A Time to Mourn, a Time to Dance: Abortion Death Rituals in South Korea

SEUNGGYEONG Ji*

Abstract

This essay explores contemporary ChonDoJe, Buddhist abortion death rituals in South Korea. I argue that both the fetus and the participants of the rituals can be conceptualized as biopolitical-spiritual subjects. This research uses participant observation, analysis of ritual texts, and a literature review of population control policies to situate the Buddhist abortion death rituals in the context of the colonial and post-colonial 'modern' reproductive regime in South Korea. The rites' participants have contradictory and multifaceted identities in the transnational biopolitical reproductive regimes as they are constructed as both the targets of population control policies as well as the 'sinners' of abortion. I argue that the collective reenactments of past abortions in the rituals have unintentionally conjured those 'erased' due to robust population control.

Keywords

abortion death ritual; South Korea; population control; grievability; abortion; Buddhist.

Author affiliation

SeungGyeong Ji is a PhD Student in the Department of Gender, Women, and Sexuality Studies at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities.

Prologue: *Let's Dance*

The writer of Ecclesiastes in the Christian Bible put dancing together with mourning. So too did the young feminist director, SeYoung Jo, in her 2012 documentary, *Let's Dance*, which was about abortion stories in South Korea. The documentary tracks the complex terrain of abortion and diverse women's first-person narratives in South Korea. The film shows government-funded TV

*Correspondence: 425 Ford Hall 224 Church St SE Minneapolis, MN 55455 USA,
E-mail: jixxx228@umn.edu.

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution License (3.0)

Religion and Gender | ISSN: 1878-5417 | www.religionandgender.org | Uopen Journals

campaigns from the 1970s—both by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and South Korea—for the ‘enlightenment [*KyeMong*]’ of family planning and contraceptive methods.¹

In *Let's Dance*, twelve women participated in interviews *without* blurring their faces. The main storytellers are young women in their 20s and 30s from various social positions (for example, a teacher, a college student, an artist, a pregnant mother). Three women in their 60s participated in the interviews as well. The three older women recount how, under the social conditions of poverty and the population control policy, some of their neighbors had seven or more abortions. One physician was renowned among neighbors for providing the procedure. They would say, ‘Go to Dr. Kim. You know where to turn.’² From 1961 to 1989, Population Council and the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) initiated and supported family planning in South Korea (Bae 2012; Cho 2012; Lee 1989). In 1974, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) became the major donor for South Korean family planning. As was the case with China’s one-child policy, South Korean dictatorial governments limited families to three (1966–1970), two (1971–1982), and one (1983–1996) child. During the population control era, many South Korean women used abortion as birth control. Prior to this rigorous population control, South Korean women, on average, had 6 children in the 1960s, a number that dwindled to an average fertility rate of 1.08 per woman in 2002. Beginning in the 1950s, the use of abortion as a form of birth control was so pervasive in urban areas that people sometimes did not know it was, and still is, illegal (Bae 2012: 43–44, 47, 166). In *Let's Dance*, the only scene featuring large numbers of the older women shows the Buddhist abortion death ritual: hundreds of middle-aged and older women bow and pray for the souls of the unborn, alongside the seashore in a cold winter wind.³

This film offers a social platform for the emerging young feminists who speak out and challenge the imposing silences and constraining gender norms. The film was broadcast and screened on university campuses and film festivals, and it was the first documentary to explore feminist activism around the topic of abortion in South Korea. Furthermore, the release of the film came during a critical time when pro-choice activists were ‘talking back’ to the rising pro-life rhetoric that had been gaining traction since 2010 in South Korea.⁴

¹ ‘Population control’ and ‘birth control’ have been the two overlapped yet conflicting political struggles. Linda Gordon tracks the American history of the population control, birth control, and planned parenthood. She points out that the population control has been a top down regulation and intervention over the reproduction. Birth control, on the contrary, has been women’s political, social, and medical movements for autonomy in the reproduction (Gordon 2002). In South Korea, the medical-bureaucrats who initiated population control changed ‘population control’ to ‘family planning’ for avoiding the negative and explicit connotation of the ‘control’ (Bae 2012: 75; Cho 2012: 23).

² This is one recount of the interview participants in the film (*Let's Dance* 2013).

³ In the review by Paul Quinn, ‘Let's Dance,’ you can see the seashore ritual scene.

⁴ Due to the social conflict on abortion after 2010, some Korean women find overseas abortion (Sridharan 2013). For the abortion cases and storytelling, see Korea Woman Link (2011).

The Biopolitical-Spiritual Subjects: The Souls of the Fetuses Remembered and the Abortion Death-Ritual Participants

As the film *Let's Dance* vividly illustrates, more interdisciplinary and transnational scholarly attention is needed in order to fully understand the complex terrain of women's lived experiences of abortion in South Korea. These personal experiences of abortion have been situated in globally interwoven socio-political-religious discourses and power relations. After watching *Let's Dance*, I had many questions: Why do older women pray for the souls of the lost fetuses at the bone-chillingly cold seashore? And, why do older and religious women *not* speak at all whereas their younger counterparts appear ready to discuss their experiences? How and with which theoretical frameworks and epistemologies can we better understand those relatively invisible and unheard voices expressed in the religious abortion death rites? With these questions in mind, I track the historical context wherein the religious women subjects are located. How do we—feminist scholars and activists—better hear those who pray for the unborn fetuses' souls? Likewise, how do we hear the voices of the younger generation who have emerged from the recent abortion debates in South Korea as the 'speaking subjects?' In this essay, I argue that these different generational subjectivities, 'the praying' and 'the speaking,' should be understood as a facet of the population control policies which have shaped the modern reproductive regime in South Korea. I will juxtapose the *ChonDoJe*, or the Buddhist and Shamanist abortion death rituals, with the colonial and post-neo-colonial population control history of South Korea. I offer an exploratory conceptualization of two social figures of the abortion death rituals: the 'mythical' soul of the fetus and the 'real' people who have become visible over the past twenty-five years due to their participation in the abortion death rituals.⁵ What roles and characteristics do these the mythical souls and real participants play in the larger and longer story of the politics of population control and reproduction in South Korea? What might the popularity of abortion death rituals tell us about the politics of reproduction as a part of the story of South Korea's 'successful' modernization?⁶

In this article, I will first track the historical background of population control in South Korea and the accompanying high rates of abortion from the 1920s to the present day. In the second section, I will focus on collective abortion death rituals to examine how women have been able to express their grief. I suggest this grief is contradictory to the logic of population control narratives, which modernized the nation through the production of social and cultural kinship norms and reproductive conformity. How have supposedly 'docile' and 'modern' women subjects been made to understand their abortion experiences as 'sins' in need of mourning in religious spaces?

