

**MODERNISATION AND CHANGING  
FAMILY STRUCTURE  
IN KOREA**

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*" for parenthood "*

*My heartfelt thanks to  
Trevor Noble, my supervisor,  
Sang-Kie Chang and Im-Sun Cho, my parents,  
Young-Han and Mun-Han, my sons.  
Jin-Sook Kim, my wife,*

## *Summary*

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**Hyun-Seob CHANG**

The thesis comprises three major parts and 8 chapters. First of all Part I consists of two chapters: a discussion on the theoretical frame of reference and a brief review of the social changes that have been both causes and consequence of the family changes of the modernisation process of the last few decades.

Part II comprising four chapters examines the result of the socio-economic change or modernisation of the last four decades in the family field : a review of the traditional family as an analytical framework; a discussion of the changes in the kinship network and marriage customs; and lastly a discussion on the relationship among family members.

Part III comprising of two chapters, sets out the conclusions to be drawn. It examines first dissolution of the family and changing attitudes and values concerning family life next discusses what sort of family policies should be arranged to meet the huge variation and diversity of family life in which conventional values relating to the family no longer appear to work properly.

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## *Abbreviation*

- FAM89** : *The Changing Family Functions and Role Relations in Korea*, surveyed, analyzed, and finally published by H. S. Chang, J. S. Kim, A. J. Cho, and S. K. Kong of the Korea Institute for Health and Social Affairs in December 1990.
- FAM86** : *The Family Transition in Korea*, surveyed, analyzed, and published by H. S. Chang, J. S. Kim, I. H. Park, and S. K. Kong of the Korea Institute for Population and Health Affairs in December 1987.
- SIK** : *Social Indicators In Korea* published by the National Bureau of Statistics, Economic Planning Board, Republic of Korea in 1992, 1990, 1989, 1988.
- Census** : *Population and Housing Census Report* by the National Bureau of Statistics, Economic Planning Board, Republic of Korea in 1990, 1985, 1980, 1975, 1970, 1966, 1960, 1955, 1949, 1944, 1940, 1935, 1930, 1925.
- Gallup** : *The Debate on Fertility* surveyed by the Korea Survey (Gallup) Polls Ltd from February to October 1989, sponsored by the Korea Broadcasting System (unpublished).
- SHKF** : Chae Sok Choi, *A Study of the History of the Korean Family Institution* (Korean edition, 1986).
- SKF** : Chae Seok Choi, *Korean Family Studies* (Korean edition, 1985).
- SKFI** : Du Hun Kim, *A Study of the Korean Family Institution* (Korean edition, 1985).
- HSKF** : Kwang Kyu Lee, *An Historical Study of the Korean Family* (Korean edition, 1986).
- KOIS** : Korean Overseas Information Service, *A Handbook of Korea* (Seoul: Samhwa, 1990).

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## *Romanisation of Korean Language*

The Romanisation of Korean words in the thesis follows the government-approved McCune-Reischauer (Mc-R) system.

Korean names are written with the given name first as the Western, however, in the case of historical figures, their family name comes first. In some cases, two spellings of a name are given: the Mc-R spelling and the person's preferred spelling.

For a sake of clarity, there also is some repetition or redundancy in the English rendition of some Korean terms. For example, *do* can mean island or province.

## *Preface*

The last half century of Korean history has been a history of triumph and suffering. The conquest of the suffering and the foundation of the subsequent achievement was caused neither by a charismatic individual leader nor the government but by the Korean family.

When Korea, *The Hermit Country* opened her doors to the world, the world's powers were expanding their aggressive policy and soon she was invaded by Japanese colonialism subjugating the nation economically, politically, culturally, and in individual life as well, for over three decades until 1945. With Independence, other trials of history were waiting. The country was reduced to a patch of scorched earth by the Civil War (1950-53) resulting from the ideological conflict with the communism of the North. After the war followed a deep-rooted corruption in every area of the nation, politically, economically, socially. The reason Korean economic development was acknowledged 'a miracle' was that the nation established the economy under this devastating handicap. The pace of development has been remarkable even by the standards of the East Asian newly industrialised countries. However, the miracle would definitely have been quite impossible if there was no solidarity among family members. Family consciousness was the only hope and base of trust in the time of pains and trials.

The Korean family was rooted in the principles of 12th century Neo-Confucianism. Of course Korea was not the only heir. China and Japan also shared the same Confucian tradition, however the manifestation of Confucian morality was in practice greatly different in each culture. Between the two pillars of Confucian ideology of obedience to the ruler and filial piety to parents, Japan adopted the former and Korea the latter. In China where it had its origin, Neo-Confucianism was accommodated as a pragmatic behavioural morality. In Korea however it was the philosophy, morality and religion of the nation. Family principle stood as the core idea of social structure and, in R. Bellah's term, fused

deeply into other realms of the society. So family ties were the most important guide to individual behaviour both in family life and socially and the only driving force to mobilise the society as a whole. So study of the family was the alpha and omega to understand traditional Korean society.

The family with these deep roots in the tradition was at the forefront of the development of the nation but has lost much in the development process of the last few decades. Of course some still remain relatively strong but in a modified form. Filial piety to parents, the supreme virtue of the past, was notably weakened in the process of economic development, which has seriously damaged parents' status and the status of both women and children was also, in some sense, worsened. Diversity and variation in family life has emerged in the process of modernisation to shake up the once strong consensus on the family. The society appears to be suffering from a generational gap derived from the break up of a common set of family values. Further social and foreseeable developments are likely to make the family suffer more in the future. The re-unification of the nation and an unbalanced sex ratio in particular could be urgent sources of conflict affecting the family.

It is now time to make a balance of what has been gained and lost in the process of modernisation during the last half century. It is time to examine if the family is still a suitable mechanism to secure the stabilisation and mobilisation of society. It is time to discuss whether there is anything still left to the family to cure the social problems of present day Korea and to achieve the second take-off of the nation. And it is time to examine the role of the state both in relation to individuals and to individual families. This thesis sets out to address these questions.

The thesis comprises three major parts and 8 chapters. First of all Part I consists of two chapters: a discussion on the theoretical frame of reference and a brief review of the social changes that have been both causes and consequence of the family changes of the modernisation process of the last few decades. Concretely Chapter .1 briefly reviews existing theories and examines their applicability to this thesis. Chapter 2 introduces the social changes that have swept everyday life in Korea most profoundly, in width and depth for the last couple of decades. They include modernisation, demographic changes and economic development.

Part II comprising four chapters examines the result of the socio-economic change or modernisation of the last four decades in the family field. First Chapter 3 as an analytical framework, reviews the traditional family: family structure, family demography, marriage customs, the inheritance system, and the clan group, which

uniquely formulated traditional society. Chapter 4 examines changes in family size and pattern, and analyses what sort of social problems the changes provoked. Chapter 5 examines, from the perspective of system approaches, how the traditional clan groups have adapted themselves to a new form in response to modernisation, and what has changed and what has not changed in traditional marriage customs and the result of the changes for the family life cycle of individuals. Lastly Chapter 6 examines how the relationships among family members, particularly between husband and wife, have changed, what are the new roles allocated to each family member, how traditional role differentiation adapted to the demands of industrialisation, what sort of conflicts sprung out of the changes, and lastly, the changing distribution of power in the husband-wife relationship.

Part III comprising of two chapters sets out the conclusions to be drawn. Chapter 7, first, discusses how far the family has weakened or dissolved under the profound influence of modernisation and how it may development in the near future. Next it examines how attitudes and values relating to family life have changed in the process of general social change. It examines changing attitudes and values relating to matrimony, to Neo-familism, in the form of the Saemaul movement which emerged in response to the changing environment, and lastly to the outcome of the reconciliation in family law of traditional Confucianism and newly emerging feminism. Finally Chapter 8, concluding the whole thesis, reviews how the society reacted, through social policies or family policies, to the changing environment. It discusses what sort of family policies which should be arranged to meet the huge variation and diversity of family life in which conventional values relating to the family no longer appear to work properly.

**PART I**  
**INTRODUCTORY**

Part I consists of two chapters: a discussion of the theoretical frame of reference and a brief review of the social changes that have been both cause and consequence of the family changes of the modernisation process of the last few decades. Chapter 1 briefly reviews existing theories from both positivist approaches and critical perspectives on the family as well as the newly emerged academic trend under the title of postmodernism, and examines their applicability to this thesis to formulate methodological framework. Chapter 2 introduces the modernisation that has swept Korea most profoundly for the last couple of decades. The astonishingly rapid and profound social change has exerted its influence on every realm of society. Economic growth and demographic change however are two of the most notable achievements of the last few decades. Family change was a natural consequence of social change and at the same time such achievement would hardly have been possible if Korean families had not changed themselves to adapt to the demands of society. Social change was the outcome of an interaction between family and the nation, culminating in the Saemaul movement of the 1970s on.

# CHAPTER ONE

## THE THEORETICAL FRAME OF REFERENCE

This chapter sets out to establish an analytic framework for the thesis. First of all, a brief history of family studies, from which both positivist and critical traditions have derived will be introduced. Second, various frameworks and perspectives, rooted in those traditions will be critically examined. This critical review includes the postmodernist perspective in the family realm. And third, methodological issues concerning the normative and empirical dimensions of the principal perspectives and a discussion of appropriate levels of analysis relating to endogenous and exogenous change so as to set out the analytic position adopted in this study. Finally sources of data used for analysis in the thesis will be briefly introduced, including the field survey data of 1986 and 1989 by KIHASA (Korea Institute for Health and Social Affairs : former body of KIPH, Korea Institute for Population and Health Affairs).

### 1.1. FRAMEWORKS FOR FAMILY STUDIES

#### 1.1.1. Brief History of Family Study

As was the case with almost all modern sciences, the study of the family was also stirred by the impact made by the work of C. Darwin. In other words, it was after the Social Darwinists applied the concept of evolution to the society of human beings that discussion of marriage and the family was opened for the first time. Of course, the importance of the family was mentioned already a long time ago in the Bible, in Confucian Scripture, or *The Republic* of Plato. Nevertheless it is appropriate to point out Social Evolutionism as the starting line of family study

as a modern science.<sup>1</sup> A substantial quantity of books and articles about the origin and evolution of the family and marriage was produced from then on.

Several works presented during this period, which have had a profound influence on latter scholars of the family, and which are still being quoted as an important corner-stone of debate, should be noted. F. LePlay comes first as a forerunner of later attempts at scientific study. Through his monumental works like *Les Ouvriers Europeans* (1855), *Les Ouvriers de deux mondes* (1857), *Le Re forme Social* (1872), *L'Organization de la famille* (1875), interview method and the participant observations were applied, for the first time, to collect data. Next, in 1870, L. H. Morgan presented "Systems of Consanguinity and Affinity of the Human Family" which has been widely quoted by Marxists and simultaneously created a sensation in American social science in the 19th century. The *History of Matrimonial Institutions* (G. E. Howard, 1904), *The Origin of Family, Private Property and the State* (F. Engels, 1910), and *History of Human Marriage* (E. A. Westermarck, 1921) etc. followed soonafter.<sup>2</sup>

During this period, most discussions concentrated on the origins of the family, with the cross-cultural aspect accompanied by macroscopic approaches but the studies ended with, more or less, unscientific conclusions. Those became a cause of ramification in the field of family studies as the general trend of social sciences was polemically dichotomised by politico-economic ideology. In other words, the embryo both of the critical and the positivist traditions of family sociology started to grow up from this period.

First of all, from the critical tradition, based on the ambiguous evolutionary anthropology of Morgan, F. Engels, through *The Origin of the Family*, gave a materialistic account of different family forms characteristic of different classes. In spite of his monumental effort, Engels failed to notice the division of labour in the family, neglected the male domination definite in the proletarian family and overlooked the fact that women from the proletarian family were bearing double suffering both from child-care and household duties and from their wage labour outside the home. Due to these shortcomings, family study was ramified, at an early stage, into anarchism, feminism, and utopian socialism etc., which are more radical, in some extent, than the original Marxist approaches. Nevertheless, family study peaked in the Frankfurt School established by T. Adorno, E. Fromm. M. Horkheimer, H. Marcuse, and J. Habermas developing the influence from Marx, Lucacs, and Gramsci, etc. These critical theorists in 1920s, emphasized the family as an 'institution', and they highlighted its ideological characteristics. After 1950s,

the discussions were continued on its attributes: whether it belongs to the private domain or the public domain.

On the other hand, American family study though influenced by the same social evolutionism as the critical tradition was, developed in a different direction passing through the European scholars like H. Spencer, and A. Comte, and was given the name, positivism. Borrowing from G. Kinloch (1977), theorising in American sociology represented "the application of the European philosophical ideas to materialistic, pragmatic, and utilitarian society in which idealism has given way to empiricism and utilitarianism". In a word, social surveys, and their methodology to deliver, and statistics to analyse the result of them, attracted strong attention from both social reformers and sociologists who were facing up to urgent social problems sprung out of industrialisation and urbanisation. The American Journal of Sociology founded by the Chicago school in 1894, is an exemplary effort to reflect the above situation. The concurrent development of statistical techniques accelerated, coming into the era of W. I. Thomas and C. H. Cooley under the leadership of E. Burgess from 1920 to 1950. In conclusion, "a body of scientific facts about the family" (B. N. Adams) were moulded and accumulated under the American sociological hemisphere, the positivist tradition.

Nevertheless, it was only from 1950s<sup>3</sup> that theories and frameworks had begun to be regarded as a significant tool by which the result of studies of the family could be judged. Thus the so called 'the period of systematic theory building'<sup>4</sup>, accompanied by the acceleration of research activity continued since the 1920s, was opened from then on. To borrow from, B. N. Adams, it was "the period of summarisation of findings, of conceptual frameworks, of complaint about the lack of comprehensive theory, of tentative theoretical attempts"<sup>5</sup> to go beyond mere description. Thereafter, dozens of frameworks and theories borrowing mainly from sociology, partly from anthropology, psychology, uncommonly even from philosophical concepts for family studies, were introduced. Among them, some had already faded away after a short period of fashion, but still a large number of theories or frameworks remained waiting for deeper experimentation.

It is not easy to examine all theories of both traditions in order, for several reasons. First, because of the complexity of the family itself.<sup>6</sup> Concretely speaking, the family is so complicatedly structured not only internally e.g., the biological or psychological characteristics of the individuals who are its members but also in terms of its external attributes, economic, political, cultural, environmental etc. so that approaches to the family can not but be diversified. Furthermore, the fact that

the family is not exempt from socio-historical change adds to the complexity and delicacy of the family. Last but not least, from an epistemological point of view, the different interests of various scholars, have further added to the complexity of those approaches.

Nevertheless, reviewing the reasons for the variety of frameworks in the field, they can be divided into two big groups of theories along to two axes: differences of perception of the role of theory and differences concerning the object of study. As with the history of the social sciences in general, family study, could not have escaped from the maelstrom of debate on the role of theory, between the two camps. Theory can be viewed as a science or method from the perspective of one group of family scholars, while by another it is viewed as critique or praxis. The author classifies them as the positivist tradition and the critical one<sup>7</sup> for convenience.<sup>8</sup>

The two terminologies, positivism and critical tradition are used in a relatively broad sense in this thesis. For example, positivism in family study connotes the methodology of constructing general, verifiable, and as a result, predictive theories, which, in principle, is not different from that of the natural sciences. On the other hand, the critical tradition in this field, following the Marxist one, emphasises the importance of praxis, which is to say the denial of the dichotomy between the subjective and the objective. That is to say, in this discussion the term is not narrowly defined to reflect to the critical theory of the Frankfurt school.

Needless to say, the contrast of the positivist and critical traditions is not the only possible categorisation of the various approaches in the study of the family. For instance, it can be dichotomised by contrasting an historical approach with the comparative perspective according to the time span, longitudinal or cross-cultural. Otherwise, four categories can be produced along the axes of ontology and epistemology: the critical, the radical, the interpretative, and the functional as J. Sprey did in 1988. All these efforts reflect the authors' personal interest. Likewise, the author has adopted the framework of positivism and the critical tradition, in consideration of the significance of debates about the subjective and the objective, which has notably emerged in the current discussion of the family.<sup>9</sup>

On the other hand, the latter axis, differences about the object of study, is the abstraction of various facets of the family, into three scales according to targets on which a researcher wants to focus his/her study; the family as individuals, as a group, or as an institution.<sup>10</sup> For instance, family researchers who are oriented to

the psychological perspective can not but to concentrate main focus on individual attributes of the members of the family like the development of children in a family, while a scholar with the macroscopic approach highlights culturally institutionalised attributes of the family like what T. Parsons called 'the integrational function of the family to a society'.<sup>11</sup>

To conclude, having pursued 'the scientific' or 'the objective', the positivists, represented classically by E. Burgess and T. Parsons, believed that "the attitude of science is that of value-free truth-seeking: the method is that of objective analysis of empirical data and the aim is that of predictive theory".<sup>12</sup> The *Handbook of Marriage and the Family* edited by H. T. Christensen in 1964, and *Contemporary Theories about the Family* Vol.I, II edited by W. R. Burr et al in 1979 would be good examples of the effort to construct an all-compassing general theory, based on the positivism.

Contrary to the positivist tradition, the critical tradition including critical theory, and feminist thought criticises this positivist approach despite its statistical and methodological sophistication. Thus "the symbolic meaning and substantive experience of housework is lost in quantitative researches"<sup>13</sup>, consequently, the critical tradition challenges the dichotomy between the objective and the subjective, and stresses the importance of *praxis*, the "revisionism and transformation of the institution of the family and the larger social system."<sup>14</sup>

### 1.1.2. The Positivist Tradition

Positivist study of the family frequently called 'mainstream family sociology' or sometimes identified with 'functionalism'(C. C. Harris, D. B. Targ), has become wide spread with varied frameworks or methodological approaches to the family, especially since Merton's advocacy of middle-range theory instead of Parsonian grand theory. Despite its diversity it can be roughly divided into four subcategories according to the object of research; the institutional approach, the system approach, the interactional approach, and the developmental approach.<sup>15</sup>

Of course, this is not the only possible categorisation of the manifold types of approach in the family area. For example, Hill, Katz, and Simpson in 1957 suggested seven conceptual approaches.<sup>16</sup> These were condensed into five types by Hill and Hansen in the 1960s and reorganised into four categories in the 1970s by Broderic. Coming into 1980s, Holman and Burr distinguished as many as

seventeen kinds of framework, while Thomas and Wilcox have identified twelve in 1987.<sup>17</sup>

Most of the above-mentioned family sociologists categorised theories into different schools of thought. This however is conceptually and analytically unclear. Instead, logical validity or empirical verification should be the first thing to which scholars give their attention. It is not difficult to find a series of neglected theories or frameworks, to be revived and at the same time, no one believes the validity of theories currently in fashion is so fully established that no others could be entertained. To escape from this dilemma the author has combined several frameworks or theories according to their logical similarities regardless of their specific claims to produce the following four groupings: <a> the institutional approach which deals with institutional aspects of the family, <b> the systems approaches which deals with the family in terms of its functional interrelationships with other micro and macro social systems, <c> the interactionist approach which focusses on the individual level within the family, and <d> the developmental approach which encompasses cyclical aspects of the family.

#### 1.1.2.1. The institutional approach

This approach derives from the work of E. Durkheim who saw the family as a social institution. According to him, the family is formulated and maintained by other social institutions which are "all the beliefs and all the modes of conduct instituted by the collectivity". As a consequence, neither is cohabitation a necessary condition, nor consanguinity alone a sufficient condition for the existence of the family to be socially recognised but external constraints exerted by society on the rights and obligations of each member are prerequisite. The family was analysed as coterminous with family custom, morals, norms, and law etc. In a word, he took the view that the family was sustained and limited by social processes, which reflect the social atmosphere of the European bourgeois family in 19th century.<sup>18</sup>

This Durkheimian view of the family, was developed at the same concomitant In L. H. Morgan's *Ancient Society*, the development of the concept of the family is discussed, is an important example of academic thought at that time. Against the prevalent conception about the family of those days, i.e. that monogamy family has always existed dominantly and polygamy appeared only scarcely, Morgan argued that monogamy is the last established pattern of family life which had progressed originally from promiscuous sexual relations and passed, sequentially, through five developmental stages of family pattern. In other words,

the institution of the family has advanced unilinearly from the barbarian stage to the civilised one. The institutional approach however declined due to its orientation to unilinearity, the moral connotation of the concept of progress, and the unreliability of data used to justify its evolutionary argument.

However, after World War II, breaking away from unilinear evolutionism of the early period and adopting a more strict approach to data collection and handling, the institutional approach was resurrected by means of a cross-cultural comparative methodology. Together with the original perspective viewing the family as a cultural pattern, i.e. a social institution, the revisionist approach has a distinctive methodological strength, in historical comparison within a given society and the international comparison of one society with others. As a result, this framework can clarify the relation between the family and other socio-cultural institutions in a society, and to specify the sequence of development and change in family patterns over a long range of history. G. P. Murdock's *Social Structure* (1949) described data on family, kinship, and marriage, collected mostly from preliterate countries, and *World Revolution and Family Pattern* (1963) written by W. J. Goode discussing, based on the comparison of family patterns of several civilised countries, about general trend of convergence towards the conjugal family, are exemplary cases of this approach.<sup>19</sup>

As reviewed above, the institutional approach offers an explanation not only of the predominant pattern of the family in a given society, like the traditional 'institution family' as E. W. Burgess called it but also of the enormous changes in the pattern throughout history. Of course, it has been criticised as having, on the one hand, a grave weakness in grasping the concrete relationships of human beings inside the family, and on the other hand, serious limitations in establishing generalisations based on theoretical concepts, as a result of its basic orientation to concrete description. The author has no intention to deny the weak points of the institutional approach in the analysis of the family in the dramatic transition of value systems or its limitation in the analysis of change *per se*. But considering the diversity of norms and patterns of conduct by which family life is regulated, ranging from the macro social effects of societal scale for example to the micro social pressures applied to a particular family in its relationships with other families, it is hardly possible to argue that potentialities both for generalisation and understanding individual human relationships are limited in the institutional approach.

Notwithstanding its shortcomings, the strong points of this approach, which come from its orientation to the cross-cultural, historical comparison, and its emphasis on social constraints imposed on individuals through social institutions should not be missed. For example, without the approach, it is scarcely possible to analyse the unique family values of traditional Korea and their modification in the family patterns prevalent in modern Korea. There will furthermore be little significance in an analysis if the author does not examine the impact on family values of the unbalanced development between rural and urban areas, accompanied with the migration of rural families during the 1970s. For this the institutional approach, together with systems approach, seems to offer a useful point of view.

#### 1.1.2.2. The systems approach

The systems approach like the structural-functional approach focusses on the family as a social system unlike the institutional approach which views the family from the perspective of culture. Both the systems approach and the structural-functional perspective share their intellectual tradition very closely with each other rooted in the structuralism of A. R. Radcliffe-Brown and the functionalism of B. Malinowski.<sup>20</sup> Of course there are some scholars like Bertalanffy or Broderic<sup>21</sup> who have sharply differentiated the systems approach from the structural-functional approach, arguing "systems theory may be the wave of the future, providing generalisations useful for understanding not only the family system but also other systems as well." There has been considerable progress in this direction by Kantor and Lehr, Satir, and Watzlawick et al.<sup>22</sup> Nevertheless it is difficult to deal with these approaches separately. First, because systems theory in family studies has not matured as they themselves have recognised and secondly but more importantly because, both approaches share 'the family as a system' as their main unit of analysis.<sup>23</sup>

In overviewing the premises of the early functionalists like, Radcliffe-Brown, and Malinowski, Turner writes "the social world was viewed in systemic terms. ... And when viewed as a system, society was seen as composed of mutually interrelated parts; the analysis of these interrelated parts focused on how they fulfilled requisites of systemic wholes and, hence, maintained system normality or equilibrium."<sup>24</sup> These basic hypothesis were moulded into the structural-functional approach in the family field by T. Parsons, K. Davis, R. K. Merton, G. C. Homans, and afterward, highlighted with M. J. Levy's *The Family Revolution in Modern China*(1949) explaining the traditional family structure and its transition in relation to five subsystems; role differentiation, solidarity, economic distribution, political

distribution, and integration, and *Family, Socialisation, and Interaction Process* co-written by Parsons and R. F. Bales in 1956, analysing the socialisation of children and role differentiation, and *A Modern Introduction to The Family* edited by Bell and Vogel. After then, coming into the 1970s, it was developed into systems theory by D. Kantor and W. Lehr of *Inside the Family*(1975), by Satir of *Peoplemaking*(1972), and by P. Waltzlawick, J. H. Weakland, R. Fish of *Change* in 1974. Having passed through a long process of change in research foci, still there has been no significant alteration to the assumption viewing society as a complex system of interrelated parts, each with possible connections to the others, and each performing certain functions for a society as a whole. The family is one social system among them, structured through the interaction and interdependence among its members.<sup>25</sup>

By virtue of its theoretical assumptions, the systems approach can be used both at the macro and at micro levels. It may concentrate on social structures and their consequences for an entire society, or on much smaller systems such as the family itself. In concrete, it is available for the analysis of mutual reciprocity between the family and other equivalent social systems such as the school, public agencies, or the market on the one hand, and the analysis of relation of the family with its subsystems: the dyad of husband and wife, parents and children, or brothers and sisters or the personality system of individuals on the other hand. But in spite of its dual availability, both levels of analysis pay common attention to "the relationship between particular structural arrangements of roles, norms, and status, and the consequences of those arrangements"<sup>26</sup>

There has been some criticism of emphasis of the systems approach on the harmoniously integrated aspect of the social system. For example, some social problems like inadequate child support caused by divorce, or conflict in the dyad of husband and wife, or housing problems resulting from the transition of family structure itself, were offered as evidence of the optimistic aspects of the approach.<sup>27</sup> But it developed and was more widely opened theoretically, by the concepts of dysfunction or latent function introduced by Merton recognising social structure having dysfunctional impacts on the system or parts of it. However, some conceptually weak points are inherent in other perspectives of the approach. First, instead of viewing each member of the family as a subject actively reacting to environments, it assumes members of the family are nothing but a bundle of status and roles passively reacting to stimulus from outside. Next, as the same token, it does not regard the family itself as an independent but as an inactive unit adapting to external social changes. As a result, even though this approach valuable insights

to offer in the analysis of change in the family system influenced by industrialisation, it does not seem to explain properly how conversely the family can affect social change, or how sometimes, non-orderly change can happen.

Despite of these limitations, there are enough reasons we can not discard this approach. For example, even if it is weak in explaining concrete and marginal cases, it, still, offers a useful analysis of recurrently occurring social phenomena. Microscopically speaking, the system approach can give a good explanation, from the aspect of role structure, of some sub-systems like the role of income acquisition, the role of housework, and the representative role, and from emotional aspect, about the dyads of husband and wife, parents and children, and brothers and sisters. On the other hand, from the macroscopic viewpoint, it can explain the reciprocal relationship between the family system and the economic system or political system or the value system in a society, or the functional relationship to the maintenance of the larger system, society itself. In conclusion, the systems approach can be useful in explanation of how the family can contribute for the maintenance of social structure on the one hand, and how individuals, in their various roles and statuses can deliver the maintenance of the family. In this context, this approach will be available for the investigation, at least at the surface level of common sense, of the function, inner structure of the family, and their transition in Korea undergoing rapid and far reaching change arising from modernisation.

### 1.1.2.3. The interactionist approach

The interactionist framework, concentrating its focus on the family as a "unity of interacting **personalities**"<sup>28</sup>(emphasis added), was originally cultivated by Mead from the school of symbolic interactionism, and was quoted and developed by E. W. Burgess. *The Family: From Institution to Companionship* (1945) by Burgess and H. J. Locke and in *Husbands and Wives: The Dynamics of Married Living* (1960) of R. O. Blood and D. M. Wolfe can be regarded as monumental works in the interactionist field.<sup>29</sup>

This approach has been the most frequently used and, accordingly, the most influential framework in family studies.<sup>30</sup> And, like the systems approach, boundaries of this framework have come to be loose and difficult to define due to its popularity.<sup>31</sup> That is to say, exchange theory, the situational framework, and role theory etc. are said to have shared their theoretical backgrounds with that of symbolic interactionism.<sup>32</sup> For example the situational approach is the same as the interactionist approach, in the sense that it assumes the family as a unity of

interacting individuals, it emphasises the process of interaction, it views the family as a situation which evokes interaction, and it focuses on the manifest behaviour of individuals reacting to that situation. Nevertheless, it is different in the context that it takes its research object not only of the stimuli from family itself but also of the stimuli the family receives from its external environment. *The Large Family System* written by J. H. S. Bossard and E. S. Boll in 1956 can be introduced as exemplary.<sup>33</sup> On the other hand, in the case of both interactionism and exchange theory, the basic assumption is that the family is a unity of interacting personalities, and humans are actors as well as reactors. But they separate with each other at the method of study and the content of interactions. If the former emphasises the importance of symbolicity, the latter accents more realistic exchange through rationalistic costs and rewards, disregarding the irrational ones like, love, social norms, commitment etc. And lastly, role theory developed as by R. H. Turner<sup>34</sup>, is almost identical with the interactionist framework in its foci on two processes: the development of self-concept and socialisation. However, they are different with their accentuation: interactionism stresses the process of communication, exchange theory concentrates on the distribution of authority and role. Besides, even the psychoanalytic approach, the phenomenological framework, and ethnomethodological approaches can be regarded as sharing common basic premises with the interactionist framework.

In spite of its complexity, all agree that the family is a unity of complex interconnections among the members in terms of roles, and that humans live in a symbolic environment as well as a physical environment, make value judgements, develop a sense of self, and are actors as well as reactors.<sup>35</sup> In a word, they are concentrating on the development of the self-concept through the interactions among family members on the one hand, and their socialisation on the other. Accordingly, this framework can be used for analysis when mate selection or family formation is discussed. For example, an increase in the divorce rate can be analysed as caused by the dissolution of the existing role relations in the family, and adolescent problems as an improper procedure of socialisation or either as the outcome of divergent interactive relationships.

However, one of the notable limitations of this approach is its relatively closed approach to the family as a group. To put it concretely, both in spite of, and paradoxically due to its distinguished ability to explain the inner mechanisms of the family, it is weak in its analysis of the relationship between the family and other social groups. Furthermore, as in its lack of consideration of the time concept, it finds it difficult to deal with process. In other words, the results of family study

based on the interactionist framework can hardly be connected to the further explanations of the family institution itself. Moreover, it has some limitation if the interactionist approach is applied to a society under despotic atmosphere, like Japan up to the period of military government in 1945 or Korea from the Colonisation up to 1970s, because of its basic assumption that each individual should be conceived of as an independent actor and autonomous unit composing either family and society. In a society where the group stands clearly superior to the individual, and where the interest of individuals is depressed into that of the group, there is no theoretical ground for the interactionist approach. Additionally, in a society where there is no concern about the opinion of others or where silence or immediate obedience is more highly regarded, the concept of communication through word symbols loses its brightness in application.

Despite of these shortcomings, they cannot be regarded as reason enough for the interaction framework to be discarded. Although it is not suitable for an analysis of the Korean family in the past, it still has outstanding potential if we are to search for the inner mechanism of the current Korean family, particularly, the dynamics of the relations between husband and wife, parents and children, brothers and family.

#### 1.1.2.4. The developmental approach

There is debate about the distinctiveness of the research object of the developmental approach. As with the above-mentioned approaches, the developmental approach also shows some complexity in its theoretical development. Sometimes it is said to be in debt to psychology. U. Bronfenbrenner's "Ecology of the Family as a Context of Human Development: Research Perspectives"<sup>36</sup> belongs to this category. On the other hand, there is a group of scholars insisting their independent background and separation from other disciplines on which most of the previous family studies have relied. On this argument, they themselves call it a famological perspective (Burr and Nye), familiological approach (Davis), or famiological approach (Beutler et al.), with their unique conceptual object of research, the **family realm**.<sup>37</sup> According to them, the term family realm is narrower than concepts such as clan, kin, tribe which do not fit post-industrial conditions, but broader than the usual use of the term family which ignores inter-generational and alternative family forms. In a word, family realm encompasses life processes and the establishment of ties across generations. The most decisive weakness of this approach in its aspiration to establish itself as an independent framework, is not that it has been established very recently, but that

it has not been fully examined yet. In spite of the problematic conditions of the developmental approach, the author has allocated it a place because of its intricate compound of perspectives that offers much to family study (Kirkpatrick, Broderick).<sup>38</sup> It directs researchers to the analysis of the orderly sequential changes in growth, development, and dissolution or decline throughout the whole family cycle. Moreover, recognising the unbroken flow from generation to generation, it enables authors to see family life cycles overlapping one another in inter-generational interaction in predictable ways throughout the full life span.<sup>39</sup>

The developmental approach has set out to overcome the shortcomings of both the interaction framework and systems approach. It is similar to symbolic interactionism, in the sense that it views the family as a unity of interacting individuals, but is different in that it focuses neither on the interaction nor on behaviour influenced by situations. Instead, it thinks of how families accomplish certain developmental tasks, and accordingly, studies the responses families and family members make to the demands of life cycle changes: marriage, birth, retirement, death, etc. On the other hand it is like the structure-functional framework in assuming the family both semi-independent from external environment and open to the larger society in interchanging influences with each other, but dissimilar in that structural-functionalism conceptualises the family system (kinship) as a structured set of positions, this framework regards it a flow of social behaviour, "with emphasis on fluidity, change and transition."<sup>40</sup> The developmental model emphasises "the constant interplay between social change, the cycles of generational replacement in families, and the individual life cycle."<sup>41</sup> Exemplary works based on this perspective include *Family Development in Three Generations* written by R. Hill in 1970, and more recently, *Aging and Life Course Transition: An Interdisciplinary Perspective* co-written by Hareven and K. J. Adams in 1982.<sup>42</sup>

Unlike other approaches previously mentioned, which limit the time period in which family phenomena are specified the developmental model is characteristic in its observation of the process from formation to dissolution of families for several decades. As a result, it is very strong when one intends to analyse the change and shift of family roles and role contents, as family members pass from one stage in the life span to the next. For example, the role of a woman, transiting to parenthood after her marriage and delivery and again to widowhood after her husband's death can be explained properly only by this model.<sup>43</sup>

Notwithstanding its applicability, the developmental model is not without its limitations. To begin with there is a need of refinement to accommodate to other family types. The model is a bit weak if it is applied to family development in the traditional Korean context. The nuclear family presupposes in the developmental model of the family, is characterised by a discrete and repetitive cycle from formation, through a certain period of expansion, to the dissolution of family. The stem family in Korea, instead of following a repetitive pattern of this kind maintains a stable pattern endlessly. Thus the model would need to develop a way of coping with a variety of patterns of family development across the historical context, and across cultures. Furthermore, the developmental model has some methodological problems such as the time-consuming and excessive expense involved in applying it to research. Of course several proposals such as a cross-cutting method or retrospective interview, have been introduced as a substitute for longitudinal approach, but these are suspect in terms of their accuracy and appropriateness.

However, these limitations do not lessen the utility of the developmental approach. Because, every perspective, or framework has to make a certain amount of assumptions, untestable, and unquestionable. The developmental model with its main strength in giving insights into the dynamism both of individuals and the family itself, can be used as a tool for explaining a range of phenomena from the socialisation process between parents and children, to social effects of the gerontization of a demographic structure, and to fertility trends which are directly connected with family changes, etc.

No approach is perfect, but nothing should be discarded due to merely partial limitations. Having reviewed critically, each framework have their own potential for explaining family phenomena, but each with its own weaknesses. For example, three frameworks except the interactionist one, have notable ability to analyse the family in the context of societal change. The institutional approach is apt to explain a society in which the family is strongly regulated by the philosophy of totalitarianism or despotism, but conversely, the interactionist and the developmental frameworks are suitable for their application to societies where individualism is more prevalent. No society is without diversity and it is hardly possible to understand the family, complicated as it is internally and externally, without an eclectic approach to theory so as to comprehend the diverse reality which the different theoretical perspectives have each in their different ways partially grasped.

### 1.1.3. The Critical Tradition

Broadly speaking, there are two principal divergences between scholars from the positivist tradition and those from the critical tradition. One is the role of theory itself and the other the definition of the family they adopt. Firstly, the family is viewed, in the positivist tradition, as "the primary institutional means of achieving social stability" (Timascheff, 1957)<sup>44</sup>, and family life as a psychological relief, and an egalitarian private area distinctively different from alienating life of public sectors. Say, a sharp split is presupposed between the private and public world. On the other hand, family scholars from the critical tradition have criticised these views as false consciousness serving the interests of people who have established their "ideological hegemony" (Gramsci)<sup>45</sup>. The family, in the critical context, is a mere mechanism for delivering some kinds of function necessary for the maintenance of the capitalist economy: reproducing labour power, schooling youth for the alienating experience of work, maintaining women as a consuming power etc. The private family is analysed as a social product and is seen as closely intertwined with the public sector. Next, if the positivists are concerned with the question of "how scientific can theory be?", family scholars in the critical tradition challenges the intrinsic character of theory. They view theory as a belief system, as praxis. Contrary to positivists, critical family sociologists do not accept the dichotomy of theory and practice, or of the subjective and the objective. In other words, if the positivist regards theory as science pursuing the goal of objectivity, the critical theorist thinks of the objective intermingled with the subjective and, by the same token, theory as a human effort *per se* in which unique and time-bound socio-cultural settings are embedded. Accordingly, scholars from the critical tradition do not take the social world as a given, instead, they question "What types of social change are feasible and desirable, and how should we strive to achieve them?" (Giddens, 1987)<sup>46</sup>.

Due to its orientation toward the subjectivist role of social theory, there are almost as many research frameworks as the number of critical scholars in this tradition. Nevertheless, they commonly share an intellectual tradition deriving from Marxism, and it can be grouped in the area of family study under two broad headings according to their object of interest: critical theory, and the feminist approach.

Of course, too simple generalisation can be a cause of misunderstanding. For example, it is arguable whether the phenomenological approach should be included in either the positivist tradition or in the critical one. It can be located

within the interactionist group in the positivist tradition, since it studies 'human consciousness as an object of intentionality,' and views the family as a phenomenon of human consciousness. That is why W. R. Burr et al. treated the phenomenological framework as a distinct model within the mainstream of family sociology through the book, they edited *Contemporary Theories about the Family Vol.2*.<sup>47</sup> On the other hand, its derivation from the hermeneutic tradition represented by A. Schutz and E. Dilthey who emphasised interpretative understanding, the phenomenological perspective can be categorised within the critical camp too, in that it denies the dichotomy between the subjective and the objective.<sup>48</sup> In spite of its theoretical contribution to both sides, the author excludes the phenomenological approach from theoretical discussion in this thesis for two reasons. First, from the point of view of logical lucidity on the one hand, main concepts of phenomenology like "social world" are too vague to be applied in the positivist field, and accordingly, it can hardly be called a model, a framework, or theory in the concrete sense of positivism, and considering its reluctant attitude to *praxis* on the other hand, it can scarcely be adopted by the critical camp. Secondly and more practically, the area to which phenomenology can be applied, is so limited to a specific family field like family therapy that the author has no mind to allow it room, beside the risk of obscuring logical clarity which adopting the approach it entails.

There is one more group of scholars with a distinct theoretical orientation but omitted from the discussion for the moment. These are the radical structuralist, or sometimes termed Marxist structuralist or Neo-Marxists. Radical structuralism represented by Althusser and Godelier, is identified with Marx's later work, particularly *Capital*, while the critical theory the young Marx. Marx moved away from philosophical interpretations to analyses of the political economy of capitalism. His emphasis changed to a focus on "crisis, contradictions, and structures" rather than the concept of "alienation, consciousness, and critique" stressed in his early work.<sup>49</sup> In other words, his early interest in the ideological characteristics of superstructures which was moulded into the main orientation of the critical approach, has been abandoned by radical structuralists focusing their analyses on the substructure, the economic basis of the society, providing a critique of the societal status quo, and emphasising radical social change. In spite of these contrasts between the two theories, the author has combined the two, laying stress on critical theory, because of two grounds. Firstly, both theories have a common vision of human liberation from the forms of domination seen as basic characteristics of capitalist industrial society. Secondly and perhaps more

decisively, if *praxis* is emphasised as one of two pillars of radicalism, theoretical discussion is more respected under the atmosphere of critical theory.

### 1.1.3.1. Critical Theory

Critical Theory starts its debates against the empiricist tradition in the study of the family by raising new questions about the intrinsic nature of marriage and the family and their relation to society which can not be sufficiently answered even by the most elaborate quantitative research skills. This new doubt was originated by F. Engels and K. Marx, Lukacs, and Gramsci, accelerated through the Frankfurt school, and more recently, deepened by M. Osmond, and E. Zaretsky, with a strong orientation influenced by Freudian analysis.<sup>50</sup>

Marxist analysis of the family was first developed in the work produced by Engels. Engels's account of the family, even if it was based on dubious evolutionism of L. H. Morgan, was distinctive in its materialistic explanation. In Engels's thought, the bourgeois family rested on a material foundation of inequality between husband and wife, the latter producing legitimate heirs for the transmission of property in return for mere board and lodging. He described this relation as a form of prostitution, contrasting mercenary bourgeois marriage with the true sex love allowed to flourish in a proletariat where couples attained an equality of exploitation through wage labour.<sup>51</sup>

Marxist family sociology was deepened theoretically by G. Lukacs and A. Gramsci reviving the subjectivist interpretation of the young Marx who had a primary interest in the alienation of the individual, viewed capitalist society as dominating human experience and reifying the individual's essential nature. Lukacs thought all aspects of social life, which is "reified" by political constraints, can not be understood unless it is viewed through the "totality": the historical whole, the social system conceived as a global entity. Most ideas were reified and alienated from the true nature of social reality by the present capitalist social order. As a result, the "natural" marital role has been reified and differentiated into "instrumental" and "expressive" ones in contemporary family sociology. On the other hand, emphasising *praxis* equated not with 'practical' or 'pragmatic' but with emancipatory social change, Gramsci regarded "ideological hegemony" a key both to social order and to social change. Accordingly, in his context of analysis, it is first in the family and then in the schools and workplaces that capitalism develops and increases the invisible power of the ruling class by infiltrating the consciousness of the individual.

Coming into the era of the Frankfurt school, represented by T. Adorno, M. Horkheimer, E. Fromm, and L. Lowenthal, H. Marcuse, J. Habermas etc., Critical Theory borrowed from the Freudian tradition on the base of young Marxism, and focused its research interest on the internalisation procedures of societal constraints to individuals. According to Horkheimer who saw capitalism as maintaining its form through the process of "social reproduction", the family as was the agent of capitalist society, which reproduces the pattern of social authority in the economic area, through paternal power grasping economic position and physical strength bestowed legitimately by the given society. It is reinforced by the submissive familial role of women. On the other hand, linking the human personality and society through the Freudian concepts of "the pleasure principle" and "the reality principle", Marcuse, in *One-Dimensional Man* (1964), criticised the individual's psychological domination by the modern system of production. Again, in Habermas's work, "self reflection" was suggested as the means to emancipation from "communicative distortion", the basis of human alienation, caused through unequal power relations.<sup>52</sup>

Coming into modern era, criticisms, represented by Osmond, and Zaretsky etc., were concentrated on two points: whether the family belongs to the public domain or the private one, and the epistemological claim of the theory. Firstly, from the perspective of epistemology, critical theory makes an assumption that the members of society are constrained by "false consciousness", which inhibits true human fulfilment. This epistemological assumption is well explained by Osmond,<sup>53</sup>

"the rhetoric of **measurement** and **variables** is predicated on the assumption that human society can be analysed in terms of objective facts and laws ... they actually justify existing social relations and structures by making them appear "natural" ... these sociologists deny the possibility of alternative forms of relations and structures."

In other words, the goal of the true sociologist is firstly debunking what have appeared natural and necessary and common sense, through revealing the fact that these are produced socially, and as a result secondly, is "emancipating" the alienated. In a word, instead of empirically based description of the family status quo, the critical theorists attempt to develop analyses that are of practical and of political relevance.

Next, instead of analysing relationships within families, critical theorists explore how the family structure and its processes were influenced by political economy. In other words, from an ideological-subjectivist point of view, the

critical theorist views the family as a social product and accordingly, concentrates on the mutual interpenetration with other social structures. For example, Zaretsky, through his *Capitalism, the Family, and Personal Life* (1976),<sup>54</sup> reviewing the history of the development of the ideology of a public-private domain, concluded that capitalism has placed the highest value on work and private property, thereby producing in embryo the split between work and the family, and of the dichotomy of male versus female worlds. That is, he explained the subordination of women to have been caused by the division of labour derived mainly from economic factors. To summarise, the family is thought of as in the public domain instead of the private one which used to be presupposed in the interactionist and developmental approaches.<sup>55</sup>

Critical Theory is able to reveal much that has been concealed beneath everyday life through the routinization of exploitative relations. The housing problem, regional differences, or some social policies concerned with family, is illuminated by this approach. Furthermore, it also has potential in the analysis of family dynamics including family crisis, conflicts, and change by confronting family members who have never experienced different types of family structure with how they feel about their own family system compared with that from other societies. Unarticulated needs, frustration, or potentialities of a family member who is routinized in everyday life, can hardly be as effectively revealed by ordinary methods.

The limitations of this approach come from the characteristics immanent in the theory. The problem is that of **who** judges the false consciousness, and **what** is the criterion of true consciousness. Is the perspective of political economy the only way for a person's true consciousness to be awakened? As far as critical theory is endowed with ethical and ontological purposes in itself, it can not but fall into the pitfall of relativity. As was the case with "conventional family sociology", critical theory can not be exempt from falling into routinization. The Kibutz having denying conventional family concept in Israel would be a good example which shows the fallacy of the critical tradition. Of course, the strength of critical theory should not be forgotten, and naturally, will be applied to the discussion of some family policies, unequal regional development which has disadvantaged families in rural area, and the demographic situation caused by fertility behaviour etc.

### **1.1.3.2. The feminist approach**

It is not easy to define the feminist approach in a word, because of its divergent orientations, or sometimes, totally different philosophical backgrounds. It

can be dichotomised, according to their strategy to challenge male hegemony and epistemological attitude on the roles of theory, into 'women's study' with an organised movement to attain women's right on a doctrine of equal rights, and so called 'feminist studies' with an ideology of social transformation aiming to create a world for women beyond simple social equality (G. Lerner)<sup>56</sup>. Sometimes, it is ramified into Anarchist feminism, Marxist feminism, Socialist feminism, or Black feminism etc.<sup>57</sup> But they are most similar in the sense that they are aiming to "redress the absence of women in the history of social and political thought."<sup>58</sup>, and to transform the institution of the family and the larger society, by emancipating women from that family and society. At this point, the feminist approach and critical theory come together in that they emphasise the term emancipation which means more than the freeing of the mind only.

To meet their goal, feminists have suggested three premises: first, women are in a disadvantaged position in all institutions in this society, and next, sociologists should be advocates for change, and lastly, assumptions of mainstream family sociology in the conceptualisation and methodology of research need to be challenged.<sup>59</sup> By these propositions, a wide area which has been regarded as merely natural, can be reviewed and reconceptualised. For example, the family can not be regarded as a haven as T. Parsons had described, but is a mentally and physically dangerous place for women and children because of male violence. And the family is no more a monolithic institution as Burgess had treated it. Instead, it is necessary to distinguish its different effects on men and women, particularly in imposing excessively burdensome responsibilities on women together with unequal rewards and costs. In a word, the symbolic meaning and subjective experience of women which have long been forgotten in conventional approaches, can be vividly brought alive through this approach.

Nevertheless, as with critical theory, the feminist approach has limitations in its application to actual life. Methodologically, the qualitative methods they want to use are so vague that it is "the subject of disagreement even among those who consider themselves feminist family scholars."<sup>60</sup> Next, the dichotomy of men and women may distort the nature of the family. The moment one perceives the family, with Hobbesian perspectives, as a place from where women are alienated, there is no longer any reason for the family and society to persist. Moreover, it is more severely limited when it is applied, for example to Korean society, where the relation between parents and adult children is still getting as strong attention as that between wife and husband. There arises another kind of structural conflict even between women, when feminist scholars are arguing about the suffering of women

in general by restricting another important half of women, say, mothers-in-law from the group of young women, that is, their daughters-in-law. This is analogous to the point made by Black feminists in the United States that not all women have the same disadvantages.

Despite restrictions of the feminist point of view, its qualification for analyses of the experiences of women can not be neglected. It is particularly useful for the explanation of traditional Korea under patriarchal authority and in drawing attention to how the process is being distorted by a capitalist way of thinking. For example the concubinage system in traditional society and excessive exchange of marriage casts between families in present day Korea can not be properly explained by the concept of class alienation or class exploitation.

#### 1.1.4. Postmodernism

There is a group of family scholars who belong neither to the conventional tradition nor to the critical tradition. They are called postmodern family scholars. The discussion of postmodernism began from their consciousness of diversity and variation in family life which does not seem to fit conventional modernisation theory. They begin with discussions of the validity of "conventional family theories" to the trend of current family life. For example, rejecting Burgess's perspective on the family and his approach to family studies, David Cheal asserts "orthodox consensus about the family is now complete," and he summarises the situation;<sup>61</sup>

Beginning in the 1960s, sociological attention was once again drawn to changing forms of family relationships but with one important difference. This time, new family forms are not seen only as consisting of a master trend of positive development surrounded by a penumbra of random and aimless variations. Family forms today are also described in terms of such concepts as alternative life-styles, social divisions, diversity, difference, and pluralism. It has been argued that any model of the family that involves the exclusive recognition of a "monolithic" form of family living is inappropriate for today. Such models have tended to be replaced by an openly pluralistic approach."

Similarly Jon Bernardes asserts "We must not define the family," and Rhona Rapoport has proposed a "diversity model" to substitute for the conventional theory of the family. There have been almost as many assertions and theoretical

alternatives as the variation of families today. In spite of various disputes about "orthodox family theories," the discussions converge on the point that the variation and diversity of current family life can no longer be explained by the theories of E. Burgess or T. Parsons and that families have moved into the era of postmodernity. Except for a short period of 1920s through the 50s it is argued historical trends have not followed the patterns as the classical family scholars predicted.<sup>62</sup>

However, in spite of these essential doubts about the classical modernisation family theories and the argument of a fundamental reorientation for present day families in the direction of postmodernity, no postmodern theories, it seems, have yet been developed in the family field. Of course there have been a few scholars who discussed postmodern family theory. For example Foucault claimed sexual partnership in the family has shifted from a "deployment of alliance" that is almost identical with Parsons'<sup>63</sup> role differentiated family division of labour between instrumental and expressive roles to "deployment of sexuality" which includes something of the move towards a less strictly differentiated role relationship - akin to Bott's<sup>64</sup> idea of joint conjugal role relations or Burgess' companionship marriage. Foucault explains that the deployment of alliance and the deployment of sexuality were closely interwoven within the classical nuclear family. However due to the declining significance of biological reproduction in advanced capitalist societies, and, when its economic and social functions were less needed, the family as a consequence lost its function of deployment of alliance. Instead the deployment of sexuality was strengthened as capitalist societies became more affluent and internally more diverse. The underlying cause of this change was the project of enhancing the subjective value of life, which has been a central organising schema in the modern idea of progress.<sup>65</sup> Other sociologists including Zygmunt Bauman seek to explain today's family life by consumerism, others by a "diversity model."<sup>66</sup>

The absence of a specific theory of the family in post-modern theory is not a sign of weakness but, on the contrary, one of its major strengths. It is worthwhile to give particular attention to their methodological position. As P. Donati or J. Bernardes in particular have argued, "we must not define the family," instead "families need to be fully recognised as families." And the new family study "should have real and direct practical consequences." Bernardes notes;<sup>67</sup>

"We must reject entirely the concept of "the family" as theoretically adequate and as a consequence, recognise the enormous difficulty, in principle, of studying what actors refer to as "family life" ..... our

theoretical work should reflect and express the enormously varied and diverse complexity of family life."

The most important point that must not be missed from the postmodern discussion on the family, is the emphasis on "the way people define family for themselves."<sup>68</sup> For a researcher facing the diversity and variation of family life at this time, it is important to measure what everyday families are actually like rather than forcing them into the outmoded categories of normality and abnormality of conventional ideology.

The way the researcher understands the nature and context of family life is critical to the presentation of the nature and context of social and family problems, and as consequence of family policy. For example, as far as other types of family which do not conform to traditional stereotype patterns of the family are regarded as atypical, then social problems they experience can be misinterpreted as separate, idiosyncratic and distinct phenomena rather than as a natural consequence of social change. Policy-makers have tended to make the primary aim of family policy the reinforcement of "the family ideology" or at best to devote tiny remedial social welfare resources for the needs of what is seen as a residual group of individuals. That has been the way family policy was delivered in the past and that is why family sociology has been neglected from the main stream of classical sociology. However from the point of view of recognising the "needs of families" as a normal consequence of social transformation no family problem is simply a matter of individual families but both a cause and the result of social, political, economic, and cultural changes. Naturally problems like divorce, single parenthood, ageing families, violence, abuse, poor families, decreasing average family size, the trend to individualistic values etc. should not be tackled as a simple deviation from family norms but handled effectively and systematically in their societal context. To conclude, to meet the needs of people in their family life and to tackle various social problems springing out of postmodernity, families (rather than people, men, or women, the old or children) should be placed at the centre and a start should be made by addressing their needs as families but with an awareness of the possible diversity of structural relationships and cultural and personal meanings that may need to be taken into account in doing so. Family policy in this more general sense ought to be at core of most of social policies.<sup>69</sup> Policy should not prescribe and impose a particular set of meanings and conventions upon the different, diverse and changing reality of peoples 'family' relationships. That is the methodologically significant implication of the postmodern discussion of today's family life.

## 1.2. LEVELS OF ANALYSIS OF THE FAMILY

There arise two methodological issues from the above discussion of family theories: the normative versus the empirical dimension approach to family changes and the issue of endogenous versus exogenous change in family life as target of analysis. The methodological issues arising from the normative versus the empiricist approach has been an everlasting dispute between the positivist tradition and the critical tradition. Since the 1960s when there was increasing emphasis on the development of theory, many approaches and frameworks blossomed.

The theorists from the critical tradition were possibly outnumbered but their argument was ambitious enough to challenge the logical validity of the so called mainstream family sociology, and was fresh enough to require a revision of the ahistorical 'social world' which had been routinised. *Contemporary Theories About The Family*<sup>70</sup> was a good example of the reaction to the new impact, codifying the phenomenological framework and relating it to the positivist tradition. Thomas and Wilcox<sup>71</sup> declaration of 'postpositivism' is another example. Despite this good start however approaches from the perspectives of the critical tradition could not satisfy the methodological requirements, sometimes showing theoretical weakness, and sometimes too politico-economically oriented to be called a science. This was because of its essentially normative approach to social phenomena. In other words the critical tradition, since Marx's discussion on the contradiction between theory and practice in his *Theses on Feuerbach*, *The Holy Family*, or *The German Ideology*, etc. has focused primarily on the *praxis* aspect of theory and the "ought-to-be" of social change rather than objective methodology as conventional sociology did. The result was the risk of egoistic practice for a particular group who shared the same ideological and methodological heritage, against other groups than themselves. "Consciousness" was a good example of this denoting a narrow perspective of the group of the critical tradition only, attributing false consciousness to all groups who did not agree with them. Ironically even "the true consciousness" was represented in various divergent normative assertions so as to cause a confusion about whose consciousness is really true.<sup>72</sup> Anyhow all these ironies or contradictions were caused because the critical tradition adopted theoretical *praxis* and a normative level of analysis as their methodological tools. Naturally it is very difficult under such a tradition to formulate a basis for consensus containing universalistic values since universalistic values appear to be denied as representing merely the interests of the dominant class.

The positivist tradition has basically adopted an empiricist level of analysis. "Typically empiricists have assumed knowledge to be established by induction from (or tested by) incorrigible, or at least uninferred, observation statements."<sup>73</sup> As a consequence, family sociologists from the positivist tradition, thanks to their development of statistical and methodological sophistication, have accumulated abundant knowledge and propositions progressively. There was even some aspiring effort to construct grand general theory. Naturally, they have influenced other approaches, the feminist approaches in particular. But the result was questioned from both inside and outside mainstream sociology: "First J. Habermas criticised, empiricist approaches, for their preoccupation with the observable and manipulable, which reflected a form of technical-instrumental practice embodying only one limited human interest. In spite of its strength in accumulating universalistic consensus, empiricist analysis showed some relatively weakness in asserting the distinctions of fact-value and theory-practice. The next criticism rose from inside the positivist tradition itself. B. N. Adams asked, "Why ... family social science continues to be relatively low in status? Despite the improvements in scientific methodology ..."<sup>74</sup> That is, many such approaches and the sophisticated methodology of this tradition could not properly deal with drastically increasing family problems. In the realm of modernisation theory and family change, the positivist tradition confronted post-modern phenomena which could not be explained consistently by the empirically accumulated knowledge. Still nobody knows if postmodernity can be explained by further development of the positivist tradition, or the critical tradition, or only by a totally different analytic dimension.

The reason the two approaches appeared to contradict each other was because the dimension of research they were analysing was different. If the empiricist approach has been quite successful in dealing with observable phenomena which is easily measurable by objective devices, the normative approach has addressed issues which are essentially unmeasurable and aspects of social phenomena inaccessible except by insight. All in all, social phenomena can be understood more deeply by combining the two dimensions of analysis. It is time to harmonise both sides. In many cases of conflict between the two traditions, it was not a matter of intrinsic contradiction, but the different object of interest. It is natural to address different facets of the family moulded by all sorts of attributes. Of course there are contradictory opinions about the role of the social scientist. But even in that contradiction it may be reasonable that social scientists should make heuristic use of the opposite canons to his/her own understanding of the family. A synthetic approach is especially relevant for the study of the family in a time of change.

Such a synthesis, however is sometimes, apt to fall into mere meaningless generalisation, if there is no clarification, in advance, of the limitations of the study one wants to do, or the methodological implications of how one wants to measure. To prevent a naive synthesis, it will be useful to define the limits of each analytic tool to be applied in this thesis. As far as the normative approach has no agreeable basis for objective observation and as a consequence for rational decision-making, it must not be extended further to the analysis in which empiricism is more applicable but should be limited to the normative discussion of conclusions, or making an alternative measure, or debunking routinised understanding, etc. Conversely the empiricist approach must allow some space for a critical interpretation, in which normative discussion works more soundly.

The next methodological issue concerns the object of analysis: exogenous versus endogenous changes in the family. The dispute is basically a debate about the sources of family change. It is a question how much of the change in family life is the result of changes in attitudes and aspirations arising out of the internal relationships within families and how much can be directly attributed to external changes like the economic, political and cultural environment etc. For example, if the changes in childrearing, husband-wife relationships, patterns of parent-child interaction, the treatment of older relatives etc., can be shown to be a direct response to changes in economic circumstances or government policy etc., then the change is exogenous. If, on the other hand, there is no such obvious external influence which would account for the changed attitude or pattern of behaviour, then it is fair to assume that it grows out of the internal dynamics of family living and that change at least is endogenous. Endogenous processes are most easily observed in those areas where change has not taken place or has been resisted. Concretely tradition is such a case where the family can show little or very slow change. Tradition is not an external factor pushing the family into conformity but is a descriptive term for the family's own persistence in practices which serve the family well enough in given circumstances but which may no longer be relevant to changed environments. The family can resist external change out of the needs of its members being no longer met in the environment the family inhabits. Or it may adapt new strategies for coping with its external environment out of the changed needs or aspirations of its members. That is endogenous change.

The discussion of endogenous versus exogenous change, ultimately, is a controversy about the attributes of the family: Is the family a dependent unit merely reflecting external social changes or an independent agent generating change with an influence on the wider society. That is whether the family or all

aspects of family life always have the character of a dependent variable responding to changes elsewhere, such as in economic circumstances as Marxists might argue, or in response to system demands as Functionalists might suggest. Or whether the family and family life, while of course always vulnerable to outside influences, is nevertheless, as W. Goode asserts, itself a dynamic factor with consequences for other aspects of society and playing a determining role in the social process in its own right.<sup>75</sup> As a matter of fact most family scholars, from the critical tradition or from the positivist tradition, focused on exogenous changes and explained, almost stereotypically, the changes as consequences of modernisation. In spite of its vulnerability to outside environment, the family has actively responded to society sometimes by perpetuating tradition and sometimes by reconciling the tradition and the new circumstances. Either in persistence or reconciliation, the family's reaction to society has an influence on the society in various forms. The Saemaul movement of the 1970s which became a stepping-stone for economic development was just one example of where the family responded to society actively. The Confucian movement of the 1980s is another example by which the family responded in silence. To conclude, the analysis of the family and family life can be completed through an understanding of both dimensions of family attributes. Naturally both endogenous and exogenous changes will be analysed in the thesis.

### **1.3. DATA USED**

Two largely different kinds of data are being used in this thesis: the primary data and secondary one. The primary materials and simultaneously main data sources to be used for thesis comprises of two field survey data delivered by the KIHASA (Korea Institute for Health and Social Affairs<sup>76</sup>) under the title, "the Family Transition in Korea" (abstract FAM86 from below) on August 1986, and "the Changing Family Functions and Role Relations in Korea" (abstract FAM89 from below) on September 1989 each. On the other hand, the secondary data which will be used as a supplementary one to the primary source, include both official statistics given by government or government related institutes and the statistics surveyed, analysed and published by other authors and but very rarely, the secondary secondary one, i.e. the data quoted by other writers.

#### **1.3.1. FAM89**

### 1.3.1.1. Survey size and target

Considering the moderate number of interviewer per survey supervisor and the optimum amount of work of each interviewer per day, 3,000 households from 75 survey areas (average 40 households of each region), were set up as a reasonable size of survey within the limits of the budget. On the process of abstracting survey target areas, all of islands including Cheju-do<sup>77</sup>, were not included due to excessive expenditure and geographical (transportational) hindrance to access for a field survey. As a matter of fact, the number of households of these islands does not exceed 1 percent of total number of household from all of the nation, and as a result, it gives no significant influence on the result of the study.

On the other hand, the household as a survey target was defined as a living unit composed of a person or two persons or/and over, sharing cooking, sleeping, and a livelihood. From this operational definition, three sub-categories were given: the ordinary household, living together two or two and over members in, as a general rule, relationship by kin; the single household, cooking for her/himself; and the non-kin household, living together more than one but less than ten persons whether they share cooking or livelihood or not. To meet unexpected ambiguities which frequently happened during the field survey, several instructions on the target of survey, were pre-given: (1) the lodger is not regarded as composing a independent household but as belonging to the owner's household. But exceptionally, if a couples is lodging, they are regarded as an independent household.; (2) The employees of a household, for example, a house maid or store clerk and sleeping and cooking together with the owner belongs to members of owner's household.; (3) if the number of the non-kin household member is more than nine persons, the household is omitted from the target.; (4) the institutional household like a boarding house, an institution for the aged, a nunnery, or a prison, etc. are excluded from the target. But persons like, managers or employees living in the institute with their families, regarded as the ordinary household, are included in the target.; and (5) if householders are foreigners, they are excepted from the target.

### 1.3.1.2. Random sampling of the survey area

The survey region was randomised from those of "1985 Population and Housing Census." And regions with new apartment houses, tenement houses, or ordinary houses too much additionally built after '85 Census were categorised into extra ones and randomised in a separate way to reduce sampling error to the utmost, and to economise time and effort which would be consumed in re-adjusting the size of each area.

**Table 1.1. Sample Size**

layer	universe		sample	
	region	household	region	household
total	325	9,669,330	75	3,232
Si	211	6,508,690	50	2,114
Gun	104	2,905,810	23	1,018
new a.p.t	10	255,830	2	100

Si: city, Gun: county, a.p.t.: apartment

Sampling was grounded on Census data delivered by National Bureau of Statistics, Economic Planning Board on 1st November 1985. On the basis of 143,500 nation-wide ordinary regions excluding Cheju-do, all islands, and special regions of the institutional houses as boarding houses, prison, or nursing homes, etc., the number of household was adopted as the measure of size, and the employment rate by industry (primary, secondary, and tertiary) and the type of house (ordinary, apartment, row houses etc.), sorting criteria. As a result, sample size was set up as Table 1.1 with average ratio of random sampling, 1/2,925 varying from 1/4,339 to 1/2,106 by sample area.

### 1.3.1.3. Field survey

The field survey was delivered for 31 days from 18th July 1989 to 17th August 1989 by 8 groups of 24 interviewers and 8 supervisors who were trained through instructions and practices, one of the main purpose of them aimed at standardisation of the survey result, for eight days. And the survey was doubly supervised by research fellows.

### 1.3.1.4. Result of survey

The real number of household from 75 sample areas was 3,372. Among them, 61 households from a few regions, were just listed due to an excessively increased number. As a result, 3,311 households were visited by interviewers. Among them, a survey on 2,923 households was completed, while 388 households were left uncompleted.(see Table 1.2) On the other hand, the number of women with whom interview was completed was 2,838 among 3,022 from 3,311

**Table 1.2. Number Of Household Surveyed**

layer	number of household	household unvisited	number of household visited		
			total	incomp	comp(%)
total	3,372	61	3,311	388	2,923(88.3)
Si	2,244	61	2,183	270	1,912(87.6)
Gun	1,019	-	1,019	110	909(89.2)
new a.p.t	109	-	109	7	102(93.6)

incom : incompleted, comp : completed

**Table 1.3. Number Of Women Interviewed**

layer	target	incompleted	completed(%)
total	3,022	184	2,838(93.9)
Si	2,012	111	1,901(94.5)
Gun	1,010	73	937(92.8)

Si : city, Gun : country

households answered, at least, to questions on household members, part one of the questionnaire. Interview was not available to 184 persons due to a long time outing or refusal. (see Table 1.3) The weighted sample total on the real value of each question surveyed, was calculated like below;

$$X' = \sum_h \sum_i W'_{hi} X_{hi}$$

$$W'_{hi} = W_{hi} ( S / \sum_i W_{hi} S_{hi} )$$

$$W_{hi} = ( M_h / N_h ) ( C_{hi} / M_{hi} ) ( S'_{hi} / S_{hi} )$$

$\sum$  : abbreviation of sigma

$X'$  : the weighted total about characteristic X

$X$  : the number of unit (person, household, family) surveyed to have a characteristic X or surveyed value on characteristic X

$W'$  : weight value to calculate the weighted sample total

$W$  : multiplier to calculate total estimated value

$M$  : measure of size

$N$  : number of sample region

$C$  : number of divided region

$S'$  : number of household

$S$  : number of household answered questions on household members, part I of the questionnaire

$h$  : abbreviation of layer (Si, Gun)

$i$  : abbreviation of sample region

In conclusion, after the procedure of codification, error check, and weighting on the data collected, raw data on 2,923 households (due 12,114 family members) and 2,838 interviewees was prepared for an operation of the SPSS program.

### 1.3.1.5. Uniqueness and limitation of data

Different from ordinary Census survey aimed at the study of household, the uniqueness of this survey lies its survey target on family itself composed not only of habitual residents at whom the Census survey is being targeted, but also of family members with who do not share a same flat, but still are conceived as a member of the family. That is to say, after checking every household members, all and every family member as well whom the interviewees themselves are

recognising as the members were checked. However one of the main limitation of this survey is caused by the interviewee. As the target of the interview was set up to married women at their age 15 and over, sometimes the result of analysis can be misinterpreted as their spouse has same opinion. To avoid making this error, the secondary data will be supplemented and compared at a point of significant discussion.

### 1.3.2. FAM86

Ground, process, and principles etc. of sampling are the same as those of the FAM89, and uniqueness and limitation as well are the same. The field survey was delivered for 32 days from 11th June to 12th July 1986 by 7 groups of 21 interviewers and 7 supervisors who were trained for 5 days through instructions and practices. The result of field survey is Table 1.4 below. As shown in the table, unlike the expected number of household in the total region sampled, the real number of household was slightly increased. Among them, 3,400 households were completely surveyed, while the target interviewees whose age was from 15 to 64, numbered 3,013 from the surveyed households. Lastly, the weighted sample total on the real value of each question surveyed, was calculated just the same as that of the FAM89.

**Table 1.4. Sample Size And Number Of Household Surveyed**

layer	universe (household)	sample		number of households surveyed		
		region	household	total	incomp	comp(%)
total	9,575,356	75	3,409	3,498	98	3,400(97.2)
Si	6,333,936	51	2,323	2,405	77	2,328(96.8)
Gun	3,241,420	24	1,086	1,093	21	1,072(98.1)

Si : city, Gun : country

incomp : incompleted, comp : completed

### 1.3.3. Secondary Data

The secondary data comprises of the official statistics and secondary secondary data. The data produced primarily by government or government related organisations belong to the former category. The most frequently cited source of data are; *Social Indicators In Korea*, by National Bureau of Statistics of EPB(Economic Planning Board), *Population and Housing Census* by EPB, *Yearbook of Health and Social Statistics* by Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, and several reports including *National Family Health Survey* by KIHASA (KIPH),

officially reported data by non-governmental organisation like Korean GALUP or daily news papers like Choson Ilbo, Dong-A Ilbo etc.

Meanwhile, the secondary secondary data are used as historical facts. There are three noteworthy books which have dealt with family as an institution from a historical perspective; *the Study on the Korean Family Institution* by D. Kim, *the Study on the History of Korean Family Institution* by J. Choe, and *Historical Study on the Korean Family* by K. Lee. The former two were from sociological perspectives, the latter cultural anthropology.

As far as the author relies on historical analysis of other authors' work, there can be some problems, say, of insufficient data, or of hermeneutics. In spite of these limitations, the reason why the author has brought historical data from other authors' work is rather to catch up holistic feature on some phenomena in the past, than to verify a certain theory.

# **CHAPTER TWO**

## **MODERNISATION, DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES, AND ECONOMIC GROWTH**

Chapter 2 is about the social changes which had a profound impact on the family life. It might be necessary to overview the social change as a barometer to understand the scope, size and speed of family change over the last a few decades. First, it examines the modernisation, in general, being comprised of attributes of industrialisation, urbanisation, and Westernisation, which swept every day life in Korea for the last a few decades. Those were urgent issues being formulated as a national consensus among Koreans of the period. Second, the chapter discusses demographic changes: changes in the size and structure of the population and attitudes associated with these changes. Of course the changes have derived from changes in family size, nuptiality, and the associated changing ideas and values relating to them. Nevertheless family change would have been impossible without the successful accomplishment of the Family Planning Programme which commenced in 1962. Thirdly, the chapter discusses economic development being closely related to the demographic changes: labour supply, economic growth etc. The demographic changes and economic development were both supreme targets of the modernisation movement and an actual manifestation of it for the last half a century. Lastly, concluding the chapter, it examines social mobility which can give a good insight into the speed of the social changes.

## 2.1. MODERNISATION

The social force of modernisation has affected the family structure of present day Korea. The change ranges from ideological and value aspect of the family to infra-structural changes of the family. Either it ranges from holistic changes of the familial network to microscopic changes of the dyad between family members. Some of them were total changes, but many of them were just an external modification of the conventional familism leaving its inner dynamism counteracting to the changing social environment. The traditionality was still alive to co-exist with the superficial changes. Of course the modification was at different range and at different degree. To sum the change in the family was a mirror of the changes having happened and still happening in the society. The mirror was coloured mostly by rapidity.

### 2.1.1. The Beginnings Of Modernisation

There have been some disputes over the point when Korean society became receptive to the influence of modernization. These can be abstracted into three periods according to the point of view: Tonghak Peasants' Movement(1894-1897), the Japanese Colonization(1910-1945), and the middle of 20th century of the Korean Civil War(1950-1953).

The Tonghak Peasants' Movement was a revolution from the grass root against both the ruling class and the Japanese imperialist invasion, but it failed. The reason for it being regarded as a corner-stone of modernization was that the movement was for the first time collectively organised from the grassroots. Secondly, there was a strong demand for the human liberation against the customs and against the given institution of marriage and the family. To say it was one of the main platforms against Confucianism in the demand for a modern way of family life. Sadly it could not exert its influence long enough to achieve reform at the societal level. It ended at a declarative level due to the failure of the movement.<sup>1</sup>

On the other hand, from the perspective of law, the Japanese Colonial Government introduced a variety of modern ways of life during the middle of their rule. Particularly those were such things as the revision of the law on domestic relations, and statutory preparation of the marriage celebration etc. Its driving force was note-worthy. Nevertheless being an oppressive policy based on government

power, it was ineffective. Its ineffectiveness went side by side with the heated atmosphere of the anti-Japan movement within Korea. Another reason for the lack of success of modernization was that it was recognized to have been prepared, not for the benefit of the colonized, but for an efficient execution of policies.<sup>2</sup> It struck out the national spirit epitomised in the Neo-Confucian familism of the colonized. One of manifested examples of the policy of coercion aimed to uproot national spirit was the change to the family name to fit to the Japanese style. All in one, in spite of strong legal preparations, a series of policies for modernization ended in failure leaving some remnants in the field of family law and marriage custom.

Eventually after the Korean Civil War of 1950, modernization that shaped the current style of family structure took place in earnest. With the U.S armed entry into the Korean peninsula, modernisation commenced in a real sense. It has deeply influenced the transformation of family structure like the change to the nuclear family, to love marriage, or to the increase in the social participation of women. It accelerated with the demands of industrialization from the first five-year development plan in 1962. As a result Korean society was dominated by an overwhelming tendency to pursue change and progress at the expense of traditional values.

Of course it is hard to say that U.S. influence followed by industrialisation were the only factors that shaped modern Korea. However it was true, at least regarding the family, that, in its real meaning, it was the most significant step toward the current Korean family structure. Most statistics on family demography show a radical transition from the mid of 20th century. To conclude, discussing the beginning of Korean modernization in this thesis, the characteristics happened from the middle of 20th century are going to be the primary focus of description and those from the earlier period will be of secondary importance.

### **2.1.2. Characteristics Of Modernisation**

The characteristics of modernisation in Korea can be sub-divided into three ideas: industrialisation, urbanisation, and Westernisation that, in turn, has a firm grounding in individualism, the advancement of women's status, and democratisation.

#### **2.1.2.1. Industrialisation**

The characteristics of industrialisation in Korea can be seen as a rapid decline of agriculture on the one hand, and on the other hand a sharp rise in the field of manufacturing industry and service sectors.<sup>3</sup> However the speed and quality of industrialisation were quite discernible following the Korean Civil War (1950-1953). (Table 2.1)

**Table 2.1. Composition Of Employed Persons By Industry**

year <sup>4</sup>	total	agriculture, forestry, fishery	mining & manufacturing		SOC & others
			total	manufact	
1917*	100.0	91.1	1.5	-	7.4
1921*	100.0	91.1	1.4	-	7.4
1930*	100.0	88.1	1.6	-	10.3
1940*	100.0	80.2	4.2	-	15.6
1955	100.0	60.2	-	-	-
1960	100.0	65.4	10.1	9.5	15.0
1970	100.0	50.4	14.3	13.2	35.3
1980	100.0	34.0	22.5	21.6	43.5
1990	100.0	18.3	27.3	26.9	54.4

- statistics unavailable, \* statistics includes both the North and the South.

source: Census, 1955, 1960, 1970, 1980, 1990.

The Japanese Government-General in Korea, *Annual Statistics*, 1917, 1921, 1930, 1940.

First of all, during the Japanese colonisation, the Land Survey law promulgated in 1912 played a significant role in transforming the industrial structure. The law, at least nominally, aimed at the modernization of the land tenure relationship. It asked each land-holder to have his ownership rights recognized, to report his name, address, and the name under which his land was registered as well as the type of land use, the dimensions, and other pertinent data. Koreans, however, felt very uneasy about reporting their landholdings to the Japanese Government-General. Moreover, the registration procedure was not adequately made known to the general farming population and many peasants were negligent about making their reports. Nevertheless, all those who failed to register their land had it confiscated by the Government-General. The Government-General thus held, according to statistics for 1930, 22 million acres, 40 per cent of the total of agricultural and forest land in Korea.<sup>5</sup> The result was severe ruin for farmers.

There were two alternatives the ruined farmers could choose; either migration or change of occupation as a wage labourer. Korean farmer immigrants in Manchuria numbered 560,000 in 1927, 800,000 in 1931, and 1,450,000 by 1940, while Korean labourers in Japan swelled to 1,469,000 by 1941.<sup>6</sup> The rest of the ruined farmers remained in Korea and had no alternative but to be a wage labourer. They had, generation after generation, no particular skills or no capital except their own two hands to engage in farming. Hard manual labour in the service sector was

the easiest job they could choose to earn a living. That was the reason why there was almost no change in the manufacturing industry in spite of considerable decreases in the agricultural population. More desperately, finances for industry were highly manipulated, public service enterprises were controlled. Even the natural resources were monopolised by Japanese imperialism. As a result, it was very difficult for Koreans both to invest and to have a job in the entrepreneurial sector. A sharp increase in the number of people employed in mining and manufacturing industry in 1940 depicts the fact that Japanese enterprises took advantage of cheap Korean labour who were once farmers. They invested in mining under the protection of the imperial government,

Of course there was a persistent growth of native capital investment to mercantile and manufacturing industry mainly by large landowners, and the result was note-worthy. In 1923 side by side with the National Movement, 'a movement to buy Korean'<sup>7</sup> was launched. It aimed at giving a positive stimulus to investment in modern industry. The development of native capital and industry entered a new phase. Many enterprises owned by Koreans came into being, and some of the companies have survived until now. Nevertheless capital resources were too meagre to enable Korean businesses to compete on a scale with those of the Japanese and to contribute significantly to the industrialisation of Korea at the time.

Under these circumstances, a statistical decline in the population in the primary industries can be directly connected neither to modernisation nor to industrialisation in its real sense. The decline simply brought to a deterioration in socio-economic stability. The induced decline of the farming population was no more than a collapse of physiocratism that could have been maintained by traditional family structure. Koreans no longer believed economic ambition to be evil, or mercantile activity and enterprise humble. However when they had awakened from a long dream of feudal self-sufficiency, the situation was too severe to cure.

It was after the Independence that Korea could have undertaken industrialisation in its real sense. However there were too many trials left yet. The Korean economy was once again badly damaged by the Korean Civil War that lasted for four years. Lee describes that<sup>8</sup>;

The damage to property has been estimated at something over 3 billion (1953 U.S.) dollars. About 43 % of manufacturing facilities, 41 % of electrical generating capacity, and 50 % of the coal mines

in South were destroyed or damaged. One-third of the nation's housing was destroyed, and substantial proportions of the countries' public buildings, roads, bridges, ports, and the like also were reduced to ruins.

Industrialisation was commenced only after passing through political and social stagnation of the post-war period.

Since 1962 with the launch of the First Five-Year Economic Development plan, rapid industrialisation has occurred in Korea. It was revitalised through the New Community Movement that began in the early 1970s. The result was as depicts of Table 2.1. Various economic indicators show that the change to the socio-economic structure constitutes a 'miracle'.<sup>9</sup> Within 30 years, the industrial structure has been transformed. The GNP share of the manufacturing sector enlarged from 14.4% in 1962 to 31.6% in 1988 especially by export-oriented industry. The economy has grown at an average rate of more than 8% annually. Per capita GDP has jumped from meagre U.S. \$1 in 1961 to U.S. \$3,500 in 1990 at constant prices.<sup>10</sup> To conclude the radical speed of the process generated by government was characteristic of Korea's industrialisation.

#### **2.1.2.2. Urbanisation**

The term urbanisation has two meanings: firstly change of life styles in rural area to conform to those of the urban pattern on the one hand, and the agglomeration of population to the urban areas on the other.<sup>11</sup> The second feature of modernisation in Korea can be defined by the urban agglomeration of population. It was influenced mainly by economic development that required centralisation both of capital and of labour population.

