the reading public in East Asia (Korea included), a very radical Marxist approach to intimacy (Barraclough et al., 2015).

It is no wonder that following Kollontai's story of an emancipated woman refusing marriage or cohabitation unless the relationship was underpinned by mutual respect and camaraderie was eagerly sought after by the Korean public, given that socialist feminism had been developing there since the mid-1920s, in tandem with the spread of Marxian socialism in general. May 1924 saw the emergence of the first-ever organization of socialist women activists, named *Chosŏn Yŏsŏng Tong'uhoe* (Korean Female Comrades Association). Its program, featuring the “building of a new society following the laws of societal development” and a “movement to liberate women,” left no doubt as to its ideological orientation (Cho, 1990; Ch'oe & Sŏn, 2020, pp. 154–155; Kim & Kim, 1972, pp. 153–154; Kim, 2016, p. 144). One of its leaders, Chŏng Chongmyŏng (1896–?)³—on whose life and activities more will be said below, appealed for collaboration with the “proletarian class liberation movement” at a public lecture sponsored by *Chosŏn Yŏsŏng Tong'uhoe* in October 1924, and was, predictably, stopped by the ever-alert police officers in attendance (Kim, 2016, p. 145; Tong'a Ilbo, 1924).

Following the lead of Engels and Bebel, one of the female socialist leaders, Hŏ Chŏngsuk⁴ (1902–1991), made it clear in a 1924 programmatic article on the “woman question” (published in the daily *Tong'a Ilbo* under the pseudonym, Sugai) that only economic independence could bring Korea's long-suffering, “enslaved” women genuine freedom (Kim, 2016, p. 146; Sugai, 1924; see also Yi, 2015).⁵ However, yet another pressing issue for Korean women which socialist women leaders often mentioned in their public utterances (Chŏng, 1933) was their general “ignorance.” Most women were deprived of the chance to receive education under the “dual oppression”

of colonial capitalism and patriarchy (Kim, 2016, pp. 149–156). This “ignorance” included—although, of course, was in no sense limited to—lack of scientific information on medical issues, including those directly related to women’s gendered roles (sexuality, childbirth, and child-raising). The awareness about the need for medical knowledge popularization among women was the background for the importance attached by female socialists of the 1920s and early 1930s to the role of such medics in their ranks as Yi Tōgyō (1897–1932), the central protagonist of this article.

The history of 1920s and 1930s Korean socialist feminism has been extensively researched since the early 1990s, in books, book chapters,⁶ and dissertations (see Cho, 1990; Pak, 1993; Yi, 1992). Literary achievements of socialist feminists attracted the particular attention of researchers (see Kim, 2011, pp. 161–191), and the reception of Kollontai’s ideas in Japan and Korea has also been meticulously studied recently (Pae, 2018)—just like the attitudes towards revolutionary intimacy theories and practices among radicalized educated women of the 1920s and 1930s in general (Yi, 2006). Such major figures in the history of the 1920s’ socialist women movement as Chōng Chongmyōng or Hō Chōngsuk—whose pioneering roles are mentioned above—have had their life trajectories and activities covered in detail in several academic articles.⁷ However, the interconnections between socialist feminism and the practice of modern medicine have not been substantially covered so far, and the personality of Yi Togyō has eluded the attention of researchers. Drawing on the existing corpus of research literature (see Kim, 2016), the current article intends to fill this gap, with specific attention paid to the ways in which Yi’s feminist ideas and socialist commitments simultaneously conflicted and partly overlapped with the biopolitical aspects of Japanese colonial power in Korea and, more concretely, socio-medical agenda of the colonial government and its media. While the leftist feminism of the 1920s and colonial medicine represented mutually dissimilar and inherently conflictual aspects of the modernity project, they intersected inasmuch as all of them tended to assess positively the biopower which the modern states—irrespective of their ideological orientation were supposed to wield. This overlap allowed Yi the opportunity to use the colonial press including government-run outlets for her campaign of medical enlightenment for women which, as I will attempt to demonstrate, simultaneously carried implicit ideological agendas of its own, ultimately running contrary to colonial authorities’ intentions and objectives. At the same time, Yi’s open acknowledgment of her lesbian past could be only possible in the atmosphere of relatively liberal treatment of non-heterosexual intimacy typical of the 1920s in both Japan and Korea. Ultimately, assessing Yi’s role and achievements as a feminist historical figure against the background of the historical conditions under which she was placed is the main task of this article.

Yi Tōgyo—a student, doctor, and activist

Yi is understood to be a Hamhŭng native—at least the Japanese authorities had her address in a central area of Hamhŭng on their records well into the mid-1930s (Chōsen Sōtokufu, 1934, p. 301). We know little about her family background but, judging from the fact that she had to seek gainful employment right after graduating with the best grades from the local public primary school in 1913 (Maeil Sinbo, 1913), we may assume that her birth family was well-to-do enough to provide her with primary schooling but not rich enough to pay for further studies, forcing her to search for a job. Still, the very fact that Yi attended a primary school for the four required years and managed to graduate reveals that her family must have had some means and was, most likely, ideologically oriented toward modernization. Even by the end of the decade, in 1919, the proportion of school-age Korean girls who attended primary school was only four percent. Six years earlier, it had stood at around two percent, and only 21% of the primary school female students finished their education, with the rest dropping out. Lack of schools, poverty, and an ingrained belief in the irrelevance of public education for girls—that is, the inherited patterns of gender role division—conspired to prevent more Korean girls from obtaining primary schooling (Kim, P., 2009a, pp. 79–94). Against this backdrop, it can be said that Yi belonged to a very small, but increasingly visible and influential, minority of women who entered public education and, furthermore, modern-type skilled employment in the 1910s, the first decade of Japanese colonial rule in Korea.

The employment that Yi could land relatively easily after having graduated with honors from her primary school was that of a nurse at a local Chahye hospital run by the colonial Government General (Maeil Sinbo, 1914a, 1914b). Hamhŭng's Chahye hospital was established by the Japanese Protectorate authorities in January 1910 and was initially staffed mostly by Japanese military doctors (Ch'oe, K., 2016, pp. 59–61). Originally, like its sister institutions in Chōnju and Ch'ōngju (built in 1909), it was supposed to “bestow” for free the “favors” (“hye” in “Chahye” stands for “favor” in Sino-Korean) of modern medical technology to the provincial Korean population, thus winning hearts and minds as the country was to be fully annexed by Japan in August of the same year. By the mid-1910s, however, the Chahye hospitals, including the one in Hamhŭng, were forced to introduce patient fees as their budgets, which were never prioritized by the Government-General, were further reduced (Pak, 2005, pp. 227–261). While 83.4% of patients were treated by these hospitals for free in 1910, the percentage fell to 61.9% by 1917 (Yō et al., 2018, p. 254). Since qualified nurses were in short supply (there were only 215 licensed nurses in Korea in 1915, and only 21 of them were ethnic Koreans, the rest being mostly Japanese, see

Kim, 2019b, p. 87), each Chahye hospital was to provide a year and a half of in-house nursing training to up to 20 girls aged 17–30 (Chöng, 2021, p. 332). Yi, who turned 17 (by Korean counting, one year added at birth) in 1913, was one of those selected for nursing treatment and work that year at what was one of the few modern medical institutions that existed in Hamhŭng at the time.