My attention to abortion death rituals and prayers stems from my master's thesis. In that prior research, I was surprised to learn that some of my research participants who are self-identified 'feminist,' also joined rituals for 'healing' and 'forgiveness.' This essay builds on data I collected for that thesis (14 in-depth

⁵ A few Catholic and Protestant churches also provide the special prayers for abortion cases. But I only focus on the Buddhist abortion death rituals in the paper.

⁶ World Bank (2017).

interviews conducted in 2010–2011) by adding participant observation of the rituals (2015), participation in a feminist reproductive justice forum (2015), and literature reviews including data on abortion death rituals and population policies. I also use available online data about the rituals such as video footage, interviews, and news updates. Participatory observations at the temples were essential to contemplate the political-social-religious meanings of abortion and women's agency in contemporary South Korea.

Let me begin by sketching the abortion death rituals in South Korea. The rituals, or *ChonDoJe*, originated in Japan and were introduced to South Korea in the late 1980s by a Buddhist monk. The ritual formula is based on the Buddhist notion of life and social relations and provides the social space and formula for participants to make meaning from abortion experiences. Here is a part of Buddhist abortion ritual text that ritual participants read aloud together during the abortion ceremony:

*Baby, please forgive this mother. Please end your suffering.
Forget your hatred (towards mother) and go to the Buddha world.
You wander around the dark world.
Leave this obscure world, follow Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva.⁷ Follow him to the Pure Land.⁸*

Over the last twenty-five years, hundreds of thousands of older women who terminated their pregnancies in their 20s and 30s (1970s–90s) have participated in the rituals. My fieldwork revealed that most of the participants are women now in their 1960s or older who lived through the family planning policies of Korean dictatorial governments. It is important to note that my research also found a small, but still significant number of women currently in their 20s and 30s also participating in the ritual. The presence of younger women illustrates that not all abortions in South Korea are the result of population control policies; however, given the larger representation of women from older generations, it is clear that these policies were a significant force of domination over reproductive behaviors during the post Korean War era (Bae 2012; Cho 2012; Kim 2001; Lee 1989). Since the 1990s, these rituals have grown in popularity in both rural and urban areas, so much so that they are now a regular practice of large temples and attended by Buddhist and non-Buddhists alike (Woo 2009a,b). Likewise, smaller temples and individual shamans provide rituals in the Seoul metro area as well as in less populated cities. According to Woo's survey, 158 temples of the Jogye Order of Korean Buddhism (the largest sect in South Korea), have been providing regular (78 temples) or irregular (80 temples) abortion death rituals (Woo 2009b: 174).

Despite the popularity of the rituals, few researchers have paid attention to how the soul and personhood of the fetus is understood in them and, as I will argue in this article, how it is situated within/or parallel to the biopolitics of population control in South Korea. For example, the secular international and domestic organizations that argued for population control schemes would

⁷ Ksitigarbha is a bodhisattva revered in East Asian Buddhism. Ksitigarbha, which is called as Jijang in Korean, is regarded as the guardian of deceased children and aborted fetuses in South Korean and Japanese Buddhism. See Moto-Sanchez (2016).

⁸ Woo (2009b: 108).

find it strange that women are now memorializing 'lost souls' through sacred Buddhist rituals. Population control policies were based on 'scientific' and 'modernizing' impetus (Greenhalgh 2003). However, as sociocultural anthropologist Charles Hirschkind argues, the secular is a dialectical partner of the religious. In this partnership, the secular and the religious engage with one another to provide a feature for the political, ethical, and social shifts that have made 'global modernity' possible (Hirschkind 2011: 644). I build on Hirschkind's work by arguing that the dialectical engagement between sacred and secular has also *birthed* two social figures in South Korea: the mystical souls of fetuses and the reality of ritual participants. These social figures, which began to emerge in the 1990s, are also a feature for the ways in which 'global modernity' is made possible in South Korea. For South Korea to achieve modernization, it needed to be able to quantify and account for success, which led to the ways in which the 'science of demography' has been embedded within discourses of population control. It was believed that lower fertility rates would accelerate the growth of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). With this belief, dictatorial governments provided Manual Vacuum Aspiration (MVA) abortions from 1974 to 1989 (The Ministry of Health and Welfare 2016). In this sense, I claim that the emergence of abortion death rituals is the dialectical partner of broader political narratives surrounding population control practices and patriarchal gender and kinship norms.

To further clarify my argument, I will describe two broader social discourses that help make sense of the rituals: population control and religious beliefs. First I will discuss the political discourse of population control. At a global level, international population control policies needed to identify certain racially Othered and colonized groups of women as the 'targets' of birth control to justify their invented argument that there was a 'population bomb' about to explode (Connelly 2008). The US government and international population organizations proposed and intervened to stop this bomb. They argued that this intervention would prevent the risk of increased abortions in the Third World (Donaldson 1990).

However, as the discourse of population control moved to the domestic/national level, decisions had to be made to implement and achieve specified demographic goals. Should government use abortion or let women abort for curbing the fertility rates? At the domestic/national level, population control implementation created a patchwork of practices in which abortions were used and necessary for completing demographic goals. If some pregnancies were defined as overpopulation and redundant numbers, governments condoned abortions in private clinics or used government-provided abortion as a means of birth control in South Korea (Lee 1989).⁹ The 'uncontrolled' pregnancies of racially Othered and neo-colonized groups of women were unwelcome within the *global and national* demographic schemes that used neo-Malthusian logic to argue that there was 'overpopulation' (Connelly 2008; Greenhalgh 2001, 2003). Neo Malthusian logic was applied only to brown, black, and yellow people, not white people (McCann 2017). Disabled people have been the target of *quality* control under the population management as well. In South Korea, forced sterilization and abortion of disabled people continued from the 1950s until the 1990s in governmental hospitals (Kim and Oh 2016).