As Table 2.2 shows, the late 40s and the early 60s saw a significant increase of urban population. The first phase of urban concentration was caused, after Independence, by the repatriation. They amounted to almost 2 millions (about 9% of total population of the South). They had already experienced, with their adequate skills, an urban way of life during their lives overseas. Beside the urban population rapidly increased caused by the North's refugees amounting to 1.5 millions before or after the Civil War. It had a great impact on the population structure.<sup>12</sup> Most of them made their new home in urban areas. There was also a post-war 'baby boom' that was a natural phenomenon occurring during the reconstruction of the urban areas after the war. In sum, the rapid increase of the population, until 1961, in the urban area was caused by political factors.

**Table 2.2. Population Size (in millions) And Proportion Of Urban To Total Population**

year	population size			proportion of urban pop <sup>n</sup>
	total	urban	rural	
1910 <sup>a*</sup>	13.70	.61	13.09	4.5
1920 <sup>a*</sup>	16.91	.72	16.19	4.3
1930 <sup>a*</sup>	21.06	1.26	19.80	6.0
1940 <sup>a*</sup>	24.33	1.87	22.46	7.7
1949 <sup>#</sup>	20.19	3.48	16.71	17.2
1960 <sup>#</sup>	24.99	7.00	17.99	28.0
1970 <sup>#</sup>	31.44	13.61	17.83	43.3
1980 <sup>#</sup>	37.44	21.42	16.02	57.2
1990 <sup>#</sup>	42.80	30.64	12.16	71.6
2000 <sup>+</sup>	48.01	38.66	9.35	80.5

a : statistics both on the South and the North,

\* : from Japanese Government-General, *Annual Statistics*, # : from Census

+ : from UN, "Prospects of World Urbanization: 1988," *Population Studies* No.112 (N.Y.,1989).

The really critical increase in the urban population came after 1962 when the economic development plan was commenced. From then on there was a sharp decline in both the absolute number and the ratio of the farming population. This caused a radical urban concentration of population who were following the trend of capital flow, both of economic organization and public agencies, and of educational, cultural, and health investment. The result was a turnabout of regional distribution of population size, eventually raising metropolitan Seoul to the 7th biggest city in the world in population size by the year 2000.<sup>13</sup> The characteristics of urban concentration during the last 30 years can be abstracted into a few points. Urban population was agglomerated out of balance in a few cities such as Seoul, Pusan, Taegu, and Taejon etc. There was a severe depopulation phenomenon in rural area. And women were more concentrated in metropolitan cities than men were.

### 2.1.2.3. Westernisation

Ideological changes can be summarized as Westernisation. It was against the authoritative order of patriarchal familism in favour of democratic individualism. It was against an empty doctrinaire Confucianism in favour of the empirical pragmatism of the Western powers. It is not easy to define Westernisation precisely. Nevertheless at least three elements are indispensable in discussing how Koreans adapted themselves to Western values and to Western learning. These were the spread of Christianity, the establishment of modern law, and the popularization of modern education. They interactively brought many changes, both in individual and in social life. Such individualism as against family-centric ideas, democratisation in politics, and the rise of women's status etc. are those changes.

First, the propagation of Christianity was directly linked to the Westernisation and had two critical meanings in the Korean context: the confrontation against the traditional belief system and the spread of Western modern learning.<sup>14</sup> The former was led by Catholics at the early stages of Christian mission in Korea while the latter was primarily brought about by Protestants at the following stage.

There was a severe tension between the Korean familism and Christianity. The familism was the core of the traditional belief system. No reconciliation seemed possible between the two. Absolute victory or total defeat were the only alternatives they could choose at that time. Concretely the Christian god recognized himself the only and almighty. Moreover he was jealous to see idols and he did not like his followers to worship any other god.<sup>15</sup> The case was exactly same with the Korean familism which had been the alpha and omega of traditional society. Naturally the Korean almighty god, ancestry felt very uneasy against the Catholic god who disgraced ancestor worship. It did not miss even the fact that Catholic converts were not legitimate children. They were mostly from those parts of society which seemed to have had a deep discontent under the present power relations. They were either from ruined *yangban* (ruling class) who were thrust out from the centres of power in the process of factionalism or they were either born to concubines or to women generally the most disregarded under the Confucian discipline. In a word, Christianity and its converts were regarded as a critical factor jeopardizing the given order of familism and disorganising society. With the coming to power of the xenophobic prince regent Taewongun bloody persecutions began in earnest, which continued until he lost power in 1873. He blamed all Korean's problems on outside encroachments. However, it was the Christian god who was crowned with the laurel of final victory. In 1876, Korea was forced to sign treaties with Western powers guaranteeing the safety of foreign missionaries and their freedom to engage in proselytising. It was an instrument of surrender of Korean ancestry to the Western god. It was a declaration for the positive import of Western learning instead of hanging on to an empty Confucian familism.<sup>16</sup>

Hearing the drum of victory, Protestant missionaries began to stream into Korea and they established a glorious history of mission. The mission style was quite different from that of the Catholics full of contradiction against the existed values. The growth rate of Christianity, particularly of Protestants, was breathtakingly rapid as shown on the Table 2.3. At least two points were critical in leading the mission to success. The protestant missionaries, relatively speaking, brought something Koreans were eager to take, while Catholics just asked their

followers for devotion. The Protestants were recognized as bearers of modern knowledge of the West in many fields. They filled a vacuum that the isolated Korean nation desperately needed filled if it was to attain modernisation that might assure its continued sovereignty among world powers.<sup>17</sup>

**Table 2.3. The Growth Of Christians**

unit : 1.000 persons

year	size of pop <sup>n</sup>	Protestant		Catholic		total % Christian
		pop <sup>n</sup>	%	pop <sup>n</sup>	%	
1914*	15,958	196	1.2	79	.5	1.7
1919*	16,784	190	1.1	90	.5	1.6
1929*	18,784	244	1.3	110	.6	1.9
1938*	21,951	263	1.1	128	.6	1.7
1949	20,167	744	3.7	156	.8	4.5
1957	22,949	844	3.7	285	1.2	4.9
1968	31,093	1,873	6.0	751	2.4	8.4
1970	31,569	3,193	10.1	788	2.5	12.6
1972	32,459	3,452	10.6	804	2.5	13.1
1974	33,450	4,019	11.9	1,012	3.0	14.9
1976	35,860	4,659	13.0	1,053	2.9	15.9
1978	37,019	5,294	14.3	1,144	3.1	17.4
1981	38,723	7,673	19.8	1,439	3.7	23.5
1985 <sup>18</sup>	40,420	6,586	13.8	1,858	4.6	20.9

source: James H. Grayson, *Early Buddhism and Christianity in Korea* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1985), p.126

\* the statistics both the South and the North

They established modern schools, taught Western civilisation, arranged for the advanced education abroad of many young potential leaders. They provided help by mission-sponsored modernisation movements in everything from agriculture to the health sector. Naturally, whether Christians or not, Koreans began feel friendship to the West. They began to adopt new ideas instead of remaining attached to traditional ideas that could do nothing during the darkest period. In sum, the spread of Christianity did a great deal, both through a painful persecution and mission of Western culture, in changing traditional culture and customs such as ancestor worship, marriage rituals, match-making, and the concubine system etc.

The next impetus to Westernisation was the institutionalisation of modern law. Modern law was already introduced at the end of 19th century.<sup>19</sup> The masses called for constitutional government and the rule of law passed through several political reforms. Many kinds of laws and regulations were promulgated. Those include "Guiding Principles for the Nation" (Hongbŏm) promulgated in 1895 as the first Korean constitution. However it was too late to exert its influence deeply.

It was under the Japanese colonisation that modern law was settled down. A basic philosophy of individualism permeated modern law.<sup>20</sup> The law prescribed the predominance of individuals over the family as the subject of a juristic right/duty.

It assumed individuals to be the basic component of a nation, unlike the traditional National Code. The Code gave legal responsibility to the family as a whole under the strong assumption that the family was the most fundamental cultivator of social behaviour. Below were just a few examples that showed the implications of the traditional code. For example, if someone turned traitor to his country, the whole clans, that is to say, all the members of father's, mother's, and wife's family were exterminated, and needless to say the person concerned.; a son was required by law to perform obligations inherited from his parents or grandparents who had already passed away.; and a couple, no matter how old they were, were required to have the consent from both sides' of the parents when they either adopted a child or were going to divorce. Those were just a few of critical targets that had the individualism make an excuse to bring about modern law. In a word, the coverage of juristic responsibility was changed so as to be limited to the persons concerned under the modern law. As a result there was no more need to keep a familial solidarity that insured the protection of one's own interest under the traditional code. Individuals alone were recognized as the only object and subject to stand under the law and in society. However this was applied only to men during Japanese rule. Women's legal status was, in a sense, far worse in the new law than in the traditional code. Women were regarded as a person without legal capacity and attached to husbands or their adult son. Their legal status was normalised after independence. Although women took longer time than Korean men in getting their legal rights as an individual human being, the slow and steady progress was achieved by women themselves.

Last but not least, the other driving force of the value change toward Westernisation came from the spread of modern education.<sup>21</sup> Education moved from the householder's responsibility to be under the control of the state. The state asked its members to obey as individuals rather than as family members. The role of the state was manifested throughout the curriculum. Traditional education mostly delivered by each family group, gave most emphasis to moral character centred on filial piety which in turn was focussed on family solidarity. Modern education put its basic emphasis on the demonstration of originality, respect for individuality, and acquisition of expert knowledge. Most of this could be achieved outside the family boundaries. To sum up, the responsibility as a member of a national society, than as a good child of a family, was more emphasised as a significant educational target. The new educational ideology of individualism infiltrated widely together with the growth of modern schools. The contribution was made both by government, Western missionaries, and private organisations and individuals at an early stage. The development of education was disrupted by

the Japanese colonial rule in spite of the increase in the absolute number of public school. Educational opportunities were given to few Koreans. Primary schools accommodated only 30 percent of all school-age children, one out of 20 or so enrolled in secondary schools, and very few attended college.<sup>22</sup> Be that as it may, Korea's educational development reached a turning point after the independence and education expanded dramatically until the 1970s despite the widespread destruction of facilities and economic suffering brought about by the Civil War. It maintained growth as shown on Table 2.4.<sup>23</sup>

**Table 2.4. School Enrollment Ratio**

year	primary school(A)	middle school(B)	high school(C)	pre-college (A+B+C)
1966	96.6	42.3	27.5	71.8
1970	102.4	57.0	30.5	76.7
1975	103.2	74.2	43.6	80.8
1980	101.0	94.6	68.5	91.6
1985	102.0	99.7	78.3	95.0

source: *Census*

At the same time, the spread of modern education did not simply stop at the growth of individualism but helped improve the status of women.<sup>24</sup> Modern education made women aware of their rights that were totally ignored under Confucian norms. According to the three obedience principle of Confucian morality, a woman was subordinated to her parents before marriage, then to her husband, and to her first son after her husband's death. Women only had a role inside home. In a word, "a good wife and wise mother" was the only educational goal allowed to women in traditional times. However, together with the extension of modern education to women, they got more opportunities than ever before when they started to participate in the labour market. More egalitarian power structures at home were expected. It went side by side with the growth of the legal status of women. The economic activity rate among the female population showed a sharp increase from 26.8 per cent in 1960 to 45 per cent in 1988. Eventually the voice for gender equality has got louder and louder based on the educational attainment.

### 2.1.3. Conclusion - Government Interventionism

To conclude the characteristics of modernisation which occurred during the last few decades, can be summarised as strong government interventionism, and orientation to economic development.<sup>25</sup> Those were closely intermingled and concretely embodied through the series of five-year plans beginning from 1962.

The early plans concentrated strictly on building the economy, in keeping with the desperate need for growth. Every policy, either economic or social, were set forth indicatively to fit the strong government orientation to economic development. This culminated in the new community movement, the Saemaul Undong that came into being in the early 1970s. The government aimed initially at improving the quality of life in rural areas. In the slogan "diligence, self-help, and cooperation," the movement over the past two decades has been termed a remarkable success. The movement has dramatically contributed to the living environment in rural regions. Soon after its inauguration among the people in the countryside, the efforts began to expand very rapidly to urban and industrial sectors, and eventually to the national economy. The industrialisation and the urbanisation followed by the changes in the value system in present day Korea are unimaginable if there had been no such effort from the government. Of course there was a side-effect of rapidity caused by target-oriented government policy. The imbalance of industrial structure, cavity phenomena of the rural areas, and value gaps between generations are good examples of the side-effects caused by the rapidity of the modernisation and by government interventionism.

Meeting demands fostered through the above-mentioned Westernisation, and asking for both democracy and social welfare from around the mid-70s, a slight change came into being from the government side. First of all, the plan began to include more social policy tasks, such as education planning, health care improvement, and housing programmes, etc. Government changed the term "Five-Year Economic Development Plan" to "Five-Year Economic and **Social** Development Plan" from 1982. The importance of social welfare objectives in the overall plan has grown over the past decades. However the primary stress of the plans still remained on economic growth until it met strong, and nation-widely spread trade union activity in the last years of the 1990s. Secondly, confronted with the desire for the democratisation, the plan, from the "Sixth Economic Social Development Plan" in effect from 1987 to 1991, placed stress on decentralizing government functions. The planning process has become more flexible than before. The Korean family was caught up inside these swirls of history and changed side by side with society. People have begun to ask the government to pay more attention to social policies concerned the family than ever before.

## 2.2. DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES

Demographic change is a direct result of changes in the family. Change in the size of the family, the rising age at first marriage, changing values on children and the family, etc. have significant and immediate impact on the demographic condition of society.<sup>26</sup> Despite their diversity, all these factors converge at the trend toward the small family.

The current demographic situation has been achieved much more rapidly as a result of government population policy which culminated in the Family Planning Programme.<sup>27</sup> Of course the Family Planning Programme was not the only factor affecting fertility and population growth. The higher age at marriage and the increased incidence of induced abortion have each also played an important role. It is not possible to measure the relative impact of these factors in reducing fertility rate with any real precision. However some studies have been conducted which give a rough idea of the relative demographic effect of the programme and other factors. It appears that about 18 per cent of the fertility decline registered in 1984, was due to the rise in the age of marriage. Around 32 per cent was due to the increase in the use of induced abortion, and the remaining 50 per cent to family planning.<sup>28</sup> While these estimates are crude, they do serve to indicate that the Family Planning Programme has played a significant role in the decline of birth rate in Korea. The indirect influence of broad social forces has undoubtedly contributed to the drop in fertility rate. Development and modernisation though difficult to quantify, have had a strong influence. The rising status of women and their greater participation in the labour force presumably help to account for the rising age of marriage and reduced fertility rate within marriage. The enrolment of men for compulsory military service also probably had an effect in this area.

The speed and scope of demographic change, however, might not have been as great, if there had not been population policy which influenced the family by the Family Planning Programme.

### 2.2.1. Population Policy

Population policies in Korea began as a part of the economic development planning.<sup>29</sup> When the government adopted population policy, the relevant considerations were not the demographic characteristics of the population *per se*. A comprehensive plan for national economic development was what identified

population problems in the country. The plan took account of conflicts within the areas of population growth, economic development, resource consumption, environmental deterioration, and other factors. Korea had maintained an extremely high birth rate until the adoption of the population control policy in 1961. However, there were no serious debates about the problem even though the country had a high population growth rate. Thus the rapid rate of population growth, urban concentration as a result of migration, undesirable population structure, etc. were not the direct reasons motivating the formulation of population policy. The most important national goal was to raise per capita income and to eliminate poverty in the country. With the accession of a new political leadership in 1961, development planners realised that a high rate of population growth had interfered with the country's development programme. This realisation has ultimately led to the establishment of the population policy.

Population policy includes direct and indirect policies influencing births, deaths, and migration of the people in general. Nevertheless, from the initiation of the national programme, the government placed the main emphasis on the control of births.<sup>30</sup> Birth rates were perceived to be the worst obstacle to economic development. Naturally, consideration of the death rate was of secondary importance and its effect on the population structure was relatively neglected. This neglect grew at first as economic progress was evident. Ironically this orientation was reinforced during the economic recession resulting from the oil crisis in the early 1970's. The high unemployment rate in the late 1970's gave warning of the over-population problem once again and the recession drove policy makers to establish stronger and more comprehensive population policies in the early 1980's.

There were several steps to be taken until the policy could accomplish a degree of success. First the Supreme Meeting for the Reconstruction of the Nation decided to adopt a population control policy at its steering committee in 1961. This policy focused on the fertility control programme as an integral part of the economic development plans. The committee advised the government to adopt a voluntary family planning programme as national policy. In order to maintain this policy, the national family planning programme was under MOHSA (Ministry of Health and Social Affairs). The programme began being implemented through the government health service network consisting of health centres and sub-centres. Family planning workers were assigned to the health infrastructure. The administration of this system was handled by the MOHSA and the Ministry of Home Affairs.<sup>31</sup>

Among the various factors during the 1960's, the Family Planning Mother's Club which was organised from 1968 was the most influential in the early stages. Generally each local club was composed of 15 or so mothers who agreed on the idea of family planning and favoured improvements in home economics. They exchanged information on family planning and home economics with other members. They persuaded people who did not use contraception to use them, arranged mass educational meetings and also distributed contraceptives. The government subsidised the club's monthly meetings and supported their activities until their integration into the Saemaul Women's Associations in 1977.<sup>32</sup>

The fertility control programme at this early stage evolved primarily in response to the high level of total fertility rate in the early 1960's. Since 1970, serious consideration was given to a small family norm. An extensive campaign was conducted to encourage the 'two children family' and discourage son-preference attitudes. Naturally the slogan was publicised: "Daughter or Son, Stop at Two and Bring Them up Well."<sup>33</sup> The publicity underlined the abolition of deep-rooted son-preference and the restriction of the number of children one may have in order to achieve the further reduction of fertility. However, it could not be achieved in a short time span.

From then on, the government strengthened its programme from two sides. On the one hand the government established the Maternal and Child Health Bureau in the MOHSA in 1972. On the other hand efforts were made, on the other hand, by the government to inculcate small-family norms. To fit the purpose the government revised population related laws and provided social support measures, while in order to improve the quality and to help increase acceptance of the programme, it was considered that the national family planning programme should be incorporated with other developmental programmes like the New Village (Saemaul) Movement in 1972. The Movement was for a community development project based on the voluntary participation, co-operation of the individual community members and self-reliance. As an integration policy, the government has been conducting the training programme for multipurpose work of health workers since 1978. The primary purpose of the training programme is to provide in-service training to MCH, TB and FP workers. It was to have them serve as multipurpose workers capable of providing comprehensive health services including family planning at the community level.<sup>34</sup>

Starting in 1974, the government introduced a number of social support policies that can be divided into two categories; the incentive and disincentive

system and population education. The incentive and disincentive system was mainly directed to inculcate the two-child family norm. Under this system, priority in allotting public housing was given to those with one or two children whose parents had undergone sterilisation operations. Allowances in monetary terms were given to the poor who had undergone sterilisation. Medical insurance benefits were also given for the first two-child deliveries. Family and education allowances were provided for government employees with up to two children, along with income tax exemption. During the period of 1977-1979, population subjects were included in the formal school education curriculum. In addition, population and family planning programmes for adults were conducted through government and private organisations, as well as in the home reserve army and the army itself.<sup>35</sup>

From the beginning of the 1980's, fertility control measures have relied heavily on integration with other social development programmes. The integration was further expedited through the existing programme and sectoral policies within government bodies. These fertility control policies were instituted in the course of implementing the Fifth Five-Year Plan (1982-1986) by presidential orders. Their primary content was improving the management of the existing family planning organisation, strengthening various social supports to instil the value of having fewer children, and establishing a system for inter-ministerial co-operation. The main emphasis of the measures was to take population into account in all government policies, to encourage the values of the small-family and to actively involve all ministries as well as non-governmental organisations in population programmes. It was judged that the policies have been conducive to increase the contraception acceptance rate and have been effective in providing incentives to lower fertility. Owing to these measures, the results of the recent family planning programme have been truly dramatic.<sup>36</sup>

To sum up there were several elements which led to the family planning programme being more successful than in many other developing countries. The elements divide roughly into two categories: internal factors of the programme in itself and external factors. First of all, The programme was delivered by the joint efforts of the government and people.<sup>37</sup> Policy-making was characterised by its broad range of participation from the whole nation and its continuity. Most of the advisory bodies were composed both of government officials and civilian specialists. The matter was discussed at the governmental level only after reflecting the opinion of the academic specialists in universities and from the non-governmental organisations, the research results of the institutes concerned, and eventually public opinion from civilians of the final demand. Thanks to the

democratic procedure of the policy-making, there were almost no serious points of dispute regardless of social strata, of political group, or even from any religious group. The programme was recognised to be a welfare policy for the benefit of people as well as for economic development policy rather than being seen primarily as a moral issue. Secondly, it was thanks to the comprehensive and organic management of the programme.<sup>38</sup> In driving forward the policy, a role division was organically designed among the organisations concerned, and the operations infiltrated effectively to the towns or villages. Execution and operation were under the control of and audited regularly by MOHSA to maintain the quality of programme delivery. The system induced voluntaristic participation from the community. Thirdly sufficient finance and man power were invested in the programme.<sup>39</sup> Particularly the positive participation of the medical profession and medical man power was critical in delivering contraceptive treatment. Furthermore there was no serious public criticism concerning the side-effects of contraception, which taken all together, led the success to the family planning programme.

There was a couple of other external elements that led Korea to be more successful in the execution of the policy than other countries. The first factor was that the family planning was aimed at the advantages for small children, a perspective that could gain sympathy among people.<sup>40</sup> People accepted that family planning was a desirable means to attain individual prosperity as well as the wealth of the nation as a whole. According to a survey by KIPH (former body of KIHASA) in 1970, 90 per cent of women aged 15-64 approved of the family planning programme. That led the government policy to progress smoothly without significant resistance. The second factor was the formation of the small family idea as being a result of rapid Westernisation accompanied with a sharp acceleration in urbanisation, a drastic change in the life style, and a notable increase in the amount of personal income.<sup>41</sup> Lastly social conditions in general had matured enough to accept the family planning programme.<sup>42</sup> The expansion of life expectancy followed by the decrease in the rate of infant mortality and of general mortality has contributed for this. In addition the rising educational level of both sexes, the formation of industrial *cum* urbanised society, improvements in women's status both in the family and in the wider society, and changes in ideas relating to the children, etc. had prepared social conditions able to gladly accept the family planning programme.

All these factors had made the policy so successful that by 1990 the total fertility rate stood at 1.6. During the last 30 years (1960-1990) of the family planning, around 4 million sterilisations were carried out, 7 million cases of the

IUD (Intra-Uterus Device) were fitted, 130 thousand boxes of condom were supplied monthly, and 70 thousand cycles of oral contraceptives were consumed per month.<sup>43</sup> Based on such efforts, the demographic transition would have been completed within three decades looking for a zero rate of population growth by 2021.

## 2.2.2. Demographic Changes

### 2.2.2.1. Population size

Reflecting the great effort of the population policy, demographic change has occurred both in population size and structure. First in terms of size, that was distinctive at a watershed in 1950s. Pre-50s change derived from socio-political changes but in the next period the primary cause lay in familial change.

There was no socially perceived idea of population growth or of overpopulation during the era of Confucian dominance. During the Japanese annexation fecundity was encouraged as a colonial policy in terms of mobilisation of labour power. Even after the independence in 1945 this policy had a continuing further influence. At the time of the 1925 census, the total population of Korea was 19.5 million. (Table 2.5) In 1945 the partition of the country between the North and

**Table 2.5. Total Population And Vital Statistics, 1925 - 1990**

year <sup>14</sup>	population	CBR	CDR	PIR
1925*	19,523			
1944*	25,120			1.8
1949	20,189			4.9
1955	21,502			1.0
1960	25,012	42.0	13.0	2.9
1966	29,160	34.6	9.5	2.5
1970	32,241	31.4	9.4	2.2
1975	35,281	25.1	7.2	1.8
1980	38,124	23.4	6.7	1.67
1985	41,056	19.7	6.2	1.25
1990	42,793	16.2	5.8	0.98

source: SIIK

CBR: crude birth rate, CDR: crude death rate PIR: population increase rate

\* : data include both the South and the North

the South marked a turning point in Korean population change. This period is characterised by a tremendous social migration from both overseas and the North into South Korea. The population census conducted in 1949 for South Korea only found the population to be around 20.2 million. That was considered as a great

increment of population size from the 1944 census result of 25.1 million for a whole country.<sup>45</sup>

The decline of fertility levels after 1960 is mainly due to the family changes derived from the successful accomplishment of population policy.<sup>46</sup> The speed of the decline was hardly paralleled in modern human history. Now the fertility rate is already below the replacement level within three decades.

The fertility level of the period 1955-1960 was influenced from the post-war 'baby-boom.' The baby-boom which had started from around 1955, but began to decline after reaching the climax of 1959. Considering no effective devices for population control were introduced at that time, the fertility increase was relatively slow and shorter in period compared to the baby-boom the west experienced in the 1950s. Crude birth rate peaked at 48 per thousand by 1959.<sup>47</sup> According to the 1960 Census, the South Korea population had already reached around 25 million, as many as the whole country's population found in the 1940 Census. This faster increment to the country's population size created many social problems such as a lack of housing, educational and occupational opportunities, transportation and foodstuffs.

After 1962, with the beginning of the government family planning programme, fertility fell thanks to the willing participation of the people. The period was characterised by a high aspirations for national socio-economic development with the slow down of the rate of population increase. As a result the CBR declined throughout the nation, but a particularly dramatic decline was observed from 1966 in urban areas. Rural areas showed a faster decline in fertility rate only from the end of 1960's.<sup>48</sup>

From the later half of the 1970's, the fertility decline began to show a totally different pattern. The one and half decades from the mid-70's, saw a second stage in terms of fertility behaviour. Before that fertility behaviour was based on ideas formed during the fecundity policy of the Japanese government and they never developed the values of the necessity for population control. The reason they accepted contraception was to solve the mainly economic burdens of having too many children. The people of the second stage after the mid 1970's by contrast had seriously thought about the number of children they wanted and about birth control prior to their marriage. The reason for the drastic decline in the fertility rate from the 1980's can properly be explained as a consequence of this generational gap.<sup>49</sup> According to the Census in 1990, the population reached more than 43 million,

while the population increase rate (PIR) dropped significantly from 1.67 per cent in 1980, to 0.98 per cent.

To summarise, despite the steady increase in the absolute numbers in the population, the rate of increase has dropped almost to a stable condition thanks to the population policy of the last a few decades. As already shown in Table 2.5, the crude birth rate (CBR) was over 40 per 1,000 in the population in 1960. Thereafter it fell steadily during the last thirty years to 16.2 in 1990 and has reached below the replacement level during the last few decades.

Trends in the fertility rates of all women aged 15-49 during the period, 1960 - 1989 are illustrated in Table 2.6. The level of total fertility rates has been dramatically decreased from 6.0 in 1960 to 1.6 in 1989. It is significant that Korea is the second of the developing countries in Asia after the Republic of China<sup>50</sup> to reach the replacement level of fertility. The data indicate that fertility rates declined systematically in each age group. The rates for the most reproductively active age group, 25-29 fell during the period fell by about 45 per cent, while the rate for those women aged 30 - 34 fell by 82 per cent.

**Table 2.6. Age Specific And Total Fertility Rates By Years, 1960-1989**

age group	1960	1975	1981	1985	1989
15 - 19	37	12	12	7	40
20 - 24	283	163	161	162	90
25 - 29	330	273	245	187	179
30 - 34	257	152	94	52	45
35 - 39	196	68	23	8	7
40 - 44	80	23	3	1	1
45 - 49	14	1	-	-	-
TFR	6.0	3.5	2.7	2.1	1.6

source: SIIK

Mortality was another important factor affecting demographic changes. Of course mortality is not an immediate result of family change but an indirect consequence of improvements in living standards. The mortality decline was responsible for the initial increase in population growth. A sharp decline in mortality since the end of the Korean war has contributed to a higher population growth rate of about 2.5 per cent compared to only 1.02 during the war. The crude death rate dropped by 5 per thousand persons in the period of 1955-1960 thanks to the introduction of antibiotics as was the case among other developing countries at the time. At the same time life expectancy at birth also rose by about 6-8 years. The changes in mortality is comparable with the change during the 15 years of the period 1925-1940.<sup>51</sup>

After 1960 onward the mortality rate showed a continuous but steady decline. The average lifetime of 50 years old in 1960 increased to 55 around 1965-1970, and to over 60 years old in 1975-1980. Contrasted with the average of 35 years old in 1920's, the increase was a dramatic one. Infant mortality also dropped drastically from the ratio of 200 per 1000 infants ever born in the 1920's to around 100 in 1955-1960, about 37 in 1975-1980, and eventually to 25-30 in the 1980's. The decline after 1960 was possible thanks mainly to economic development, the improvement in living standards, new medical knowledge, and the reform of the health system. The expansion of medical opportunities accompanied by the improvement in living standards had a significant effect on the mortality level. As a result general mortality has steadily declined from about 15 per thousand population in the 1950s to about 6 in 1985.<sup>52</sup>

To summarise, both the changes in fertility behaviour and the decline of the mortality rate have contributed to increasing the absolute size of the population. However the growth rate has been stabilised with the decline in fertility to reach the replacement level or below.

### 2.2.2.2. Population structure

Change has also occurred in the structure of the population. Table 2.7 shows changes in age structure of the Korean population over the time, 1960 - 1990 and a projection after that.

**Table 2.7. Changes In The Age Structure Of Population And Projection**

year	total population	age group						dependency rate
		0 - 14		15 -64		65 & +		
		pop <sup>n</sup>	%	pop <sup>n</sup>	%	pop <sup>n</sup>	%	
1960	2,501	1,015	40.6	1,390	55.6	98	3.9	80.0
1970	3,224	1,357	42.1	1,760	54.6	109	3.4	83.2
1980	3,812	1,296	34.0	2,371	62.2	145	3.8	60.7
1985	4,106	1,254	30.6	2,677	65.2	174	4.2	53.4
1990	4,279	1,108	25.9	2,970	69.4	201	4.7	44.1
1995	4,596	1,160	25.2	3,197	69.6	240	5.2	43.8
2005	4,971	1,058	21.3	3,544	71.3	369	7.4	40.3
2015	5,196	965	18.6	3,742	72.0	490	9.4	38.9
2023	5,257	904	17.2	3,695	70.3	658	12.5	42.3

source: EPB, *Population Projection*, 1986.

unit: 10,000 persons

Until 1960 the population structure in Korea showed the typical pattern observed among underdeveloped countries. The structure was pyramidal with youth aged 0-14 accounting for 43 per cent of the total population in 1955. The

elderly were no more than 3.4 per cent at that time. Naturally the proportion in the working age range with a high dependency ratio.

The population structure changed drastically following the changes in the fertility behaviour and in mortality rate. The proportion under 14 years of age dropped to 34 per cent of the total population in 1980 and again to about 26 per cent in 1990. The ratio is anticipated to decrease further to about 17 per cent between 2000-2020.<sup>53</sup> The composition of the school age population has changed as well. As shown in Table 2.8 below the population of primary school age has increased by about one million over the last three decades, however, in relative terms it decreased by a considerable amount thanks to the fertility decline following the family planning programme. Without such a programme, the total number of primary school age children was estimated to increase explosively to 7 million<sup>54</sup> with huge costs for educational facilities and expansion of teaching staff. The reduction of financial load in the educational field has helped in activating the industrialisation of Korea. In contrast, the proportion in the working-age population increased from 55 per cent in 1970 to some 70 per cent in 1990. Naturally the increase reduced the burden of support for the elderly and children and the dependency rate dropped from 83 to 61 over the period of 1970-1990. The decreasing trend directly indicates the changes in fertility which was the main determinant of the decreasing dependency ratio. Within the population of working age the proportion of males aged 15-24 has declined considerably from 35 per cent in 1960 to 30 per cent in 1990. The trend is expected to progress steadily to only 18 per cent by 2020. The average age of the workers population will have risen to 40 years old by then and economic activity rate of the population in their middle years will have risen also.<sup>55</sup>

**Table 2.8 Changing Trend Of The School Age Population**

school age	1960		1990	
	No.	%	No.	%
total	855	100.0	1,339	100.0
6 - 11 years (primary school)	363	42.4	475	35.5
12 - 14 years (middle school)	157	18.3	235	17.5
15 - 17 years (high school)	142	16.6	261	19.5
18 - 21 years (universities)	194	22.7	368	27.5

source: SIIK unit: 10,000 persons

The elderly population increased by about 1.1 million from 0.98 million in 1970 to 2.01 million in 1990. The population over 65 years is likely to reach about 3 million by the year 2000 and about 6 million after another 20 years. The elderly population increased by just 1.2 million over the 30 years between 1960-1990, and

by as much as 4 million for the same period of 1990-2020. Thus the ageing phenomenon has accelerated and the population of 65 and over will account for 12 per cent of the total population by 2020. Even then the population will be still relatively young compared to other developed countries like Japan, UK., or France.<sup>56</sup>

The population structure has been changed by the migration of rural families as well. Being stimulated by urban-centric industrialisation, a large proportion of rural families moved to urban areas.<sup>57</sup> Urban areas provided more job opportunities, educational opportunities, and cultural facilities as well. As Table 2.9 shows 42 per cent of the urban population were aged below 14 in 1960 but this has drastically decreased to only 29 per cent in 1990.

**Table 2.9. The Change Of Demographic Structure By Region**

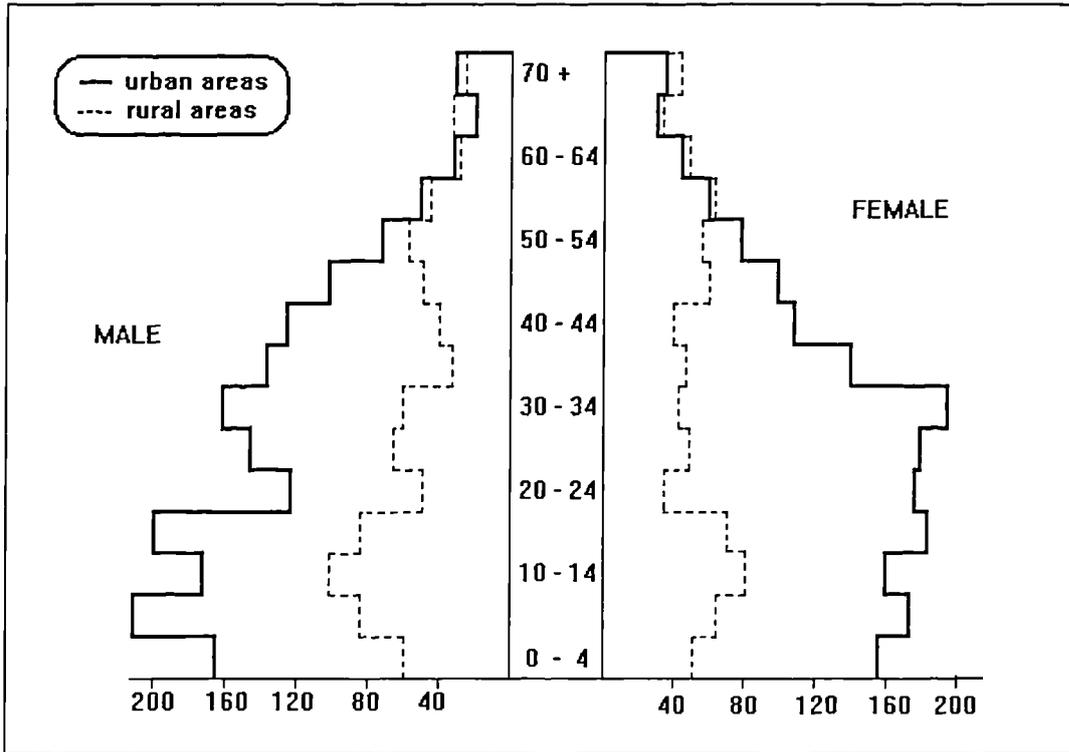
age	1960			1990		
	total	urban	rural	total	urban	rural
total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
0-14	43.0	41.6	43.5	25.9	28.6	19.0
15-64	53.7	56.2	52.8	69.4	68.3	72.2
65+	3.3	12.2	3.7	4.7	3.1	8.8

source : Census, 1960 and 1990. unit : per cent

The rural population structure has changed far more dramatically and the young decreased from 44 per cent of the rural population in 1960 to just 19 per cent in 1990. Until 1960, that is to say, the urban and rural demographic structures were not significantly different. However the rural populations are ageing faster than the population in the urban areas do. The proportion of the population under 14 has sharply declined while that of the elderly has significantly increased. Figure 2.1 shows the situation graphically. The proportion of the young rural population is considerably smaller than that in the urban areas, however that of the elderly is significantly big enough to surpass that of the urban elderlies both in proportion and in absolute numbers while the working-age population is relatively small. That means the rural structure is very much older than urban structure and eventually the dependency rate imposed on the rural working-age population is overburdened.

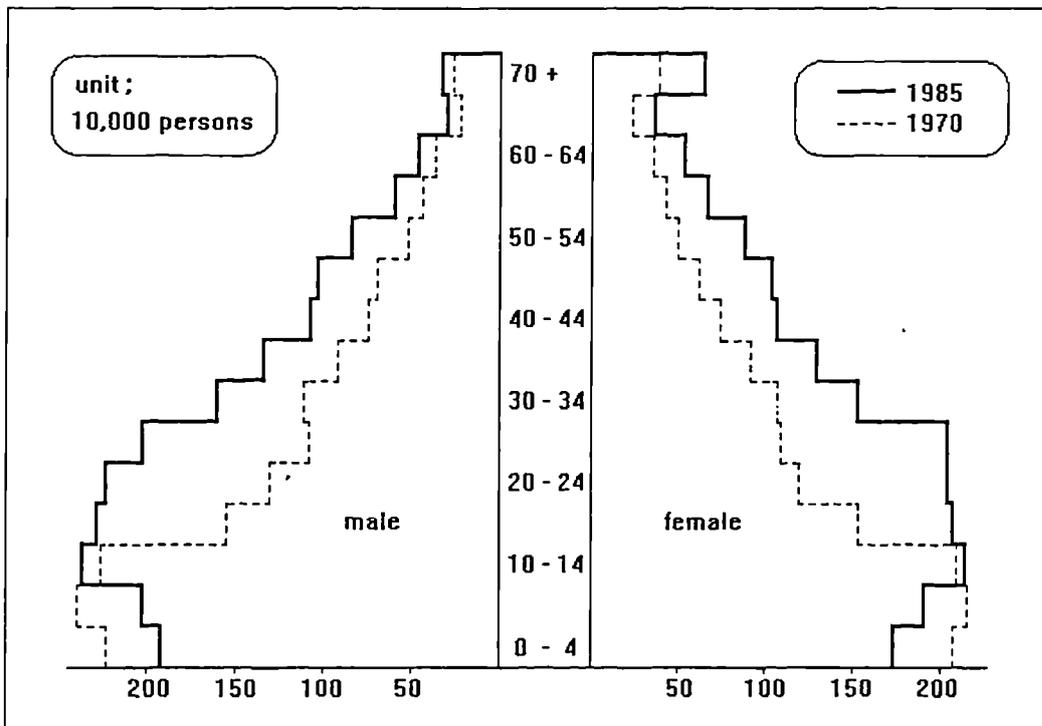
To conclude, the whole of the section, Figure 2.2 summarises population changes both in size and structure which have happened during the last few decades. First, the absolute numbers in the population have grown considerably. Second, the population structure has begun to progress from the pyramidal type to the diamond type of the developed countries showing decline in the proportion aged 0-14. Third a considerable increase in the group aged 65 and over is observed.

Figure 2.1. Population Structure By Region And By Sex In 1985



source: *Census*, 1985  
unit: ten thousand

Figure 2.2. Change Of Demographic Structure By Sex



source: EPB, *Census*, 1970, 1985. unit : thousand

This ageing trend is particularly true among women. Lastly a demographic disparity by sex is found. Conventionally females throughout the history have outnumbered males, which made patriarchal dominance possible in the marriage market. However, the structure went dramatically into reverse from the group aged 20 years and below.

## **2.3. ECONOMIC GROWTH**

Changes in the family have brought about the demographic transition, and that subsequently has had innumerable repercussions in the socio-economic field. They range from the impact on economic development to conditions in labour markets, environment, education, social security, and housing issues etc. This section limits the discussion to the examination of economic changes only.

### **2.3.1. Labour Supply**

The supply and demand of labour are closely related and interact with each other. For example an anxiety about a decrease in the labour supply can have employer make changes in methods such as introducing automation which demand less power.<sup>58</sup> Conversely, a lack of labour demand due to a long-term recession can have people reduce their fertility and so influence the labour supply.<sup>59</sup> However the primary elements inducing each trend are quite different. Labour supply is mainly determined by the demographic transition of a society, like vital changes in the level of mortality, fertility, migration, marriage, or of divorce etc. While the labour demands are primarily settled by economic conditions such as economic growth or changes in the industrial structure of society. Of course it is undeniable that demographic changes influence the demand side as well. For example a manpower shortage can induce progress towards mechanisation in the mining or construction sector, or automation of a factory in the manufacturing sector, most of which demand less labour. However many of the impacts are indirect and mediated so that this section limits discussion mainly to labour supply and its immediate relationship with the pattern of demographic change.

The total labour supply is determined by the size of the productive age population and the proportion of the population economically active. Being a certain age range of the total population, the productive age population is directly determined by the level of births, mortality, migration, etc.<sup>60</sup> It is important to note

that changes in demography trends affect the productive age population with a time differential, in effect by the births, deaths, and migration which occurred 15 years ago. The participation rate of the economically active population is influenced more by socio-economic elements than by demographic ones. Roughly three elements are crucial to the changes in the activity rate. First change in the demographic structure like sex ratio or the age structure have an effect on the economically active population. Next the rate is influenced by personal/familial factors such as the level of education, marriage status, or the number of children of individuals from each age group. Lastly labour market variables like wage level or changes in the market prosperity etc. also affect economic activity rate. The Korean labour supply was most directly and crucially influenced by changes in fertility and divorce. Changes in mortality or migration also were rapid but not as fast or as unpredictable while fertility and divorce were changing very rapidly and unpredictably.

**Table 2.10. Trends And Prospects Of Labour Force Supply**

year	total population	productive age population (%1)	economically active population		
			total (%2)	employd	unem(%3)
1963	27,184	15,085(55.5)	8,343(55.3)	7,662	681(8.2)
1965	28,705	16,591(57.8)	9,199(55.4)	8,522	677(7.4)
1970	31,435	18,253(58.1)	10,199(55.9)	9,745	454(4.5)
1975	34,679	21,833(63.0)	12,340(56.5)	11,830	510(4.1)
1980	38,124	25,335(66.5)	14,454(57.1)	13,706	748(5.2)
1985	40,806	27,553(67.5)	15,592(56.6)	14,935	619(4.0)
1990	42,793	31,723(74.1)	19,415(61.2)	18,910	505(2.6)
1995	44,870	34,354(76.6)	21,643(63.0)	-	-
2000	46,828	36,696(78.4)	23,485(64.0)	-	-
2005	48,407	38,328(79.2)	24,913(65.0)	-	-

source: 1965-1990; EPB, *Annual Report on the Economically Active Population Survey*  
1995-2005; EPB, *Population Projection*(1988).

unit: 1,000 persons - : statistics unavailable

%1 : the proportion of productive age population to the total population

%2 (labour force participation rate) : the proportion to the economically active population to the population 15 years old and over

%3 (unemployment rate) : the proportion of unemployed to the economically active

The supply of labour displays three different stages; the early 60's to the mid 70's, the latter 70's to the mid 80's and latter 80s on. First until the 1970s, the Korean economy used to be characterised by a surplus of labour. A sudden growth of population due to social factors such as repatriation and refugees directly increased the supply of labour force. Also during the period the group born in the baby-boom grew up to join the productive age population. All these social and demographic factors increased the labour supply. As shown in Table 2.10, the

productive age population as a proportion of the total population greatly increased to 63 per cent by 1975, from less than 55.5 per cent in 1963. The economically active population as well increased to 56.5 per cent by 1975. The rate of increase of the economically active population during the first half of the 1970s averaged 3.9 per cent annually. The pressure came solely from the baby-boom group of 15 years earlier. This was relatively less severe than in the West after the second war but still was quite a problem for Korea. The economically active population increased by one and half times in a decades so that labour supply increased at average of 333 thousand persons annually for ten years.<sup>61</sup> These demographic conditions had a negative impact on the national economy as population pressure continued for more than ten years owing to the impact of the baby-boom and the growing migration from rural to urban areas. At the same time the national economy was in a very difficult situation at the time as capital stock almost completely vanished through the devastating Korean War.

The reason the nation survived economically in spite of surplus of labour and the economic ruins was the Five-Year Economic Development Plan. Vigorous economic development policy from 1962 succeeded in breaking the so called vicious circle of poverty and surplus labour in Korea. The Korean economy between the early 60's and mid 70s in the initial stage of industrialisation was able to absorb the newly growing labour force as well as accumulated unemployment. Employment increased by 347 thousand at an average rate of 4 per cent annually. Thus the unemployment rate mounting to 8.3 per cent in 1963 dropped to 4.5 per cent in 1970 and again to 4.1 per cent in 1975. In addition employment below 18 hours per week which is an indication of potential unemployment decreased very rapidly from 667 thousand in 1963 to 299 thousand in 1975. The accumulated surplus labour supply decreased and the new additions to the labour force could be absorbed thanks to the economic growth rate at average almost 10 per cent every year and to production methods being labour intensive.<sup>62</sup> Much of this growth was in agriculture and light industry, both of which demanded labour-intensiveness while low wage levels also contributed as employers preferred labour to expensive machinery.

In the second stage, the supply and demand of labour force were totally different from the previous stage. The period between the latter half of the 70s and the first half 80s is remarkable for change from unlimited labour supply to manpower shortage. The latter half of 1970s show a considerable decline in the employment rate compared to the first half of 70s and the participation rate of the economically active population also increased from a yearly average 56.3 per cent

to 57.5 per cent in the periods (Table 2.10). The increase in the productive age population weakened from a yearly average growth of 3.7 per cent in the first half 70s to 3.1 per cent in the latter half of the 70s. Correspondingly the increase of the economically active population declined from 4.1 per cent to 3.3 per cent in the same period. The most critical cause of the decline was the effect of fertility control from the early 60s. The next reason was the astonishing increase in the over-seas migration of workers to Middle-East countries. The numbers of the overseas migrant reduced as much as 1 million between 1975 and 1979.<sup>63</sup>

The labour shortage was a highly transitional phenomenon. The labour shortage was not solely attributable to the demographic elements. The proportion of the over-seas migrant workers increased rapidly to as much as one per cent of the economically active population, and was one of the primary reasons for the labour shortage in the domestic market. However the more significant reason came from the failure of upgrading the quality of the labour structure. In the latter half of the 1970s, industrial strategy emphasised heavy and chemical industries, which demanded new skill workers and new managerial manpower. Thus whilst the heavy engineering and chemical industries were suffering labour shortage, other fields were in over-supply showing quite unchanged high rates of unemployment.

**Table 2.11. The Elasticity Of Employment To Economic Growth By Industry**

period	all industries	agriculture, forest & fisheries	manufacture & mining	SOC & other services
1964-1971	0.36	0.02	0.56	0.65
1972-1979	0.41	0.01	0.64	0.54
1982-1986	0.22	-1.50	0.59	0.50
1987-1991	0.31	-0.91	0.37	0.49
1992-1996	(0.26)	(-0.70)	(0.30)	(0.40)
1997-2001	(0.22)	(-0.50)	(0.25)	(0.30)

source: EPB, *The 6th Economic and Social Development Plan*, 1986.  
numbers in parenthesis are projected ones.

The situation was confirmed by the high rate of unemployment during the economic slump of the early 80s. At the end of 1979 the society fell into political and social instability following the assassination against President Park and suffered a general economic recession. The unemployment rate increased to as much as 5.2 per cent in 1980 and kept on over 4 per cent even during the period of 1981-1985, when the chaos was already under control. As a matter of the rate of increase in the productive age population greatly dropped at 2.4 per cent in the first half 80s. Moreover the proportion of the population economically active declined to 56.0 per cent. Thus the fact that unemployment was very high in the period of economic recession, in spite of the decline in the labour supply, revealed that there

was a surplus of labour unnoticed under the prosperous condition of the latter half 70s. It is true that the pressure of absolute over-population remarkably decreased however a new hint of over-population appeared in the labour market: the pressure of relative over-supply resulting from technological unemployment due mainly to labour saving technology including automation and mechanisation. Reflecting the industrial change the elasticity of employment to economic growth rapidly decreased in the 1980s as shown in Table 2.11.<sup>64</sup>

The third stage begins from the latter 1980s to the near future. The period is characterised by greater complexity than ever before. The situation can be summarised as a coexistence of labour shortage on the one hand and a relative over-population resulting from the structural changes in the labour supply on the other. The structural changes include a growing proportion of higher education labour force and the old-aged and the increasing participation of females, and also these made available by the structural unemployment. The former was caused by the unanticipated fertility behaviour of the baby-boom generation while the latter was a consequence of social changes.

Although the absolute number of the productive age population is rising, the rate of the increase has slowed down from the late 1980s as a result of the Family Planning Programme which commenced in the early 1960s. In other word the efforts made two decades ago have begun to manifest themselves from now on. (Table 2.10) More significantly the productive age population is projected to decrease from the year 2000. The New Demographic Projection (1988) of EPB (Economic Planning Board) shows a great change compared to the conventional population project of 1983. The TFR (total fertility rate: the average number of children per woman), is newly estimated to have reached 1.7 by 1987. It was a far more drastic decline than the conventional projection of 1983 which estimated that level to be reached only by the year 2000. The newly projected number of births in 1987 was no more than 651 thousand, 264 thousand births less than the earlier estimate of 802 thousand.<sup>65</sup> The reason of the significant gap between the statistics was an unexpected changes in the fertility behaviour among the young women born during the baby-boom which lasted for about a decade after the Civil War. The conventional anticipation that the baby-boom generation women would bring about another semi-baby-boom due to their absolute number missed the mark. Because they apparently hoped to have a far smaller number of babies. Of course the change would not have an immediate impact, however, changes in fertility behaviour might bring about both a decrease of the productive age population and a labour shortage from the year 2000 or in the early 21st century.<sup>66</sup>

The assertion that the decrease in the fertility rate does not have a short-term impact on the productive age population does not imply that it has no influence at all on labour supply. Rather it can cause, in the short term perspective, an increase in the economically active population of a society as whole.<sup>67</sup> A decrease in the fertility rate can promote women's participation in economic activity with enough time span after rearing a small number of children. Partly reflecting this, change in the female labour participation rate has increased from 47.1 per cent of 1965 to 57.9 per cent in 1985, and again to 63.4 per cent in 1989. Considering the unexpectedly rapid decrease in fertility among post-war generation women, their economic activity is easily anticipated to increase quite drastically in the near future around the year 2000 on.

Of course, the changes in fertility are not the only causes of the increase in the female economic participation rate. A sharp increase in the divorce rate is another cause that increases the labour supply. According to the New Demographic Project (1988) of EPB, the crude divorce rate of 0.47, increased to 0.62 in 1980, and again far more drastically than expected to 1.07 in 1987. The rate is anticipated to increase further for the time being. It is important to focus on the divorce occurring in the age group 25-34. The divorce rate for this age cohort was recorded at 15 per cent. While female participation rate in economic activity is lowest among the age cohort 25-34, because they are newly married or their children are very young, the very fact that the divorce rate is the highest among this age cohort connotes a high possibility of a sharp increase in their participation in economic activity.

Before and after the year 2000, labour supply is expected to decrease greatly in the long-run thanks to the sharp decrease in fertility among the post-war generation women. Nevertheless, the change in fertility or a sharp increase in the divorce rate increases the female participation rate in economic activity, which might cause a relative over-supply in the labour market.<sup>68</sup>

### **2.3.2. Economic Development**

Economic growth is generally measured by the increase in per capita income. As per capita income is being calculated by division of GNP to population, the increase of per capita income is in the inverse proportion to the population size. Per capita income has grown from a meagre US\$87 in 1962 to US\$5,500 in 1991.<sup>69</sup> The pace of the forced-draught development of the economy has been remarkable

even by the standards of the East Asian newly industrialised countries. Of course two criticisms can be made against the formula. The first is a question about the real variable that produced an increase in the income level. It can be debatable if the *de facto* increase has come from the increase in the GNP or decrease in the fertility rate. As a matter of fact since Korea launched its first five-year development plan in 1962, real GNP has expanded by an average of more than 8 per cent per year. As a result the GNP grew from US\$2.3 billion in 1962 to US\$170 billion in 1988. Of course it is true that the increase in the GNP has greatly contributed for the increase in the per capita income. Nevertheless unless population growth slackened the reproduction on a progressive scale based on the increase of investment expansion was hardly possible.<sup>70</sup> It is not difficult to find developing countries suffering from investment reduction due to financial overburden in the educational sector due to a increase in the school age population.<sup>71</sup> It is definite that the decrease in the fertility rate has contributed to the increase in the per capita income. The next criticism against the formula lies on the attributes of the GNP calculation. GNP is in a functional relation to the size of population. If population increases GNP also increases. Unless the population growth goes with a proportional growth in reproduction and an improvement of labour quality (technology), it eventually diminishes the return of the nation's economy. For Korea poor in resources, fertility decline was a good strategy to help develop the national economy and per capita income as well in the long run.

Adam Smith argued that an increase in the population is a precondition for economic development under a closed economy system.<sup>72</sup> Increasing food production to feed a growing population, the agricultural sector develops as the initial stage of the economic development process. As agricultural productivity is improved and agricultural production increases, demand for agricultural product, according to the Engel's law<sup>73</sup>, remains static and produce a surplus of farm product and a surplus of labour in the agricultural sector. These surplus agricultural products and surplus labour power in turn form a base for industrial development. Thus an increase in the population in the agricultural sector is a precondition for the development of manufacturing industry or for an overall industrialisation under the closed economy system. However, in addition to the surplus labour, there must also be a surplus of agricultural products which can be diverted into the capital and raw materials for industrialisation. Naturally if population pressure is too great the possibility of a surplus of production is reduced because of the consumption of the agricultural products.

In the case of Korea under the open economy system, the role of the agricultural sector at least until the early 1970s was limited to the supply of surplus labour. The Korean economy has relied for the capital for industrialisation and raw materials on overseas investment.<sup>74</sup> The increase in the population brought about a level of demand which exceeded the availability of home-produced agricultural products and caused a serious burden on Korea's economic development. Thanks to the successful population policy in accordance with other factors like cultural, political, economic and international, industrialisation was able to accelerate. The decrease in the population growth rate on industrialisation has had three effects. First the financial burden to import overseas food was reduced and a surplus of agricultural products was established particularly from the early 1980s. Second demographic change allowed an increase in savings which could promote investment following the formula <economy in consumption>-<accretion of domestic saving>-<reduction in the induction of foreign capital>. Lastly demographic change encouraged the development of capital intensified advanced technology industrialisation. With its orientation to the qualitative change of population, the family planning programme of the early 60s led to a change from quantitative labour to qualitative labour. Without that programme, there is a strong possibility that the Korean economy would have remained an underdeveloped industrial structure with a relative priority given to unskilled labour intensive production. To sum up even if demographic change, the fertility decline in particular was not the only cause of rapid economic development, it played a significant role in the fast industrialisation process in accordance with cultural, political, economic and international factors etc.

#### 2.4. CONCLUSION : THE SPEED OF CHANGE

To understand the overall social changes occurring in Korea, it is very useful to look at the speed with which they have taken place. Social mobility can be a useful measure of this and moreover is an indication of the inner motivation underlying social change as a whole over the last half century.<sup>75</sup>

The astonishingly high speed of social change reflects a strong enthusiasm for a limited social objective. The race to change accelerated as this enthusiasm grew. Traditional Korean Neo-Confucianism blended with Buddhism gave a distinctive interpretation of the class system which can be summarised in the phrase "there is no seed of *yangban*hood (classhood)."<sup>76</sup> Even though hard to attain, high status was, at least in principle, open to every class and was achievable through the

study of Confucianism as prescribed by law.<sup>77</sup> In present day Korea this idea has survived to motivate free competition among individuals. Nobody was believed to be born *yangban*. It was rather a target to be achieved. Everyone could participate in the competition to attain the status.

In the course of modernisation and industrial development a new pattern of competition to gain the most valuable resources emerged. If land was the most valuable asset in the past, in the present day money, power, reputation, etc. have become more important.<sup>78</sup> Achievable resources have become far more diversified and magnified and more widely accessible to a wider public. This has induced and activated the whole nation with the enthusiasm for upward social mobility. In the past social mobility was mostly a competition among the upper class due to the extremely limited resources. The boundary for participation in competition for status has been opened to the members of other social classes in present day Korea.

Education was, as it was in the past, a prerequisite condition to enter competition. Education was the most certain ticket to the other resources of society.<sup>79</sup> A high school career ensured a high salary and high social reputation, and satisfaction as well. This was particularly true during the Five-Year Economic Development Programme. The government's efforts to promote education culminated in the Charter of National Education promulgated in 1968.<sup>80</sup> It served to guide people in developing their creative power to contribute to revitalising national strength and common prosperity. The charter stressed a balance between tradition and development and the needs of the individual and the needs of the nation. Meeting the needs of the nation by attaining a high degree of education was recognised the best ticket to achieve personal upward social mobility. Present day Korea is no different from the past in the sense that education is the best strategy. The only difference is in the syllabus at school. In the past, the Confucian scriptures were taught in the present day the emphasis is on modern knowledge.

Family values operated as a guiding principle for upward social mobility. In other words the family, as in the past, was the basic unit to participate in the competition for social mobility. Most families were not rich enough to have all of their children enter high school. Strategically the child with the best prospects among all the children was selected to compete for the highest levels of education. Daughters were usually excluded from the selection because they were still believed to belong to another family after their marriage. Among sons however there was no difference and the stem principle did not apply in the selection among sons. But once a son was selected the other children were expected to support him

in earnest. The other rural girls and boys, not chosen to compete within the educational system, left home to work as a housemaid or an unskilled factory labourer in the cities. They sent what they had earned to help have the chosen brother educated. That is the reason for the big flow of capital from the cities to rural areas from the end of 60s until the middle of 1980s.<sup>81</sup> Of course this arrangement was possible on the premise of a strong family tie. The reward they were to share after the selected brother was successful was primarily neither an economic one nor political power but just the enhancement of family reputation and self-satisfaction. The chosen brother poured his best efforts into gaining entry to a good high school to win the competition among the others selected from other families. However the competition was not easy due to the educational system. Colleges and universities operated under strict enrolment limits. Because of the difference in college admission quotas and the number of applicants, each school year produced a large number of repeaters who added to the intensity of competition for college admission. This disparity has been continuously augmented because the rate of increase in the number of high school graduates has far surpassed that of college places. It used to be described as 'exam hell'<sup>82</sup> and every December universities' entrance examinations have been the focus of nation-wide news. This competitive zeal was not limited to the chosen brothers only but generally pervaded the whole generation at that time.

The final goal of this demanding competition was not so much academic distinction only but rather gaining a good occupational job.<sup>83</sup> The reason they invested a huge effort in education was to gain access to a good job that assured upward social mobility. Candidates applied to the academic department which was assumed to provide the best access to the labour market after graduation. Occupational transmission from father was almost totally absent. The main concern was upward social mobility.

The reason present day Koreans have enthusiasm for upward social mobility is because *dé facto* social mobility was quite easy. If social mobility had been as hard as in traditional society or a caste system, there would have been no reason for Koreans to try in earnest to get higher education and a better job. Table 2.12 demonstrates the prevailing enthusiasm for social mobility and is an indirect sign of social mobility having occurred during modernisation.<sup>84</sup>

The table produced from the EPB survey in 1988 shows three phenomena. First most present day Koreans think upward social mobility quite possible within their generation or at latest within children's generation. The proportion thinking

the between-generation social mobility difficult is less than 6 per cent. Naturally the proportion believing mobility to be very easy (I) is lower than that believing it to be moderately easy (II). Nevertheless, overall attitude in society is generally optimistic about social mobility.

**Table 2.12. Attitudes Toward Social Mobility By Educational Level**

Respondents' education	total	easy		fair	difficult			
		I	II		III	IV		
possibility of between-generation social mobility ;								
total	100.0	64.0	21.6	42.4	30.2	5.8	5.2	0.6
primary	100.0	56.6	14.8	41.8	36.0	7.4	6.7	0.8
middle	100.0	61.6	20.5	41.1	32.3	6.1	5.5	0.6
high	100.0	68.0	26.0	42.0	27.3	4.7	4.2	0.6
university	100.0	75.1	28.0	47.2	20.7	4.1	3.6	0.5
possibility of intra-generation social mobility ;								
total	100.0	53.6	15.9	37.7	34.3	12.1	10.6	1.6
primary	100.0	49.5	12.3	37.2	37.8	12.7	11.0	1.7
middle	100.0	52.1	15.1	37.0	35.7	12.2	10.8	1.4
high	100.0	55.7	18.2	37.5	32.0	12.3	10.6	1.7
university	100.0	60.1	19.8	40.3	29.8	10.1	9.0	1.1

source: SIIK, 1988.

I: very easy to move upward,

II: moderately easy to move upward

III: very difficult to move upward,

IV: moderately difficult to move upward

primary: primary school graduates and under,

middle: middle school graduates

high: high school graduates,

university: college or university graduates and over

Thus most Koreans believe upward mobility is not impossible and the only element required is a blood-and-tears endeavour. Secondly attitudes are more optimistic about between-generation mobility than about intra-generational mobility. The difference denotes that social mobility is achieved not by chance but by endeavour for long time. However, the proportion with positive attitudes about intra-generational mobility is not small. More than one out of every two Koreans believe upward mobility is achievable within their own generation. The fact denotes present Korean society is an open society and that many things can be achieved by individuals and for the nation. If society as a whole is perceived to have limited achievable resources, the apparent possibility of gaining access to the resources would be narrowed. Finally attitudes are exactly related to the respondents' level of education. Even the less educated are quite optimistic about social mobility chances, however, the more educated, the more optimistic the respondents felt about social mobility. Thus as many as two out of three university graduates believe social mobility is possible within their own generation while three out of four believe it to be possible from one generation to the next. This confirms that education has been a very important mechanism in achievement in present day

Korea as it was in traditional society.<sup>85</sup> In this sense at least, modern Korea has scarcely changed from the traditional pattern.

According to a Korean Gallup survey in 1985 there are several occupations that are perceived as having the highest social status in present day Korea. They are scholars, higher government officials, politicians, and great entrepreneurs. They are the jobs present day parents like their children achieve. The two latter jobs are regarded as attained when the individual has made his fortune and is in a powerful situation, while the first two jobs are attained purely by blood-and-tears endeavour and hard competition through national examinations. That is why the final successful applicants for the first two jobs are far more respected than those of the latter two jobs in Korea. Thus the best way to win the most respected social status has been through educational achievement. In hard times when an individual family had not enough money to educate all of their children, a promising son was selected from each family and was encouraged to compete with other prospective sons in the educational system. This was a family competition to earn the most socially respected status and better rewards. Thus modern society is not greatly different from traditional Korea in the sense that it was family competition and education was the most effective means to win the competition. The greatest difference is that the social resources to achieve are wider than traditional society could offer. As a result people have more actively sought the possibility of upward social mobility and that is why the nation as a whole could achieve the dramatic rate of social change within such a short period of modernisation. Of course it is quite risky to conclude a relationship between the economic growth and social mobility under the condition actual mobility rates are unavailable, however considering the fact that attitudes on a social phenomena generally reflects actual condition in a society, the conclusion may be not totally rootless in understanding present day Korea.

**PART II**

**CHANGES IN**

**FAMILY STRUCTURE**

**1950s to 1980s**

Part II comprising of four chapters examines the result of socio-economic change or modernisation of the last four decades in the family field: how the family has changed and resisted in response to the changes in other areas. First Chapter 3 as an analytical framework, reviews the traditional family: family structure, family demography, marriage custom, inheritance system, and clan group, which formulated the uniqueness of traditional society. Chapter 4 examines changes in family size and pattern, and analyses what sort of social problems the changes provoked. Chapter 5 examines, from the aspects of system approaches, how the traditional clan groups have turned themselves to a new form in response to the need from the modernisation, and what has changed and what has not changed among the traditional marriage custom as an institution, and what is the result of the changes in the marriage custom to family life cycle of individuals. Lastly Chapter 6, primarily from the interactionist aspect, examines how the relationship among family members, particularly between husband and wife, has changed, what are new roles allocated to each family members, how the traditional role differentiation turned to fit a new need from industrialisation, what sort of conflicts have sprung out from the changes, and lastly, who has taken more power in the process of changes in the role relationship.

# CHAPTER THREE

## THE TRADITIONAL FAMILY

### IN KOREA

Three major topics will be discussed here; first of all, the concept of the Korean traditional society used in this thesis, next, a description of traditional society, and, lastly, an analysis of ideological, socio-economic, cultural, and demographic aspects of traditional family structure.

#### 3.1. TRADITIONALITY

Whenever there is a discussion of social change or modernisation, one can hardly omit the past from which the present has sprung. Nevertheless, it is not easy to choose exactly which historical period and which element of the period should be identified as traditional. Characteristics which identify the present have emerged from various social backgrounds each of which have different historical roots and each one has intermingled, unceasingly, in the process of social change. The difficulty in defining both the period and content of the traditional identifies the advantages of an operational definition.

In this thesis, the traditional has been defined as referring to **the Chosŏn dynasty after 17th century with its ideological pillar, Neo-Confucianism**. Even though this has been determined for analytic convenience, there is also substantial theoretical justification for doing so.

First of all, this period has been chosen because it is the nearest past which can be effectively contrasted to the present. Of course Confucianism is not the only tradition which has formed the modern era. Elements from Buddhism, Taoism, or shamanism which have far longer or sometimes even stronger historical

background, have still survived and have exerted their influences on everyday life of present day Koreans. Even so, it was Confucianism that has been most deeply influential, particularly, in relation to family structure and, accordingly, that also has been most severely altered during the social change of the last hundred years of so called modernisation. In other words, it was Confucianism that has had the most systematic influence in the traditional or pre-modern era.

Next, there has been an implicit agreement or a consensus among family sociologists about prescribing Chosŏn society for the traditional period. As a matter of fact, in terms of literature, most articles discussing the modernisation of the traditional family structure published since 1945, have set up Confucianism or the Chosŏn dynasty as a frame of comparative analysis.<sup>1</sup> There is no reason to disregard this general agreement unless there be a reasonable alternative.

Lastly but most importantly, it was from the end of the 16th century or the beginning of the 17th century, in spite of its early import in the 14th century, that Neo-Confucianism stabilised and exerted its deep influences not only on the ruling class but also on the ruled. Again the mid-17th century was the turning point from a non-patriarchal family system which had been a strong tradition for more than 15 centuries before the 17th century to the patriarchal pattern which was a by-product of Confucian ideology. It was in the 17th century that there was an institutionalisation of the patriarchal family system in the base of society by passing through factionalism after the social change following on, the Japanese Invasion(Im-jin Oe-ran, 1592), which, in turn, caused fossilisation of Confucian ideology.

## 3.2. THE SOCIAL SITUATION

### 3.2.1. Neo-Confucianism

With the establishment of Chosŏn dynasty, the founder T'aejo and his retainers searched for legitimacy for their revolution from a new value system, *viz.* Confucianism. They confucianized not just politics, political structures, or economic systems only but also intellectual, cultural patterns, and social institutions as well. They got rid of ideological and religious remnants of the Koryŏ dynasty based on Buddhism by adopting Confucianism as the national religion, and by supplanting the hereditary aristocratic system with a civil bureaucratic one with a state examination system, and by setting up Confucian shrines on village level

throughout the nation instead of breaking down Buddhist temples. As a result, Chosŏn society became more Confucian than Confucian China.<sup>2</sup>

As a matter of fact, Confucianism was not a newly introduced ideology. There are records of various forms of Confucian practices throughout Korea's early history. The Primitive Confucianism had already reached Korea from before the fourth century.<sup>3</sup> The Unified Korea, Shilla, embracing the T'ang model, established a national university for teaching Confucian texts in 682, and there was an office of government in charge of education.<sup>4</sup> Coming to the Koryŏ dynasty, Chinese political concepts and systems and Confucian civil service examination (*Kwagŏ*) system were imported in 958, and brought about an inevitable evolution of Korean culture during the later stages of the dynasty. Many famous scholars arose, important literature was published. A national university called *Kukchagam* was established in the capital city in 992, and many Confucian schools in local regions in the late tenth century.<sup>5</sup> Thereafter Confucianism began to gain influence in staunchly Buddhist Koryŏ and survived side by side with the dominant religious belief.

Still, it was not Confucianism that held the supreme position in the philosophy of everyday life and cultivation of the self but Buddhism. As Ch'oe Sung-No, a Confucian scholar associated with the establishment of central bureaucracy patterned after the Chinese system, states, the influence of Confucianism was limited to regulating the state affairs of the present only whereas Buddhism was exerting its influence deep into the core of belief system of Koryŏ society. Even among elites, it was simply a ruling code rather than a profound philosophy.

There remained a great tension between the Confucian literati and the Buddhist aristocrats on two points. On the one hand, Confucian scholars could not agree with the Buddhist idea that one should denounce one's family ties to become a monk because the very basis of Confucianism was founded on strong family and social relationships. On the other hand, the literati began to question the excessive amount of money spent on Buddhist celebrations, and the power and wealth distributed both to temples in general and their aristocratic adherents possessing big estates. However there was, at the time, no ideological justification for displacing Buddhism.

It was just around this period that the Neo-Confucianism advocated by Chu Hsi (1130-1200) of Sung China, was introduced in Korea to become rapidly imbued among literati. He had identified the logical connection between morality

and politics. Highly moral behaviour became a prerequisite of good government and governing. Chu Hsi revitalised the Mencian doctrines combining with them elements of transcendental Buddhism and Taoism and put the morality of both individuals and governors at the core of Confucian decree. Confucianism became the orthodoxy among Korean literati and came to be accepted as a popular moral ethics and even as a religion. Eventually, the moralistic platform of Neo-Confucianism got to be the rationale among literati for revolt against the Buddhism of the Koryŏ dynasty and to open an unique political power game to monarchs in the Chosŏn era. In the 14th century, during the final years of Koryŏ society, Korea thus became test-bed for the Neo-Confucianism for the half millennium of the following Chosŏn dynasty.

### 3.2.2. The *Yoksong* Philosophy

The Neo-Confucianism adopted among scholars, which became a plea to revolt against Koryŏ society, and which got to be a political cornerstone of future Chosŏn, did not allow any other interpretation regarding the nature and behavioural patterns of government, society, and individual human being. There was "no room for political reconciliation or compromise in dealing with differences of opinion concerning policy, court rituals, and ethical and moral issues. Compromise meant dishonesty, disloyalty, and depravity."<sup>6</sup>

Broadly speaking, it can be abstracted into two doctrines on human nature and behavioural patterns; *sugi* (cultivation of self) and *chi'in* (governance)<sup>7</sup>. Even though they are like head and tail of the same token, there was different priority in practice. While the former was emphasised by a group of Neo-Confucians who were more concerned with the study of the origins of human nature in ethical, metaphysical terms, the other was given primacy by a group who were interested in the study of practical, political ethics that expound the mutual relationship of ruler and subject. It was the latter which gave way to the philosophy of *yŏksŏng* revolution. Chŏng To-jŏn or Cho Chun was one of literati who had crystallised *chi'in* philosophy as a basis for revolt against an old order and to rebuild a new one based on it.

In the *Chosŏn Kyŏnggukjŏn* (the Administrative Code of Chosŏn) submitted by Chong to King Yi Sunggye, the relation between monarch, bureaucrats, and *baksŏng* (hundred surnames - a metaphor for the people) is prescribed. The monarch is the person who executes the Mandate of Heaven.

Officialdom shares the monarch's role and as a result, both monarch and bureaucracy have higher and more noble status than individual *baksŭng*. But they are not expected to reign over people but to practice *in* by means of safeguarding, loving, and stabilising them economically because '*baksŭng* is the foundation of a nation and is the Heaven of the monarch.'<sup>18</sup> In other words, even if the monarch is the agent of Mandate of Heaven, as the will of Heaven is not permanent but changeable according to the mind of people in collectivity, if he loses *in* from his mind, he loses popularity and accordingly can be replaced by another monarch of different surname who has the support of the people. This is *yŏksŏng* (substitute of surname) revolution. Based on the above philosophy, a peaceful change of regime was possible in 1392 from Wang dynasty, Koryŏ to the Chosŏn dynasty whose king uses the surname, Yi.

### 3.2.3. The Formation Of Bureaucratic Society

Apart from the nominal aspect of the *yŏksŏng* revolution, there was a decisively important point at the level of practice, which determined not only the fate of the Wang dynasty but also the future of Chosŏn dynasty. Bureaucracy was that. It was seeded in the interpretation to the role of officialdom. If the Wang dynasty was overthrown according to *yŏksŏng* ideology, the same logic was applicable to the new dynasty. So there was a need to prevent the monarch losing *in* which is the core of the Mandate of Heaven. As a result, a significant role to check and balance the authority of the monarch via both the power of speech and formal political organs, was given to officialdom. And it was regarded as sincere loyalty to the monarch to check everything which deviated from Confucian principle.

The idealistic role of bureaucrats was visualised through several political systems. The Council of State, *Uijŏngbu* which was the policy deliberation council, would be an example. "Three High State Councillors discussed important matters of state, conveyed their **consensus** to the king and, receiving his decision, transmitted it to appropriate executive branch."<sup>19</sup> Through this organisation, arbitrary decisions by the king were prevented and even the smallest actions of kings, queens, and their families were checked and criticised. Beside *Uijŏngbu*, there were three mechanisms called *samsa* which functioned as organs of public opinion, like the Office of Special Advisers (*Hongmun'gwan*), the Office of the Inspector-General (*Sahŏnbu*), and the Office of the Censor-General (*Saganwon*). Many other institutions performed the role of checking the monarch from

despotism, including the Royal Secretariat (*Sŭngjŏngwon*), the National Confucian Academy (*Sŏnggyungwan*), the Hall of Worthies (*Chiphyŏnjŏn*) etc. In a word, officialdom functioned as a practical transmitter of the Mandate of Heaven, and society grew into 'one of oligarchic centralism by bureaucratic power and Confucian ideology',<sup>10</sup>

The reason Confucianism could infiltrate deep into the new society was that the proponents of the Confucian value system were the ruling classes themselves who had established the Chosŏn dynasty. They obtained abundant economic resources and socio-political power through study of Confucian doctrines and state examinations. They devoted themselves to the investigation of Confucian values from which their political and economic interests originated and to the maintenance of the system by establishing Confucianism as the state religion penetrating every part of social structure and accordingly reinforcing their vested privileges.

With the growth of bureaucracy the contest between the monarch and officialdom on the one hand, and the factionalism among bureaucrats on the other, was inevitable. The former continued until the early of 16th century with bloody purges called *sa-hwa* (the disaster for scholars). But unfortunately, this, in turn led officialdom to split into factions with opposing interpretations of Confucian concepts competing for the control of important government positions.<sup>11</sup> These internal difficulties weakened the foundation of the kingdom causing a deterioration of political and economic conditions and the decline of creative spirits from the end of 16th century.

During the process of *sa-hwa* and factionalism, the literati felt the necessity to intensify kinship solidarity. The strong clan network was thought as a good mechanism for formulation of public opinions, in league with other families, to resist the monarch and to compete against rivals. And once it had been successful in resistance and competition, kinship served to maintain the given privileges. Accordingly, to meet the need of rivalry, the relationship among members within the kinship network became a centralistic and authoritarian rather than a democratic one. That was the reason why Chosŏn society from the 17th century was stabilised with a patriarchal family structure. This exactly coincided with the *sugi* (self-cultivation)<sup>12</sup> doctrine of Neo-Confucianism and that is why *hyo* (filial piety) was laid as a higher virtue than *ch'ung* (loyalty). For example, whereas the political legitimacy of royal authority was questioned by the *baeksŏng*-centric idea, 'monarch should get the mind of people' for '*baeksŏng* is the foundation of a nation', but the legitimacy of parents' social position never ever had been queried

from a child-centred idea. In a word, compared to the relative, conditional and reciprocal value of loyalty demanding responsibility and self-sacrifice from political groups, *hyo* to parents was an absolute and unconditional virtue in Korean society, at least after the 17th century. These phenomena were visualised through publication of *Chokbo* (genealogies) which could be used as an ostentation of kinship solidarity and prestigious authority of a clan and, in return, as a text book to socialise descendants to the importance of familial union.<sup>13</sup>

### 3.2.4. Class Society

The Choson dynasty was called the *yangban* society. Not only because the group of *yangban* took hegemony to control both socio-economic structure and superstructure of the society but also their ideology and culture was moulded into the core of the Choson belief system commonly shared even with other classes.

The term, *yangban* means literally 'the two groups,' the civil and military branches of the bureaucracy who achieved their due position through national examinations. As the civil bureaucracy became the dominant influence throughout the country, the term came to signify mainly the bureaucracy *cum* the Confucian literati class rather than the military.<sup>14</sup>

The social structure of the Chosŏn dynasty was classified into three categories, namely the *yangban*, the commoner, and the lowborn, and into four by dichotomization of *yangban* to *yangban* and *chung-in* from around 17th century. The lowborn was composed mainly of the slave population and partly of outcasts who hereditarily worked at such occupation as butchering, tanning, and wickerwork, including puppeteers and exorcists. While the commoners consisted mainly of peasants and a trifling minority of artisans and merchants. The *yangban* were the ruling class and protectors of Confucian ideology, *chung-in* being composed of technocrats, born of concubines of *yangban*, and as humble placement in the local areas, stood between the *yangban* and the ruled.

The Choson dynasty was classless society in a nominal sense. The *yangban* status was not ascribed but achieved by taking government posts via *kwagŏ* (national examinations) or by becoming a literati through the study and moral *praxis* of Confucian classics. As a result the commoners could attend public schools and were allowed and encouraged to apply for national examination. Conversely, the *yangban* would fall to the *chung-in* or commoner class if there

was, for generations, none who achieved high position in the government position or who showed academically outstanding achievement. Accordingly social mobility was allowed to any person except the lowborn at least by law.<sup>15</sup>

But the reality was different. Almost no peasants had time enough to read and understand sophisticated Confucian classics. Almost no commoners were allowed economic resource enough for the long preparation for the national examinations. Moreover application to *kwagŏ* and provision of a government position after success in final examinations was restricted according to the family he came from. For example, the candidates were asked to write, on their application form, names of four ancestors (father, paternal grand-father, paternal great-grand-father, and maternal grandfather). From these entries, firstly, lowborn-originated or concubine-originated family were sorted out and next, distinguished families were selected among rest of them. Accordingly it was almost impossible for non-*yangban* class to apply for the examination, and even if he was a successful candidate with a top grade, to get a due government position. Naturally these were monopolised amongst the ruling class, and were ascribed to generation after generation of the *yangban*.

In the 16th century and side by side with the completion of the bureaucratic system, access to the national examination for the limited number of government posts was getting more and more competitive. This resulted in two important social trends: the rise of 'rustic literati' called *sarim* and the reinforcement of the family system.

First of all, the *yangban* felt a need to have their children have an intensive and high-quality education under the supervision of noted scholars. As a result, instead of sending their children to public school, they established a private one or supported an established private school directed by famous Confucian scholars. These private academies were called *sŏ-won*, and the literati, their disciples and followers were commonly designated as *sarim*(forest of scholars). *Sŏ-won* sprang up everywhere and numbered more than one hundred by the early of 17th century. And nearly three hundred *sŏ-won* were founded during Sukjong's reign (1674-1720) alone.<sup>16</sup> At the same time, together with the political factionalism of the *yangban* class, *sarim* groups increased rapidly representing neo-mainstream of Confucian scholarship on the one hand, and accelerating factionalism on the other hand. In a word, the *sŏ-won* functioned not merely as a preparatory course to the national examination but also as an outpost to compete against other academic schools, other political parties, or other clans .