After having worked there for several years and presumably having saved enough money for her further education, Yi went on to study in Tokyo in 1918 and ended up enrolling at the prestigious Tokyo Women's Medical College. Founded in 1900 and entitled from 1920 to bestow official licenses to practice medicine without a separate examination (Sakai et al., 2010, p. 341), it was the first educational institution in Japan to produce female medics. Its earliest Korean graduate was the famous Hō Yöngsuk (1897–1975), also known as the wife to the novelist Yi Kwangsu (1892–1950); she finished her studies in 1917 and obtained her license for medical practice in 1919 (Sin, 2012, pp. 32–33). She, in the company of eight other Korean students at the Tokyo Women's Medical College who attended it before or simultaneously with Yi (Ch'oe, Ŭ., 2016, p. 291), was among the pioneering female doctors in Japan's Korean colony. Hō was the daughter of a rich merchant (Sin, 2012, p. 27) and most other Korean students at the Tokyo Women's Medical College also came from well-to-do families (Ch'oe, Ŭ., 2016, pp. 291–293). The same can be said about the three domestically trained pioneers of Korea's female medical practice who were—as an exception—allowed to audit classes at Seoul's Governmental Medical School and received their licenses in 1918, somewhat ahead of Hō (Kim, 2019b, p. 68). Kim Yönghŭng and Kim Haeji came from families of middle-class Protestant converts while An Sugyöng was a daughter of a reformist Confucian scholar who was at the governmental service before 1909. Interestingly, An Sugyöng's brother, An Kwangch'ön (1897–?),⁸ a doctor-turned-socialist activist (Yi, 2021) ended up marrying Yi Hyönggyöng, once Yi Tögyo's lesbian lover.

In contrast with all of them, Yi Tögyo was the daughter of a family of moderate means. Unable to rely on support from her parents, she studied with enormous determination, amidst rather challenging circumstances. According to her later confession, she was so immersed in her studies while in Tokyo that she only went to see the famed Ueno and Hibiya parks after she had safely graduated and obtained her diploma. Extreme concentration on the studies exacerbated Yi's health problems (Maeil Sinbo, 1931) which later led to her passing at the early age of 35. Still, despite her busy academic program, Yi also found time and energy to participate in the female students' movement—hardly a surprising development given the general rise of social movements in the 1920s following the transformative experience of the pan-national pro-independence protests which began on 1 March 1919. From January 1921, Yi was jointly responsible for the finances of *Yöja Hakhŭnghoe* (Society for Developing Women's Education), a group built by Korean female

students in Tokyo. The group's organizer was Yu Yǒngjun (1892-?),⁹ Yi's co-student born to a poorer Pyongyang family, who was once forced even to study at a school for would-be female entertainers (*kisaeng*), and was connected to nationalist and, since the mid-1920s, also socialist radicals (Ch'oe, Ŭ., 2016, pp. 292–298; Hwang, 1933). Later, as we will see below, Yu and Yi ended up collaborating again as socialist feminists in Korea proper.

A student activist, once a lesbian (see below), and subsequently a lover of Chu Chonggǒn (1895–1936), later to be one of the founders of Korea's underground Communist Party (on his life, see Tikhonov, 2023), in her student years (Im, 2019), Yi Tǒgyo returned to Kyǒngsǒng (Seoul) in 1924 a committed “red” feminist, but also a qualified doctor. Having first worked for the Government-General's central hospital as a physician, pediatrician, and gynecologist, Yi opened her own private clinic in May 1928 in a rather remote area of Inch'ǒn (Tong'a Ilbo, 1928). In 1930, she moved her clinic from Inch'ǒn to Kyǒngsǒng's downtown area (Maeil Sinbo, 1931). From 1927 to 1931, Yi also belonged to the core group of activists behind Kǔn'uhoe, a “united front” women's movement organization designed to consolidate the uneasy collaboration between mostly Christian “new women” moderates and socialist radicals (Kyōshōkō hi dai 5865-gō, 1927, p. 7). In April 1927, she joined the preparatory committee which was to establish Kǔn'uhoe (Tong'a Ilbo, 1927a). In May 1927, just after Kǔn'uhoe was first formed, Yi was elected a member of its executive committee—interestingly, together with her student-days intimate lesbian ex-partner, Yi Hyǒn'gyǒng (Tong'a Ilbo, 1927b). She remained a committed Kǔn'uhoe activist until the very end. Newspaper reports indicate that in March 1930, she was put in charge of drafting political documents at the organization's Kyǒngsǒng branch (Chosǒn Ilbo, 1930).

Kǔn'uhoe and the social landscape of colonial Korea

The first-ever pan-national female group to temporarily unify Left and Right (parallel to the establishment of pan-national Left-Right alliance in the form of Sin'ganhoe, 1927–1931; see Yi, 1993, p. 210, 216), Kǔn'uhoe has been extensively studied by historians, both in South Korea and Anglophone academia. One of the pioneering monographs published in South Korea in the early 1970s on the history of the Korean Communist movement, for example, has a special subchapter on Kǔn'uhoe. The authors concluded that, already by 1928, the Left had gradually assumed a dominant position inside Kǔn'uhoe and that the arrests of such prominent leftist leaders of Kǔn'uhoe as Hǒ Chǒngsuk decisively weakened the organization (Kim & Kim, 1973, pp. 72–101). The latest multi-volume canonic version of Korean history produced by South Korea's state-run National Institute of Korean History (*Kuksa p'yǒnch'an wiwǒnhoe*) emphasizes the triple overlap at the

heart of Kŭn'uhoe's ideology which was simultaneously modernist (explicitly militant vis-à-vis the "feudal vestiges," or the traditional gender role distribution patterns), anti-colonial and, in addition, anti-capitalist (*Kuksa p'yŏnch'an wiwŏnhoe*, 2001, pp. 298–311). In Anglophone historical academia, Wells emphasized the radicalism of Kŭn'uhoe's Christian women around issues of gender and the politics of the private realm (many of them chose remaining single, a very difficult personal choice in a society that expected women to become wives and mothers) and made insightful comparisons between the inclination of *both* nationalist and socialist male activists to subordinate women's agenda to supposedly "higher-level" national or social issues (Wells, 1999). All in all, the existing literature paints a picture of a feminist movement at the intersection of Christian nationalist and socialist ideas and agendas which was closely interwoven with the general trajectory of nationalist and socialist anti-colonial struggles.

Recent social history, however, has started to pay closer attention not only to Kŭn'uhoe's proclaimed ideals or its place in the general scheme of anti-colonial nationalist and socialist movements but also to the social backgrounds of its leaders and membership, on both the socialist and Christian nationalist sides. As Kim Kyŏng'il, a prominent South Korean social historian, makes clear, even socialist feminist activism, inside the Kŭn'uhoe framework but also both before and after Kŭn'uhoe, had little to do with the urban proletariat or peasantry, the supposed end beneficiaries of the hoped-for socialist transformation. For example, *Chosŏn Yŏsŏng Tong'uhoe* (The Korean Female Comrades Association), the pioneering socialist women's organization in Korea founded in 1924, had students, nurses, teachers, and housewives among its 73 members in December 1925 but practically no workers or peasants. Kŭn'uhoe's total membership stood at 2,135 by the close of 1929, but only 7.7% of the members were either workers or peasants; the majority (58.8%) were educated urban housewives. Seen in this light, Kŭn'uhoe's varied educational activities (lectures, night schools, etc.) were more an attempt by a radical minority of modernized, urban middle-class women to reach out to the majority of Korean women whose lives were still, by and large, embedded in inherited patterns of separate gender roles (Kim, 2016, pp. 157–159).