⁹ See the similar cases in China (Chu 2001) and India (Patel 2007).

Neo Malthusian logic provided justification for the dilemma that international organizations, the US government, and post-colonial countries faced. The US-led population organizations sought to lower population and prevent abortions in the Third World; however, to achieve this goal, population organizations needed to render the women and their fetuses as less than human in order to not 'count' their bodies in their population schemes. In any case, some postcolonial governments such as South Korea and Egypt should demonstrate their low fertility rates to keep receiving USAID resource (Solinger and Nakachi 2016). In this biopolitical regime, it was only by regarding the women and their fetuses as Others who were not worthy of grieving, caring, or remembering, that international and national biopolitical population regimes could succeed. Murphy argues that international population control objectifies, dehumanizes, and materializes people as a distanced object that can be, have been manipulated (2017: 135).

The second discourse I discuss here is the traditionally religious discourse that comes from Buddhism which constructs and locates both the fetus subjects and the ritual participants. In abortion death rituals, Buddhist languages and ideas provide the worldview to both conjure the souls of the fetuses, and also designate the women as 'sinners' and mourners. The ritual narrative is concomitant with the commonly-found religious narratives of sin, forgiveness, repentance, next lives (or afterlife), soul, and healing etc. In Buddhist thought about eternal life circuits, one's soul has multiple bodies over lifetimes, and in the ritual spaces, the fetuses and the ritual participants are identified as spiritual beings who live as souls as much as in bodies. Even though someone has 'erased' the fetus' body, Buddhist thought argues that ritual participants can and should pray to appease the soul. To achieve this appeasement, ritual participants must use their physical bodies when they participate in the ritual. In Buddhist tradition, acts such as large bows and chanting are the body motions that embody sincere minds and 'true' affects. However, as Woo (2009b) emphasizes, these rituals originated from Japan and introduced and adapted to Korean Buddhism in the late 1980s. The ritual deploys the traditional elements and concepts of Buddhism; however, Woo argues that prior to the introduction of the Japanese abortion rites to Korea, Buddhist texts did not provide any references to or moral judgment of abortion. In this sense, I maintain that the rituals give 'birth' to both the concept that the aborted fetuses' have souls and also that abortion is a 'sin.' I argue that those women who identify themselves as the 'sinners' of abortion were, in reality, living as the 'good women and good citizens' who accommodated national family planning policy and received international aid. In sum, the ways in which the ritual gives rise to the discourse that the women are 'sinners' undergirds the biopolitical project that used abortion for family planning and population control regime.

The social representation of the fetus subject as a body, soul, image, or identity has been a point of contention within feminist scholarship both globally and in South Korea. Morgan and Michaels (1999) indicate that recuperating the fetus as a feminist research agenda was and is 'dangerous territory,' due to its predominant use in anti-abortion propaganda. Yet the authors also urge feminists to take risks in their scholarship and not leave the issue of fetal subjects in the hands of pro-life antagonists who oppose women's procreative integrity and autonomy (Morgan and Michaels 1999).

I take up Morgan and Michaels' call and propose conceptualizing the religious expressions of the fetus subjects and the abortion ritual participants as 'biopolitical-spiritual subjects.' My conceptualization is informed by Michel Foucault's articulation of biopolitics, or the ways in which power works in modern capitalist society. I especially draw on his analysis of 'the modern soul' on which power produces docile bodies through disciplining and correcting techniques and institutions. Foucault analyzes and describes the seventeenth and 18th-century Western European power mechanisms which work *through* the body. In David Armstrong's interpretation of Foucault, 'The body has been the point on which and from which power has been exercised (1983: 2).' Biopolitics, as the forms of power that inscribe themselves onto and into bodies, have been developed with two poles: the discipline of the individual body and the regulation of the population as a totalized group (Foucault 1978/1990: 139). As Foucault points out, the matters of 'propagation, births and mortality, the level of health, life expectancy and longevity, with all the conditions that can cause these to vary' (139) are the issues that multiple forms of biopower exercise upon the population. Individual bodies are incorporated as a population at the various levels of territories such as town, city, nation, continent, globe etc. (Foucault et al. 2004/2007).

Foucault observes that 'the soul is the effect and instrument of a political anatomy (1977: 30).' A political anatomy addresses the ways in which the body is recognized, described, and rendered. Bodily wellbeing, conduct, and sexualities are all sites of political power being exercised. Power works through the body and simultaneously conjures our souls. Foucault reverses the propositions of Christian theology based on his analysis of the modern mechanisms of punishment, discipline, and surveillance. Foucault posits that in modern biopolitics, the body is not a prison of the soul, but rather 'the soul is the prison of the body (1977: 30).' The soul does not liberate us. The soul imprisons us, our modern bodies. Foucault explains that,

'It would be wrong to say that the soul is an illusion, or an ideological effect. On the contrary, it exists, it has a reality, it is produced permanently around, on, within the body by the functioning of a power that is exercised on those punished-and, in a more general way, on those one supervises, trains, and corrects, over the mad, children at home and at school, the colonized, over those who are stuck at a machine and supervised for the rest of their lives...This real, non-corporal soul is not a substance; it is the element in which are articulated effects of a certain type of power and the reference of the certain type of knowledge (Foucault 1977: 29–30, emphasis is added).'

Foucault argues that in the science and humanist discourses, the modern soul has been constructed as the domain of analysis such as 'psyche, subjectivity, personality, consciousness, etc. (29–30).' Let me consider here what extending Foucault's articulation of 'the modern soul' could provide to understanding abortion death rituals as a facet of global population control regimes. As I pointed out earlier, the socially-recognized and remembered fetus' soul and the agency of the ritual participants in the South Korean Buddhist abortion rituals make visible some complex intersections between the ontologically multiple worlds. The fetus souls and the ritual participants live within the Buddhist notion of the eternal circuit of lives. At the same time, they are the subjugated bodies within the biopolitics of population control. I argue that we should understand abortion rituals with multiple cultural and political narratives and ontologies.