On the other hand, the over-heated climate in the examination system reinforced kinship solidarity. As mentioned above, accreditation to a good family increased from the 15th century as a requisite to apply to national examinations and to get a good position in the government bureaucracy. Such a demand stirred up the consciousness of the *yangban* class to keep patrilineal purity of their lineage which was displayed externally through the publication of *chokbo* (genealogy) and which again was internalised to the descendants through feed-back procedure. As a result endogamy within the *yangban* class and extreme exogamy to clan was the inevitable pattern of marriage and there was no place in the *chokbo* for descents of concubines or the lowborn. Meanwhile, as a success in a national examination was alpha and omega guaranteeing economic wealth and social status directly to one's own family, indirectly to one's clan, enthusiasm among *yangban* about education was not restricted to his sons only, but extended to sons of his relatives who were clever but poor. Accordingly, there used to be set up an autonomous *kye* (mutual aided society) among members of same clan or same local community, apart from government policy. The *kye* had the role of mutual aid both in economics and in labour power on the one hand, and the role of mutual promotion of socially encouraged behaviour, and of mutual constraints to deviance on the other hand. In the end, the *kye* became one of the significant social networks which mobilised the later half of Chosŏn era.

The social structure of Chosŏn society met a serious challenge during the Japanese invasion which lasted for seven years (1592-1598). The whole of the Korean peninsula was disrupted economically, politically, culturally, and ideologically. The class system was one of the reasons which increased the rigidity of Chosŏn society after the 17th century.

The degeneration of Chosŏn class system can be viewed from two sides. First of all, the ruled lost their respect for the *yangban* class because government was too weak and too slow to react to the Japanese invasion, and second the fact that invaders were not from a big country like Ming China but from none other than Japan who was known to be inferior and barbarian at that time both culturally and economically, and in Confucian spirit. This hurt national self-esteem. Moreover, the people disappointed by invasion turned angry and could not believe in the process of recovery after the war, due to the sluggish government reaction and *yangban* exploitation. Naturally there had arisen a new idea against empty and fossilised Confucianism, called the *silhak* (pragmatism) idea. Unfortunately it was drowned in the political factional whirlpool between ideological groups of orthodoxy and heterodoxy. This ended by the victory of

orthodox Confucianism. This not only intensified prevailing ideology but also deepened the fossilisation of family life and reinforced the patriarchal family system.

On the other hand the seven-year war meant disorganisation of the lowborn class which had been the economic and social base for the *yangban* class. First, during the war, the census registers and official document on the lowborn were either burnt by the invaders or destroyed and stolen by the lowborn themselves. They could now claim to be commoners or even *yangban*. Moreover what made the thing more complicated was the fact that "the government resorted to selling official titles and ranks in exchange for grain contributions in fixed amounts in order to overcome its financial difficulties resulting from a shortage of food grains."<sup>17</sup> Anybody who was rich, even the lowborn, could become *yangban*, and conversely, any *yangban* could fall to the status of a commoner if he was poor. Social mobility thus increased greatly among classes in 17th century Korea.

Ironically, the openness of the class system did not directly contribute to its disorganisation. Instead, hegemony was concentrated into the *yangban* class. There were two reasons for this. Ideologically speaking, Confucianism, with its intrinsically jealousy toward any other interpretation or ideas, had already spread far and deep into layers of the ruled. And the orthodoxy of Confucianism was reaffirmed through the factional strife amongst the heterodox academies called *silhak* after 17th century. Accordingly the many social changes could not uproot the existing common belief system, particularly about the ideological justification of the *yangban* system *sui generis*. At the same time the ruled were stimulated with a temptation to move upward to *yangban* status. On the other hand, from a realistic point of view, to be a *yangban* meant everything. It was not a simple social honour or credit, but also a certificate to guarantee economic wealth and political power. As a matter of course, instead of striving to reorganise the society in its intrinsic structure, the competition to enter into the given *yangban* class, and efforts to follow family life which the existing *yangban* class used to emphasise, were increased in the later half of the Choson period.

**Table 3.1. Social Mobility Amongst Classes In The Early 18th Century**

class of son	class of father			
	total	<i>yangban</i>	commoner	lowborn
total(N)	100.0(1461)	100.0(214)	100.0(959)	100.0(288)
<i>yangban</i>	13.8	49.1	9.9	0.3
commoner	60.2	47.0	80.1	6.3
lowborn	26.0	7.5	10.0	93.4

source : HSKF, p.206.

Table 3.1<sup>18</sup> shows the result of the social change in terms of class structure. All the classes of sons, largely speaking, had followed those of their fathers. But at least one person out of five, in total, had moved down-ward or upward (8% upward, 14% down-ward). Among them, most of down-ward mobility to lowborn was caused by mother's class, say, concubinage. The National Code in 1485 prescribes the class of a person to follow that of the mother. And upward mobility was achieved through payment of ransom or through national examination. In conclusion, in inverse proportion to the fall of *yangban* authority, the percentage belonging to the *yangban* population class was increased via national examination or trafficking of official posts on the one hand, the Confucian ideology of familism was diffused more widely and more deeply on the other hand.

### 3.3. TRADITIONAL FAMILY STRUCTURE<sup>19</sup>

#### 3.3.1. The Ideological Aspect

The family was significantly influenced and transformed by Confucian moral teachings and ethics during Chosŏn society because the family was the alpha and omega of Korean Confucianism. In other words, among the virtues of Confucianism, the *hyo* (filial piety to parents) which symbolises patriarchal family structure, was regarded as the most sacred items in the Chosŏn belief system. Only Chosŏn society has ever made *hyo* the core of its social symbolic system.

In Confucianism society was seen as woven with *samgang* i.e. three cardinal relationships; between the monarch and retainer, between parents and children, and between husbands and wives. *In* (benevolence) was regarded as the highest idea which stabilises and smoothes the society, and *ye* (courtesy, ritual) the social realisation and objective manifestation of *in*. To achieve *ye*, required the practice of *o-ryun* (five ethical norms). These were the norms of justice and righteousness between the ruler and his vassals: cordiality and closeness between parents and children: distinction between husbands and wives: order between elders and juniors: and trust between friends. Among them, Chosŏn literati interpreted *hyo* as the most absolute value which following the original idea of Neo-Confucianism emphasised moral and ethical principles in human relationships.<sup>20</sup> To conclude, the ruling class made *hyo* the ethics of familial solidarity, stressing cordial devotion among consanguine relations, and made them the principles of harmonious cohesion for society and politics as a whole.

*Hyo*, largely speaking, had three characteristics in Chosŏn context; formality, absoluteness, and closedness. The uniqueness of *hyo* lay in its demand for formalised patterns of behaviour. It was not enough to feel respect only. Children were asked to show their thoughts and feelings in their behaviour and attitude. For example, they were expected neither to comb their hair nor to play a musical instrument when their parents are sick, but to wear only a worried look on their faces. They were asked to hang down their heads when they sat at the same table with their parents. Again they were not expected to turn their backs when they came out of their parents' room etc. In a word, there was a formalised pattern of behaviour from which the degree of *hyo* could be judged, and which was diffused everywhere deep into family life. Thus the *hyo* to parents was as seriously formal as the ceremony in relation to a foreign sovereign. The formality of Confucian morals was accelerated from 17th century and was most fully set out in The Handbook of Family Ritual (*Karye Pyŏnram*) of Yi Jae in 1844. Korean family structure particularly affected by the Handbook, in marriage, inheritance, kinship, and rituals etc.

Next, the *hyo* was, unlike the Eros or Philanthropy, regarded as an unconditional, one-way, and absolute obedience to parents, like Philo in the Bible. The essence of *hyo* was to make parents feel comfortable mentally and physically. There were two extreme cases during Chosŏn period, which showed the absoluteness of *hyo* to parents. A poor farmer was deeply devoted to his parents but was too poor to serve every member of his family. As a result he used to give the first priority to parents. One day, his beloved only son who were aged three was going to eat the food served to the peasant's parents. The peasant, however, thought that he could have as many children as he wanted after he got rich but his parents were the parents he would ever have and moreover would not live till he became rich. At length he decided secretly to bury his infant son alive, so as to support his parents more effectively.<sup>21</sup> There was another farmer and his wife who having no more food to provide their parents, scooped out their own thighs to cook. Going a step further, the absoluteness of *hyo* was extended even to the dead parents. For example, a son whose parents passed away, was expected to keep mourning for three years to show his *hyo* to the dead. In practice he ate crude gruel and water only with no sweet or savoury food like vegetables, meat, liquor, or fruit. He slept, without taking off his mourning dress, under a piece of straw mat instead of a bedquilt, and laid his head on a lump of earth instead of a pillow. Furthermore he was expected to leave public life at least for three years and to ill-treat himself as a sinner. He was regarded as a **sinner** by himself and by his neighbours.

The belief in absoluteness of *hyo* on the one hand, together with ancestor-worship on the other hand, led impiety to parents to be regarded not simply as an amoral event but as a significant crime to be restricted by law, and both were represented in the legal code. The efforts to codify immortal Confucian truths based on the *hyo* idea, were evident in the National Code, *Kyŏngguk Tae-jŏn* in 1485 after developing through several stages after the establishment of Chosŏn dynasty. This Code had deeply influenced family institutions in the early Chosŏn society and there was continuous revision of the Code during the rest of Chosŏn dynasty. Accordingly It was quite natural that Chosŏn was called by Chinese themselves, 'the country of courteous people in the East.' And it was inevitable that it became a model country of Confucian familism.

Lastly, *hyo*, in spite of its humanistic voice, was closed against some groups of people. In other word, the more the *hyo* idea was deepened and formalised, the more some were severely alienated and dehumanised by Confucian familism. First of all it was closed against children and juniors. As mentioned above, the essence of *hyo* was not simply to take care of parents but to respect and follow their opinions unquestioningly. This was widely applied to juniors or subordinates. Hence any creative thoughts or any deviant behaviour from those prescribed in the formal Confucian doctrines were firmly suppressed and sometimes regarded even as a crime. They were asked only to follow ideas of their parents and seniors. This was one of the reasons why Confucianism was fossilised in the later half of Chosŏn dynasty.

Secondly, it was closed against the illegitimately born. *Hyo*, the core of the Chosŏn belief system was a virtue asked between parents and their children but in reality, the concept of children was strictly limited to legitimate sons. Even though it was *yangban* themselves who had concubine born babies, and even though the same degree of *hyo* was firmly asked of the sons of concubines, the reward given to them was bitter. The severity of treatment of sons, needless to say applied even more to the daughters of concubines and was found in several areas. They were excluded from distribution of succession to the same father's property and even from the performance of ancestral sacrifices. Their right to apply for a national examination except lowest level of those for technocrats, was strictly prohibited by law. More severely there was neither legal nor any legitimate chance to escape from their social status itself except by revolting against the Chosŏn dynasty. That is the reason why they became leading members of rebellions during the later half of the Chosŏn period. So that is the reason the legitimacy of the Chosŏn family system was questioned by this group during the last stage of the dynasty.

Thirdly but the most decisively, the *hyo* tradition dehumanised and oppressed women. The social sanctions against Chosŏn women were particularly severe. Quite apart from their social, economic deprivation in public life, they were moaning even in private life. Nahm describes<sup>22</sup>,

Under strict moral code, ... re-marriage of widows were prohibited by law of 1485 (the National Code: added by the author) The so-called *samjong* (three obediences: added by the author) principles was practiced. Under it, a woman was to follow (to be subservient to) her parents before marriage, then her husband, and after her husband's death her first son.

In a word, subordination was the only thing allowed to women. Furthermore, there was a principle of *chilgŏjiaek* (seven evils) which allowed the husband's kin the right to divorce a wife against her own will or sometimes even against her husband's will. It prescribed seven kinds of legitimate excuse for divorce: disobedience to her parents-in-law, failure to bear a son, adultery, jealousy, hereditary disease, talkativeness, and larceny. Moreover, in the case of women from the *yangban* class, they were requested to go out in public with their head and face covered by a large scarf.

Lastly it was closed against other families, other clans, and the wider society. As mentioned above, *hyo* to parents was not a rational love but a blind subordination. As a result, *Hyo* required a man to avenge his parents against their enemies and to welcome persons with whom his parents were pleased, in any case regardless of his father's rightness and wrongness. And it was defined as amoral to respect or love others instead of his own parents. Every kind of behaviour in life, even a success in life was not aimed for himself but to please his parents. It is quite natural that unconditional inclination to *hyo* shaped a family egoism exclusively against other families, other clans. The rest was competition and conflict instead of compromise or reconciliation. Acute factionalism during the later half part of Choson dynasty, was none other than a reflection of family egoism amongst the *yangban* class.

In conclusion, Korean familism can be described as a pattern of social organisation to which every kind of values is connected and formulated for the maintenance, continuance, and function of the family group composed of blood relations. Individuals can not be independent from the family, and primary importance is given to the family as a whole rather than each members themselves. Furthermore, it is the familial pattern of behaviour, social relation, and value system that was applied to every social area beyond the boundary of the family.

### 3.3.2. Demographic Aspects

The ideal type of family pattern in Chosŏn society, was the extended family, or more exactly speaking, the stem family centred patriarchal blood relations. But due to mis-understanding about the concept of the ideal type, there have been quite widely spread beliefs on the traditional family that it might, compared to the modern one, be large in size, multi-generational, and prevalent of the extended pattern.<sup>23</sup> This view is partly true and partly false.

#### 3.3.2.1. Size of family

First of all, the average number of household members, as shown in Table 3.2<sup>24</sup>, was too small to be called that of the large family. The family size during the Chosŏn dynasty, was no bigger than that of present day Korea with 4.2 family members on average by the year 1985, and even smaller than those indicated during the period of Japanese Colonial Rule.

**Table 3.2. Average Number Of Household Members At An Interval Of 30-year**

year	household	population	average
(Choson period after 17 <sup>c</sup> ) * ;			
1639	441,827	1,521,165	3.4
1669	1,313,652	5,018,744	3.8
1699	1,333,330	5,774,739	4.3
1729	1,663,245	7,131,553	4.3
1759	1,690,715	6,968,856	4.1
1789	1,752,837	7,403,606	4.2
1807	1,764,504	7,561,403	4.3
1837	1,591,963	6,708,529	4.2
1864	1,703,450	6,828,521	4.0
(Japanese Colonial Rule) ;			
1912**	2,885,404	14,566,783	5.0
1944***	4,920,203	25,917,881	5.3

source: \* SKFI, p.353,

\*\* HSKF, p.355.

\*\*\* Government-General, *Vital Statistics*, 1944.

Some of the causes can be identified. To begin with the inaccuracy of the official record might be the first reason. Due to a high level of infant mortality during Chosŏn dynasty, registration used to be reserved until the child was one year old. The fact that infants' names were omitted from most *hojŏk* (the Family Register) surveyed on regional base, backs this up. As a result, it has functioned as decreasing the total number of population. On the other hand, over-counting of households was another cause. Due to a financial pressure of government and the practice of local corrupt officials exploiting the ruled, from later half of the Chosŏn

era, large families were coercively divided into two or three administrative households for the collection of tax. As a matter of course, it inflated the size of the numerator.

But even taking these factors into consideration, it is hard to judge these average numbers as evidence of the prevalence of the large family. The decisively important reason for the small size is neither the omission of infants nor the exaggeration of household numbers but the traditional custom of establishment of a branch family. The traditional Korean family closely followed the patrilineal stem family principle. Eldest sons married and remained in their father's households (*chong-ga-chib: pon-ga*) while, on marriage, younger brothers established households of their own (*pun-ga*) as soon as they got married. While these formed the majority of family households, ideally each in turn would become the focus of a new stem family (*pon-ga*). However as a majority of households at any time had not reached this ideal state, so that there was no time that the number of family members of *pon-ga* could have been counted as a large one.

Of course there can be some degree of variation among classes. As shown in Table 3.3<sup>25</sup>, lowborn families were small in size as single household and two-person families. The *yangban* and commoner families were distributed with relative evenness from large member families to small ones. In other word, the lower the class the more usual the small size family. The degree of variation is not big but a matter of more or less.

**Table 3.3. Size Of Family By Numbers Of Family Members  
In The Early 17th Century And Early 19th Century**

size of fam £	17th century				19th century			
	total	high	middle	low \$	total	high	middle	low
total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
(r.N)	(660)	(149)	(392)	(119)	(2989)	(1128)	(1621)	(230)
1 pr	25.6	15.4	27.3	32.8	3.9	1.3	4.7	10.4
2 prs	47.7	53.7	44.9	49.6	22.1	16.9	25.2	25.2
3prs	15.3	20.8	14.3	11.8	29.5	25.8	31.1	35.7
4 prs	8.9	6.0	11.2	5.0	22.3	24.9	21.3	16.1
5 prs	1.8	3.4	1.5	0.8	12.5	15.7	11.0	7.4
6 prs					5.6	8.1	4.3	2.6
7 prs	0.6	0.7	0.8		2.5	4.3	1.4	1.7
8 prs					1.3	2.1	0.8	0.9
9 prs					*	*	*	
10prs+					*	*		

\* : 0.5 % below

\$: high: *yangban*, middle: commoner, low: lowborn

£: pr: person household, prs: persons household, prs+: household composed of 10 persons and more

source : SHKF, p. 397, 465.

During the Chosŏn dynasty after the 17th century, families contained a relatively smaller number than expected. In any case socio-economic conditions of the higher classes had them can able to keep stem family pattern household.

However, there seems to be a noteworthy degree of geographical variation. For example, the average number of family members was as high as 15.7 persons in the town of *Yŏngju*, 12.2 persons in *Hayang*, and 11.3 persons in *Sŏnsan* etc.<sup>26</sup> In those cases, they all belonged to *Kyŏngsang* province where the population density was the highest due to the fertile soil for agriculture. However, the places were crowded with powerful Confucian clans who were leading groups during the later half of the Chosŏn both in politics, academy, and even in economic affairs. As a result the family size could not but be large.

### 3.3.2.2. Patterns of family membership

The second misunderstanding about ideal typical traditional Korea, was about the predominant family pattern. In other words, the stem family household was believed to have been prevalent during the Chosŏn dynasty but in reality two out of three families were of the conjugal family type as shown in Table 3.4. There was almost no fluctuation in the prevalence of the conjugal family during the whole period of the Chosŏn era from the 17th century. From the table, several distinct trends can be discerned.

First of all, the higher the social status was, the higher the proportion of extended or stem family households. The proportion of the stem and collateral family households increased remarkably with time. On the other hand, the proportion of unstable patterns of family like the transitory family household composed of brothers or sisters, or disorganised patterns of family like one person households,

**Table 3.4. Distribution Of Family Pattern By Class In 17th And 19th Centuries<sup>27</sup>**

type of household	17th century				19th century			
	total	high +	midd	low	total	high	midd	low
total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
conj *	65.5	75.9	62.8	61.4	65.2	56.4	71.2	65.7
stem	6.8	8.7	6.9	4.2	26.8	33.7	23.2	18.3
coll	1.4		2.0	0.8	3.5	8.4	0.1	4.3
tran	0.8		1.0	0.8	0.6	0.2	0.8	1.3
sing	25.6	15.4	27.3	32.8	3.9	1.3	4.7	10.4

source : SHKF, p.491 and SKFI, p.353..

\* conj: conjugal family, stem: stem family; coll: collateral family

tran: transitory household, sing: single person household

+ high: *yangban*, midd: commoner, low: lowborn

were found much more amongst commoners and most frequently among the lowborn. The proportion of the former was steady but that of the latter declined considerably with time. However, it was always the lowborn class who showed to have the highest rate of single person household, and which had an unstable pattern of family life during both periods. This can be explained from the economic subordination of the lowborn to the *yangban* class who owned most of the farmland during the later half of Chosŏn period. In other word, slaves composing most of the lowborn<sup>28</sup> had no right to set up an independent family outside the owner's house unless allowed to set up one so as to have them cultivate a farm far away from the owner's house. It was still impossible for them to marry a woman due to lack of economic potential unless the owner let them marry out of charity. As a result it was natural that many of the single person households were found primarily among the lowborn, and their family type was disorganised or unstable. To conclude, the proportion of stem and collateral families were higher among the higher class, while that of unstable family or household was most frequent among the lowborn. The conjugal family household was more frequently found in commoner and lowborn classes than in the *yangban*, while the proportion of the extended family households was higher in *yangban* than in the commoner or in lowborn classes. However the absolute number of stem family households in traditional society was not notably high compared to that of modern Korea where it was 16 percent by 1989.<sup>29</sup>

### 3.3.2.3. Family composition

The next nostalgic opinion about the deterioration of family life since the Chosŏn epoch is the belief that the traditional type of family was composed of blood relatives only, and that members of a family were only rarely scattered out of their own home like those of urban families in modern industrial society. However this also has been found to be untrue. By *hojŏk*, the Family Register, it is not possible to determine exactly how many members from a family, or which of them, and for what kind of purpose, were away from home for a long period. But at least a rough estimate of trends can be made from Table 3.5. First, there seemed to have been quite significant amount of movement outside their own family. Two alternatives are available to persons who have moved away from their own family for a long time: to live in a family as a non-family member on the one hand, or to become a one person household by oneself or to compose a transitory household with sisters or brothers on the other. The increase in the number of one person households or families including non-family members, indicates a high level of inter-household mobility of family members. Chosŏn society had a high rate of

inter-household movement. The high proportion of single and transitory households in the previous Table 3.4, and again the high proportion of families composed of non-family members in Table 3.5 are evidence of this mobility.

**Table 3.5. Proportion Of Households Containing Family Members Only And Non-family Members**

type*	17th century				19th century			
	total	high+	midd	low	total	high	midd	low
total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
(r.N)	(660)	(149)	(392)	(119)	(2989)	(1128)	(1631)	(230)
fam	72.4	36.2	82.1	85.7	62.5	43.8	75.7	60.9
h-h	27.6	63.8	17.9	14.3	37.5	56.2	24.3	39.1

source :SHKF, p.388, 457.

\* fam: household composed of family members only    h'h: household including non-family members

+ high: *yangban*,    midd: commoner,    low: lowborn

Meanwhile the percentage of families containing non-family members is never a negligible value compared to 1.1 per cent of current Korea in 1990. It means that, in spite the importance of blood relationships or family solidarity among members, it was not connected to the closure of their household boundary against other non-family members who are not in blood relatives. In this sense, the traditional family was more opened to non-family members than the closedness of the modern family. Of course it was mostly opened to slaves only. Strictly speaking, it was not a matter of openness or closedness but of the economic subordination of slaves to the owner. As a result the more a family had non-family member meant the stronger its economic potential was. In this sense, as shown in Table 3.5, it was the *yangban* class who most benefited from the slave system.

**Table 3.6. Rate Of Household In Possession Of Slaves By The Number Of Them**

No. of slaves	17th century				19th century			
	total	high*	midd	low	total	high	midd	low
total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
(r.N)	(660)	(149)	(392)	(119)	(2989)	(1128)	(1631)	(230)
no	72.4	36.2	82.1	85.7	62.5	43.8	75.7	60.9
yes	27.5	63.8	17.9	14.3	37.5	56.2	24.3	39.1
1	10.6	20.2	8.1	6.7	26.2	35.6	19.3	29.2
2	6.5	14.8	4.1	4.2	5.9	9.8	3.0	6.5
3	2.6	6.7	1.8		2.1	4.1	0.9	1.7
4-5	4.4	13.4	1.8	1.7	1.9	3.7	0.7	1.7
6-10	2.6	5.4	1.8	1.7	1.1	2.4	0.3	
11-20	0.6	2.0	0.3		0.3	0.6	0.1	
21+	0.3	1.3						

source : SHKF, p.493.

\* high: *yangban*,    midd: commoner,    low: lowborn

However, the degree of economic concentration was much weakened in time, with the development of both commerce and industry which on the one hand allowed the lowborn to have their own property instead of being subordinated to the owner's farmland and on the other hand the relaxation of class system in general during the 19th century. This opening of the class structure can be found again in Table 3.6.

First of all, it is clear that there is a link between proportion of slave holding families and the rate of households containing non-family members as previously shown in Table 3.5. The increase in households possessing slaves can be interpreted in several ways. The most decisive reason is the economic development after the 18th century. At the end of 18th century, a pragmatic reaction (*silhak* idea) to the fossilised doctrine of Neo-Confucianism, came to the forefront emphasising the development of national wealth based on commerce and industry. It brought general development in economics, the improvement of the economic position of commoners and the lowborn, and as a result, allowed them to buy slaves who until 17th century were owned primarily by the *yangban* class.

There were notable fluctuations by class. To begin with, it was always the *yangban* class who showed the highest proportion of household possessing slaves during the whole later half of the Chosŏn period. But the proportion was in marked decline in relative terms compared to the sharp increase in the proportion of the households in possessing slaves among the lowborn or commoners. The reason for increases in the rate of lowborn households holding slaves as already explained was due to development of the economic position but it was particularly government slaves who benefited from economic improvement and themselves bought private slaves. The fact that they held a position in the government, however low it was, and however contemptible their occupational function was, frequently gave them access to the economic resources, in commerce or industry which though denigrated by the physiocratism of Neo-Confucianism, enabled them to accumulate capital more easily than the mainly farmer commoners or even than the *yangban* who fossilised themselves by means of dogmatic Confucianism. On the other hand, some of commoners were economically successful and could obtain a government positions which promised them far bigger economic returns with which they could buy slaves. In a word, economic wealth or occupational position in the government was the most significant variable which allowed people to possess as many slaves as possible. So even a *yangban* could not have had any slaves unless he was rich enough or unless he was in a government post.

However the possibilities for the lowborn or commoner to surpass the economic strength of the *yangban* were not unlimited. Their social or official status was determined by Confucian law, and more decisively, the physiocratism based on Confucian doctrine was still too strong enough to be replaced by modern capitalism which does not raise questions of occupational status of the economically successful. The idea of *silhak* which had prepared a base for the development of industry and commerce, was only available among a small portion of society. Naturally, there was no room left for the accumulation of large scale capital for either commoner or lowborn. The number of slaves owned by commoners or lowborn was mainly limited to one. And economic potential was still in the hands of the *yangban* class and they possessed bigger numbers of slaves than the commoners or lowborn did.

In sum, the average size of family was too small to be called a stem family pattern, and the prevailing pattern during the Chosŏn period was the conjugal family in all classes in spite of strong cultural orientation to the patriarchal stem family. However the higher the class the greater the percentage of stem or collateral families on the one hand, while on the other hand in the lower classes the conjugal family and disorganised patterns like one-person households or transitory ones prevailed. Meanwhile, the proportion to allow non-family members in the home was quite high compared to that of modern Korea, but those non-family members were slaves who were subordinated economically and by Confucian law. The proportion of households possessing larger numbers of slaves, was mostly confined to the *yangban* class. The increase in the percentage among commoners or the lowborn who owned slaves were found in the 19th century when class system weakened and the improvement of their economic position was based on industry and commerce.

In conclusion, however small the size of the family was, however rare the pattern of the stem family was, however many non-family members in the *yangban* family were, and however unstable the lowborns' families were, the reason Chosŏn society cannot but be designated of patriarchal stem family, was because of its ideals commonly believed and shared by its members. Even if the idea was not realised through the external family pattern the most decisive thing was that (as already mentioned in section 3.3.1, and would be further discussed in 3.3.4) the ideal of patriarchal stem family was the core of the symbolic system of Chosŏn society. It was intrinsic in the constitution of other institutions rather than an external pattern of the family which was merely externally affected mainly by economic factors.

### 3.3.3. Marriage

Some misunderstandings about the traditional patterns also relate to marriage and the age at first marriage, the age gap between couples, or the incest taboo.

#### 3.3.3.1. Early marriage

Early marriage was prohibited by the National Code. According to the marriage articles, 'men were allowed to marry from the age of 15, and women from 14. However man or woman could marry after a report to a government office at 13 years old when one of his/her parents was suffering from a chronic disease, or he/she could marry at the age 12 when either of both parents were over 50 years old'. The minimum limitation to the age of marriage was slightly increased with time to 20 years at the end of Chosŏn period.<sup>30</sup> Even though exceptional clauses were prepared under a consideration not to have a patrilineal family line be cut off, the basic purpose of legal prescription on the minimum age at marriage, was to establish Confucian morality against a corrupt custom which was fashioned during the last stage of the Koryŏ dynasty. However, the reality did not follow spirit of law.

There is no data which gives exact statistics about early marriage. So the author can only infer from two indirect ones: firstly the age gap between fathers and children in the early 19th century, and secondly data on the age at marriage calculated during the Japanese Colonial period. First of all, according to *Monthly Survey* of the Japanese Government-General of Korea, 6.7 percent of brides, and 7.6 percent of bridegrooms who married in 1921, were married below the age of 15 which was designated by law. About one out of two brides, at least two out of three bridegrooms got married below the age of 20. Another clue of a tendency for early marriage can be discovered in Table 3.7.

**Table 3.7. Age Gap Between Father And Son In The Early 19th Century**

age gap	total	<i>yangban</i>	commoner	lowborn
total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
(r.N)	(1648)	(762)	(790)	(96)
13-15	1.2	2.0	0.5	-
16-20	12.8	16.7	9.0	13.5
21-25	24.0	24.2	24.3	21.9
26-30	22.5	20.6	24.6	19.8
31-35	16.6	14.3	18.1	21.9
36-40	11.9	10.5	13.0	13.5
41 +	11.0	11.7	10.5	9.4

source: SHKF, p.400.

In concrete, the age gap between father and son should be over 15 years old, a father could not marry at 14 years old or less, but might marry at least at his age 15 or over. Inferring from this hypothesis, at least one out of seven bridegrooms were married at the age below 20 years. The proportion of brides married below 20 years old might have been much bigger if a special consideration is given to the historical fact, which will be explained soon, that the early marriage rule was much more enforced for brides than bridegrooms. The early marrying trend was found more prevalent among the *yangban* class than among commoners or the lowborn. The reason why the lower classes married later than *yangban* can be attributed to their economic poverty. To conclude, in spite of a lack of exact statistics, early marriage was quite common during the whole Chosŏn dynasty and particularly amongst the *yangban* class.

Several explanations can be inferred from historical, economic, and ideological perspectives. Historically speaking there were two reasons. The first one can be traced back to the Koryŏ dynasty when it was attacked from Yuan China at the end of 13th century. Yuan asked Korea to deliver unmarried women while getting the Koryŏ king and princes married to Yuan princesses with the aim of racial mixture. The Koryŏ government could not but to accept this oppression and established an organisation to select women to send to Yuan, and dispatched special officials to each province to select unmarried women or widows. Simultaneously all women except the ones from the lowborn, were asked to report to government offices before their marriage. This process lasted for some eighty years, and women were delivered to Yuan 51 times. Under this terrible situation, the only alternatives for parents who had unmarried girls were getting them married earlier than the official notice on the age at first marriage. In spite of the mental and biological side effects of early marriage, this was thought much better than to have their children married into a barbarian country too far away to meet their daughter before their death. This became a turning point from a marriage by a free will between the contracting persons to coercive early marriage arranged by a match-maker, and was continued under the Chosŏn dynasty.

Another historical factor which accelerated the trend toward early marriage, was due to a special law on the marriage of kings and princes during the Chosŏn government. Under this law, no adult woman was allowed to marry while a mate for a king or a prince was being selected. The most desperate thing was that a woman who was selected for a preliminary examination and brought to a palace, was very hard to marry to another man even after being freed from the selection procedure. She was believed to have lost spiritual virginity. Therefore parents who

had a daughter liable to marry, used to hurriedly get her married before a official announcement for selection was made.

The custom of early marriage was escalated by adopting Confucian ideas about patriarchal right and the use of match-maker. First, under the Confucian atmosphere, continuance and prosperity of family line was regarded not only as a personal pleasure of a householder himself but also as a *hyo* or duty which should be kept in order not to disgrace his family and ancestors. Bound by the Confucian concept of *hyo* demanding absolute subordination of children, householders had their children married so as to have a grandson as soon as possible. On the other hand, due to the extreme requirement of the virginal purity of women under Neo-Confucianism, no girls were expected to share the same seat with a boy from an early age at seven on. Father, brother, and father's brother were the only males women were allowed to engage in a dialogue. Naturally, it was match-making women who were able to go between bride and bridegroom. They were expected and encouraged to be women of knowledge and experience. However occupationally and tactically, they exaggerated good points of both sides to hurry up marriage and this coincided with the householder's desire to have a grandson as soon as possible for the continuance and prosperity of a family line.

Further, economic factors can not be omitted from the cause of the early marriage. In agricultural society, the increase of labour power was directly related to economic prosperity. As a result, bringing a wife or daughter-in-law into a family meant an increase in the labour force and led to an accumulation of wealth. However, even if that is true, bringing an adult bride into one's family was quite burdensome for a family which is too poor to prepare household goods which may demand quite a large amount of money. Naturally, to have their son marry a young bride was the next alternative and, of course, if one had not enough finances to bring even an immature bride, unmarried life or a late marriage was irresistible.<sup>31</sup>

### 3.3.3.2. The age gap between husbands and wives

The age gap between couples could not escape from historical and politico-economic influences any more than the age at first marriage could. Cases of the older husband were dominant in all times and classes, and the next comes the older wife, and then the same age (Table 3.8). Until the 17th century, the ratio of older husband was overwhelmingly high among the *yangban* and commoners, but decreased considerably in 19th century due to a rise of that of the older wife. The trend was much more dramatic in the *yangban* class. The reason for the older wife becoming predominant among the *yangban* in 19th century can be explained by a

need from both the side of the bride and bridegroom. From the point of view of a bride's parents, it was thought better to get a daughter married to a child bridegroom than to have her be an old spinster by being trapped by a match-making period of king or prince. Because once a lady was selected as a candidate, she had no alternative except living on to die as a old-maid unless she won the final selection as a queen.

**Table 3.8. Age Gap Between Couples**

gap	17th century				19th century			
	total	high	midd	low	total	high	midd	low
total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
(r.N)	(413)	(104)	(257)	(70)	(2198)	(976)	(1098)	(124)
W>H	10.4	4.8	8.9	24.3	25.4	33.4	18.6	22.6
W=H	7.9	5.8	8.6	8.6	10.6	10.5	10.6	12.1
W<H	81.7	89.4	82.5	67.1	64.0	56.1	70.8	65.3

source: SHKF, p. 501.

high: yangban, midd: commoner, low: lowborn

And even if she was not selected as a candidate and was regarded as keeping the condition of a virgin, once she was no longer of a marriageable age, it was hardly possible to get back into the marriage market in normal way. At best, she was taken as a second wife. As a result, marrying to a younger brother-like husband was thought much better than to be left as an old spinster lifelong or to be a second wife. At the same time, from the perspective of the groom's side, desiring a grandson as soon as possible, parents wanted a daughter-in-law to be mature enough to be highly fertile on the one hand, and on the other they expected her to be old enough to skilfully practice the complicated Confucian rituals being held at home. As a result, younger son and older daughter-in-law was fashionable among the *yangban* classes. But, the older wife among commoners or the lowborn is best explained from the perspective of economic need. Under an economic condition where an increase of household members meant an expansion of agricultural cultivation size, and as a result, increase of a family's wealth, to have a son married to a woman was directly related to the purchase of a labour power and future wealth. Therefore a trend to have a child son married to a matured girl appeared.

The degree of age gap between couples, is broadly constant. First of all, in case of older wife, it was mostly from one to four years (Table 3.9). This means that even though the daughter-in-law was chosen at parents' will to have her deliver a grandson as soon as possible or to share burdensome house-chores and carry out complicated Confucian family rituals among the *yangban* classes, consideration of emotional harmony between son and daughter-in-law was not totally ignored.

**Table 3.9. Size Of Gap When Wife Is Older Than Husband**

gap	17th century				19th century			
	total	high	midd	low	total	high	midd	low
total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
(r.N)	(45)	(5)	(23)	(17)	(558)	(326)	(204)	(28)
1-2	53.3	(3)	47.9	(10)	49.6	45.2	55.4	57.1
3-4	20.0	(1)	30.4	(1)	33.3	36.8	28.4	28.6
5-6	8.9		13.0	(1)	12.5	15.0	8.8	10.7
7-8	11.1		8.7	(3)	3.0	2.1	4.4	3.6
9-10					0.7	0.3	1.5	
11 +	6.7	(1)		(2)	0.9	0.6	1.5	

source: SHKF, p. 502.

high: yangban, midd: commoner, low: lowborn

**Table 3.10. Size Of Gap When Husband Is Older Than Wife**

gap	17th century				19th century			
	total	high	midd	low	total	high	midd	low
total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
(r.N)	(352)	(93)	(212)	(47)	(1407)	(548)	(778)	(81)
1-2	11.1	8.6	9.9	21.2	24.1	28.6	21.2	18.5
3-4	11.3	6.5	14.2	8.5	21.2	17.2	23.0	32.3
5-6	14.2	10.7	14.2	21.3	14.4	12.8	16.0	9.8
7-8	13.7	11.9	14.6	12.8	11.1	10.4	11.0	17.2
9-10	10.8	7.5	12.2	10.6	8.8	9.1	8.7	8.6
11 +	38.9	54.8	34.9	25.6	20.4	21.9	20.0	13.6

source: SHKF, p. 502-3.

high: yangban, midd: commoner, low: lowborn

Even if a daughter-in-law was regarded primarily as labour power to cultivate farmland among commoners or the lowborn, her ability for a biological fertility and emotional sympathy was not disregarded. The problem was, however deep the considerations were, that it was at parents' will, and not the will of the persons directly concerned. The result was often maltreatment of both sides. Nevertheless, it rarely led to a dissolution of the family. Disorganisation of a family was scarcely possible first because of a strict Confucian law against a divorce, next because a family was formed neither on the base of a contract nor by love between couples, but at a parents' will. The fundamental purpose of married life for a housewife, lay not in the love for her husband, but on the *hyo* to her parents-in-law.

Due to the size of 17th century sample in Table 3.9, it is not easy to find a trend by time or by class. In spite of the limitation of the data, it is clear the gap size ranged widely from one to eleven years old and over, and extreme gap is much more usual for older husbands than that of older wives.(Table 3.10) It can be explained as a result of the remarriage of the rich. Contrary to a strict prohibition against the remarriage of women, which was regarded as amoral or even as a crime, men were allowed and even encouraged to engage in a second marriage or

sometimes to have a concubine in the pretext of getting a descendant to keep family line maintained.

### 3.3.3.3. Clan exogamy

The Chosŏn dynasty was one of the societies in which incest was the most widely and severely prohibited in the world. Prohibition of incest was regarded a basic, biological and cultural requirement to achieve Confucian morality. As a result, no one was allowed, by law, to marry a person not only in the paternal line but also either in the maternal line or in the wife's line. And running to an extreme of Confucian logic, the boundary of taboo was extremely wide.

By the National Code, a marriage to a person of *tongsŏngdongbon* (the same place of origin of the same surname) was proscribed as a crime. As for Koreans four points have been used, at least until the early 20th century and even until 1960s, to identify oneself; one's own place of origin, surname, name of branch clan, and lastly one's first name in sequence. All Koreans can be categorised into four different groups according to the criteria of surname and place of origin; *tongsŏngdongbon*, *tongsŏng-yibon* (different place of origin of the same surname), *yisŏngdongbon* (same place of origin of different surname), and *yisŏng-yibon* (different place of origin of different surname). Persons of the first group are descendants of a same ancestor who lived almost thousand years ago, and use the same surname, while persons of the second group, a same ancestor several thousands years ago, and use a same surname. In case of the third group, it is subdivided into two: mostly a group of different ancestor of different surname, and more rarely another group of the same ancestor thousands years ago but of a different surname. And lastly, different ancestor of different surnames belong to the fourth group. It was the first group in which endogamy was not allowed by law, but even a marriage within the second group, and the latter of the third group were thought as an amoral incest by socially enforced common sense. So the marriage boundary became extremely narrow with time.

Of course, if the law was one thing, the reality was another, as shown in Table 3.11. According to the Family Register of the town of *San-ŏm*, most condition of marriage was almost extreme clan exogamy, but it was not difficult to find some cases of clan endogamy (5.8 percent). Among them, all of the endogamy of same surname of same place of origin was among commoners, but in the case of endogamy of same surname of a different place of origin, a small portion was from the *yangban*, though largely commoners. In conclusion, no matter that clan endogamy existed, exogamy in Chosŏn was enough for it to be called a clan

exogamous society, not simply because of a statistical prevalence of marriage outside *tongsŏngdongbon* clan, but also because of its exhausting pursuit of consanguine genuineness by tabooing even the marriage between cousins thousands of times removed, who are hardly possible to be, even biologically, called the same descendants in real life.

**Table 3.11. Percentage Of Clan Endogamy And Clan Exogamy In 17th Century.**

surname	place of origin	percentage(N)
total		100.0(431)
same	same	1.9(8)
same	different	3.5(15)
same	unknown	0.0(2)
different		94.2(406)

source: SHKF, p.371.

The thoroughgoingness against the incest taboo did not halt at inter-patrilines but extensively applied even to relatives on the mother's side and relatives by law, who are from different places of origin using different surnames. Even a secondary cousin in a matrimonial relation was defined as an unethical crime and punished by severe flogging. Moreover, even a marriage to a third cousin in a relationship on the mother's side or parents' mother's side, was punished as a crime.<sup>32</sup> This strict taboo derived from the matrilocal marriage custom which was traditionally strong enough to have remained upto the first half of Chosŏn period. Putting all Korean history together, matrilocality was a strongly established pattern of marriage. A bridegroom went to bride's house to marry, and lived at an annex until children of the couples grew up. As a result, from a perspective of the husband, living with matrimonial relatives, or from the view of children, living with relatives on the mother's side for a long enough time to feel intimacy, husband or children could not but feel taboo about sexual relation with one of them. The custom lasted to the middle of Chosŏn dynasty, and as a matter of natural course, the same Confucian ethical code was applied. That was one of the reasons why Korea was called the country of courteous people in the East during the traditional times.

The concrete result of exhausting pursuit of courtesy was found far more bitter than beautiful in the real life. Being prohibited to marry any person who is connected, directly or indirectly, near or distant the degree of consanguinity, the marriage market was very much narrowed. The only exit was to remain single by going beyond marriageable age or to bargain for an early marriage. As a result, a child groom got married to an adult woman, vice versa, a little girl to an another

little boy or to an adult. Of course, there were exceptional cases of old spinsters who were waiting for a marriageable bridegroom. However this was a rare case found only among *yangban* who had, economically, enough room to allow their beloved daughter to remain under their roof for a long period. Through a thoroughgoing taboo against clan endogamy, each family in Chosŏn society could afford to foster one's own clan's moral sentiment which, in a feed-back process, encouraged clan consciousness and reinforced clan structure. This was one basis of a family's pride to fight against other families to get a vested interest in government posts, and also the basis for positive competition for social co-operation to overcome various national disasters.

### 3.3.3.4. Class endogamy

The more strict a class structure was, the more frequently members were inclined to marry persons within their own class. The marriage custom of Chosŏn dynasty, was not exceptional from the principle of class endogamy. As shown in Table 3.12, during the 17th century, over 80 percent of marriages were carried out within the same class, while only 18.7 percent were class exogamous.

**Table 3.12. Marriage Pattern By Class**

class of		17th century	19th century
husband	wife		
total (real Number)		100.0 (436)	100.0 (2230)
<i>yangban</i>	<i>yangban</i>	20.4	9.0
<i>yangban</i>	commoner	5.7	35.1
<i>yangban</i>	lowborn	0.5	0.1
commoner	<i>yangban</i>	2.5	-
commoner	commoner	49.7	47.7
commoner	lowborn	5.0	2.5
lowborn	<i>yangban</i>	-	-
lowborn	commoner	5.0	3.9
lowborn	lowborn	11.5	1.7

source: SHKF, p.496.

Among the latter, from the perspective of a wife, the proportion of upwardly mobile marriages was slightly higher than downward marriages. It was women who benefited from upward marriage, because the National Code prescribed for a wife's class to be ascribed by marriage, according to that of her husband, but the contrary was not possible. Accordingly, no bride wanted to marry a groom of lower class unless her family was extremely poor, or she was past a marriageable age. Even in that case, no bride of the *yangban* class married a groom of the lowest class due to a strict class consciousness while it was not unusual to find bridegrooms of the *yangban* class married to a bride of lowborn. Thus Confucian

morality or class consciousness in marriage was more generously applied to men, making the excuse of the maintenance of patriarchal family lines.

In the 19th century, with the relaxation of the class system, the rate of class endogamy drastically dropped to below 60 percent. The most significant change was derived from the *yangban* and lowborn classes. First of all, only one groom out of five *yangban* maintained class endogamy, almost four *yangban* grooms out of five made a downward marriage. This was caused first because of an increase of the absolute number of the *yangban* class, next because of the poverty of the majority of them who failed in competitions for the limited number of government post. Due to the social consciousness of the role of *yangban* class, prohibiting participation in any job concerned with an economic interest, reading Confucian books and poverty was the only alternatives allowed to majority of them. As a result, it was only brides from the commoner class that poor *yangban* bridegrooms could ask for in marriage. This created a momentum for the breakage of the myth of the *yangban* class, and an argument for bringing about a social change to a capitalism.

On the other hand, out of every ten bridegrooms of the lowborn class, just three married within their own class, while seven married upwardly. The majority of grooms who made an upward marriage were government slaves. Contrary to private slaves who were strictly subjected to an owner, they, in spite of their nominal class, could enjoy much more power and economic privileges deriving from their governmental position, than private slaves or poor farmers or even ruined *yangban* did. They could have chances to get into a well paid job which had been despised under the vocational ethics of Confucianism and they could accumulate money enough to marry a woman of the upper class.

In conclusion, class endogamy was jeopardised from both the side of the *yangban* and lowborn. However considering that exogamy was mostly with neighbouring classes not with the highest or the lowest ones, and that exogamy had been never found among *yangban* brides, the Confucian principle of marriage was not greatly broken down but was still quite strongly exerted.

### 3.3.3.5. Divorce

As discussed above, considering the structurally irrational elements of the Confucian marriage system coercively applied primarily to women both by her parents and husband, and secondarily to sons by his parents, it is not difficult to imagine a prevalence of disharmony between couples. And as a result, one might

expect considerable family disorganisation. Due to lack of exact statistics, it is not easy to test this hypothesis, but referring to the Official Record of Chosŏn Dynasty, divorce was never encouraged whether couples were in harmony or disharmony. In a society where the primary purpose of marriage was considered as the reproduction of descendants for family lines and as the practice of ancestor worship, the cohesion of couples was sanctified so that divorce was not easy unless they were recognised to have failed in the maintenance of family lines.

Of course, there can be some variation by classes. In case of commoners or lowborn, whether it was a divorce by consent or a forced one, the procedure was so simple that they did not bring even a forced divorce to a court of justice. Giving and taking a word of separation was enough for a divorce by consent. To divorce in force, husband or his parents cut the edge of the wife's neckband and drove her out of the house. That was all. Notwithstanding the easygoing process, the reality was not so generous to a divorced person under the Confucian doctrine of familism, and under a social atmosphere where divorce was regarded as a failure of life. Meanwhile, it was much more difficult to divorce among the *yangban* class. This was strictly controlled by the National Code, and sometimes, even punished as a crime. Being regarded not only as a disorganisation of an individual family but also as a serious deviance against the social contract of patriarchal familism which had been the core structure of the Chosŏn dynasty, divorce was restrained in many cases. In a word, a divorce by consent was not easy due to the public sentiment, and a judicial divorce, due to strict control by law.

Divorce in Chosŏn society had two unusual characteristics, first the unfair operation showing favouritism to the patriarch on the one hand, and the fact that it could be forced by parents-in-law even in disregard of the wishes of the persons directly concerned. Both denoted another facet of the strong patriarchal rights and how strongly Chosŏn society was structured by the subordination of children on the grounds of *hyo*.

The right to conduct a divorce was given to the husband's side only. Wives could not divorce their husbands however bitter their marriage was. There was roughly three barriers to wives seeking to divorce. First of all, public constraints discouraged her from divorce. There was a case raised by a woman in 1713. Taeyŏng, from jealousy of her husband who abandoned her to enjoy himself with a concubine, asked the government to let her divorce, complaining of him as a corrupt official. The matter gave rise to a socially heated controversy and the opinion of the Royal Court was divided, under a mutual agreement that she was as

bad as vampire because of the very fact that she had debunked her husband's bad behaviour however bad it was. A group argued from a criteria of disciplinary punishment, that the King should let them divorce to keep Confucian ethics against amoral behaviour of a wife debunking husband's secret. Another group argued a divorce should not be allowed so as to prevent successive occurrence of the second and the third case of betraying a husband to divorce.<sup>33</sup> In conclusion, it was a controversy between Confucians who emphasised the importance of absolute patriarchal right one the one hand, and those who stressed the sacredness of the marriage and the family which composed essence of Chosŏn ideology on the other. Once divorced, however legitimate her reason might be, she was regarded as a Xanthippe, and even her own parents felt shame and did not allow her to return home.

Next, by the law of 1477, remarriage was prohibited and severely punished, reckoning it as a loss of fidelity and chastity. Moreover, a divorced woman's name was listed as a Lewd Woman and her descendants were restricted against an opportunity of promotion to government post.<sup>34</sup> Accordingly, no woman could dare to think of divorce under an atmosphere in which remarriage was not guaranteed after divorce. A woman, whether she was widowed by her husband's death or by divorce, was expected to maintain her faithfulness till death. Lastly but most realistically, as a result of the first and the second conditions above, she could not have any confidence about her economic security after divorce. Because no person, even her own parents, regarded divorce an irresistible alternative, and no man except lowest one of lowborn class, would want to marry her, a present husband and present family-in-law, however bitter to live with, was the best she could depend on economically.

At the same time, since the primary purpose of marriage was not the love between the couple but the maintenance of the family line, the marriage would have been arranged, by force, by the parents, not by persons concerned, and as a result, a right to have a couples divorced, was a matter for the parents. In fact, *pulhyo* (undutifulness to parents-in-law) was one of the most significant reasons for which a daughter-in-law could be divorced.

To put it concretely, as we have seen, *chilgŏji-ak* (seven valid causes for divorce) was prepared by law to provide for an irresistible divorce. The judicial right to issue a forced divorce was allowed to the husband and the husband's parents only. To prevent patriarch's side abusing divorce articles, the National Code prescribed another articles in favour of women's rights. It was called

*sambulgŏ* (three resistible provision against divorce); a case when she had gone into mourning for three years for at least one of her parents-in-law, a case when a husband's family got wealthier and more honourable after she had married, and when she had no relatives or no friends to turn to after a divorce. The articles of *sambulgŏ* were generally enforced on the more dominant position than that of *chilgŏji-ak*. Nevertheless there were two exceptions when the latter was predominate over the former. These were *Pulhyo* and sexual unchastity.

For example, in 1426, Kim Oe was accused on a charge of a forced divorce from his wife to engage in a second marriage for a purpose of having a second wife to have her deliver a son to succeed the family line, whose first wife already had gone into mourning for his father for three years. But he was freed and was allowed to remarry when it was proved that a divorce was not his own will, but he was following in fact his father's last will and testament in which his father's desire was to have him have a successor was stated. There was another case, in 1443, of recognised forced divorce. Lady Wang, in spite of her husband's family having become notably wealthier and honourable only after her marriage and even though she had gone into mourning for her mother-in-law for three years, was divorced on a charge of ill-treatment to her father-in-law to revenge herself on her husband who had fallen in love with a concubine.<sup>35</sup>

As shown above, in spite of its patriarch-centred orientation, as it was demanded to keep Confucian morality emphasising the importance of the family and the sacredness of marriage, divorce was hardly possible, conventionally and institutionally, in real life. As a result, a safety-valve was required to soften a desire to divorce which threatened the foundation of Chosŏn society. Sexual pleasure was allowed to men and the, strict division of labour by sex, to women.

First of all, men were allowed to engage in a second or third marriage, or to take a concubine for the purpose of getting a son to succeed in the family line. This was permitted by laws, but in the case of most *yangban* and rich persons whether they were commoner or lowborn, it was mainly just an excuse to satisfy sexual appetites, a means to escape from emotional conflict against a wife who he had married as a consequence of match-making by parents' will. The dysfunction of an arranged marriage or forced one, did not stop at the cruel system of concubinage. It also developed into another social problem. Disputes arose about the succession between sons of a legal wife and those of concubine in the later half of Chosŏn dynasty. Under a Confucian moral norms despising the descendants of concubines, which was contradictory to the institutionalisation of concubinage itself, sons of

concubines were almost totally excluded from a share in inheritance and from social position. Increasingly dissatisfied with time, they rose as a leading group against the social order at the end of the dynasty.

On the other hand, women were allowed to monopolise household affairs without any interference from men. Of course, strictly speaking, it was too hard work to be judged a privilege, but a monopoly of household affairs was the only opportunity allowed under a society where no public life was permitted to women, and no leisure activity was thought honourable. Unfortunately, this caused another contradiction in the authoritarianism of mothers-in-law. As the household affairs were thought of as an independent area of women, no husband or no father-in-law could interfere to prevent cruel behaviour on the part of mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law. The more bitter the life of mother-in-law when she was daughter-in-law under another mother-in-law, the more cruel she was to a new bride. As a vicious circle continues, the circumstances of the women in general were getting worse so as to regard black-hearted rather than those of a human being. As a natural matter of course, in feed-back mechanism, this, more and more, accelerated son-preference ideas.

### **3.3.4. Inheritance**

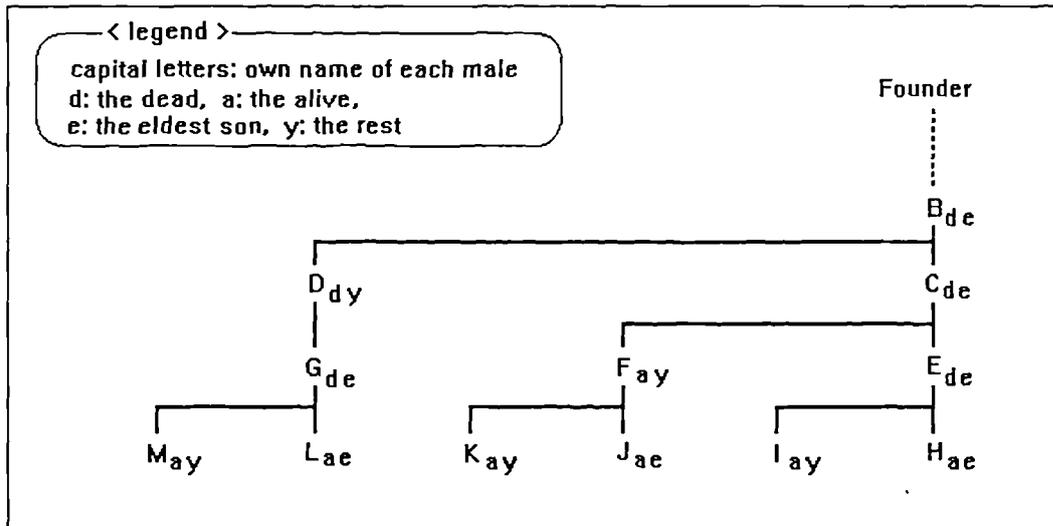
The perpetuation of the family line was the root and trunk of the extended family system, and as a result, of Confucian familial society as a whole. After the establishment of the patriarchal family system casting off a primitive clan society, mechanisms to give concrete form to its continuance were required. They were the succession of the ancestral rites on the one hand, and the inheritance of family property on the other.

#### **3.3.4.1. Inheritance of ancestral rites and adoption**

The absolute *hyo* to father was not limited to the living father but extended even to the dead. The souls of dead fathers and ancestors were believed to have remained in this world to observe their descendants and to exert powerful influences corresponding to their behaviour. Descendants believed that an ancestor punishes unfilial behaviour which brings disgrace to the name of the ancestors, and takes care of those with honourable attitudes. As a result, a ritual of ancestor worship was as important as *hyo* to the live father was, and it was regarded not only as a sacred duty but also as an honourable right.

Either glorious or dutiful, the succession of sacrificial rites was defined by the doctrine of *chongbŏp*(the principle of the ancestor). The *chongbŏp*, according to a primogenitive hierarchy, prescribed who was the closest to the founder of a family and defined him as the superintendent of ancestral rites. A person nearest to the direct lineage of the originator, was called *taejong* (the great ancestor), and inherited a right to perform sacrifice to originator, while the next nearest one, *sojong* (the small ancestor) could make sacrifice to his direct lineal ascendants only. For example, in Figure 3.1, however younger in age among cousins in the same generation, and however lower in generation among kin alive, 'H' person takes position of *taejong*, and is in charge of the nominal delegation of whole family trees, and as a result, is a legitimate successor of sacrificial rites to the founder and 'B', needless to say to 'C' and 'E'. Meanwhile, 'L' person was prescribed as a *sojong* being ascribed a right to summon 'D' person's descendants to perform a sacrifice to him. And 'J' would be another *sojong* to perform an ancestral rites to 'F' if his father died.

Figure 3.1. Heirs Of Ancestral Rite



The concept of *chongbŏp* was socially prepared, in a narrow sense, to define a centripetal point for the establishment of patriarchal extended family system, but in a broader sense, to give a previous warning against amoral behaviour like keeping a concubine or a sexual deviance which can exert significant harm on the monandry of sacred marriage life and the order of patriarchal family system. According to it, a person most directly descended from a progenitor, was regarded as keeping the purity of blood relation of a family, and was defined as a superintendent of ancestral rites. As a result, needless to say illegitimate children or children of concubines, daughters and even brothers of a same father, were excluded from the symbolic centre of a family on the one hand,

and the eldest son of a head family took an independent position differentiated from that of a real leader like the eldest man or a rich and powerful man among a clan. The position was important in the nominal sense but not in a realistic one until the 17th century.

The rule of *chongbŏp* was not thoroughly obeyed at the early stage. Ancestral rites were performed, except a few cases of primogeniture sacrifice, generally in division or in rotation among brothers, regardless of the eldest son. Far from consolidation by the eldest son, it was performed even by daughters or a daughter's son. This implies that there still remained too strong emotional integration between maternal side which was traditionally formed under the matrilocality, to allow the *chongbŏp* idea to penetrate deep into the early Chosŏn period. It was only after mid-18th century that ancestral rites were inherited firmly according to primogeniture.<sup>36</sup>

Clues that *chongbŏp* was not absolutely kept, could be found from the object of rites. Being simply called ancestors, the object of rites was not concretely defined until the 17th century. It was only after the mid-18th century that parents, and grandparents etc. were prescribed clearly, which signified an increase of interest in making a sacrifice to parents or ancestors. More significantly, even a father's concubine was the object of rites before the 18th century, which could not be imagined in the latter half of the Chosŏn period under the strong principle of *chongbŏp*. To conclude, it was after the mid-18th century that primogeniture was thoroughly kept.

The settlement of *chongbŏp* idea and its deepening brought another feature into the family system, namely, the adoption system. It is not difficult to imagine families with no children or no son to inherit the ancestral rites. Strict as the rule of *chongbŏp* was, excluding either daughters, second and third son, or cousins, the proportion of families with no successor was increasing. The adoption system was an alternative to deal with this situation.

The adoption system was needed not merely because of the Confucian ideology of primogeniture, but due to several social situations. First of all, there arose the necessity of systematisation of kinship groups centred on the paternal or patriarch, as a way to cope with the factionalism among political groups, intensified after the middle of the Chosŏn period. Next, there was also the need to organise social groups to deal successfully with economic wants caused by the Japanese Invasion (1592-1598). In this particular culture and history, paternally centred organisations could plot economic development more effectively than

broad but vague groupings of both maternal and paternal sides did, and adoption, was judged a much better way to realise the intentions of the deceased than to give up hope of prosperity due to discontinuation of a family line. Lastly, kinship, including the adoption system, was systematised to maintain the position and authority of the *yangban* class against the relaxation of the class system after the 18th century.

Table 3.13 shows the general trend except few minor fluctuations in a particular period. As noted in the Official Record of 1516 that "even if a member of the gentry has no son, one does not adopt a child of others, but have daughter or son-in-law perform ancestral rites,"<sup>37</sup> there was no statistics on adoption in the early stages of the Chosŏn period. Adoption cases began to appear in small numbers, after or before the early 16th century. Thereafter the number increased and was significantly augmented from around the mid-18th century. As a result, there was even a case of both father and son who were adopted from other families, showing a reinforced social atmosphere on *chongbŏp cum* adoption idea.

**Table 3.13. Percentage Of Adoptions Among Successful Candidates Of National Examination<sup>38</sup>**

period	Number of candidates	number of adoptions(%)
1393 - 1478	802	- ( - )
1498 - 1504	161	2 ( 1.24)
1520 - 1528	208	2 ( 0.96)
1546 - 1549	108	4 ( 3.70)
1570 - 1577	238	8 ( 3.36)
1599 - 1603	176	9 ( 5.11)
1618 - 1624	246	13 ( 5.28)
1635 - 1644	264	14 ( 5.30)
1657 - 1663	222	18 ( 8.11)
1678 - 1683	307	21 ( 6.84)
1696 - 1702	263	15 ( 5.70)
1723 - 1728	328	18 ( 5.49)
1747 - 1754	313	29 ( 9.27)
1773 - 1777	400	42 (10.50)
1798 - 1803	265	33 (12.45)
1822 - 1829	287	34 (11.85)
1847 - 1853	247	31 (12.55)

source: SHKF, p.603.

There were two tendencies in adoption. First of all, the boundary from within which a child could be adopted, was narrowly limited to near relatives like a cousin or a nephew, in the first half of Chosŏn dynasty. Coming into the later half, the boundary was extended far, to distant relatives, some times, even to include an abandoned child whose origin was unknown. But in any case, however far away an

adopted son came from, he was selected within same clan using the same surname. It implies that the adoption was for solidarity among clan and no other purpose.

Next, another tendency can be seen at the boundary of decision-makers on adoption. An heir was adopted basically under a consented decision between couples who expected to have a son, and under a legal acknowledgement of a near relative of both couples. It was legal prescription and maintained well until mid-17th century. Thereafter, consent from the wife's relatives was of less importance, and, at last, from mid-18th century, the adoption procedure was possible under the consent of the husband's side only.<sup>39</sup> It reflected that paternal lines were respected and their solidarity reinforced on the process of adoption from later half of the Chosŏn period. To conclude, inheritance of ancestral rites, following strict primogeniture, was retained, even accepting the side-effects of the adoption system, to organise Chosŏn society by paternal lineage groups.

#### 3.3.4.2. Inheritance of family property

According to the National Code, "every child, whether it be son or daughter, alive or dead, natural or adopted, had a right to parents' property as an heir." However that did not mean an equal distribution. The principle of succession to a family's property reflected the *chongbŏp* idea. There was a definite discrimination according to ranking in a family, and birth. For example, an additional fifth share was prescribed for a person who performs ancestral rites, say the eldest son, whilst just a seventh share was allowed to a child born of an ordinary concubine, a tenth to that of lowborn mistress, and a seventh to an adopted son. Apart from these provisions, all of the parents' property was distributed equally among legitimate children whether it was the eldest or the rest, son or daughter. No exclusive possession was allowed to any child by law.<sup>40</sup>

However as is any society, if the National Code was one thing, the actual rule of succession to property was another. As we have already seen in the early period of Chosŏn dynasty reflecting the divided or rotating ancestral rites, priority of succession could not be given to the eldest son. By the mid-17th century, however, the situation was changed by the reinforcement of primogeniture under which the monopolisation of ancestral rites was emphasised.

There are no systematic and official statistics about how family property was shared among children, except fragmented and informal records called *Punjaegi* (record of property division) which was drawn up by each common family, partly submitted to the government and partly owned by individuals. As a

result, it is impossible to tell exactly how the custom was, but at least, it is not difficult to make out the general trend. The table below is based on data from 81 cases of *Punjaegi*.

**Table 3.14. Pattern Of The Property Division Among Legitimate Children**

patterns of property division	1500-1649	1650-1749	1750-1850
total	24	43	14
equal	20	19	4
priority to the eldest son	1	7	3
priority to sons	-	9	5
priority to non-eldest	3	8	2

source: recalculated from SHKF, p.531.

Slaves, paddy fields and ordinary fields were the most frequent types of important family property. Only land, however, is dealt with in the table. In the case of slaves, it was difficult to draw a generalisation from the data on them, because they lost value as a good when inherited due to their drastic decrease in number. For example, in the above record, 62 out of 68 families owned slaves before 1749, but the proportion decreases notably to three out of fourteen families after 1850.<sup>41</sup> Anyhow, as shown in Table 3.14, until mid-17th century, there was almost no discrimination between sons and daughters, the eldest and the rest. From the mid-17th century on, inheritance was gradually becoming less favourable to daughters or the non-eldest, and became still less so with time.

**Table 3.15 . Ratio Of Paddy Additionally Inherited By The Eldest Son  
On A Condition Of Making Ancestral Rites.**

additional share	1500-1649	1650-1749	1750-1850
total cases	18	38	11
no succession	2(11.1)	3(7.9)	1(9.1)
below 20%	1(16.6)	2(13.2)	-
20 - 40%	5(44.4)	3(21.1)	2(27.3)
40 - 60%	4(66.6)	12(52.6)	1(36.4)
60 - 80%	3(83.3)	5(65.8)	-
80 - 100%	2(94.4)	6(81.6)	2(54.5)
100 - 150%	-	3(89.5)	2(72.7)
150 - 200%	-	3(97.4)	-
200 - 300%	1(100.0)	-	1(81.8)
1600%	-	-	1(90.9)
monopoly	-	1(100.0)	1(100.0)

source: SHKF, p.541.

percentage: a ratio to average amount of succession per a legitimate child.

numbers in brackets: cumulative percentage of inheritors

The factor which increased the share for the eldest son, was the increase of an additional share given to the person in charge of ancestral rites. As mentioned earlier, ancestral rites were at first divided or rotated among children and not fixedly inherited by the eldest son only. It was after the reinforcement of the

*chongbŏp* idea that the eldest son came to be recognised as the only superintendent of ancestral rites and, accordingly, became more privileged in the succession to family property. Table 3.15 gives some indication of this.

The legal ratio added to the person in charge of ancestral rites was 20 percent, but in actual practice, except in a minority of cases, most of the additional share for persons in charge of the ancestral rites was over 20 percent with a great fluctuations regardless of times. It is not difficult to find a general trend from the table. The additional proportion for a person in charge of the ancestral rites shows a slight increase from the mid-17th century and a notable rise from the mid-18th century. Certainly then the share of property inherited by eldest sons increased particularly from mid-17th century onwards.

The causes which had led from an equal division in the early stages of Chosŏn society to an unequal one can be categorised in three types. First of all, the change reflects the intensified ethos of ancestor worship. Granting the Family Rites of Chu Hsi was introduced early in the last stages of Koryŏ dynasty, the idea did not reach the level of a nation-wide ethos until the National Code was promulgated in 1516. It was after the mid-17th century on that the Confucian idea of ancestor worship was strengthened, and accordingly, led to discrimination of sex and rank in the family.

The emphasis on ancestor worship and ancestral rites created a need to settle on the eldest son to superintend them and to stabilise his status and means to fit him to be the master. Otherwise occasional skipping or neglecting rites could occur, especially under a system when rites are rotated or divided among children as in the early Chosŏn period. In the natural course of things, the share of the estate left to the eldest son or the additional share for the performance of rites, which might be assigned to him, increased more and more.

The second cause was the growth of clan consciousness consolidated from the mid-17th century onward. Emphasis on ancestor rites on the paternal side could not but reinforce clan consciousness and solidarity. The membership of a clan was composed of paternal males only. The pivot of a clan was defined by the *chongbŏp* idea as being ascribed to the eldest son or the head family in charge of ancestral rites, and as a matter of course, his status was respected and protected. The more they became responsible for the ancestral rites or for the maintenance and development of their own clan, the more discrimination against daughters and the rest of the sons intensified. As we have seen, the increasing specification of the

object of worship, can be one of the clues to the strengthening of clan consciousness; the publication of genealogies would be another one.

The third factor derives from the fragmentation of agricultural land. The amount of farmland for development was basically limited in most traditional societies. Going through many generations, shares divided among descendants would become much smaller than those among the early generations. Coincidental with the proliferation of *chongbŏp* ideas and the ethos of ancestor worship from the mid-17th century on, it was inevitable that a priority to the economic benefit could not but be given to the eldest son who is socially believed performing a significant role. It might function, in feed-back, as enhancing the prevailed ideology.

### 3.4. CONCLUSION : CLAN SOCIETY

#### 3.4.1. Summary - the *Chib* Idea

The development of familism in Chosŏn society was intimately related to that of bureaucracy. The embryo of Chosŏn bureaucracy began to emerge even before the dynasty was established. The fact that the leading group of the Chosŏn revolution was the literati opened the way to a new social order based on free competition through *Kwagŏ*, the national examination. Participation in the officialdom through *kwagŏ* was believed to be the only honourable goal. No other social resource was judged more valuable than becoming an official. As a result competitiveness was inevitable. In addition, as times passed and as population increased, the race for this extremely limited social resource was getting fierce. Naturally it was thought that individual effort alone was not enough to win in this overheated competition. Some institutional mechanism to support individual competitors and to preserve and maintain what they got after successfully competing was needed. This was the *chib*<sup>42</sup> (family). The family was not only a closed field for the emotional satisfaction of individual members but also functioned as a socially recognised gateway to access to the limited social resources as well. In this sense, Chosŏn family organisation was utilitarian and self-centred as against other families.

The need for the family as a method of access to social resources, coincided with the establishment of Neo-Confucian morality in Korea. Among various general principles of Neo-Confucianism, *hyo* which could be exactly fitted to familial structure was emphasised as a core ideology. By joining the value of *hyo*

to the basic structural unit of society, the family, the literati set up the basic framework of Chosŏn society. By adopting and emphasising the moral principle of duty and devotion to superiors in the family community, they made it a fundamental of social integration, on the assumption that a person dutiful to his parents would obey the ruler in society as well, and on the assumption that loyalty and devotion to a family would, automatically, be extended to the level of kin, local community, and nation. The primogeniture stem familism of Chosŏn society was the outcome of agreement on these principles.

However, in spite of this familial system in Chosŏn society, it is not easy to find many examples of this external pattern of family as a residential group. Either the number of members or their family pattern was hardly consistent with those of the stem family. Instead, except for a small portion of the ruling class, the conjugal family pattern was much more widespread during the whole of the Chosŏn period. Moreover even non-family members were significantly included in the family. Economic variables more decisively affected the pattern of family than the ideological ones did. First of all, the reason for the number of non-family members was the economic subordination of slaves, mostly, in the ruling class household. At the same time, the size of arable land was too limited to allow a family to maintain a pattern of extended families. In addition, children except the eldest son, were each expected to set up an independent family of procreation as soon as they got married. As a result, there was not enough time for a large number of family members or an extended *cum* stem pattern of family to emerge.

The importance of primogeniture and the stem family could be found rather in the dynamics of family customs than in day to day phenomena. Marriage and inheritance rules were the outstandingly observable institutions of the patriarchal system in traditional Korea. The principle of inheritance and the adoption system were the basis of common interest among members of primogenitive stem families or those of a paternal lineage group. Extremely strict clan exogamy and both constitutional prescription and social sanctions against divorce, together with endogamy within the same class, all sustained the common interest of the paternal lineage group. With the intensification of patriarchy, the society went through a fluctuating pattern of age gap between couples and a declining age at first marriage by class and over time. To escape from the intense strains arising from strict application of the patriarchal system, the custom of concubinage and strict division of sex roles were adopted as a social safety-valve. Contrary to their original purpose, these spread son-preference deeper into the layers of consciousness, and in a feed-back process, reinforced patriarchal familism.

To sum up, the traditional familism of Chosŏn was a structural pattern in which every kind of values was judged in connection to a pattern maintenance and continuance of the patriarchal family group and its functioning. In other words, it was a norm in which individual members could not become independent from their own family, and in which more importance was attached to the family than to its members, and in which this kind of familial human relationship was extended to every social field beyond one boundary of the family. Concretely speaking Korean familism could be defined in several points. First of all, the basic constituent unit of society was the *chib*(family) based on paternal pedigree. Second, the *chib* was valued above every other social group and, as a result, developed its own to achievement orientation or egoistic attributes. Next, an individual, in terms of psychology, could not become totally independent from the *chib*. Every aspect of the behaviour of individuals was evaluated in terms of the unit of the *chib*. Fifth, The relationships inside the family were not democratic and equal in condition but were hierarchically organised according to status ranks, and this finally, extended beyond the *chib* itself.

### 3.4.2. *Munjung* : The Clan Group

How were individual families organised into the wider society ? In other words what secondary group integrated the separate families within the larger system? The *munjung* (clan group) was the secondary organisation through which patriarchal familism was expanded to a societal level.<sup>43</sup> *Munjung* was a general term given to a patriarchal family tree which was, conceptually, composed of *pon-ga* (family of orientation) and *pun-ga* (family of procreation). (Refer to 3.3.3.1) A *pon-ga* was headed by the eldest son or sometimes by an adopted son, who was in charge of the rites of the paternal ancestors. Other sons were expected to leave the family of orientation and to establish their own family of procreation. That was *pun-ga*. What was most significant was that, even if, geographically, far away from their *pon-ga*, their status in the *munjung* never changed so that they possessed strong identity as a member and maintained a deep and unceasing solidarity. The *chokbo* (genealogy) was a manifestation of these sorts of *munjung* consciousness. As shown in Table 3.15, coinciding with the starting period of consolidation both of Neo-Confucianism and familism, the greater the emphasis on the paternal lineage group, the stronger the clan consciousness was.

A *munjung* organisation was established by the suggestion of one or more leading members and through discussions among members in a clan. Once agreed,

grain or cash was collected for an organisation fund. It was gathered mostly in family units fairly and disinterestedly but sometimes extra contributions were requested to persons in government post, according to their ranks. A fund manager was nominated to see to the accumulation of a large sum by moneymaking. The money was spent largely in three ways; ancestral worship, education for youngsters, and aid such as condolence expense in mourning or congratulation expenses for marriages or successes in the national examinations.<sup>44</sup>

**Table 3.15. Frequencies Of *Chokbo* Published**

duration	period	frequency *
150 years	1500-1649	4
100 years	1650-1749	41
100 years	1750-1849	67
50 years	1850-1899	50
10 years	1900-1910	101

source: SHKF, p.552-3.

\* cases of unidentified period omitted from calculation

As in the outlay of finances, the *munjung* organisation fulfilled many functions which can be grouped into four general categories. The first and the most important function was sacrificial rites: promoting idea of ancestor worship, servicing ancestral rites, and caring for graveyards etc. To enhance the idea of ancestor worship was the most important of any of them. To emphasise this more completely, sanctions were applied to persons who did not attend a ritual. For example, he was punished with a fine of grain or money at the first and second absence, by flogging his slaves at the third non-attendance, and removal from genealogy at the fourth absence. Similarly any relaxation of clan consciousness was noted and prevented, and the social structure of the primogeniture system was maintained.

Secondly, the Confucian order based on consanguine relationships was kept through the function of *munjung*. A covenant in which virtues and regulations were prescribed in detail was prepared to socialise clan members and to re-socialise deviants. Behaviour enforced by the regulations served to establish the status order by age and generation within the clan, by respect to the eldest grandson of the head family and to the head of the clan, by courtesy to parents, and by harmony and solidarity among clan members etc. The clan agreement encompassed the village code of each local community. It was a mode of local self-government infused with a spirit of basic justice for all and mutual assistance in time of need. However there was no distinct difference in the sense that it functioned to establish and maintain the paternal lineage group.

The next function was mutual aid through congratulations and condolences: misfortunes such as disease, natural disaster, or funerals and congratulations for success in national examination or marriage were attended to by the clan organisation. Aid was provided by the *munjung* organisation and also by individual family units in the name of a family head according to their economic circumstances and more attention was given to condolences. The mutual aid among clan members developed into *kye* (voluntary mutual assistance association) among local community members. As Lee describes,<sup>45</sup>

The *kye* was quite unlike the Confucianist village code that operated under *yangban* leadership, attempting to enforce Confucianist moral prescriptions from above. The *kye*, in contrast, came into existence for the purpose of securing tangible benefit of its participants. Thus as the village code lost its meaning with the disintegration of *yangban* society, the *kye* in contrast flourished all the more.

The associations, in the initial stage, were formed for mutual assistance or simply as social gatherings, but later organised primarily to overcome economic hardship through the pooling of resources. Be that as it may the *munjung* organisation, in Parsons' terms, performed the adaptation function to the prevailing social order through mutual assistance.

Lastly, *munjung* had an educational function. It offered scholarships to clan members who were poor but brilliant. Or sometimes a *munjung* established a private school to teach children locally instead of sending them to public school. In this case, a *schoolmaster and teachers* were recruited from within the same clan or sometimes from famous scholars of other families, and the internalisation of clan consciousness was emphasised *in addition to the regular curriculum*. Through the process, integration among clan members was reaffirmed.

As reviewed above, being a collectivity based on consanguinity like the family, the clan group was extremely closed against non-clan members, and being an extension of a family, it was working rather more like a *primary group* than as a secondary one. In a word the group was operated, in Parsons' terms, on particularistic norms rather than being open to the universalistic values.

As a matter of course, there was no inducement to members of Chosŏn society to cast off familial ties and push forward common goals hand in hand with others from different family groups. There was no place to create voluntaristic and universalistic human behaviour due to the lack of openness. Neither commerce nor handicraft manufacturing was lively enough to attract anonymous members to

cities. The commerce of Chosŏn society was underdeveloped due to agricultural life being self-sufficient under physiocratism and due to the narrowness of the capital market consequent upon taxation in kind. In addition the biggest market in the capital city was monopolised by government. Again, even though private enterprises flourished more than the government ones, manufacturing was in the same situation due to the extremely limited amount of demand.

To conclude, due to the lack of geographical movement in the population which derived from narrowness of the commercial and manufacturing market, there could be no possibility for people to organise themselves into secondary groups, in its original meaning, beyond consanguine and territorial boundaries fixed by particularistic and patriarchal norms. The consequence was that Chosŏn families were extended and organised at a societal level through the *munjung* group instead of any other secondary ones.

The question then arises how social change in the social order was possible with the *munjung* group ? As far as each individual units were organised by *munjung* structure, and as long as there was no real sense of secondary group which can manipulate each family and liberate family members from their closure, the basic structure of society was not hierarchical but, borrowing from M.G Smith<sup>46</sup>, *segmentarily independent from each segment and exclusive with respect to other families*. Moreover the firmer solidarity within each family unit was, the more it was prone to be defensive and aggressive against other units. Confrontation or competitiveness used to be sharpened and naked when it was bound to important interests politically or economically. However strict the hierarchical order inside a family was, once he was out of his family, there was no other group which could influence the individual with alternative principles to those of familism so that his pattern of behaviour could have been liberal, individualistic or achievement-oriented toward society. In other words, from a long-distance perspective, the relationship among different family groups in spite of its hierarchical structure internally, was organised segmentarily. However once there came a definite goal to achieve, families in the horizontal segmentary order developed competitive relationships between one family and another. Examples existed through the whole period of Chosŏn society, for instance in competition in the national examinations to get a limited number of government positions, factionalism to achieve initiatives against the monarch, later, against other parties, etc. Finally, inherent achievement orientation was latent in the traditional familism of ordinary times, but once stimulated by a particular conditions, was manifested. It competitively could become a motive either for social change or for the maintenance of social order.