Following on this newer trend in the studies of Kŭn'uhoe, I would like to highlight the significance of the modern patterns of vertical mobility via educational advancement in the life trajectories of Yi Tŏgyo and her Kŭn'uhoe comrades. Indeed, sociologically speaking, Yi exemplified the opportunities for social mobility that modernity, even in its colonial version, provided to at least some of the disadvantaged and underprivileged.¹⁰ A native of the traditionally discriminated against northern area of Korea¹¹ and a woman from a poorer family, she nonetheless succeeded in moving upwards to both the geographical and social center of the colonial society by her own efforts

via the modern ladder of academic achievement. It is noticeable that, besides Yi, a number of other Kŭn'uhoe activists, on both socialist and Christian sides of the movement, also exemplified a sharp upward mobility trajectory enabled by modern developments. Among the socialist women on the preparatory committee, Yu Yŏngjun (1892–?),¹² a gynecologist and a fellow graduate of Tokyo Women's Medical College mentioned above in connection with her student activism, was born to a poor Pyongyang family (Maeil Sinbo, 1922). Chŏng Ch'ŭlsŏng (1897–1958) was a former professional entertainer (*kisaeng*) (on her life and radical activities, see Pak, 2019), while Chŏng Chongmyŏng (1896–?),¹³ was a licensed nurse and midwife born to an impecunious commoner household in the Korean capital (Ch'oe & Sŏn, 2020, p. 147).

While Yi Tŏgyo, Yu Yŏngjun and Chŏng Chongmyŏng managed to dramatically raise their social standing by acquiring either higher or middle-level qualifications in medicine and/or nursery/midwifery,¹⁴ Chŏng Ch'ŭlsŏng studied English, typewriting, and applied arts in Japan in 1922 and 1925 and was able to reinvent herself as a social activist on the strength of her educational credentials (Pak, 2019, pp. 135–136). Their socialism, in a way, might have been a product of their desire to create the conditions under which the poorer, uneducated, and domestically oppressed majority of Korean women would be enabled to lift their socio-cultural and economic status along the lines which Yi Tŏgyo's, Yu Yŏngjun's, Chŏng Chongmyŏng's, and Chŏng Ch'ŭlsŏng's own life paths might suggest. It must have been clear to these socialist women that such a mass status rise was unthinkable inside the framework of colonial capitalism, and that could have stimulated their quest for alternative forms of modern life (Kim, 2005, pp. 6–7).

On the Christian side, the proportion of women from noble (*yangban*) landowning families was higher but at least one of Kŭn'uhoe's Christian initiative-takers, Kim Hwallan (1899–1970), was the daughter of a warehouse owner from Inch'ŏn, originally from northwestern Korea and of moderate means. Her mother—her father's second wife had experience of being a live-in maid and a concubine before her marriage and childbirth (Ye, 2005, p. 402). Schooling at a missionary institution and later abroad via missionary channels could often offer social mobility chances to aspiring underprivileged females attracted to the Christian mission by the promise of education and subsequent advances in the public space (Choi, 2009, pp. 86–120).

Typically, Kŭn'uhoe activists were upwardly mobile women whose social rise was down to modern education and the emergence of professional women's potential employers, such as hospitals, educational institutions, or newspapers. Kŭn'uhoe's agenda, of course, was not limited to an improvement in educational opportunities and the consequent possibilities for upward mobility for women. Its 1929 program included both full legal equality of sexes and more radical, socialism-inspired demands, such as economic improvements for peasant women and the introduction of mandatory two-

week-long paid maternity leave for female workers. In addition to that, Kŭn'uhoe wanted to eradicate gender discrimination in wages and abolish dangerous labor and night shifts for women and children as well as trafficking in females which the colonial police de facto condoned¹⁵ (Chosŏn Ilbo, 1929; Kuksa p'yŏnch'an wiwŏnhoe, 2001, pp. 306–307). However, to the degree that Kŭn'uhoe's female professionals embodied the possibilities of success via education which colonial modernity opened to at least some Korean women and worked to spread modern knowledge among Korea's female population, Kŭn'uhoe, all its pronounced radicalism notwithstanding, could coexist—albeit rather precariously—with the colonial authorities whose legitimacy was, after all, based on their (quite far-fetched) claim to modernize “backward” Korea. The Japanese colonial “cultural policy” of the 1920s, aimed at allowing the colony's emerging middle classes at least some degree of semi-independence through controlled organization in order to secure their cooperation in the longer term (Robinson, 1988, pp. 48–51), was yet another background for the uneasy coexistence between Kŭn'uhoe-type activism and the colonial order.

Medical knowledge popularization and colonial biopolitics

While Kŭn'uhoe was busy spreading modern knowledge in general among Korean women (Kuksa p'yŏnch'an wiwŏnhoe, 2001, pp. 307–308), the spread of specifically modern medical knowledge was a field of activity in which Yi indeed excelled. As a popular doctor, Yi was in high demand as a writer on medical issues for newspapers and journals, advising her largely female readership on everything, from pertussis (whooping cough) to endometritis. Her role as a major popularizer of women-oriented medical knowledge in colonial-age Korea still awaits proper attention from researchers.

One important point in Yi's crusade for women-oriented popularization of medical knowledge was its emphasis on vaccination (Yi, 1927c) and prevention, and especially on hygiene. On pertussis, for example, Yi stressed its bacterial nature and its spread via coughs from already infected humans and asked her readers to do their best to isolate those who were already sick in order to prevent further contagion (Yi, 1930b). Ideally, she wanted Korean families to dedicate a separate, isolated room to the nursing of sick family members and ensure that they were thoroughly quarantined from the rest of the household (Yi, 1930a). On the delicate subject of endometritis, Yi named the gonorrhoea infections of women's husbands as a major cause of all sorts of pelvic inflammatory diseases and advised women to demand health certificates from their prospective marriage partners before marriage (Yi, 1930c). The female readers were also exhorted to persuade their husbands to avoid any sexual contact during menstrual days to prevent any possibility of contagion (Yi, 1930c) and reminded women that pelvic

inflammations could block their pregnancies (Yi, 1930c). Otherwise, in common with many other medical professionals of her age, Yi believed that female masturbation increased the danger of nervous breakdown and chronic headaches (Yi, 1930e). Similar to mainstream (male) medical professionals, Yi saw STD as a potential reproductive danger first and foremost, while at the same time emphasizing the individual suffering that congenital syphilis could cause to the children of the infected women—with blindness and deformed bones highlighted as the main dangers. Yet another important point she made was the husbands' responsibility for the hygienic aspects of sexual intercourse; this contrasted with the emphasis more conservative male medical professionals of the 1920–1930s were routinely putting on women's responsibility for sexual hygiene (Yi, 1930d).¹⁶ All in all, while Yi's medical advice sought to convey a rather standard version of what was considered scientific medical truths in the 1920s and early 1930s to her readership, her emphasis on women's agency in disease prevention, on husbands' responsibility for their female partners' health and safety, and on the social preconditions of successful prophylactics (separate rooms for patients in the houses, etc.) reveal the socially progressive and gender emancipatory aspects of her agenda.

An interesting observation related to Yi's medicine popularization activities is to take note of which newspapers, specifically, carried her numerous articles on general and women-specific health issues. Some of these articles, to be sure, appeared in the Korean-run daily *Tong'a Ilbo* which tended to give tribune to the radical intellectuals in the 1920s and early 1930s. Nonetheless, other ones were carried by the daily *Maeil Sinbo*, the Japanese Government-General's mouthpiece. Interestingly, Yi's connection to *Maeil Sinbo* even predated her acquisition of physician status. As early as autumn 1913, the Government-General's official paper praised the future "red feminist" as a "model woman," applauding her both for having graduated from the local primary school with the best grades and for being "the politest nurse" at the local hospital and thereby earning the gratitude of patients (*Maeil Sinbo*, 1913). More praise came in the same paper the next year, as even more patients saluted the "docile, humane, well-behaving and kind" nurse with—importantly—excellent Japanese language skills (*Maeil Sinbo*, 1914a, 1914b). The hospital at which Yi worked in Hamhŭng before departing to Tokyo for study was a government one; Yi's first job after returning to Korea as a qualified physician was also at a Government General-run hospital in the Korean capital. Japanese police documents indicate that from approximately 1927 Yi was under surveillance as a Communist activist (Chōsen Sōtokufu, 1934, p. 301). That, however, did not dampen *Maeil Sinbo's* enthusiasm for publishing her medical advice. Interestingly, Yi was not the only Kūn'uhoe member whose medical advice *Maeil Sinbo* was prepared to publish. Chōng Chayōng (1896–1970), yet another graduate of Tokyo Women's Medical College

once active in Kŭn'uhoe, also enjoyed the privilege of publishing her exhortations to Korean women in the colonial authorities' official newspaper. She opined, for example, that the time-honored *ondol* floor heating system made Korean houses less "hygienic" than their Western counterparts and bemoaned the lack of regularized physical activity in Korean households (Chŏng, 1926). By 1930, she was already criticizing the supposed "irrationality" of Koreans and their assumed penchant for "everything new" (Chŏng, 1930; see also Ch'oe, Ŭ., 2016, p. 309).