It is important to recall that many of the 'mothers' who seek forgiveness from the aborted fetuses were also the policy targets for population control. From 1983 to 1996, South Korean dictatorial governments emphasized that every married couple should have only one child. Unlike the Chinese one-child-policy, South Korean married couples could have more children. However, they had to relinquish governmental benefits which were only for one child family. Couples who accepted sterilization and had one child received benefits in tax, health insurance, and public housing. The mandatory yearly military training for all adult males was used for recruiting men for sterilization. Sterilized men were exempted from the yearly military training. For instance, in 1984, 83,527 men received vasectomy using public expenditure and international family planning aid. Using a top-down quota system rather than providing manual vacuum aspiration (MVA) on demand, from 1974 to 1989, the South Korean family planning policy offered a total of 1.7 million MVA abortions (Cho 2012).

Furthermore, sex selective abortion and terminating pregnancies with potentially disabled fetuses was pervasive during the 1960s to the 1990s (Suh 1995). In South Korea, there is a strong preference for sons, and selective abortion practices skewed the sex ratio at birth (SRB). If married couples 'failed' to have a son as their first child, some of the couples used abortion for giving birth to a son. For instance, in 1993, the SRB of the third birth was 206.5 male births to every 100 female births. In Busan city in 1993, SRB was 533.3 male births to every 100 female births at the fifth birth of a couple (Suh 1995).

During the four decades of the Korean population control policy (1961–1989), women's reproductive bodies were subjugated through biopolitics (Picture 1). At

Picture 1: Family Planning Poster Produced by South Korean Family Planning Federation in the 1980s.

'Two (children) are too many!', 'Korean Peninsula is Too Crowded.' ('Family Planning Advertisement Poster, 1983.' National Archives of Korea. <http://theme.archives.go.kr/viewer/common/archWebViewer.do?singleData=Y&archiveEventId=0049281788>. You can see more posters in the National Archives of Korea website. <http://theme.archives.go.kr/next/populationPolicy/slogan.do>.)

the same time, as was witnessed in the temple rituals, as Buddhists, the women also live the eternal circuit of lives. When the boundaries between the secular and religious are crossed, it is possible to posit that the fetus subjects could be, as Foucault writes, 'an articulated effect' of biopolitical interventions. From this perspective, the ritual participants could be viewed as 'the modern souls' who have been supervised as the docile bodies of population control policies. Another way to consider this phenomenon is through the following questions: Does the myth of the fetuses' soul have the effect of imprisoning the women rather than liberating them from the social shaming and self-blame in terms of abortion?¹⁰ Why is this social shaming and self-blame for abortions only applied to women? Within the history of South Korean modernization, the question would be more basic: how or in what ways is the commemoration of the souls of fetuses by ritual participants *modern*? The family planning campaign aimed to produce 'modern mothers' (Bae 2012; Cho 2012). What then, does the ceaseless popularity of the ritual among those 'modern mothers' tell us about modern subjects, abortion, mourning and as Foucault posits, 'a struggle for a new subjectivity' around a spiritual life and 'in the work of salvation' (Foucault 1982: 782)?

Women's collective agency to participate in abortion death rituals urge us to observe how women understand *who they are* at the historical juncture of population control policies, religion, and gender. The biopolitical-spiritual subjectivities expressed and shaped in this history are diverse. Women were the direct *targets* of population control. Women go to the temples as *Buddhists* who wish to clean their karma and seek healing. Women participate in the abortion death rituals as *sinner*s of abortion.¹¹ They say they are *mothers*, or a mother who did not choose to be a mother. They are *mourners* and some grieve the loss, which happened long ago. Above all things, the individuals in these narratives are gendered and they narrate the story of women's fate, women's lives, and women's shame and secrets.

These contradictory and multifaceted biopolitical-spiritual identities get woven together with the politicized discourse of population control. Yet these identities are somehow divorced from the politicized discourse, which in turn creates a myth around the Buddhist rituals. As Roland Barthes (1972) postulates, 'in [myth], things lose the memory that they once were made... The function of myth is to empty reality (16).' My research illustrates the ways in which the depoliticized 'myths' of the ritual are, in reality, deeply informed by histories of population control policies, a preference for sons (Lee 1989), and eugenic

¹⁰ For the discussion among the American scholars on the Japanese abortion rituals, see LaFleur (1992) and Hardacre (1997).

¹¹ The ritual participants use the terms 'sin' and refer to themselves as 'mother.' The ritual participants read aloud a specific book or a passage produced by temples, which is titled as 'Repentance (confession) and pray (wish),' in Korean '참회발원문 (懺悔發願文)' during the rites. Temples use different manuscripts yet, most of the scripts have common themes and lines such as 'I am very sorry. Mother (I) feel sincerely sorry about your suffering. Forgive your mother and please go to the heaven.' Another script says, '...Your mother and father were ignorant and committed a sin, which is hard to be erased forever... As I repent with tears, please do not attach to your short life.' This last script was written by one ritual participant in the form of a letter and the leader of the rituals, a monk designated this letter as the regular reading passages of the routinely provided rituals (Woo 2009b: 181–182).

practices (Hwang 2011). In the following section, I will further track the historical background of population control and the accompanying high rates of abortion from the 1920s to the present day.

The 'Population Problem:' Controlling Births in Korea

One of the major mechanisms of the colonization, post colonization, modernization, and subjectification of (South) Koreans is the ways in which they are counted and managed as a *population* and '*Kookmin*' (*national people*). The Japanese colonial period of the 1920s introduced 'The population problem,' as well as contraceptive devices, eugenics and neo-Malthusian theories to Korean society. As Sonja Kim (2008) illustrates through a close examination of newspapers, women's magazines, and popular magazines, the discourse of 'the population problem' and the first advertisements for contraceptive and abortive methods appeared in major newspapers in 1921. The Japanese colonial government pushed pronatalist policy in both Japan and Korea to secure and increase human resources for the expansion of the Empire of Japan into China and other parts of Asia.