# **CHAPTER FOUR**

## **CHANGES IN**

### **FAMILY SIZE AND PATTERN**

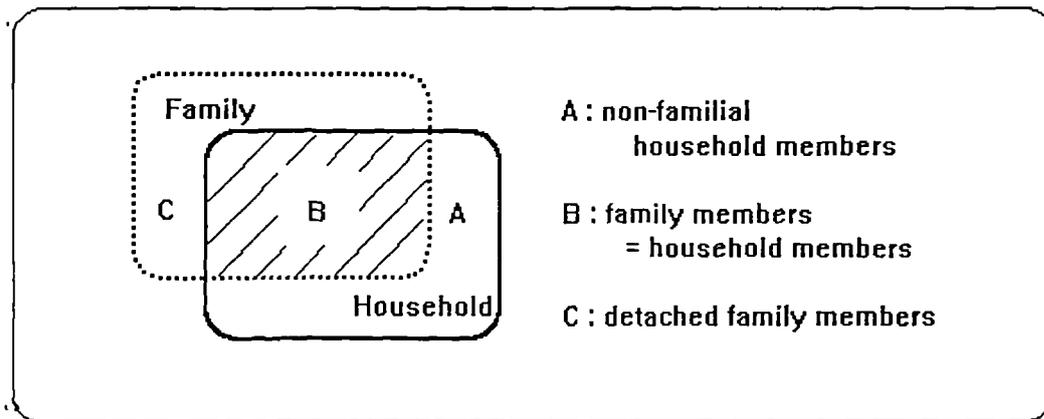
This chapter comprises of four sections. First how the family differs from the household in concept and what the difference means in reality. Second, what is the predominant size of the household/family and next what is the most dominant family pattern combining a household in present day Korea. Lastly what are the deviated types of family, how prevalent they are, and eventually how the social structure has been changed by the above-mentioned transitions.

#### **4.1. FAMILY AND HOUSEHOLD**

The terms 'family' and 'household' are often used interchangeably. There are two reasons for the lack of conceptual clarity. Firstly, it is because the two coincide empirically in most cases. If the household is just a group of person(s) dwelling under a same roof, the family is distinguished by having a bio-social relationship among its constituent members by ties of marriage, blood, and adoption.<sup>1</sup> The family is a subjective concept while the household objective one due to the very fact there are non-overlapping groups between the two concepts. First those who live in the household being never family on any social or legal definition are one group. Those considered as bound by the obligations of family in popular sense or in law but who do not co-reside are the other group.<sup>2</sup> (Figure 4.1) Due to these marginal group, if the concepts are not defined elaborately, important areas of social reality and social change become impossible to identify. The next reason of unclear usage of the two comes from problems with surveys. Even if a researcher made a clear definition of the two, it is hardly possible, due to the limited time,

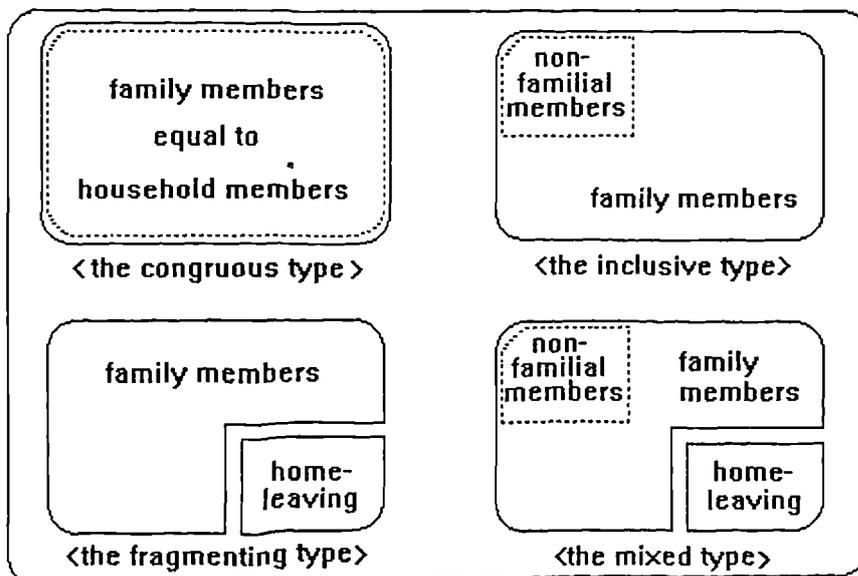
finances and efforts, to extend a survey to those who have left home as well at the moment of survey. The household survey has been the most frequently adopted alternative to family study. Even if it is the case, analysis should be scrutinised in discerning the two concepts in the process of interpretation. In this thesis, for the pragmatic purpose, the data on the household is used as a frame of reference to analogise the family situation. However both are going to be compared statistically if required to validify the interpretation.

**Figure 4.1. The Conceptual Gap Between Household And Family**



What kind of insight into research is produced by clarification of the two concepts? The change of household reflects that of family. The household changes in conformity either with a part of family members leaving home or with non-familial members co-residing. It is these two marginal groups that reflect the changes in the family and that change household type and that reflect social change.

**Figure 4.2. The Four Kinds Of Household**



Four different types of household are distinguishable by the combination (Figure 4.2): the congruous type, the inclusive type, the fragmenting type, and the mixed type. First the congruous type is the household that comprises no non-familial members and where no family members have left home. Household and family overlap exactly. As a result, both the family members and the household members have the same identity. Secondly the inclusive type includes not only all the family members but also non-family members as well under the same roof. The number of household members is bigger than that of family members. Thirdly, the fragmenting type is the one where some family members are absent at the moment so the current number of household members is smaller than the total number of family members. Lastly, the mixed type is a combination of the fragmenting type and the inclusive type. The lower the proportion of inclusive and mixed types in the population, the more the household is closed to the others and is exclusive. The greater the proportion of fragmentary and mixed types, the more the household is actively responding to society but the greater the instability of the household itself.

Table 4.1 shows the broad trend of change in Korean household types. The year 1955, at the time of the most severe economic conditions, marked the lowest proportion of the congruous type. Just one out of three households consisted of a complete set of family members, while four out of seven households broke the same bread with non-family members (II and IV). It was far higher than those in the 19th century. Non-familial members included two groups. The first group was employee, like slaves in Chosŏn society, primarily for domestic affairs or sometimes for business affairs. This situation was thanks to the cheap labour price resulting from the high rate of the unemployment after the Korean Civil War. Next it was owing to the mass of rural migrants who exited their home to cast off

**Table 4.1. Percentage Distribution Of Each Household Type**

type of household	19 <sup>c</sup>	'55	FAM86		
			whole	urban	rural
I. congruous	62.5	31.5	71.4	81.0	50.1
II. inclusive	37.5	39.5	0.8	1.0	0.4
III. fragmentary	u.k.	11.3	27.5	17.7	49.2
IV. mixed	u.k.	17.7	0.3	0.2	0.3

u.k.: unknown, c: century (refer to Table 3.6)

'55: SKF

the historically chronic poverty particularly in the rural areas. They turned into the cheap labourer in the cities. The next significant group was the boarders. Whether her husband was employed or unemployed, it was not unusual that a housewife took in lodgers to add to her income. It was the case at least until the late 1970s, and the total amount of boarding charges they could get from lodgers, was more

than that of living expenses. Frequently it was more than that of the income their husband brought in. If rural boys and students could enter a school for higher education thanks to the money sent from sisters/brothers working as unskilled labourers or as a kitchen maids in the cities, the urban youths, mostly as poor at that time as those in the rural areas were indebted to their mothers who had them educated by taking in lodgers. Of course it was true that private life was interrupted very deeply in proportion to the openness of a family to non-family members.

Coming into the 1980s, the statistics indicated a tremendous change. This has been marked by the highest level both of the congruous type and of the fragmentary type, and the lowest rate for the inclusive type. First the total percentage of households where some members have left home(III, IV), is almost similar to that in 1955. However there is a great difference between regions. Almost one out of two rural households had lost some of its members, compared with just two out of eleven in urban areas. In a word rural households have experienced a lot of instability, while urban ones were in a relatively quite stable condition. It was due to the huge rural migration to urban areas caused mainly by the economic development policy.<sup>3</sup> Table 4.2 explains how this instability came about. In any region the most significant reason for households being unstable was economic. This is true particularly among rural women. The next most important cause

**Table 4.2. Percentage Distribution Of Socio-Economic Activity Of Persons Leaving Home**

activity	whole country			urban areas			rural areas		
	total	male	fem	total	male	fem	total	male	fem
real No.	1496	916	580	540	339	201	956	577	379
employed	55.2	50.4	63.1	43.9	43.7	44.8	61.6	54.4	72.9
study	17.0	18.7	14.5	13.7	12.4	15.9	18.9	22.4	13.7
army	12.5	20.2	-	18.3	28.9	-	9.2	15.1	-
family	4.3	-	11.2	7.4	-	19.9	2.6	-	6.6
others	7.7	8.2	6.5	9.3	9.1	9.4	6.7	7.6	5.0
n.r.	3.3	2.5	4.7	7.4	5.9	10.0	1.0	0.5	1.8

source: FAM89

**army:** to do army duty for 34 months

**family:** to help family member who left home by marriage

**others:** unemployed adults, pre-school children, **n.r.:** no response, **fem:** female,

arises either when urban youths leave home to do their army service for three years, or when rural boys enter a school for higher education. A third element involves urban women middle aged to elder women who move to give a helping hand to a married son's family, or to a married daughter. This occurs when most of the married children are working in double harness. The middle-aged/aged women

help in the role mostly of baby-sitter or sometimes do housework. This was an unavoidable alternative in the absence of enough nursery places and a high level of labour charges for baby-care and household chores.<sup>4</sup>

Households encompassing non-familial members (II, IV type) dropped almost to none both in urban and in rural areas. In other words, present day Korean families are showing an extreme exclusiveness against non-familial members, and prefer to live with their own family members only. This trend was most pronounced in urban regions (just 1.2 per cent of II, IV type and 81 percent of congruous type). The rural areas are showing relatively much less proportion of the congruous type than the urban areas are. It is because the fragmentary type is predominant. To say too many family members migrated to cities to retain its original form of family. Anyhow the reason for the rise of the congruous type can be traced from two points: the changes in the economic situation and in values on the role of family. Firstly it owes to the rise of living standard by virtue of the general growth of the national economy.<sup>5</sup> Housewives no more have to keep lodgers to add to their income. The charges to pay for a kitchen maid have increased too high to employ her. The next reason for the exclusiveness was due to the changes in the family role towards emotional stability among family members. Unlike the bitter socio-economic situation of 1950s in which maintenance of livelihood was the most important and urgent need of each family, economic conditions of both nation and each individual family have been improved. This made family members wonder what they have lost whilst gaining economic prosperity.<sup>6</sup> The husband/father was a moneymaking machine who went to work early in the morning before his children could see him and came back late in the night after they had fallen asleep. Moreover, even mother had not enough time to pay significant attention to her children while lodgers were occupying their home. Every inconvenience, every breakdown of private life, and every desertion of wife and children was excused by economic growth. It was a family history full of sorrow and pain during the last few decades. Now, both housewife, children, and husband no longer wanted their family and private life interrupted by any other elements than familial ones. Emotional stability at home has been more highly regarded than ever before.

The same logic applied to persons leaving home. They did not like their privacy interrupted by sharing a tiny lodging room with other boarders whom they have never seen before or by eating with friends in a small rented flat. They have come to prefer an independent and unconstrained space nobody can disturb, putting

up with paying a fairly good amount of money in rent. That was the reason of the rise both in the congruous type and in the fragmentary type of household.

In sum, present day Korea displays two complicated and even contradictory characteristics in household organisation. The highest exclusiveness and deepest instability distinguish today's Korean household. Firstly they are feeling their families to be a nest-like place full of their own family members. They like to take a full rest both physically and emotionally at home without being interrupted by outsiders. They showed an extreme exclusiveness in accepting non-family members whom they supposed would disrupt their privacy and private life. While persons leaving their own home have never decreased since 1955. The rural areas were extremely exposed to this instability. This was the result of the economic policy of pursuing rapid economic development, and by the mal-distribution of educational resources across the nation. In short, in spite of the deepening idea looking for a sweet home, the number of inter-regional migrants has not decreased but increased considerably due to occupational migration.<sup>7</sup> The alternative to someone leaving home could choose was to have his or her own space to be free from any household or any person, whom they never met before.

Reviewed so far, the household has subtly reflected the changes in family. Those leaving home and their changing attitude toward having an independent flat, were crucial factors that caused instability of households. While the deepening idea of the sweet home carried out the exclusiveness of household. However it is too early yet to judge the family situation out of the household transition only. For example, home-leaving in physical term can not directly be connected to the instability of a family *per se*. In the West, leaving home by an adult child can be connected to the independence from his/her family of orientation. However in the traditional Korean context it simply means establishing a household. This leads neither to independence from the family of orientation nor to the establishment of a family of procreation unless she/he leaves home by marriage. Even if it was by marriage, there remained persistent and strong familial ties on the emotional and social level.<sup>8</sup> Leaving home without parents' recognition meant losing everything under the familism. However at least two things are definite in the future of Korea. First considering the economic policies of which the stress still on the development, the inter-regional migration is easily anticipated. The migration might induce the increase in the number of the fragmentary type of households. Again considering the deepening idea of individualism or of sweet home, people are foreseen to be more reluctant in admitting non-familial household members. That might increase the number of the congruous type. All in all the result is the

increase in the absolute number of household on the one hand and the household can get more point than ever before as a conceptual frame of reference to measure the society on the other hand.

#### 4.2. THE SMALL FAMILY

There are various factors that influence the size of the family. These can be summarised as socio-economic variables, cultural tradition, environmental variables and demographic conditions etc.<sup>9</sup> Each of them has a significant influence in its own way on the size of family. Among them change of demographic elements has been the most direct and prompt one that influenced on the size of family. This has certainly been the case in Korea for the past more than half a century.

Borrowing from Donald J. Bogue, Korea has entered the post-transitional stage, by achieving the total fertility rate (TFR) of 2.1 by 1985. He divides the demographic transition into three stages: the early transitional period, the transitional period, and the post-transitional stage.<sup>10</sup> The first stage is distinguished by high rates both in fertility and in mortality, which are shown in the underdeveloped countries. The second stage is marked by a decrease of both rates and the final stage is reached when the low level of both rates results in stability. Concretely, first, the early transitional stage was from the early 1910s to the early 1960s. It was the period dotted with many historical events like Japanese colonisation, the second World War, Independence, partition of the peninsula, and Civil War etc. Each of them made a significant impact on demographic change in Korea. For example, the introduction of modern hygiene and medicine, the many deaths during the war, the huge migration during the colonisation, the partition, all these factors mingled to influence the demographic condition of the period. During this period the crude death rate (CDR) dropped from 35~40 per 1,000 persons to 25 during 1910-1930. It owed a great deal to the spread of modern medicine, medical techniques, and the wide implementation of an anti-epidemic programme. The rate dropped again to the level of 15 during 1955-60 as a result of the diffusion of new medicines like antibiotics. In spite of the drastic decline in the CDR, the crude fertility rate (CFR) was still at a high level at about 40-45. Next the transitional stage(from the early 1960s to the early 1980s) was marked by the most rapid decline of fertility rate in the world. The CFR decreased from 38.7 of 1961 to 22.6 in 1982, while the TFR from 6.0 to 2.7 persons in the same period. The CDR declined not as rapidly as the CFR or TFR but with a steady trend to some 6

persons per thousand by 1982. The most critical causes of the rapid decline in the fertility rate were the success of the Family Planning Programme on the other hand.<sup>11</sup> It was delivered as a part of the Economic Development Five-Year Plan. The next cause of the decline was a continuous increase in the age at the first marriage.<sup>12</sup> Lastly, the post-transitional stage which commenced from 1983 has been characterised by an accelerated decline in the fertility level. The CFR dropped drastically to 15.3 by 1988, the TFR to 1.7. As a result the population growth rate has been decreased to below 1 percent, and eventually reached that of the developed countries.

There were two points that make Korean demographic experience unique and different from those of the developed countries. The first thing was rapidity. It took merely seven decades for Korea to reach to the final stage. Considering the West spent one and a half centuries on average, it was a surprisingly short time. The next was its unpredictability. Unlike the experience of the developed countries of which the fertility rate is stabilised and is foreseeable, it is unforeseeable yet at which point the Korean fertility level will be stabilised.<sup>13</sup> The family has changed in ways parallel with that of the demographic change. That is to say the small size family has been the result of the demographic change.

The decrease of family size developed through a few stages. First, as already mentioned in the previous chapter, the average size of the traditional Korean family was not as big as its strong orientation to the stem family as one might expect. According to the Family Register (*hojŏk*), the average number of members composing an ordinary household<sup>14</sup> was quite stable at no more than 4.5 persons during the whole period of Choson society after the 17th century.<sup>15</sup>

The statistics increased during the Japanese colonisation to 5.3 persons on average, in spite of a slight improvement in socio-economic and hygiene conditions accompanied by modernisation. The reason the fertility rate stagnated at a high level was because modernisation policies were believed being not for the benefit of the ruled but designed to support colonial rule.<sup>16</sup> As a result, the effect of modernisation was confined to the minority of the ruling class only. The modernisation could not bring about an overall change for the whole of the country. The size of household once again increased very rapidly to 5.71 persons by 1960, followed by the peak of the Baby Boom after the Civil War (1950 - 1953).

Passing the peak of the early 1960s, the statistics declined dramatically and eventually reached less than 4 persons by 1989. It took less than 30 years.(Table

4.3) Even the regional difference between rural and urban areas has been dramatically decreased to reverse its course. First, the narrowing of the urban/rural gap was caused by migration from rural to urban areas, which was driven by industrialisation and the economic development policy. In other words the rural has suffered from depopulation while the urban areas experienced over-population. As a result the average size of rural households was lessened due to the youths leaving home. According to FAM89, one out of two rural households lost a member or more by home-leaving, while three out of eleven in the urban. The reason the rural population leaving home was to get jobs(61.6%) or to study(18.9%) while the figures for urbanites were: to find a job(43.9%), army duty(18.3%), or study (13.7%).

**Table 4.3. Average Size Of Ordinary Household**

region	'66	'70	'75	'80	'85	'90
whole nation	5.49	5.24	5.04	4.55	4.09	3.71
urban areas	5.1	4.9	4.9	4.4	4.0	3.7
rural areas	5.7	5.5	5.4	4.7	4.2	4.0

source: Census '66 - '90.

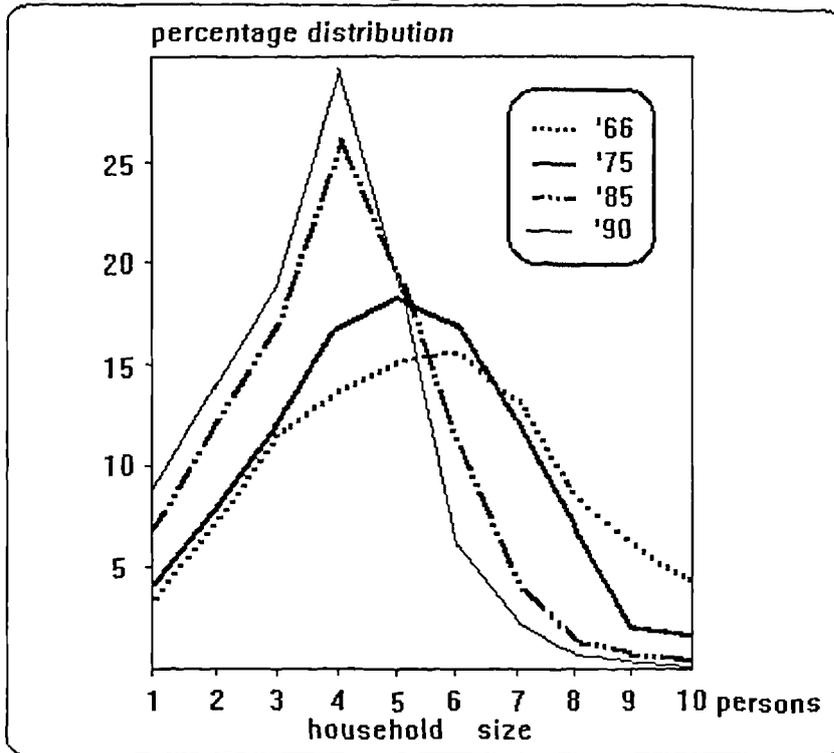
On the other hand, the size of households in the whole country showed other trends. (Table 4.4, Figure 4.3) It can be summarised into two points. First, the size of household has been reduced very speedily from 5.71 persons on average in 1960 to 3.71 persons in 1990. That is to say, as many as two persons were reduced in the course of just one generation. Next, the range of prevalent household size has been intensively narrowed in contrast to being spread quite broadly in 1960.<sup>17</sup> It means social consensus on the small family size was stronger than the idea of the big family had been in the past.

**Table 4.4. Percentage Distribution Of Ordinary Household By Its Size**

No. of members	year						
	'60	'66	'70	'75	'80	'85	'90
total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
1 person	2.3	3.6	3.7	4.2	4.8	7.0	9.0
2 persons	7.1	7.7	9.3	8.3	10.5	12.4	13.8
3 persons	11.8	11.5	12.8	12.3	14.5	16.5	19.1
4 persons	14.7	13.9	15.0	16.1	20.3	25.2	29.5
5 persons	15.9	15.2	17.0	18.3	20.0	19.3	18.8
6 persons	15.3	15.4	16.3	16.6	14.7	12.2	5.9
7 persons	12.7	13.1	12.2	11.7	9.7	4.3	2.5
8 persons	8.9	9.1	7.3	7.7	3.0	1.9	0.9
9 persons	5.3	5.9	3.6	2.5	1.5	0.7	0.3
10 prs & over	4.5	4.6	2.6	2.3	1.0	0.4	0.2
1-2 persons	9.4	11.3	13.0	12.5	15.3	19.4	22.8
3-5 persons	42.4	40.6	44.8	46.7	54.8	61.0	67.4
6-9 persons	42.2	43.5	39.4	38.5	28.9	19.4	9.6
10 prs & over	6.0	4.6	2.6	2.3	1.0	0.4	0.2

source: Census '66 - '90

Figure 4.3. Historical Change Of Household Size

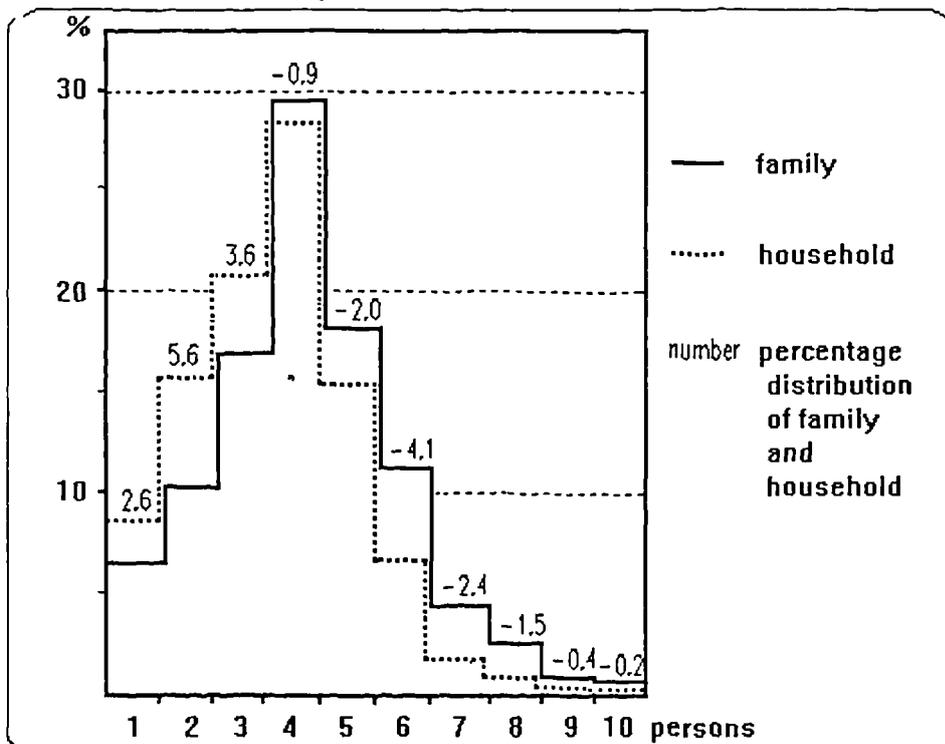


The reason for the trend to a small family and to the socially intensified consensus on the small family norm, can be traced back to two facts. The first element was an increase of an average age at marriage. Together with an extension of education duration and increase of women's participation rate in the labour market, both women and men felt no need to hurry up marriage. Self-development was preferred to the reproduction of the next generation. The average age at first marriage during the period 1912-1932 for men was 22.2 years old and for women was 19.7 years.<sup>1</sup> This increased to 24.5 and 20.4 by 1955 and again to 27.8 and 24.8 by 1985. The survey data from FAM89 calculated 28.2 and 25.3 for each sex. It reduced the fecundible frequency to decrease the fertility rate and led eventually to the small family. The next element was a successful execution of the Family Planning programme. This had more to do with a strong consensus on the small family norm. The population policies in Korea, as already mentioned, began to appear as a part of economic development planning. With the accession of a new political leadership in 1961, development planners realised that a high rate of population growth interfered with the most important national goal to raise per capita income and to eliminate poverty in the country. Naturally, government initiated Family Planning policies very resolutely keeping pace with the nationwide diffusion of contraceptive measures, with improvement of women's social status, and with changes of the value on children. Above all, an autonomous demand from citizens for a small family and their positive participation in the

programme was the most critical factor establishing the small family idea. TFR of 1.6 persons by 1991 reveals a successful march to the small family.

The trend to the small family can be criticised as pseudo. It is true that the small family household has been over-estimated. The decrease of household size can not directly be interpreted to the decrease in the family size. Table 4.3 and Table 4.4 can be the target of criticism. Misleading interpretation arises from the conceptual gap between the household and the family as already shown in the Figure 4.1. It is a statistical gap came about in the process of analogising the family situation by the household. The household misses the information on those leaving home. If persons who have left home are included as non-familial members of the inclusive household type (Figure 4.2) over-estimation will be far less statistically. However reality does not go that way in present day Korea. Many of them occupy own flats to establish themselves as independent householders instead of entering into another household. Moreover the deepening idea on the sweet home shows the high exclusiveness against non-familial members. That is the reason for the statistical discrepancy between the family size and the household size. That is the reason for the small family household being counted as more common than it really was. This criticism was verified by the FAM89 data (Figure 4.4).

**Figure 4.4. The Gap Between The Distribution Of Household Size And Family Size**



The dotted line was made of the statistics in which whole of family members is included, whether still at home or not. That is to say, it is calculated by adding in all the people who had left home for other purposes than marriage and by excluding non-familial members. The solid line encompasses just the current number of household members excluding the members who left home temporarily. As shown in the figure the percentages of the small size household (1-3 persons per household) increased, while those in the large households (4-10 persons per household) decreased. It means that most of those leaving home from a large family established a small size household alone or with a couple of other persons. Concretely if the small sized family is over-estimated, the big sized family is under-estimated. To say there are less small-sized households than they are analysed superficially. That is one of the reasons why the criticism of the statistics on the small family have got a good point. In spite of all this criticism against the mis-estimation we still can not reject the irresistible trend to a small family in absolute numbers as already shown in the Table 4.4.

**Table 4.5. The Change Of Ideal Number Of Children And The Total Fertility Rate**

	'58	'65	'71	'76	'81	'85	FAM89
No. of children	4.4	3.9	3.7	2.8	2.5	2.0	1.9
(No. of son)	-	(2.4)	(2.2)	(1.7)	(1.5)	(1.0)	-
TFR	6.0	4.6	4.3	3.1	2.5	1.7	-

source: KIPH, *National Family Health and Family Survey*

- unavailable

It is supported even by a small family norm and fertility rates as surveyed by KIPH (Korea Institute for Population and Health Affairs) during the last three decades.<sup>18</sup> (Table 4.5) As shown on the table, women like to have no more than two children and no longer have the son-preference idea that was a chronic cause of high level fertility rates. The norm of 'three boys and two girls' at the early 60s shifted to 'two boys and a girl' during 1970s, and again to 'a boy and a girl' by the middle of 80s. Responding to the value change, the fertility rates that is a crucial indicator of family size has drastically decreased to mark even below two children. To sum up in spite of the slightly unreasonable statistics by analogy with household, it is not difficult to conclude that present day Korea has achieved a small family by casting off son-preference idea.

### 4.3. THE MODIFIED STEM FAMILY PRINCIPLE

#### 4.3.1. Decrease In Stem Family Households

The demographic transition has been associated not only with a decrease of family size but also with the shift from the stem family of settled peasant societies to the more mobile and residentially separate nuclear family which is more responsive to the employment opportunities of an industrially developing and urbanising society. R. M. MacIver's classical statement of the loss of family functions and decline of the extended family as the dominant social institution with the emergence of modern society<sup>19</sup> was more systematically developed by Parsons who stressed the functional adaptation of the nuclear family to modern industrial society.<sup>20</sup> Goode summarised evidence up to that date for the move toward more nucleated families in societies undergoing the early stages of industrialisation in his *World Revolution and Family Pattern*<sup>21</sup>. W. E. Moore too identified the link between industrialisation and the emergence of the conjugal family unit as the functionally apposite form:

"Strong emphasis on the bonds of lineage, the consanguine principle of familial organisation, is clearly inconsistent with individual mobility or merit. The separation of small family units, and especially the probability that young adults will seek new employments in new locations as industrialisation proceeds, provide both a spatial and a social foundation for the appearance of the *conjugal* family with its emphasis on the marital unit and its immature children"<sup>22</sup>

While for Moore the link between modernisation and the small family unit was one of functional convergence rather than one of necessity,<sup>23</sup> he clearly implies a degree of causality, as does Smelser, in accounting for the structural differentiation of the family unit in the wider process of modernisation.<sup>24</sup> And reviewing British trends in his excellent study *The Family and Industrial Society*, Harris concluded:

"The 'extended family' *household* as a national phenomenon (however important in certain localities), would appear to be virtually extinct; and the elementary family household now also appears to be shrinking to its nuclear core"<sup>25</sup>

Vogel, on the other hand, writing of Japan has argued that industrialisation tends to *strengthen* rather than weaken the links of solidarity in the extended family.<sup>26</sup> And, though he suggests it may be different in Korea, in his study of economic development and kinship links in Hong Kong families, Wong has

concluded that in 'entrepreneurial familism' strong extended family connections may be highly adaptive in the process of industrial and commercial development.<sup>27</sup>

On the other hand Greenfield, Nimkoff and Middleton, Laslett and Macfarlane have all shown that the nuclear family unit is not uniquely a product of industrialisation but was found in many pre-industrial societies in many different parts of the world. Hunters and gatherers mostly have lived in elementary family groups.<sup>28</sup> And in England and Northern Europe at least, there appears never to have been a pre-industrial predominance of stem-family households, while highly individuated nuclear families have always been the norm, statistically and culturally, for as far back as direct and indirect evidence will take us. Laslett, for example, found only ten per cent of households in England from the sixteenth to the early nineteenth century contained kin outside the nuclear family.<sup>29</sup>

We should not exaggerate the changes consequent of modernisation, firstly because the traditional household was on average not large, and secondly because, in spite of the vastly changed socio-economic and political circumstances of present-day Korea, many cultural assumptions relating to relationships within the family persist.

The traditional Korean family closely followed the rule of patrilineal primogeniture(*chongbŏp*). Eldest sons married and remained in their father's households(*chong-ga-chib: pon-ga*) while, on marriage, younger brothers established households of their own(*pun-ga*). While these formed the majority of family households, ideally each in turn would become the focus of a new stem family(*pon-ga*). This ideal played a powerful role in the culture of Choson society wider than its key place in the family value system. However as a majority of households at any one time had not reached this ideal state, even in the nineteenth century two-thirds of all households consisted of nuclear families only and less than 27 per cent contained stem families.<sup>30</sup> Throughout the Choson period, from the seventeenth century to the late nineteenth, according to the Family Register(*hojŏk*) the average membership of ordinary households remained at about 4.3 persons. This furthermore included household slaves in more than a quarter of households in the seventeenth century and more than one in three in the later nineteenth century when early industrial and commercial developments improved the economic circumstances of some entrepreneurial families and the practice formerly limited to the landowning class (*yangban*) spread more widely.<sup>3132</sup>

While changes in household size and family life in general should not be exaggerated as far as most ordinary Korean families are concerned, nevertheless

there has been a very remarkable reduction in the proportion of large family households notably in the last fifteen years or so after the mid 1970s. The nuclear family household has proportionately increased in inverse ratio to a decrease in the stem family household. Table 4.6 shows exactly what happened in the last three decades.

**Table 4.6. Percentage Distribution Of Each Family Pattern**

	1960	1966	1970	1975	1980	1986	1990
total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
1 generational family household ;							
total	5.4	5.5	5.8	6.5	8.3	9.6	10.7
A		4.5	4.4	4.8	6.0	7.1	8.3
B		0.3	1.3	1.7	2.3	2.5	2.4
C		0.8	#	#	#	#	#
2 generational family household ;							
total	64.0	66.1	70.0	68.9	68.5	67.0	66.3
D		52.9	55.5	53.2	53.0	52.8	51.9
E		2.0	2.0	2.1	2.3	2.3	1.7
F		0.7	10.6	9.7	9.3	8.9	7.8
G		7.2	@	@	@	@	@
H		0.6	0.6	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2
I		0.8	0.8	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.6
J		1.9	0.6	3.4	3.3	2.3	4.0
3 generational family household ;							
total	26.9	23.5	22.1	19.2	16.5	14.4	12.2
K		6.7	5.1	2.0	1.9	1.9	1.7
L		12.7	12.3	8.5	7.9	7.2	6.7
M		4.1	4.7	8.8	6.7	5.4	3.8
4 gen fam							
total	1.6	*	1.1	0.9	0.5	0.4	0.3
non-fam	2.1	2.6	1.0	1.2	1.5	1.7	1.5
single	%	2.3	%	4.2	4.8	6.9	9.0

Abbreviation; gen: generational type, fam: family pattern, A: couple, B: couple + brother/sister, C: other one generational family, D: couple + children, E: couple + children + brother/ sister, F: father + children, G: mother + children, H: couple + parents, I: couple + a parent, J: other two generational family, K: couple + children + parents, L: couple + children + a parent, M: other three generational family, 4 & over: families composed of four generations or more,

#: calculated to add to B; @ to F; \* to K

#: included in the 1st generational household

Source: Census '60 - '85

The extended family including both the stem and the collateral family, which accounted for 30.3 percent of cases in the later 19th century (Table 3.4 of Chapter 3), remained relatively stable until 1960. From the early 1960s when the first Five-Year Economic Development programme was commenced, the proportion of extended family households began to fall rapidly. The extended type due to its size, was unsuitable in the process of industrialisation/urbanisation that requires high mobility. The small family pattern was the convenient alternative to accommodate with regional job mobility. In the two and half decades from 1966 to

1990, as shown in the Table 4.6, the extended family type (H, I, K, L, M, 4 & over) declined more than 10 percent to 13.3 percent. Among them the one(K) that was believed to be the ideal type of the stem family accounted for just 1.7 per cent by 1990. However strong social nostalgia for the stem family may be said to be, it is hardly possible to describe present-day Korea in such terms with that small proportion of cases.

The nuclear family type (A, B, C, D, E, F, G), does not show as high rate of change as the extended family household did but has maintained steadily, with a bit of fluctuation, a high ratio of some 74 per cent on average since 1970. Of course, this does not mean every type of nuclear family pattern kept on rising. In case of A or B types in which the composing members are very young and are small in size, it has increased dramatically. However, other types like D, E, F, G that are larger in size and are including members of older age than those of the A and B types showed some fluctuation. The D type, regarded as an ideal type in the West, even shows a slight decline after attaining a peak in 1970. However, it is important to give attention to the absolute number of nuclear family household. Whether its philosophy be exactly the same as in the West or not, a society can hardly be labelled a nuclear family society unless it has a moderate amount of the nuclear family pattern. 72.1 per cent by 1990 is more than that.

However, there still remains some questions both on the breakdown of the stem family and on the emergence of the nuclear family. As already mentioned, the family situation does not exactly coincide with change of the household. The decrease of family size does not coincide with the increase of the nuclear family. It is because the family is characterised by its social and emotional ties among its constituents which is invisible through household observation. Therefore questions arise. Has the Korean family really gone far away from the traditional structure? Do the statistics show just superficial and external changes or do they represent a more fundamental transition of inner dynamism?

When traditional Korea was characterised by the stem family structure, it did not mean just the statistical prevalence of that household types. Its primogeniture principle of family composition with parents, **eldest son** and their spouses, and the grandchildren of the eldest son was the point. It was almost impossible for the eldest son to establish an independent family of procreation(*pung-ga*) away from his family of orientation(*pon-ga*). It was disapproved of socially and even by the law to prevent unfilial impiety toward parents. This tradition seemed to have drastically declined if we look at Table 4.7 calculated by familial

status of householders. Just about two out of seven eldest sons are serving their own parents. With these numbers, it is hardly possible to argue that Korea today retains the stem family culture. In addition, even there are extraordinary patterns of co-residence being ill-matched to the primogeniture principle. Other sons or daughters than the eldest one living with their parents was socially disgraced in the past. Both the children and parents were said to wash their dirty linen in public when the parents lived alone or with other children than the eldest son. The same family situation applies to the householders who have married children. Among 228 householders who had the children married, two out of three are living alone without being served from any married children.<sup>33</sup> In sum, the primogeniture principle of the traditional stem family appears being dismissed judged from the above data.<sup>34</sup>

**Table 4.7. Percentage Co-residing With Parents  
By The Family Status Of The Householder**

family status of householder	total number of householder	householder whose parents alive (A)	householder co-residing with parents(B)	percentage co-residing with parents ((B/A)*100)
total	2,923	1,873	286	15.3
1st son	1,173	765	224	29.3
other son	1,360	860	57	6.6
daughter	390	158	5	3.2

source: FAM89 (The total number of household 2,923 is the statistics calculated by extracting unanswered households about the questions.)

**Table 4.8. Percentage Distribution Sharing/Shared a Residence with Parents-in-law by Interviewee's Characteristics**

	total	co-dwelling*		independent
		lastingly	temporarily	
total	100.0	31.2	22.3	46.5
family status of husband among his brothers ;				
the eldest	100.0	46.0	23.9	30.1
the only	100.0	62.5	12.6	25.0
the rest	100.0	16.0	21.8	62.3
age cohort of the interviewee women ;				
- 29	100.0	17.3	17.3	65.4
30 - 39	100.0	16.3	27.4	56.3
40 - 49	100.0	33.7	24.5	41.8
50 - 59	100.0	49.6	22.4	28.0
60 +	100.0	61.1	15.8	23.9

source: FAM89

\*: lastingly; lived with parents-in-law from the time of marriage until now/ the death of them

temporarily; does not co-reside with them at the moment but did in the past

#: the North or a foreign country

Another Table 4.8., however, affords quite a different interpretation of the transition. Both of them are telling a truth in the end. The differences of the two

tables are; firstly, the previous one included householders regardless of their marital status, the Table 4.8 is based on married women. Next, the former produced data from the current point of time, while the Table 4.6 scans the whole of the past life span of the interviewee. If the former Table 4.6 in some way shows a superficial change of the stem family, the next Table 4.8 allows us to look more dynamically and even more exactly at change over time.

Table 4.8 calculates more than one out of two Korean women are living or once lived together with their parents-in-law, which denotes a higher degree of the tradition than the previous table did. The figures increase tremendously if their husbands were the eldest or the only son. This pattern is more common in rural areas than in urban. The primogeniture principle seems to have remained still strong. Of course it depends on which age group a woman belongs to. The more older, the longer and the more of them share a same roof with parents-in-laws whilst just one out three of the youngest women are living or once lived together with their parents-in-law. There are some more variables that affect co-residence. (Table 4.9)

**Table 4.9. Correlation Coefficient Between The Co-dwelling With Parents-in-law And Socio-Demographical Characteristics**

variables	urban(769)	rural(569)
family status of husband (1=the eldest, the only, 0=others)	0.219	0.270
age of interviewee women (1= -29, 2=30-39, 3=40-49, 4=50+)	0.240	0.239
employment of interviewee women (1=employed, 0=unemployed)	0.239	0.017
economic level of the household (1=low, 2=high)	0.247	0.313
educational level of interviewee women (1=none, 2=6years, 3=9years, 4=12years)	- 0.230	- 0.276

p<0.01

First, it depends on the economic conditions of the parents-in-law. For example if parents-in-law have enough money to arrange a moderate size of house equipped with many rooms and enough space to fit a large family, it is easier to co-reside with each other. At the same time, the interviewee's occupational career has a significant influence on the pattern of family.<sup>35</sup> For a dual career woman, child-care has been the most serious factor that makes her stop working outside the home. Traditionally strong enthusiasm for education and child rearing has made her so reluctant in continuing her job. She could not easily take her children to a baby-sitter or to a nursery. She is recognised as being an insincere mother even now. Worse than this even the number of them was not enough to meet the need. The

alternative was the unemployed grandparents. A stem family therefore was thought a moderate alternative for a woman going out to work. They could continue working by handing over their role to co-dwelling parents-in-law. Lastly, the level of women's education had a negative effect on co-dwelling.<sup>36</sup> The more educated a daughter-in-law was, the more deeply she preferred the independent life free from any interference of any person except her own family of procreation. By the concept of sweet home, the parents-in-law were mostly excluded from her home. The more greatly the parents-in-law were aware of the different way of life from their daughter-in-law the more they felt even an anxiety about sharing residence with a well educated daughter-in-law.

A great demand on the nuclear family replaced the weakness of the stem family principle. The demand was mainly rooted in the increase in the individualism being impacted from the Western way of life. Urbanisation followed by the high migration became a timely excuse to ask for a nuclear pattern of family life. Of course there has been an effort to retain the traditional principle of the stem family but with a greater flexibility. First Koreans transformed the duration of co-residence. Once a woman was married to the eldest son of a family, conventionally, she was supposed to live with them until her parents-in-law passed away. The duration of co-residence was modified to meet the need from both generations. Newly wed couples were individualistic and looking for an independent life on the one hand. The elder generation was feeling a generational gap and even uneasiness to stay long with a well educated but incompatible daughter-in-law. For example, she was allowed to be independent after a relatively short period of adaptation to her husband's family of orientation and to its family customs and so on. It generally took several months or a few years or sometimes several years. She was allowed to have her flat, to create her own way of life domestically or socially without interference from her parents-in-law. However she was supposed to reunite with them when they are in need: in case either one of them should be seriously ill or if a partner of them passed away. In addition there is another case of family reunion. As already mentioned a daughter-in-law herself likes to live with her parents-in-law to get their help in taking care of children during her time out at work. While there has been the other adaptation of the stem family principle, traditionally primogeniture meant that no parents and no married eldest son dared to think of setting up an independent household. With growing egalitarianism associated with the decrease of the (eldest) son preference idea, filial piety was thought not only a matter of the eldest son but also applied to the rest of the sons as well. The change was concomitant with the successful Family Planning programme and with the change in the family law on inheritance. If co-residence with a parent was thought

both a duty and a privilege of the eldest son in the traditional family, this idea expanded to include the rest of sons in the present-day Korea. As a result co-residence with parents-in-law, whether on a temporary or lasting base, was applied to daughters-in-law married to non-eldest sons and was even sought by them for their own benefit.

To conclude, the nuclear pattern households are prevalent in present day Korea, however it has not brought about breakdown of the stem family. There is still a strong tendency in Korea to retain the stem family culture. Of course the working principle for this trend has not been limited to the eldest son only but has expanded to include the rest of the sons as well.

#### 4.3.2. Changes In Family Membership

The family group is composed basically of close relatives. That is to say, the family members are composed generally of couples, parents, children, brothers, sisters, grandparents, or grandchildren etc. who have been recognised as the most immediate. As far as the family is the group of near relatives based on emotional solidarity, it is hardly possible to have remote relatives as family members. Even if that may be a case in chance, it is only when there are no other nearer relatives. However, membership networks have changed reflecting the changes in the household types. In this section three things are going to be discussed: who are the close relatives composing a family: who are standing on the marginal area of the family: and what is the change in the membership by period and how it is different by region.

One problem which arises in examining the boundary of the family membership is that person's position in a family is very relativistic depending by whom s/he is viewed. Assuming a three generational family composed of grandparents, couples, and their children, the family can be categorised having no children if it was described from the point of view of children. Or it can be categorised as the family of no parents and no grandparents from that of parents or grandfather. As a result it is all too easy to miscalculate the closeness or remoteness of membership. In spite of the ambiguous character of membership definition, it does not mean the analysis impossible. Should it be examined from the viewpoint of householder, such problems lessen. In traditional society the householdership was ascribed, by law and by custom, to the eldest male or with a rare exception to the eldest female. He was householder both *de facto* and in name

Whilst, in present day Korea, householdership is not prescribed in law but is likely achieved by breadearning. Anybody can be a householder by report. However, it is still rare for a female to register as the householder unless she is widowed.<sup>37</sup> Modern or traditional, one thing has been quite common, the householder whoever s/he is, takes the central position in determining family affairs. S/He was still powerful in setting the boundary of the family membership whether that power was ascribed or achieved by economic contribution in the family. To sum up, in spite of the ambiguity of membership definition among family members, it seems reasonable to have the householder as the criterion of membership positioning because s/he mostly has the final power to decide the boundary of family membership.

Table 4.10 is showing the ratio of each member to 100 householders. As shown in the table, the boundary of family membership has changed very drastically.<sup>38</sup> Compared to the family boundary of 1955, the range of family networks has sharply narrowed. Even the density of the relationship among members has fallen. It is most distinguishable among patrilineal members both in direct and in collateral lines. While family members in the matrilineal line and wife's relatives have increased very slightly. Greatest decline is evident in rural areas.

Firstly among members in patrilineal direct line, the ratio of spouses has slightly increased reflecting rise of life expectancy of men (from 54.1 years in 1940 to 66.9 in 1989). Child ratio was the most notably decreased denoting the small family norm influenced by the successful Family Planning programme launched from 1960s. The decline in the ratio of daughters-in-law, grandchildren, parents, or grandparents was brought about by the relaxation of the stem family principle,<sup>39</sup> and by the expansion of individualism<sup>40</sup> or preference for conjugal family life among the younger generations. For fathers the change seems statistically insignificant. However, considering the rise of the average life span of Korean men, the actual size of change is not small. Considering the ratio of fathers 25 in 1934<sup>41</sup>, the older men's position in the family seems far more marginalised. Mothers' positioning is not exceptional from this trend. Even though statistics indicate many more mothers than fathers this reflects just higher rate of average life span for women to men (66.9 years for of males compared with 75 for females by 1989).

The weakening of patrilineal kin is found again among collaterals.

**Table 4.10. Ratio Of Each Family Member To 100 Householders**

relation to householder	1955			FAM89		
	W	U	R	W	U	R
householder	100	100	100	100	100	100
patrilateral direct line;						
total	389	360	400	260	263	256
spouse	79	76	80	81	81	81
child	242	238	244	158	164	144
spouse of a child	17	10	19	3	3	4
grandchild	30	19	34	8	6	12
spouse of a grandchild	*	*	*	-	-	-
grand-grandson	*	*	1	-	-	-
spouse of a grand-grandson	-	-	-	*	*	-
father	3	3	3	2	2	3
mother	17	13	18	8	7	11
grandparents	1	1	1	*	*	1
patrilateral collaterals;						
total	23	17	23	6	7	2
brother(A)	9	8	9	3	3	2
sister (B)	7	6	7	2	3	*
spouse of A/B	2	*	3	*	*	-
child of a brother(C)	5	5	4	1	1	*
child of a sister	-	-	-	*	*	-
father's brother/sister(D)	*	*	*	-	-	-
spouse of D	*	-	*	-	-	-
child of D (E)	*	*	*	*	*	-
spouse of E	*	-	*	-	-	-
grandchild of a brother	*	-	*	-	-	-
matrilateral kin;						
grandmother of mother	-	-	-	*	*	-
child of mother's sister	-	-	-	*	*	-
child of mother's brother	-	-	-	*	*	-
wife's relatives;						
father-in-law	-	-	-	*	*	*
mother-in-law	*	*	*	1	1	1
brother/sister-in-law(F)	*	*	*	1	1	1
spouse of F	-	-	-	*	*	*
child of F	*	*	*	*	*	*

W: whole country, U: urban area, R: rural area,

\* less than one person, - no one

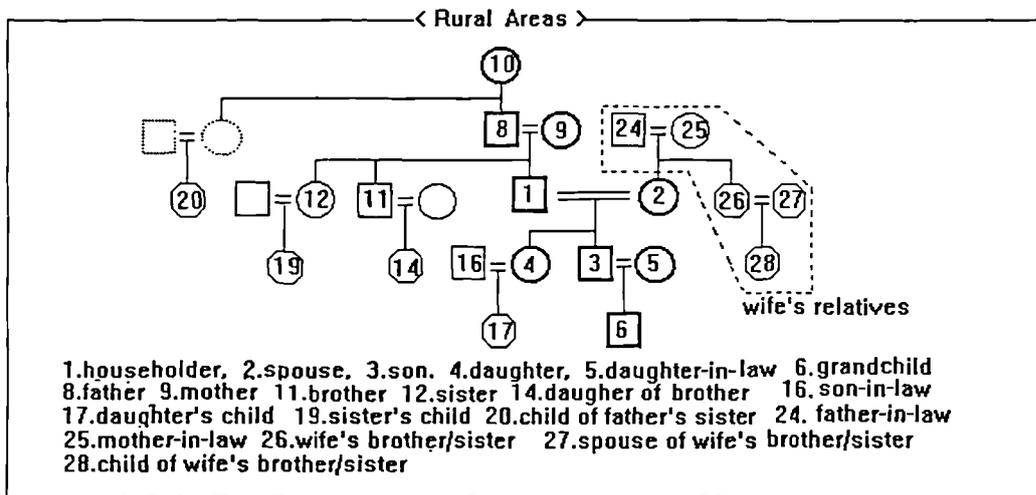
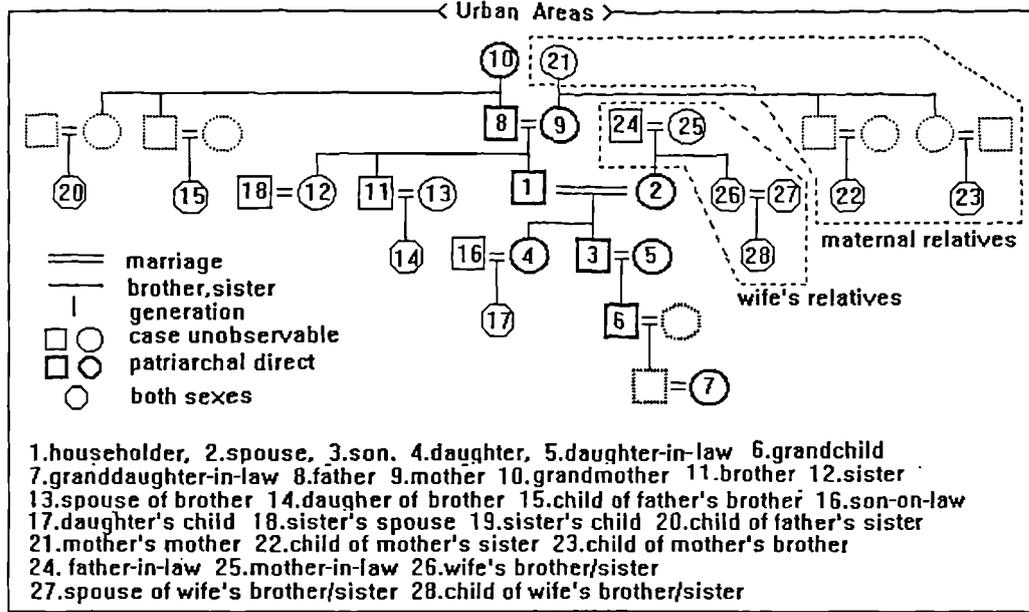
source: '55; 1/1,000 abstracted data from Census'55 in SKF,p.58.

According to the 1934 survey, uncles or aunts and their families averaged 11 persons, however they had totally disappeared by 1989. The same applies to brothers and sisters and their families. The further the degree of consanguinity and the more remote the generation goes, the more their place has been marginalised and eventually it has disappeared. Collateral relatives were once welcomed as farming hands in traditional society. However, they are perceived as unwanted by present day urban housewives and economically burdensome to salarymen's housekeeping, sometimes disturbing couples having a sweet time, or couple's own family dining out.

If most of the patrilineal household members have become marginalised or even excluded from their conventional network, there is a group of persons who newly gained their membership. The members in the maternal line and of the wife's relatives are those. They have become accepted as close family members. The trend denotes a rise of women's voice, particularly from wife side rather than mother side. It is thanks to the progress of women's status inside and outside family. She raised her voice loudly to husband, "If your parents are my parents, my parents are your parents as well." Under the traditional atmosphere the daughter-in-law was expected to call her parents-in-law 'parents' and to serve them as her own parents, the reverse was unaccepted. A son-in-law was disgraced if he called his parents-in-law 'parents.' Both of them were expected to behave as the best guest to each other. Even if the parents-in-law had no one to serve them and even if they were in severe need of health care, they would not be expected to be a family member of the son-in-law. Now the taboo of being the wife's relatives has gone. The statistics on the ratio of them will increase in the future. However, it is unlikely to see statistics increased far over that of householder's parents or brothers and sisters. There are too widely spread preference to conjugal family or to individualism among young generation to be the statistics increased. That is to say the matrilineal lines would be stronger than ever before but not as strong as the patrilineal lines are at the moment.

On the regional level it has been believed that *traditional traits have been* more persistent in rural areas than in urban ones. The myth was disproved by the statistics of FAM89. This theory was plausible until the 1950s as shown in Table 4.10. The boundary of close relatives in patriarchal lines in rural areas was wider than that in urban areas. The degree of the network intensity was far higher, particularly among those in patriarchal direct line. Yet such trends changed quite drastically except in few cases. Of course the intensity of the network between grandchildren or parents which has been an element for the three generational family, maintains a strong existence, in a relative sense, in the rural areas. However, on being looked at more closely, almost two thirds of them are coming from abnormal pattern of family of no intermediate generation.<sup>42</sup> The generation moved to cities to earn money. It was an unwilling choice, and might diminish very quickly as soon as the generation organise themselves for city life. Except for this case, the boundary of the close relative has been narrowed greatly among families in the rural areas. Figure 4.5 shows the change very realistically.

Figure 4.5. Family Tree By Region



To conclude, the change in the family membership reflects infusion of individualism and weakness of the stem principle among younger generations. It was an inescapable result of the high mobility caused by socio-economic development. The actual family members under the same roof have become couples and children, that is to say the conjugal family type. Even the intensity to the marginal members has been thinner than ever before particularly in the rural areas. However it is another thing to examine the actual density of emotional, physical, and socio-economic relationship to the conventional members who once shared the same roof. It may be possible to continue strong patriarchal relationship not as family members but as just relatives. It sounds plausible considering the modern condition that requires a high level of regional mobility. The physical instability can provoke a homing instinct or identity consciousness among the migrants. Of course the author has no intention to deny even some degree of

weakening of membership consciousness caused by regional mobility, or redistribution of membership by feminist voice. There is a striking clue about the weakness of the family consciousness. To an open question of FAM86, who are your close family members, just 10 per cent of the interviewee women answered parents-in-law. Looked at in detail, one out of two housewives from three generational families, and just one out of seven housewives whose parents-in-law are still alive, included the parents-in-law in the family membership. It denotes that most of parents have been marginalised from their conventionally strong position in the family. In spite of these, it is more likely that they would keep on communication among themselves in modified forms, directly or indirectly, and socio-economically or emotionally.

#### 4.4. NON-IDEAL TYPICAL PATTERNS

Defining Korean family pattern gives rise to many difficulties. First the dichotomy between the stem family and the nuclear one remains as it was. As already discussed, there is an ambiguity in defining the present-day situation in Korea. The absolute number of the stem family as the ideal type is too scarce to distinguish present-day Korea in those terms. However, if we want to say that Korean society is taking on a nuclear family structure we must also point out that the stem family tradition still exists and is of significance. The argument that the stem family structure is under going a change towards the nuclear one, is a superficial one. As shown in Table 4.6 (D type), the typical nuclear family composed of couples and children, has from the early 1970s declined in spite of very slow tempo. Rather there has been an increase in households that do not fit any ideal type such as one person households and extraordinary patterns that deviate either from the nuclear family or from the stem family.<sup>43</sup> Basically, current Korean family patterns are characterised by a complexity or an ambiguity which does not fit any one ideal typical form.

##### 4.4.1. One Person Households

The one person household<sup>44</sup> is one of the current family situations that have brought about suspicion of the existing family framework. A family can not consist of one person. The one person household was traditionally deeply despised of being a *changdolbaeng-i* (an itinerant market dealer) or was analogised of a

humble floating weed. The reason was due to the strong enthusiasm for the family life. That is to say that the family was the most important homing place and source of identification. Naturally the number of the one person households was very tiny in the past. However, as shown in Table 4.11, single person households have increased very steadily and rapidly both in absolute numbers and in proportion as well. According to Census data, the proportion reached 9 percent by 1990. The only exception was the year 1955 when hundreds of thousands refugees from the North moved mainly to cities in the South during the Civil War and have not yet settled down. Most of them fled from the communists by themselves or accompanied by just a part of their family.<sup>45</sup> They never thought the partition would be forever and that was the reason for the high rate of one person households. Except for the year after the historical disaster, the table shows two trends. Firstly the single household increased steadily until 1985 but swelled explosively from then on. Secondly, the proportion of the single household began to surpass that of urban areas from 1980.

**Table 4.11. The Growth Of Single Household**

year	total No. of one person household	proportion to total household(%)		
		whole country	urban areas	rural areas
1955	123,000	3.24	5.22	2.58
1960	100,168	2.30	2.36	2.26
1966	182,040	2.32	2.83	2.04
1970	216,706	3.74	#	#
1975	281,077	4.23	4.52	3.07
1980	382,743	4.80	4.71	4.93
1985	674,440	7.04	6.75	7.20
1990		9.00	8.55	10.3

source: Census '60 - '90. # data unavailable

The increase in single households during the 20 years between 1960 and 1980 has a close relationship with the rural migration to the urban areas. Urbanisation was driven mainly by the National Economic Development programme which began in 1962. Among the migrants, over 4 persons out of 10 rural persons moved to the cities to get a job, one out of three to re-join a householder or household members who had already moved ahead of them to get a job in an urban area.<sup>46</sup> In addition one out of six rural youths migrated for education in the cities.<sup>47</sup> The steady increase of single households almost proportionately reflects the growth of rural migrants who left their families to get a job or to do study in the city.

Coming into the 1980s, an unusual phase of migration began. Inter-city migration increased while rural-urban moves declined in relative terms.<sup>48</sup> The primary cause of the change in the direction of migration was education. One out of three persons moved from city to city or from town to city to have more opportunity for education. This reflects a reaction of citizens to the educational reform policy of 1980 for a standardisation of educational opportunity. The policy aimed at the abolition of private tutoring that had been one of the most controversial issues in education. Enthusiasm for education coupled with a feverish rush to the so-called "first-rate" universities precipitated the widespread practice of private tutoring. The practice resulted in a financial burden for parents, undermined normal school education, and even caused stratification conflicts among citizens. The government proclaimed a legal ban on private tutoring and changed the college entrance system. It administered a state examination for all high school graduates wishing to advance to colleges or universities after 1981.<sup>49</sup> The scores in this uniform written test and in high school records are combined to determine the qualifications of a student to enter a certain college or university. The new system prohibits individual colleges and universities from conducting their own entrance examinations. However, the reform policy could not crush the enthusiasm for education. Driven by parents obsessed with finding "first-rate" schooling, moved to other districts or cities to change from one school to another with a high reputation in the state examination. That was the reason the 1980s showed a steep increase in single households and inter-city migration.

Next, the increase in the proportion of rural single households so as to outstrip that in urban areas reveals the side-effect of the huge migration which occurred during the last three decades. First of all, contrary to the trend in the urban area, the increased proportion of single households does not mean an actual growth in its absolute numbers but only a relative increase as a result of the absolute decrease of ordinary households which moved to join a family member already settled in a city. Accordingly the characteristics of single households differ by region. As shown in Table 4.12, urban areas have mainly the unmarried single household while rural areas disorganised single household.

**Table 4.12. Percentage Distribution of Each Single Household by Region**

region	total No of household	unmarried		disorganised	
		real No.	%	real No.	%
whole	3,400	156	4.6	85	2.5
urban	2,328	119	5.1	35	1.5
rural	1,072	37	3.4	44	4.1

source: FAM86

If the former is the pattern of initial stage of the nuclear family cycle, the latter is the last stage, that is to say a disorganised pattern of the nuclear family. Concretely if the former is composed of younger population, the latter consists of persons who were once married but are alone at the moment either as a result of divorce or the death of a partner. As a matter of fact this mostly results from the death of a partner, and naturally have a quite old age structure (mean age 64.0 years) and consist mainly of women (sex ratio 20). Those in urban areas are mixed including those resulting from both the death of a partner and from divorce and have a relatively young age structure (mean age 45.6) and more balanced sex structure (sex ratio 66) compared to those of rural areas. On the other hand unlike the distribution of the disorganised pattern, the unmarried single households encompass a wider range of age cohorts and include more women in urban areas. This is reversed in rural areas (sex ratio 82.0 in the urban, 92.3 in the rural, mean age 23 in urban 22 in rural).

It is possible that some of the single households, either unmarried households or disorganised ones, might re-join their family of orientation or establish their own family of procreation reducing the overall numbers. However it is more likely that single households will increase.<sup>50</sup> There are two points which allows the anticipation plausible; the acceleration of regional migration and the growth of individualism. First, regional migration is unlikely to decline but is more likely to remain at least at the same level. In the Sixth Five-Year Plan (1987-1991) the government declared a target for a stabilisation of economic growth and re-shaping of the industrial structure to increase the balance of development between regions, and to improve the overall standard of living. However, the primary stress was still on economic development not on the redistribution of the economic gains or on welfare. For example, the economy was expected to grow at an average rate of 8.2 percent in real GNP. Accordingly, whichever kind of restructuring the future industry undertook, society basically requires the continuous mobilisation of human resources. This might cause an acceleration of regional migration. There might be two different phenomena in the migration trend. First it might not be an uni-directional move from the rural to cities as it was before. Instead it would be multi-directional: from city to city, to the rural areas, or overseas as well as from rural areas to the cities. It depends on government policy on the regional distribution of financial investment either by private companies or by governmental ones. Next, the average age of the migrants would slightly increase due to an active participation of householders following moves by their company. This is contrasted to the previous migrants being mostly rural young age groups to get a new job in a city. To sum up it is natural that the single household will

increase in response to a growth of regional migration unless the government gives up its development policy or unless it deliver sincerely an agriculture foster policy.

Another factor that might increase the growth of single households is an expansion of individualism based on affluence and late marriage.<sup>51</sup> First the individualistic atmosphere can drive some minor groups to the household multiplication. Returning back to Table 4.6, the non-familial household of which the each constituents are non-familial members and C, J, M type of family in which a portion of non-familial members are comprised can be a primary target of household fission. The main reason they have shared the same flat/room or being a non-familial member to a family so far was to save expenses on rent or living expenses. If the economic condition gets better, there is no reason to share a private space and no reason to accept infringement of private life. It means that about one out of ten ordinary household would split to multiply the number of one person household. In addition this might be reflected more dramatically in statistics by the delay of the marriage among young generations.

To sum up, the growth of single households looks inevitable in the 1990s. Of course it is too early yet to analogise weakness of family consciousness with the increase of one person household. Rather it has been due more to the unreasonable economic policies causing a huge migration. Simply it is enough to recognise that the single households are and they have become stable as an alternative in the way of life apart from the family domain. That is to say we should probably allow an independent identity to that type neither as a nuclear family type nor as an abnormal and temporary pattern.

#### **4.4.2. Extraordinary Patterns**

No mature theory is likely to cover every individual instance. The more the unexplained portions grow, as Kuhn suggests, the more a given theory is under a threat of scientific switch-over to another.<sup>52</sup> There is a similar problem in describing the Korean family pattern. In other words, there are many exceptions that fit neither to nuclear family nor to the stem family pattern. Beside the single household, there have been various kinds of family patterns once unusual but no longer at the moment. Those are the household composed just of a mother and children, of a father and children, of a grand-parent and grand-children, of a couple with brothers/sisters, or of four generational families depriving of intermediate generation(s) etc. These are no longer a negligible amount. Table 4.13 that is

abstracted and re-mapped from Table 4.6 shows a trend away from the ideal type pattern. Pivoting at 1970, ideal typical family patterns have kept level at below 55 percent and were in decline inspite being very slow and steady. The transitory type is the one under a change either to an ideal typical family household or to non-ideal ones sooner or later, and is fluctuating. Examples of the transitory type would include a household consisting of a couple only whether it be a young couple household or an empty nest, of a couple and a parent/parents, or of a couple, children, and a single parent etc.

**Table 4.13. Percentage Distribution Of Ideal Type And Non-ideal Type Of Family**

family type	'66	'70	'75	'80	'85
total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
ideal type	59.6	60.6	55.2	54.9	54.7
nuclear family	52.9	55.5	53.2	53.0	52.8
stem family	6.7	5.1	2.0	1.9	1.9
transitory	18.6	19.1	13.8	14.4	15.0
non-ideal type	21.9	20.3	31.0	30.7	30.4
single household	2.3	-	4.2	4.8	6.9
collateral family	2.3	3.3	4.0	4.6	4.8
single parent fam	7.9	10.6	9.7	9.3	8.9
others	9.4	6.4	13.1	12.0	9.8

source: Census '66 - '85

The non-ideal typical patterns include households encompassing the brother/sister of the householder, the single parent household, three generational family households with none of second generation couple, or a household embracing relatives who never thought to be stem/nuclear family members such as matrilineal relatives or relatives by marriage etc. These non-ideal typical families indicate a great leap in the middle of 1970s, and continues at some 30 percent. At this level it is hard to put them aside as a marginal. To sum up, it is difficult to adhere to just a nuclear-stem dichotomy. It is necessary to consider whether current Korean family structures really are under a progressive change toward the nuclear family type or under going a revolutionary shift to some other framework.

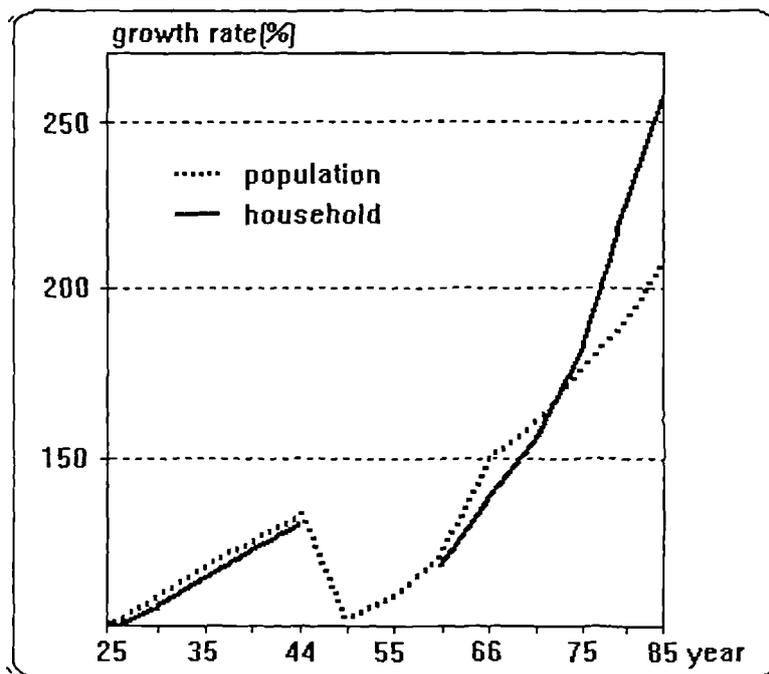
## 4.5. CONCLUSION

### 4.5.1. The Increase In The Number Of Separate Households

Most discussions on the change of family size and family patterns converge at a point: the increased number of households. Figure 4.6 explains the situation the most clearly. Except for the huge fluctuation during period between 1944 and 1960

when political upheavals supervened, the demographic growth rate follows a relatively proportional curve.<sup>1</sup> The household curve shows a geometric increase from around the early 1960s. There was once a balanced growth rate until 1944, and it was not dissimilar in the period between 1960 and 70. However, the population growth rate was tremendously exceeded by the household growth rate from the mid-70s on. That was the principal cause that provoked the shortage of housing from the early 1980s on in Korea.

**Figure 4.6. The Growth of Household Numbers Contrasted to That of Population**



source: Census '25 - '85

There were no statistics on the number of household for the period '49, '55.

The causes of household growth can be summarised in a few points. The first cause derives from ideological change. In the global movement towards modernisation Korea could not have selected to adopt just a part of the process. Although much was gained there was a loss of tradition, which can be seen as being good and/or bad. Economic growth was gained, the family patterns modified, with increased individualism as a by-product. The young generation was looking for individual rights and duty; casting off the group psychology characteristic of the traditional familism. Individualism, because of its central idea of individuality, could not help but have an affinity with a small nuclear family against a big stem family. They preferred one person households rather than sharing a cramped room with some total stranger. As a result of preference for individualism it is expected that an existing household will split and its numbers multiply. For example, a

newly married son whose familial status is the eldest/only establishes his family of procreation after a moderate period of co-residence with his family of orientation. Of course it was on the condition of re-union when a parent is lonely or severely ill. That kind of split was never thought of a couple of decades ago. It was a compromise of traditional principle of stem family loyalties with the individualistic ideology of the son's generation.

The second cause of the increase in the number of households was migration resulting from industrialisation and the shortcoming of the education policy. It is natural that labourers follow the flow of capital, where jobs can be easily obtained. It is general that students pursue more educational opportunity. The problem was that it was highly concentrated in the cities. Upon that, there was the unique habit in the Korean migration for a job. Whole of family members scarcely moved to city until a frontier member has settled down in a new place. Naturally the family splits into two households until they re-unite either at the new place or at their original place. That is the reason the rural households showed a severe instability and why there was such a considerable amount of single households in the urban areas, and extraordinary types of families in the whole of the nation. This tendency was strengthened by the growing idea of a distinctive home excluding non-familial members who, in the past decades, would have been attached to an ordinary household somewhere.

In conclusion, there arises a question to the family situation. Does the increase and instability of household indicate directly the weakness of the traditional familism? As already examined through the pattern of co-residence between generations, Korean familism still exists even passing through the rapid and profound modernisation. However, it could not have maintained the original principle. It has expanded its influence to other sons or even to daughters as well instead of limiting room for the eldest son's couple only. The stem family structure is still there but in modified form. In other words in spite of the predominant number of nuclear patterns, the households are still organised by the stem family principle in the inner dynamism. Of course many socio-economic factors can affect the future condition of the family values in Korea. Among them the deep diffusion of individualism among younger generation can be one thing. Far widely activated inter-regional occupational mobility can be another thing. Both factors can give impact either to weaken or to strengthen the family consciousness in the future. However the factors have been used to excuse modification of the conventional family principle among present day Koreans.

### 4.5.2. Housing Problem

The increase in the number of separate households, in association with other related variables, has caused a housing shortage.

Among the basic elements for human life the provision of food and clothing has come to be solved thanks to the economic development of the last few decades of industrialisation, and the proportion of the cost of food and clothing to the total domestic consumption is still declining.<sup>53</sup> However the cost of housing has steadily risen to record 38 per cent of total domestic consumption in 1987. In spite of a big increase in housing construction, the housing shortage has deepened until three out five households are without their own homes in urban areas. The housing shortage is a serious social issue in present day Korea.

The most frequently used quantitative social index for the level of housing is the housing supply rate. The rate is the total housing stock divided by the total number of ordinary households. The housing supply rate has greatly changed for the worse as time has passed in spite of apparent growth of national wealth and an improvement of individual economic conditions. As shown on Table 4.14 the housing supply rate has seriously degenerated from about 83 per cent in 1960 to 63 per cent of 1990 in spite of the fact that total house stocks have more than doubled.

**Table 4.14. Population, Household, And Housing Unit Change By Region**

	1960	1970	1980	1985	1990
whole country					
population	24,989	30,852	37,407	40,432	43,410
household(A)	4,198	5,576	7,470	8,763	11,377
housing stock(B)	3,464	4,360	5,319	6,107	7,160
B/A (%)	82.5	78.2	71.2	69.7	62.9
urban areas					
population	6,997	12,685	21,409	26,458	32,309
household(A)	1,209	2,377	4,362	5,937	8,480
housing stock(B)	805	1,398	2,468	3,428	4,646
B/A (%)	66.6	58.8	56.6	57.7	54.8
rural areas					
population	17,992	18,167	15,997	14,009	11,102
household(A)	2,989	3,199	3,107	3,038	2,897
housing stock(B)	2,659	2,962	2,850	2,846	2,514
B/A (%)	88.9	92.6	91.7	93.7	86.8

source: EPB, *Census*, 1960, 1970, 1980, 1985, 1990.

unit: thousands

The situation is far more serious in urban areas than in the rural areas. Housing conditions in the rural areas have steadily improved to reach about 94 per cent of housing supply rate by 1985 except for a slight variation in 1990. The decline was due to the people looking for a home who were feeling burdensome about

purchasing a flat in urban areas, moved to rural areas. Thus rural areas also began to suffer from a housing shortage. However, in urban areas there is a serious shortage and the housing supply rate does not exceed even two thirds of that of rural areas. Although the urban housing stocks have increased almost six times in three decades, still the housing supply rate has become worse. Of course there was undeniable improvement of the quality of the housing supply. Improvement in dwelling density is a good example of this. As shown on Table 4.15, the number of persons occupying a room has greatly reduced and the per capita floor space has greatly expanded as well from a meagre 6.8 m<sup>2</sup> of 1970 to 13.2m<sup>2</sup> in 1990. The improvements are more evident in the rural areas. However, another indication shows the quality of housing conditions may be worse. Referring to Table 4.16 it is apparent that, in spite of a slight improvement in 1990, the proportion of houses containing just one household has significantly decreased (with a partial exception of the urban areas in 1985), while the proportion of houses crowded with two or more than two households has generally increased in the whole country.

**Table 4.15. Housing Space**

	1960	1970	1975	1980	1985	1990
persons per room :						
whole country	2.5	2.4	2.3	2.1	1.8	1.5
urban areas	2.8	2.7	2.5	2.2	1.9	1.5
rural areas	2.4	2.2	2.1	1.9	1.7	1.3
per capita floor space(m <sup>2</sup> ):						
whole country		6.8	8.2	10.1	11.1	13.8
urban areas		5.7	7.4	9.3	10.8	13.0
rural areas		6.1	9.0	11.1	11.6	15.9

source: EPB, *Census*, 1960, 1970, 1975, 1980, 1985, 1990.

**Table 4.16. Percentage of Households Per Housing**

	1970	1975	1980	1985	1990
whole country;					
one household	79.6	75.6	71.8	69.7	72.2
two households	13.2	15.1	16.9	16.8	13.7
three households	4.4	5.5	6.5	7.5	6.9
four & more households	2.8	3.8	7.5	6.0	7.3
urban areas;					
one household	55.2	51.6	51.1	53.8	62.0
two households	26.6	28.6	28.3	24.6	17.9
three households	10.9	11.6	11.7	11.8	9.6
four & more households	7.3	8.3	8.9	9.8	10.5
rural areas;					
one household	91.1	90.5	89.8	89.1	90.9
two households	6.8	6.8	7.0	7.2	5.9
three households	1.4	1.7	2.0	2.2	1.8
four & more households	0.7	1.0	1.2	1.5	1.3

source: EPB, *Census*, 1970, 1975, 1980, 1985, 1990.

In other words among the 11.4 million households in 1990, just 72 per cent had their own space to reside while as much as 28 per cent that is equivalent to 3.2 million households were sharing a flat with some other family. Unlike the semi-detached house in the UK with the structural attributes of independent living conditions, most Korean houses share a common kitchen, bathroom, and living room etc. So the tenants' family sharing a house with other households which amounts to a good 30 per cent in 1990 (Table 4.16) are living under very difficult living conditions. The absolute shortage of housing and the inconvenient dwelling environment are major social and political issues in present day Korea. The issue is becoming more heated as the general level of economic conditions improves thanks to the economic development of the nation.<sup>54</sup>

The first reason for the serious housing problem arose from a failure in housing policy. Purchasing power for housing is in a direct relationship to the level of income and the price of the house. Thus when the housing price is bigger than the income of the purchaser, dealing poses a problem. The income of the working class in the urban areas has sharply increased by 28 time during the period between 1965 and 1980, however, housing prices have jumped 39 times for the same period. Naturally the gap made it difficult for the low-income group in urban areas to have their own house. That is the one of the reasons a considerable proportion of households dwelling in the urban areas live in rented housing. (Table 4.16)

Secondly, demand is inescapably related to the number of population. As shown on Table 4.14 the absolute numbers of population has increased faster than the growth in the housing stock. There has been a strong government policy to control the population and the population growth rate has unprecedentedly declined for the last a few decades. Nevertheless, the absolute number of the population has increased as much as 61.7 per cent for two and half decades between 1960 and 1985 and has had a significant impact on the housing shortage.

The third reason is the regional movement of the population. Since industrialisation began to accelerate from the early 1960s, the change was inescapably accompanied by urbanisation causing a housing shortage for the new urban immigrants. In addition urban housing conditions became worse due to the migration. Over one out of two job migrants left their families behind their home town<sup>55</sup> They re-joined their families when they achieved economic success in the city. Naturally the migrants doubled housing demand to cause the housing shortage in the cities.

Lastly, the housing problem is directly related to the values relating to the family in Korea. First, one of the basic organising ideas of traditional society was *chib* idea. *Chib* (family) was a concept comprising both of the family itself, its each and every member, and sometimes used to denote clan members as well and also identical with their physical housing. A house was perceived not merely as a physical place for comfort and rest of each member but rather as a significant symbol of the family itself. It was a sacred thing which should be kept generation by generation in order to distinguish a family's identity. Thus the house was a distinctive instrument for family identity. This idea survives in present day Korea and influences housing demand. The first thing is the type of house: however expensive a house is, most people have feeling of fulfilment only after they get an independent house of their own: neither an apartment nor a semi-detached house. As far as housing is concerned most of Korean people feel a loss of family identity about co-ownership of a dwelling. As shown in Table 4.17, the proportion of present day Koreans wanting an independent house is greater in rural areas in which general housing conditions are quite generous. Of course the proportion preferring an independent house has rapidly declined as time passes and the preference for apartment housing has sharply increased particularly in the urban areas. The preference for an apartment is especially marked among the young generation because of its anonymity of apartment life, its convenient facilities, and relatively cheap cost. However, there is an undeniable possibility that they would change their preference as they get older and if general housing conditions improved.

**Table 4.17 . Desired Type Of Housing**

	1979	1982	1987	1992
whole country ;				
total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
independent house	92.5	85.0	79.3	63.3
semi-detached house	0.8	2.3	1.9	1.8
apartment	6.5	12.5	18.3	34.2
others	0.2	0.2	0.5	0.7
urban areas ;				
total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
independent house	89.7	78.7	72.3	56.0
semi-detached house	1.0	3.0	2.4	2.1
apartment	9.0	18.0	24.8	41.0
others	0.3	0.3	0.5	0.9
rural areas ;				
total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
independent house	95.8	95.2	92.7	84.6
semi-detached house	0.6	1.0	0.9	1.0
apartment	3.5	3.7	6.1	14.0
others	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.4

source : EPB, *Social Statistics Survey*

The problem is that present day Koreans are too strongly possessed by the traditional idea of *chib*. Koreans feel rootless if they have no house registered in their own name. If they do not waste their money, time, and mental effort on enormously expensive housing, they can easily upgrade their standard of living staying in a rented house which might be more appropriate under the conditions of modern industrial society in which high rates of occupational mobility are demanded. Of course it is true that there is a risk the rental would increase and sometimes the facilities of the rental house do not reach a comfortable standard of living. Even considering the disadvantages of a rented house, however, the ideas of tenant life as rootless are too deeply embedded in present day Korea. The traditional idea of *chib* and preferring their own independent house has persisted to the present day in Korea and demands more housing supply than there is land available.