This continuous professional interaction between the colonial government and anti-colonial female radicals with physician licenses indicates that diametrically opposing political positioning notwithstanding, the colony's radicalized doctors and its imperialist rulers had at least one important thing in common. The colonial government, its legitimacy based, as mentioned above, on its (essentially self-serving and extremely questionable) claim to stand for modernizing "reforms and improvements" in its colonized domain, was an active practitioner of biopolitics.¹⁷ It ran a few medical institutions and, while clearly prioritizing the disciplinary, regimental aspects of modern state power over the medical ones, also practiced the policies of disease prevention and control, to the degree that the (highly limited) budget of the institutions concerned would allow. Medical advice published by newspapers was, in fact, the cheapest available prevention measure. It was amply used, in addition to hygienic advice in civic ethics textbooks, public lectures, and even radio broadcasts from the late 1920s (Hwang, 2016, pp. 239–242). So, it may not be very surprising that even a known Communist activist was allowed to contribute some useful articles on medical issues to the Government-General's own newspaper. Communist radicals, in turn, regarded medicine as an important aspect of their own project of liberating alternative modernity. Free medicine—an avowed goal of the Soviet state, the Korean Communists' model in the 1920s (it was fully introduced in the USSR by 1937) was one of the declared objectives of the hoped-for revolution in the Communist programs since the very beginning of the 1920s (see Tikhonov & Lim, 2017). It comes as little surprise that Communist activists of the kind Yi represented did not consider it objectionable to collaborate with the colonial government when the issues of popular health knowledge were at stake.

The patterns of socialist feminism

At the same time, however, Yi was also active as a socialist feminist and was understood—as alluded to above—by the Japanese police to be a part of the underground Korean Communist Party organization. As a feminist radical, she wanted women to be empowered, both socio-economically and in the sphere of intimate relationships. She saw a close alliance with—but not

subsummation to the labor movement as the only hope for any effective improvement of poorer working women's socio-economic conditions. Her feminism, however, was much more than simply an extension of her radical political commitments. She was known as a staunch advocate of women's moral right to initiate divorce proceedings. That was an especially acute issue given that most marriages were still arranged, and the consent of the marrying parties themselves was often purely formal (Yi, 1927b). Simultaneously, she made noteworthy attempts to outline her vision of emancipatory intimacy in a number of her essays in periodicals, lectures, and roundtable discussions. She saw, for example, men's high-handed, commanding attitudes as one of the main reasons behind the marital discord issues in contemporary Korea (Chosŏn Ilbo, 1927). As with most of her contemporaries (of both sexes), Yi believed that men and women were, to a degree, innately different from each other and considered men more "flexible and determined" compared to women. She concurrently believed, however, that women had other advantages, and refused to regard either of the two sexes as "innately superior" (Yi, 1929).

Many of these essays also shed light on Yi's own married life with Han Wigŏn¹⁸ (1896–1937), one of the most important organizers and theoreticians of the Korean Communist movement and a journalist with *Tong'a Ilbo*, which published some of Yi's essays in 1927–1930. Yi strongly appreciated the "understanding" that existed between her and her husband (Yi, 1928). Her experience taught her that "full understanding," a comradely relationship of mutual encouragement, equality, and support in marriage, was an effective antidote against the anxiety and fear that were otherwise an unescapable part of radical activists' lives (Yi, 1927a). As we will see below, Yi's staunch commitment to her partnership with Han led to her following him to exile in China and, eventually, to her death at a relatively young age.

It is also noteworthy that both Yi and many of her colleagues at Kŭn'uhoe, the representative emancipated women of colonial Kyŏngsŏng, demonstrated a very open attitude toward female homosexuality. This attitude was not necessarily unusual in the 1910–30s, as various kinds of female homosexual intimacy often accompanied the relatively secluded dormitory life of female students¹⁹ in their late teens and early twenties (Pak-Ch'a, 2018, pp. 231–236). It still could, however, sound challenging to mainstream society, but that did not seem to deter Yi. She readily shared, for example, the memories of her lesbian love experience during her student days in Japan, which evidently predated her heterosexual relationship with Chu Chonggŏn (Yi, 1930f). Her lover was Yi Hyŏn'gyŏng (1902–?),²⁰ a scion of a rich family from Suwŏn (Kyŏnggi Province), who was at that time a student at Tokyo Women's University, and an active participant first in the Christian and then the socialist movement. Later a fellow socialist Kŭn'uhoe activist, Yi Hyŏn'gyŏng ended up marrying An Kwangch'ŏn (1897–?),²¹ a physician-

turned-Communist activist (Cho, 2010, pp. 273–274) and she fled to China, together with her husband in around 1929 (Kaebyök, 1935). Both Yi Tögyo and Yi Hyön'gyöng were apparently bisexual, and seemingly saw their lesbian affair as quite natural and befitting their student status (in the case of most female undergraduates, being a student effectively precluded marriage and subsequent childbirth). Yi Tögyo shared with her readers the intense physicality of her love affair with Yi Hyön'gyöng (“constantly sleeping under one blanket”), her polyamorous inclinations (she pursued several parallel lesbian love affairs at the same time, one of them with an ethnic Japanese co-student) and the extremity of psychological suffering which her predilection for open relationships caused her jealous partner (who once was reportedly close to suicide) (Yi, 1930f). It appears highly plausible that Yi Tögyo's attitudes toward love might have been influenced, among others, by Alexandra Kollontai's (1872–1952) theorizing on non-proprietary amorous relationships, which—as I have mentioned above—was highly influential among feminists on the Left in both Japan and Korea in the 1920s.

Kollontai's theories were often misrepresented, in her own time and later, as advocating promiscuity or, at least, open relationships with a plurality of partners. This was not, however, necessarily the case; nor was it the only way in which “Kollontatism” was interpreted by the Korean female radicals of the 1920s, Yi Tögyo included. Her principal advocacy of easy divorce and her belief in the theoretical permissibility of open relationships notwithstanding, Yi refused to initiate any affairs after her husband left her behind in Korea in 1927 and went into exile in China in May 1931 on account of police persecution of leading Communists in Korea, but also out of her wish to be together with her husband, keeping their relationship alive.

In a 1930 journal contribution, Yi emphasized that she managed to maintain fidelity to her husband during the three years of his absence, despite all the challenges her unfulfilled sexual urges presented. Always a sober-minded observer, she added that her social status as a qualified doctor with a solid income was helpful—she was economically independent and did not need to enter a new relationship for pecuniary reasons. While she acknowledged that the women who were completely unable to endure their sexual urges while their lovers were imprisoned or exiled should not be ethically reproached for initiating a new relationship while waiting for their original partners to return, she used her own example to demonstrate that fidelity to an absent partner was not physically impossible, provided the couple's love life was from the very beginning solidly grounded in comradesly mutual understanding (Yi, 1930g). In the end, it appears that a form of intimacy with one other person, solidly embedded in egalitarian thinking, comradeship, mutual understanding, and respect, was Yi's personally preferred mode of intimate relationship. Non-proprietary attitudes were an important prerequisite for practicing such a form of intimacy.