Nevertheless, as Kim emphasizes, birth control during the colonial period was not simply imposed uni-directionally by foreign initiatives or imperial power. Rather, there were negotiations, tensions, and conflicts over birth control among various actors (Kim 2008: 337–339). Those actors were Japanese pronatalists, Japanese feminists, Korean women writers, Korean male reformers and physicians, as well as the colonial government. A few educated young Korean women of the era criticized these population control approaches for regarding women as 'reproductive tools (Kim 2008: 344).' The women's criticism about being treated as reproductive tools resonates with Foucault's analysis of the birth of biopolitics. Biopolitics subjugates the individual body by transforming it into a machine. As tools or machines, when we are counted as population, we do not see ourselves as individual bodies who have human rights and humanness (Foucault 1978/1990).

The biopolitical construction of gendered bodies as a population management's reproductive tool was and is deeply masculinist. Korean male intellectuals and physicians dominated the discussion on the 'population problem.' The male dominated decision-making and bureaucratic-medical systems for population and birth control continued from 1960s to 1990s when birth control had been nationalized (Bae 2012). The history of a century of population control in South Korea shows that masculinist military dictatorships and medical technocrats have seldom paid attention to women's rights and health concerns as their policy priorities (Bae 2012; Lee 1989).

Contraceptive practices and the medical termination of pregnancy provide a contested area between women's liberation, imperial control, and the patriarchal familial order over the colonial period. This contested area is combined with the long-lasting discrimination against women and the Confucian 'wise mother, good wife' gender norm.¹² The 'modern girls,' literally the 'New Women

¹² For example, women could not be a head of family under the family registry law until 2005 since Chosun dynasty era. This patrilineal family registry law is also the Japanese colonial legacy. See more details, Nam (2010).

[Sinyŏsŏng]' of the 1920s welcomed the 'scientific' and medical reproductive health medications such as diathermy and androgen, as well as 'a new bourgeois ideal of a nuclear family with two or three children (Kim 2008: 348).' In rural areas, however, households had more than six children on average (Cho 2012: 155). More crucially, the medicalized termination of pregnancy made it possible to access safer abortions. Until these medical advancements, pregnancies were terminated through traditional methods such as jumping downhill, drinking large amount of soy sauce, and unmarried women committing suicide (Kim 1991: 394). Yet, self-harming and suicide cases still haunt Korean society today.

Following independence from Japan and the Korean War, these colonial legacies of population control continued through the dictatorial era (1961–1988). The first of these legacies is the criminalization of abortion under 1912 Criminal Code (Kim 2008: 339). Another legacy is the stark discrepancy between the law and the 'real' implementation of the legislation. For example, colonial law prohibited all abortions, including in cases of rape; however, these laws applied differently to the 80,000–200,000 'comfort women' who served as sex slaves in Japanese military camps. According to some of their testimonies, abortions were conducted and did not draw any attention or concern from law enforcement (Yang 1997). In the example of comfort women, the extreme violence committed against them by the Japanese military left their bodies and sexualities marked as tools for imperialism and nationalism. Over the past century, hegemonic ideologies in the Korean peninsula shifted from: serving the Greater Japanese Empire (the Japanese colonial era from 1910 to 1945); providing national security from North Korea (the Korean War era from 1950 to 1953); and acquiescing to 'the faith of Father Nation's (JoKook) Modernization' as claimed by dictators such as ChungHee Park (1961–1979) and DooWhan Chun (1979–1988) (Bae 2012: 71). This final ideology, modernization, or as dictator ChungHee Park put it, 'the supreme goal of the nation and the individual' (Lee 2003: 558) continues as a primary focus in South Korean life.

The logic and ideology of 'the greater good' that underpins women's reproduction in South Korea has been repeated in other countries throughout the 20th century (Greenhalgh 2001; Kligman 1992). Whether the ideology is capitalism, modernization, anti-communism, or the glory of nations, the most ignored and silenced aspect of population control are women's embodied experiences, social isolation, and the grave toll of psychological trauma. Literally and figuratively, this ideological gag muffled women's voices: particularly the sounds of their moaning and mourning. In this vein, prioritizing women's bodies and mental health concerns and claiming women's dignity and autonomy in public debates has been deeply contentious and challenging to South Korean society and other parts of the world as well.

Foucault delineates mechanisms of biopolitics as 'without question an indispensable element in the development of capitalism' as well as a signal of the threshold of modernity (Foucault 1978/1990: 141). Throughout the South Korean history of population control, this point is highly relevant and applicable. As Namhee Lee posits, the division of Korea into North and South, the Korean War (1950–1953), and the hegemonic power of the U.S. under the Cold War system placed South Korea firmly in the world capitalist order (2003: 558). Within this global geopolitical order, Koreans are also placed in the web of capital, production, and reproduction as labor resources,

military forces, and the optimal numbers of population for modernization. For instance, the Population Research Institution in South Korea was first founded under the permission of the Ministry of Economy and Planning in 1965 (Cho 2012: 44). This institutional arrangement tells us that, in the minds of the government, the population problem belonged to the economy. To achieve economic growth and modernization, South Koreans have been served as the 'population' who have been imagined and disciplined as a *human resource*, or *homo economicus*, rather than as citizens, individuals and/or other multi-fold identities. In other words, the process of redefining humanness based on 'the overtly imperial and colonial liberal mono-humanist premises' is macro-political (Wynter and Mckittrick 2015: 21).

The idea that post-colonial South Korea must make up for 'lost time' if it was to achieve modernization and strengthen its national security has been used as the rationale for targeting individual women's bodies as a *homo economicus* for reproduction. In the process of post-colonial state formation, population control and its means (for example, contraception, medicalized abortions, educational and advertising campaigns about family planning) worked as the essential technique for the formation of 'modern' nations (Cho 2013, 2014). Out of the despair of the post-colonial consciousness of 'failed history' from colonialism, the Korean War, and two Korean divisions, ChungHee Park's dictatorship declared that only modernization and economic development would promise success and a better life for the Father Nation ('JoKook') (Lee 2003: 558). Under this totalitarian drive for development, glory, and the reconstruction of the nation, abortion issues were a trivialized and silenced matter; however, abortion serves as a pervasive form of birth control up to the present.