The next element directly related to the housing problem is the modification of the stem family principle. It stipulated the duty and right of the eldest son's family to share a house with his parents. The principle is still in operation as far as the organic relationship between parents and children, however, the rule has been modified in practice during modernisation. First the subject of the duty and right was once limited to the eldest son only, but has expanded to other sons and sometimes daughters as well and that has brought a vagueness of the duty boundary. Thus there is now the possibility that parents can be abandoned latently or manifestly. The proportion of *de facto* co-dwelling with parents has been reduced notwithstanding the organic connections still persisting. Most young women married to an eldest son or the only son can have a separate married life from his parents under the conditions that they re-unite when one of them is in bad health situation or one partner passes away. This modification has doubled the housing demand. Once a unit household in traditional society has split into two due to the weakening of the stem principle. Roughly 1.7 millions were estimated being doubled.<sup>56</sup> The increase in the divorce rate has also split households in two.<sup>57</sup> All in all the above changes in the values relating to the family, demographic change, regional migration etc. have been deeply influenced on the increase in the number of household with which the supply of house stock has been unable to keep pace. Having extremely oriented to the development policy, the government could not have invested enough resources to housing welfare.

Projecting the number of ordinary households, it is anticipated that there will be an increase from 9.6 million to 13.8 million at 44.5 per cent by the year 2000. To solve the housing shortage problem, 6.9 million new houses must be

constructed by the year 2000. Thus, annually, 540 thousand additions to housing stock should be supplied.<sup>58</sup> However, regarding the limited land area and environmental issues, it sounds almost unattainable. The alternatives are changes in the conventional values relating to the family and housing and continuous policies on the population control etc. For example, housing of smaller size rooms can be an alternative. In fact per capita floor space in Korea has notably expanded from 8.2 m<sup>2</sup> in 1975 to 13.8 m<sup>2</sup> in 1990 which is never less than 9.3 m<sup>2</sup> of Hong Kong or 13.2 m<sup>2</sup> of Japan in 1989. However, average number of persons per room is 1.5 in 1990 which is worse than 0.8 of Japan in 1978 or 0.6 of Netherland or UK<sup>59</sup> in 1978. Considering the far higher population density (432 persons in 1990) than 327 persons of Japan in 1985 or 366 persons of Netherland in 1971 or 234 persons of UK in 1981,<sup>60</sup> housing policy can induce the present day Korean to accept living in a narrower room than before instead of having an independent room per person. In other words a policy of smaller room space can contribute to constructing more rooms per housing or more housing of smaller size rooms which might relieve housing shortage problems.

# CHAPTER FIVE

## THE KINSHIP NETWORK

### AND MARRIAGE

Chapter 5 is largely composed of two sections. The first section examines the change of the clan and kinship network. It shows how *munjung*, the traditional secondary group has changed its role and its function and how the relationship among relatives has adapted to fit the modern era. The second section discusses the changes in marriage patterns. It examines decision making in the choice of marriage partners, class endogamy and clan exogamy. To conclude, the chapter examines what these changes in the marriage field mean to the individual life cycle.

#### 5.1. CHANGES IN CLAN AND KINSHIP

##### 5.1.1. The *Munjung* Group : *Chongch'inhoe*

*Munjung* was the secondary group by which individual families were regulated and through which familial values expanded to societal level. It was the most basic unit motivating social changes in traditional society.<sup>1</sup> However, it lost its main function as a secondary organisation, in the process of modernisation and industrialisation.<sup>2</sup> The cause can be attributed to two factors: political upheavals and economic change.<sup>3</sup> The farmland reform of 1950 and the Korean War were the most critical factors among many social events. Since independence in 1945, society converted its active mechanism from clan-oriented structure to an individual family-oriented one. Through the reform, the communal property of the clan was broken up. Losing its infra-structure, the cohesive power of the clan group was weakened and the hierarchical order within community collapsed. During the

war most of the ancestral shrines were destroyed and ancestral tablets and family books were lost during the upheaval. These great events led people to think again about the meaning of ancestral worship, of ancestor rituals, and eventually of *munjung*. The second factor that weakened the *munjung* was the development both of commerce and the manufacturing industry. These led *munjung* members to abandon the land which had kept them from leaving the familial and territorial boundaries in traditional society. The growth of commerce and manufacture led familial members to migrate to urban areas, breaking from the narrowness and closeness of their *munjung* group. Individual ability rather than familial identity was the only condition required for a free and promising career in cities. Naturally the *munjung* lost its predominant influence as a social institution over its members.<sup>4</sup> Each member lost their devotion to and respect for the clan group and eventually individual familial interest gained precedence over *munjung* interest.

However this does not mean the *munjung* totally diminished. Rather it still exists but is of different size, and is in a modified form of organisational structure, and in an altered context of organisational activities. First, the boundary and size of the *munjung* have changed. To examine the status of *munjung* in present day Korea, it is first necessary to recall what it entailed. It was an organisation composed of the descendants of the same progenitor. It was a group of persons sharing the same surname and the same *pon*<sup>5</sup> (place of origin). Unlike the Chinese or Japanese who had no idea of *pon*, there were many different clans using the same surname but from different *pon*. To belong to the same *munjung*, one should use the same surname and the same *pon*. The '85 Census showed 249 different surnames being used among present day Koreans divided amongst 3,387 *pons*. That is to say there were 3,387 clans at the time of 1985. These groups were generally called *munjung* and became the unit for exogamy.

The *munjung* group stood as a definitional and nominal group rather than the unit for a group identity or for a collective behaviour. The active unit was the *p'a* (faction) smaller than *munjung*. A *munjung* was split into several or dozens of *p'a* according to the total size of the clan. There were two principles in this segmentation. Firstly, in most cases the first ancestor of each clan was the mythical founder in anthropological terms. Nothing was known of his lifetime achievements or most importantly of the burial place, so his real existence would not be verified. The name and mythical story about him was transmitted by word of mouth only. This was much same for the several generations after the progenitor, sometimes even up to the tenth generation, where just the names and myths were enumerated. Accurate records of the lives or the graves of ancestors began after that. These



whole of *p'a* groups. Unlike *p'a* groups led by a particular figure, *chongch'inhoe* is open to everyone who uses the same surname from the same place of origin. As a matter of course *chongch'inhoe* is of nation-wide size unlike the conventional locally-based *p'a* group. Therefore most *chongch'inhoe* have head offices in Seoul, while *p'a* groups were down-graded to a substructure to be a liaison office in each region. To conclude, despite the weakened cohesive power of segmented clan groups, a new integration of clan groups has formed and its influence has expanded more widely than *p'a* did.

The second characteristic of the change of *munjung* is observed in the modern organisational structure of *chongch'inhoe*. The conventional *munjung* (*p'a*) consisted of dual leadership of the eldest of the head family and the powers of the clan group.<sup>8</sup> As a result, unless the eldest of the head family was powerful socially, economically, and politically enough to regulate the other families, the leadership used to become dubious and the *p'a* weakened. However, the leadership has been centralised to a socially and economically prominent person under *chongch'inhoe*. The eldest of the head family had their status removed. *Chongch'inhoe* have their head offices mainly in Seoul and are generally composed of a chairperson, a board of directors, and executives. All of them are selected by democratic election. Local substructures were organised according to the population of the members. The given *p'a* groups were annexed to these local substructures.<sup>9</sup> To conclude, the conventional *p'a-munjung* showed frequent conflict between the eldest of the head family and the powers of the clan. The *chongch'inhoe* is operated far more effectively and consistently under the centralised leadership of an elected chairman. If the former was under the vertical line of command, the latter represents a democratic process of decision-making. If the status of the former was ascribed regardless of his quality as a leader, that of the latter was achieved based on leadership.

Finally *munjung* activity has been changed. If the ancestral rituals were the prime purpose of the conventional *p'a-munjung* organisation, the plenary session is that of the *chongch'inhoe*. The general meeting is held twice annually and decides on the activities of the year. The activities can be summarised into three: demonstration of *munjung* power, educational work, and cultural work. First of all, the opening of the annual meeting itself is a good arena to boast clan strength and solidarity. The more they congregate, the better. Moreover educational work or cultural enterprise is also another side of clan ostentation in terms of competition with what the other clan groups do. Secondly, educational work has two directions: private and public. *Chongch'inhoe* encourage younger members to study on the one

hand by offering scholarships to their clan members regardless of sex and by offering dormitory facilities to students from rural areas or from poor families, while they found private schools on the other hand. Of course, teaching staff or students are recruited regardless of the clan and the same curricula are taught as in the other public schools. Only the board of directors is nominated from their own clan group and sometimes a monument to some historically distinguished figure from the clan is built in the schoolyard. Sangmun High school in Seoul is a successful, educational institute of the *chongch'inhoe* of Sang clan from Mokch'ŏn<sup>10</sup>.

Lastly but not least, cultural enterprise shows another side of *chongch'inhoe*. The work is roughly divided into two: 1> publications and 2> care of the clan cultural heritage. *Chongch'inhoe* publishes great family genealogies encompassing every *p'a* group. Unlike conventional family genealogy that was very strictly limited to patriarchal lines and written in Chinese, the new genealogy is very voluminous, reflects sex equality, and is frequently written in Korean characters. Besides these, historical performances or literature etc. of historically eminent heroes, scholars, or politicians from the clan are translated and published in Korean<sup>11</sup>. Other cultural works are the care of historical remains like tombstones, graveyards, and shrines. Each *chongch'inhoe* makes efforts to redecorate their historical assets and open them for the benefit of the public as a leisure garden or for educational and cultural purposes. Often the works are subsidised from government finances or by assistance from other clan groups who share the same cultural heritage for a historical event. For example, the erection committee encompassing the Speaker, the Chief Justice, the Prime Minister, and the chairman of other clans etc. was organised and it helped the *chongch'inhoe* of Yun clan of P'ap'yungto set up the statue of General and Scholar Yun Kwan, who had greatly contributed to society during the Japanese Invasion of the 16th century.

To conclude, the conventional *munjung* has lost its influence as a social institution over individual families, however it still exists to exert its authority as a secondary group. Even though it has lost the visibly strong coerciveness upon each individual, it has expanded its influence more widely, overcoming its regional limitedness.<sup>12</sup> The conventional *munjung* was segmented and was exclusive or against other clan groups or even against the other *p'a-munjung* of the same clan group. However *chongch'inhoe* has been successful in mobilising not only its own members but also even others on a nation-wide scale. It has functioned successfully in integrating national consensus at a certain point. It has spread to educational and cultural works for the benefit of the public instead of being restricted to ancestor

rituals of their own. In a word, if the conventional *munjung* is past-oriented and ancestor-centred, *chongch'inhoe* is opened to the future and is descendant-oriented through sound competition among clan groups. To conclude the clan group is still alive to give influence in organising social consensus. It has changed its external format and its way of exerting power, responding to the over-all social change to modernisation.

It might be interesting to trace back the background of the new clan group which emerged in the form of *chongch'inhoe* in present day Korea. The background can be abstracted to the socio-cultural demand. It is a sort of cultural and ideological trend restoring to the past tradition.<sup>13</sup> At the beginning of the 1970s, Koreans began to weigh the balance of social changes. Economic welfare which they had earned during the last half of a century of modernisation was like a miracle. However, the side-effects of the rapid achievement looked more serious and offset of the value of the miracle. They recognised themselves as having lost too much. It was particularly severe in the cultural and moral domain. They came to the view that the distressing socio-cultural phenomena were due to the rapidity of the change on the one hand and the discontinuity of the tradition on the other hand. Naturally the restoration movement appeared to harmonise the traditional heritage with the modern way of life. The value of familism was emphasised.<sup>14</sup> However, they did not like the conventional type of familism which suffocated individual. Openness to society and comprehensiveness to its members as a whole was preferred, rather than the closeness and narrow-mindedness of the past. *Chongch'inhoe* was a natural conclusion in terms of the restoration. Through the activation of the new clan group, people wanted to recover their cultural self-identity. They expected some social issues like sexual openness or the rise of the divorce rate etc. to be halted. Thus *chongch'inhoe* was born from a social demand for an alternative to re-integrate socio-cultural disorder.

It is hard to say how far *chongch'inhoe* will develop as a secondary group. Will it again participate deeply in competition for political and economic hegemony as it used to do in traditional society or will it be replaced by the occupational group in Durkhemian terms?<sup>15</sup> In fact, the occupational organisation has not yet succeeded in integrating social consensus in present day Korea. Instead, the organisations have been interwoven more by familism, by the affinity of the same regional territory, or by the tie-in of the same school. In any case, it has been true that it, at least, exerted its influence very significantly in the development of public opinion in some fields. *Chongch'inhoe* offices are necessary places for MP candidates or for the Presidency to visit to win an election. Some clan groups along

with the Confucianists were very active in the process of the Family Law Revision of 1989, and other social affairs as well. The New Community movement that was the stepping stone for economic development for the last few decades gained great assistance from the clan groups.

### 5.1.2. Kinship Membership

Both kinship network and the consciousness have changed during the last few decades of modernisation. This can be observed in many fields like the changes in the appellation given to relatives, in the legal definition on the kinship, or in the frequency and contents of the communication in every day life among relatives. However the due data are not enough to verify the situation in detail. The survey of FAM86 and FAM89 did not pose the due questions for the data. Moreover, there has been little data by other researchers on the changes in the kinship, and even those are old-dated or surveyed on a regional base.<sup>16</sup> Nevertheless, some of them are good for evaluating the present situation in the kinship network in modern Korea.

The change in the kinship is best described in the revised family law of 1989. (execution from 1st Jan. 1991) Of course there can be different opinions on what the law says. If law is a simple reflection following public demand, it is also true that law is created to lead the public to a certain social atmosphere which has not yet arrived.<sup>17</sup> The latter seemed more true among developing countries. In any case it is true that any law reflects, directly or indirectly, the trend of the times, whether a society is mature enough or not to accept the law. The established title of Korean family law is The Kinship and Inheritance Law in the Civil Law of the Constitution. As the prescribed title denotes, one of the most essential frameworks of the law was the prescription on the kinship boundary. The law defined the boundary of relatives including up to 'the eighth degree<sup>18</sup> (third cousin) of the patrilineal line. the fourth degree (first cousin) of the matrilineal line and wife's parents.' The prescription reflecting the traditional frame of the kinship network was sustained until 1991 of the revised family law. The new prescription has changed to reflect the voice of sexual equality, and a relative weakening of the patrilineal kinship network. The new law prescribes the boundary of matrilineal line to expand to the third cousins equally as that of patrilineal lines. The boundary of matrimonial relation has also expanded to the first cousin of the wife which was, in the past, limited only to her parents. To sum up, the new family law is backing up the positions of the matrilineal line and matrimonial relatives. It

reflects a relative decline of the patrilineal line from the conventional kinship positioning in the past. Of course, the prescription is just a nominal level in the Constitution. The *de facto* relationship can show stronger and more frequent communication among patrilineal members of a kinship network depending on regional base, individual families, or religious orientation. Nevertheless, it is undeniable that the new law is reflecting general changes in the conventional kinship relationship to manifest sexual equality among family members. On the other hand, it is hard to say that the boundary expansion of the matrilineal line and matrimonial relatives in law denotes the expansion of actual strengthening of the relationship among kinship members. Rather, the expansion tells us nothing but a relative weakening of the traditionally strong relationship among patrilineal members.

Weakening of the patrilineal line or of kinship as a whole can be observed in the appellation custom as well.<sup>19</sup> Traditional society developed the appellation system to a high level. Naming identified each position in the kinship network. The more the kinship network developed, the more accurate positioning with precise appellation was needed. This was exactly the case in traditional Korean society. Concretely 146 different terminologies were used to designate the distinctive position of each relative. Among them 101 designations were for the relatives in the patriarchal line, 19 for wife's relatives, and 26 for maternal relatives. The total 146 terminologies varied again according to the speaker's familial position or sex; to the age gap between the speaker and the relatives; and whether the relatives were married or not. For example the appellation a husband used to his brother was different from what his wife called to him. Moreover, the appellation a housewife used to her brother-in-law was distinctive according to whether he was married or single, or whether he was older than her husband or younger. Those were summed up to 458 distinctive relative titles.<sup>20</sup> Through the highly developed appellation system, each member could have a definite identification of position *cum* role in a kinship network. Eventually it promoted kinship consciousness to a high level.

Modernisation has weakened kinship consciousness in terms of these appellations. The majority of present day Koreans are forgetting or misusing the meaning of the complicated appellations. For example, by nephew, all positions of the sons of brother/sister or of brother-in-law/sister-in-law are included in the West. As a result if there is no personal intimacy between them, in principle all children have the same relationship as nephew. However, there are 8 different sorts of nephew in the Korean relative network by law: *choka* (sons of brothers): *saengjil* (sons of sisters): *chongjoka* (grandsons of father's brothers): *naejongjoka*

(grandsons of father's sisters): *ijongjoka* (grandsons of mother's sisters): *oejongjoka* (grandsons of mother's brothers): *chaejongjoka* (great-grandsons of grandfather's brothers): and *ch'ojoka* (nephews on the wife's side). Each naming was strictly controlled to be used correctly, because each nephew was recognised as having a different kinship position and a different role within a kinship network: For example *choka*, *chongjoka*, and *chaejongjoka* were expected, to different degrees, to participate in ancestor rituals<sup>21</sup>, while the rest were hardly recognised as relatives in a real sense. Only the role of emotional intimacy or of mutual aid was expected to them. Moreover the degree and content of feeling intimacy or of mutual help to each of them varied even among the rest of them. However, the boundary of the appellation has reduced to only a few namings of *cho-ka* or *ch'ojo-ka* etc. Distinctive positions were referred to vaguely using the term *choka*. According to FAM86, only one out of nine in the urban areas and one out of five interviewees in the rural areas answered correctly who each of the above eight nephews were. While just one out of eight interviewees in the whole country gave the correct answer to which of them could attend at ancestral worship. Kinship consciousness once strong in the past has faded away during the process of modernisation. The conventional clan group is in a similar situation but in a modified pattern as already mentioned in the first section..

Changes are observed in the communication among kinship members as well.<sup>22</sup> According to Han's survey, quite a good proportion of modern families are still in touch with each other. However, the boundary of the frequent contacts is limited to fifth *ch'on* (a first cousin once removed) of the patrilineal line and fourth *ch'on* (a first cousin) of the matrilineal line. If the genealogical distances become remote, kinship meeting was rare.<sup>23</sup> In other words, the relationship with the secondary kins who were never under a same family of orientation, has been weakened, while the primary relatives(kin of orientation)<sup>24</sup> still keep a close relationship with each other wherever they are.

Changes are happening not only in the boundary but also in the contents of the communication. The relatives below are those of the primary kins. As shown in Table 5.1, the proportion of the families visiting relatives has been generally weakened particularly on institutionalised days like festival days, ritual days or birthdays. Especially on the day of ancestor worship for father's patrilineal direct line, like father's parents, visiting was previously compulsory. The proportion has declined considerably. Nevertheless, a good proportion of urban families still keeps good contact with each other at various aspects.

**Table 5.1. Proportion Of Families Visiting Relatives**

relatives	sample size	proportion of families visiting relatives at time of			
		festive days	ancestor worship days	birthday	any time
father's parents	211	53.1	37.4	46.0	73.0
father's brothers	312	44.6	34.3	21.2	65.7
father's sisters	300	39.7	18.0	16.3	67.0
mother's parents	309	43.7	22.0	40.8	61.8
mother's brothers	347	31.1	17.9	17.9	69.7
mother's sisters	349	21.5	7.7	13.2	82.8

source : Han Nam-Jae, *Study on Korean Modern Family*, p.306

The pattern of kinship association can be abstracted into a few points. First, at the time of festive days like New Year or Korean Harvest Moon day or ancestral ritual days, the father's parents are the most visited relatives among primary kins. It is because, no need to say about the ancestral ritual days, the festive days as well are open by giving thanks and respect to ancestors in the patrilateral direct line. Courtesy calls to other relatives on that day are only after an ancestral sacrifice to the patrilateral direct ancestors. That is the reason why the proportion visiting father's parents are the highest in most cases. Thus the patrilateral direct line is still the most important subject of association in modern Korea nominally or practically. The line is the most frequently pursued subject to find familial identity emotionally or genealogically.

Secondly, the proportion visiting relatives other than the patrilateral direct line on ancestral ritual days is never small. They are not there to perform ancestral sacrifice but to give helping hands to the complicated and hard work of the preparation for relatives' rituals. It was a strong custom among kins of mutual aids passed down through traditional society. The custom has weakened in the process of modernisation but still appears quite a lot. This extent denotes traditional Confucianism in courtesy calls as well. Under Confucianism, ancestral ritual was a sort of consensus that should be kept at any cost and should be praised at any time, regardless of who the rituals were for. Thus it was quite natural to have a courtesy call to other relatives' ancestral rituals to praise the good behaviour of the opposing ancestor.

Thirdly, the extent of association with the mother's parents is never small compared with the father's. It is as much as that of father's parents. In fact father's sister was traditionally regarded as belonging to the other family after her marriage. Her name was not registered even in the genealogy book. Of course, the genealogy offered no separate space for the name of the mother's father, but unlike the

daughter's name, records about mother's father took at least minimum space beneath the name of mother. Genealogically the mother was perceived as an indispensable contributor to the family prosperity and correspondingly the mother's father, due to the fact that he produced her, was highly respected. Even if emotional intimacy to the mother's parents was relatively lacking compared to the father's sister, the respect was significantly attributed to him. Naturally the extent of association with the mother's parents was higher than with the father's sisters on festive days or ancestral ritual days. The situation is most highlighted on the birthday of the mother's parents. They are the second most visited relatives for paying respect but are the least remembered in every day life of emotional contact. The conventional degree of distance has not changed in modern Korea either emotionally or in genealogical status.

Fourthly, the mother's sister is the least associated relative at times like festive days or ancestral ritual days or even on her birthday. It confirms the traditional idea of the woman married into other family. If mother was a new member came from another family by marriage, mother's brothers were members of another family where mother was from, but mother's sister was having totally no connection because she went to the other family by marriage. The mother's sister was completely isolated from any of her family so there was no point in associating with her at least genealogically. Considering the traditional custom expecting women to fully integrate into the husband's family, and considering geographical isolation or transportation condition of the time, it was hardly possible to communicate or come and go to the mother's sister. However, the situation has greatly changed in modern Korea. Although she is still the least associated relative at a formal level, reflecting the traditional custom, she is the most frequently coming and going relative. The strongest emotional ties in every day life are to the mother's sister.

To sum up, the kinship network among relatives has been narrowed to primary kins in modern Korea. However, the pattern of association among the kinship members is almost as it was in the past. The kinship network still functions conforming the stem family principle in amended pattern. The patrilateral direct line is still an important centripetal point in forming kinship relationships. The only exception is the great rise of the mother's sisters' position in every day life. This is due to modernisation accompanied by the rise of women's status in general, and the progress of national transportation system etc.

The function of the kinship group has not changed even under modernisation. The group still stands together for kinship solidarity based on ancestral ritual performances. According to Han, four out of five modern Korean families in the urban areas are visiting each other for ancestral rituals. Nevertheless, the primary function of the kinship group moved from the coercive solidarity to emotional comfort among kinship members. For example, the families joining a *kye* (a mutual aid club) among the kinship group were no more than one out of three and just four out eleven families join together for kinship intimacy on a regular basis.<sup>25</sup> In traditional society *kye* was an important centripetal mechanism, promoting kinship solidarity by meeting regularly, or by giving economical or physical help to other members on occasions of congratulation or condolence. Through the mechanism, the kinship group could show solidarity, confirm kinship identity, and exert coerciveness over each member of the group. Of course there are still a majority of families mutually aiding each other economically and physically. Seven out of ten families give and receive economic aid when needed and lend or borrow helping hands when there is a need. However, this is not normal practice, and is not coercive. The mutual help does not come from an institutional basis but from emotional intimacy. The change of the kinship function is being confirmed by other statistics as well. For example, 95 per cent of the modern urban families inform their relatives when they are in good or ill fortune, and three out of four have their children visit relatives during the academic vacation. To sum up, the primary function of the kinship group is more as emotional comfort or servicial co-operation than economic exchange.

## 5.2. MARRIAGE

Marriage is the legal, social, and customary institution prescribing how the family ought to be formed and maintained. Being married means two individuals being a couple to pursue self-perfection and to create their life values based on autonomy, contract, love etc. These are meaningful enough as an individual affair. However, the reason the marriage ought to have been under the social regulation was because of its social characteristics. Marriage does not stop at the individual cohesion between two different sexes but more critically, expands to social integration. Marriage has functioned as a mechanism, at an initial stage, transmitting the socially recognised values to generations and socialising social consensus to each and every social member. That is the reason society institutionalised the process of social recognition of the marriage.<sup>26</sup>

As far as social affairs, the marriage is also about human affairs, and shows inescapable differences according to each society, each culture, and each period. The primary purpose of marriage in the traditional society was to keep the continuation of a family line. As a result the conjugal relationship was expected to be domination-subordination, and their life recognised as an instrument for reproduction of generations and eventually for maintenance of the community order. It was marriage of the family, by the family, and for the family with almost unjust regard to the individuals concerned. However, modern marriage emphasises autonomy and is formed by the choice and decision between individuals rather than between families. As a result, self-realisation and contracts based on love and personality have been far more highly regarded as the virtues of married life. In this section, the demographic characteristics and dynamics of marriage, and values relating to marriage etc. will be examined in terms of modernisation and industrialisation.

### 5.2.1. Mate Selection

In traditional society marriage was meaningful only as a familial affair. Marriage was recognised not as the creation of an independent family but as the expansion of the stem family. It was therefore natural that parents, instead of the persons concerned, dominated the choice of partner in the marriage.<sup>27</sup> With modernisation, marriage has been illuminated as a love affair between two individuals rather than conventional family affairs.<sup>28</sup> Individual right and personal choice play a much greater role in the decision to marry. Table 5.2 was produced from FAM86 and was calculated regardless of what sort of marriage interviewees took: love marriage or an arranged match. It shows a dramatic change in the location of decision-making. Viewed from the years when interviewee women were married, the older she was, the more the final decision-making of marriage was in her parents' hands. The younger she was, the more likely it was to be her own decision. One interesting thing is that in spite of the dramatic decline of parents' overall power(I-type), the proportion of bride's absolute power (IV-type) has not increased in the same proportion. Instead it was the type III, in which the bride took the lead of marriage accompanied by parents' approval, which increased most. It is a sort of harmonisation.<sup>29</sup> It is a quite different pattern of decision-making from the compelled marriage disregarding the preference of persons concerned as in the traditional period. It is a reconciled pattern of decision-making

allowing a space for parents' opinion in the process of mate-selection. Much the same applies to the type II though that case is more inclined to the parents' opinion.

**Table 5.2. Choice Of Marriage Partner By Marriage Cohort And By Region**

year she married	total(real No)	types of decision-making				
		I	II	III	IV	others
whole country						
total	100.0(3008)	21.2	32.1	38.7	7.7	0.2
1934-49	100.0( 357)	71.7	22.7	2.8	2.5	*
1950-59	100.0( 431)	45.5	37.6	13.0	3.7	*
1960-69	100.0( 589)	22.9	43.8	26.3	6.4	*
1970-79	100.0( 865)	4.6	33.6	51.4	10.3	-
1980-86	100.0( 766)	1.3	22.7	65.4	10.4	-
urban areas						
total	100.0(2044)	14.2	31.1	45.5	9.1	*
1934-49	100.0( 173)	67.0	26.6	3.5	2.9	-
1950-59	100.0( 245)	35.5	40.0	19.2	5.3	-
1960-69	100.0( 393)	17.3	42.7	32.1	7.6	*
1970-79	100.0( 639)	2.5	31.3	55.6	10.6	-
1980-86	100.0( 594)	*	20.7	66.7	12.0	*
rural areas						
total	100.0( 964)	36.0	34.2	24.6	4.7	*
1934-49	100.0( 184)	76.1	19.0	*	*	*
1950-59	100.0( 186)	58.6	34.4	4.8	*	*
1960-69	100.0( 196)	34.2	45.9	14.8	4.1	*
1970-79	100.0( 226)	10.6	40.3	39.8	9.3	-
1980-86	100.0( 172)	4.1	29.7	61.0	5.2	-

source: FAM86 (5 cases of no response excluded)

I type: Parents decided overall. II type: parents decided followed by my agreement.

III type: I decided followed by parents' consent. IV type: I decided overall.

(R.N.) real number \* real number below 5 cases - no case observed

The attitude of compromise can be proved first by the continuing existence of a high percentage of arranged marriages among present day Koreans. Of course it depends on which generation they belong to. According to FAM89, even the youngest generation who married in the 1980s showed a high frequency of arranged marriage, which accounted for one out of two brides. Of course, the fact that she was interviewed at the matchmaking meeting does not exactly demonstrate the decisive power remained in the parents' hands. She still can have the initiative in decision-making, regardless of who arranged the meeting. Nevertheless, attending a meeting arranged by the parents can save the parents' face. It is, at least superficially, a good gesture to the parents to earn more points in the on-going decision-making process. Another indication of reconciliation can be observed in the duration of acquaintanceships. In traditional society, once a bride was introduced to a would-be-groom, it was nothing different from marriage itself, there was no alternative but to marry him. However, the younger generations have asserted their voice for the final decision on mate selection instead of having their

parents keep to the conventional pattern of match-making through a match-maker. Now she can refuse a would-be-groom if she does not like him. As a result, while the duration of acquaintance for those who married before 1959 was on average two months maximum, that of those who married in the 1980s was calculated to almost one year on average<sup>30</sup>. Prospective brides reconciled the change by being very sincere and positive in using their final decision power that they took over from their parents. It was because young girls still retain a belief that love can not only arise instantly but can also be produced by the couples' efforts as in their parents case. That is the reason they think of the arranged marriage positively.

The reason brides have shown an attitude of compromise instead of running alone can be analysed from various angles. Among them the continuance of traditional values and economic strategy seems the most plausible and both are closely intermingled. First, There is deep-rooted traditional belief that the older one is the wiser one is both in the experience of familial life and social life. The elderly are believed to be very strong in the intuitive power of judging persons at first glance, in spite of their lack of knowledge about modern technology. As a result, unless she has fallen in love with a would-be-groom for life, she generally pays more attention to her parents opinion. She can make an excuse to her charming but novice lover at the initial stage of their meeting. If he is not the person her parents were expecting, she eventually gives up the love as a temporary romantic affair. Even if she has decided to marry him, she waits until she can persuade her parents to find good points in her would-be-husband instead of marrying away as she pleased. She is not so brave yet as to bear being stigmatised as an indiscreet person by her relatives or even her friends. The second reason for the attitude of compromise comes from utilitarian grounds.<sup>31</sup> Marrying without her parents' blessing does not stop at psychological disapproval but practically can lead to the loss of the economic base of married life. Most young couples do not have enough savings to pay for very expensive rents or for living expenses to keep the life style enjoyed under the parental roof. And they can not afford to think lightly of some extra money to pay for luxuries that may, from time to time, brighten conjugal life. They are not foolish enough to forget how money can enrich or devastate one's marriage in a society deeply pervaded by capitalism. Unless they levels down the quality of life, marriage without parental approval means losing too many things once promised. Eventually poverty can cause even the wrecking of married life. Either as an economic tactic or under the influence of traditional trust in parents, the use of extreme power in decision-making has not been found among the young generation.

There is no regional difference in the trend discussed so far. With the same pattern but at a different speed, marriage choice has been handed over from the parents to the persons concerned. Of course it does not mean a total change but is a compromise between the two generations. In the flow of this general tendency, those from rural areas are a bit slower than those from urban areas shown in the statistics tending towards I- and II-type regardless of marriage cohort.

**Table 5.3. Marriage Choice By Interviewees' Education Level**

decision-making types	educated years of the interviewee				
	total	0-6	7-9	10-12	13 & +
total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
(real No)	(3011)	(1401)	(763)	(707)	(140)
I-type	21.2	40.8	5.1	3.7	0.7
II-type	32.1	35.2	36.4	24.2	17.9
III-type	38.7	17.7	48.8	63.2	71.4
IV-type	7.7	6.0	9.7	8.8	9.3
others	0.2	*	-	*	*

source: FAM86(2 cases of no response excluded)

\* real number below 5 cases, - no case observed

The educational level of the interviewee also affects the decision-making as shown in Table 5.3. The more educated the woman, the more the decisive power of the parents was reduced. However, even educational factors did not break down the general tendency observed above. Thus, even educated women are very reluctant to be the sole decision-maker in their choice of would-be-groom, in spite of their preference of autonomy in the decision-making. The more educated, the more she is against her parents' total power. However, ironically, the more reconciliation is likely to be needed. The reason for this comes from her economic background. For a woman to be educated at the highest level, she must have had moderate economic background from her parents, particularly under the social condition where educational awards are still rare. It follows that she has enjoyed a better quality life style than the less educated young girls with poor parents. While the less educated has no more things to lose from her parents, the better educated still have more things to get from her parents. That is the reason she is no more likely to ignore her parents' opinion about her marriage than less educated women.

To conclude, there arises a question of how much the type IV would increase, how much the use of complete power of the person concerned, would increase in the future. Firstly, the young generation would not like to give up their rights, however reserved and however compromised it is. It is a matter of interest particularly under the prevalence of individualism. It is anticipated that the idea is likely to be more widely and more deeply pervasive than ever before as Westernisation increases. Moreover, it is much more likely to increase if either the

familial function weakens or economic status of the younger generation gets better, enabling them to be more independent of their parents. However, the reverse can also be true. Thus, an aversion against ego-centricism followed by a homing instinct can lead the younger generation to recognise the importance of the family of orientation. The deepening of social competition also means that individuals find it difficult to gain success without the support from parents and this may be another good cause. Generally the parents have more resources than the young generation, and this can make the young generation more dependant on their parents. To conclude it is difficult to say at which level the statistics will be stabilised. However it is definite that the trend would be influenced by social, cultural, and economical factors. Again it would affect other factors concerned with marriage, like age at marriage, process of the marriage, and values relating to marriage etc.

### 5.2.2. Demographic Features Of Marriage

The changing pattern of choice relating to marriage has led to another consequence: change of the age at marriage. In traditional society parents had complete control over the children's choice of marriage partner on the one hand while on the other hand they thought of the succession of generations as the best expression of filial piety to the parents and duty to their ancestors. Naturally these ideas led parents to have their children marry as soon as possible.<sup>32</sup> Early marriage was instigated once again by two points: the high rate of mortality and the Mongolian invasion followed by the tributary of Korean girls. (Refer to 3.3.3.1. of Chapter 3) Modernisation brought about changes and the age at marriage was not exceptional from the influence of modernisation. As shown in Table 5.4, the age at marriage has increased as modernisation progressed, and sexual difference of the matrimonial age has narrowed as well. Thus the speed of the increase in the brides' age at marriage has surpassed that of grooms. Over about the last 7 decades brides' ages have increased by almost ten years. The fundamental cause of the steady increase in the age at marriage can be attributed to the change of socio-cultural values relating to marriage. Early marriage was thought of as restraining self-realisation. Both men and particularly women began to prefer spending time in attending higher education, in economic participation or in social activity. Thus they liked to develop self-cultivation instead of being confined to married life. The idea of the perfection of the ego replaced the conventional obsession of generational reproduction for the benefit of family succession. Women, being

particularly deeply influenced by feminism, have shown a greater interest in this field. This again was supported by the government Family Planning programme aimed at achieving a low fertility rate.<sup>33</sup> The programme attacked the son-preference idea and devalued the image of early marriage. That was the reason why women's age at their first marriage increased faster than the men's age, narrowing the sexual difference.

**Table 5.4. Historical Change Of Average Age At First Marriage**

year	men	women	difference
1925 <sup>1)</sup>	20.2	16.7	3.5
1930 <sup>1)</sup>	21.2	17.0	4.2
1935 <sup>1)</sup>	21.6	17.3	4.3
1940 <sup>1)</sup>	21.7	17.5	4.2
1955 <sup>2)</sup>	24.5	20.5	4.0
1960 <sup>2)</sup>	25.4	21.6	3.8
1966 <sup>3)</sup>	26.7	22.8	3.9
1970 <sup>3)</sup>	27.1	23.3	3.8
1975 <sup>3)</sup>	27.4	23.7	3.7
1980 <sup>3)</sup>	27.3	24.1	3.2
1988 <sup>4)</sup>	28.4	25.3	3.1

source: 1) Y.S.CHANG, *Population in Early Modernisation :Korea* (Princeton Univ.,1966), p.238-330.

2) Y.KIM, "Age at marriage and trend of fertility in Korea," *World Population Conference Vol.II*(N.Y., 1967), p.147.

3) EPB, population and Housing Census of Korea

4) The Population Association of Korea, *The Journal of Population association of Korea* Vol.13(1), 1990

However, there still remain some facts that cannot be clearly explained by socio-cultural or educational factors, for example why the age at marriage showed a sharp increase at around the year 1955, and why the age at marriage of men is three years older than that of women. The first and the most influential thing was military affairs. The Korean Army was established in 1946 and they soon participated in the Civil War of 1950, required a huge number of young men to be recruited until 1953. Since then three years of military service was compulsory for every young man. Economic instability before and after the war also contributed to late marriage both of brides and of grooms. These were the reasons for there being three years age difference between the sexes with a drastic increase in 1955.

The trend is closely related to the change in the rate of unmarrieds.<sup>34</sup> Of course this rate, in a sense, is a tautology of the age at marriage. In fact both have been used very often interchangeably to analyse the same trend of mating. However the boundary both statistics explain is quite different. The former allows more detailed explanation than the latter does on mate-selection. Table 5.5 is a good example. The unmarried rate has increased very rapidly as the age at marriage

did. However, the table shows the inner dynamics of the change by age cohort and adds new findings. Firstly the total rate of unmarrieds increased rapidly but showed a slight decline recently. The statistics do not imply a real decline but a pseudo-decline from demographic characteristics of the age cohort of between 15-19 and that of 30-34 year old. The latter group is the generation born during the baby-boom period after the war. As a result of the successful Family Planning Programme of the late 1960s onwards the former was small enough to change the pyramidal demographic structure. Thus the larger population of the 30-34 year old group gives it a greater influence on the overall statistics than the former. The general trend of increase in the unmarried rate shown in Table 5.5 roughly conforms to the trend in the age at marriage.

**Table 5.5. Change Of The Unmarried Rate By Age Cohort And Sex. (1935-1985)**

age cohort	male				female			
	'35	'55	'75	'85	'35	'55	'75	'85
total	19.4	31.5	40.7	38.5	6.8	18.5	28.5	27.8
15-19	76.5	94.3	99.7	99.9	38.0	85.2	97.4	99.1
20-24	35.2	67.1	92.9	94.4	4.3	20.8	62.5	71.8
25-29	9.5	25.3	47.0	49.8	0.7	3.0	11.8	17.4
30-34	3.1	3.7	7.0	9.5	0.3	0.6	2.0	4.3
35-44	1.4	0.9	0.9	2.2	0.2	0.3	0.5	1.2
45 +	1.5	0.8	0.5	0.8	0.4	0.6	0.5	0.6

source: Census, 1935, 1955, 1975, 1985.

It is notable that the sex ratio is greater among those in the latter marriageable age range, if we match the male age group 30-34 of the baby-boom generation to the female age group of 25-29 to allow for the current tendency of brides' age to be three or four years younger than would-be-groom. We find over one out of six women was unmarried while just one out of ten males from the due cohort in 1985 was unmarried. The Table 5.6 examines the situation in detail. One out of two females aged 25-34, and a third of the age cohort 20-24 are destined to fail in mate-selection. These imbalance phenomena brought about a social problem for marriage expenses.

**Table 5.6. Sex Ratio Among Matchable Age Group**

groups matched		sex ratio (males per 100 female)	
male	female	in total	among the unmarried
15-19	10-14	105	-
20-24	15-19	102	99.9
25-29	20-24	99	68.3
30-34	25-29	82	42.4
35-39	30-34	89	47.7

source: FAM86

Driven by the groom scarcity phenomena, parents of a would-be-bride paid excessive expenses for a would-be-groom, to his parents and families. They even paid his distant relatives in the form of wedding gifts<sup>35</sup>. Particularly if a would-be-groom was well-educated and had an economically and socially good job, such as a medical doctor, lawyer etc., he was guaranteed a flat and/or a car as a wedding gift from his would-be-parents-in-law. Sometimes shockingly even the existing couples divorced after a naive dispute on the amount of the wedding gifts from the brides side. It was a serious social issue which very frequently adorned daily newspapers from the middle of the 1980s. Of course there was excessive spending on marriage expenses even during the traditional period in the shape of wedding gifts. However it was of a different pattern. In traditional society this was caused by ostentatious competition and occurred only between the families of the rich minority. Excessive expense was generally regarded as a barbarian custom. Moreover, even if it was the case, the affairs were reciprocal not one-sided. If the would-be bride's parents paid a large amount of expenses for wedding gifts, the same was returned to them from the would-be-groom's parents out of courtesy. It was zero-sum calculation of no gain and of no loss economically. However, in modern times the problem has become more serious. It is one-sided flow of economic resources, regardless of the economic ability of the persons concerned or the parents concerned. The social problem caused from the groom scarcity phenomena has revived the son-preference idea. It has also caused social alienation of those who had not enough money for the large financial outlay. Regarding the sex ratio of the younger age cohort, the problem is expected to continue until the demographic structure becomes more balanced.

The future of the marriage market is likely to be significantly different due to a dramatic reversal of sex ratio. Thus a scarcity of potential brides is likely to replace the shortage of potential grooms. According to EPB population projection in 1990, as shown in the Table 5.7, the sex ratio reveals a radical reversal if matched to the girl groups three years younger than the cohort. Initially this was a side-effect of the Family Planning programme.

**Table 5.7. Sex Ratio In General And Matched To Girls 3 Years Younger In 1990**

age cohort of male	sex ration(males per 100 females)	
	in general	matched to 3 years younger females
0-4	111	-
5-9	109	118
10-14	107	113

source: Census (1990).

**Table 5.8. Trend In Pregnant Cases And Induced Abortion Rate**

year	total number of pregnant cases and the ratio of induced abortion per 100 births					
	total	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44
(total number of pregnant cases)						
1978	923	196	341	200	138	48
1984	1,655	330	849	363	88	25
1987	1,198	218	637	260	66	17
(the ratio of induced abortion per 100 births)						
1978	84.1	18.5	57.5	116.8	513.6	366.7
1984	77.6	30.6	65.5	149.2	272.7	240.0
1987	68.2	42.9	51.3	108.6	550.0	166.7

source : KIHASA, *30 Years of Population Policy*(1990), p.574.

The government allowed amniocentesis testing and overlooked abortion. The induced abortion rate among the age group 20-44, reached 84.1 cases per 100 babies born in 1978. Since then it has steadily decreased to 77.7 in 1984, and 68.2 in 1987 as the Family Planning Programme turned its orientation for the benefit of maternity health. (Table 5.8) To prevent induced abortions due to the son-preference idea, the government prohibited amniocentesis testing.<sup>36</sup> Nevertheless, the rate of induced abortion did not decrease among groups aged 25-34 who were showing a strongest fecundity. That is the reason for the increase in the male sex ratio of the age group 5-9 although the total rate of induced abortion decreased. A pregnant woman influenced by both the traditional son-preference and the prospective economic burden of rearing many children, easily chose an induced abortion if the test revealed a girl. We find therefore, within little over one generation, two quite contradictory social phenomena ; groom scarcity and bride scarcity. Furthermore this is not limited to marriage only. As already discussed above, it causes socio-economic problems followed by some confusion in the value system.

**Table 5.9. Unmarried Rate By Sex And Region In 1986**

age cohort	urban areas		rural areas	
	male	female	male	female
15-19	99.8	99.5	99.5	98.9
20-24	94.4	72.5	93.7	55.8
25-29	44.0	16.0	46.5	8.2
30-34	5.0	4.4	8.4	2.9
35-39	2.0	1.4	3.5	-

source: FAM86

Apart from these problems in the near future, the marriage market is also in regional dis-equilibrium. Looking at the matchable cohorts, in Table 5.9 from FAM86, matched on the assumption of brides three years younger than grooms, there is a matchable male to female surplus in the urban areas far more severely

imbalanced than that of the whole country. On the other hand, would-be-brides in rural areas are in great shortage. This problem derives from the failure of economic policy rather than fertility structure. Due to the acceleration of economic growth policy since the late 1960s, a huge migration swept young girls into the rural areas. Until the 1970s the girls who earned enough in the city returned to the country to marry. At the beginning of the 1980s, with the deepening of regional discrepancy of economic wealth, cultural facilities, or educational opportunities etc., the rural girls were very reluctant to return to the farm in the devastated country side. Farming was physically hard and offered less economic, cultural, and social rewards than white-collar or even the unskilled work in the cities could. They preferred to settle down to marry in the city and gave up any lingering romanticism of rural life. The people who remained in the rural areas were mainly the aged, the small farmers and their families, those afraid of changing jobs and older bachelors without specific skills guaranteeing jobs in the city. Thus, the more the cities suffer a groom scarcity, the worse the scarcity of brides in the country. The marriage market in rural areas seems unhopeful regarding either the general trend of bride scarcity among the younger generation or the deeply pervasive feeling of alienation toward rural life.

Finally modernisation has affected the age gap between couples as well. Traditional society had quite a high proportion where the wife was older than the husband or where couples were age-fellows. As already discussed in Chapter 3, there were two main reasons for this. First parents did not like their daughters being selected for the tributary of Ch'ing dynasty of China, so they had their daughters married before the selection. Parents chose the alternative of marrying their daughter to a boy groom instead of to barbarians far away. The next but still more important reason was on the groom's parents side. They sought to do two things at the same time. The first thing was to have their son reproduce the next generation as soon as possible. To achieve this aim, the bride should be mature enough to be quickly pregnant as soon as their son was mature. The second demand on the bride was of her skills in preparation for the very complicated process of ancestral rituals. Preparation for these rituals was too hard and difficult for a young girl. Such conditions had a groom's parents choose a slightly older bride or at least one of the same age as their son.

As modernisation progressed, the need to practice ancestral rituals weakened and moreover both men and women came to reject the conventional meaning of marriage as mainly concerned with the reproduction of a new generation. Instead, the criteria for prospective bridegrooms have moved to more

individualistic ones. In hard times socially and economically, a groom was expected to have a stable job as a good breadwinner. Thus it was important for a groom to have a would-be-wife believe that he was strong enough to protect her socially and economically. A bride could feel respect to the socially and economically prospective man whom she relied on for her whole life, and that was an important element that helped the married relationship. For a man to have an economically stable job, first he should have completed three years of compulsory army duty and have had a couple of years more for settling down with his job until he could earn a minimum amount of money to pay for rent. As a result the average age gap between couples in 1989 was calculated to be 4.31 years.

**Table 5.10. Distribution Of Age Gap Between Husband And Wife  
By Wife's Birth Year Cohort**

year the wife born	age gap between wife and husband				
	real No	total	wife>hus	wife=hus	wife<hus
total	2260	100.0	4.9	7.0	88.1
1905-20	78	100.0	5.1	2.6	92.3
1921-30	216	100.0	4.2	6.0	89.8
1931-40	464	100.0	4.7	6.3	89.0
1941-50	609	100.0	4.3	6.6	89.1
1951-60	744	100.0	5.0	9.2	85.5
1961-68	149	100.0	9.4	16.1	74.5
19th century*		100.0	25.4	10.6	64.0

source: FAM89,

\* from Table 3.8 in Chapter 3.

In Table 5.10, two groups can be distinguished. The first group, born between 1905-1950, were those who suffered from economically, socially, and politically severe events, and the last two cohorts (1951-1968) are from the post-war period. Particularly interviewees born between 1961-68 have benefited most from economic development. A man with potential economic success was the most important for the next group. The next group cared slightly less for this and was more concerned with other conditions for her would-be-groom. A man with good personality, love, and the same generational identity were considered to be more important as a base for conjugal communication and eventually for love. As a result, casting off the traditional pattern, the conjugal age gap settled down with about 4 per cent of wives older than husbands and 6 per cent age-fellows for many decades with only a slight fluctuation. However the statistical trend changed very dramatically, to a sharp increase with the wife older than the husband or of the same age. The reason young post-war generations took age-fellow or younger males as grooms can be explained from two perspectives. The first reason particularly for the same age groom, was derived from the change in the values of marriage and in lifestyle. This generation was the one most exposed to the

individualistic atmosphere and they saw how dreary and depressing their mother's marriage was because of marrying an older man who had an economically stable job. The marriage they saw from their parents was deeply affected by the battle against poverty. They saw a life far removed from what they had learned from textbooks, novels, and movies which were deeply western-influenced. Fortunately or unfortunately, they have been free from economically hard times thanks to their parents' effort. Naturally they regarded age-fellow marriage as a good condition for conjugal communication. Moreover it, more or less, points to emancipation from the authoritarian conjugal order reflecting the age-oriented social structure still prevailing in most parts of society. It was also a good opportunity to raise the issue of her equality against her husband unlike her mother in relation to her father. The next reason for the increase in the wife older than husband and the age-fellow pattern came from the narrowness of the marriage market. Would-be-brides were driven by the groom scarcity phenomena to turn their eyes to groups once neglected as simply friends or younger-brother-like persons. From the perspective of bride's parents, they were perceived neither stable economically at the time, nor mature enough emotionally to protect their daughters. However, from the aspects of the would-be-brides, they looked neither as authoritative as their father did nor a slave of mammon as the all too scarce older potential grooms did in the exchange of wedding gifts. In addition since the military service law of 1983, the period of active service was reduced and job opportunities after army service improved compared with what the elder generation had endured. There was therefore no reason to be reluctant in choosing a younger groom. That was the reason post-war generations began to show an increase in the wife older than the husband and the age-fellow patterns of marriage. Of course still as much as three out of four youngest brides choose a husband older than them. In other words respect and guardianship are still important attributes perceived to maintain the conjugal relationship among the younger generation as well. However, mutual love is being embossed as an alternative to replace the conventional conjugal relationship.

There remains the question of which factors affected couples in selecting mates most. So far two factors have been examined: changes in values on marriage and the change of demographic structure. The data of FAM89 and FAM86 is not extensive enough to examine the question fully, but it seems possible at least to determine which factors are unlikely. To state the conclusion first, the value factor seems more unlikely than the demographic element does. If most of the changes were derived from a change in the values of marriage, the interviewees would have shown a due amount of change in their opinions. However the reality was not so. For example, the age gap between couples does not correspond to the change in the

ideal value as shown in Table 5.11. There still remained a strong preference for the husband older than the wife. Of course, the statistic has decreased from the bride

**Table 5.11. Ideal Age Gap Between Couples**

year she married	ideal age gap between wife and husband				
	total	wife>hus	wife=hus	wife<hus	don't care
-1939	100.0	-	4.1	92.4	3.5
1940-49	100.0	1.0	2.4	90.3	6.2
1950-59	100.0	0.3	2.0	94.0	3.7
1960-69	100.0	0.2	2.5	94.3	3.1
1970-79	100.0	1.1	3.6	92.5	2.8
1980-89	100.0	0.9	5.2	89.0	4.9

source: FAM89

who married in 1970 onward. However the amount has been too slight to judge it as the main cause of decline in the percentage of husbands older than wives. The situation is the same with the age-fellow pattern. The preference, among those who married during the last two decades, for the age-fellow has increased in relation to those who married before 1970. Yet the increased amount does not match the statistics of Table 5.10. There is too big a gap. In contrast to the increase of couples of the same age and of the wife older than husband, ideal expectations about the age of a would-be-husband have not changed yet. The husband is still expected to be a protector of the family rather than to be a friend lacking a sense of responsibility. All in all, the changing demographic structure, with its impact on the marriage market looks to be a more plausible cause of the decrease in the conventional husband older than wife pattern of pairing.

### 5.2.3. Regional Propinquity Of Modern Marriage And Match-maker

Before progressing to the regional propinquity of marriage, we will discuss the principle of regional exogamy in the traditional society. The matrimony followed the rule of regional exogamy at village level. Although being not as strict as the clan exogamy or class endogamy, the regional exogamy principle was quite pervasive at village level across the nation.

There were a couple of reasons for the regional exogamy. First it was because, excepting a few big cities, most of villages were composed mostly of the same clan. Thus seeking a would-be-bride/groom within a same community could violate clan exogamy. Of course there were a few other clans using a different name and different *pon* in a same village. However they were minorities in number

and the social rank of their families was not similar enough for marriage with the dominant families in the community.

Secondly, each family of a different clan felt a sort of brotherhood. Although they were of different clan genealogically they were too deeply bonded at territorial relationship provoking brotherhood among different families to have a nuptial matter. As a matter of fact there were many cases of prohibition of marriage between families of different clans living in the same village. For example, the Chang family of Andong, the Kim family of Andong, and the Kwon family of Andong is a case. As the *pon* (places of origin) denotes, three of them lived at Andong over one thousand years ago and contributed, in good co-operation, for the establishment of Koryŏ dynasty. After the successful accomplishment, they made a verbal promise to have a brotherhood relationship. From then on marriage among the families was prohibited as moral incest even until present day Korea. The territorial identification functioned in prohibiting marriage within the same community.

Thirdly, but most importantly, a would-be-bride/groom was sought outside the community to prevent the influence of the matrimonial relatives. To strengthen solidarity among the *munjung* group that mostly formed a regional community, it was felt to be necessary to isolate the influence of matrimonial relatives. Naturally a bride was sought outside the groom's community. The saying, a toilet and a wife's family are the better the further away, reflects the regional exogamy. The saying is wide spread even in the present day. There is another clue of regional exogamy that is observed in the wedding process even in modern Korea. After a wedding ceremony at a bride's home, a newly married groom is expected to entertain the bride's neighbours to a dinner party. It was perceived as a sort of cost paying for bringing out a member from the community. He used to be asked to compose a poem within a limited time, to sing a song, or to mimic funny behaviours. If he failed at the request from the community members the soles of his feet were beaten. Beating the sole of the groom's feet symbolised him having difficulty in bringing his wife out from the community. By the way the reverse was not true. It was because a groom's community gained a member if a bride's community were the losers. In other words, the bride was expected to move to the groom's family after three days of wedding ceremony under the patrilocality principle. That is why a son-in-law was likened to a visitor while the daughter-in-law was as a real family member. After the marriage celebration both daughter-in-law and son-in-law were rarely expected to visit the bride's family by both family and community in order to prohibit the influence on each other. That was the reason why a would-be

bride/groom was sought outside the regional boundary a clan. However, even with regional exogamy, the absolute distances involved hardly stayed outside the same provincial or township boundary because transportation or the information network for would-be groom/bride was not as developed as in the present day.

Modernisation deeply stirred regional exogamy.<sup>37</sup> Regional exogamy lost its meaning by casting off from the conventional community life, pivoting at clan group. There is no more conventional clan coercing community-based familism. The breakdown of exogamy was accelerated by the high rate of regional mobility followed after transportation development, and it has stirred the conventional base of community life. In addition, three quarters of the population are living in the urban areas of anonymity, so talking about the regional boundary itself has become useless. Moreover, regional bondage of conventional marriage has been rapidly broken-down by the spread of preference for a love marriage. The basis for the regional exogamy has almost disappeared in modern Korea in the process of urbanisation, migration, and Westernisation all of which stirred conventional community identity.

The breakdown of regional exogamy does not mean that there is not regional propinquity<sup>38</sup> in marriage matters. If breakdown of regional exogamy is one thing, regional propinquity is another. Regional propinquity existed from the traditional period. Even though the society was under the principle of regional exogamy, the regional boundary within which a family could seek a would-be-bride/groom outside own community was not open nation-wide. Rather, the boundary was mostly limited to province level at maximum. In traditional society people were geographically isolated and since transportation was undeveloped, it was hardly possible to marry a child into a family too far away to hear no news about the child after marriage. Even the match-maker had not enough information about would-be-bride/groom to introduce them across the nation. As a result the regional boundary showed quite a homogeneous propinquity at a provincial level. In modern society, thanks to the development of the transportation system, the regional boundary of marriage was seen to be heterogeneous. However, in reality it has not happened like that. It still revealed a high degree of regional propinquity.

There are some difficulties in examining the regional boundary of matrimony. The first is a lack of historical data on the degree of regional propinquity in the past. The next and worst difficulty comes from the high rate of mobility before marriage. It makes measurement difficult. In traditional society for most husbands, the place where he married was the same place he was born and

brought up, because the society was under patrilocality principle. The probability of a wife living in the place she was born and brought up after her marriage was relatively quite rare at village level due to the patrilocality principle interwoven with the regional exogamy. However the probability, at town or provincial level, was not relatively low due to the geographical and transportation barriers mentioned above. Regional basis of most of husband and wife was decided roughly at town level. Due to the high rate of regional mobility since the late 1960s, the frame of reference for measuring the regional base has been quite weakened. In other words in modern times many have moved too frequently to measure the conventional concept of the matrimonial region. Urbanisation has developed too much to make an operational definition of the conventional regional community. In spite of the barriers on data, Table 5.12 gives some insight into the change of regional propinquity. In general both husband and wife are not living in the same place when married as when they were single, hinting at regional propinquity.

**Table 5.12. The Consistency Ratio of Residential Boundary Of Marriage By Sex And By Marriage Cohorts.**

marriage cohort	consistency ratio of the places <sup>39</sup>			
	born and married		before & after marriage	
	husband	wife	husband	wife
total	62.4	69.3	85.6	71.3
1934-39	88.9	95.6	93.3	84.4
1940-49	85.6	92.9	90.1	81.4
1950-59	78.4	84.5	89.6	80.3
1960-69	70.0	76.8	83.9	71.0
1970-79	52.1	63.5	84.4	68.7
1980-86	48.2	50.4	83.9	64.6

source: FAM86

The table calculated what percentage of persons were married and living in the same place where s/he was born and how many of them, after marriage, are living in the same place they lived before. The table reveals many social facts about the marriage pattern. Firstly the first two columns of the table tell how frequently the bride/groom moved regionally before marriage. The statistics show a dramatic decrease in the 1970s. It reflects the high mobility to the cities brought about by the Economic Development programme. At the beginning of the 1980s, the gap between the sexes reduced greatly to just 2.2 per cent. This again reflects the high mobility of female labour into the cities. The last two columns come close to the explanation of the pattern of regional propinquity. In spite of the fact that modernisation has progressed very rapidly both sexes show a high regional endogamy. This is more evident among the male group. The consistency ratio for females is smaller than that for males and the gap is getting bigger with each

younger generation, notably among those who married after the 1970s. The reason for the lower ratio amongst females reflects both the lower social status of women and the tradition of patrilocality. In traditional society, a bride was expected to move to the groom's house after the marriage ceremony at her home. The trip from her home to her husband's house after the ceremony was called the honeymoon trip. Along with the decline of the stem family principle, neo-locality has increased. However, the newly married couple is still expected to stay nearer to the groom's parents or even to stay with them for a time until they judge the bride is able to learn her husband's family customs. Women's socio-economic status also added to their lower ratio of regional endogamy. In spite of modernisation, the would-be-brides' salary is usually smaller than that of the would-be-groom and her occupational status is still likely to be lower than his. A would-be-bride could therefore more easily give up her job to move to where her would-be-husband was working. The situation has been getting worse for would-be-brides due to the groom scarcity phenomena since the 1970s which has discouraged women from taking the initiative in raising their voices to the matrilocality or neolocality.

To conclude, in spite of these variations, the trend shows a high ratio of residential propinquity. The reason is neither transportation nor geographical as it was in the past, but the main reason for this is the match-making mechanism. As discussed previously the hegemony of decision-making about the marriage partner has moved to the children, but the children's rights and parents' authority have been reconciled by allowing them space in the process of match-making. Employing a match-maker is the mechanism parents can conventionally offer in the process of mate-selection and the average rate of women married by a match-maker was 71.8 per cent by 1989. In fact, unless the match-maker is a highly specialised woman, the information she has about would-be-brides/grooms is mostly limited to her own residential area. That is why the consistency ratio for residential boundaries is quite high.

To help understand the situation, it is necessary to scrutinise the process of match-making and the reason for its prevalence, even in modern times. First a match-maker is appointed at the request of the parents. Of course, the parents ask their daughters/sons about their intention to marry in advance. At the request of the parents, the match-maker, usually a woman in her fifties or sixties, visits the client's home. She observes the features and personality of the would-be-bride/groom and in addition asks questions or makes her own self-estimates about the family's condition. The important points generally include the degree of education and the occupation of the person concerned, and the economic condition

or social status of the family or near relatives concerned. After this she introduces a few candidates whom she judges the most well-matched to each other. The candidate can be either from the same socio-economic and educational group or from a different group that may compensate for the weak points of each other. If a would-be-groom is highly educated and holds a job with good prospects but is from a poor family background socially or economically, he can be introduced to a would-be-bride of a good family but lacking these other attributes. If a would-be-bride is well-educated and even beautiful but from a poor family, she can be introduced to a candidate with less education from an economically well endowed family. However such cases are not as frequent as those where candidates from similar backgrounds are introduced.

Once the level of the person concerned and of her/his family is judged, the match-maker introduces candidates one by one until marriage is decided upon. The candidates themselves have to estimate the personality of their opposite. Both candidates are allowed a considerable length of time to understand each other. Sometimes the match-making is successful with the first candidate, but sometimes dozens of other candidates are introduced. Interestingly most match-making is successful after just a few introductions because both candidates are from similar backgrounds which makes it easier for each to discover identical concerns.

Once both candidates show a clear intention to marry each other, the role of the match-maker comes into operation again even more earnestly. She visits the parents of both families and mediates in detail until the end of the marriage celebration. Under conventional familism the marriage process was strongly felt to be the most serious and dignified undertaking for a human being. *To fit this sacred purpose, the procedure of marriage was highly elaborate and complicate.* However the more elaborate, the more conflicts were observed between families in the process. That is why the match-maker was enrolled as a mediator for the marriage and a supervisor for the marriage decorum. The present day match-maker negotiates the amount of the marriage gifts that otherwise may cause conflicts between the persons concerned or between the families. In most cases, the disputes about the marriage gifts predominantly reflect the remains of conventional family competition rather than economic conflicts. There used to be many cases of breakdown in the middle of marriage over the amount of marriage gifts, though the underlying cause of the conflicts came basically from the traditional competitive familism.

The reason a match-maker was needed can be explained on the basis of two points. The side-effects of a match-maker have never been negligible, sometime she escalated family competition in terms of marriage gifts. Worse, she might even intentionally break up the on-going event if the reward she got from both the families was not satisfactory. In spite of these side-effects, the custom has continued until the present day mainly from the deep-rooted sense of decorum. The Code of the Chosŏn (1395) society prescribed that marriage should be delivered by a match-maker. The law was prepared as a reaction against the immoral trends associated with love marriage at the end of the Koryŏ dynasty. Love marriage without a match-making process was restricted as a barbarian practice. This historical root has been handed down to present day Korean parents. They tend to view couples choosing love marriage as indicating a lack of home training. The next reason is more pragmatic. With deepening urbanisation, most members of society have fallen into anonymity. Most present day Koreans are unaware of who lives next door or the identity of their neighbours. As a result information on the most suitable person for a would-be-bride/groom is extremely limited. Nevertheless, the parents are very reluctant to leave their children to a love-marriage, because they have always believed it to be a most barbarian custom on the one hand, and they are not sure their children can choose a moderate would-be-groom/bride by themselves on the other hand. They know that the young generation attracted by externally attractive features rather than by good personality or socio-economic potential. The former may seem good when they are in love but the latter is far more important for a balanced family life. Considering their own matrimonial life, they believe that similar background or a better off partner were very important elements for a sound family life. On this point children of marriageable age are of the same opinion as their parents' generation. Naturally a match-maker is the most convenient person they can consult about their possible marriage. That is the reason for the prevalence of arranged marriage in present day Korea.

#### 5.2.4. Changes In Clan Exogamy

No marriage was allowed within the *tongsŏngdongbon* in the traditional society. It was a strict clan exogamy. The group sharing the same surname and the same place of the origin was tabooed regardless of how distant the kinship relation of the persons concerned. Clan endogamy was strictly regulated as an incest taboo, and even as a crime.

Matrimonial customs have remained almost unchanged in the process of modernisation. Clan exogamy still persists in present day Korea. Of course the fact that clan exogamy has persisted for centuries both legally and socially does not mean that there were never any cases of marriage of *tongsǒngdongbon*. The Census of 1985 counted 1.1 per cent of clan endogamy, and FAM89 0.5 per cent. However the statistic was very meagre compared even to the 17th century's of 5.4 per cent<sup>40</sup>. However minor the figure may be, it still concerned an issue of human rights. There were gigantic efforts made in 1977 and 1990 which resulted in the revised law of 1978 and 1991. The result however was just a series of hot disputes between women's groups and the Confucianists. Both of them appealed to public opinion but none of the points they made were critical enough to win the argument. The women's groups pin-pointed how ridiculous it was to cage a couple in the incest taboo on the ground they had origins in the same clan hundreds or even thousands years ago. Even if there were a point eugenically, the *chokbo* was purchased too often during the social disorders caused by wars in the traditional period so that it is hardly believable that the book-holders really are the descendants of the originator in the book. The Confucianists on the other hand focused on the significance of marriage regulation as a social reference of morality and a crystallised symbol of human morality. They attributed the increase in illegal or pre-marital sexual affairs and divorce rate etc. to the symptoms of a moral vacuum. They argued this was *the consequence of breakdown of the family principle*. Once the matrimonial regulation is loosened, hundreds of other social disorders occur. They believed human behaviour and thought to be closely interrelated and resulted in change after change. Both sides had some support from public opinion and as a result, a reconciliation was commenced leaving both unsatisfied. The ad hoc law was pronounced to relieve the minority who could not have registered as a legal couple and whose children were prescribed as illegitimate. Obsessional belief against clan endogamy is still pervaded deeply unchanged in the present day. It is observed in the initial process of a date between youths. Both sexes almost stereotypically ask two questions at the first greeting; name and *pon*( place of the origin). If they recognise the same genealogical ancestor, they laugh and do not go further.

### 5.2.5. Changes In Class Endogamy

In the traditional society, the matrimony was strictly class endogamous. No male from a non-*yangban* class could marry a woman born of the *yangban*. Even a love affair meant the loss of his life. A female could marry a *yangban*, however

this conferred no socially and legally guaranteed status. She was just a plaything, a concubine of an old man. However the custom has changed, since modernisation, the most profoundly at least externally. The class system itself has disappeared from the first Constitution of 1905 and nobody believes in class as a condition for marriage. The concubinage as well has totally disappeared both from legal proscription and from social recognition. Class endogamy of the conventional level is being recognised and proscribed as an evil in modern times.

Nevertheless there still remains a question of class concept. Of course the conventional class system has collapsed and accordingly the conventional class endogamy has also disappeared. The question is a possibility of the presence of a modified pattern of class endogamy.<sup>41</sup> However there are many barriers that examine the difficult issue. Among them, defining the capitalist characteristics of present day Korea is not easy work. Thus there has been no consensus about the capitalist structuralisation of class in Korea. It has been recognised as not a matter of absolute deprivation but of relative deprivation. Conventionally the income inequality index (Gini's coefficient) has been relatively quite low compared to any other Asian society or even to the U.S.A or many developed countries in Europe. It was 0.359 in 1980 and was much lower up to the 70s.<sup>42</sup> The reason for the low index came from the high rate of social mobility during the last half a century. Of course there were the rich. However, they were a sinking and a very transient group reflecting the speedy change in Korean society. In a word there was no socially recognised rich class in Korea, in spite of there being many rich people. As a result, it becomes meaningless to examine the existence of class endogamy in the Marxian way. The next barrier to analysis of class or class endogamy comes from the lack of historical data and lack of an economic scale to measure the class structure. Unlike the West measuring a person's class position according to a scale of economic income, Korea has not sorted out a proper scale yet. Even the salary schedule regulation is not identical in each organisation. Worse, there still exists huge amounts of money earned in the parallel economy that cannot be identified in a conventional social survey. As a result it is very difficult to measure social class relying on the registered amount of salary an individual gets.

Quite recently the issue of class has been revived. Kong is a representative scholar who argues the arrival of the upper class in Domhoff's concept<sup>43</sup>. In the early 1980s Korea achieved a good rate of economic growth and accordingly the big companies, once unstable due to the very fragile political, economic and social conditions began to stabilise and to transmit their wealth to the next generation. To reinforce this class reproduction, they established relations through marriage to the

figures in the same business world or in political or administrative circles. Relatives by marriage were expected to make a trust to protect their own wealth and that of their children. According to Kong who surveyed the marriages of children and grandchildren of the hundred big companies, one out of three sons from these married brides from political or administrative circles, two out of five to those from the famous business families, while two out of five daughters married grooms from the famous business families and one out of four from the political or administrative world. On the basis of these statistics Kong asserted the arrival of an upper class in recent Korea.

It is a quite plausible interpretation. However, there are still a couple of unverified and ambiguous points to have the argument settled. It is still hard to assert that this demonstrates class endogamy. First Domhoff's concept of class is much too limited to the family group to denote the economic concept of C. W. Mills or K. Marx. Of course, the fact alone cannot be an excuse for rejecting Kong's analysis. However, the suspicion lies with the social characteristic of modern Korea, if Korea has already reached to an extreme capitalist country. The problem is that the marriage practice of the other groups from the political or administrative circle have not yet been verified. Considering the historically inherited spirit of 'honourable poverty' that is still strongly prevalent, it is natural for the economic circle to have their children marry to families of honour such as political or administrative circle or scholarly families, since it is perceived as upward social mobility for the rich by marriage. However, it is downward social mobility for the political and administrative circle at least nominally. Deeply influenced by the traditional idea of 'honourable poverty', Koreans tend to think negatively of rich people and it is still an aspect which exists against the business circle, due to their capitalistic attitude of pursuing an excessive interest. Most Koreans think a person who contributes to society cannot be rich but poor. Scholars, politicians, or administrators were extremely poor but the most respected because of their sincere devotion to society. The idea is still powerful in the modern Korea. One of the most outstanding clues on the social status of each occupation is observed at any formal public meeting or event at town/village level. The seats reserved for honoured guests are hierarchically arranged, first of all to scholars or administrative heads of the region, next to politicians, and lastly and rarely to the rich who were directly concerned in the event. An opportunity to deliver a congratulatory address is allowed almost rarely to a man of enterprise or rich person. They are perceived of just rich but with no authority or honour. Another clue to the status of the rich is observed when they visit their home town. If a famous scholar or politician visits his/her home town the administrative head

of the town goes to the train station to meet them or at least sends their head's car to bring the visitor to the opposite's home comfortably if the head is really busy. The residents as well sincerely welcome the visitor with great respect. However nothing happens if a man of enterprise visits, however rich he is. Reversely he himself visits here and there to give to the honourably poor. The fact that some children from rich families marry into families from political or administrative circles cannot directly explain the arrival of the upper class. It can be an upward mobility of their social status but not a formation of an upper class yet. Unless the matrimonial custom of the political and administrative circle or scholar group as well is proved, Kong's argument is a bit of an over-generalisation under an assumption that Korea has been structuralised into a typical capitalist society. Yet the assumption is implausible under the condition *the rich are not yet socially* perceived as an upper class in present-day Korea. Secondly, the data surveyed referred to less than half of the relevant population, and collaterals were excluded from the analysis. It is quite risky to assume the collaterals are under as much similar matrimonial flow as the direct lines are. Considering the weakness of the conventional primogeniture stem principle, there is no definite clue that the rich can coercively draw their collaterals to marry like them. Lastly, as the Korean business world is, directly or indirectly, closely related to the political hegemony, it rises and falls too often according to changes in the power structure to structuralise a stable class. So it is still uncertain for the rich to reproduce their wealth generation by generation. To conclude neither capitalist class nor the class endogamy has settled down in present day Korea.

However, it seems possible to examine class endogamy in terms of the stratification of M. Weber. As we have stated above the scales to measure economic condition or social position in Korea are not yet elaborated. Even if a would-be-bride/groom's salary was known, it would be almost meaningless to quantify it as a measure of the class endogamy. Firstly, because women's salaries are generally lower than those of men, even if the educational level is same. Next more importantly, because the economic condition estimated for making marriage deal is not that of the persons concerned but that of the parents. Of course match-makers try to find out about a would-be-groom's salary level for the future life of the would-be-bride. The present level of economic wealth that insures pleasant married life at least in the initial stage for those concerned, is judged by their parents' economic condition. However, there is no data in FAM86 or FAM89. Naturally the educational or occupational level is therefore the best alternative left. In spite of the lack of economic indices, the educational scale has been a quite reliable barometer for the analysis of the stratification. Due to the deep enthusiasm

for education, economic and social reward conforms closely to educational achievement at least until the mid-80s when the trade union movement became more active. The educational aspect of the choice of marriage can be a good index of endogamy in Korea.

**Table 5.13. Percentage Distribution Of Educated Years Of Husband And Wife.**

educated yrs of wife	educational years of husband <sup>44</sup>				
	total	0-6	7-9	10-12	13 & +
total	100.0	26.7	19.1	36.4	17.8
0-6	40.7	25.5	9.4	5.4	0.4
7-9	23.2	0.8	8.4	12.2	1.9
10-12	29.9	0.4	1.2	18.6	9.7
13 & +	6.2	-	0.1	0.3	5.9

Kendall's correlation coefficient : 0.4645 (sig. = 0.000)

source: FAM89 (Among 2838 cases in total, 469 cases of no response, or of no couple were excluded)

As shown in Table 5.13, educational condition shows a very high correlation in mate-selection. The table shows a few interesting trends. Firstly at the more extreme educational levels that is to say the lowest and the highest level, the stronger the correlation. Next, while males tend to marry women with a lower educational level than themselves, it is very rare to find female married to a husband of lower educational level. Thus educational condition was recognised to be a very significant one to qualify would-be grooms, while other conditions such as beauty or good nature were added as qualifications for would-be-brides. To conclude, in spite of a slight variation by sex a high rate of educational matching was found among present day Koreans.

The similar degree of high correlation is observed in the occupation between husband and wife. Of course the correlation coefficient of the occupational field is statistically lower than that of the educational level. However, if VIII-category of unemployment is excluded, the statistic increases very significantly to as high as the correlation coefficient of the educational level. In fact, the opinion towards an unemployed bride is totally different from towards an unemployed groom. If a would-be-groom is unemployed, he is socially perceived as being an incapable person and very shameful, however rich a family he is from. However, if a would-be-bride is unemployed, she is perceived as just having no job doing other things she might think more important like self-cultivation or attending a school for domestic training. It is nothing to feel shameful at all about for Korean women. Measuring correlation between an unemployed groom and an unemployed bride is meaningless, at least in the Korean context of social consciousness. As a

result, if we calculated excluding the unemployed women before marriage, who occupy half of women, the statistics might increase far higher.

**Table 5.14. Percentage Distribution Of Occupation Of Husband And Wife Before Marriage**

husband's occupation	wife's occupation before marriage							
	total	I	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII
total	100.0	3.6	14.4	6.0	4.9	20.5	0.2	50.3
I	7.2	<b>0.8</b>	1.9	0.4	0.2	0.8	-	3.1
II	3.9	0.3	0.9	0.2	0.2	0.5	*	1.8
III	14.1	1.1	<b>4.8</b>	0.8	0.2	1.9	-	5.3
IV	25.9	0.9	4.3	<b>2.3</b>	1.4	6.8	*	10.1
V	20.2	*	0.6	0.6	<b>1.4</b>	2.5	*	15.1
VI	8.1	0.1	0.9	0.5	0.3	<b>3.2</b>	*	3.0
VII	12.3	0.1	0.6	0.8	0.6	3.9	-	6.1
VIII	8.3	0.1	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.9	-	<b>5.7</b>

Kendall's correlation coefficient : 0.1942 (sig. = 0.0000)

source: FAM86 (Among 3013 cases in total 394 cases were missing due to no response etc.)

Category of occupational job : I. professional and engineering, II. administrative and managerial

III. clerical, IV. sales and service, V. agriculture, forestry and fishery,

VI. skilled manual, VII. unskilled manual, VIII. unemployed.

legend : - no cases observed, \* below 0.1 per cent, **bold character**: correlated cells

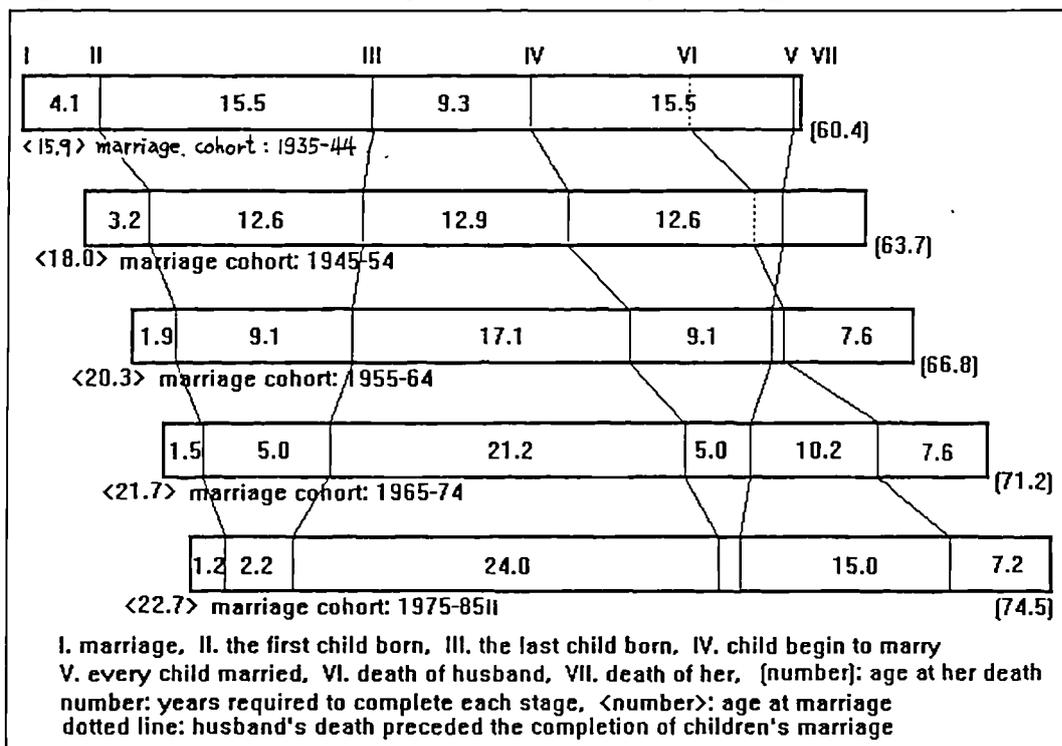
There is quite a high rate of correlation between the husbands' occupational or educational level and the wives' level. In other words, although modern marriage does not follow the conventional principle of class endogamy, a high rate of endogamous characteristics are observed at the level of stratification. By stratification only educational or occupational variables are examined not income level. However regarding the educational variable dominates over other variables in achieving social status, endogamous marriage is assumed to have been prevalent in the income level as well. Of course, the trend may be false in a relative sense at the end of the 1980s after the formation of the trade union movement which made one of its targets the reduction of the wage gap through education.<sup>45</sup> However, the fact the income gap became a serious issue of the movement denotes nothing but the income strata have existed and it was decided by the level of education. However mitigated the correlation by stratum is at moment, it may be true Korean marriage custom is being regulated to be endogamous within same educational, occupational, and even by income level.

### 5.3. CONCLUSION : THE LIFE CYCLE OF INDIVIDUALS

Changes in the pattern of fertility behaviour and in the matrimonial trend accompanied by the general increase in average life expectancy, inevitably brought about further changes in the life cycle of individuals.<sup>46</sup>

Before going into the main context, it is necessary to describe the background of the life cycle calculated, because part of the data in the cycle was produced by projection. Firstly, the age at first marriage of the interviewee was calculated directly in the data collected from FAM86. The age of interviewee women at the first born was also directly adopted from FAM89 data on the fertility history of women. Secondly, women's age at the last born was produced by a dual scale. In the case of the youngest group (marriage cohort: 1975-85) of whom 22 per cent of them have not completed fertility behaviour, the age at the last born was projected by two variables. subtracting the given number of children already born from the number of the expected children (0.2 persons at average), the period until she would deliver the last baby was estimated reflecting the time other women of the same age group delivered their last baby from the time the second to last baby was born. Then the estimated age was re-averaged with the statistics of the age at the last born from 78 per cent of the women who had already completed fertility behaviour in the same marriage cohort.