Yi's flight to Beiping (today's Beijing) was a part of both her intimate and her political life. She reportedly wanted to stay with her husband, but also at the same time to "work" from China's old capital, presumably as a part of a Communist network. Japanese police managed to find her Beiping address, placing her under surveillance even there, in her self-chosen Chinese exile (Chōsen Sōtokufu, 1934, p. 301). However, she soon fell ill and passed away in Beiping. The sad news was known in Korea by the autumn of 1932 (Kwan-sangja, 1932). In the end, Yi lived in Chinese exile for only slightly more than a year, and, due to a fatal illness, her life ended at a relatively early age.

Conclusion

This article examined Yi's life course and her activities, including professional and socio-political engagements. The methodologies utilized for the analysis of Yi's life and writings included the methods of social history, with special attention paid to the role of the modern educational system in the upwardly mobile trajectory of Yi's professional life, and critical feminist reading of her writings in heavily censored colonial press. Colonial press, as well as Japanese police documents, furnished much of the information about Yi's life and activities used in this article. One of the foci of the article was Yi's negotiation strategies vis-à-vis colonial modernity. The modern educational system and press outlets run by the colonialist state power apparatus were essential for Yi's upward social mobility trajectory and her campaign for disseminating medical knowledge to fellow Korean women. At the same time, Yi was subjected to constant police surveillance on account of her participation in radical anti-colonial activities. Her modus vivendi under such conditions was to identify the domain in which her own preferred vision of (socialist and emancipatory) modernity would not clash with the modernizing claims of the colonial government, namely the sphere of medical knowledge popularization, with women readers as her target audience.

In the late 1920s and early 1930s, parallel to her engagement in Kūn'uhoe, a pan-national women's group with a strong contingent of socialist radicals (mostly upwardly mobile female professionals like Yi herself), she was also tremendously active as a popularizer of medical knowledge, using all available media channels including the Government-General's own mouthpiece. Her medical writings are worth rereading in the context of the contemporaneous domain of popular medical advice for women; Yi's choice of subject matter and her placing of emphasis, in comparison with those of male medical professionals, subtly indicate the radicalism of her attitudes. More generally, popular medical discourses of colonial-age Korea (some of the primary materials for which are recently reprinted in *Ch'ōngam Taehakkyo Chaeil K'orian Yōn'guso*, 2022) should be reexamined by researchers in the future, as many of them, once scrutinized from an intertextual viewpoint, reveal

their connections to the attitudes towards gender, family, intimacy as well as a number of biopolitical domain popular among Korean intelligentsia (and Japanese medical professionals in Korea) of the colonial period.

At the same time, parallel to her “legal” existence as a medical professional, popularizer, and social activist in the officially permitted domain of the colonial civil society, Yi lived a second life as the wife and close comrade-in-arms of Han Wigŏn, a Communist dedicated to overthrowing the colonial order. A bisexual, Yi never disowned her lesbian past. However, at the same time, she and Han managed to embody an example of a heterosexual marital partnership based on the rejection of proprietary attitudes, and epitomizing equality, mutual understanding, comradeship, and trust. Their practice of “red love” was an important contribution to the debates on non-conventional and radical forms of intimacy that raged in Korea (and elsewhere, including Japan) in the 1920s and early 1930s. The attempts of colonial-age radicals to challenge both pre-modern and modern forms of patriarchy in intimate relationships were ahead of their time. They may serve as an important reference in the discussions on dismantling the patriarchal forms of gender relations²² even in today’s South Korea.

Notes

1. In the case of the journals, see Yi (2021). See also a selection of the original texts in *Ch’ŏngam Taehakkyo Chaeil K’orian Yŏn’guso* (2022, pp. 13–54, 62–101).
2. For pre-publication censorship in the case of the periodicals, see Robinson (1988, pp. 50–55).
3. Chŏng Chongmyŏng (1896–?) moved North after 1945 and nothing is known about her activities after 1948. The year of her death is unknown.
4. See Hŏ Chŏngsuk’s biography in Barraclough (2015).
5. Yi (2015) explains Hŏ’s ideological development in the 1920s.
6. The standard works are Kim (2016, pp. 131–226) and Barraclough (2015). See an inclusive bibliography in Kim (2016, pp. 309–326).
7. The most representative recent ones are Ch’oe and Sŏn (2020) on Yi (2015) on Hŏ.
8. No information is available about the whereabouts of An Kwangch’ŏn (1897–?) after 1931. His year of death remains unknown.
9. Yu Yŏngjun’s (1892–?) activities in North Korea (where she moved to soon after the Liberation) are not known after 1962, and thus the year of her death is unknown.
10. On social mobility channels granted to a small minority of Koreans who managed to reach college level in their academic careers, see Kim, Y. (2009b, pp. 131–172) and Yumakoshi (2001, pp. 155–160).
11. On this discrimination and the consequent prominence of the northerners among early modernizers, see Hwang (2002).
12. Yu Yŏngjun’s (1892–?) activities in North Korea (where she moved to soon after the Liberation) are not known after 1962, and thus the year of her death is unknown.

13. Chŏng Chongmyŏng (1896--?) moved North after 1945 and nothing is known about her activities after 1948. The year of her death is unknown.
14. Chŏng Chongmyŏng studied at a nursery school affiliated with the missionary Severance Hospital between 1917 and 1920 and at the Government General-run midwifery school in 1920 (Ch'oe & Sŏn, 2020, pp. 148–151).
15. On the system of licensed prostitution and sex trade in colonial Korea, see Soh (2004, pp. 172–173). See also an interview with a former Kŭn'uhoe activist in Hangyoreh (1989).
16. See an analysis of this piece by Yi (1930d) in the contemporary context in Pak (2021, pp. 55–57).
17. On the Japanese appropriation of the “scientific colonialism” discourse and the importance of medical and hygienic practices for Meiji-period Japanese colonial enterprise, see Rogaski (2004, pp. 136–164). On Japan's emphasis on biomedicine in its colonial governance in Korea, see Kim (2019b, p. 8).
18. On Han's life and activities, see Kim (2019a).
19. On lesbian love among girl students as a “danger,” see Pak-Ch'a (2018, p. 244).
20. Yi Hyŏn'gyŏng's (1902--?) activities after 1931 are entirely unknown. Her year of death remains unknown.
21. No information is available about the whereabouts of An Kwangch'ŏn (1897-?) after 1931. His year of death remains unknown.
22. On the de facto persistence of these forms, see, for example, Brinton and Oh (2019).

Acknowledgements

This work was supported by the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Korea and the National Research Foundation of Korea (NRF-2017S1A6A3A02079082). The author wants to express his profound gratitude to the two anonymous readers whose comments were of great help in improving this paper and preparing it for publication. He would also like to thank the editorial staff for their assistance.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

Funding

This work was supported by the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Korea and the National Research Foundation of Korea (NRF-2017S1A6A3A02079082).