Grievable Souls and Acts of Grieving: Abortion Death Rituals

In this section, I elaborate on the socio-historical meanings of the abortion rituals in the contemporary South Korean society. I ask: what are the social and historical effects of the *public* (government-led) population control policy and eugenics efforts and religious—which is often read as *private*—women's reenactments of past abortions in abortion death rituals? As discussed in the previous section, some of the women who now sit in the temples and cry, pray, and bow for lost fetuses were the targets of population control policies throughout the 1960s and 1980s. Women have been expressing intense emotions about abortion in Buddhist temples since the 1990s. My research is interested in the social phenomenon of the ritual and the ways in which participants' abortion narratives are constructed. During the ritual, individual participants are transformed into remorseful subjects who are held responsible for having sinned when their pregnancies were terminated. I paid close attention to the ways in which individual women held themselves, but not necessarily the population control policies, personally accountable for these so-called sins. Here, I introduce one excerpt from my field notes written in 2015 that describes the ritual space and scene (Picture 2 & 3).

On one Sunday in August 2015, over 100 women and 5 men sit in ByuckUn Buddhist temple in Seoul for the ChunDoJe ritual. Later, one temple staff tells me that sometimes there are too many participants to sit in the temple, so some stand

during the two and a half hour-long ritual. Today is the last day of the 49-day ritual. Next to the golden statue of Buddha, an altar is decorated with papers carrying the names of the fetuses lost to abortions and miscarriages. Some papers are blank with no names on them. Baby diapers, baby snacks, and Disney Frozen dolls, donated by ritual participants, are stacked in front of the altar. Through the two hours of the ritual, participants recite and chant together from a booklet exclusively produced for the abortion ceremony. 'Forgive me babies. I pray for your peace in samsara, the endless life and death.' The participants frequently bow toward the altar. I can hear weeping. The air is full of pious prayer. Women do not talk to each other. Only the monk reads and chants out loud, a position that makes the women and men seem like, literally, the 'followers' of the ceremony process. After the ritual ends, a lunch is provided by the temple, and a gracious middle-aged woman tells me she had traveled 4 hours by bus to come to the temple. Another woman tells me it is her third time participating in the full ritual cycles. She said she has other children who are grown up. During the conversation, she tells me, 'This is not only for the fetus. This is for myself.'

ByuckUn Buddhist temple is one of the popular abortion death ritual providers in Seoul, the capital city of South Korea.¹³ According to HaiRan Woo (2009a,b), these Buddhist death rituals are regularly practiced two or three times a year, for up to 100 days in 6 big temples located in across Seoul and rural areas. In other temples, women embrace and cradle plastic babies. In other temples, the stone babies wear handmade knitted winter clothes around their bodies and necks (Dae-won temple 2016). The main motive for the rituals is to let unborn babies go to the 'sky' as 'Chon do,' which means 'the way to sky.' The sky is a symbolic place, and in some ways similar to the Judeo-Christian concept of heaven, or a

Picture 2: The picture that I took in July 2015 at ByuckUn Buddhist temple in Seoul. The snacks and diapers for aborted 'babies' were filed.

¹³ Some ritual videos and interview with monks are available in YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UR6TgAYNEyc>. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FKHOIJC5WbE>. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DKYkEXoZsek>. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n1GQmJEgD7w>.

Picture 3: Another picture that I took in July 2015 at ByuckUn Buddhist temple in Seoul. Disney Frozen dolls, donated by ritual participants, are stacked in front of the altar.

peaceful space for the dead. The ritual involves stories of repentance and praying for a next life for the unborn fetus, and for the women. They also pray to cleanse negative *karma* in *samsara*.¹⁴ In the ritual, the fetus and the child are not seen as different from one another, and are, therefore, interchangeable in the chanting. These ritual activities are based on Buddhist thoughts about life, death and rebirth. Buddhist teachings about eternal rebirth is a reoccurring theme and thought in popular Korean culture. The ritual is for the relationship between the woman and the fetus based on the belief that the relationship itself will continue to their next lives. The rituals, thus, are the enactments of continuing bonds with death/loss like other ancestor memorials in various religious traditions (Goss and Klass 2005).

Reflecting on this empirical material, it seems to me that the liberal-secular language and concept of 'reproductive rights' could not offer the theoretical terrain needed to shed light on abortion death rituals. Put differently, in the 'American' dichotomy between pro-life and pro-choice, there has been not enough theoretical space to examine the women and men's social and religious acts to construct the continuing bonds with aborted fetus. Abortion is understood as death and loss in the rituals. In addition, pro-life and pro-choice binary cannot explain imperial biopolitical intervention of population control. As Margaret Kamitsuka posits, 'if women's grief over pregnancy loss sits uneasily with

¹⁴ In Buddhist teaching, karma is any of your thoughts and actions that have cause and effect relations; i.e., 'rebirth is governed by the causal laws of karma (good actions cause pleasant fruit for the agent, evil actions cause unpleasant fruit, etc.)' Siderits, Mark, 'Buddha,' the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (spring 2014 Edition). And Samsara is 'the eternal cycle of rebirth or reincarnation.' Hansen, Chad, 'Daoism,' The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (fall 2014 Edition).

their pro-choice platform, then maybe that platform is, so to speak, too narrow and too high off the ground (2011: 25).’ This problematic pro-life/pro-choice dichotomy is likewise related to the ways in which the feminist research agenda has struggled in its considerations of the fetus as subject.