Figure 5.3. Individual Life Cycle Of Women By Marriage Cohort



Source: FAM86

On the other hand, in the case of women married before 1974 among whom 99 per cent have completed fertility, their fertility history was directly used for the calculation of the life cycle. The third projection of the IV-stage (at the women's age a child begins to marry) and the V-stage (the age every child married) was the most difficult and sophisticated. According to the data collected from FAM86, the proportion of women who had a child married was just 22 per cent, and no more than 2.2 per cent of women had every children married. If the data was used directly, it definitely caused a bias from the truncation effect due to the high unmarried rate. As a last resort the stages were estimated in an empirical study that children's age at the first marriage can be moderately estimated from the age at the first marriage of one generation younger group than the interviewee women.<sup>47</sup> Of course it is quite risky to adopt the assumption, but under a condition lacking sound data, it can be an alternative. To estimate the women's age at a child began to marry, census data in 1966 and 1975 were used for the marriage cohort of 1934-1944 and 1945-1954 in each. In the case of women married after 1955, census data of 1985 were used. In fact, the age at the first marriage depends on social and demographic and sex difference of each individual and the sequence of each child married does not exactly correspond to the sequence of child born. Nevertheless, for the purpose of simplification, only the sexual difference of marriage age of the first born child and the last born child was considered for the calculation of the life cycle. For example in the case the first born child being a boy and the second child a girl, the second child may probably marry earlier than the eldest son did if their age gap was short. However the difference was disregarded to simplify the calculation as primary data was lacking at the time. While for the calculation of the women's age at the every child married, in the same procedure above, the women's age at the last child born was added to the due value of the age at the first child married. Lastly VI- and VII-stage were calculated based on the life table of each marriage cohort. Using the life table, the duration of expected future life from the age at their marriage was calculated by the statistics of linear interpolation and added again to their age at marriage. In spite of a few weak points latent in the procedure of the estimation, it might give enough insight into the general analysis of life cycle. Although the figure is mapped out from the women's life cycle, there may be some misinterpretation of the life span of men in detail, and it is still valuable in giving a general insight into the family life as a whole.

As shown in Figure 5.3, several patterns can be observed. First, in spite of the trend towards late marriage among the younger generation, the total period of married life has been extended.<sup>48</sup> The main reason comes from the extension of life expectancy. The average life span of both women and men has extended almost 15

years for the last two decades with a sex difference of about 7 years on average. The increase is due to medical progress, and the advancement of living standards brought about by the economic growth of the last a few decades. While the age at the first marriage has been prolonged by some 7 years. As a result, the total period of family life for both of them has been extended from 44.5 to 51.8 years for two decades .

The second characteristic of the cycle is the reduction of the honeymoon period until the first child is born (II-stage) and of the period until a woman delivered the last baby (III-stage).<sup>49</sup> The reduction is closely related to the reproductive behaviour of the younger generation. First, since women believe a baby born of a younger mother is healthier than that of an older mother, they deliver a baby as early as possible to compensate their late marriage.<sup>50</sup> In addition, if married life with no children is unimaginable, it is best to have a small number of children as early as possible to enjoy a second stage of individual life. That is the reason the II-stage has been quite reduced among younger generation. Second the popularity of the small family idea, III-stage when the last child was born has come far earlier than with the older generation. Thus the duration between the first child born and the last child born has radically shortened. The reduction of the fertility duration brought another change in women's life cycle. The period for childrearing has been reduced. In other words, the duration between the first child born (II-stage) and every child married (V-stage) has been radically shortened from 39.3 years among those in their sixties to 28.4 years among in their twenties. Naturally the reduction has increased the remaining life until the husband's death and the woman's own death. The changes in the fertility behaviour have allowed a second stage in which younger generations may have time for themselves rather than for the children.

The third aspect of the life cycle is the time of a husband's death. Husbands used to die very much earlier than at retirement from their job and even prior to the marriage of the last of the children.<sup>51</sup> In the eldest generation, on average he died in his early fifties. His death affected not only his wife but also probably the children not mature enough to control themselves psychologically and emotionally. More seriously perhaps than the emotional deprivation, was the loss of economic base for the remaining family. The early fifties was the age when a husband just began to stabilise his home economically. It was the period when economic support for the children was most needed and when for his wife it was too late to find a new job. This occurred when society had not yet even dreamt of providing even moderate social security. Husbands from the youngest generation live long enough to have

all their children married, owing to the general increase in the life expectancy. Even if he dies before the average life expectancy, the economic impact on the surviving wife and children is not as serious as it was for the eldest generation thanks to the pension system.

The fourth factor is the expansion of the empty nest period of between V-stage (the time every child married) and VI-stage (death of husband). For the women group of marriage cohort 1955-64 and below, they had almost no concept of empty nest. The group in their sixties and over (marriage cohort: 1935-1944) is a typical example. There are two reasons of the absence of empty nest. The first reason is that they had too many children. The second reason is that life expectancy of both husband and wife was too short to have such experience. The husband died before he could complete his familial duty and his wife as well died soon after she had all her children married. Thus, the elderly group in their sixties and over had no more individual life. They devoted almost the whole of their life to childrearing and family affairs. That was the general image of women. That was the reason motherhood predominated womanhood. Under the situation where her children had not become independent yet, the discussion of womanhood was luxurious and nonsense. However, the situation has changed very dramatically in the last a few decades thanks to the changes in the attitude towards a smaller number of children and the extension of average life expectancy. For example, for the youngest generation in their twenties, the average husband lives 15 years more after all his children are married and his wife 22.2 years. As a result a husband and wife keep an empty nest for at least 15 years. It may be a good time for a couple to enjoy their married life but without adequate levels of social and financial provision for their old age, it becomes boring, and even deprived, and their home an iron cage. Husbands still enjoy an occupational life until they retire and die after several years of retirement. However a wife mostly lacks a social or economic job with the decrease in mortality rates and this may be the case particularly for women in the future.

There is one thing more which makes the situation of women in the empty nest complicated. As a matter of fact, no concept of empty nest existed under the traditional principle of stem family. As the eldest son and his family were sharing the same roof after his marriage, parents who had all of their children married did not have to be alone. According to FAM89 data, 15.7 per cent of household still remained a stem family pattern. Thus parents belonging to the stem family household are not in an empty nest, at least nominally in spite they had all children married. Except these cases, many of parents are in the empty nest. Under the

modified stem principle after modernisation, parents have separated from the married children but re-join only when one of the partners passes away or is in bad health. Of course, if the parents are economically lacking, children, in co-operation, contribute during the empty nest period. However the modification is quite reasonable if parents are physically and emotionally healthy enough not to feel any deprivation. It can be an alternative to prevent possible conflicts between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law. However, the reality does not always exactly correspond to the theory. If children are not wealthy enough to support poor class parents in the empty nest, or if the circumstances of children's family are not moderate enough to serve parents in ill health, eventually the parents are deserted in the empty nest. The newly arrived, in the process of modernisation, concept of the empty nest looks like expanding, accompanied with the modification of the stem family principle..

Lastly the change in the life cycle affects *married life, particularly for* housewife. In the case of the older generations, they spent the whole of their married lives in handling familial affairs. With large numbers of children preferred, they used the whole of their time, resources, and energy in attending to their children's affairs. In addition they were expected to pay more attention to the near or even distant relatives' problems under the patriarchal familism. Naturally *there* remained nothing left for themselves. A few years of honeymoon period were the only time they could concentrate on each other but not enough to foster the love that youths prefer. Brought up to express none of their feelings in front of their parents, they could not fully make use of the honeymoon, sharing the same roof with them. Co-operation rather than love was more important in coping with the exhausting, repetitive familial affairs between couples. They spent the whole of their life believing that was joy and the goal of a sincere life and the real meaning of married life. As a result the present day idea of love between couples was recognised as the affair only of the young. Among older people it was thought immature and selfish behaviour, forgetting their responsibilities for their children.

However this situation has changed due to the change in the familial life cycle. Among the youngest generation, significant affairs like the birth of children, their marriage, and the death of a husband, occurred at great enough intervals to handle them calmly because they preferred a small number of children. In addition there is no need to pay attention to remote relatives due to the general trend toward greater individualism. As a result, both the wife and husband can afford much more time, effort, and economic resources to concentrate on each other. Moreover thanks to the development of household appliances, a housewife has much more time than

her parents could. They do not have to stay under the same roof with their parents-in-law thanks to the modification of the stem principle. In a word it is the best time for young couples to enjoy their own married happiness. However if other conditions are not adequate the free time can create unexpected disasters. For example, conflicts can be worsened by a wife's concentration on her husband's behaviour on the one hand, or she can feel much more severe deprivation if her individual economic or social conditions are not sufficient to enable her to make use of her free time on the other hand. The occupational market in present day Korea, is not enough to offer all housewives a full time or part time job, and even healthy recreational or educational programmes have not yet fully developed. The change in the family life cycle has come too early for the society to cope with. If it is time to make a consensus about the dealing of the free labour, it should be done in the home as well as at social level.

To conclude, going back to the discussion on the atypical pattern of family households (Refer to 1.1.4 and 4.4.), each and every change in individual family life cycle mentioned so far are closely related with the emergence of diversity and variation of family life: single person households, empty nest, single parent households, etc. which was rarely observed in the traditional society. However, as already discussed in Chapter One, the emergence of the atypical pattern of family households does not mean Korean families are under the third family principle as postmodernists asserted, but merely a change in the life cycle together with an increase in the divorce rate. Present day Koreans are still under either the principle of lineage or the nuclear family principle even though both are sometimes conflicting. The changes are in tempo and pattern of the life cycle but the organising principles either of stem family or of nuclear family are not. Rather, it is important to recognise the atypical patterns as families rather than abnormal or residual ones.

# CHAPTER SIX

## HUSBAND AND WIFE:

### ROLES AND POWER

In this chapter mainly two themes are going to be discussed: role allocation in the family and the distribution of power among its members. First I will examine four roles that in traditional society were very strictly defined and this has been mitigated to meet the demands of young generations, together with the resulting new patterns of role conflict. Finally I shall consider the *de facto* distribution of power over familial affairs

Before proceeding with these themes, it is necessary to have a brief look at the overall characteristics of roles and power in the Korean context. The role structure or power allocation within a family is determined by both familial factors and social elements which eventually interact with each other. Of course it is difficult to separate one set of determinants from the other. Both are the cause and effect of each other. However, for analytical purposes the causes and results of change in the role distribution and authority structure, will be separately discussed both at the macro and at micro levels.

The concept of the role has been influenced by several intellectual traditions including, interactionism, behaviourism, utilitarianism, pragmatism, and phenomenology etc. All these traditions influenced the behavioural capacity of individuals, crucial to playing roles. Role theory is roughly comprised of the structuralist approach and the interactionist approach. The former focuses on the social characteristics of role assignment, the latter on inter-personal relationships between/among the role performers. The difference of the two approaches are different opinions on what is the nature of script guiding role behaviour. The scholars belonging to the former tradition like Parsons or Linton argue that there

are norms attached to each status position in a social structure, and so, roles are simply the behaviour of people in particular positions following normative script (expectations of appropriate behaviour). The latter scholars including R. H. Turner, Handel, Colomy, Blumer, etc., argue that norms are only broad parameters within which individuals make roles confirming self and meeting their needs. Eventually both are the heads and the tails of the same coin but different in their primary emphasis. Both regard the family as individuals interacting with each other.<sup>1</sup>

Microscopically role or authority in a family is decided according to familial characteristics. Elements such as sex, age, and generation etc. ascribe to each family member a due position or role and a due amount of power in the family. Between generations, the parent's role is given to the elder generation, and children's position to the younger generation. Again the children's role is different between daughter and son roles. The more children a couple has, the more complicated are the role relations among the children. Even power sharing among children often gets very sophisticated. Role structure and power allocation become more extensive and more tangled when sharing a roof with another generation like parents or grand-children. Power relations for the senior generation becomes confused unless it is defined institutionally. The role structure and the power relations among family members become more diversified and more complicated if the number of children and generations gets bigger.

To add to this complexity, role distribution is characterised by its duality. An individual can have two or more roles within a family at the same time, for example a woman can play the role of housewife to her husband, concurrently the role of mother to her children, and again the role of daughter-in-law as well to her parents-in-law. The smaller the family is, the simpler each member's position becomes. The bigger the family by generation, the more doubtful role allocation within a family is.

Macroscopically role and authority in the family are influenced by social, cultural, and environmental variables etc. as well. Role relations and power allocation in the family are significantly influenced by the sort of family pattern which is prevalent: by how big or small the average housing size is, and by what sort of social norms concerning family life prevail within a society etc. Changes in any of these non-familial factors can have a significant impact on the allocation of power among family members or on role relations within a family not only in a quantitative sense but also at a qualitative level as well.

The same changes of role structure and power allocation within the family have happened in Korea both at macro and at micro level. The decrease of the three generational family household made role relation within the family far simpler than ever before. At the same time the density of relationships has been far intensified. Thus much of the previous role relations between married couples and their parents have diminished, however the relational density of couples to their children has been reinforced while the increase in families with a small number children has also intensified and simplified the relationship.

These changes are closely connected to the non-familial factors as well. First the weakening of the stem family principle has changed the position of each member. Next the rapid increase in urban migration followed by the increase in the number of separated households has led to changes in the distribution of roles and power. While the cultural changes arising out of the feminist movement or individualism have led to similar changes in the role and authority distribution. These changes reached even to the qualitative level. The vertical power relations among family members in traditional society have changed to more horizontal ones. Once strictly differentiated roles associated with sex and age have now become more co-operative ones.

In order to examine these changes, data from FAM89 have been analysed. Of the 2,923 households in the survey, 1,939 households containing still married women are the target of this analysis. Women separated by the death of their husbands or by divorce are excluded. Three generational families composed of daughter-in-law and mother-in-law were almost equally distributed by region but two generational families were three times more frequent in the urban areas than in the rural areas.

**Table 6.1. Demographic Characteristics Of Married Women  
By Family Pattern And By Region**

age	3 generational family			2 generational family		
	whole	urban	rural	whole	urban	rural
total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
(N)	(275)	(154)	(121)	(1624)	(1195)	(469)
15-24	6.5	5.8	7.4	5.2	5.9	3.4
25-34	40.7	44.8	35.5	41.9	47.4	27.8
35-44	28.4	31.8	24.0	27.7	29.5	23.2
45-54	20.4	15.6	26.4	17.8	14.3	26.8
55-64	2.9	1.3	5.0	6.1	2.2	16.0
65+	1.1	0.6	1.7	1.3	0.7	2.8

source: FAM89

There are a few points about the sample which need to be noted. To begin with in three generational families mothers-in-law are partly excluded. This might lead to a misinterpretation of the role structure in the family and therefore discussion of the contrasting opinions of mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law will be considered subsequently. The next problem is the exclusion of husbands or children from the analysis. While it is hardly possible to encompass all family members due to the lack of time and research funds. Yet given the Korean domestic situation relying on the housewife, is not wholly misleading. The last problem comes from the lack of comparable historical data. There are many case studies of family roles and authority but nation-wide surveys on the subjects are very rare. Even the results of the survey contradict each other. To compensate for the lack of historical data by age-cohorts of the interviewee can be attempted but does not look wholly convincing. As shown in table 6.1, the cell size of age-cohorts are not equally distributed but are greater for those in their thirties and forties. Except for the urban two generational families members are too small to be quite reliable. It may as a result, be more plausible to compare traditional society to present-day Korea at a descriptive and holistic level. In spite of all the shortcomings the data can give some insight into the change of role structure and power distribution in broad terms. While the percentage of involvement in each area was measured by time spent on each activity in a area, which was finally summated and averaged. FAM89 asked who were spending the longest time for each activity in each area, gave ordinal number in the order of contribution amount, and finally summated and averaged whole of the ordinal number to find the best contributor.

## **6.1. THE CHANGES IN ROLE STRUCTURE**

### **6.1.1. Changes In Role Performances**

Role structure in traditional society was strictly differentiated inside and outside the home. It was rigorously dichotomised by sex and by age. The situation has changed in the process of modernisation during the last a few decades. Four different sorts of role performances will be discussed; housework, childrearing, outside activities, and economic activities. In these areas a strict role differentiation was strongly expected in traditional society, however the idea has greatly changed, sometimes with deterioration of women's status. Each area of role performance is encompassing a couple of activities related and they are collectively measured at arithmetic mean.

### 6.1.1.1. Housework

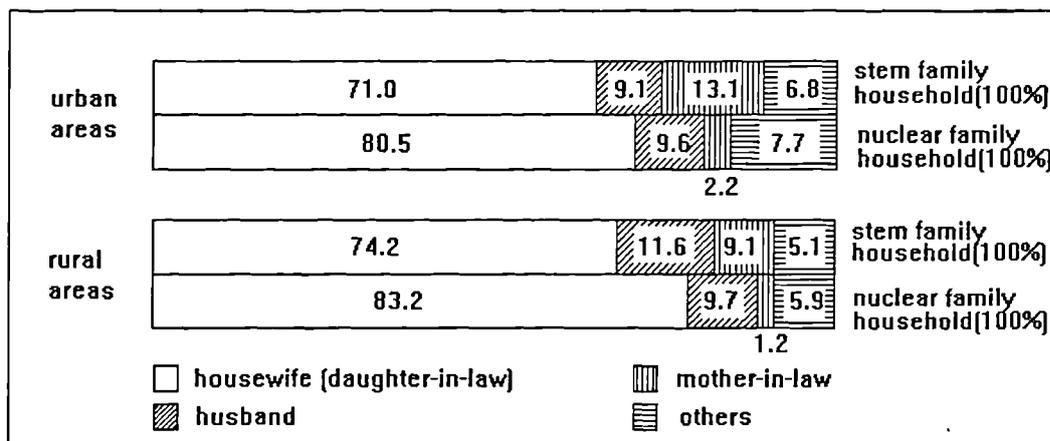
Housework, includes preparing meals, cleaning the house, laundry, needlework, production of soy and bean paste, and interior decoration or repair etc.<sup>2</sup> With a slight exception of repair of the flat, these were firmly believed to be the responsibility of the housewife. In the case of soy and bean paste, this was one of the most important annual responsibilities for housewives in traditional society. Preparing a suitable amount and achieving a good taste of the soy or bean to last a whole year long for use in almost every cooking process, was very important for female family members. No commercial product was available or in any case would have been ridiculed. Sometimes a taste of the soy or bean paste produced by bride's family was asked for by groom's mother before an offer of marriage was made. All the management of affairs concerned with food, clothing, and shelter were the absolute domain of women with which male family members could not and ought not interfere under any conditions in traditional society. This principle was applied even to the small children below 7 years old.<sup>3</sup> A small boy who happened to enter kitchen just for a drink would be disgraced and sometimes punished both by his mother and by his father. Housework was not a thing a manly man ought to give any attention to.

Housework was rigorously differentiated not only by sex but also by generation, mother-in-law was the supreme commander and supervisor inside the family, daughter-in-law was expected to be simply a sincere follower. She could have independent opinions on domestic affairs only after her mother-in-law passed away. However old and however incompetent her mother-in-law was, a woman was strictly expected to ask her direction for every domestic affair no matter how trivial because of the strong orientation to filial piety imposed by Confucianism. Even the householder could not interrupt a mother-in-law's despotic role in relation to the other female members of the household. An order from mother-in-law and execution by her daughter-in-law were the typical division of labour in the traditional family.

This situation has changed as the result of modernisation. The pattern of change can be summarised in a few points. First, husbands' contribution for the housework averages ten per cent throughout the nation and across different family patterns. This proportion does not mean the husband's role has increased by this amount in present day Korea. Husbands' participation is far smaller than the statistics might suggest. In spite of the contempt of male members participating in the domestic affairs, those demanding physically hard labour like house repair or

fence mending etc. were always given to men. As these activities were included in the domain of the domestic duties, the actual increase in the proportion of husbands' contribution is far smaller than the statistics appear to indicate. Husbands from the rural stem families contribute more than other husbands even more than the contribution from their mothers. The reason for this is that their farming situation allows them to participate in domestic affairs more easily than other jobs do. Other husbands in non-agricultural occupations have their work place separated from home. They are chained to the work place and have not enough spare time to lend a hand in their domestic duties like house or fence repair, and more readily employ a repairman. Farming husbands do not make a strict division between home affairs and farming and more readily participate in domestic matters. Moreover the value of cash is still too important for farmers to pay for simple labour. Naturally all these things have made rural husbands from stem families contribute to domestic affairs more than other husbands.

**Figure 6.1. Percentage Of Domestic Duties As Assigned To Each Family Member By Region And By Family Pattern.**



The second characteristic of the role distribution in present day Korea is the participation of others than family members in domestic duties. These others roughly comprise two groups; domestic servant or daily maid and the market. First the role of present day domestic servant or daily maid was in traditional society fulfilled by slaves. Considering the high proportion of slave's participation, the domain of the home help's role has been sharply narrowed. The proportion of households in possession of slaves was 27.5 per cent in 17th century and 37.5 per cent in 19th century. (Refer to Table 3.6.) However the total percentage of the others in the present day does not exceed 7.7 per cent of urban nuclear family at maximum.<sup>4</sup> The reason for the decrease in the proportion of others' contribution came from the abolition of slavery in the modern era and high expenses for labour charges.

In spite of this, the proportion of others' contributions is still non-negligible amount. The share in urban areas is bigger than in rural areas, and in nuclear families than in stem families. This is the result of the increase in the proportion of housewives participating in economic activities outside the home. Domestic servants or daily maids have been needed to make up for the domestic work they can not do while they are at their work place. Even when a mother-in-law is able to contribute to domestic matters, the home help was needed to do physically hard labour not fit for the aged woman. In such work as cleaning, laundering, preparation of meals, etc. a dual career woman is likely to make use of a paid servant.

The other outside contributor is the public market. Particularly for soy and bean paste many housewives deeply depend on the public market. According to FAM89, at most 7.3 per cent of urban housewives and 11.2 per cent of rural wives prepare soy and bean paste for private use solely at home. The rest transfer the role, in terms of preparing soy and bean paste, to the public market. The process of preparing soy and bean paste is quite time-consuming and it is complicated to produce a delicate taste. The paste produced by a factory is much cheaper than the one produced domestically, and even the taste is not too bad so that housewives could substitute the bought commodity for the domestic paste.

The third characteristics of present day role structure is the position of the mother-in-law. The mother-in-law who traditionally was the leading member in the domestic affairs of the family looks to have given way to her daughter-in-law. The contribution of the mother-in-law in the stem family either in rural or urban areas is quite small. Of course the mother-in-law was not the member who physically executed domestic labour. Rather she was the figure ordering and supervising. Her physical contribution to domestic matters was quite small even in earlier times so there is almost no significant change in her physical contribution. However the point is that she has lost her position as supervisor and become an assistant of daughter-in-law's. Her decline from the supervising position, of course, resulted from the trend to the democratisation of the society in general on the one hand. While at the same time in traditional society the source of income was monopolised by parents today a son has acquired economic independence as well. That is another reason for mother-in-law's decline. Thus their economic power allows the young generation to raise their voice against their parents. Moreover mothers-in-law are unable physically to successfully execute the whole of the domestic management. Harder work is done by a daily maid or by the daughter-in-law herself leaving her mother-in-law as a role assistant.

Another interesting point concerning the mother-in-law role is the proportion of households comprised of a nuclear family only. Although these amount to only a small proportion of all households, mothers-in-law nevertheless contribute to their son's life mainly in the preparation of soy and bean paste. However much it costs, mothers-in-law generally prefer the home-made product. They are unsatisfied with the market paste and soy full of artificial(chemical) sweetening. In addition, they can afford to have son's family save their living expenses by themselves supplying home-made soy and bean paste. This is one indication of the continuing existence of the stem family principle. Through this process parents, can check from time to time how a daughter-in-law is managing the affairs of their son's family, inspite of their physically separate living.

Lastly, in spite of modernisation followed by the general improvement in women's position, the housework still remains the domain of female members only. It varies by region and family type. Rural housewives have more housework than urban housewives as a result of the slightly different way of life. The urban housewife enjoys more modern domestic facilities while the rural housewife is less well equipped due to lack of cash. The gap is partly compensated for by help with more physical labour in the rural home. The housewife in the nuclear family household has less help with housework than those from the stem family households. Housewives in nuclear family households share almost ten per cent more domestic work. They are paying cost for the separate life from their parents-in-law. To sum up, in spite of modernisation followed by the women's liberation movement, the burden of the conventional housewife has not reduced as much as might be expected. Domestic affairs are still rigorously differentiated domains for female family members.

#### **6.1.1.2. Parental roles**

Four aspects of parent roles, guiding children's studies, domestic training, consultation and allowing children's pocket money are examined.<sup>5</sup> The traditional ideal for parents were the 'affectionate mother and strict father.' Thus if the mother was expected to play the role comforter, the father was the educator. The father was the most deeply involved teacher, and supervisor in his children affairs. This was the prevalent ideal at least until the mid-70s but it has changed very drastically in present day Korea.

The educational role was different according to the sex of parents and the children. Traditionally it was only boys who got a formal education. Girls were educated by their mothers in the virtues of domestic life like tender mind,

needlework, preparation of soy and bean paste etc. They were excluded from what their brothers were learning. Boys were educated by their father or paternal grand-father from their seventh year and learned Confucian literature.<sup>6</sup> Thus a father or paternal grand-father was the only educator, and sons the only ones educated at home at that time.

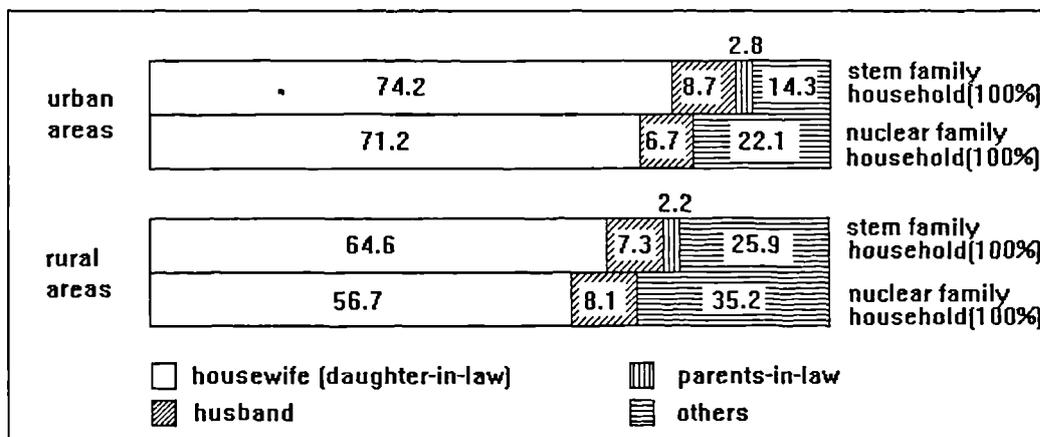
**Table 6.2. Change In The Expected Level Of Education For Children By Sex**

expected level of education	sons			daughters		
	'77	'87	'90	'77	'87	'90
total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
middle school	7.5	1.6	1.6	23.7	4.0	3.9
high school	36.2	13.9	12.1	42.7	25.6	20.4
college & university	55.5	60.5	61.9	33.3	55.1	61.3
graduate school	0.8	24.0	24.4	0.3	15.3	14.4

source: EPB, *Social Statistics Survey*.

The situation has changed in the process of modernisation. The change has occurred both from the parents side and the children. First compulsory education system required girls as well as boys to attend primary school. In addition even the expected level of education for children has been equalised as shown in Table 6.2.<sup>7</sup> No big difference except at the graduate school level is found between sexes in present day Korea. Daughters are expected to enter a college or university course as much as sons are. Of course there are things that have not changed yet. Some traditional aspects of home education are still very strong. Boys are expected to show more interest in manly behaviour, while girls are expected to conform to ideals of feminine behaviour. However the demands of gender do not displace expectations about gaining a good mark in the formal education system regardless of sex.

**Figure 6.2. Role Allocation On The Children's By Region And By Family Pattern <sup>8</sup>**



The changes in parents roles are also drastic. A father's role *vis a vis* his children has become relatively smaller even than in respect of other domestic matters. His involvement in his children's lives is less than in any other roles of his family, accounting for less than 10 per cent of the children's matters as Figure 6.2 shows.

A husband and father may almost seem to his wife and children like a lodger who comes home just for sleeping. A father attends his office from early in the morning before his children get up, and comes back late at night when all the rest of the family are asleep. Fathers attend their offices even on weekend as well. This has been a typical story among many Korean families for the last a couple of decades. Whilst it was one of the most significant factors in the astonishing growth of national wealth, both the father and his children and his wife lost a great deal from the arrangement. Fathers were perceived by their children as merely a bread-earning machine or boarder or, at best, the person providing their pocket money. Thus fathers lost patriarchal position and children has lost the experience of paternal socialisation.

The same happened to grandfathers. Once as influential as a father was to his children, the paternal grandfather lost his position as an educational guide to his grandchildren. Even more than in the nuclear family, in the stem family there is a very weakened role of paternal grandparents in the children's lives. The familial position of the paternal grandfather as an educator of his grandchildren may have disappeared from memory. Otherwise he has remained as a role assistant such as baby-sitter or a kindly relative rather than a *strict educator*.

The children's upbringing has become almost wholly the responsibility of their mothers. She does everything that her husband would have done for the children in earlier times. Mothers train their children in household duties, guide their studies, and gives them their pocket money. She has taken over responsibility for the education role to compensate for the absence of their father. At the same time mothers' contribution varies according to region and family pattern. First her role is bigger in urban areas than in rural areas because in rural areas husbands are engaged in jobs with less rigid time, schedules like farming and can participate more in what is happening at home. Urban husbands, whether salary men or self-employed, are working under the far more competitive conditions and thus spend more time away from home than rural husbands do. Working late at night, may make a favourable impression in their place of work, but is at the cost of severe damage to their commitments as fathers. Naturally it has to be their wives who

make up for the absence of the father so that the urban wife as a result contributes more to her children's upbringing than a rural wife has to. At the same time the difference in a wife's contribution by family pattern is also influenced by demographic characteristics in particular. It depends on the number of 'others' available in the household.

The others are involved in child's upbringing mainly other children themselves or in rare cases sometimes a private tutor etc. The rural nuclear family shows the biggest proportion of children's own involvement and the urban stem family the least. The difference reflects the age structure in urban and rural family and difference in family patterns. There are more grown up children among nuclear families than among stem families, and rural families are on average older than the urban families so that the proportion of older and grown up children is greater. Thus according to the FAM89 data, the proportion of housewives aged 45 years old and over in stem families was 33.1 per cent in the rural areas and 17.5 per cent in the urban areas. The proportion of housewives aged 55 years old and over in nuclear families was 18.8 per cent in the rural areas and 2.9 per cent in the urban areas. Children's age goes roughly side by side with their mothers'. Many of the children from the urban nuclear families are already grown adults, and children in the rural areas left their homes at marriage or for a job or to study.

However even if it is not the absence of parental involvement so much as the demographic character of the family, significant role of other children at least indicates the low level of patriarchal influence. In the traditional family, children, young or grown-up, married or unmarried, could not be free from parents' influence and particularly from their father's. However owing to the growth of modernisation and individualism, autonomous and independent behaviour by children has come to be highly regarded both by children and parents. Which explains the high contribution of the adult children to the upbringing of their younger siblings, what was once the domain of a father or grandfather, has increasingly become the responsibility of a matter of other children. This is not a matter of neglect of children's upbringing but that children are exposed to the lack of influence from their fathers.

### **6.1.1.3. Outside activity**

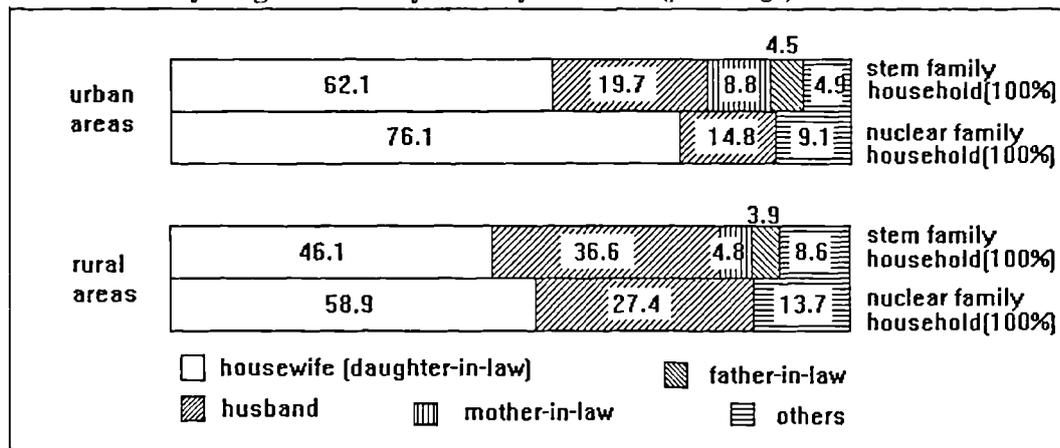
By outside activities, we refer to going to public institutions for example to have a certificate of residence or a copy of family register, or other formal certificate etc.: attending a relative's on matters of congratulation or condolence: or going to the parents' meeting at the children's school.<sup>9</sup>

Outside activities were recognised as exclusive matters for the eldest male of the stem family or husband of the nuclear family in traditional society. There was a proverbial saying in traditional society reflecting Confucian principles. "If the hen cries, family goes to the bad." Wife or any other female member of a family was never expected to express any opinions outside the family. She was expected to be subservient to her parent's opinion before marriage, her husband's, and after her husband's death to her first son's opinion. In Confucianism, this principle of *samjong* for the women was praised. As a result in all affairs outside the family, the family was presented and led by male members.

Modernisation has rooted up the once conventional idea. Women now are allowed to engage in socio-economic activity outside the home. Two things have led women to participate in social activity outside home: first the general enhancement of women's social status; secondly the separation of home and work place, and the demands of occupational life. The work place in traditional agricultural society, was not away from home. Today's workers however work far away from their home, and are expected to concentrate fully at their work until the end of the working day. As a result it is hardly possible for them to engage in any outside activity concerned with their home unless they make use of their lunch time or risk being unfaithful to their job. As a result they have handed over their, conventionally, essential role to their wives like the other roles reviewed.

In spite of this general trend towards women's total dominance of outside activities, husbands contribute a significant amount in relative sense. Compared to their contribution to the domestic duties or their children's upbringing the role of husbands in dealing with the outside world is still significant. It is greater among the rural husbands particularly in stem families for three reasons. First, in spite of the separation of their occupational lives, both husbands and wives are still active in relation to the outside world in terms of personal contact. The avoidance of the opposite sex is still pervasive. Both sexes still feel it unnatural to communicate with each other especially in rural areas. The division of labour by sex is still pervasive among present day Koreans. Regional differences also reflect different working conditions. However harsh modern occupational life is, rural husbands enjoy relatively relaxed working conditions compared with the urbanites who are overtasked with work and time. That is the reason a rural husband can afford to keep his conventional position in relation to matters outside the household. Lastly, husbands from the rural stem family are more likely to be engaged in farming than the husband of the rural nuclear family which easily permits them to be, showing the biggest contribution, involved in matters in relation to the outside world.

**Figure 6.3. Role Allocation In Respect Of Out-of-household Responsibility  
By Region And By Family Pattern (percentage)**



Nevertheless extra-household responsibilities have been transferred generally to the housewives. The housewives from the nuclear family particularly regardless of regional differences, are taking on more responsibility than other housewives are. This is due to the structural characteristics of each family pattern. In the stem family parents-in-law can deal with outside matters on behalf of a busy son at work or a busy daughter-in-law involved with domestic affairs. However in the nuclear family a housewife is the only person, unless she has grown-up children, who can take the place of her husband.

In terms of the housewife's role, outside responsibilities show the biggest difference of role allocation by region and by family pattern. This is the area in which the sexual division of labour is not yet settled. In other words, the discrepancy between the expected family member and the actual person delivering the role is greatest.

How role allocation in respect of outside relationships will be sorted out in the future depends on how occupational life develops. The economic policies of the government push husbands to become more attached to their work place than before and the housewife's role is expected to grow bigger as a result. Again considering the general attack of the women's liberation movement on sexual differences, the responsibilities of the housewife role seem to be getting bigger than ever before.

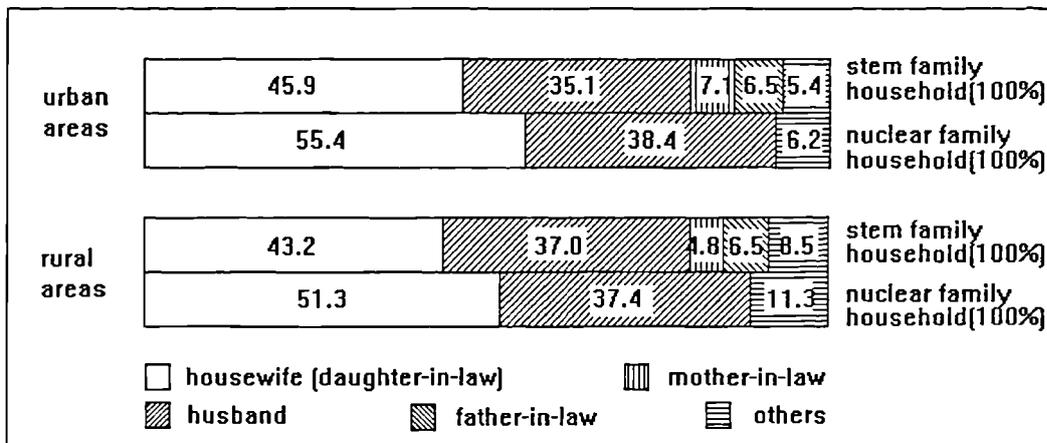
#### 6.1.1.4. Economic activity

In the economic domain, questions on four activities are asked and measured separately but aggregate arithmetic means are presented here: firstly who is responsible for savings; secondly who buys daily consumption goods; thirdly

who has income earning responsibilities; and lastly who is instrumental in buying or selling the family house or apartment.<sup>10</sup>

Traditionally economic activity was basically dichotomised by sex. The husband was the breadwinner, the housewife manager of the domestic economy. To be precise, most activities happening outside the home were the husband's buoyancy while the others at home were in the housewife's domain. Economic activity was closely connected to the representative role in relation to people outside the home. Naturally breadwinning, or purchasing or selling the family home was undertaken by the husband or the eldest male member in the family.<sup>11</sup>

**Figure 6.4. Economic Role Allocation By Region And By Family Pattern**



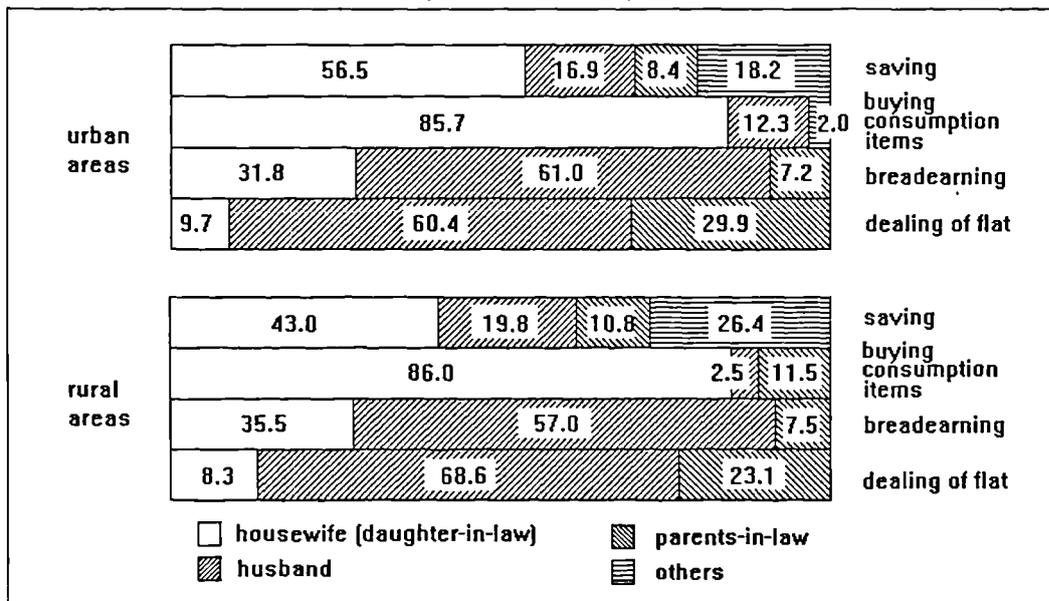
Economic activity is the least changed domain of role allocation in the process of modernisation. As shown in Figure 6.4 there is a sort of balance between husband and wife in their role performances. In case of the couples from the stem family pattern, the gap between husband and wife is below 10 per cent regardless of region, while the gap in nuclear family couples is about 15 per cent on average. This may seem quite big but compared to the absolute dominance of the wife in the other three role performances reviewed previously, the economic role is the most balanced area between husband and wife.

The contributions of husbands show almost no difference by region or by family patterns. The housewife's contribution differs very little between regions but varies according to family pattern. The housewife in the nuclear family has a larger share in economic activity than the housewife from the stem family household since if she lives with her parents-in-law, they contribute a significant amount in economic activity. Relatively the housewife of the nuclear family carries a greater burden of economic activity except when this is compensated for by her grown-up children.

The next most important economic contribution is that of children or sometimes of grand-children. The reason for the bigger proportionate contribution of the children in the nuclear family is due to statistical relativism which comes basically from the structural character of the family composition. The reason for the bigger rate of rural children derives from the generally poorer economic situation of the rural areas. Due to the regionally disproportionate distribution of national wealth, rural families are more dependant on the children's income than urban families are. In other words balance of economic exchange between the generations is more likely in rural families than in urban families.

Economic activity is the domain to which the husband makes his greatest contribution and it is the area of role allocation between husband and wife which is the most balanced. However, unlike the other areas reviewed previously, the economic domain is the most fluctuating field when discussed in terms of detailed activities. Husband and wife both show emphatically different role performances in each area of activity in contrast to the other three role sectors analysed earlier. We can scrutinise closely the role allocations in the stem family households. Those in the nuclear family households are almost exactly similar with just minor variations from the structural difference of family composition explained already. Extreme fluctuation by sex is observed in each economic activity as shown in Figure 6.5.

**Figure 6.5. Detailed Economic Activities In The Stem Family Household By Region.**



First the activity of saving is mostly carried on by the housewife. Conventionally the good housewife was expected to save something from the

income earned in the main by her husband. However a meagre salary it was, a good wife and mother was expected to lay something aside for the rainy days and particularly for the educational fees of children entering a school of higher degree. This was unavoidable with the high value placed on education but lacking of social security provision from the government. As a result the housewife and mother showed up as the best manager of the home economics to make tiny amounts of money to grow to a round sum. The husband's role in savings reflects the general socio-economic conditions. To accelerate the economic development of the nation, the government launched a savings promotion policy from the late 70s when almost compulsory savings were introduced which were deducted automatically from salary. Only the balance of the salary was available to be handed over to the housewife. This condition was no different whether the husband was a government official or a private company employee, so the proportion of the savings activity by a husband denotes nothing but the government interventionism. Children are the second most significant family members in savings activity. The proportion is particularly high among rural families. Living with parents, grown-up children, single or married, could have saved what they earned untouched. Of course in the traditional period the income was untouchedly handed over to parents. This was the case at least until the 1970s, and used to be a source of calamity between the mother-in-law and the daughter-in-law. However owing to the general economic growth and to the expansion of individualism, adult children can save by themselves what they have earned for their own sake so that children's role in the savings activity is the second most significant. Sometimes the amount of the children's saving is much bigger than that of their parents. The money saved is used to fund the marriage of unmarried children or for the purchase of an independent flat for married children. This is more common among rural adult children because of the relative economic poverty in the rural areas. Having the poor as their parents, the rural children have to rely more on their own money to marry or to be independent from their parents.

Buying daily consumption goods is almost entirely the responsibility of the housewife. That was the typical pattern of management in traditional home economics and the activity has almost not changed at all in the process of modernisation. A tiny change may be observed among urban husbands who show up at the supermarket as a result of the sexual equality movement. In spite of the small increase in the proportion of the husbands shopping, they are still viewed as a petty fellow and unmanly men among present day Koreans both men and women. In the rural areas parents-in-law show some participation but these are almost mothers-in-law. This reflects the remains of the tradition when mother-in-law was

the supreme manager of the home taking care of the keys of the economic resources of the family. It is still not rare to find a married rural son, giving the whole of his monthly salary not to his wife but to his parents. Hence the housewife gets the living expenses from her parents-in-law. Over 10 per cent of rural parents still enjoy this dominant management role of traditional society. It often creates conflict between young married couples.

The breadwinning is primarily the responsibility of husbands. Husbands have virtually total dominance over the main source of income. However the housewives' participation in earning activities are never negligible. Roughly almost one out of three housewives in urban areas and a high one out of three in rural areas participates in economic activity outside the home. Due to the complexity of farming, it is difficult to regard the statistics of actual participation to the economic activity but considering the case, the proportion is significant enough to denote the improvement of social status of women in rural and urban areas. The other major change in the income domain is the decrease in the contribution from parents-in-law, mostly of fathers-in-law in the stem family household. Fathers-in-law were one of the major sources of earnings in traditional society. However in the process of changes in the industrial structure and by the introduction of the retirement at the age of 65 age limit, they will have retired from work the main source of income, unless self-employed. As a result the father-in-law's position at home declined with the loss of his income.

Lastly buying and selling the family house or flat is an area from which the wife is almost totally excluded. It is only male family members, particularly the husband who are involved. There are two components in the cultural determination of this pattern. The first comes from the *chip*(house) idea which is deeply rooted in traditional familism. The house was believed to be not simply a place of habitation but the sacred container for its own family and its spirit. Male members were and still are believed to be the symbol and representatives of their own *chip*. Whoever, a wife or wife's parents, pays for the house it was almost always the male family members who buys the house, at least manifestly. It was the last and most important or even the only basis of self-esteem of the Korean man. The appearance of his wife in bargaining for the house accounted to the loss of the masculinity of husband. That is the reason women are almost excluded, even in present day Korea, from buying and selling the family house or apartment. That is why fathers-in-law play a great role in purchasing or buying the house or flat than among whole of the role allocation reviewed up to now. The second reason for the exclusion of female family members is a quite recent change rather than traditional one. To be

precise the change came from the period of the Japanese annexation. Unusually capable women was not rare in traditional society and they were not disgraced unless they openly offended their husband's authority. However, the Japanese government severely reduced women's status and prescribed women as legally and customarily incapable persons. As a result, a wife could not make large transactions. This custom still remains in present-day Korea to exclude a wife from the purchase or sale of the family house or flat.

In general domestic economic activity is the area where the conventional division of labour has changed least. The husband is still predominantly the breadwinner and responsible for dealing with large sums of money while the wife manages small sums. Her role is limited to the activity of small scale saving and purchasing daily consumption goods.

To conclude this whole section, a few general points can be abstracted. First, most aspects of the division of labour between husbands and wives is structured to reveal the wife's dominance. The roles are allocated predominantly to the wife from domestic duties to the children's upbringing and even in dealings outside the domestic household. The situation looks like an improvement of women's status compared with the traditional family but it is concerned only with effort-taking or time-consuming or boring areas. A few but the most important affairs, in terms of infrastructure, like buying and selling the family house and the breadwinner role reserved for husband or male family members. That is the only domain Korean men can maintain their dignity as husband to their wives, as father to his children. Most other roles concerned with the home are overwhelmingly dominated by the wife. The excuse husbands could give for their staying out of the home, derives from the economic development policies of the last few decades. Both husband and wife have submitted to the loss of fatherhood and of husbandhood, to gain economic prosperity. The situation is more bitter for wives in nuclear families than among those living in stem family households, because they are paying the price of having a life independent from their parents-in-law. If she is sharing a same roof with her parents-in-law, a woman's burden of house chores or dealing with outside bodies might be lessened. By having a home of her own, however, she gets more work to do and possibly more stress from that than the housewife of the stem family does. Lastly, the rural housewife has a more traditional division of labour. She takes charge of more housework but is concerned with less outside matters and likely to be involved in less economic activity outside the domestic setting or the farm.

The conventional type of division of labour by sex has been changed drastically. However the situation brought more burden to wives than to husbands. If there is one thing that has not changed in the process of modernisation, it is emphatic division of labour. Role allocation is dichotomised by sex rather than being harmonised or converging between the sexes. The main reason for this would appear to be the socio-political orientation toward economic development of the last a few decades.

### 6.1.2. Role Conflicts

In this section two sorts of role conflict are selectively discussed. First conflicts between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law in the stem family will be examined. They once were tightly demarcated by the relationship of dominance and subordination in traditional society but has changed in the last decades of modernisation. The next thing to examine is the role conflict arising among dual career women who have been growing very rapidly in number in present day Korea.<sup>12</sup>

It is quite disputable if the conflict between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law is role structured conflict in real sense or just a conflict. The daughter-in-law finds her role obligations and expectations are changing while her mother-in-law is slow to adopt this fact and this can create conflict between them. However it is not exactly the role conflict what N. Gross noted, in the sense that each plays her role without uncertainty or interference from the other roles in her own role-set but rather a mere conflict between them arising from other sources like cultural and ideological changes. Nevertheless there are a couple of reasons why the conflict is being analysed under the title of role conflict. First there is no suitable terminology to overcome ambiguity in distinguishing the conflict between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law from the role conflict of N. Gross, in spite of the conflict quite deeply in the family field at the moment. Next, in spite of both mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law is being certain to deliver each of their concrete roles, they are still not certain about their general status at home. Mothers-in-law like to maintain the traditionally ascribed status of in-master at home regardless of the amount of her contribution of physical labour, but they are not certain about their status that must be recognised by other family members, particularly by daughters-in-law. By the same logic, daughters-in-law are not sure if they are both nominally and actually in-masters at home, in spite of their greater contribution in physical term. No other family members are certain about who is the in-master at home. That is

one of significant reasons why the stem family split into nuclear type family households as reviewed in Chapter 4. If both mother-in-law and daughter-in-law are not brave enough to disregard the in-masterhood, the alternative is having a separate household. In spite of the conceptual ambiguity arising by analysing the conflict between mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law under the title of the role conflict, the author included the discussion on the conflict between them in this section for an editorial convenience giving stress to the fact that the conflict between them arises at a pretext of in-master-hood.

#### **6.1.2.1. Conflicts between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law**

The excessive role allocation to the housewife in present day Korea might bring about conflict between/among family members. However the conflict surprisingly looks quite mild except in the field of housework. Most gaps between role expectation and role performance of each family member are below 5 per cent and only rarely reach a maximum 8 per cent on average. However housework shows quite a significant amount of gap between role performers and their normative expectations. This conflict happens mainly between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law.

As shown on Table 6.3, the situation can be reduced to a few points. First the housewife in the nuclear family shows almost no significant difference between the actual performer and the person being expected to deliver each activity. That is to say the persons expected to do the housework generally coincide with the family members who are actually performing it. The only exception is shown for the activity of preparing soy and bean paste. Most housewives prepare those by herself and are going to do that in the future as well. However a proportion of housewife relies on supply from her mother-in-law or her natural mother but prefers to buy and use the commercial soy and bean paste from the market. This is the point some housewives feel in conflict with their mothers-in-law. However as most housewives are proud of using home-made items, the conflict is relatively lessened. Moreover the conflict she feels from the intervention of her mother-in-law is recognised as trivial and the price of life independent from her parents-in-law.

In the stem family households, the role conflicts are complicated and more bitter and wide spread than in the nuclear family households. First of all the most decisive conflicts are implicit in the self-estimation of role performances. That is to say, the amount of work the mother-in-law and daughter-in-law recognise each other has done, is quite different.

**Table 6.3. Role Conflict Over Housework  
Among Family Members In Stem Family Households<sup>13</sup>**

performer	stem family: response from				nuclear family	
	mother-in-law		daughter-in-law		wife	
	per	exp	per	exp	per	exp
preparing meal:						
total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
wife					98.7	96.8
husband					0.1	0.2
daughter-in-law	66.2	76.4	95.3	90.9		
mother-in-law	32.8	23.2	4.7	1.8		
homemaid	1.0	0.4		7.3	1.2	3.0
cleaning rooms:						
total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
wife					96.0	92.3
husband					0.6	1.2
daughter-in-law	58.6	69.0	90.5	88.0		
mother-in-law	39.4	28.6	6.9	1.8		
daughter			1.5	3.6	2.0	3.7
individually	2.0	2.4	1.1	6.6	1.4	2.8
decoration and repairing flat:						
total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
wife					26.4	22.5
husband	52.7	58.2	60.8	64.5	56.5	59.2
daughter-in-law	8.0	9.5	13.6	12.1		
mother-in-law	8.5					
father-in-law	16.9	14.9	5.5			
son				4.8	3.5	6.7
employee	13.9	17.4	20.1	18.6	13.6	11.6
cleaning cloths:						
total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
wife					97.2	90.0
husband					0.5	1.0
daughter-in-law	65.5	77.3	93.1	91.6		
mother-in-law	33.0	20.2	4.7			
daughter				1.5	1.5	1.6
laundry	1.5	2.5	2.2	6.9	0.8	7.4
preparing soy and bean paste:						
total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
wife					72.5	80.1
daughter-in-law	28.1	52.2	54.5	70.9		
mother-in-law	68.5	45.8	42.9	24.7	11.4	6.5
mother					8.6	
market	3.4	2.0	2.6	4.4	7.5	13.4

source: FAM89

per: performer, exp: expected person to do

In other words the amount the mother-in-law is thinking she herself has performed, is under-estimated by daughter-in-law. Similarly the daughter-in-laws' self-estimation of what she has contributed is quite under-estimated by her mother-in-law. Of course daughters-in-law take the lead in housework but the self-estimated allocation between them shows too big a gap to reconcile. According to the daughters-in-law's self-estimation, mothers-in-law are almost incapable of doing

housework. However mothers-in-law themselves estimate they perform at least a third of the housework. It is a source of discord between mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law which can be explained in terms of contest for power in domestic affairs. In a society where the strict sexual division of labour is prevalent, the housewife role is likely to be the key role in which female members of the family can establish their identity at home. That would explain why daughters-in-law mostly excluded mothers-in-law from the expected general household responsibilities as shown on the table. Mothers-in-law have a different concept of household management from the one daughters-in-law recognise. If a young daughter-in-law thinks of domestic housework in terms of physical labour, mothers-in-laws give more stress to command and supervision. It would be natural for mothers-in-law to think of themselves as a domestic responsibility while daughters-in-law only judge them to be doing nothing but faultfinding or tittle-tattling. Whatever the reason, there is a very wide gap between the self-judgement of mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law in their perceived role performances.

A further aspect of role conflict is the gap between role performance and role expectation. This is particularly true for mothers-in-laws. In case of daughters-in-law, there is almost no difference between their actual role performances and the expected pattern of what they want to do. There is a slight preference for a greater opportunity to hand over housework to employees by paying wages. However mothers-in-law expect more to be done by daughters-in-law instead of by themselves. They tend to feel they should be free from domestic work. In other words most conflict arising in stem family households issue from the mother-in-law. This does not necessarily mean mothers-in-law are narrow-minded. Rather it denotes their efforts to keep to a traditional way of housekeeping. It is their desire and their wish that daughters-in-law should be housekeepers. However in their mother-in-law's eyes most young housewives are, neither skilful nor dedicated. They are seen as giving more attention to their relationship with the husband or to personal matters outside the household. Mothers-in-law think their daughters-in-law should concentrate more on the family as a whole. This reflects a generation gap concerning the ideal family life style.

There are two exceptions to the above account of role conflict in the stem family household. First among domestic tasks, the one most likely to involve a male family member, decorating and repairing the house or flat, shows almost no role conflicts either between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law or between actual and expected role performances. Secondly, preparing soy and bean paste is another exception to the general pattern of role conflict between mothers-in-law and

daughters-in-law. It is similar in the sense that both of them are inclined to underestimate each other's performance and that daughters-in-law generally do not like mothers-in-law to intervene. However it is also the activity daughters-in-law are the most aware of mothers-in-law's activity, and it is the activity mothers-in-law still like to perform with their own hands more than any other sort of housework. This is because it directly represents keeping the older family tradition and it concerns the preservation of the individual identity of their particular family different from other families, with its unique taste of soy and bean paste. However this does not mean role conflict is lessened. On the contrary it is the area over which mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law are the most likely to clash. It is here there is a greatest difference between the amount a daughter-in-law actually performs and the amount she would like to do among the whole range of domestic activities. Preparing soy and bean paste is the activity in which a daughter-in-law most wants to take away the initiative from her mother-in-law. However it is the activity mothers-in-law least like to be deprived of. Over all it is the areas where both mother-in-law and daughter-in-law feel the worst role conflict.

With a few exceptions, role conflicts among female members of stem family households are much greater and more bitter than those in nuclear family households. In the stem family household the conflict originating from mothers-in-law is more than that from daughters-in-law. The conflict comes from different background values on the way of performing the domestic tasks. This conflict of tradition and market values in the home is one of main reasons both daughters-in-law and mothers-in-law prefer having an independent life instead of sharing the same roof. It is anticipated such conflicts with increase as individualism expands among the younger generations, as opportunism grow among housewives of both generations, and as market influences upon ordinary household intensify.

#### **6.1.2.2. Role conflict among dual career wives**

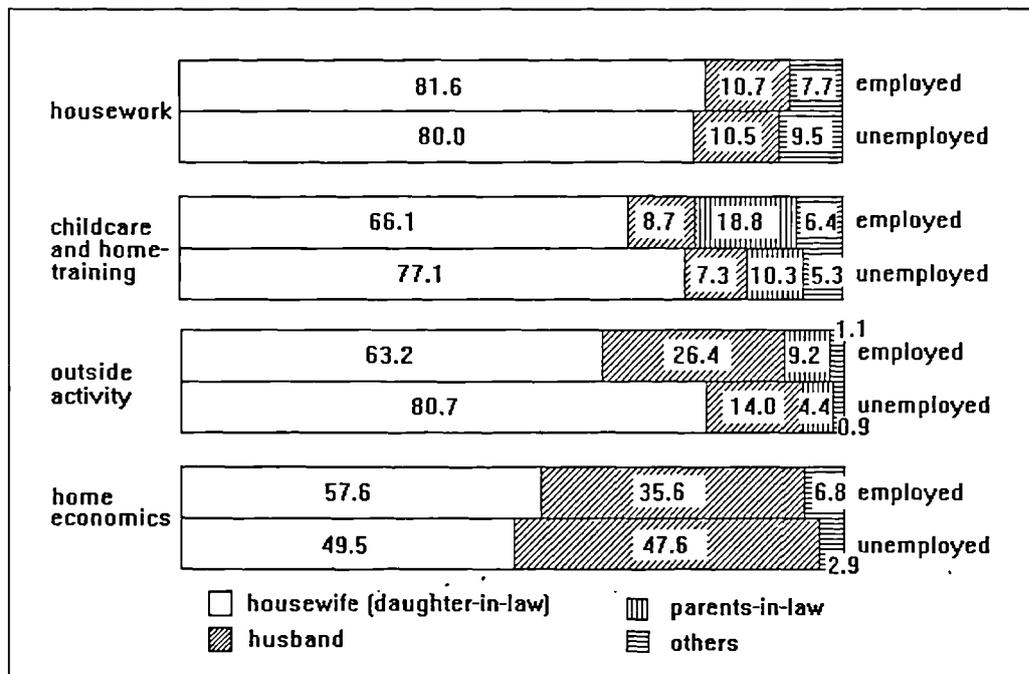
As reviewed in the previous section, wives are taking charge of most roles concerned with the home. Not only roles which conventionally belonged to female members but even roles traditionally recognised as those of male family members have been transferred to the wife in the modern household. The only responsibilities remaining predominantly those of husbands are the management of large sums and breadwinning. The responsibilities of the wife have become disproportionate.

The only excuse husbands could have made for this was that they were earning the household income. Of course this was due to the socio-economic

situation. In order to achieve rapid national economic development and to compete with other nations overtime work has been required. And irrespective whether employed in a private company or a government organisation, husbands were strongly expected to work quite often until mid-night.

If the demands of work accounted for the husband's low level of participation in domestic affairs, the same might also be expected of a wife who works outside. If a wife engages in a paid occupation, there is no reason she should also take full responsibility for everything at home. When the wife has outside employment an equal division of labour between husband and wife at home might be anticipated, or at least the proportion of family responsibilities dual career women have taken should be less than that undertaken by the full-time housewives.

**Figure 6.6. Role Allocation On Each Domestic Affairs By Housewife's Economic Activity.**



Reality does not correspond to this hypothesis. No significant differences are observed between the amount full-time housewives perform and that done by dual career wives. In terms of total amount of labour, undertaken the circumstances of dual career women' looks worse than that of the ordinary housewives. Household spending is an obvious example of the demands on the dual career woman. She must hurriedly go shopping for the preparation of the dinner meal as soon as she leaves her office. And she must pay attention to savings for a rainy day and so that children go on to higher education. As a result, the amount of time she spends on income and expenditure for the family is more in total than that of full-

time housewife. It is typically even far bigger than that of her husband. Under this situation, the wife becomes the main leading household member both inside and outside the home. The proportion of economic activity a husband contributes only slightly exceeds a third of the dual career wife. The absolute domain exclusive to the husband vanishes and conjugal conflict may be anticipated between the capable woman and her dispirited husband.

Apart from economic, a dual career woman can feel stress arising from the other areas of her domestic life. First there is almost no difference between the employed wife and the full-time housewife in the time spent on housework. The amount of assistance the employed wife gets from her husband or from her mother-in-law or even from paid help is insignificant. Most husbands are still not liberal enough to enter his own kitchen and share the chores by breaking the conventional obsession against men doing women's work. At the same time, daughters-in-law do not feel able to ask mothers-in-law to share chores that might tire the older woman. Even hiring domestic help is not easy since the main reason for having a job is not for self-development but to meet existing economic necessity. Women in professional jobs are relatively more likely to be concerned to the development of their own potential but the majority of women with non-professional jobs are chiefly concerned to earn living expenses. If she hires a charwoman, the employed housewife might find there was no profit in her working. That is the reason the proportionate contribution from others in the households of employed women is less than that among full-time housewives. The only alternative for the dual career woman is being a superwoman. She takes on both breadwinning and running the household as well.

The situation is not very different even in relation to looking after her children. The main difference is that she can seek some help from her parents-in-law. Due to conventional ideas about patrician and plebeian work, she could not ask assistance from her parents-in-law with the housework but it is easier to ask their help with the children. There are other socio-economic reasons for seeking the help of parents-in-law. First there are not enough nurseries to provide for the needs of employed women. At the same time the quality of provision has not been good enough to satisfy employed mothers who are feeling some degree of guilt about the care of their children. More significantly the registration fees are burdensome for poor mothers. Naturally parents-in-law are the only alternative she can turn to to care for her children during her absence at work. That is why parents-in-law appear to make a greater contribution in the households of employed wives than among full-time housewives. In spite of this, the amount of child care the employed

women undertake is still never light compared to the full-time housewives. While the reason why the housewives in nuclear family households do not turn for help neither to their own parents nor to their parents-in-law in spite of their heavy burden of childbearing is concerned to their preference to sweet home idea or individualism. However burdensome the activities are, they normally do not like to have their status as the in-master at home ambiguous by allowing parents, mother-in-law in particular interfere in her domain.

The dual burden of the employed women is not any less in the outside responsibilities either. Activities like visiting relatives for congratulations or condolences, attending parents' meeting at the children's school, or visiting public offices etc., have not changed. Although all of these are recognised as responsibilities of the husband too, they still also fall on wives regardless of their economic activity. Of course it is in these areas that parents-in-law and particularly husbands give most help to employed women rather than to full-time housewives. However given the conventional ideas on the responsibilities of husbands, the proportion of them the dual career wife has come to perform is a heavy burden. It can create conflicts and contradiction with her husband, one of main issues arising among feminists in present day Korea.

In spite of the totally unequal division of labour between the dual career woman and her husband the conflict the wife concerned endures is not usually decisive enough to overturn the status quo. The gap between the expectations of the employed wife and her actual obligations surprisingly does not exceed 10 per cent in any area of activity. Korean women endure the severe burden at home because of the deeply entrenched Confucian emphasis on familism and the strict sexual division of labour.

As already mentioned in Chapter 3, a strict sexual division of labour was an essential element in Confucian patriarchy and has lasted until the present day. Husbands ought to behave in a husband-like way, wives wifelike, and children childrenly. To be specific, a husband was expected to work outside home to maintain and enhance the prestige of his own family. Children were expected to concentrate solely on learning so as to inherit the values handed down from generation to generation. A good wife and wise mother was expected to take care of the whole of the domestic affairs to allow her husband or children to feel totally free from domestic matters so as to concentrate on their own responsibilities. Thus the mother and wife had a strong image, not as a leader pursuing the major goals in society, but as an assistant for male family members to do that on her behalf. The

wife was required to believe in her husband's or children's social success as her own success. A key to success was to invest in one person rather than in every one. Her whole help was expected to be in the home. Sharing effort equally between both him and her was believed stupid. These ideas still remain as an influence in present day Korea. Naturally the employed woman is likely to feel guilty that she can not concentrate solely on her traditional duty. Regardless of the reason for her outside employment, she has been accustomed to feel ashamed about her lack of dedication as mother to her children, as wife to her husband, and as daughter-in-law to her parents-in-law. That is the reason she rarely feels any great conflict with other family members since she is likely to share their perception of her family members, in spite of the excessive demands placed by her working outside the home.

In addition, traditionally a husband's success in life was applauded as a direct reflection of his wife's efforts and was viewed as a success for his whole family. The ultimate goal a husband pursues in society was making the family's name followed by establishing his individual social position and personal reputation rather than achieving economic resources because *honour lasts longer* than money does. That is why for the last a few decades Korean husbands have not been reluctant to work late at night in spite of a meagre salary. The reason for a dual career woman to work outside however is not usually for fame but to earn living expenses. In the end it was to assist her husband that she worked rather than for her own ambition. The fact that husband's dedication was respected by society gave a significant value to her conjugal life. If the occupational activity of the husband was basically oriented to goal-rationality (*wert rational*), that of the wife was for means-rationality (*zweck rational*). In Parsonian terms the husband was fulfilling an integrative function or latency function while his wife's employment had an exclusively adaptation function for her own family. That is why dual career women have not complained about their excessive role at home and that is why the nation has enjoyed such rapid economic growth. Husbands paid the nation by working hard to make their family's name, the wives by enduring the excessive burden of their role at home.

While that was usual pattern in more traditionally oriented generations, with the expansion of individualism some young wives began to question received given ideas. They came to criticise the philosophy of Confucian familism and sought equal opportunities both at work and at home. Thus from the point of view of young employed wives the endurance of the wife is viewed an example of the exploitation of women, rather than as of co-operation between couples with

different but complimentary roles as earlier generations had thought. Unless an equal division of labour is achieved at home, the statistical rise in women's participation in the labour market can not lead to an improvement of their social status. While the idea of the co-operative role division rather than traditional Confucian exploitation still strongly persists, with the criticism raised by younger generation, the conventional unequal division is likely to be improved as time passes. How their condition changes depends on both cultural transitions and socio-economic development including the size of the labour market.

## 6.2. THE POWER STRUCTURE

Authority is inherent in the structure of roles within the family and is related to decision-making in family life. Power on the other hand refers to the way in which husbands and wives actually deal with each other. For example, sometimes a housewife is able to exercise almost no power on the allotment of living expenses in spite of the fact that most of them are paid by herself. Vice versa, a husband with little or no involvement in his children's upbringing can exercise total authority in making decisions on such matters. In spite of still having authority, however fathers may have less power in family life whilst a mother can hold power in spite of pretending that father is king of her kingdom.<sup>14</sup>

We shall examine three areas of decision-making in this section: the family economy, the children's upbringing, and couple's external activities. The analysis is based on 1,664 nuclear type of households and 275 stem family households from FAM89.

Borrowing a frame of reference from Elizabeth Bott, the analysis of the family distinguishes two different types of power structure: namely the segregated role relationship on the one hand and joint role relationship on the other hand. In the former each family member decides matters independently without consulting with other family members, while the joint role relationship is defined as a structure of decision-making through mutual consensus. In a word the terms are intended to analyse a degree of collaboration or separateness among family members in making decisions concerning to family life.<sup>15</sup>

To meet the purpose of the analysis, independent from the measures of the previous section, a couple of questions were prepared in each area of decision-making: family economy, children's upbringing, and a couple's external activities.

On each question, several answers were arranged to choose among them: namely decision-making absolutely by the husband, the couple in collaboration, by the wife alone, by the parents alone, the couple and parents in collaboration, the couple and children in collaboration, by the children alone, and others, etc. If an activity was a collaborated decision-making between/among family members, it was a joint role relationship and if under the one-sided decision-making of a family member or a few members, a segregated role relationship. Of course it is hard, with this measure, to observe exactly who is taking the initiative in making a decision on an activity of each area. More accurate survey methods like depth-interview or participation observation are needed to measure the subtle subject of which actual family member has the power in decision-making, and they demand time, effort, and finance. Regarding the difficulties, questions were prepared as above to observe the broad atmosphere among family members in decision-making.

### 6.2.1. Economic Decision-making

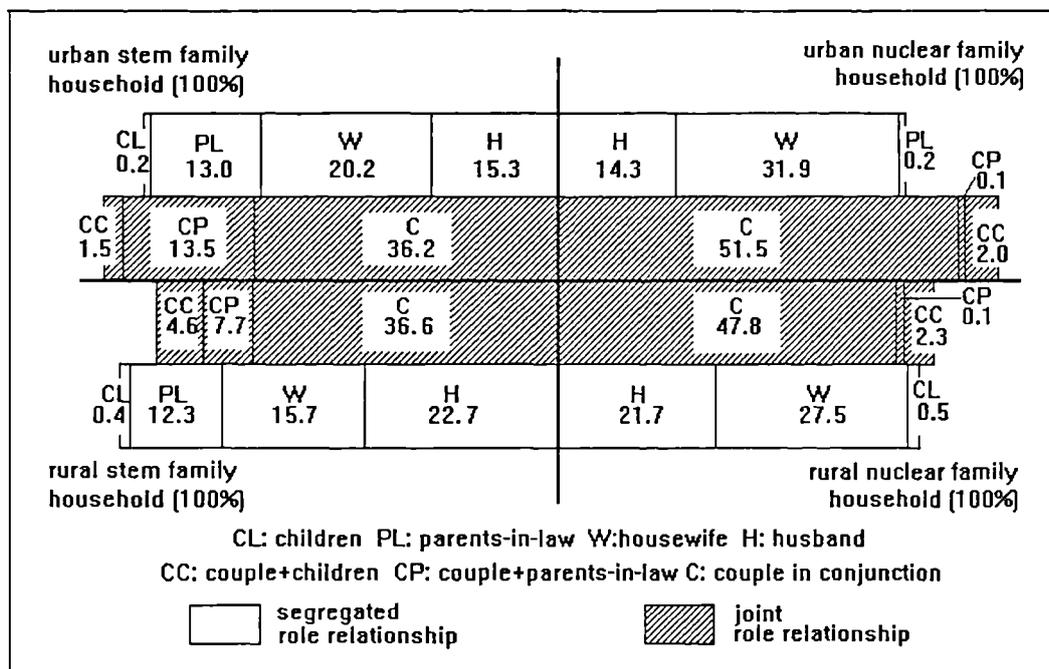
Three areas of economic decision-making will be examined: the purchase of the family house or flat, buying household furniture, and the amount of monthly living expenses. As already reviewed in the previous section on the role relationship, these activities are hard to be mixed into one category on the discussion of who is the main performer. However the discussion below does not focus on who is a performer but mainly on the process of decision-making. Of course it can be misleading in the interpretation of power attributed to each family members but is still useful in making sense of an overall trend.

As shown on the Figure 6.7, economic decision-making is a relatively democratic process. Compared to the excessively dichotomised pattern of role allocation reviewed in the previous section, the balance of power in this area is quite egalitarian. This is the case more in urban areas than in the rural areas, and more among nuclear families than in stem family households. Thus the urban nuclear family is the most egalitarian type and the rural stem family household the most authoritative. The more urbanised and the more nuclear families increase, the more egalitarian the type of family power structure becomes.

The degree of egalitarianism varies according to family types; the stem family allows far more scope for the parents-in-law than the nuclear family does. There are two exceptions to this general pattern. Firstly because rural stem families are usually more traditional in terms of the *hyo* idea (filial piety), one would expect

evidence of more power in the hands of parents-in-law than in urban families. The amount of shared decision-making with parents-in-law in the rural stem family is smaller than that in the urban stem family. This may be because the rural stem family mostly engages in agriculture and farming in a relatively monotonous and repetitive activity with few occasions for asking each other's opinions. The other exception is the extent of children's participation in the economic decisions in the rural stem family household. The explanation probably lies in the greater proportion of grown-up children than in other families which meant couples were more likely to listen more to opinions from their children.

**Figure 6.7. Economic Decision-making By Region And By Household Pattern**



However a good proportion of families are making decisions on the basis of clearly dichotomised roles. This reflects the survival of traditional ideas of the division of labour. The main feature of this pattern can be summarised under two headings. First the wife has slightly more power in decision-making especially among wives in nuclear family than in stem family households and more among urban wives than among rural wives. As a result, an urban housewife in a nuclear family household exercises almost twice the power in economic decision-making compared with the rural housewife from a stem family household. This reflects the heavy burden of her responsibilities reviewed in the previous section. Though it may not be fully proportional to the excessive demands imposed on the dual career wife, it has brought about some gain in her power of decision-making, though this was in the form of the egalitarian type of decision-making. The second notable

feature is the great preponderance of the type over the egalitarian style among rural stem family households. This also reflects the greater average age of rural stem families who prefer the traditional division of labour and decision-making.

In spite of such variations, economic decision-making is relatively egalitarian. There is a slight increase in an employed wife's status as decision-maker at home thanks to her economic role. However, the result has been an egalitarian style of decision-making rather than a wife's total gain of power at home which reflects the general trend towards married happiness in present day Korea.

### 6.2.2. Children's Affairs

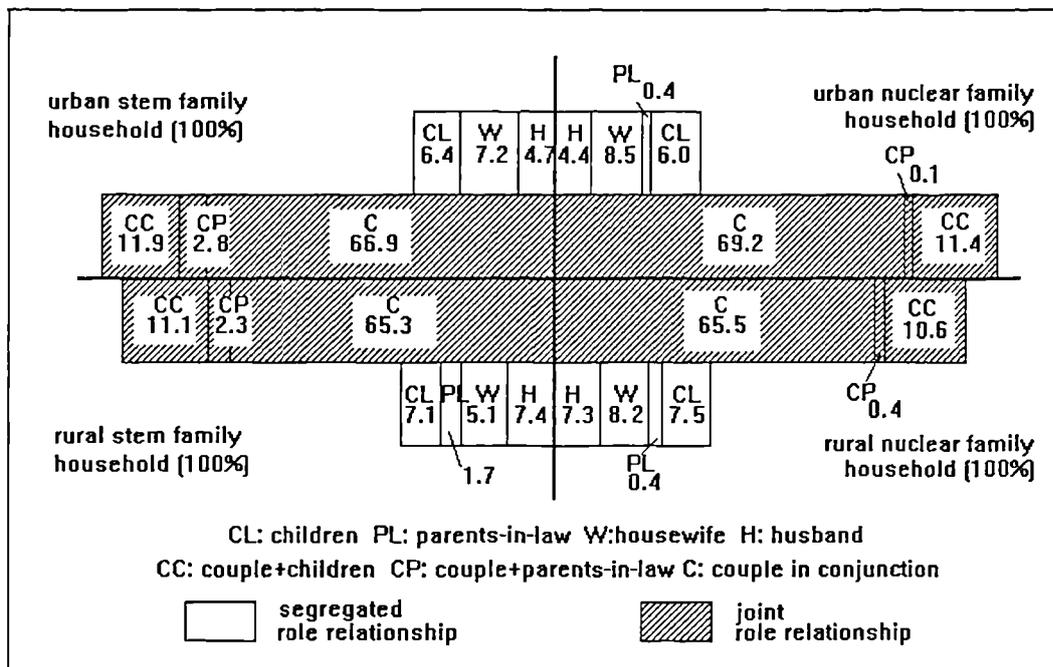
Three areas of decision-making in relation to children are included: planning the number of children, direction of home training, and choosing the high school for the children to enter.

Traditionally decision-making relating to children was strictly patriarchal. However it has come to show an almost egalitarian pattern reflecting the increase in the performance of the housewife role described in the previous section. This is even more marked than in economic decision-making. The degree of egalitarianism shows almost no difference by the family pattern though it varies by region. Urban families whether of the nuclear pattern or the stem pattern, are slightly more democratic in making decisions relating to children than rural families are. This derives from the higher average age of rural families and conversely, as urban families are more exposed to a modern way of family life, they tend to follow a more democratic pattern of decision-making.

The amount of influence children have is quite small considering that some issues concern the children themselves. The decision on which high school children are to enter, though it directly affects children themselves, is frequently quite out of their hands and is made entirely by their parents. It is directly connected to the prospects for getting a job and how successful s/he will be. Entry to high school or to a better department in utilitarian terms is recognised as a matter of family concern not an individual affair of the children's own because parents identify their children's future with their own. There is the almost total exclusion of parents-in-law from the decision-making in relation to the family's children. Of course in the stem family there is more scope for influence by the paternal grandparents than in the nuclear family. However the traditionally powerful

position of parents-in-law, particularly of father-in-law, in the education of children, has been significantly weakened. Their influence is even smaller than the part they play in their grandchildren's upbringing. Their position at home has changed from that of strict educator to simply a tender granny or grandpa or to one merely auxiliary to the young couple's educational role. Rural husbands generally have more time to engage in family affairs than busy urban salary men which is why they are able to have more influence in decision-making on matters concerning their children.

**Figure 6.8. Decision-making In Relation To Children By Region And By Family Patterns**



With only a few exceptions decision-making in matters concerning children is very egalitarian. This reflects the increase in the involvement in all activities by wives. However this has led to an egalitarian balance of power rather than a matriarchal authoritative pattern of power mirroring the conventional father and husband dominance in traditional society. However this egalitarianism is limited to couples only and excluded parents-in-law and even the children directly concerned. This is the case regardless of region and of family type. Present day Koreans are more concerned with the improvement of their conjugal relationships than reconciliation with their parents-in-law or the feelings of their children.