Notes on contributor

Vladimir TIKHONOV (Pak Noja) is currently teaching Korean and general East Asian studies at Oslo University, Norway. He previously worked for Kyunghee University in South Korea. His publications currently focus on Korean modern history, especially the history of Korean socialist movement, including socialist feminism. He has been also working on the history of Korean Buddhism and Korean nationalism. Email: vladimir.tikhonov@ikos.uio.no

References

- Barraclough, R. (2015). Red love in Korea: Rethinking communism, feminism and sexuality. In R. Barraclough, H. Bowen-Struyk, & P. Rabinowitz (Eds.), *Red love across the Pacific: Political and sexual revolutions of the twentieth century* (pp. 23–38). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Barraclough, R., Bowen-Struyk, H., & Rabinowitz, P. (2015). Introduction: Sex, texts, comrades. In R. Barraclough, H. Bowen-Struyk, & P. Rabinowitz (Eds.), *Red love across the Pacific: Political and sexual revolutions of the twentieth century* (pp. 11–22). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Bebel, A. (1904). *Women under socialism*. Labor News Company (Original work published 1879).
- Brinton, M. C., & Oh, E. (2019). Babies, work, or both? Highly educated women's employment and fertility in East Asia. *American Journal of Sociology*, 125(1), 105–140. <https://doi.org/10.1086/704369>
- Cho, K. (1990). 1920 nyöndae yösöng tanch'e undong e kwanhan yön'gu – sahoejuüi yösöng tanch'e rül chungsim üro [A research on the 1920s' women organization movement – focusing on socialist women groups] [Master's thesis]. Sookmyung Women's University. http://www.riss.kr/search/detail/DetailView.do?p_mat_type=be54d9b8bc7cdbc09&control_no=1fc16ed2cda76fdc
- Cho, K. (2010). 1920 nyöndae chaebukkyöng Hanin Hyöngmyöngsa üi Hyöngmyöng palgan kwa hyöngmyöng undong [Publication of the journal Revolution by Beijing-based Koreans' Revolutionary Society and their revolutionary movement]. *Han'guk Tongnip Undongsa Yön'gu* [Research on Korean Independence Movement History], 36, 249–285.
- Ch'oe, K. (2016). Hujit'a Ssüguak'ira üi saengae rül t'onghae pon shingminji Chosön üi üihak, üiryö, wisaeng [The Japanese colonial medicine, treatment and hygiene as seen through the life of Fujita Tsuguakira]. *Üisahak* [History of Medicine], 25(1), 41–75.
- Ch'oe, K., & Sön, U. (2020). Haengdonghanün kanhosa' üi wönjo, Chöng Chongmyöng [The prototypical 'activist nurse', Chöng Chongmyöng]. *Üiryö wa Sahoe* [Medicine and Society], 10, 146–161.
- Ch'oe, Ü. (2016). Ilche kangjömggi Chosön yöja üisa tür üi hwaltong: Tok'yo Yöja Üihak Chönmun Hakkyo choröp 4in ül chungsim üro [The activities of women physicians in colonial Korea: Focusing on the four graduates of Tokyo Women's Medical College]. *K'ogit'o* [Cogito], 80, 287–316.
- Choi, H. (2009). *Gender and mission encounters in Korea: New women, old ways*. University of California Press.
- Chöng, C. (1926, December 11). Muöt put'ö Koch'ilka [From where should it be changed?]. *Maeil Sinbo*, 4.
- Chöng, C. (1930, February 26). Yösöng chigöp yech'an [A paean to female occupations]. *Maeil Sinbo*, 5.
- Chöng, C. (1933). Sintong'a üi inhyöng chöllamhoe rül pogo [On having seen Sintong'a's doll exhibition]. *Sinkyedan* [New Stage], 4, 130–131.
- Chöng, Ü. (2021). Ilche kangjömggi kanhohak üi pogup kwa kanhosa yangsöng chöngch'aek [Dissemination of nursing science and nursing training policy during the Japanese colonial period]. *Han'guk Yunghap Hakhoe Nonmunjip* [Article Collection of the Korean Society for Convergence Studies], 12(7), 329–336.
- Ch'öngam Taehakkyo Chaeil K'orian Yön'guso [Ch'öngam University's Institute of Zainichi Korean Studies]. (2022). *Kündae köngang tamnon kwa sinch'e charyojip 4* [Collection of materials on the modern discourses on health and body 4]. Sönin.

- Chōsen Sōtokofu. (1934). *Kokugai ni okeru yōgi Chōsen jinmeibo* [Name list of suspicious Koreans abroad]. Chōsen Sōtokofu Keimukyoku.
- Chosōn Ilbo. (1929, July 25). Kūn'uhoe taehoe e haengdong kangnyōng kwa ūian [Kūn'uhoe assembly debates its action program and agenda], 2.
- Chosōn Ilbo. (1927, January 2). Ponsa chuch'oe yōru myōngsa kajōng munje hap-p'yōnghoe [Joint discussion by female luminaries on family issues convened by our newspaper], 5.
- Chosōn Ilbo. (1930, March 20). Kūn'uhoe Kyōngsōng chihoe samu pusō paech'i [Kūn'uhoe's Kyōngsōng branch decided on its officers' line-up for its department], 2.
- Engels, F. (2004). *The origin of the family, private property and the state*. Resistance Books (Original work published 1884).
- Foucault, M. (2003). *'Society must be defended': Lectures at the College de France*. Picador (Original work published 1997).
- Hangyoreh. (1989, August 13). Koguk yōsōng undong, minjuhwa e nūl kwansim' Kūn'uhoe hwaryak yōsōng undongka Chang Kyusōn ssi [Always interested in the women's movement and democratization in her homeland: Ms Chang Kyusōn, a former Kūn'uhoe activist]. <https://newslibrary.naver.com/viewer/index.naver?articleId=1989081300289108003&editNo=3&printCount=1&publishDate=1989-08-13&officeld=00028&pageNo=8&printNo=387&publishType=00010>
- Hobsbawm, E. (1987). *The age of empire, 1875–1914*. Abacus.
- Hwang, K. M. (2002). From the dirt to heaven: Northern Koreans in the Chosōn and early modern eras. *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 62(1), 135–178. <https://doi.org/10.2307/4126586>
- Hwang, K. M. (2016). *Rationalizing Korea: The rise of the modern state, 1894–1945*. University of California Press.
- Hwang, S. (1933). Pando e kida injae rūl naein Yōng, Mi, Ro, Il yuhaksa: Tonggyōng yuhaksaeng kwa kū hwaryak [The story of study in Britain, America, Russia and Japan which gave the Peninsula so many talents: The activities of students in Tokyo]. *Samch'ōlli* [Three Thousand Li], 5(1), 22–26.
- Im, K. (2019, April 18). Chujō ōbsi kkum kkugo saranghada [Dreaming and loving without hesitation]. *Hankyoreh*, 21. Retrieved September 23, 2022, from http://h21.hani.co.kr/arti/society/society_general/46928.html
- Kaeb'yōk. (1935, March). Yōgija Kunsang [Portraits of female journalists]. *Kaeb'yōk* [World's Creation], 4, 73–74. https://db.history.go.kr/item/level.do?levelId=ma_013_0750_0080
- Kim, C., & Kim, C. (1972). *Han'guk kongsanjuūi undongsa*, Vol. 2 [The history of the communist movement in Korea, Vol. 2]. Koryō Taehakkyo Asea Munje Yōn'guso.
- Kim, C., & Kim, C. (1973). *Han'guk kongsanjuūi undongsa*, Vol. 3 [The history of the communist movement in Korea, Vol. 3]. Koryō Taehakkyo Asea Munje Yōn'guso.
- Kim, K. (2005). Sinyōsōng, sahoejuūi, chōnt'ong kwa Sōgu iron [New women, socialism, traditions, and Western European theories]. *Ihwa Yōja Taehakkyo Asia Yōsōnghak Sent'ō Haksultaehoe Charyojip* [Proceedings: Academic Conference of Asian Women Centre, Ewha Women's University], 11, 3–15.
- Kim, K. (2016). *Sinyōsōng, kaenyōm kwa yōksa* [New women, the concept and history]. P'urūn Yōksa.
- Kim, P. (2009a). *Hakkyo pakk ūi Chosōn yōsōng tūl* [Korean women outside of school]. Ilchogak.
- Kim, S. (2019a). Han Wigōn ūi saengae wa minjok tongnip undong [The life and national independence movement of Han Wigōn]. *Han'guk Minjok Undongsa Yōn'gu* [Research on Korean Independence Movement History], 101, 257–311.