In some feminist research, it is ‘dangerous’ to incorporate and study the ways in which some men and women express grief over their choice to have an abortion because these emotions have been appropriated in some contexts. For instance, the Japanese abortion ritual has been performed in the US over the last 20 years. In *Mourning the Unborn Dead: a Buddhist Ritual Comes to America* (2009), Jeff Wilson points out that the American pro-life Christians have appropriated women’s and men’s need for grief and their participation in the abortion rituals, *mizuko kuyo*. American pro-choice feminists have also appropriated this grief to strengthen their political positions and criticize the opposing side. Grief after abortion is read in this ingrained pro-life and pro-choice binary. Some pro-life advocates interpret the *mizuko kuyo* to ‘support their assumptions about abortion’s injurious effects’ and the supremacy of Christianity in moral disputes around abortion (147). On the other hand, some pro-choice advocates use the ritual for various ideological agendas, including the argument that American Christian antagonism to abortion is ‘[an] unusual phenomenon’ and women who underwent abortion are caring individuals and not ‘hard hearted monsters or child-haters (153).’

In *Frames of War: When is Life Grievable?* (2009), Judith Butler mentions this political sensibility of the ‘danger’ of framing reproductive freedom and mourning together, saying,

‘Of course, it is difficult for those on the Left to think about a discourse of “life,” since we are used to thinking of those who favor increased reproductive freedoms as “pro-choice” and those who oppose them as “pro-life.” But perhaps there is a way to retrieve thinking about “life” for the Left, and to make use of this framework of precarious life to sustain a strong feminist position on reproductive freedom (15).’

Indeed, to constitute a grievable life and its ritual expressions of loss in abortion death rituals raises some fundamental questions on how we understand life, humanness, soul and body and the contentious sacredness of fetal subjects in abortion debates. Butler, in *Frames of War*, is talking to ‘we,’ probably the American audience, the Left, and pro-choice groups. Nevertheless, the framework of precarious life might be useful in large parts of the world, including poverty-stricken areas where the precariousness of life is a routine everyday condition. The affective and visceral expressions of grieving (that is, crying over the death) could be read as inappropriate in routinized precarious lives. Cultural anthropologist Nancy Scheper-Hughes writes that women who lost their offspring due to the miserable conditions of living in Northeast Brazil in the 1960s showed a seemingly ‘indifferent’ attitude to the deaths of their babies. These women’s individual and familial apathy had been situated within public and social production of indifference toward the premature children’s deaths by politicians, religious readers, physicians, and bureaucrats (272). Crying over the dead child was regarded as too much emotional investment and attachment to ‘reproductive wastage’—an expression used by demographers—in the lives of the poor and marginalized women (273). As Butler points out, ‘grievability is a presupposition for the life that matters (2009: 14).’ Lives at the margins are

often not considered worthy or 'economical' enough to grieve. Grieving takes time to think and feel over and over again. The everydayness of the death of a child produces different economies of attachment and recognizability as 'life.' As a result of my research, I have found that Brazil and South Korea experienced high rates of abortion during the 1960s–1980s. In both countries, high rates of abortion and infant death were reported as 'maternal health and infant mortality' and treated by power elites as *normal* part of the natural order. Even though the death of a child and abortion are very different situations, the routinization of indifference towards the women's bodily and psychological conditions was a similar phenomenon in both contexts. In other words, the women's emotional and affective expressions over matters of reproduction have been expressed under the broader social conditions of indifference to *normalized* pregnancy loss. Or, as Butler puts it, 'affective responses that are highly regulated by regimes of power (2009: 39).'

Just as expressions of emotions are socio-economical, so too are acts of grieving political. As Goss and Klass (2005) mention, social narrative functions to *police* grief. 'Society regulates bereavement... All societies have rules for how the emotions of grief are to be displayed and handled (189).' Individuals' grieving should be congruent with the familial narratives and the family's expressions of loss. Grieving should also fit within the larger social customs and political arrangements. Grieving is not only a personal emotion and response, but also a social arrangement with material investments and a social formula: that is holding the various rituals to display affective actions and gestures.

Abortion death rituals in South Korea, in this sense, have been situated at the interstices of a legal system which criminalizes abortion (Yang 2005) while also promoting it to prevent 'over-population.' Women and a small number of men need social spaces where they can make meaning and reconcile their abortions with their religious worldview. The political meaning of the rituals becomes more noticeable when these divergent frames are put together. The penal code system designates a woman's abortion as a criminal offense; therefore, under the law, she should be corrected and punished (Sung 2012). The population control narratives imply that the redundant 'numbers' of the population and its producers—the fetuses and women—are hardly considered emotional beings or sacred. I argue that within these two dominant narratives, the ritual participants' collective reenactments of past abortions have *unintentionally* shed light on those erased by historical memory due to top-down population control policies. In addition, the rituals serve as an interpretive community where the abortion itself, as a socially-invisible and tabooed experience, gains shared meaning through organized rituals which require labor and designated time for prayers and remembrance. The rice, fruits, and baby toys brought to the altar reinscribe and conjure the deceased, memories, and time. Although some Buddhist temples and abortion rituals are not immune to patriarchal bias and misogyny about abortion, those spaces are still relatively distant from the criminalizing law system. They serve as mourning spaces for women in the post-colonial and post-Cold War eras when there had been few alternatives.

However, by internalizing and confining women's grieving emotions within only religious spaces, the acts of mourning which potentially could be political, do not challenge the biopolitical regimes or its actors: the US government, international population organizations, and various South Korea governments and

dictators. The acts of grieving for erased, marginalized, and violated lives have the political potential to reverse hegemonic narratives which define whose lives matter. To make subjects grievable can be a rebellious act because it makes lives matter. Yet, women have been socialized to grieve only within religious spaces. In other words, the potentially political act of mourning has not been directed at the biopolitical regimes that exercised top-down population control policies. Rather than protesting to people who occupy politically and socially important positions of honor, ritual participants occupy the position of 'sinner' by talking to the fetuses and confessing to the monks. The Buddhist narrative in the rituals supports the worldview that women should self-identify as sinners, which is a prerequisite for access to the spaces of mourning. Women's collective abortion death rituals over the last twenty-five years in South Korea de-politicize the very political process of some abortion practices that were based on population control policies.