### 6.2.3. Activities Outside The Family Household

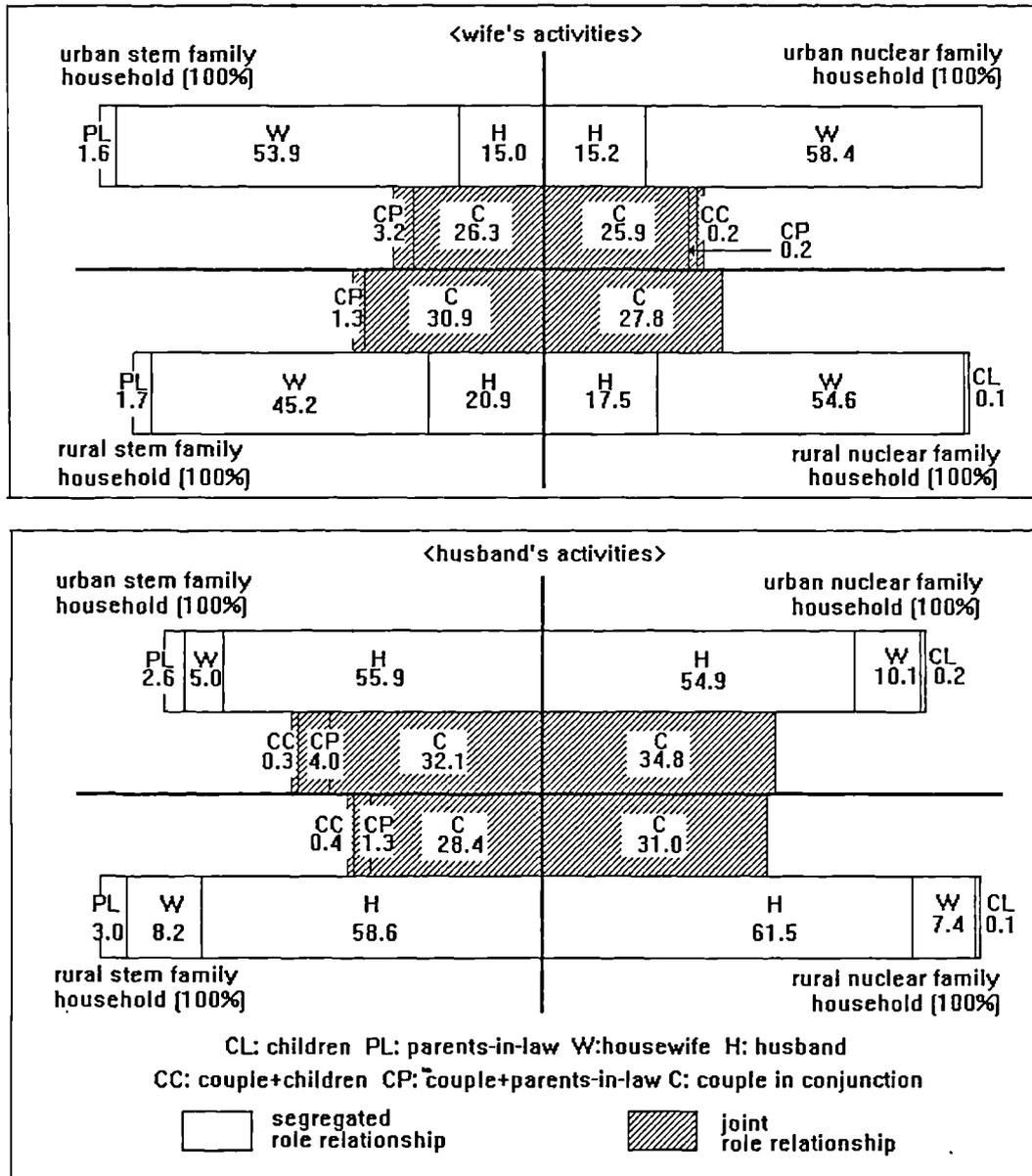
In this section a husbands' selection or change of occupation and meeting with his friend and wives' application for post-marital employment and going out to meet her friends are examined.

According to Confucian tradition the stem family was sharply divided by sex. A husband was called the out-master or out-partner and a wife the in-master or in-partner. There should normally be pre-consent or permission if either was to intervene in affairs belonging to the domain of the other. Observance of this division was an expected virtue and recognised as of one of four supreme decorum which should lubricate relationships among human beings.

Outside affairs such as employment or visiting friends was definitely matters for husbands and there was rarely anything to concern women outside the household. Only a minority of women with some humble job could go out of doors on their own. Even a short visit to friends next door was regarded as shameful and irresponsible by her neighbours. Even a short outing for tea or a chat needed permission. She could go out, wherever it was, and whatever work she had to do, only with permission from the eldest female family member at home or otherwise from her husband. Even then he might sometimes be scolded by his mother for having intervened in the women's domain.

The situation has changed very drastically as shown in Figure 6.9. Regardless of region or family pattern, the segregated type of role pattern is totally dominant. Just under one out of three wives discusses her outside activities with her husband and asks mutual-understanding(not permission). While just over half the wives decide their outside activities by themselves with neither permission nor understanding from their husbands. Rural wives in stem family households are slightly less likely to make their own decisions. Traditional authority of the eldest female member of the household or of a husband on deciding about the outside activities of a wife, has almost vanished, especially that of a mother-in-law's. Almost no wife asks her mother-in-law's permission for her outside activities, and very rarely her husband either. Of course, rural husbands are slightly more dominant than urban husbands, particularly those from rural stem families. As already mentioned this reflects the relatively older age structure of rural stem families. Thus older couples have more traditional ideas on the wife's outside activities while urbanites have been more exposed to the ideas of the women's movement. The nuclear pattern of family is the result.

**Figure 6.9. Decision-making About Wives And Husbands Outside Activities By Degree Of Conjugal Role Segregation**



It is important to explain the cause of such a huge change in the outside activities of wives. The reason is basically from an emphasis on outside/inside activities and the primary stress has moved to the fact of the housewife's own affairs. In that sense there has been no change in the conventional idea of the strict division of labour by sex. Thus there is still a strong disapproval of husbands who intervene in women's affairs both among present day Korean men and women. However it is only mothers-in-law who have totally lost their influence.

The same situation, in terms of keeping traditional ideas, is happening in relation to husband's outside activities. A wife traditionally was never expected to put her nose into the husband's outside activities. Even discussion was looked on as

a sign of a spineless husband even by his own wife. Reflecting this tradition, most husbands still make all the decisions on their own outside activities. This is more true among rural husband regardless of family patterns. In other word the rural families have a smaller proportion with joint conjugal role relationships while urban families have more of them.

A change has occurred in decision-making concerning a husband's outside activities. In other words, the proportion of joint decision-making regarding those activities is greater than that for a wives' activities. This is because a husbands' occupational activities are generally recognised as involving the family income. Even chatting with friends or a social meeting after work is perceived to be connected directly or indirectly to the domestic income; While a wife's activities are perceived of as being a source of extra income, her social meetings are regarded as of trivial importance, producing nothing but chat. Being identified as the main income source, a husband's activities have more significance for the family than do his wife's. Thus, husbands feel more responsible about their outside activities and expect more understanding from their wife. That explains the more sharing style observed among urban husbands. However, with more traditional views about men's affairs, rural husbands, particularly from stem family households are less egalitarian about making decisions about their outside activities. The influence of parents is very small regardless of region or of family type, as in the case on the wife's outside activities.

To sum up, in the process of modernisation, there has been a major shift towards a more joint style of making decisions on family affairs of common concern. This was an indirect reflection of the massively increased responsibilities of wives. Taking charge of most of the role inside the home and outside as well, housewives have assumed a more significant share in family decision-making. Individual activities are still the domain the least changed. Both husbands and wives still maintain the idea of a strict division of labour by sex. Most husbands believe their outside activities are their own affairs. Most wives object to their husbands interfering in their own business. The situation is more true in rural, and particularly rural stem family households. Both past and present influences are at work in the minds of husbands and wives. In other words, both wife and husband are seeking to modernise their pattern of decision-making to a more egalitarian style on the one hand, and at the same time are trying to keep the traditional division of labour by sex on the other. How they can harmonise such a contradiction depends on other social changes in the future. However, it is possible to anticipate at least some more decrease in role segregation and some increase in

sharing decision-making both on economic affairs, children's affairs, and the couple's outside activities as well. This is possible due to the increase in the nuclear family pattern. The trend presumably leads both wives and husbands to be more attached to each other with an increase in the amount of discussion between the couple more than amongst other family members. This trend would naturally lead them to a more egalitarian style unless they are going to divorce.

In spite of these general trends, there are three groups which are excluded: children, dual career housewives, and parents-in-law. Children may gain influence relatively easily as time passes with the on-going trend to individualism or modernisation among the younger generation. However, the other two groups, particularly parents-in-law are total losers. In spite of the double burden imposed on the employed housewives, their influence in the family is no greater than that of the full-time housewife. Thus, in spite of the amount they contribute, dual career women have no more power to make decisions on home affairs than other wives. However, their position looks optimistic, owing to the general march of the women's movement. Speed of the movement may be slow but steady and the end of the tunnel is foreseeable. Last but not worst of all, parents-in-law, particularly mothers-in-law are of generally declining significance in the modern Korean family. They were the last generation devoted to traditional values. They were the group who devoted themselves to the creation of the wealth of present day Korea. However, they have gained nothing yet from the nation nor from their younger generations. They were asked by the nation to maintain the traditional way of life for the benefit of economic development both of the nation and of the individual family. However, the only thing waiting for them in the end, having kept faith with the nation, was the cold individualism of their daughter-in-law and of their spiritless and henpecked son. Parents-in-law may be one of the first groups to be considered the object of social policy in the near future.

**PART III**

**PROBLEMS AND POLICY**

**FOR THE FAMILY**

**IN A CHANGING ENVIRONMENT**

Part III is a concluding remark comprising of two chapters. Chapter 7, first, discusses how much the family has weakened or dissolved after the profound influence of the modernisation of the last few decades: how much the divorce rate has increased and would increase in the near future. Next, it examines how attitudes and values relating to family life have changed in the process of the social change. It comprises of changing attitudes and values relating to matrimony, to neo-familism, in the form of Saemaul movement, which has emerged in response to the changing environment, and lastly to the outcome of reconciliation, in the family law, of the traditional Confucianism and the newly emerged feminism.

Finally Chapter 8 is to conclude the whole of the thesis. First, it summarises whole discussions so far; what was the tradition, what has changed among them and what has remained unchanged. Next, the chapter reviews how the society reacted, through social policies or family policies, to the changing environment. And it discusses what sort of family policies should be arranged to meet the huge variation and diversity of family life in which the conventional values relating to the family do not work properly.

# **CHAPTER SEVEN**

## **FAMILY DISSOLUTION AND CHANGING VALUES**

The discussion so far has concentrated on changes in the attributes of the family and has not examined whether the family has been weakened or still retains its original solidarity and how the family responded to the changes. This chapter first examines how far the family has been undermined and how far concern about it has grown among present day Koreans. Secondly, it considers changes in general ideas about matrimony. Thirdly it discusses neo-familism having emerged in the process of a programme of planned social change through the Saemaul movement, which sought to mobilise traditional family values to improve the economic effectiveness and social cohesion of rural communities. Lastly, it discusses a reconciliation between Confucianism and feminism in the form of family law in present day Korea. The family law reflects family values commonly shared among present day Koreans. The change in family law demonstrates the confirmation of yet unchanged traditional family values and the ideas in the family realm changed during the modernisation.

### **7.1. FAMILY DISSOLUTION**

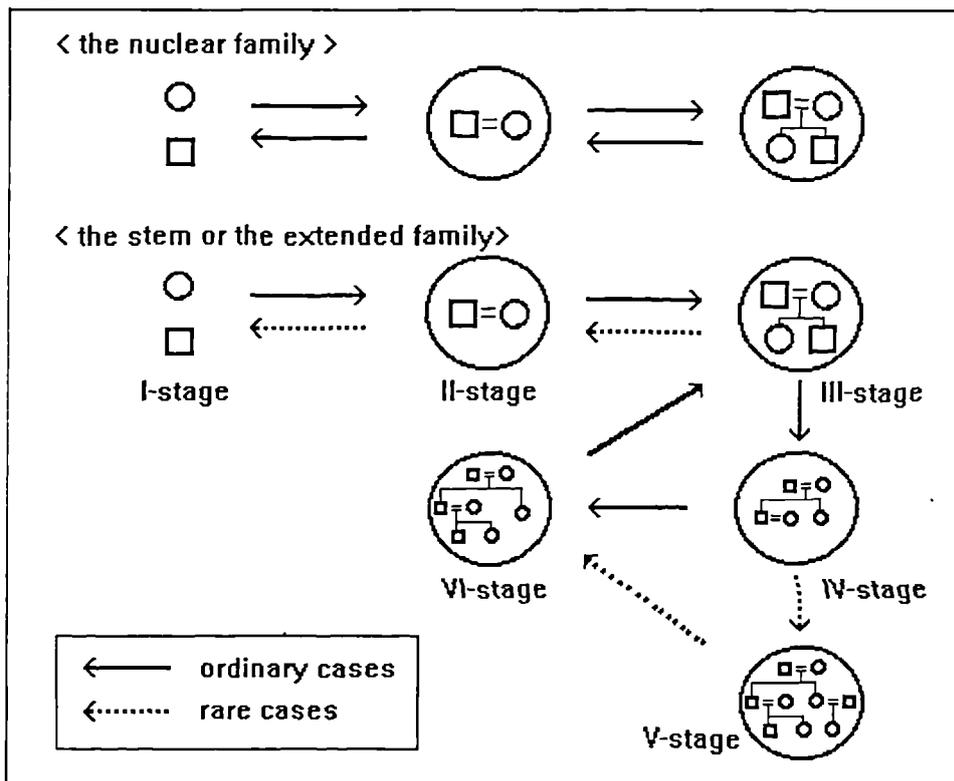
Family dissolution can be the result either of divorce or separation on the one hand or by the death of a partner on the other hand. Both have been changing under the influence of modernisation throughout the last half century..

#### **7.1.1. Changes In The Family Life Cycle**

In traditional society, the death of a partner was recognised as a very sad event for an individual family but in general was accepted as part of the natural way of life. It was perceived as no more than an individual event. It neither brought about the dissolution of a family nor raised any social issue. Society was organised on the stem family principle and as the family was comprised of a couple of generations, the death of a partner did not necessarily lead to the disorganisation of the family as a whole. It was just a reduction of the family size and the family kept on functioning.<sup>1</sup>

This situation has changed after a few decades of modernisation. Modernisation weakened or at least modified the stem family principle as already reviewed in Chapter 4. The change has resulted in the dissolution of the family for those individuals who have lost their own partner and this is especially severe in rural areas. To examine the situation, we must first consider the conceptual differences between the cycle of the stem family and that of the nuclear family.

Figure 7.1. The Family Cycle In The West and Korea



First the cycle of the nuclear family is lineal and is single phased. The ideal typical nuclear family in the West followed the unilineal process as shown in Figure 7.1. An individual forms a family of procreation by marriage and then s/he expands the size and the structure of the family by giving birth to children. Next the family reduces to an empty-nest when the children leave home to marry or

become independent. Eventually the family dissolved to an individual again by the death of her/his partner.

Once dissolved, the individuals had no where to go unless they remarry. Even this alternative is nothing but a temporary solution. Because the boundary of the range of possible remarriage partners is generally limited to older individuals, on average remarriage might end in much less time than first marriage did. All in all, on the death of a partner, the older individual confronts a total loss physically, emotionally, and economically. That is one of the reasons why old age has been one of the most pressing issues for welfare provision in nuclear family societies.<sup>2</sup> That was one reason why the West developed the role of the Welfare State and was first to develop social policies for the care of the old. Having gone too far with individualism, society should have prepared some mechanism at institutional level that could replace the role of the family.<sup>3</sup> Of course the author is not denying the existence of home-care in the West, however the basic and heavy burdens of provision still remain with the government.

Divorce has added to the increase of broken families and has also exposed individuals to a range of depriving circumstances.<sup>4</sup> The increase in broken families caused by divorce or by the death of a partner has been proportionally related to the increase of the role of the State. As a result it has increased the financial burden on the nation as a whole.

Traditionally there was a totally different situation in Korea. There was no concept of family dissolution. As shown in Figure 7.1, the family cycle in traditional society repeated a circular process.<sup>5</sup> It was *basically different from the unilineal and single phase process of the West*. Roughly there were two types of the family cycle. The first was the circulation through stages III - IV - VI - III. It was the most typical stem family pattern, and the most predominantly observed pattern in the tradition. If a family adopted the extended pattern by having more than the eldest son's family co-reside, it would pass through stage V as well, though that was a very rare case. The family cycle starts from stage I when the rest of the family apart from the eldest married sons were establishing an independent family of procreation (*pun-ga*). However it progressed to the III stage and eventually to the IV and VI stages. As a result there was no dissolution of the family but it continued to expand or to reduce, in feedback, almost forever. That is the reason why traditional society was called the stem family structure in spite of the prevalence of nuclear pattern families. Statistical prevalence was a superficial and temporary phenomenon. Of course it is possible to imagine a family failing in

generational reproduction but nevertheless the family was rarely dissolved, thanks to the adoption system. Few families were too poor or had too few relatives to adopt a son and the case of failure of the adoption was extremely rare. Anyhow due to the very fact of the stem principle family dissolution was scarcely thought of and was rare in reality as well.

The structural characteristics of the unceasingly repeating family cycle had provided a good deal of welfare for its members.<sup>6</sup> Individual events like divorce or the loss of a partner, however sorrowful it might be, did not have a critical impact on family functioning. Even if an elderly person lost their own partner, the remaining members of the stem family could take care of them. The family did not lose its status as a basic unit of a society and it still functioned as an intermediate unit between individuals and the state. Concretely there were few old people divorced, or children who suffered from significant deprivation economically, and emotionally. The aged, with or without a partner, economically disabled or not, and physically healthy or not, did not feel deprivation or loneliness so severely as to think of suicide. This was due to the filial piety of the Confucian doctrine fused in the stem family principle. Even the conjugal conflicts of younger couples were diluted due to their relationships with the other family members. Conjugal love was important but not critical enough for divorce to be a possibility. Both were too much and too deeply connected to the other members under the same roof to waste their time and effort focussing only on the relationship with their partner. To sum up, the structure had the intrinsic function of stabilising the family and eventually the society as a whole.

The family cycle has been affected by modernisation as other matrimonial aspects of family life have been.<sup>7</sup> The cyclical continuity has been distorted by the relaxation of the stem principle which has brought about an increase in family dissolution both by loss of a partner and by divorce. With the weakening of the conventional stem principle, the family has split into two or more small families of a nuclear pattern. Thus the eldest son as well as another son could easily set up an independent family. Of course, this would usually be with the consent of the parents. They would be assured that the younger generation would reunite immediately if the parents were in a severe situation like the loss of a partner or suffering significant ill-health. In the sharp increase in the nuclear pattern family cycle, they believed was for the benefit of modern couples pursuing conjugal happiness.

The changes in the stem principle brought complicated changes in attitudes toward the aged parents.<sup>8</sup> As shown in Table 7.1, the changes can be summarised in a few points. Filial piety is still widespread reflecting the persistence of the stem family principle in present day Korea. However ideas about who should look after the aged parents economically, physically, and emotionally have changed as the stem principle has been moderated. First, filial duty to parents is not limited to the eldest son only. It has been extended to other sons or daughters as well, regardless of their age hierarchy at home. The change proportionally reflects the breakdown of the (eldest) son preference idea of the conventional familism of the past. As a result the statistics show the biggest proportion in the IV-category referring to all sons and daughters together. The changing idea is more fashionable in urban areas than in rural areas. However, the strict filial duty of traditional society is no longer universal. One out of five people in the whole country believe parents should be provided for by the welfare services or provided by themselves (category V, VI). This directly reveals the extent to which the stem principle has been weakened. Moreover the duty for all children can mean the duty of nobody. The boundary of filial responsibility can be vague among children, and parents can be abandoned by each child in turn.

**Table 7.1. Who Should Look After The Aged Parents.<sup>9</sup>**

year	age cohort	person most expected to look after the aged parents						
		total	I	II	III	IV	V	VI
1979	whole	100.0	30.6	22.2	0.6	6.4	36.6	3.6
1983	whole	100.0	22.1	21.7	0.8	27.1	20.5	7.8
1988	whole	100.0	25.2	17.8	0.5	35.8	15.8	5.0
1991	whole	100.0	18.3	13.8	0.4	46.2	15.4	5.9
	urban	100.0	15.4	12.1	0.4	49.6	16.1	6.4
	rural	100.0	26.6	18.8	0.3	36.3	13.5	4.5
	15-19	100.0	12.0	11.1	0.6	54.7	14.6	7.1
	20-29	100.0	13.1	13.6	0.4	49.3	17.7	5.8
	30-39	100.0	15.0	14.2	0.5	45.9	18.4	6.0
	40-49	100.0	18.4	14.2	0.5	43.1	17.9	6.0
	50-59	100.0	26.5	17.1	0.2	35.9	15.6	4.7
60+	100.0	38.6	16.9	0.3	30.7	9.2	4.4	

source: EPB, *Social Statistics Survey*(1990), P.288.

I: the eldest son, II: all sons, III: daughters, IV: sons and daughters together, V: self-reliance, VI: social welfare and others

The next change indicated in the table is the generation gap in expectations about who should be the main person to look after old parents. The above mentioned trend of the moderated stem principle, is disproportionate between generations. The younger generation is far more likely to expect their parents to be independent than they, the parents, actually would themselves like to do. The younger generation is far more likely to think society should care for their parents

than the parents are likely to expect social welfare to be provided for them. Similarly, the younger generation is increasingly reluctant to take upon themselves sole responsibility for looking after their parents. Just one out of six eldest sons feels it is his duty to shoulder the burden alone. Most of them expect their siblings to share their burden, while almost one out of two amongst the aged feel comfortable only when they are cared for by their eldest son. This clearly can be another cause for the aged parents ambiguous position in the family.

The table reveals that the moderated stem principle has left the elder generations alienated to some degree.<sup>10</sup> Their alienation from the conventional family-care it may easily be supposed will increase. Apart from the amount of V, VI categories, the boundary of the IV-category is vague, and there is a huge difference of opinion according to the generation about the main source and support for elderly parents. Whilst the elder generation spent their money for their children's higher education, they saved no money for their own sake. They were the group who predominantly contributed to the economic development of the nation. Without the support of their families the nation is the only agent to take care of the aged.

Families once separated are difficult to reunite physically and emotionally. There have been roughly three points that hinder reunification. Once has been enjoyed the pleasure of life independent from the parents-in-law, the wife of the eldest son feels it would be very burdensome to share a small roof with them again. She lacks the emotional intimacy in her relationship with them unlike with her natural parents, and would have to accept their assumed rights. Naturally she would wish to share the work with the wives of her husband's younger brothers. From her point of view, all sons should have the same responsibility. However the wife of her husband's younger brother is likely to claim she has not married an eldest son. She is likely to refuse to take the conventional responsibility of the eldest son's family. In the process of disputes among sisters-in-law, most husbands become a sandwich between parents and wife. A husband is lost between the importance of married life and his filial duty to his parents. It is a sort of cultural lag. He is not so brave as to resist the current fashion of the feminist movement. The movement has struggled exclusively for the interest of young women only. It confirms the statistics of Table 7.1. Parents may feel they are being treated like a ball in a pingpong game. However the state is not ready to protect these parents financially and socially. Eventually this led to a case of suicide of a parent in such a situation<sup>11</sup>. It was just one case but the social shock the accident brought to every family in Korea was stirring.

The second barrier against reunification is the housing problem.<sup>12</sup> The price of housing has increased astonishingly. Unless the parents have enough money to purchase a moderate sized house, reunification means further reducing the already narrow living space available for the son's family. Of course it can be another excuse for some sons and their families to stay with parents until they can buy their own house. However, having once got moderate economic resources, they were reluctant to share their house with their parents because the size of the house they could buy was limited due to high housing costs.

The other hindrance to family reunification is the occupational mobility of sons. It is impossible to ask a son and his family to give up his current job to rejoin and look after his parents. The alternative is to have parents join the son's household. However the parents find it as difficult to leave their ground to which they are firmly attached emotionally, as their son's family is. As a result parents are left alone with their friends who are also in the same situation as well.

Family dissolution as a result of changes in the family cycle is most frequently observed among one person households in rural areas. The proportion of broken families has sharply increased. According to FAM89, one person households accounted for 9.1 per cent of households in the whole country (8.3 % in the urban, 10.8 % in the rural). Among them more than one out of two rural single household, and two out of nine urban single households consisted of the elderly. Three quarters of the urban cases are due to divorce but four fifths of the rural one person households are due to the loss of a partner. Most of them have married children staying somewhere in the cities. The rural areas suffer far more from family dissolution and are far more subject to the weakness of the stem principle. Of course, that does not mean urban parents, widowed or not, are in a better condition. Though the proportion of one person households is smaller, the alienation the urban aged is suffering is much the same.

### **7.1.2. The Increase In The Divorce Rate**

Family dissolution is also the result of divorce.<sup>13</sup> In escaping from the stem familial cycle, young couples might enjoy conjugal happiness but they are also exposed to the aggravation of conjugal conflict. Unlike couples in stem families there are no other adults except themselves who could perform the role of mediator. In a sense they are locked in a small castle of just two extreme alternatives allowed: happy married life or separation. No structural mechanisms

are provided at home to reconcile even trivial conflicts between them. As a natural result, the weakening of the stem familial cycle has brought about the increase in the divorce rate as well. As Table 7.2. shows, the trend displays two distinct periods: before and after the 1980s.

**Table 7.2. The Growth Of The Divorce Rate**

year	total cases of		divorce rate per	
	marriages	divorces	1000 persons	100 marriages
1911		5,621	0.41	
1920		7,982	0.47	
1930		8,894	0.45	
1970	295,137	11,615	0.88	3.94
1975	283,610	16,617	1.26	5.86
1980	400,471	23,150	1.83	5.78
1985	362,767	34,640	2.86	9.55
1989	343,285	45,039	3.12	13.12

source: EPB, *Vital Registration Statistics*

Even in the earlier three decades the divorce rate were never negligible. Though the statistics show the lowest rate since the Japanese annexation of 1910 there was already a surprising increase even at that time. Considering that there were almost no cases in traditional society on the one hand or the low rates of the developed countries at that time on the other, the divorce rate was significant enough. The rate far surpassed that of the United Kingdom of 0.1 persons per thousand, and slightly that of the Netherlands at 0.4 persons in 1934. It was just slightly lower than France with 0.5, Germany with 0.6, and Japan with 0.8 in the same year<sup>14</sup>. In comparison with these statistics, divorce in Korea was never a negligible amount throughout the present century. Again considering the extremely rare cases of divorce reported in the past, statistics are surprisingly high. Though there was no specific law that prohibited divorce in traditional society, nevertheless society almost never allowed divorce either by custom or by the strict application of the Code. This was to preserve the family values as already discussed in Chapter 3. Unless a wife was recognised as unfilial to her parents-in-law, or unless she was unfaithful to husband, traditional society almost never allowed divorce. Thus already in 1910 the divorce statistics were amazingly high. Some explanation can be derived from close scrutiny of the statistics. Among the divorces, four out of five were due to cruel treatment or insult from a husband or husband's family. Of course these divorces was instigated from the woman's side and most of divorce in the earlier decades were predominantly brought forward by women. This was a reaction against the fossilised Confucian familism of the time. The statistics are an indication of how women's life in traditional societies was deteriorating. The

reaction was increased dramatically due to the introduction of divorce law quoted from Japanese Civil Law during the annexation.

Since the middle of the 1980s the divorce rate has shown a dramatically increasing new trend. About one out of nine marriages by the late 1980s ended in divorce. According to *Vital Registration Statistics* of EPB, over four out of five cases of divorce were due to domestic differences. In addition, divorce petitions were being issued equally from both husbands and wives. Suing for a divorce is no longer mainly because of ill-treatment or from familial trouble like those of the earlier period. More and more it was the result of very personal and even minor disputes like disparity of characters.<sup>15</sup> This is particularly true among the younger generations still in their twenties or thirties. These changes reflect the modernisation process following the deepening of individualism among younger generations and the growth of women's economic potential. Tolerance and forgiveness was an essential principle for the maintenance of traditional family life, but no longer carries the same weight among younger generations. The meaning of married life has shifted from generational reproduction to the pursuit of married life. As a result when love no longer exists a couple no longer stays together. That is why the average marriage duration of the young divorced in their twenties is below one year since they prefer to divorce before a child is born. Compared to the developed countries, the rate so far is still at a lower level but the speed of the growth in breakdowns is very rapid.

Hardships arising from divorce fall mostly on the divorcee and on the children.<sup>16</sup> The divorced woman is deprived of an economic base after the dissolution of the family. Of course women's economic participation has notably increased but the increase is predominantly amongst unmarried women. Job opportunities for a divorced woman after the empty period out of paid employment due to matrimony, are very limited.

The difficulties to which children are exposed are as serious as those the divorcee has to confront.<sup>17</sup> Children are very fragile psychologically and emotionally. They are the losers of the adults' love disputes. For the adults, if the marriage was their choice then the divorce also is what they themselves have chosen. Adults chose divorce looking for a better quality of life, however bitter the choice might be. Children however are not allowed to participate in the adults' discussions and they are the victims of their parents interests. Deeply influenced by individualism or egoism, the adults are inclined to believe that children are able to cope with their environment and have, as the adults have, their own way of coping.

It may be true but their emotional injury is not something they had any choice about. That is something no body and no state can compensate for.

Once protected under the stem family system in the past, the injured now have nowhere to go. If divorce was a matter of a reduction of the family size in the stem family, it now brings about a total breakdown in the nuclear family. Even though the stem principle is still alive in a different form in present day Korea, it is not able to help in healing feuds between couples or in preventing divorce, because however strong it may be, families are divided into nuclear families. Thus the safety-valve mechanism has disappeared as a result of the physical separation. The state is the only agent which can provide care for the divorcee or her children. However present day Korea, in spite of the speedy growth of the last two decades, is not economically strong enough to subsidise the divorced and their families. The nation is still not rich enough to divert finances allocated for economic production on an enlarged scale.

### **7.1.3. Prospect For Family Disorganisation**

Family dissolution is the result of changes in the family cycle and the increasing rate of divorce. The statistics may be anticipated to increase further in the future. Of course the stem principle is still alive among present day Koreans but no longer according to the traditional pattern. The reality however does not go side by side with the principle. Table 7.1 demonstrates the ineffective functioning of the modified stem principle. There is too deep a generation gap about who should be the main person to take care of aged parents. These changing attitudes can produce an increase in alienated parents and family dissolution. Moreover once divided by the nuclear pattern, it is hardly possible to reunite families across the generations. The elderly widow/er remains alone. Women's demands for their own conjugal life rejecting their mother-in-law and opposing traditional familism continue to increase more than ever before. Furthermore with the strong and wide diffusion of individualism, the stem principle may be expected to be weaker in future. This follows from the increase in the nuclear family pattern, followed by the isolation of the widowed survivor of the death of a partner as in the West. Of course it depends on the economic situation and housing supply in the future. If house prices are as high as at the present day it will be hard for the young couple to get a home of their own, and the alternative is sharing a roof with their parents. If the general conditions of the nation worsens in the future, young couples can choose to live in with the elder generation but those will be just temporary trends. The trend towards

individualism followed by the increase in the dissolved family looks inevitable. Of course no body knows yet how far these trends will go.

The increase in divorce is also influenced by the change in the stem principle. Though accepting the stem principle, most young couples do not stay physically with their parents generation and lack the safety-valve this may provide to their conjugal feuds. If it makes them more easily accept family dissolution, then as a result of the weakening of the stem principle, more divorce is anticipated.

The increase in the divorce rate also is related to changing values about divorce. Of course most human behaviour cannot be separated from economic and social conditions but it is also true that no social change can be possible without changes in attitudes. Regardless of analysing which factor contributes more to a change than another, it is still meaningful to examine the pattern of attitudes and values for an anticipation of future trends.

**Table 7.3. Opinion On Divorce By Age Cohorts**

age cohort	total(r.N)	opinion on divorce		
		can	mustn't	no idea
total	100.0(2826)	41.9	55.4	2.4
-29	100.0( 588)	57.0	40.1	2.9
30-39	100.0( 796)	53.3	43.7	3.0
40-49	100.0( 584)	38.0	60.1	1.9
50-59	100.0( 469)	25.6	72.7	1.7
60+	100.0( 389)	21.3	76.3	2.3

source: FAM89

r.N.: real number,

As shown in Table 7.3, viewed longitudinally, the probability of divorce has sharply increased. The increase shows far more steeply in the age groups in their thirties and younger. Divorce as an option is almost three times greater among the younger group in comparison with the eldest group. The young generation in their twenties and thirties is the baby-boom generation. They were brought up under relatively economically wealthy conditions thanks to the economic development of the last few decades. While they disregard the economic struggles of their parents, they saw and hated their parents' home life. Unsatisfactory for their parents, it was also destructive for the children. The only excuse was the pursuit of economic prosperity. For the younger generation a loveless married life was viewed as worse than divorce. Once believed a sort of evil, seeking divorce is no longer recognised as an immoral attitude. Divorce may now be seen as a beneficial alternative for the good of both. They no longer feel an obligation to continue married life with someone when they have become disagreeable to one another. That is one of the reasons for the sharp increase in divorce among younger

childless couples. Side by side with changing attitudes toward divorce and the weakening of the stem principle, disorganised families are anticipated to increase in the future.

## 7.2. CHANGING ATTITUDES AND VALUES

### 7.2.1. Matrimony

The increase in dissolved families reflects changes in conventional values on matrimony.<sup>18</sup> Married life itself has been devalued and there has been a growth in the preference for the single life.

Present day Koreans increasingly have a negative attitude to family life itself as shown on Table 7.4. Marriage used to be recognised as the greatest aim in a woman's life. However it has lost its attraction among the young generation. If men in traditional society were brought up to achieve the goal of high social status, being married and having a family was the only goal for women. A girl missing the chance of marriage felt ashamed of herself and was ridiculed socially. Social pressure stressing familism in which reproduction was a core value was hard to go against.

**Table 7.4. Opinion On Living Alone Unmarried**

age cohort	total (r.N)	degree of opinion on single woman					
		I	II	III	IV	V	d.k.
total	100.0(2826)	6.2	37.1	7.1	27.6	18.6	2.8
-29	100.0( 588)	5.6	52.3	7.7	25.4	7.7	1.4
30-39	100.0( 796)	6.6	47.2	9.3	26.5	8.4	2.0
40-49	100.0( 584)	7.7	32.4	6.5	29.8	20.0	3.6
50-59	100.0( 469)	5.5	26.2	6.0	27.4	31.1	3.8
60+	100.0( 389)	4.9	13.8	8.2	30.5	38.7	3.8

Source: FAM89

r.N.: real number, d.k.: don't know

I. Single is much better than married life anyway.

II. Single is better only if she has economic base.

III. It is personal affairs. IV. Married life is better than living alone.

V. One should marry anyway.

Now the younger generation has found there are too many socially attractive and achievable things to do instead of burying oneself in a boring home. They have come to think that living a single, unmarried life is much better than the loveless married life their parents had. The myth of matrimony seems almost destroyed and the desire for marriage has been weakened. Seeking to improve the individual quality of life has come to be viewed as a much more honest and moral way of life.

Reflecting the changing values the positive attitude to matrimony (V) has dramatically decreased to one-fifth in one generation. Just under 9 per cent of the younger generation still think of matrimony as an important event for a woman. The statistics showing a preference for the single life, depending on economic stability, has increased exactly fourfolds over the same period. As a result, almost three out of five women(I,II) prefer an unmarried, single life. The younger generation, it might be said, is inclined to prefer womanhood to wifehood. Of course, these changing attitudes can cause an increase in the age at first marriage among the younger generation on the one hand, while the changing attitude can also give impetus to the increase in the divorce rate. Of course all this only exposes women themselves, children and the elderly to the desolate condition of the social welfare provision.

It is true that statistics calculated on the basis only of responses from women may present a one-sided view of reality. Men can have more positive ideas on matrimony. It is still widely recognised among present day Koreans that a man should stabilise through happy marriage, if he is to be successful in his social and occupational life. The idea that the wife is an assistant to his occupational life is still prevalent. This in itself caused many women to feel married life was essentially boring. However, men still feel in need of matrimony.<sup>19</sup> Since marriage is an event between two persons, statistics based on women's attitudes cannot be totally nullified by any gap between them and men's attitudes. On the whole, these statistics are a good basis for anticipating future matrimonial trends in Korea.

**Table 7.5. Opinions Of Women On the Remarriage Of Men And Of Women**

attributes	If it is a man			If it is a woman		
	I	II	III	I	II	III
total	9.2	14.9	75.9	39.9	18.0	42.1
by age cohort;						
-29	11.1	16.5	72.4	31.0	18.5	50.5
30-39	8.8	14.9	73.3	36.7	17.7	45.6
40-49	7.7	15.2	77.1	45.0	17.0	38.0
50-59	10.0	12.4	77.6	47.3	17.7	35.0
60+	8.7	14.7	76.6	42.9	19.8	37.3
by years of education;						
-6	9.0	14.7	76.3	46.2	17.6	36.2
7-12	9.3	15.0	75.7	35.2	18.1	46.7
13+	10.7	15.4	63.9	22.5	20.8	56.7

source: FAM89

I: It is better not to remarry. II: It is a personal affair. III: It is better to marry.

Another Table 7.5 looks, at first glance, contradictory to the previous table. Contrary to the negative views about marriage, attitudes to remarriage are very

positive. This is not contradictory but tells of a different facet of the same idea of family life. Two trends are observed in Table 7.5.

First, almost all the interviewees thought divorced men should remarry. More than three out of four interviewees think it natural a man remarry after a moderate period. The reason can be traced from two aspects but lead to the same conclusion eventually. First, many Koreans still think occupational activity is a man's main domain in life. If he is going to be successful in the field, there should be an assistant at home to have him concentrate on his outside work. It is recognised as impossible for men to have a successful occupational activity side by side with trivial chores at home. On the other hand, the statistics reflect men's lack of ability to do housework. Both men and women know how men have been brought up and they both know he knows nothing about cooking, laundry, childrearing, home economics etc. Men were brought up by their parents to concentrate on study only. Educational activity was the only activity allowed for boys. Gaining a good mark at school was the only desire of his parents. Naturally for men divorced life has been more than frequently imagined to be chaotic in terms of housekeeping. That is why men are recommended to re-marry by most respondents. The statistics reflect conventional ideas on the strict sexual division of labour, still deeply rooted among present day Koreans. However the trend is slightly decreasing among the younger generation and the case is more true among those exposed to higher levels of education.

Opinions on women's remarriage has almost reversed from a negative attitude to a positive one.<sup>20</sup> If a woman was widowed or divorced, she was expected to live alone un-remarried among the elder generation and this remains true even among the group in their forties. The reason comes from two roots. First it goes back to the remarriage prohibition law of the Chosŏn society. Remarriage was prescribed as an immoral activity and the person concerned was severely punished as well as each set of parents. The law was to prevent divorces that were thought to jeopardise the family stability, while the law also sought to reinforce one of the four supreme commandments of Confucius, that a good wife does not serve two husbands for life. This was to prevent the sort of sexual demoralisation observed at the end of Koryŏ dynasty, which served to legitimise its replacement of the Chosŏn establishment. The tradition was strongly inherited by existing elder generations. They viewed remarriage as immoral both individually and socially. They were the generation brought up to disapprove of premarital love affairs, as a husband and perfect virginity were the most valuable things they had ever had. Consequently, they did not like themselves being treated as a sexual plaything by a

would-be-husband through remarriage. The elder generation furthermore avoided remarriage on account of the hardship of family life. They already knew how boring married life had been. In spite of their efforts in childrearing, they were tired of conventional family life lacking in love from the husband. Perhaps aroused by the younger generation's voice, they have also come to realise that married love is demanding for a woman as a human being. Naturally, they are quite reluctant to remarry, unless they feel real love. For family life lacking in love, once is enough.

This attitude has changed very drastically among younger generations. The group in their twenties and thirties shows the reverse preference for remarriage. They vote more for remarriage in disproportion to their parents' generation. They no longer think of remarriage as a matter of morality but just of love. They reject the virginity idea imposed on women only. They know their father was not as innocent as their mother was. If the ideology cannot be kept by both sides, there is no reason it should remain on the women's side only. Naturally remarriage is a far more moral choice than to have extra-marital affairs. That is why the younger generations are *positive about remarriage*.

In spite of this dramatic change, the statistics for the negative attitude are still big enough to maintain the conventional idea. About one out of three of the younger generation in their twenties and thirties are opposed to remarriage. These attitudes are transmitted from their mother's generation. They prefer to remain alone instead of feeling subordinated to a second husband through remarriage. They choose to be alone rather than have another marriage lacking love. Altogether the statistics show a similar amount of aversion to conventional family life as those in the previous Table 7.4. It is a revolt against traditional wifhood. It is a trend to look for womanhood as a human being. They like to enjoy as much womanhood as men have enjoyed their manhood in the past, and even in present day Korea.

Another attitude reduces the speed of family disorganisation and the desire for womanhood, namely motherhood. Three out of four interviewees oppose divorce due to the bad effect it might have on their children. (Table 7.6) The main reason they would not divorce is due neither to economic difficulties nor to socially negative attitudes about divorce nor to the religious teachings. The overwhelming reason is because they cannot afford to make their children fatherless. The attitude is, surprisingly, more prevalent among younger generations than among their parents' generation. If a religious precept was more influential amongst the older women, their daughters are more active in solving their own issues.

**Table 7.6. Opinion On The Reason Against Divorce**

age cohort	reason divorce ought to be prevented					
	total	I	II	III	IV	others
total	100.0	76.3	3.0	3.2	14.6	3.0
-29	100.0	78.8	2.1	2.1	12.7	4.2
30-39	100.0	86.2	1.1	1.7	5.5	5.5
40-49	100.0	79.1	3.4	2.9	10.6	4.0
50-59	100.0	69.2	4.4	3.5	22.0	0.9
60+	100.0	67.3	3.7	5.7	22.9	0.3

source: FAM89

I: for children's sake II: due to economic incapability of women

III: due to moral responsibility to parents IV: due to religious commandment

The most important lesson they learned from their parents was that they themselves were their parents' pride, hope, and everything. They were brought up to think mature adults did everything to benefit their children, however trivial it might be. They almost never saw their parents leaving them alone to pursue their own interests.

Fatherless children were ridiculed in the community and found it difficult to marry aw when they grew up. This custom, good or bad, has been handed on to survive deeply ingrained in present day Korea. Children without fathers were believed to lack home training, to lack in moral virtues and to be spoiled. This is another reason a woman is so reluctant to divorce when she has children, in spite of the rapidly increasing preference for womanhood. There are two contradictory values here. However, women are trying to reconcile the two ideas and devote their efforts to fit and to love their husband not just for their own sake but for the benefit of their children. However disagreeable a character her husband is, she tries to create a good image of fatherhood for her children. *They understand that love within marriage, natural or hypocritical, may be the alpha and omega for children's education.*

To conclude, it is difficult to foresee how long motherhood will contribute to keeping the family from dissolution or how motherhood can be reconciled to desired femininity or womanhood. Of course family dissolution would be much more accelerated if women's divorced life was insured economically, or if society induced married women to participate in economic and social activity. However, it looks more likely to anticipate the rate of dissolution will, at least, slow down. Concretely speaking, the number of marriages may decrease due to the aversion to conventional familism. However, once married the family may be stabilised thanks to the motherhood idea, deeply permeated among the women of the younger generation. It looks more likely amongst the younger generation considering the statistics of Table 7.6. Even if they felt an aversion to the husband they would put

effort into solving the problem rather than easily choosing divorce. It is for the benefit of their children. Society as a whole can expect to enjoy stabilisation thanks to motherhood for the time being.

## **7.2.2. Neo-Familism: The Saemaul Movement**

### **7.2.2.1. A brief introduction to the movement**

Saemaul Undong, Korea's new community movement came into being in the early 1970s and aimed initially at improving the quality of life in the rural areas. Two successful five-year development plans covering the period from 1962-1971 had seen rapid strides in the urban areas, but with farmers in the countryside lagging far behind. The average amount of income in the rural areas was far less than that of simple workers in the urban areas in the latter half of the 1960s. The movement sought to remedy this situation and started the first experimental projects in 1971. As part of a nation-wide campaign to promote better living standards and a new work ethic among farmers, the guidelines for the Saemaul movement were summed up in the slogan "diligence, self-help, and co-operation." With about 35,000 village units involved, the movement over the past two decades has been termed a remarkable success, and has made a dramatic contribution to the living environment in rural areas. Soon after its inauguration among the people in the rural regions, efforts began to extend the movement to urban and industrial sectors and various action programmes were started from the later 1970s.<sup>21</sup>

From its start, the movement has been envisaged as a "hands-on" effort, emphasising actual practice rather than words. For the first three years of the movement (1971-1973), the project gave a priority to the improvement of the rural environment. Soon, approximately 20 kinds of rural development projects were undertaken in the drive to improve living conditions in the rural areas under the Saemaul movement. These included an important village road expansion plan, designed to improve access and accelerate the movement of people and goods. In the past, village roads linked to local public roads were generally narrow and winding and often without bridges. Under the Saemaul campaign, most of the participating villages launched projects to straighten and widen the roads so vehicular traffic could be handled more easily. Bridge construction was also undertaken, with about 65,000 built in the period between 1971 and 1975. As a result motor vehicles, ox carts, push carts and motor tillers could reach the villages and most isolated farmhouses except for those located on remote islands. Another

project called for the renovation of farmhouse roofs. In 1971, more than 80 per cent of the 2.5 million farmhouses across the country had rice-straw that had to be replaced every winter season, a process calling for a great deal of work. As cement tiles and slate became more available in the early 1970s, it was recognised that the annual replacement of the thatch roofs was uneconomical as well as wearying. Renovation programmes were carried out and by the end of 1977, almost 100 per cent of the farmhouse roofs were of cement tile or slate construction. The appearance of rural villages was altered, and there were some complaints that one aspect of their traditional beauty had been lost. For the people who lived and worked in the rural areas, however, the change was a practical one that saved money and labour.<sup>22</sup>

**Table 7.7. Comparison Of Agricultural Productivity In 1958**

nation	output per unit area	hours of labour	productivity per 100 hours
Korea	1.70	180	0.94 <i>seom</i>
Japan	2.34	183	1.28 <i>seom</i>
U.S.A	1.18	4	29.5 <i>seom</i>

source : The Agriculture Bank, *Agricultural Year Book*, 1959.

*seom* : equivalent to 5.12 U.S. bushels.

While for the next three years (1974-1976) the movement emphasised economic self-sufficiency to increase the level of income and agricultural productivity. The productivity in the agricultural sector was very much lower than in other countries. (Table 7.7) For example, there was the countrywide distribution of a newly developed, high yield rice that boosted production of that grain dramatically during the mid-70s. In the period from 1971-1977, the national average rice yield rose from 3.5 to 4.9 tons in polished rice per hectare. The emphasis on co-operation in rural areas was carried over to rice production, and it is quite common to see work teams made up of 20 to 30 farmers participating in a joint endeavour. Usually the rice seedbed is made in one location for all members instead of having individual seedbeds scattered in several localities. Also carried out jointly is the grain variety selection, the work of growing healthy seedlings, transplanting, application of fertiliser and insecticide, weeding, irrigation and harvesting.<sup>23</sup>

The response of the farmers was greater than had been anticipated. In many cases, villagers added their own capital goods and labour to the government subsidies with the aim of quickly accomplishing the selected projects. With some variations by region, approximately 10 per cent of the whole of project expenses were paid for by government subsidies, 17 per cent by loan, and as much as 73 per

cent by villagers themselves. (Table 7.8) Roughly 70 per cent of the villagers' contribution was in the form of labour the remaining 30 per cent in cash or goods.<sup>24</sup> Thus farmers' contribution was US\$ 204 million out of the total of US\$ 264 million invested for the projects in 1974 only.<sup>25</sup>

**Table 7.8. Trend Of Finances Invested For The Movement**

	1971	1972	1973	1974
source of the invested finances (unit: thousand million <i>won</i> )				
total	12.2	31.3	98.4	132.8
subsidy from government	4.1	3.3	21.5	30.8
contribution from villagers	8.1	28.0	76.9	102.0
investment proportion to each project (%)				
total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
environment improvement	100.0	97.3	81.0	52.7
increase of income & productivity	-	2.7	19.0	44.7
education	-	-	-	2.6

source : Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, *Yearbook of Agriculture and Fisheries* (1976).

*won* : Korean currency

This undertaking was termed an outstanding success in what was described as a 'very active' manner and the movement has spread from its original rural environment to include those from other walks of life. Using the same principles of diligence, self-help, and co-operation, various action programmes have been undertaken for city dwellers. Along with helping to clean and beautify the city environment, there have been programmes to boost reforestation, preserve nature, combat pollution and aid resort areas. To make the success of the movement sure, there has been a continuous supply of qualified village movement leaders as a result of institute training at village levels. January 1972, saw the entry of 150 village leaders, one from each county, into the Saemaul Leaders' Training Institute as its first trainees. Since then local officials and many high-ranking officials from the central government have received the same training with the goal of heightening their understanding of local problems. The programme was extended to include businessmen, university professors, judges, legislators, journalists, religious leaders and others. In 1988 alone, a total of 21,000 leaders from various social sectors went through the Saemaul training course. They included 13,024 village leaders as well as people from industrial plants and factories.<sup>26</sup>

#### 7.2.2.2. The influence of family values on the Saemaul movement

A brief discussion of the family in rural areas is necessary if we are to understand the influence of traditional family values on the success of the Saemaul movement. Traditionally most villages were dominated by a single clan who composed the majority, while only a few from different clans were included in the

community. It was common to call a regional community by the surname of the predominant clan instead of its official appellation. For example a village was called Kim's village, another Park's village, or the other Chang's village so on.<sup>27</sup> Thus the community boundary was almost identical with the kinship group and local interest was very often the same as clan interest or family interest. This homogeneity was loosened in the process of industrialisation particularly during the 1960s or 1970s. Industrialisation accompanied by urbanisation induced a huge number of rural families to move to the cities.<sup>28</sup> The result was a relative weakening of the dominant local clan groups and a dispersion of power among the several clan groups of the local community.<sup>29</sup> Each clan group or individual family began to break up into its component parts. Thus decision-making for the community which had been easy in the past became very difficult due to the separation of individual families. It was no longer easy to reach a consensus among several clan groups since none of them were numerically predominant in the local community any more.

The migration of rural families also brought structural changes in the community. If urbanisation weakened the clan homogeneity, the same influence brought new and important homogenising influences on other aspects of the village communities. The earliest migrants who left their rural areas were mostly the poorest and families with no arable land in the village.<sup>30</sup> Thus those who remained were relatively wealthy and from the economically upper strata so that the gap between the poorest and the richest remaining in the village became narrower than before the migration. In addition, regardless of their relative wealth, those who remained had as strong a desire to cast off their poverty of the time as those who went away. Homogeneity of the local community was reinforced by the nationwide land reform of 1949 (execution from 1959). Before land reform, land and wealth were extremely concentrated in the ownership of a minority so that trend was a relationship of rule and subordination by the rich landowners over the tenants. The land reform allowed tenant farmers to claim the right to land which they had cultivated generation by generation at minimum price, and increased the proportion of landed farmers or economically-middle-level farmers.<sup>31</sup> Thus the redistribution of land and wealth increased the potential for co-operation among community residents. Homogeneity in the village was also increased because most of the migrants were the younger generation who were inclined to prefer modern values or were anti-traditionalists who felt pessimistic about the Confucian way of living.<sup>32</sup> Thus those who remained shared relatively homogenous values in terms of Confucianism reducing the possibility of value conflicts among the residents in the local community.

In spite of all this latent potential for development, the regional communities were steeped in habits inherited both from tradition and the period of Japanese annexation. The rural areas stagnated as a result of conservative resistance against any change, idleness during the winter of the farmers' slack season accompanied with drinking and gambling, and over-emphasis of solidarity among kinship members. The Saemaul movement was devised by President Park who had grown up in the countryside rural area to combat these habits and to raise a 'scientific attitude' in the rural areas. The movement aimed to get rid of bad habits during the farmers' slack season, to economise on the traditional ceremonies of marriage, funerals, and ancestral worship and to have clan groups recognise that the community interest is prior to the familial or clan interest.<sup>33</sup>

To achieve this goal the conventional family values and the related customs and ceremonies were revised. The movement tried to re-organise the internal structure of the community on the basis of locality instead of the ties of consanguinity or kinship. It aimed to promote an enthusiasm for one's native place and a sense of common local identity. The movement sought to induce the scattered clan groups to recognise the importance of a common local interest and pursue co-operation among them for the village's common good going beyond the particularistic interest of each family or kinship group. Conventional virtues were re-emphasised. Under Confucianism, men of high status or rich men were expected to contribute for the benefit of the community. This value was reinforced when the relatively rich family or dominant clans were dedicated more deeply to the movement than any others and the movement leader was elected from among the most devoted persons. Having moral authority, the leader was one of the most respected in the village. To the rest of the residents the respect for authority, individual diligence, and co-operation was reinforced and deviants were effectively restricted by conventional sanctions like gossip, shame, or shunning etc.<sup>34</sup> Thus the pattern of behaviour for the group was reinforced by conventional values to re-integrate the scattered clans or families during modernisation but this time homogeneity was sought in terms of local village identity rather than of familial or clan ties.<sup>35</sup>

Based on the recognition of local homogeneity and co-operation among village residents, the movement had each village enter constructive competitions with other villages in terms of diligence and economic and environmental achievement. Traditional society functioned on the basis of family competition, this time the movement aimed at village competition. As a means to achieve the goal of competition, the government categorised three different levels of villages in

terms of environment improvement, economic achievement, and scientific attitudes. Scientific attitude was operationally defined in terms of the simplified marriage, funeral ceremony and ancestral worship procedures and the sweeping away of over-drinking or gambling behaviour. Categorising the underdeveloped villages (Kich'o-maul), the developing village (Chajo-maul), and developed village (Charip-maul)<sup>36</sup>, the movement made a strategy to stimulate each village and each member of the village to be competitive in achieving the highest level.

The results of the Saemaul movement were assessed by the Korean committee of UNESCO in 1979.<sup>37</sup> The committee found that the movement was successful in the sense that it could mobilise people nation-wide to participate autonomously in the projects. Autonomy is deeply rooted in the Confucian family tradition of Choson society. With a dominant clan group, the traditional local community was strong in solidarity among the community members and very exclusive against influence from outside.<sup>38</sup> The central government mostly appointed a figure with no local or familial connection to be the administrative head of the community in order to prevent the decentralisation of local government. Anyhow having no exact or abundant knowledge about the local community, the newly designated governor had to rely on assistance from the influential persons in the community. Thus the members of the governor's Cabinet were appointed, following recommendation from the local influentials, from the local community that was still composed mostly of the same clan group. As a result the community was ruled autonomously by community members themselves rather than by the officials from central government. The governor set out basic guidelines only for projects from the central government and the local residents carried them out. Thus, the best way for the governor to gain success in the designated community was to minimise his role of intervention from the central government and to transmit public opinion from the community to the government. If the governor failed in this, his success in carrying out his programme during his stay frequently met difficulty. Residents participated in the selection of projects, formulation and execution of plans, and as already shown in Table 8.2 the government's financial contribution was minimal and administrative intervention as well was very limited. The government sometimes intervened in the process of leadership election, perhaps when a rich man of no moral authority was elected and the influence was indirect. Sometimes government sought to influence leaders from the under-developed or developing villages to accelerate their projects and to achieve a high level. Except for these indirect and partial interventions the movement was run almost totally by the residents themselves.<sup>39</sup> The tradition of autonomy which was inherited from the self-governing tradition in the local

community by clan groups during Chosŏn society helped to make the movement successful.

The second element in the success of the Saemaul movement was the tradition of co-operation. Traditional society had a distinctive mutual co-operation system of *kye* based on the strong bond between relatives and clan members. *Kye* went beyond personal interests adhering to traditional principles regarding mutual co-operation as a solemn duty. *Kye*, meaning agreement or bond, was a social organisation based on the principle of mutual aid with a specific objective. All *kye* collected dues and managed a fund and, depending on the objective and programme, are classified into many kinds. One type is *sangjogye*, literally meaning *kye* for a funeral. Traditionally, people prepared splendid funerals as expressions of filial piety so they tended to be costly. The *kye* was organised by those who had aged parents in order to provide for their funerals. To prepare for this time, funds or rice were collected each month or annually to help each member in return to defray the cost of the ceremony. In the *kye*, not only were there monetary benefits, but the *kye* members all pitched in to carry the bier, to serve as messengers, to dig the grave, etc. Village *kye* were characterised by the admission of all villagers. It collected an agreed-upon sum of money from each family and helped villagers through unexpected times of need, building bridges, digging wells, or repairing facilities for the community. Sometimes the village *kye* raised funds through collective work such as *ture* (co-operative farming). Even before the establishment of the Saemaul movement the *kye* were based on mutual aid and co-operation with each member performing his duties as if it were his own business. As it was difficult to maintain if a member did not pay his dues or reneged on his duty, solidarity was a must. Through such systems many families prospered and many villages developed in the past.<sup>40</sup>

This tradition persisted into modern Korea both in rural and urban areas. *Kye* characterised by monetary interests became very popular among housewives in cities particularly during the economic development of the 1970s. Urban *kye* were mostly organised to save small amounts of money or to prepare expensive modern facilities. In fact they not only provided extra cash but also opportunities for getting together, exchanging gossip and partying. While in the rural areas *kye* were organised primarily among householders to pursue Saemaul movement. The movement was able to make use of these traditions of mutual co-operation. The result was revealed, as shown on Table 7.8, in the great local financial contribution for the community development projects. Each village had registered their community as a corporate organisation and prepared and managed common

property that was contributed through *kye* and devoted their labour for the developmental projects in the form of *ture*. The interest from the common property, they invested for continued growth and development or sometimes used it for the whole of the community members to travel, or for marriage, funeral, or ancestral worship ceremonies of each family. The process reinforced solidarity among the community members. The conventional *kye* was functional basically for the familial ties or clan bond, but the Saemaul movement emphasised local community solidarity.

The other element in the success of the movement was, ironically, *familial* solidarity. Originally the movement was invented to extend the community components beyond familial ties for integration of the village. However, the result was disappointing, compared to the original anticipation. Most of the developed villages including a village in Ich'on town who got the President's prize in 1976 for their achievement, attained high achievement thanks to co-operation based on family solidarity. Brandt and Lee found three types of villages differentiated by their level of co-operation and consequently by their level of achievement in the movement. The first type of villages, in spite of huge migration during the industrialisation of the 1970s, was composed of one dominant clan group either of *yangban* class or commoners. In the case of the most developed village in Ich'on, 70 per cent of the households in the community belonged to a *yangban* clan group. Another type of village was composed of a few clan groups co-existing with a similar amount of influence on each other. The third type was totally mixed with families of different clan groups and no clans were dominant in the number of households or their influence. The class system had no influence at all in the formulation of co-operation among community members. Whether *yangban* or commoners, the level of success or failure in co-operation was identical. Next, the movement was most successful when the local community was organised by a predominant clan group. When a village was led by a leader from the dominant clan group the co-operation among the village members was strongest and the rest of the non-predominant families could co-ordinate in the development projects. Local autonomy was greatest when there was constructive competition with other communities in the race of development. The least developed villages were those composed of a few clan groups but none of them predominant in the number of households or level of their economic and social influence. Each clan group competed to take the initiative of the movement, to monopolise the decision-making for the benefit of their own clan interest and to obstruct the other clan groups. As a result co-operation was difficult and development the most retarded. Villages with no identifiable groupings depended on what sort of leader was

elected. If a leader of high ability and moral authority was elected, co-operation as good as in the village with one dominant clan group was achieved. The achievement of a village where there was familial heterogeneity was directly related to the level of self-sacrifice of the leader. Such a leader promoted a new concept of the 'family spirit' based this time on local identity instead of blood ties, and could re-integrate the community to compete with others. Interventionism from the government was originally invented to foster this type of village solidarity and inter-community competition.<sup>41</sup>

The Saemaul movement was successful in promoting a healthy competition among local communities to achieve higher standards of environmental or economic development. The competition was most effective when the village was internally integrated by autonomy and co-operation. Co-operation was best when there was familial solidarity or at least 'familial identity' among community components. Thus development was rather the result of the strong devotion of a self-sacrificing leader or the collective effort of a clan group than of local solidarity itself. The strong devotion to the primary group like the family rather than the nominal ideology of pan-village development was an effective tool for the re-integration of the whole of the nation. Particularistic values could be extended to and integrated into the universalistic rational values for the benefit of development of the nation. From this experience in the rural areas, the government applied the same principle but this time more emphasis on 'familial spirit' and Confucian leadership to urban areas as well from the late 1970s. The 'family spirit' permeated into each small group of factories or companies of the whole nation. The small groups sharing the same family identity among its members turned to a basic unit to compete with other small groups in the same company or factory in achieving a target imposed on each department or group. The successful solidarity among members was possible first by a firm self identification as a family member and next by the devotion of leaders in terms of the Confucian virtues. The family spirit expanded to the whole company level to compete with other companies in the nation or other countries. 'The Hyundai Family', 'the Daewoo Family', 'the Goldstar Family', etc. are a few examples of the extension of family ideology learned from the Saemaul movement in the rural areas.

### **7.2.3. Changes In Family Law**

#### **7.2.3.1. The confrontation between tradition and human rights**

Changes in the law relating to the family have been the result of conflicts and confrontation between traditional ideas or customs and changed ideas about the family in the period of modernisation. Of course it is hard to say that laws exactly reflect the spirit or trend of the time since they relate more to the normative level of the society or what ought to be human behaviour. A law, in its detail, can sometimes be far out of date or be ahead of the times. Nevertheless it is true that laws generally move with the changes of the time and that trends of change can be observable through the changes of the law. This is particularly the case if a law belongs to customary laws like the civil law.<sup>42</sup> Korean family law belongs to the civil law under the title of 'the law on relatives' and 'the law on inheritance' and has been maintained on the basis of the common sense of the time with, of course, variations or at different degrees. All in all the study of the law can give a rough idea of the current trend of the family and the study of its changes demonstrate the confrontation between traditional family values and the changed spirit of the family.

The law relating to the family has changed as a result of the interaction between two extremely opposing views. One party has adhered to the traditional Confucian family values, believing the conventional family system ought at all costs to be maintained to preserve social and individual morality and the welfare mentally, physically and economically of individuals as a whole. The other party has pursued individual freedom and rights, particularly the rights of women, regardless of any fossilised tradition. They argued tradition cannot have precedence over human rights and that tradition should be kept only within the boundary of the natural rights of men inherited from god. They may be represented by women organisations. The Confucianists focus on the moral decay of present day Korea and the women on the social handicaps of women inherited from the past. The former argue for a reinforcement of family values to cure current social problems; the latter for Westernised individualism to protect individuals for a healthy family in which no women suffer. Thus it was a confrontation between family values and individualism.<sup>43</sup>

Since the 1970s two issues relating directly and indirectly to the family have stirred up public sentiment in Korea. The two include the family law that is going to soon be discussed in the next paragraph, and a criminal law to protect the innocence of marriage.

First a criminal law prescribes adultery of a married man or woman and pre-marital intercourse of an unmarried man a crime. Criminal punishment to the

pre-marital intercourse applies to male only by a criminal complaint of woman side who failed to marry him while the adultery by both sides of whose partner in extramarital intercourse. The criminal law in both cases, in spite of its disobedience against the constitutional principle, was originally established by an idea to protect women who were believed socially disadvantaged.<sup>44</sup> In a word, the law was a sort of symbol in the past denoting women's inability in society. However, interestingly when the abolition of the laws was issued the objection was, ironically, from inside women's organisations. A few of them approved of the abolition because the law was a symbol of low status of women in the past, which stands against, in nominal sense, the women liberation movement, but most of them objected to the abolition due to *de facto* disadvantages deriving from the abolition under the present situation where women's rights are not fully guaranteed economically, socially, and legally. Women can take an economic initiative and divorce due to husband's adultery under the current law.

Since the first establishment of the family law in 1958,<sup>45</sup> the two extremes have shown frequent and constant confrontation and each has structured their movement to win over public opinion except the above case on criminal law for the purity of married life. First the women's organisations focused their argument primarily on the abolition of the legal position of the head of the family<sup>46</sup> in which the current law allowed the headship to male members only. The movement had the strategy of changing the social and cultural atmosphere to abolish the law. At the beginning of the 1980s, thanks to the progress of the feminist movement in society, they moved their strategy to more concrete, practical, and organic demands in the revision of family law. From the argument for a simple abolition of the headship system, the women's organisations asked for the revision of the law on the boundary of kinship, a wife's right to the shared property, the legal relationship between stepparents and step-children etc. which could cause a subtle conflict of economic interests for women. Other laws concerning women, like equality of job opportunity, equal rewards, or public nursery provision were also proposed in parallel. Thus the movement aimed at an organic improvement as far as women were concerned of the social system as a whole. Corresponding to this changing trend of demands, the subjects of concern have expanded more widely than ever before. The main axis of the movement had been women from the middle class or above and the movement was very frequently accused of frivolity due to the very limited range of class and could not get much attention from public opinion. However, the subjects expanded to include the problems of the urban poor, blue collar workers, and farmers as well from the 1980s, and gradually the movement has become firmly established with a wide range of supporters<sup>47</sup>

Compared to the womens' organisations, the Confucianists' visible foundations look quite weak. The 1985 Census calculated just 800 thousand in the Confucian population which comprises 2 per cent of the total population of the nation.<sup>48</sup> The economic foundations of the Confucianists, most of which are land, are quite poor which makes their educational projects difficult to maintain. However they have two strong points in their favour for mobilisation of the movement. First, they have an effective organisation culminating in *Sŏng-gyun-kwan* university<sup>49</sup> together with 232 local schools spread nation-wide. Besides this the Confucianism Association has national networks permeating to the village level of the nation. The association was reinforced by the Neo-classic movement of the 1970s when clan groups were being revitalised into *munjung* associations (Refer to Section 3.4.2 above). Under the basic guidance from *Sŏng-gyun-kwan* and in connection with its local schools, the association has participated in the preservation and reinforcement of Confucian virtues, cultures, and rituals, etc. The next and best point for the Confucianists is the spread of the tradition among present day Koreans. Despite the small number of people describing themselves as Confucian, it is hard to find a Korean who does not behave on the basis of Confucian values consciously or unconsciously in everyday life. Thus, if there is only a small nucleus for the Confucian virtues, many Koreans are fellow travellers. That is how the Confucianists were able to get statements of support from over two million people during less than a month in their 1976 campaign against family law revision, an amazingly quick and strong reaction to preserve the tradition.<sup>50</sup>

It is hard to say which group has the greater influence and how much their influence has contributed to changes in family law, since there is no consensus on which parts of whose arguments are correct. However, putting aside who is correct one thing is quite obvious: women are challenging the judicial and social system of present day Korea but are a minority and have not gained enough public sympathy to change the whole system in the realm of the family. The Confucianists, on the other hand, are basically conservative in preserving and reinforcing the current family law inherited from tradition and they have an effective majority of public backing either by positive consent or by silence. Whilst Table 7.9 does not directly show public opinion on family law or on the arguments of each group, at least it gives an indirect or rough idea of how Koreans feel about the current family system or family law. Although there is perhaps always a gap between the law and the real condition of human life, the law reflects the feelings of ordinary people in a nation and influences, in feedback, directly or indirectly to each member of society. Thus if extreme issues do not arise in some realm of human life, the relevant law in general tends to maintain at least the *status quo*. By the same logic, satisfaction or

dissatisfaction with the human relationships in the family realm denotes at least indirectly a reaction to the pressure of social institutions. If family law is against human relationships within the family realm, the patterned behaviours in the family which are internalised from the society can cause significant strains among family members. Conversely if the relationships among family members do not show any considerable conflicts, the principle ruling of the family as a whole can be said to be deeply internalised by individuals.<sup>51</sup> Of course women's organisations can argue that the silence or unconcern is a 'false consciousness' of the majority. However as far as a society is ruled under democratic principles then numerical superiority is in no way to be ignored. In so far as individuals are satisfied with their overall family life, it is hard for challengers to gain support for their new arguments from them.

**Table 7.9. Percentage Distribution Of Satisfaction Level With Family Life**

	total	satisfied			III	unsatisfied		
		I	II	IV		V		
overall family life by sex ;								
total	100.0	32.3	9.6	22.7	57.1	10.6	8.8	1.8
male	100.0	35.8	11.0	24.8	56.1	8.1	6.9	1.2
female	100.0	29.6	8.5	21.1	57.8	12.6	10.3	2.3
overall family life by level of education ;								
pri	100.0	23.8	5.4	18.4	61.1	15.0	12.2	2.9
middl e	100.0	30.0	8.7	21.3	60.5	9.5	8.0	1.5
high	100.0	39.3	12.8	26.5	53.8	7.0	6.0	0.9
univ	100.0	56.0	21.8	34.2	40.5	3.6	3.1	0.4
financial situation ;								
total	100.0	14.5	2.4	12.1	50.0	35.5	26.5	9.0
male	100.0	15.5	2.4	13.0	51.4	33.6	25.6	8.0
female	100.0	13.8	2.4	11.4	38.8	37.4	27.6	9.8
relationship with children ;								
total	100.0	57.3	25.2	32.1	35.9	6.8	5.6	1.2
male	100.0	58.4	25.9	32.5	35.3	6.3	5.3	0.9
female	100.0	56.4	24.6	31.9	36.3	7.2	5.8	1.4
relationship with parents ;								
total	100.0	41.2	17.4	23.8	49.9	8.9	7.3	1.6
male	100.0	44.3	18.9	25.4	48.5	7.2	6.0	1.2
female	100.0	38.3	15.9	22.4	51.3	10.4	8.5	1.9
relationship with spouse ;								
total	100.0	54.5	24.2	30.2	38.1	7.4	5.5	1.9
male	100.0	57.3	26.0	31.3	37.5	5.6	3.9	1.3
female	100.0	51.8	22.5	29.2	38.6	9.6	7.0	2.6

source : EPB, *Social Statistics Survey*, 1988.

I : very satisfied, II : moderately satisfied, III : acceptable, IV : moderately unsatisfied, V : very unsatisfied, pri : primary school graduates and under, middle : middle school graduates, high : high school graduates, univ : college, university graduates and over

Table 7.9 is from a social survey by EPB in 1988 when discussions on family law revision of 1989 were at a peak in the whole of the nation and it shows some of the trends in family life. First, a far bigger proportion of present day

Koreans is satisfied with overall family life than is dissatisfied. Although more than one out of two show a neutral attitude, there seems to be no strong ground to seek rapid changes in current family law regarding the small proportion of the dissatisfied. Of course the women's organisation can interpret the majority of neutral attitude tacitly as standing for their side, but that majority is at least not one to raise voices for the revision of family law. Second, the degree of dissatisfaction among women is much greater than that among men. It reflects the fact that present day women feel more strain from the current family system than men do. Thus more women can accept the women's organisations' demand for law revision than men do. Surprisingly, the degree of satisfaction is different depending on the educational level of interviewees. The more educated the more satisfied family members are with their overall family life and the less educated the more dissatisfied they are. If the arguments of the women's movement were to convince the public, those with a higher level of education should have felt more inconvenience about the overall family life than those of lower class. However, the intellectuals seem to be positively enjoying their current family life while the women's organisations argue it has deteriorated as a result of sexual inequality. The satisfaction gap by educational level can be due to the financial situation. As shown in the same table present day Koreans feel the least satisfaction about the financial situation of family life. The dissatisfaction came mainly from the inequality of income distribution which was manifested in the housing issues in the 1980s. For the poor who are mostly less educated, it was almost impossible to have their own house due to increasing housing prices. Thus the housing problem was one of the worst things that made family life a problem and the less educated the less income level and eventually the more dissatisfied about the economic conditions of family life.<sup>52</sup> The dissatisfaction reduces the degree of satisfaction with overall family life. In spite of negative attitude deriving from financial difficulty, the human relationships among members show relatively a positive reaction. Ordinary Koreans are satisfied with their relationships among family members so it is quite implausible that they would ask for a revision of the law to define relationships among family members. Of course relationships with parents are relatively less satisfying than the relationship with others and the degree of women's satisfaction with human relationships is less than that of men. However the gaps are still not great enough to view current human relationships as very bad. Thus as far as current Koreans are satisfied with their family life, they are hardly likely to rise in opposing the current family law.

### 7.2.3.2. Changes in the family law

Korean family law is keeping traditional principles to the extent that people are conservative and satisfied with family life, and the law has changed to the extent that they are dissatisfied with the human relationships in family life. In other words it has been a barometer showing the confrontation between the arguments for tradition and human rights.

There are two main points at issue: the prohibition of marriage between *tongsŏngdongbon* (the same surname and the same place of origin) and the family headship principle. The two principles have been frameworks for family law in Korea inherited from tradition.<sup>53</sup> Confucianists are striving to maintain the principles and the women's organisations are asking for their abolition. The prohibition of marriage between persons of the same surname (*tongsŏng*) and the same place of origin (*tongbon*) is inherited from traditional morality. Its aim was to regulate sexual behaviour between the sexes and indirectly to reinforce other moralities relating to sex and to re-confirm the group identity of a clan group. However from the perspective of the women's movement the prohibition is anachronistic in modern days. Medical reports stating that sexual intercourse who are third cousins does not produce any harmful results eugenically, used to be quoted by women's groups. Nevertheless, the principle, from the Confucianists' view, was much more meaningful as a symbolic framework to keep morality of society however out of date the principle is.

The next point in dispute was headship of the family. There were some arguments about the historical legitimacy of the principle. The women's organisations argue the principle was imposed from the Chosŏn Civil Proceedings Act in 1911 by Japanese colonisation. The structure of the act was originally based on the Japanese civil law established after the Meiji Restoration of Japan. Women, particularly wives, are defined by the Act to have no legal rights.<sup>54</sup> Confucianists argue the principle was inherited from tradition to maintain primogeniture in the stem family. The principle was needed to prescribe the rights and duty of the inheritance of ancestral worship that is an essential practice of familism. Both arguments are right in terms of historical legitimacy. Although traditional society prescribed a strict rule of headship of family, society never stipulated that wives were legally disqualified. Through the whole of the Confucian scripture society emphasised the importance, at least nominally, of the conjugal relationship. The conjugal relationship was not hierarchical but only the role distribution was different and both were equal before law. However under Japanese colonisation,

the conjugal relationship became hierarchical and a wife's status in the family became even lower than that of sons. That is the reason why traditional Japanese, in their classic essay *Man-ensue* praised the *samurai* who knifed to death his wife for not bowing down upon her knee properly.<sup>55</sup> It was a symbolic story indicating the status of the wife in the family and the custom persisted into modern Japan. The Japanese colonial government imposed their civil law and Korean women's juridical status was totally depreciated. Thus women are asking for the abolition of the headship principle to liberate women with no legal rights to clear out the old-fashioned idea of role distribution by sex which has determined the relatively disadvantageous conditions for women in society. However, the Confucianists oppose the loss of the headship principle from which they believe many other moral virtues derive. The headship principle not only assures ancestral worship but also reinforces *hyo* (filial piety) that is a moral issue which maintains inter-generational relationships. The principle, they believe, can revitalise family values under which many modern social problems can be remedied.

Unlike the prohibition of marriage between *tongsŏngdongbon* the family headship produced several other issues between the two antagonists. First the family law of 1958 gave parental authority after a divorce to the husband first, regardless of his economic ability to bring up the children mentally, morally, and physically.<sup>56</sup> Unless a husband gives up his parental power the divorced wife has no right guaranteed by law to bring up the children and traditionally husbands have rarely given up this right. Both husband and wife struggle to get the parental right but the Family Court, which gives priority to the husband according to the custom inherited from tradition. That is one of the reasons why Korean wives have been so reluctant to divorce. According to FAM89 data, over three out of four housewives were not going to divorce for the benefit of children, even if the husbands behaviour gave legal grounds for a divorce. Even if the divorce was due to his misbehaviour, the law allowed parental rights to the husband first. The women's organisations challenged this favouritism and asked that the importance of maternal rights in the childrearing should have at least equal right.

The headship dispute gave rise to another issue on the boundary of kinship. The family law quoted the boundary from the National Code of 1492. In the section on funeral rites, the code prescribed the boundary of kinship by stipulating who can/must wear which mourning garment for how long according to the degree (*ch'on*) of the kinship relationship.<sup>57</sup> *Ch'on* was originally a unit scale to measure length in traditional Asian societies but was developed in traditional Korea to denote the distance or nearness among kinship members. The nearer the smaller the

number of *ch'on*, the more distant the bigger the number of *ch'on*. The conjugal relation is zero *ch'on* in the sense husband and wife are of one flesh and spirit during their married life but are nothing to each other when divorced. Children and parents are in one *ch'on* relationship, while children themselves are in two *ch'on* relationship each other. That is the basic scale to measure the boundary of near relatives. For example an uncle is in a three *ch'on* relationship, the first cousin in four *ch'on*, and a third cousin in eight *ch'on*, etc. The Code defined the nearer kinship as composed of up to eight *ch'on* (third cousin) in patrilineal lines, four *ch'on* (cousin) in matrilineal lines, eight *ch'on* in husband's line, and only parents-in-law in the wife's lines. Relatives by marriage were confined to the boundary of kinship. The women's organisations have asked to change the boundary equally to four *ch'on* in both lines. For example if a cousin in eight *ch'on* relationship shelters his relative, the criminal law cannot apply misprision of treason to the cousin in Korea because the law can override the importance of family solidarity secured by the higher rank law. However if a wife's brother harbours a criminal who is his brother-in-law, the law applies a severe misprision of felony because they are not in a kinship relationship in the current family law. The women's organisations point out the brother-in-law has a much more intimate relationship emotionally and in everyday communication than the third cousin in present day Korea. For Confucianists, even if the women's argument sounds plausible, the generous boundary to patrilineal lines is necessary to keep the stem principle that secures the duty among patrilineal kin in terms of filial piety and ancestral worship.

There are three further points in dispute which are derived from the headship principle but were not inherited from tradition but from the Japanese annexation. First the family law did not recognise the domestic labour of a housewife when she divorced. This legal prescription stemmed originally from the Japanese legal system that passed over women's legal ability in silence. However a housewife's legal rights over her contribution to the domestic labours was stipulated in the article on divorce in the National Civil Code. If a family prospered economically after a daughter-in-law became a member, she had a definite right not to be divorced from her husband. Even if there was no accurate articles on the calculation of her share when divorced, her contribution to the domestic activity was significantly recognised by law. The prescription of women's lack of legal rights during Japanese colonialism was also extended to the question of adoption. Traditionally whenever there was an application for the adoption of a son, the written consent of wife was compulsory as the traditional law viewed the wife being in one flesh and spirit<sup>58</sup>, and adoption without her consent was immoral because it led to a weakening of family solidarity. However under the Japanese

legal custom the authority in a family was absolutely the husband and the wife was excluded from the family boundary and family law required no consent from a wife for an adoption.

Lastly the women's organisations challenged the inheritance law. Family law gave great priority to the eldest son leaving other sons, daughters, and particularly a married daughter or wife in an extremely disadvantageous situation. This principle mainly came from Japanese inheritance law prescribing total right to the eldest son where the wife's legal status was null. In the National Code the distribution of inheritance, exclusive of the common property for ancestral worship, was equally assigned regardless of the birth order of children, sex, or marriage. Moreover as a wife had a legal right to register property by her own name, she was not as disadvantaged as traditional Japanese women were in terms of inheritance distribution.<sup>59</sup>

All these traditional and non-traditional elements in the family law were seen by women's organisations as hangovers from the patriarchy of Confucianism. This attitude has been criticised by the Confucianists and even the general public who still need some Confucian sentiments. Women were accused of having a point in debunking the negative aspects of the past but in selfishly pursuing individual rights only and were said to have no systematic moral vision for future society. While the argument of the Confucianists was more concerned than the women's groups with maintaining morality in a society suffering from new social problems, such as the increase in divorce rates, adolescent problems, sexual misbehaviour, etc., they sought to maintain non-traditional elements they once themselves criticised as non-Confucian customs of barbarian Japan. They failed to show alternatives to meet the needs of a speedily changing society particularly among the young generations. Family law has changed under these situation and the result of the legal change has gone almost parallel with the confrontation between the two opposing groups. However the Confucianists have more established power and have more support, at least numerically, amongst the public to whom the Confucian values have traditionally been widespread.

Family law has changed three times: in February 1958 when the new code was established, in December 1977, and December 1989 and ad hoc laws relating to the family were enacted twice in 1978 and 1988 for one year each. The latest change in 1989 which has been in force from the first of January 1991 was the biggest, but the basic structure and nominal level of the law based on traditional

principles has not changed but has only come to allow a number of utilitarian benefits for wives or women.