- Kim, S. (2019b). *Imperatives of care: Women and medicine in colonial Korea*. University of Hawaii Press.
- Kim, Y. (2009b). *Ilcheha Hanin chibaech'ung yŏn'gu* [Research on Korean ruling class under the Japanese colonial rule]. Kohŏn.
- Kim, Y. (2011). *Kŭ nyŏ tŭr ūi iyagi, shinyŏsŏng: Han'guk kŭnhyŏndae munhak kwa chendŏ yŏngu* [The stories of these women, new women: Research on Korean modern and contemporary literature and gender]. Yŏngnak.
- Kollontai, A. (1927). *Red love*. Seven Arts Publishing Co (Original work published 1923).
- Kuksa p'yŏnch'an wiwŏnhoe [National Institute of Korean History]. (2001). *Hanguksa* [Korean history], 49, T'amgudang.
- Kwansangja. (1932). Sarang i chabakan yŏnsang [Portraits of women taken away by love]. *Pyŏlgŏn'gon* [A Separate World], 57, 40–42.
- Kyŏshŏkŏ hi dai 5865-gŏ [Keijŏ Police District, Chongno Police Station, Higher Police, Secret, Document No. 5865]. (1927, May 28). Kinyŭkai sŏritsu ni kansuru ken [On establishment of Kŭn'uhoe], Police District, Keijŏ, Japanese Empire. https://db.history.go.kr/id/had_135_0710
- Lenin, V. (1965). A great beginning: Heroism of the workers in the rear “communist subbotniks”. In The Institute of Marxism-Leninism, Soviet Communist Party's Central Committee (Ed.), *Lenin's collected works* (Vol. 29, pp. 409–434). Progress Publishers (Original work published 1919).
- Maeil Sinbo. (1913, November 28). Tu nyŏja ūi mobŏm inmul [The two women are model personalities], 3.
- Maeil Sinbo. (1914a, February 2). Chŏnk'waeja ūi kam'un [Gratefulness of the fully recovered patients], 3.
- Maeil Sinbo. (1914b, May 9). Hamhŭng [Hamhŭng], 4.
- Maeil Sinbo. (1922, July 20). Yŏja kyoyuk ūi sŏn'guja, Son Chŏnggyu yang ūn yŏja kobo kyoyu ro, Yu Yŏngjun yang ūn pyŏng ŭro chungdo t'oehak [The pioneers of female education, Ms Son Chŏnggyu goes to a female middle school as a teacher while Ms Yu Yŏngjun drops out due to illness], 3.
- Maeil Sinbo. (1931, March 5). Mijisu ūi hŭimang kwa hangsang sae maŭm ŭro [With unknown amount of hopes and always with a renewed commitment], 1.
- Mayhall, L. (2003). *The militant suffrage movement: Citizenship and resistance in Britain, 1860–1930*. Oxford University Press.
- Pae, S. (2018). Shingminji Chosŏn esŏui K'ollont'ai nonŭi ūi suyonggwa kŭ ūimi [The acceptance of discussions on Kollontai in colonial Korea and its significance]. In Y. Minjok Munhaksa (Ed.), *Hyŏngmyŏng ūl ssŭda: sahoejuŭi munhwa chŏngch'ŭi kirok kwa kŭ yusan tŭl* [Writing the revolution: the records and legacies of socialist cultural politics] (pp. 244–276). Somyŏng.
- Pak, C. (2021). Chilbyŏng ūi kŭndae: Ilche kangjŏmgi puinbyŏng ūi ūimi wa maeyak kwanggo [The modernity of diseases: The meanings of female illnesses and medicine advertisements during the Japanese colonial era]. *Asia Yŏsŏng Yŏn'gu* [Asian Women Research], 60(3), 45–93.
- Pak, H. (1993). 1920 nyŏndae sahoejuŭi yŏsŏng undong ūi chojik kwa hwaltong [Organization and activities of the 1920s female socialist movement] [Master's thesis]. Ewha Womans University. http://www.riss.kr/search/detail/DetailView.do?p_mat_type=be54d9b8bc7cdb09&control_no=9105cf3b850b1189
- Pak, S. (2019). Chŏng Ch'ŭlsŏng – yŏsŏng nodongja rŭl taeyŏnhan Kŭn'uhoe ūi ridŏ [Chŏng Ch'ŭlsŏng – a Kŭn'uhoe leader who represented female workers]. *Naeil ūl yŏnŭn yŏksa* [The History Opening Tomorrow], 76, 134–143.

- Pak, Y. (2005). *Han'guk kundaе üihak üi kiwön* [The origins of Korea's modern medicine]. Hyeon.
- Pak-Ch'a, M. (2018). *Chosön üi K'wiö* [Korea's queer]. Hyönsil Munhwa.
- Patton, P. (2016). Power and biopower in Foucault. In V. W. Cisney & N. Morar (Eds.), *Biopower: Foucault and beyond* (pp. 102–120). University of Chicago Press.
- Prozorov, S. (2016). *Biopolitics of Stalinism: Ideology and life in soviet socialism*. Edinburgh University Press.
- Robinson, M. (1988). *Cultural nationalism in colonial Korea, 1920–1925*. University of Washington Press.
- Rogaski, R. (2004). *Hygienic modernity: Meanings of health and disease in treaty-port China*. University of California Press.
- Sakai, T., Sawai, T., Takizawa, T., Fukushima, O., & Shimada, K. (2010). Wagakuni no igaku kyöiku ishi shikaku fuyo seido no rekishiteki hensen to igakkö no hatten katei [Historical development of the systems of medical education and medical licensure and its effect on the evolution of medical schools in Japan]. *Igaku Kyöiku* [Medical Education], 41(5), 337–346.
- Sin, T. (2012). Ilche kangjömgi yöüisa Hö Yöngsuk üi sam kwa üihak [Life and medical activities of Hö Yöngsuk, a female doctor of the Japanese colonial period]. *Üisahak* [History of Medicine], 21(1), 25–66.
- Soh, C.-H. (2004). Women's sexual labor and state in Korean history. *Journal of Women's History*, 15(4), 170–177. <https://doi.org/10.1353/jowh.2004.0022>
- Sugai. (1924, November 3). Yöja haebang ün kyöngjejök tongnip i künbon [The fundamental of women liberation is economic independence]. *Tong'a Ilbo*, 4.
- Tikhonov, V. (2023). Chu Chonggön (1895–1936) – Life and death of a transborder Korean socialist intellectual. *Studia Orientalia Electronica* [Oriental Studies: Electronic], 124, 199–216.
- Tikhonov, V., & Lim, K. (2017). Communist visions for Korea's future: The 1920–30s. *The Review of Korean Studies*, 20(1), 7–34. <https://doi.org/10.25024/review.2017.20.1.001>
- Tong'a Ilbo. (1924, October 3). Yösöng Tong'uhoe kang'yön [A lecture organized by the Female Comrades Association], 2.
- Tong'a Ilbo. (1927a, April 29). Kakkye nyösöng ül mangnahan Kün'uhoe palgi ch'on-ghoe [Kün'uhoe's inaugural meeting brings together women from all walks of society], 3.
- Tong'a Ilbo. (1927b, May 29). Kakhang kyölchöng, manseri e p'yehoe [On having decided on each agenda article, the meeting was adjourned], 3.
- Tong'a Ilbo. (1928, May 26). Yöüi Yi Tögyo ssi ka Inch'ön esö kaeöp, puin wisaeng kwa soa üi wisaeng ül wihayö noryökhagettago [A female doctor, Ms. Yi Tögyo, opened her clinic in Inch'ön, and says that she will work for female and children's hygiene], 3.
- Walters, S. D. (1995). *Material girls: Making sense of feminist cultural theory*. University of California Press.
- Wells, K. (1999). The price of legitimacy: Women and the Künühoe movement, 1927–1931. In G.-W. Shin & M. Robinson (Eds.), *Colonial modernity in Korea* (pp. 189–220). Harvard University Press.
- Ye, C. (2005). Ilcheha Kim Hwallan üi hwaltong kwa taeil hyömn'yök [The activities and pro-Japanese collaboration of Kim Hwallan under Japanese colonial rule]. *Hanguk Saron* [Korean History], 51, 397–454.
- Yi, K. (1993). *Sin'ganhoe yön'gu* [Research on Sin'ganhoe]. Yöksa Pip'yöngsa.
- Yi, P. (2021). 1930, 40 Nyöndaе taejung chapchi e nat'an'an üihak sangshik: *Kajöngchüi, Hantö no Hikari* rül chungshim üro [Medical common sense in the popular journals of the 1930s and 1940s: Focusing on *The Friend of Family* and *The Light of the*

- Peninsula*. In Ch'öngam Taehakkyo Chaeil K'orian Yön'guso [Ch'öngam University's Institute of Zainichi Korean Studies] (Ed.), *Chishikchang üi Pyöndong kwa Kongjung Wisaeng* [Changes in the realm of knowledge and public hygiene] (pp. 162–202). Sönin.
- Yi, S. (1992). *1920 nyöndae sahoejuüi yösöng undong üi inyömjök söngkyök e kwanhan yön'gu* [A research on the ideological character of the socialist female movement in the 1920s] [Master's thesis]. Yonsei University. <http://data.riss.kr/resource/Thesis/000000714008>
- Yi, S. (2015). 'Na' esö 'uri' ro: Hö Chöngsuk kwa kündaejök yösöng chuch'e [From 'me' to 'us': Hö Chöngsuk and the modern female subject]. *Yösöng Munhak Yön'gu* [Women Literature Research], 34, 89–148.
- Yi, T. (1927a). Kyörhonhagi chön kwa kyörhonhan hu, saenghwal sang iltae chön'gi [Before and after marriage – definite changes in life]. *Pyölgön'gon* [A Separate World], 4(2), 88–89. https://db.history.go.kr/item/level.do?sort=levelld&dir=ASC&start=1&limit=20&page=1&pre_page=1&setId=-1&totalCount=0&prevPage=0&prevLimit=&itemId=ma&types=&synonym=off&chinessChar=on&brokerPagingInfo=&levelld=ma_015_0040_0270&position=-1
- Yi, T. (1927b, July 2). Insüp t'ap'a ga mokchön üi munje [Reforming the outdated customs is the immediate task]. *Tong'a Ilbo*, 3.
- Yi, T. (1927c, October 10). Chongdu üi sigi-1 [The season of smallpox vaccination-1]. *Tong'a Ilbo*, 3.
- Yi, T. (1928). Anae ege, namp'yön ege paranün il [What I wish for wives and husbands]. *Pyölgön'gon* [A Separate World], 11(2), 90–93. https://db.history.go.kr/item/level.do?levelld=ma_015_0110_0160
- Yi, T. (1929, October 26). Saömnnyök i kangnyöl, tök tö tongnipsim i innün gös i küdür üi k'ün chaesan i anilkka [Aren't strong practical abilities and independence their big assets?]. *Tong'a Ilbo*, 5.
- Yi, T. (1930a, January 1). Ponsa chuch'oe kajöng puin munje chwadamhoe [A debate on housewives' issues convened by our newspaper]. *Chungoe Ilbo*, 6.
- Yi, T. (1930b, June 11–12). Paegilhae [Pertussis]. *Maeil Sinbo*, 5.
- Yi, T. (1930c, June 17–19). Chagungbyöng [Endometrisis]. *Maeil Sinbo*, 5.
- Yi, T. (1930d, August 8–9). Chuüihal puin söngbyöng [Women's STD one has to be careful about]. *Chosön Ilbo*, 5.
- Yi, T. (1930e, September 23). Yosai e cheil manün sin'gyöngbyöng, soa kam'gi [The most common recent nervous disease: toddlers' flu]. *Maeil Sinbo*, 5.
- Yi, T. (1930f). Yöryu myöngsa üi tongsöng yönaegi [Records of homosexual love among female luminaries]. *Pyölgön'gon* [A separate world], 34(11), 120–124. https://db.history.go.kr/item/level.do?levelld=ma_015_0320_0240
- Yi, T. (1930g). Namp'yön chaeok, mangmyöng chung ch'ö üi sujöl munje [Issue of whether wives have to stay committed to their imprisoned or exiled husbands]. *Samch'ölli* [Three thousand Li], 10, 39–41.
- Yi, T. (2006). Pulgün yönae wa saeroun yösöng [Red love and the new women]. *Hyöndae Sosöl Yön'gu* [Modern Novel Research], 29, 159–181.
- Yi, Y. (2021). Ch'oech'o üi kungnaep'a yösöng üisa An Sugyöng, Kim Yönghüng, Kim Haeji yön-gu [Research on the first domestically trained female doctors: An Sugyöng, Kim Yönghüng, and Kim Haeji]. *Üisahak* [History of Medicine], 30(1), 101–144.
- Yumakoshi, T. (2001). *Han'guk kündae taehak üi sönnip kwa chön'gae* [Establishment and development of modern universities in Korea]. Kyoyuk Kwahaksa.
- Yö, I., Yi, H., Kim, S., Sin, K., & Kim, Y. (2018). *Han'guk üihaksa* [The history of medicine in Korea]. Yöksa Konggan.

이 논문의 주인공은 식민지 시기 조선의 선구적인 여성 의사 중의 한 명이며 동시에 열렬한 사회주의였던 이덕요 (李德耀, 1897-1932)다. 이 논문은 의사이자 사회주의자인 이덕요의 의학 지식 대중화 노력 등에 초점을 두어서, 그녀의 “의료”에 대한 이해가 그 당시에 “의료적 근대성”의 주류 통념들과 어떤 관계에 있었으며, 그녀의 젠더 해방 지향과 사회주의 이념과 어떻게 상호작용했는지 알아보려고 한다. 이와 동시에 이 논문은 이덕요의 사회주의적 여성관과 그녀의 성과 성평등, 연애, 결혼에 대한 신념을 조명하여, 그녀가 “적애” (赤愛, 사회주의적 연애)를 어떻게 실천에 옮겼는지 알아본다. 이외에는 이 논문은 이덕요의 의학 지식 대중화 운동과 조선 총독부의 “대중위생론” 사이의 중첩되는 점에 착안하여 양쪽의 근대적 진료, 위생관의 상통하는 점 등을 알아보고 이덕요와 일제 관영 언론 사이의 관계에 대한 이해를 시도해본다. 결론적으로 이 논문은 이덕요의 신념, 실천, 그리고 저술 활동에 대한 조명을 통해서 1920-30년대의 사회주의적 여성해방론, 그리고 사회주의적 페미니즘과 의학적 근대성 사이의 관계에 대한 우리 이해를 심화시키고자 한다.

KEYWORDS 이덕요; 근대 의료; 페미니즘; 사회주의; 조선공산당