Through the whole history of family law, nothing has changed in the prohibition principle of marriage between *tongsŏngdongbon*. In spite of women's groups' argument of there being no eugenic harm if a couple is in a relationship of over eight *ch'on* (third) the prohibition law still seems to have more influence on the everyday life of present day Koreans. It is observed in ordinary meetings between youngsters. University freshmen have a custom of attending a group meeting through the good offices of a friend. Once pairing is done, the first talk most of the youngsters exchange is their name and *bon* (place of the origin). If a pair recognise they are from *tongsŏngdongbon*, they make no more progress in the relationship. Marriage between persons of the same surname and the same place of origin does not yet fit the moral sentiments even among the younger generations. Moreover as Confucianists asserted the prohibition principle functions as a symbol to maintain sexual morality in a society suffering from a rapid increase in social problems. Thus there was no need for change for the minority at the expense of the abolition of the moral framework of a nation. Instead the government executed an ad hoc law giving relief to the minority concerned. The prohibition law does not recognise either the couples nor the legality of births from them. Thus their children were deemed illegitimate in a juridical sense and nominally registered as an adopted child to some other family. The various disadvantages of the persons concerned stemmed from the illegitimate status of the couples and their children. The *ad hoc* law redefined the couples and their children as legitimate and in the year 1978 the number of cases amounted to 4,223 an accumulation of decades.<sup>60</sup>

The establishment of the 1958 family law was a copy of the civil law imposed during the Japanese annexation and involved almost no change except some minor but important changes for the benefit of women.<sup>61</sup> The law abolished the articles on the housewife's legal position and prescribed that a wife and daughters could also participate in the inheritance distribution. The law slightly weakened the right of the head of a family and allowed wrongful behaviour (adultery) of a husband as a just cause for divorce. Traditionally men's sexual misbehaviour was generously recognised as a natural desire to have many offspring while a woman's misbehaviour was seen to be like a vampire disgracing the family. Under the new family law, a man's wrongful behaviour was defined as equally weakening the integrity of marriage and the family.

The next changes in the family law were in 1977 and trivial, leaving the basic frameworks unchanged. Three clauses were notably changed. First the law allowed a joint ownership of the property where ownership was vague between couples but the law had till then recognised the property registered in the husband's name as belonging to him however much the wife contributed to the property. Second the law re-prescribed a joint responsibility of parental authority for children after divorce from the former almost absolute power of husband. Third the law changed the legal proportion of inheritance distribution which had been very disadvantageous to the wife and daughters. This time the law allowed the same weight of distribution to the eldest son and wife, and the rest of the children shared equally, regardless of sex. However, married daughters were still disadvantaged in the sense they were seen as belonging to another family after their marriage and the proportion of their share remained worse than it had been in traditional society.<sup>62</sup>

The revision of the family law in 1989 was relatively the greatest change in its range and degree. First and the most shocking, the headship principle was changed. Formerly limited to the eldest son or the eldest grandson only, the succession right to the family headship was opened to the rest of the sons, daughters, and even to the wife. Of course this is possible only when the eldest son gives up his right to the headship; nevertheless the change is an epoch-making change. The change proportionately reflects the weakening of the stem family primogeniture principle. Of course more eldest sons still share their roof with their parents, compared with other married sons or married daughters. However the principle became very hard to maintain due to the high rate of regional or occupational mobility among family members and it has become quite commonplace to see a married non-eldest son or daughter living with their own parents. Naturally the right of access to the headship also has been opened to them. Next, many *de facto* rights and duties of the family head have been abolished. Under the previous family law the head of a family had legally recognised powers of announcement quasi-incompetence, the designation of dwelling place, and power to order a separate family to his family members. All these rights and duties have been abolished reflecting the increase of children's economic and social rights in modern Korea. In traditional society where most income sources of each family were from land, the headship could have a significant influence on the family members but not in the present day in which income level of individuals are measured mostly by their own ability and earning capacity.<sup>63</sup>

The second area of the new revision is a wife's right to share her husband's property in divorce cases. Of course a wife's legal ability derives from the

establishment of the family law of 1958, but she had no right to claim her share of the property registered in her husband's name because the full-time housewife was not recognised as having any income. Reflecting the changes in family life like the increase in the nuclear family household and the improvement of the educational level of women etc., family members recognised the economic values of the wife's domestic labour. Thus the law allowed wives to claim their share of the property increase after their marriage. As the law did not define the ratio of her share clearly, the claims may cause disputes but it is more important, at the moment, to give attention to the fact of joint ownership of the whole of a couple's property.<sup>64</sup>

The third change is an improvement in parental authority. The revision of 1977 prescribed joint authority over children after their divorce but the real priority used to be on the husband's side. For the benefit of the maternal right, the law was revised again to give parental power to the actual fosterer.<sup>65</sup>

Fourth, and amazingly, the law revised the boundary of kinship. The previous law was defining the boundary upto the 8 *ch'on* (third cousin) of patrilineal lines, 4 *ch'on* (full cousin) of matrilineal lines, 8 *ch'on* of husband's line, and wife's parents only. The revised law stipulated the boundary upto the 8 *ch'on* of both patrilineal and matrilineal lines and 4 *ch'on* of both husband's and wife's lines. Thus, the husband's kinship boundary has been narrowed, while matrilineal and the wife's line has been considerably extended for the benefit of sexual equality under the law. Originally the women's organisations asked a standardisation of boundary upto 4 *ch'on* among all of the lines evenly, but due to furious opposition from Confucianists and patrilineal sides, the boundary has been extended in a standardised way.<sup>66</sup>

The last changes are in the legal proportion of inheritance among family members. According to the revised law in 1977, all children shared evenly exclusive of married daughters assigning just 1/4 of the share of the other children and 1/2 was additionally allotted to the eldest son as a share for ancestral worship. However the law was changed reflecting the demands from women's groups. The additional share for the successor to the family headship has been reduced to nil with the condition that the succession is not compulsory, and all children share evenly regardless of their birth order, sex, or whether married or not. Only the wife is assigned to have an additional 1/2 of the children's amount. There is one further change in the inheritance law. Previously the property in the name of a wife who died without children, belonged to her husband only, even if she died within three years of her marriage, and her parents had no right to the property most of which

had been given by them. The revised law prescribes joint rights for a wife's parents together with the husband if she dies within three years of married life.<sup>67</sup>

The rights of women or wives have improved as much as in other developed countries in the West. The law revision has been focused on the *de facto* improvement of women's legal status as a human being and economic rights as a real member of a family. However, in focusing mainly on women the revisions, particularly of 1989, are showing some points of controversy. The status of some family members has been marginalised. The room for conflict among kinship members over property inheritance has been enlarged due to the expansion of the kinship boundary. The newly included relatives from matrilineal lines or wife's lines can intrude into a quarrel over an inheritance to ask for their share which makes the partition of the estate very complicated and eventually makes the share of wives themselves let alone those of their children reduced.

Second the revised law can reduce the status of elderly relatives and respect of the older generation party because so many rights have been taken away from the head of the family, making him a paper tiger. By changing the one-sided and compulsory primogenitive succession to the headship the possibility none of children would want to succeed to the almost unsubstantial headship arises. Thus, the aged head of a family may assume even a low posture to his or her children. Moreover, as expanding the boundaries of kinship lines, the once clear duty for serving the aged in the patrilineal lines may become vague by serving too many other kin in the new boundary of kinship. A system for the benefit of everyone may frequently turn out to be for the benefit of none of them. Thus the revised law can make the status of the aged very vague.

Another point of issue deriving from the revised law is the status of children. A good example comes from a legal prescription on the relationship between a step-parent and a step-child. In the previous family law, their relationship was exactly that of a parent and a child, however it was down-graded by marriage. The change was aimed to protect the property and right of remarried women from the previous legal coercion of sharing her own contribution, in the case of divorce, with step-children. However this time the law applies disadvantageously to a step-child. As far as they are simply a relative to their step-parent, it is difficult for them to have access to the joint property of their own parent. The revised law is mostly criticised because it overlooks the position of the elderly and children and that is why the women's demands have been frequently criticised as self-centred.

In spite of the great improvement in the legal status of women, the basic framework of family law is almost unchanged. Its two basic axis of the law, to say, the prohibition principle of marriage between *tongsøngdongbon* and family headship principle are still alive in spite of the headship being quite weakened. Thus family law is still strong in maintaining the traditional family values. The Confucian sentiments on the importance of family values are too deeply entrenched among the public either of the recognised Confucianists or non-Confucianists, or even among women's groups consciously or unconsciously in everyday life. The importance of family values which have contributed to revitalising national consensus on economic development in the last few decades, and its moral authority, emphasising the importance of each family as an agent to cope with surging social problems like adolescent problems, divorce rate, ageing issues, and problems coming from sexual openness, etc., are still attractive points for present day Koreans, in spite of its shortcomings in hindering women's self-development in the past. That is why conventional family law has kept its basic framework for decades.

Though focusing on the customary attributes of the family law and the normative level of family relationships, the law at least shows us a broad outline of family life. The law is a crystallisation of the values commonly shared among different social elements. The study of changes in family law revealed various changes in the pattern of present day Korean family life and changes in traditional family values among present day Koreans, however these sentiments are very slowly being weakened meeting the demands for human rights, notably coming from women. Thus the changes in family law have been a result of a confrontation between tradition and human rights generated by the new tides arising from the effects of social and economic modernisation.

# CHAPTER EIGHT

## CONCLUSION

The first section of this chapter summarises the whole of the thesis so far. The second section discusses social policies relating to family life in Korea: what sort of family policies have been provided to meet the demand from groups being marginalised in the process of social and family changes; how policy has responded to the weakness or breakdown of traditional family values, and eventually what sort of policies, in the family realm, are needed to meet the demands from individual families and society as a whole.

### 8.1. SUMMARY

#### 8.1.1. The Tradition

Family life in traditional Korean society was structured around three axes: the ideas of *chib*, *chonghŏp*, and *hyo*. In interaction with each other these ideas established the essential framework within which traditional family patterns were maintained and reinforced.

The *chib* was the basic unit for the integration of individuals within a family and the mobilisation of each family within the wider society. The *Chib* (family) was a compound concept comprising both the family itself, each and every one of its members, and of the physical housing as well. The term was also used more extensively to denote fellow clan members as well. The traditional society was basically structured by this *chib*. The inner structure of a *chib* was organised along two principles: *viz.* the authoritarian relationship between generations and the egalitarian relationships between a couple or among children. However *de facto* in real life the *chib* was commonly characterised by the hierarchy between

generations than by the horizontal relationships of the couple, or siblings. Each individual *chib* was firmly integrated by the highly hierarchical relationship between generations and this became a powerful bond against other family units. Relations between different *chibs* were not hierarchical but segmentarily independent and exclusive with respect to other *chibs*. Thus the firmer the solidarity within each family unit, the more it was prone to be defensive and aggressive towards other units. Confrontation or competitiveness would be intensified when it was bound to other important interests politically, economically, or in honour. Although the hierarchical order inside a family was very strict once he was out of his *chib*, there was no other group that could influence the individual with different principles from those of his family values. His behaviour could be liberal, egoistic or altruistic, or achievement-oriented toward the larger society.

The *munjung* group was a social and external manifestation of the *chib* idea. A *munjung* was a clan group an aggregate of individual *chib* and functioning as a secondary group at regional level. It was an integrated organisation bringing together the demands from each small *chib* so as to achieve individual or communal interests more effectively and to protect and maintain their collective power. Thus the practical unit for practical or political purposes was more frequently the *munjung* than the individual *chib*. The basic element that linked each *munjung* member to the others was their consanguine relationship. The structure was hierarchically organised by the rule of patrilineal primogeniture, however the inner dynamics of the structure were quite democratic with each *chib* being recognised as having its own independent identity. The territorial boundary was also important in developing a consciousness of *munjung* identity extending beyond *chib* loyalties. When they were geographically isolated and with transportation underdeveloped, each *munjung* occupied and dominated a regional community. Thus regional territory and the *munjung* boundary were almost identical, notwithstanding that consanguine relationships were the foremost element in composing each *chib* and the *munjung* of which they were constituent elements.

*Chongbŏp* (primogeniture) was the organisational principle which served to create and institutionalise the family headship as the centralising force of each individual *chib* or *munjung*. The principle prescribed who can or can not be a head of a *chib* and where the authority, in Weberian terms, of the *chib* was. The principle stipulated that the duty and right to maintain a *chib* belonged to the head of a family and the headship was ascribed, by birth, to the eldest son or the eldest

grandson. Thus the eldest son remained in his family of orientation to inherit the headship from his father and the rest of the sons left home after their marriages, each to establish a separate family of procreation. The former family of orientation being succeeded to by the eldest son is *pon-ga*, the latter new family of procreation is *pun-ga*. The *pon-ga* of which the successor has been an eldest son, generation after generation, was specifically called *chong-ga-chib* (the great head family). Each *chib* either *pon-ga* or *pun-ga* was composed of a head, his wife, the eldest son's family, the eldest grandson's family and so on. Thus the average number of the family was not as big as we used to assume because the other sons used to leave to set up their own family of procreation as soon as they married, so there was not enough time for the number of family members to become large. Over an extended period of time conjugal family units would predominate numerically until each second or subsequent son's eldest sons married. Thus these conjugal family units were in each generation a transitional form eventually conforming to the stem family pattern, each to become another *pon-ga* from which the next *pon-ga* and *pun-ga* would be reproduced like cell-division. That was the *chong-bŏp* idea or the patrilineal primogeniture stem family.

Under the *chong-bop* principle the head of a family was the focal point of each *chib*, *pon-ga* or *pun-ga*, and *chong-ga-chib* the centre of the whole clan group *munjung*. Of course the *de facto* power of a *munjung* group was not identical with the power of the head of *chong-ga-chib* because a *munjung* was run by a dual power structure. Frequently the substantial influence moving a *munjung* was in the hands of others rather than the head of the leading *chong-ga-chib*. Nevertheless the *chong-ga-chib* was the central point of a *munjung* and its representative to other *munjung* and the society at large. Even if the essential power lay with another *munjung* member, it was used not in his name but in the name of the head of the leading *chong-ga-chib*. In practice the *chong-ga-chib* was an organisational symbol rather than the substantial power of a *munjung*, and the prosperity of the clan group was believed to be identical with the everlasting succession of the great head family. The adoption system was developed to maintain the succession of the headship. If there was no natural son, the nearest relative was adopted by the clan group and he continued the ancestral worship inherited generation by generation.

Lastly filial piety to parents, the *hyo* idea, was the ideological axis for the maintenance of the familial pattern of traditional society. It was a lubricant to the *chib* and *chongbŏp*. Under the commonly shared belief with the virtue of *hyo* each individual family and each *munjung* was integrated and fortified against other units and the virtue expanded to re-integrate the segmented *chib* or *munjung* at societal

level. Traditional Choson society made *hyo* the supreme value over all the other Neo-Confucian virtues. This ethos served to solidify the hierarchical order within each family. By emphasising the moral duty of devotion to superiors within the family and the regional community, it was fundamental to social integration, since a person dutiful to his parents would obey his ruler in society as well, and loyalty as devotion to a family would, automatically, be extended to the level of kin, local community, and nation.

To conclude, Choson society pursued the *hyo ethos* to make ancestral worship a manifestation of the supreme virtue of all virtues. The best filial piety to the ancestor was crystallised in the effort to maintain the perpetuity and purity of the genealogical line. From this stemmed the eldest son preference idea on the one hand and the adoption system on the other hand, all of which are brought together in the *chib* and the *chongbŏp* principle. The extreme effort to maintain a genealogical line coincided with the *chongbŏp* idea giving primacy to the eldest son and the family values which put the individual *chib* interest above all other interests. Marriage was regulated by an extreme incest taboo and class endogamy. Marriage between even extremely remote cousin a thousand times removed was prohibited. The prohibition extended to marriage between *tongsŏng-dongbon*, i.e. persons of the same surname and the same place of origin who had the same ancestor hundreds or even thousands years ago. Women's rights in particular were severely restricted as the rigorous pursuit of traditional Confucian ideas fossilised in a rigid traditionalism.

### 8.1.2. What Has Changed

Since the mid 1950s Korea has undergone rapid industrialisation, urbanisation, and Westernisation and, undeniably this modernisation was made possible only by active grass-roots participation. Nevertheless government intervention was the major factor in social change and was responsible for the fast rate of change. The speed of industrialisation followed both by the growth of living standards and the economic development of the nation was unprecedentedly dramatic. Industrialisation led to inter-regional migration as people sought jobs in the cities with the result of over-crowding in the urban areas. The scale and speed of the rural emigration to the cities left the rural areas depopulated and the urban areas with many social problems. The influence of modernisation was not limited to the material or economic realms but led to a preference for Western life styles

particularly among the younger generations. Westernisation, with its emphasis on the importance of individual rights and the pursuit of individual interests slowly replaced the former strong moral belief in more collective values. Ironically the basis of this pursuit of individual rights was the economic development made possible not by individualism, but by an ethos which had stressed the collective interest.

The family and cultural and social areas relating to it were not excluded from the influence of modernisation. Many things have changed during the last half century of rapid social change including the demography of the family, kinship boundaries, marriage and family dissolution, role distribution and power, and many other aspects of family life.

The most immediately obvious demographic change has been the rapid reduction in family size. The average size of the ordinary household was 3.7 persons according to Census data in 1990. The number is even smaller than that in traditional society when most ordinary families had not enough time to have a large number of members due to the stem principle that prescribed establishment of a separate family of procreation as soon as sons other than the eldest married. The sharp decrease in size came primarily out of a decrease in the fertility rate. The total fertility rate decreased to 1.6 by 1989.

Nuclear family households have noticeably increased and those according to FAM89 data of the stem pattern have dwindled to below 15 per cent. This is less than half the proportion of stem family households in early 19th century Chosŏn society. The increase in nuclear families and the decrease in stem family households is mainly due to the high rate of inter-regional migration in pursuit of employment. According to a KIPH report (1986) over three out of five persons experienced long-term migration which takes over a year throughout the nation in 1943-1983 and among them over one out of two men migrated because of employment. The migration of the eldest son and his family split the stem family into two households of the nuclear pattern. Conflict between the generations, in particular between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law was also a decisive factor which tended to split stem-type families into two households. Urbanisation not only decreased the number of stem pattern households but also increased the number of one person households and those with an atypical pattern. Particularly the increase in one person households partly reflects the increase in individual living standards and partly a change in values so that persons began to prefer having their own separate household for the benefit of personal privacy. Thus

households began to separate out into one person households and ordinary households comprising just own family members. Atypical households have also increased as a result of urbanisation but also because of other trends like the increase in the divorce rate. Thus households of a diversity of types of composition such as a single parent and children, grandparents and grand children, three or four generation families without intermediate generations, and couples with brothers or sisters of either of them etc. have all increased.

Demographic changes in the family brought about other subsequent changes, both positive and negative, in the population or economic fields. First the decrease in the fertility rate changed the age structure from the underdeveloped pyramidal pattern to the diamond style typical of economically developed countries. The per capita income increased notably, the unemployment rate declined as prospects of employment in the future improved with the reduction in the labour supply. At the same time the financial burden of educational investment for the school-aged population has been reduced while the quality of the investment increased.

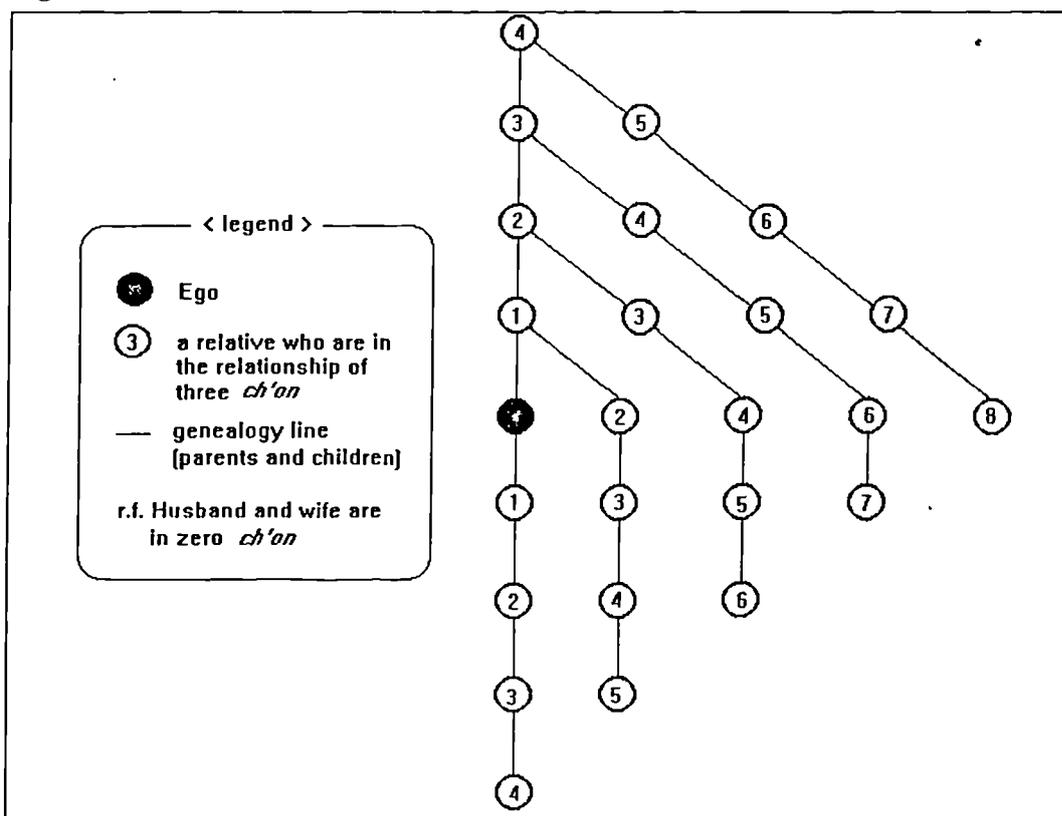
However this demographic change provoked negative results as well. The enthusiasm for family planning brought about an unbalanced sex ratio with the predominance of boys among the population below 15 years old which will make pairing conditions a problem in future marriage markets. This is anticipated to cause serious adolescent problems in the near future. The rapid decrease in the fertility rate accompanied by the increase in the average life expectancy are also causing a rapid ageing in the population structure. Apart from the burden to the social security for the aged which this represents, many other social problems can be foreseen in the near future like the necessary expansion of medical facilities, and job opportunities for the elderly which may reduce opportunities for youth etc. Of course it may encourage the development of industry oriented towards the older worker that may add a positive advantage to the industrial sector of the nation. Nevertheless, more problems are foreseen economically, socially, and politically.

Lastly, the changes in family pattern such as the increase in nuclear families, one person households, and atypical patterns, has brought about a sharp increase in the number of separate households. The rate of the increase far exceeded that of population growth and has led to a severe housing problem in present day Korea particularly in the urban areas. Housing supply in the last few decades has been unable to satisfy the increase in the number of households and the situation has been aggravated by the growing concentration of rural population in

the cities. The unequal distribution of income, particularly since the late 1970s, has made the situation still worse as speculation in real estate, has made it far more difficult for urban poor families to have their own flat than ever before.

Modernisation has also had an impact on kinship relations. Interaction with patrilineal relatives, particularly third and more remote cousins has been reduced while there has been an increase in frequency of contact with other relatives. The role of wife's relatives has noticeably increased so that a woman's frequency of contact with a cousin in the patrilineal line is now less than the wife's brothers or sisters who were not perceived as a relative at all in traditional society. This trend has been reflected in the revision of family law in 1989 and the juridical boundary of kinship has been defined equally upto 4 *ch'on* (full cousin) both of husband's and wife's side, and 8 *ch'on* (third cousin) in both patrilineal and matrilineal lines. (Refer to Figure 8.1)

Figure 8.1: Calculation Of Number Of *Ch'on*



source: Kwang Kyu Lee, *The Family and Clan in Korea* (Korean edition, 1990), p.179.

Marriage has also changed. Concubinage has even been prohibited by law. Class endogamy has declined with the growing emphasis on individual character and the reduction in the perceived importance of family background. In traditional society, decision-making about adult children's marriages was in the hands of their

parents and children were obliged to marry at a very early age. This has drastically changed. The unmarried rate has sharply increased, and the age at first marriage has risen considerably. Decision-making has moved to the persons concerned and young people no longer feel marriage to be urgent thanks to the general increase in living standards, the increase in educational level, and the increase in job opportunities for women in particular. These changes in marriage, directly or indirectly have led to an increase in women's participation in society which in short term created both an unemployment problem and a decline in the fertility rate which in the long term has thrown the improved job prospects in the labour market for those seeking employment by reducing the potentially competitive labour supply.

Changes in the life cycle of women have also come about during modernisation. The prolongation of women's post-childcare lives has resulted from the extension of life expectancy thanks to the improvement of medical services and the growth of individual living standards as well as from changes in fertility behaviour among the younger generation who tend to have a small number of children as soon as they marry. These changes brought about subsequent changes for example in the availability of women to join the labour force and this has intensified the competition for jobs. Social policies related to women have had to keep pace with women's new status in society.

Women's roles in the family have also been affected by the process of modernisation. Quite apart from those household tasks or child care that traditionally belonged to the housewife, even the outside activities representing a family which in traditional society were monopolised by men, have been left to the wife. Dual career women have had to become superwomen managing everything in family life.

This change provoked several issues socially and individually. The changing distribution of roles between husband and wife in some cases created a sexual-identity problem for their sons becoming girlish or at least unisexual due to a lack of influence from the father.<sup>1</sup> Second the over-burden of housework particularly among dual career wives increased dissatisfaction with family life and generated an increased demand for social facilities for their children left alone during their time out at work. The increased role of wives matches to a relative decrease in the role expectation for the elderly in family life. In traditional society all of the activities inside the family were supervised and controlled by the eldest women but given the currently prevailing egalitarian ideas, their position has been

so reduced as to undermine the traditional *hyo* idea. Children remain inactive subjects and have no distinctive role except doing their school work. All these changes have thrown up new issues for the labour market, social policies, and even family law which has been revised to meet the increased role of women in the home and outside.

Modernisation has also affected family dissolution. The divorce rate is not as high as other developed countries like Japan or Western countries. On the other hand however, the facts suggest that the rate will rise in the near future, to match those in other countries. During the last few decades, particularly in the 1980s, the increase has been very sharp among the younger generation. The weakness of the stem family has deprived young couples of an institutional mechanism to reduce the conjugal conflicts occurring. As most households consist of couples and children only, they concentrate on their own affairs which while everything goes well may be congenial, but is far more serious and destructive when their relationship comes under stress. The modern emphasis on individual rights, in contrast with the older generation's Confucian stress on common prosperity or the common good, contributed to an increase in the divorce rate. The increase in family dissolution has begun to demand social policies for the divorced and their children and at the same time the growth of atypical family patterns has produced other social issues relating to adolescent problems.<sup>2</sup>

### 8.1.3. Continuities

In spite of various changes in family life, the three traditional principles have not yet totally disappeared. The *chib* idea is still strong among present day Koreans. Of course the attributes or orientations of the idea are not exactly the same as the traditional one but, within an externally different social environment, the *chib* idea is alive enough to exert a continuing influence both in the family and society. The traditional *munjung* (sub-clan) group has changed its organisational principle and enlarged the boundary of membership to encompass far wider membership of the whole of the clan group under the name of *chongch'inhoe*. The new clan group undertakes similar activities of inter-clan competition but in a more open and more widely beneficial way than before.

This was revealed in a sharp increase in the *chokbo* (genealogy) publication rate from 1980s. Genealogy publication reflects a changed idea about the clan

boundary and a rise in demands for sexual equality etc. It is a mechanism to reinforce integration among the members within the newly expanded boundary. The best example of a social movement successfully activated by the conventional *chib* idea was the Saemaul (New Village) movement. This movement was motivating unprecedented development in the national economy, and was able to achieve its objectives through co-operation between clan groups within a neighbouring region. It was an example where the *chib* idea was realised through a constructive competition. However, there is another example in which the same idea has functioned negatively in present day Korea. The idea of *chib* entails of an enthusiasm for family housing and even its land as well. Each family aspires to have their own independent house rather than a semi-detached one or an apartment flat as those do not guarantee their own independent space or their own ground and it encourages them to have a bigger and more luxurious one than other families. Competition for the limited housing stock provoked a drastic rise in housing prices leaving poor urban families less and less likely to get their own flat. Over-enthusiasm for the housing caused capital flow into real estate sometimes with negative effects on investment in the national economy. Investment in the housing sector more than tripled, from 1.5 per cent of the GNP to 5.2 per cent over the period between the first five-year plan (1962-1966) and the fifth five-year plan (1982-1986).<sup>3</sup> The *chib* idea of children as the mechanism to reproduce the family and to realise parents' dearest wishes, has not changed even among the younger generation. In traditional society *hyo* was another token of solidarity between generations. The higher the degree of *hyo* in the society, the more enthusiasm and sacrifice for their children was expected of parents as well. These sentiments still help in preventing family dissolution in the present day. Of course the divorce rate is rising sharply among the younger generations but most of them divorce before they have children. Once they have a baby, husband or wife rarely consider divorce however egoistic each of them are and no couple dares to think of divorce at the risk of losing their children. That is why almost all the disputes at the Family Court have been to take charge of custody of the children regardless of expense<sup>4</sup> and why most family re-unions have been for the benefit of the children. (Refer to Table 7.6 in Chapter 7)

Elements of the stem family persist although it has been much weakened. Of course most present day Korean families live in a nuclear family household but there are still definite ties between generations living apart. Whilst these no longer emphasise the position of the eldest son. All sons or daughters regardless of birth order position maintain emotionally, economically and physically a frequent relationship with their parents. As soon as parents are in difficulties, they are ready

to return to the original household even sharing a roof with parents when necessary. These strong sentiments and the *chib* idea have eased the economic development of the country. development would have been impossible without sacrifice on the part of urban mothers and rural sisters during the last a few decades. The mothers endowed their children with education rather than land or money as in traditional society with the money she earned from lodgers. Rural sisters working in the urban factories also sent their earnings back to rural homes to provide their brothers with a higher education. They strove almost competitively to have their children or brothers educated more than others in other families reflecting the continuing strength of family loyalties and the *chib* idea. The traditional stem family was, in a sense, a mechanism for role allocation between the sexes. The roles of a wife and husband were very definite and are still clearly differentiated among contemporary couples. Wives have taken over many roles which once belonged exclusively to the husband. Outside activities like visiting public offices or attending relatives' for formal congratulation or condolences are good examples of wives' newly assumed responsibilities. In spite of the expansion of the wife's role in and outside the home, the changes do not mean an abolition of role differentiation itself but just a changed contents of the separate roles. Husbands are attached to their work place but a wife typically has a non-work place orientation including home affairs. Reflecting the traditional idea of role differentiation, a husband now tends to think occupational activities are the most important realm for men as economic earner or in the eyes of other families. Thus they rarely like to engage in what are seen as trivial things which now belong to the sphere of a wife whether in traditional society they belong to him or to her. This dedication to work contributed to the development of the national economy. A husband was proud of his occupation and his wife was also proud of herself as the supporter never blaming her husband staying night after night at his work place leaving his own family at home. These attitudes reflect the Confucian virtues of forbearance for women and sincerity in men. Husbands identification with their work place and the strict role differentiation so that he was freed from home responsibilities, helped factories and companies achieve unprecedented economic growth. Despite an egalitarian trend in relation to some responsibilities for children, *de facto* most duties relating to home affairs are strictly dichotomised by sex. Thus men exercise total authority for large amounts of property like real estate and still act on behalf of their families on such matters while the wife has her own realm relating to smaller expenditure and she acts wholly without intervention from her husband.

Clan endogamy prohibiting the marriage between *tongsŏngdongbon* (same surname and same place of origin) is still strictly kept in the present day with the effect of a form of *ad hoc* law. This could create some difficulty in the marriage market when the group aged under 15 years old amongst whom there is a serious imbalance with sex ratio, grows up in the near future. The idea of narrowing the mate boundary can cause serious problems in marriage as a result of the restriction of choice. However as the Confucianists enthusiastically asserted, it may reduce the possibility of a breakdown of sexual morality. The traditional rule is basically against the idea of love affairs as an individual right overcoming the barriers of age difference, regional or nationality boundary etc., which can easily go beyond to justify illegal affairs as well like pre-marital or extra-marital intercourse, etc. In fact the prohibition philosophy was not limited to clan exogamy but extended to most sexual morality. It was a sort of moral symbol for the exercise of moderation in sexual behaviour, to prevent intemperate behaviour like extra- and pre-marital intercourse that eventually could dissolve the family itself. Traditionally society allowed concubinage or prostitution for the benefit of men but the prohibition principle continues in the present to discourage any relaxation of sexual morality and preserve class endogamy. Of course as the class boundaries have weakened, there is not strict class endogamy either but a strong propinquity is observed in marriage in terms of the educational or occupational level of marriage partners.

Education has been more important in measuring the suitability of prospective partners due to the traditionally inherited enthusiasm under Confucianism. Education guaranteed economic wealth and social standing as much now as in the past. Together with this modified class system, the current scarcity of potential bride-grooms has produced an abnormal marriage custom. In order to match a daughter to a suitable would-be-groom whose educational and occupational background may be thought to ensure her a better life, parents compete with other parents in the amount of wedding gifts they can offer to him and his family. Gifts sometimes amount to a luxurious apartment flat, a car, or offices for the son-in-law to work in. Parents and their daughters who cannot participate in this extravagant competition suffer a degree of relative deprivation provoking a number of social issues. This custom is now beginning to disappear to transmit to bride scarcity phenomenon in the near future. (Refer to Section 5.2.2. of Chapter 5.)

*Hyo* also still persists in various patterns in present day family life. Having a strong affection for their parents, either living under the same roof with parents or not, children have continued to provide for their parents physically, economically,

and emotionally. Thanks to the children's filial piety the government could save the finances for welfare to invest in economic reproduction. *Hyo* was observed in the marriage process as well. Although the final choice of partner is that of the persons concerned themselves, out of respect for their parents they have them participate in the match-making process. That is why match-makers are still prevalent in present day Korea. This has both negative and positive aspects. Match-makers could manipulate the excessive competition between the parents concerned so as to earn more reward for themselves and if the situation did not develop as the match-maker intended the relationship between the couple can be broken off through her trickery. Nevertheless it had a positive side in matching couples from a similar life style and living standards which contribute for a more stable married life.

It may be argued that there have been more losers than winners as a result of these new developments in the family system. Although many traditional elements have been changed or broken down, there is still not an apparent consensus commonly shared among present day Koreans about how the family ought to be in the future. So far the abolition or revision of distortions that have been mostly thought of as belonging to tradition has not led to any vision of what the family should be like in the future. The groups who sought to change the tradition are not winners in real sense. Of course the individualism associated with modernisation or Westernisation is deeply instilled among the younger generations and in women's organisations. However it has not yet gained full legitimacy and there is a lack of consensus at societal level about new tendencies in the family.<sup>5</sup>

The rapid modernisation of the last few decades has thrown more shadow than light on the family. In the process of social change, men have lost as much as women claim they lost in the past in terms of human rights. Of course what the man has lost is not identical with what woman did but he also was serious in his social life. If the society gave serious problems to women in family life, it gave the same amount of problems to men in social life. Men were almost deprived of family life to their work place. That is one of the reasons an improvement of labour condition, holidays and work hours in particular, was claimed with the same importance as an increase of salary in the trade union movement in the late 1980s. Eventually there was no significant difference in perceiving the level of satisfaction with family life as shown in Table 8.1 though men are slightly more positive about the family life in general.<sup>6</sup> To say both men are almost similarly suffered if it was suffering and similarly enjoyed if it was enjoyable either in family life or occupational life at least in perception of ordinary person in spite men have been

told, from perspective of some of social groups, more benefitted from the given social system.

**Table 8.1. Level Of Satisfaction On Overall Family Life**

	total	Satisfied	Acceptable	Unsatisfied
total	100.0	36.0	52.8	11.2
husband	100.0	39.4	51.5	9.1
wife	100.0	33.2	53.8	13.0

source: SIKK (1992), p.309.

The older generation contributed to the economic development of the nation and the individual family with their devotion to Confucian family values. After their sacrifices for the benefit of their family and the nation they now find nothing is left for them and they, in some sense, are in even a worse situation than their own parents' generation. They lost most of their rights as head of a family and they have become no more than toothless tigers as children are no longer afraid of their fathers as a head of family. They have also lost their role of family manager and become simply a supporter to a younger daughter-in-law or son. They can no longer afford to order the younger generation about, instead they dare only venture an opinion studying the younger generations' faces whom they themselves brought up. Outside activities are now monopolised by the younger daughter-in-law and the elderly are alienated inside and outside family life. The aged are no longer ascribed meaningful roles through which they can find their identity. The modification of the stem family also means that although they are in constant contact with their own children, most of them do not share the same roof with them. This separated residential life has weakened their welfare once guaranteed by living together. As they get older they need more attention from their children not only regarding their physical health but also with regard to their economic level and emotional satisfaction. However, as they are living apart from children their immediate needs are difficult to fulfill. In addition, government welfare agencies are not developed enough to pay attention to them. Filled with the ideas of *hyo*, they were sincere in serving their parents' generation, and sacrificed to pass on what they earned for the benefit of the younger generations in the form of education, and for the benefit of national development.

Of course there are a few important things the aged gained. Rising living standard partly thanks to urbanisation and partly to the income earned by their working daughter-in-law have improved their living conditions and material comfort, have improved their health and have extended their life expectancy. While their responsibilities to their families which, in feedback, gave a total authority in

the past, are less which means they too have more freedom to development a wider range of qualities in their relationships with members of their families and their children and grandchildren in particular.

Non-authoritarian relationships for some people are a positive gain for both sides not only for those who were formerly subordinate. All these examples are true but to a minority group. At least three out of five aged people have no money to use for themselves for the extended life expectancy.<sup>7</sup> More significantly most of them are still relatively too much oriented to traditional virtues of a dignified head of a family to enjoy the non-authoritarian relationship which a minority of their generation and their sons' generation are enjoying. It is difficult to see which way of life is more pleasant and valueable. But at least one thing seems true, that most aged people are surrounded by a cultural atmosphere on human relationship of which they do not approve. To say the non-authoritarian atmosphere of the society drives the aged to emotional alienation. To sum up, they have few rewards either from their children who have a greater commitment to individualism than to *hyo*, or from the state which is still committed to the logic of development.

Children have also lost out in the modern family. Of course they have benefitted from both education, most valuable in present day Korea and from the economic prosperity resulting from economic growth in the individual family and the nation as a whole. Again more important is the improved quality of relationships with parents and others in the non-authoritarian modern family. Nevertheless their position as an important axis of the traditional family has shrunk to a mere component in everyday family life. They were an institutional symbol of the family but now the axis of the family has moved to couples and to the couples' interest at the expense of the interests of children. In other word the main axis of a family is moving from the relationship of parents and children to that of husband and wife. It is to be expected that the situation would turn worse if children are in a step-family and will sharply increase in the near future. In the step-family, the child's position has been downgraded in relation to his/her step parent and creates the need for a special mechanism to protect his/her juridical rights. The evidence is observed in the revision of inheritance section of family law. Present day children are prescribed to get less share of inheritance from their parents than their step-mother or step-father is going to get.

The women's movement has often accused men of upholding patriarchy in the traditional Confucian family but husbands themselves were victims of the same social system. They sacrificed much of their own personality and freedom as

individuals under the prevailing family value just as women did. Of course men were the main beneficiaries and women the main losers, but all of them were in a similar situation in the sense that both served to sustain and reinforce the Confucian system and were deprived of their human rights in the process. Men have suffered in the modernisation process as well. They worked by day and night in order to provide educational fees for their children and to enable their family to prosper economically as well as to contribute to the economic development of the nation. Working like machines, they missed out on family life and even the fatherhood of their children. They had little time to take care of their children as a father, or to relate to other members as a son or a husband. Although wives blame husbands for indifference, they have been made scape-goats for the economic development of the society. Growing up under economically prosperous conditions and with their modern individualistic values, children tend not to recognise the sacrifices they made. They easily forget their parents guaranteed that. Perhaps it is a time to think about fatherhood lost during modernisation but those fathers under the Confucian virtues of devotion and silence, are still silent about what they went through.

Women on the whole seem having gained many things they have claimed relating to their social and familial status in family law, family life and social life generally. However it is just a relative and superficial view and it is difficult to say if they are winners in a real sense. Their *de facto* status was not as disadvantaged in traditional society as many now believe. What they have struggled against was not wholly Confucian tradition but the legacy of Colonial annexation. In the process of modernisation, many obligations and responsibilities, new or conventional, have fallen upon women as husbands spent little time in the households but instead were in their workplace working hard day and night. Women's devotion at home was the other side of the same contribution made by husbands to the economic development of the nation. Nevertheless, their devotion has not been acknowledged as much as their husband's was. Their effort was sometimes recognised as meagre in the court when they demand reparation for injury or sue for a divorce in particular.

To conclude, the modernisation of the past half a century was a collective movement to cast off the long standing poverty of the nation. The social change was successful in as much as it was collectivistic and was sustained by the familial tradition. However, as worthwhile as the economic development was there has been a price to pay. Too many members in the society have been hurt in the process of social change and it may be time to ask if traditional family values that

contributed economic growth can contribute again to cure the individual suffering and growing social problems.

## 8.2 FAMILY POLICY

### 8.2.1. Social Security And Family Policy

A short review on the state of social security in the nation might be helpful in understanding overall family policy in Korea.<sup>8</sup> Social security and social welfare have progressed in line with the socio-economic development of the nation. Living standards have improved markedly due to the rapid economic growth of the 1970s. At the same time, this fast growth and industrialisation have given rise to an assortment of social problems such as extreme income gaps and a widespread imbalance of development among regions and industries. The deterioration of socio-economic conditions featuring price spirals, economic slow-down and growing unemployment, prompted by the 1973 and subsequent oil shocks, added further to the need for broad welfare programmes.

With the successful implementation of five five-year economic development plans, demands for welfare programmes and expansion of employment opportunities have risen in many sectors. The imbalance in income distribution has brought about the realisation that the problem of poverty needs to be addressed, and this has led to the establishment of a social security which has sought to create a balance between economic and social development. In this direction, the medical aid and insurance systems began expanding in 1977, and the National Pension Law, enacted in 1986, has also been enforced beginning in 1988.<sup>9</sup> Social welfare policies have concentrated on the relief of those unable to support themselves due to old age, disability and other causes.

**Table 8.2. State Of Social Security Programmes**

Programmes	Scope	Coverage	Beneficiary
<b>1. Social Insurance ;</b>			
a. Medical insurance	Workers in workshops with 5 or more employees, public officials, private school teachers	Disease, injury, birth death	20,777,000
b. Industrial accident compensation insurance	Workers in workshops with 5 or more employees (102,744 workshops)	Disease, injury, disability, death	6,107,000
c. National pension	All citizens	Old age, disability death	4,323,697

d. Special profession pension	Public officials, military servicemen, private school teachers	Old age, disability death	798,000
e. Seamen's insurance	Seamen	Old age, disability death	
f. Severance allowance system	Workers in workshops with 10 or more employees	Severance allowance	
<b>2. Public Relief ;</b>			
a. Subsistence care			
Care at home	Persons, as defined by Law on Subsistence Care	Food, fuel, educational expenses, medicine	318,000
Care Residential	Persons accommodated at social welfare facilities under Law on Subsistence Care	Food, fuel, education, medicine, funeral	75,000
Care of the needy	Persons with low incomes, as prescribed by Law on Subsistence Care	Food, fuel, medicine, education	1,917,000
b. Medical care	Economically incapable persons, needy persons, and persons in residential accommodation as defined by Law on Subsistence Care, persons subject to veterans assistance, etc.	Disease, injury	4,290,000
c. Veterans assistance	Wounded veterans and policemen, bereaved families of fallen servicemen and policemen, those who had rendered outstanding contribution to the nation's independence, defectors from North Korea etc.	Subsistence, medicine, etc.	132,000
<b>3. Social Welfare Service ;</b>			
Care at 580 facilities	Persons in residential accommodation for the aged, physically handicapped persons, children welfare, etc.	Subsistence, medicine, etc.	74,287
<b>4. Disaster Relief</b>	Victims of disasters	Emergency relief, etc.	

source: quoted from KOIS, *A Handbook of Korea*, p.468-469.

The social security system in Korea was effectively institutionalised by the Social Security Law enacted in 1963. It consists of three major elements: the social insurance programme, the public relief programme, and social welfare programmes. Programmes undertaken and planned as of August 1991 are listed in Table 8.2.

First of all, one of the most important elements of the social insurance program is medical insurance. The law on medical insurance was enacted as early as in 1963. However, its implementation took place later in the 1970's after several revisions.<sup>10</sup> Medical insurance was first introduced for industrial workers of large firms in 1977, and since then gradually expanded to smaller firms. As of 1988, a total of 5,279,000 persons in 154 industrial establishments and their 11,000,000 dependants were benefiting from the medical insurance service. Public officials and employees of private schools were also covered by medical insurance in 1978. In 1980 coverage was extended to the dependants of career military servicemen. In addition there were six compulsory community group medical insurance societies established in 1981 as pilot projects for those living within designated regions who were not eligible for other types of medical insurance. With the implementation of medical insurance for regional populations more than 90 per cent of the people were covered under some type of policy.

The medical insurance system was operated on a three-tier basis - industrial establishments, regional medical societies, and the insurance for public officials and employees of private schools. However the medical insurance system expanded step by step by 1991 to cover almost the entire population. At that time, the medical insurance managerial system was integrated, industrial establishment insurance was expanded in scope to cover workshops employing five or more workers from 1988, and community insurance was expanded to every region to cover the total population by medical insurance by 1991. The medical institutions participating in medical insurance programmes numbered 18,462 across the country, including 213 general hospitals, 351 hospitals, 5 dental hospitals, 8,267 clinics, 3,036 dental clinics, and 541 maternity clinics. Since 1981, two herbal hospitals have participated in the medical insurance programmes on an experimental basis to determine the role of herbal medicine in the medical insurance system.

Along with medical insurance, the government has also run the medical aid program for low-income families, veterans, disaster victims, and government-designated "human cultural properties."<sup>11</sup> Under the medical care program, the government bears the entire medical expenses of economically incapable persons. For those in low-income brackets, the state provides for all out-patient expenses and half of the in-patient charges, the remaining half being paid from the Medical Aid Fund on an instalment basis. Funds have been established through the medical care programme, within the provinces and six major cities to be disbursed by city, county and ward governments. The government bears 80 per cent of the Medical

Care Fund and provincial administrations the remaining 20 per cent. For the effective implementation of medical care, the country has been divided into 57 clinical zones with a total of 6,071 medical institutions designated for the program - 5,068 public or private primary medical institutions (health centres and clinics), 452 secondary institutions (hospitals and some clinics) and 11 tertiary institutions (general hospitals). As a result, the number of the medical aid beneficiaries has steadily increased since 1977, covering 5.8 per cent of the total population, and it doubled in 1986. Before 1977 Koreans, the poor in particular, were living in a medical vacuum period. The average number of treatment days per patient as well has been increasing steadily.<sup>12</sup> However, as shown on Table 8.3, medical aid service coverage began to decline from 1987 as medical insurance was expanded. The service coverage of the medical aid programme has been relatively low since then thanks to the general rise of living standard of individual families.

**Table 8.3. The Number Of Medical Insurance Beneficiaries And Medical Aid Beneficiaries**

year	medical insurance		medical aid	
	number of beneficiaries	service coverage	number of beneficiaries	service coverage
1977	3,202,981	8.8	2,095,251	5.8
1980	9,226,365	24.2	2,141,690	5.6
1985	17,994,913	44.1	3,258,769	7.9
1986	19,360,822	47.0	4,386,000	10.5
1987	21,257,464	51.1	4,386,000	10.4
1988	28,906,359	68.9	4,290,000	10.2
1989	39,922,389	94.2	4,246,000	10.0
1990	40,180,023	93.7	3,930,389	9.2
1991	40,800,123	94.3	2,878,684	6.7

source: Korea Medical Insurance Corporation, *Medical Insurance Statistical Yearbook*.

The public relief system has been sought out by the Livelihood Protection Act which was enacted in 1961. It provides assistance for the two categories of persons stipulated by the Act: those who are incapable of making any income and those who have low incomes. The former includes those of 65 years and over, children aged under 18, and those disabled due to injury, mental derangement and physical handicaps, all of whom do not have any economic supporter. The magistrate of the county or mayor gives a list of them to the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs. The needy families are counted by magistrates or mayors excluding those in home care and institutional care but including those without employment, single parent households, school leavers without a job etc. They are defined by the amount of average monthly income per person. The ceiling set for income relief eligibility is an average of 110,000 *won* (equivalent to 88 UK pounds) per person in 1993. This was 46,000 *won* (equivalent to 31 UK pounds) in 1987. The minimum living expenses for an urban household of three persons was 581,975

won (equivalent to 416 UK pounds) in 1989<sup>13</sup>, so the ceiling is still quite low. However, those being in the category but healthy enough to work are excluded from the livelihood protection.

As shown in Table 8.4, the proportion of persons who are provided for at home or in residential care remained about the same allowing for the increase in the total population. The number of people on low-incomes doubled and the number of eligible households grew more than two and half-fold during the period from 1972 to 1991. This is not because the total number of low-income people increased, but because the government allocated more budget to the public assistance program for low-income families. The low income household. In other words, although the number of persons in need has declined with increasing economic growth, the number receiving care remains relatively about the same because the income ceiling for those eligible for public relief has been raised.

**Table 8.4. Persons Under The Livelihood Protection**

year	Livelihood Protection				
	Home care		Institutional	Low-income	
	individuals	households	care	individuals (%)	households
1972	283,000	-	-	957,859(2.8)	185,992
1975	330,000	-	55,838	903,872(2.6)	179,339
1980	282,000	-	47,000	1,500,056(3.9)	329,682
1985	282,000	-	63,150	1,928,000(4.7)	471,393
1986	283,650	-	70,900	1,819,000(4.4)	-
1987	295,000	-	74,650	1,984,000(4.8)	-
1988	318,294	177,231	75,020	1,916,757(4.6)	-
1989	340,595	179,260	79,000	1,932,935(4.6)	493,359
1990	339,423	188,568	81,383	1,835,385(4.3)	488,134
1991	338,168	177,983	81,556	1,826,421(4.2)	493,620

source: MOHASA, *Yearbook of Health and Social Statistics*

% : percentage to total population. (Percentage of individuals are almost identical with that of households.)

- : unavailable

The standard of provision at home or in residential care has gradually been improved and it will account for 70 per cent of the minimum required living cost in rural areas and 75 per cent in urban areas by 1995. The effectiveness of public care will be increased by targetting the greatest need according to regional and household composition factors. The entire amount of the minimum required living cost is to be provided for those in residential accommodation. To encourage self-help among the needy, cash loans of 500,000 won (equivalent to 401 UK pounds in 1993) to 1,000,000 won<sup>14</sup> are on offer to about 183,000 households or half of the total of poor families. The loans are repayable over five to six months at an annual interest of 5 per cent with a grace period of one year. Recipients are selected by

mayors of county commissioners at the recommendation of township heads. In addition, there were plans to provide four to 24 months of vocational to about 4,500 young people from poor families. After such training, jobs were to be arranged for them through local labour offices.

Medical care is provided for those in the low-income bracket: military veterans, disaster victims and government-designated "human cultural properties" and the state bears the entire medical expenses of economically disable persons. Under the Military Relief Programmes, public assistance is extended to about 149,544 families of dead or disabled veterans and 2,303 families of those who have rendered meritorious services to the nation. Aid includes compensation in cash, educational aid for children and vocational training. In addition, soft-term loans are provided for the homeless for use in building, purchasing or renting houses. Recipients of such loans numbered 4,400 in 1985. The homeless are also given priority in the distribution of public housing. A total of 352,244 wounded military veterans still receive full medical care at veterans' hospitals, and the disabled veterans are supplied with various complementary services.<sup>15</sup>

**Table 8.5. Social Welfare Institutions And Residents In The Institutions**

year	Homes for the aged		Institutions for the handicapped		
		residents (%1)		residents(%2)	
1965	42	2,567(0.21)	38	6,205(-)	
1970	44	2,383(0.20)	44	6,944(-)	
1975	45	2,441(0.20)	66	8,491(-)	
1980	48	3,158(0.22)	90	11,281(-)	
1985	67	5,059(0.29)	92	9,326(-)	
1990	89	6,409(0.30)	150	12,759(-)	
1991	106	6,822(0.30)	167	13,131(-)	

year	maternal & child welfare		women's vocational		children's houses	
	instituti on	number of hholds(%3)	guide centre	resident(%4)		resident(%5)
1965	37	1,126(0.28)	29	1,333	543	67,144(0.53)
1970	34	945(0.16)	34	2,451	533	54,899(0.41)
1975	34	1,025(0.16)	31	2,672(15.3)	385	38,452(0.29)
1980	33	872(0.12)	24	2,136(20.5)	314	27,907(0.22)
1985	34	956(0.11)	23	1,211(11.5)	290	28,187(0.23)
1990	37	879(0.10)	22	1,172(14.7)	287	26,368(0.24)
1991	38	829(0.09)	22	1,152(14.3)	288	24,997(0.23)

source: EPB, *Summary of Budget for Fiscal Year*.

%1 : percentage to the population aged 65 and over.

%2 : percentage to all the mentally handicapped (unavailable)

%3 : percentage to single parent households

%4 : percentage to the number of ruined women in brothel.

%5 : percentage to the child population under 15 years old.

Along with the social insurance, and public relief programmes, there are residential and other social welfare institutions such as homes for the aged,

institutes for the handicapped, maternal and child welfare institutions, and women's vocational guidance centres. As shown on Table 8.5, there has been a great increase in the number of homes for the aged and their inmates which seems to be mainly due to the ageing of population and the decline of the stem family. However regarding the increase in the number of the total aged population the proportion of the provision for the elderly has not increased so noticeably. The number of the institutions for the handicapped and their inmates increased up to 1980. The abrupt fluctuation in 1985 is due to the changes in the classification: those in mental hospitals were excluded. While the number of single mother households accommodated in the institution also has steadily declined. Until 1965 many of the inmates were widows and their children of the Korean war but since then they are comprised of unwed mothers and those separated by divorce or separation. In spite the number of them are increasing rapidly, the inmates in the institution have declined. On the other hand the inmates in the women's vocational centre are mostly ruined women and reliable data are unavailable except relating to those in a particular brothel. The provision for them has gradually declined.

Lastly the number of children's homes and their inmates have continuously declined over the past two and half decades. The changes are regarded firstly as a consequence of socio-economic development since the 1960s and secondly the number of orphaned children of the Korean war, has declined by their natural growth into adults or by adoption, abroad or at home. That is the reason the statistics after 1970 have sharply declined. The Korean war ended in 1953 and the orphans were 17 years old or more by 1970. The institutions accommodated them until their 18-year-old legal age ceiling. The further decline after 1970 is due to, in addition to socio-economic development, a decline in birth rate and in the stem pattern families.

**Table 8.6. Trend Of Budget For Social Welfare Services** % (100 million won)

target of the service	distribution of welfare service budget in each year					
	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992
total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
(real sum)	(421.6)	(515.6)	(724.3)	(1222.0)	(1489.6)	(1922.4)
child	27.2	27.4	22.4	25.8	32.3	35.0
elderly	8.7	8.9	9.6	31.0	26.4	30.0
women	11.5	8.7	3.2	2.1	3.1	2.5
disabled	39.5	41.9	40.8	24.2	22.4	17.1
homeless	6.5	6.9	8.9	5.6	5.6	4.3
others	6.6	6.5	15.2	11.2	10.4	11.0

source: EPB, *Summary of Budget for Fiscal Year*.

The major emphasis of social welfare policy has been on children, the disabled, the elderly and women who need special care. (Refer to Table 8.6) In 1991 a total of about 25 thousand children were accommodated in 288 children's homes throughout the country. In addition there were 6,901 households headed by children with a total number of 14,416 children. With 12 vocational training facilities the government has increased public support for child welfare funding. There are job-placement campaigns to help older children become self-supporting. The government has also provided subsidies for living and educational expenses of children who are heads of households. Counselling for children was provided by 380 counsellors at child guidance centres nation-wide. A nation-wide network for finding missing children was set up in 1986. Despite the traditional value placed on blood relationships in family succession, it has been the policy of both governmental and private organisations to encourage adoption by Korean families rather than allowing children to be adopted by foreigners.

**Table 8.7. Trend of Adoption Abroad and Domestic**

year	total		abroad		domestic	
	real No.	per cent	real No.	per cent	real No.	per cent
1965	653	100.0	451	69.1	202	30.9
1970	2,467	100.0	1,932	78.3	535	21.7
1975	6,954	100.0	5,077	73.0	1,877	27.0
1980	7,801	100.0	4,144	53.1	3,657	46.9
1985	11,692	100.0	8,837	75.6	2,855	24.4
1990	6,079	100.0	4,191	68.9	1,888	31.1

source: MOHASA, *Health and Society* (1991).

In 1988, there were almost 915 thousand persons (2.2. per cent of the total population) of the disabled and among them at least one out of ten were needy disabled persons, of whom 11,762 (just 12.3 per cent of the needy disabled) were accommodated at 120 residential homes.<sup>16</sup> With the enactment of the Disabled Welfare Law in 1981 a welfare system for the disabled has been established, medical rehabilitation programmes strengthened and welfare centres for the disabled expanded.

The National Rehabilitation Centre was constructed in 1985 and now is in operation. The government also has taken over from the Red Cross, the programme to provide such things as artificial limbs, hearing aids and wheelchairs for the disabled poor. While most disabled are under home care to support their families is given. However, the support to the families of the disabled is limited to needy family only and the level of income ceilings set for income relief eligibility or the amount of the benefit is exactly same as those under Livelihood Protection Law. To compensate meagre support to the families of the disabled, the government

enhanced indirect support to the families by promoting the employed disabled. Government authorities have joined with the private sector to ensure that the disabled have a fair opportunity to reach their full potential and the government's Directive on the Promotion of the Employment of the Disabled in 1977 was designed to encourage industries to employ the disabled. At the private level, the Korean Society for Rehabilitation of the Disabled conducts various programmes to train the disabled and get them jobs. To promote equal opportunities for disabled persons, restrictive provisions in existing laws have been amended. Public facilities for the disabled have been expanded.

There were over 2.2 million persons aged 65 or over in 1992, or 5.2 per cent of the total population and it is projected by EPB to increase to 6.4 per cent by the year 2000 and to 11.4 per cent in 2020. As for the welfare of the elderly, major emphasis has been placed on increasing respect for senior citizens. Schools and the mass media have been drafted into the cause and a week designated to honour the elderly. The government annually honours filial sons and daughters-in-law and typical traditional families as a way to encourage time-honoured values. A system was introduced in 1980 in which people aged 65 or older can use some public facilities free of charge and others at a discount. These include public transportation, parks and public baths. In addition free health examinations have been given to the elderly since 1983 in accordance with the Aged Welfare Law. The government is going to place more emphasis on the establishment of facilities to take care of the physical and mental needs of the elderly rather than just relying on residential facilities. The number and types of nursing homes are going to be increased.

Of course, the provision is critically meagre compared to the developed countries like United Kingdom in particular. The UK, in spite of having a far bigger proportion of elderly, which amounted 15.7 per cent of the total population in 1991,<sup>17</sup> arranged far various social services in depth. Except for the services mentioned above, provision of meals in the home, sitters-in, night attendants and laundry services as well as day centres, luncheon clubs and recreational facilities etc. are included. Alarm systems have been developed to help elderly people obtain help in an emergency. Also in some areas 'good neighbour' and visiting services are arranged by the local authority or a voluntary organisation.<sup>18</sup> To sum up, compared to the social services in UK or other developed countries, the Korean government has made policy orientation to the projects demanding a smaller amount of finance

Welfare programs for women are aimed at female heads of families, homeless women, unmarried mothers, women working at entertainment places and other needy women. Support for maternal and child welfare facilities has been strengthened as well as support for vocational training programs for young girls who run away from home, unmarried mothers and other needy women. There are 273 counsellors throughout the country who provide guidance for women working in entertainment places and runaways. There are also vocational training facilities where such women can stay and receive professional training and moral education. The Korean Women's Development Institute was established in 1983 with strong government support and is aimed at promoting women's welfare through research on women's problems and training programmes. Together with the National Committee on Women's Policy under the Prime Minister's office, which systematically and comprehensively reviews government policies affecting women, the Women's Development Institute places a leading role in promoting and enhancing the status of women.<sup>19</sup>

**Table 8.8. Expenditures Structure Of The Central Government**

Expenditure	1970	1975	1980	1985	1990	1992
total in percentage	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
(real sum in billion won)	(49)	(172)	(759)	(1465)	(3017)	(4608)
general administration	5.9	15.9	11.1	3.2	3.2	3.5
security	5.9	4.1	4.6	5.0	5.4	5.4
defence	20.7	27.1	30.2	27.2	23.7	20.1
education	15.2	13.1	15.1	16.9	16.3	17.4
health	0.9	1.0	1.9	1.5	2.7	2.3
<b>social security welfare</b>	<b>5.1</b>	<b>4.4</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>5.3</b>	<b>7.3</b>	<b>7.6</b>
housing, community devel.	-	1.2	2.2	5.2	7.7	8.2
culture	-	0.8	0.7	1.0	0.4	0.5
economic affairs	25.2	30.3	23.8	21.1	21.6	24.6
others	21.1	2.2	6.9	12.4	11.7	10.4

source: EPB, *Summary of Budget for Fiscal Year*.

**Table 8.9. Trend Of Expenditure On Social Security** billion won (%)

year	expenditure on social security				ratio to GNP
	total	social insurance	public relief	welfare service	
1970	26.1(100.0)	14.5(55.5)	11.1(42.7)	0.5(1.8)	0.97
1975	87.0(100.0)	36.2(41.6)	48.8(56.1)	2.0(2.3)	0.89
1980	610.7(100.0)	402.6(65.9)	195.2(32.0)	12.9(2.1)	1.67
1985	1676.6(100.0)	1277.3(76.2)	353.6(21.1)	45.7(2.7)	2.32
1990	2016.4(100.0)	1659.1(82.3)	235.1(11.7)	122.2(6.1)	1.18
1991	2605.2(100.0)	2205.6(84.7)	250.6(9.6)	149.0(5.7)	1.26
1992	3176.2(100.0)	2728.1(85.9)	255.9(8.1)	192.2(6.1)	1.40

source: EPB, *Summary of Budget for Fiscal Year*.

The scope of social security programmes has expanded steadily reflecting increased demand resulting from the changes in social patterns brought about by industrialisation, urbanisation, and by changed social values.

To examine the quality of social security programmes, we can review the expenditure structure of Korean central government. The absolute amount of expenditure allocated to social security has increased reflecting both an increased size of total expenditure of the central government and the increased size of the national economy. Expenditure on social security as a percentage of the total budget has remained almost unchanged for the last two decades. As shown on Table 8.8, expenditure on social security programmes is low compared to that of other developing countries like Taiwan, Singapore, or Hong Kong or the 26 per cent of UK<sup>20</sup>. Compared to the dramatic economic growth of the last two decades, investment in social security programmes has remained underdeveloped. There are many examples of underdeveloped condition of social security in Korea. Provision for the elderly is just one example of them. Concretely, the UK has provided about 5 per cent of the total elderly population with institutional accomodation in 1991 while Korea just 0.3 per cent at the same period. Also, coverage of most social services are below standard level. This contributed to industrial unrest among workers in the late 1980s. As shown in Table 8.9, the absolute amount of expenditure for social security has increased in every section and in total but the increase was almost solely for social insurance and medical insurance in particular. As a result the level of expenditure on social welfare services is too meagre to justify the claim that Korea has developed a social security system in the real meaning of the term.

Family policy comprises just a minor part of this underdeveloped social security system. The state has adopted a negative attitude of "home care first, social security next" in order to have child and adolescent problems, women's issues, and elderly problems solved within the family. The negative policy was pursued so as to invest the whole of the national resources of human power or materials on economic development. Measures for the redistribution of wealth were discouraged as antithetical to the growth of the national economy. As a result, active measures to support self-reliance of families, to protect families from social changes have not been provided but instead the responsibility has been placed on individual families.

So far, family policy of worth mentioning has hardly been in Korea. Of course there are the Livelihood Protection Act or the Child Protection Law as family-allied policies. However, the laws relate only to individuals isolated from

families rather than to families in need of special care. It is true that family policy deals with problems emerging from family changes but it has failed in managing the whole of a family organically as a unit. It has divided members of family into children, adolescents, women, or elderly etc. and dealt separately with them group by group. Of course those are important targets of family welfare but they are neither all nor the whole of the subject of policy. Above all, even if welfare policy can deal with the problems of every sort of individual family member, a consideration of their relevance to the families of which they are part has been neglected. Welfare programmes have been delivered according to the needs of each individual family member isolated from their own family and there was no overview of the problem for the family as a whole. Therefore residential accommodation has been much more predominant than home care in family support. As a result, family policies sometimes separated individuals from their families and provoked family dissolution instead of integrating them more effectually within their family.

Family policy has been extremely selective and residual. Public relief to low-income families under the *Livelihood Protection Act* is offered to an extremely limited number of vulnerable cases with a minimum amount of material support. Family policy on an range of enormous family-related social problems prevailing in present day Korea is virtually non-existent. Old people neglected by their family; abandoned children; erratic adolescents; physical ill-treatment of spouses, children, or the weak; family desertion phenomena; the increase in single parent families, lone mother families in particular; the increasing pressure of poverty resulting from various disasters or accidents; chronically inadequate environments for children, education, residence etc. are practically ignored. Besides these particular problems, there are problems of overburdening housework for dual career women, of various socio-cultural obstacles against the employment of married women, and there is no social mechanism to tackle problems like the illness, death or divorce of a spouse, and defenceless women who cannot escape from status decline, poverty, or emotional deprivation. These represent present condition of family policy in Korea.

### **8.2.2. Conclusion : A Direction For Future Family Policy**

There are innumerable actual, urgent, and complex issues family policy should handle: ageing issues, adolescent problems, divorce, family poverty,

violence, sexual abuse, increases in illegitimate sexual behaviour, the weakness of the filial piety idea, homelessness, dual career women, the extremely skewed role distribution, the lack of home training, housing problems, etc. which have caused heated debates throughout the last couple of decades. However, all these problems can be summarised under four headings: generational conflicts, women's issues, the changing sex ratio, and the re-unification of the nation. The first two are urgent issues which in Korea we are confronting at the moment, the latter two are issues from which we are going to suffer most seriously in the near future. Family policy could be expected to help in present day Korea by re-formulating or reinforcing the relationship between parents and children, which is one of the main axes structuring the family, as well as the relationship between couples and the relationship between the adult generations. These are social attributes in the sense that the breakdown of the relationships is connected to social disorder. Whatever conjugal pattern a family adopts, and whatever lineage system a family follows, the relationship between parents and children must be strong enough to maintain the social consensus or at least to slow down its weakening. This does not mean a revival of past patriarchal relationships but in order to sustain social integration and continuity, the generational relationship should not be damaged in the nuclear family, the stem family, the single family, or the step-family.

Under this proposition, family policy could simultaneously tackle both ageing issues and children's issues in terms of reinforcing the parent-children relationship. For instance, the tradition of filial piety could be reinforced and its practice insured as an institution. However, this time it would be in a different form, neither patriarchal nor authoritative but equally distributed to both the mother's side and father's side and more democratic and humanistic between parents and children. Many alternatives can be suggested to upgrade individual status of present day old people at home and their social status more widely. First of all, breaking from conventional policy orientation, family policy should provide more independent housing for elderly people. Of course family policy can support or enhance the meagre number of both statutory and voluntary bodies which help the elderly to live at home when they choose, and increase the number of social workers giving advice and domestic help, providing meals or laundry services etc. as well as day centre or recreational facilities. A wide range of aids should be arranged for those elderly people with difficulties in hearing and eyesight. In other ways, family policy can also encourage housing associations and private builders to provide homes designed for elderly people, those in poor health in particular. Above all these arrangements, economic benefit for the needy elderly is one of the most urgent targets for family policy. Considering that, according to Social

Indicators In Korea by EPB (1992), three out of five Koreans through all age cohorts have no economic provision for their old-age, it is easily seen how bitter the condition of the present elderly aged over 65 is. Under this condition it is hardly possible to expect a healthy relationship between elderly parents and their adult children. Of course the government launched a pension system but the eligible beneficiaries are a relative minority with a moderate economic background. Most elderly people are without either the pension system or personal insurance yet. So the easiest way, at the moment, to support the elderly in economic difficulties is old people's benefit.

On the other hand family policy should encourage families to recover their educational role for their children which has been almost entirely transferred to school teachers training children for examinations rather than in humanitarian education. If the father has become a working machine, children have become studying machines. Family policy in co-operation with other education, social, and culture policies, can reform the education system which can help children be free from 'exam hell' so as to have them think of the real meaning of being educated in terms of a sound relationship among family or community members. It can also motivate parents, fathers in particular, to spend more time strengthening their relationships in sound and healthy ways with their children, by promoting the importance of family life and parent-children relationships through the mass media or through flexible working conditions to help them spend more time at home.

Family policy should also deal with a number of issues relating to women. The issues are by-products of the contradiction and conflict between tradition and socio-economic change. However the source of the conflicts can be abstracted into three elements: the deterioration of women's status during the Japanese annexation, the expansion of the national economy requiring women's participation, and the overburdened distribution of domestic roles for women at home. Whichever source they are from, women's issues are movements to ask for an equal right as a human being equal to those of a husband or of a boy on the one hand and movements to search for individual rights as a woman rather than as a mother on the other hand. These issues are quite subtly intermingled, sometimes confirming existing family values but sometimes contradicting them. The equality movement should be backed up by family policy or related social policies. The unequal distribution of power at home has exerted negative influences in many realms.

Experiencing Japanese totalitarianism during the annexation, Koreans were habituated to regarding women as unequal beings. Children who grew up looking

at their mother totally subordinated to father have learned to see women as subservient, weak, or at best a sexual object, and the logic of subordination at home has expanded to accept as natural women's subordination in society. This has been usual in groups in their middle age or over. However, younger generations and feminists began to raise questions about their mother's subordination. Without a sound reorganisation of power between a couple, harmonisation among family members is hardly possible, and without that it will hardly be possible to see children growing healthy and society sound. Therefore equalisation is a way to recover traditional virtues lost for decades between couples and to normalise family functions in a more humanitarian context. Of course equal rights should be applied to equal opportunities for jobs and equal wages for equal labour regardless of sex as far as the economy needs women to participate in the labour market for the development of the nation.

At the same, time demands for individual rights or womanhood are quite subtle and raise contentious issues. The source of conflict comes mainly from the frustrated status of women at home and the diminished recognition of the value of family life. During the rapid industrialisation, the family was recognised as merely a place to rest, the place the mother does all sorts of routine and humble matters to serve the father who has come back from his place of work. Domestic affairs were treated as an obscure occupational activity and the last thing to be given any attention. In a word family life was recognised as totally isolated from society. Naturally, a mother's status was degraded, and the father's upgraded, and as a consequence, well-educated women in younger generations began to feel distaste for and irritation against domestic life, and many rushed to have a job outside the home. It was a sort of fashion of the times rather than a sincere search for a development of individual potentiality. Naturally a full-time housewife of high education was perceived as an incompetent or failed woman. The trend brought about an increase in the number of families with husband and wife both working. In order to cope with this phenomenon family policy must deliver three approaches. First the value of household tasks should be re-estimated to counter negative attitudes against domestic life. Raising the proportion of money maintenance payments after divorce would be an example and a reasonable calculation of compensation for injury to a full-time housewife another. In any case family policies should be prepared to have both men and women recognise household responsibilities are as or even more valuable than occupational activities outside the home. Secondly channels must be arranged between family and society to break the assumption that the family is no more than a place solely for emotional rest and and to have the family take back part of those functions totally transferred

to society. For example, its educational function should be reinforced so as to emphasise home training, or the religious function developed to enable the family to run more smoothly spiritually. At the same time, part of the industrial structure must be revised to meet demands from married women. Most industries are structured to require the full-time participation of employees and that makes the family of dual career women suffer various problems; from child rearing to intensive relationships with relatives, etc. So industrial structures should be diversified so that women can participate in economic activity as a side job or part-time job, which allows them to co-ordinate both household responsibilities and occupational activity. Lastly the amount of earning of families where both husband and wife are working should be balanced, through taxation policy, with that of the full-time housewife's family. The taxation system should allow couples to decide between family loss and the economic rewards of both working. As a consequence working in double harness should not be directly connected to economic prosperity but only to the development of individual potential and to a contribution to the nation. Of course there would need to be two measures. First working in double harness among poor families must be excluded from the taxation policy second there must be a cultural and cognitive shift from the conventional idea on role distribution. Society should be changed so as to accept a husband working at home as natural. All in all, the individual rights of a husband or wife as a woman/man should be insured as far as parenthood is working soundly.

The next issues family policy will have to tackle are various foreseeable social problems arising from the change in the sex ratio and the consequences of re-unification when that is eventually achieved. First the changing sex ratio is anticipated to cause various social problems: an extreme imbalance in the marriage market, the risk of youth who fail to pair turning to violence, breakdown of sexual morality etc. To slow down the problems, family policy should seek to break many prohibitions in marriage customs. Age differences, social class, and educational level which have been preconditions of pairing among Koreans should be mitigated to widen the marriage boundary, and the prohibition rule which has significantly narrowed the marriage market must be softened to reduce the number of the youth who fail to pair. Instead sexual morality after marriage should be reinforced through mass communication to insure the stabilisation of married life while pre-marital intercourse may be tolerated. Of course policies to meet sexually transmitted disease would have to be supplemented to prevent national health decaying due to sexual liberation. Development of far more positive and comprehensive policies is needed to have youths formulate their self-identity through occupational and social activities rather than love affairs or to encourage

them go abroad to create new types of activities. That could prevent youth turning to violence but, of course, a new and relevant philosophy or ideology should be reformulated and this would require the emergence of new and constructive cultural leadership which is hard to contrive or predict.

Re-unification of the peninsula could cause both positive and negative effects for family life. Families from the North having been under communist ideology, seem to have achieved sexual equality between husband and wife to a considerable extent, and women have become relatively autonomous and independent social beings in managing household affairs compared to the South brides burdening themselves with incredible marriage expenses.<sup>21</sup> By adopting and encouraging the North's custom in terms of marriage expense or other practices, family policy can remedy regrettable marriage customs that have caused severe social deprivation among poor Southern families. Of course if the policy fails in remedying the custom, poor families' alienation might expand to the mostly poor North as well and so deepen social conflict.

The most serious problem anticipated from the reunification is an increase in the number of poor families, needing a huge amount of family welfare finance. The Northern family, which on average is relatively poorer than the families of the South, could move to the South for a promising job, and might cause an increase in the poor urban families, leaving behind the aged or the weak who could not accompany the migration. Koreans already have experienced what sort of problems can occur from the experience of the migration of the 1960s and 1970s but this time they would be bigger in size. Even the nightmares of housing problem, health problems, and poverty, etc. among the poor migrant families have not been sorted out yet. After re-unification the social problems of migration would cause far deeper conflicts in range and in depth to jeopardise social integration. Various family policies in co-operation with other social, economic, cultural, and political policies are needed to mitigate the expected migration, to soften the economic gulf between the North and the South, etc. Of course encouraging youth in the seriously restricted marriage market to devote themselves to a reconstruction of the North's national economy could be an example of family policy. Regarding the anticipated problems from re-unification and the sex ratio, the essence of family policy should be oriented to encouragement of enterprise, progress, development, and open-minded toward new situations, and the world.

There are several traditional patterns which have remained unchanged during the modernisation of the last few decades. Family policy-makers should not

miss harmonising for the successful completion of their policies. There are five characteristics to consider: the *hyo* idea and the traditional devotion to children, the nostalgia for family solidarity, ideas about role allocation, traditional sexual morality, and the co-operative street committee.

First whichever pattern of household a family may compose, a strong devotion between parents and children remains even now. Of course the *hyo* should not be limited to patrilineal lines only as was usual, but should be expanded to the wife's line as well, and the traditional devotion to children should remain as a family focus but also expand to include all children of the other families and the nation. With sound devotion to and from parents and children, regardless of whether they are sharing a same household or not, there would be a basic strategy to reduce generational conflicts and the social alienation prevailing in the society at the moment.

Secondly, family policy can encourage families in a nostalgia for family solidarity in cultivating a new cultural and ideological movement. Of course which sort of solidarity would be encouraged depends on how present day families respond to that. Coming from the late 1970s, a new type of clan association emerged in great numbers and genealogy books were very rapidly published. All these trends reflect a crisis in self-identity and denotes a nostalgia for a strong solidarity among human beings. Family policy should graft them to a new social solidarity, this time it should not be narrow-minded as was in the traditional society but be a healthy competition in creating national consensus in the realm of family life.

Thirdly, contemporary Koreans are showing a strict role distribution among family members even now, and the strictness has tended to increase conflicts among them. However one important idea inherent in strict role distribution is a reflection of a social pressure to be true to one's duty. Family policy should sublimate the sense of responsibility whilst eliminating authoritative and exclusive elements from the strict role distribution custom. Whichever role a person is in, and whichever sex the person is, a strong commitment to fulfil their responsibility should be grafted into social and economic development programmes in the future.

Fourthly, family policy must preserve and extend the traditional strong sense of morality to prevent the nation from the anticipated moral disorder that would rage due to the changing sex ratio and surplus of unattached males. Of course some morality like the prohibition principle between the persons of the same surname and same origin, can worsen problems of pairing and as

consequence serve to damage moral sense as well. Therefore the principle should be revised to relax the boundary of pairing. With this exception Confucian moral on sexual behaviour could be re-viewed to prevent possible unhappy events in marriage life. Of course in order for the policy to be successful, other associated policies to encourage the youths to participate in areas other than love affairs must be arranged.

Lastly family policy should make use of the street committees (*pansanghoe*) that have been used for a couple of decades to formulate consensus for economic development, which originated from a Confucian tactic for grouping several families to meet for taxation collection or group work for the regional community etc. Of course the mechanism would not be exactly the same as the previous street committee that has been identified as a government agent to compel one-sided economic policies or to maintain the political hegemony or political interest of a particular group. Nevertheless there should be a mediating or secondary grouping between individual families and society. The mediating function in traditional society was fulfilled by clan groups. However we already have seen the family easily used to become community focussed when it was mediated by the consanguinal secondary group and moreover, various elements of modern society would not allow the kinship group to dominate within the same regional boundary due to occupational, educational, and social mobility. The alternative is to organise individual families within each locality. The mechanism would not be one-sided or compulsory as before but reciprocal and more autonomous in mediating between them and society. Through this mechanism various social values of concern to the family or the society as a whole could be renewed, revised, and enforced to reduce various social problems, like violence, either among adolescents or among adults, unfilial piety, abuse, etc. and enhance local welfare in positively caring for many distressed families, the disabled, and the aged etc. To meet the need, family policy should support an increase in the number of voluntary organisations and the enhancement of their function.

To conclude, whatever family policy may be, if it is going to be successful, it should be based on a sound consensus among people, and it should be autonomous and reciprocal to ensure positive participation from both people and the nation. And a healthy atmosphere of altruism is needed. As Durkheim argued in his study of suicide, unhealthily strict altruism demanding too serious a sacrifice for individuals to cope with, can cause malfunction of social integration. However without altruistic values prevailing in society, no great achievement is possible: devotion for children, for the aged, for each family member, for society, and

eventually for world peace instead of pursuing private individual interests only. Whichever side-effects come from the trend and however severe they are, society can survive in as far as it is going to contribute to the common good. It is what Koreans have experienced during the modernisation of the last few decades. Self-centredness is widespread everywhere: family members, friends, foes, society, spiritual activities, material products, etc. Naturally as far as a person searches for his or her own self-identity from an egoistic point of view, s/he only loses too many important things and finally achieves only alienation from the person and from society. Family policy can contribute to fostering social atmosphere, casting off from egoism to reach a sound consensus on a society for all.