Conclusion

Between 1961 and 1989, Population Council and the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) initiated and supported family planning in South Korea. Like China's one-child policy, South Korean dictatorial governments limited families to three (1966–1970), two (1971–1982), and one (1983–1996) child. During the population control era, many South Korean women used abortion as birth control and for the purposes of being sex selective of child. Introduced from Japan in the late 1980s, the abortion death rituals, *ChonDoJe*, have been providing the social spaces and the ritual formula to make meanings out of abortion experiences. Based on the Buddhist notion of eternal life and continuing bonds beyond lives and deaths, *ChonDo Je* has been very popular among older women over the past 25 years. By socially-recognizing and remembering a fetus' soul, ritual participants of South Korean Buddhist abortion rituals make visible some complex intersections. These intersections include the Buddhist notion of the eternal circuit of lives, the biopolitics of population control, and participants' individual and collective understanding of their abortion experiences within multiple cultural and political narratives. I argue that those women who identify themselves as the 'sinners' of abortion lived as 'good women and good citizens' when they complied and accommodated family planning policies. In sum, the birth of the ritual's idea that there are sinners of abortion undergirds the biopolitical project that used abortion for family planning, son preference, and population control.

Acknowledgements

I am much indebted to Susan Craddock, Ilana Turner, and Beaudelaine Pierre who have read and commented insightfully on the different stages of this article. I also thank the two anonymous reviewers who offered rich and very helpful comments. Gratitude to Catherine Squires, Zenzele Isoke, Jigna Desai, Hale Konitshek, Siri Suh, Richa Nagar, Andrew, Kelly, Tad, and YoungHae for their comments and support for this research project. I am also thankful for

Director Seyoung Jo and my 'research participants,' the fellow activists, writers, and scholars who shared insights, experiences, and stories.

Bibliography

- Armstrong, David. 1983. *Political Anatomy of the Body: Medical Knowledge in Britain in the Twentieth Century*, Cambridge [Cambridgeshire], New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Bae, Eun-Kyoung. 2012. *Human Reproduction in Contemporary Korea: Women, Motherhood, and Family Planning Policy*, Seoul National University Institute for Gender Research Series 7. Time Travel.
- Barthes, Roland. 1972. *Mythologies*, New York: Hill and Wang.
- Butler, Judith. 2009. *Frames of War: When is Life Grievable?* London: New York: Verso.
- Cho, EunJoo. 2012. 'Population and Control: Family Planning in South Korea', Sociology, PhD thesis, YonSei University.
- Cho, EunJoo. 2013. 'Postcolonial Modernity and Governmental Subjectivity: The Family Planning Program in South Korea', Paper presented at 6th World Congress of Korean Studies, Seoul Korea.
- Cho, EunJoo. 2014. 'Population Statistics and State Formation: The 1960 and 1966 Population Censuses of the Republic of Korea', *Korea Sociology* 48:5, 137–172.
- Chu, Junhong. 2001. 'Prenatal Sex Determination and Sex-Selective Abortion in Rural Central China', *Population and Development Review* 27:2, 259–281.
- Connelly, Matthew James. 2008. *Fatal Misconception: The Struggle to Control World Population*, Cambridge, MA: Belknap of Harvard UP.
- Donaldson, Peter J. 1990. 'On the Origins of the United States Government's International Population Policy', *Population Studies* 44:3, 385–399.
- Foucault, Michel. 1977. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, 1st American Ed, New York: Pantheon Books.
- Foucault, Michel. 1978/1990. *The History of Sexuality* (Vintage Books ed.), New York: Vintage Books. (First American edition published 1978).
- Foucault, Michel. 1982. 'The Subject and Power', *Critical Inquiry* 8:4, 777–795.
- Foucault, M., M. Senellart, F. Ewald, and A. Fontana. 2004/2007. *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1977–78*, Basingstoke, New York: Palgrave Macmillan: République Française. (Original work published 2004).
- Gordon, Linda. 2002. *The Moral Property of Women: A History of Birth Control Politics in America*, Urbana, Chicago: University of Illinois Press.
- Goss, Robert, and Dennis Klass. 2005. *Dead but not Lost: Grief Narratives in Religious Tradition*, Walnut Creek, CA: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Greenhalgh, Susan. 2001. 'Fresh Winds in Beijing: Chinese Feminists Speak Out on the One-Child Policy and Women's Lives', *Signs* 26:3, 847–886.
- Greenhalgh, Susan. 2003. 'Science, Modernity, and the Making of China's One-Child Policy', *Population and Development Review* 29:2, 163–196.
- Hardacre, Helen. 1997. *Marketing the Menacing Fetus in Japan*, Berkeley: University of California. Twentieth-century Japan; 7.
- Hirschkind, Charles. 2011. 'Is There a Secular Body?' *Cultural Anthropology* 26:4, 633–647.
- Hwang, Ji-sung. 2011. 'Reproduction Experience of Women with Disabilities: From the Politics of Reproduction Perspective', Master thesis, Seoul National University.
- Kamitsuka, Margaret. 2011. 'Feminist Scholarship and Its Relevance for Political Engagement: The Test Case of Abortion in the U.S', *Religion and Gender* 1:1, 18–43.
- Kim, Eun-Sil. 2001. *Women's Bodies, the Cultural Politics of Bodies*, Seoul: Another Culture Publishing.
- Kim, Sonja. 2008. "'Limiting Birth': Birth Control in Colonial Korea (1910–1945)", *East Asian Science, Technology and Society: An International Journal* 2:3, 335–359.

- Kim, Jae-Hyung, and HaA Oh. 2016. 'The Historical Origin and Litigation of Compulsory Sterilization and Abortion over People affected by Hansen's Disease in Leprosarium', *Journal of Democracy and Human Rights* 16:4, 153–200.
- Kligman, Gail. 1992. 'The Politics of Reproduction in Ceauaescu's Romania: A Case Study in Political Culture', *East European Politics and Societies* 6:3, 364–418.
- Korea Woman Link. 2011. 'There is No Abortion as You Think; to Resonate Through Women's Experiences', Collection of abortion stories. Seoul.
- LaFleur, William R. 1992. *Liquid Life: Abortion and Buddhism in Japan*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Lee, Mi Kyoung. 1989. 'A case study of Decisive Factors of Rural Women's Contraception in Korea', Master thesis, Ewha Womans University.
- Lee, Nam-hee. 2003. 'Between Indeterminacy and Radical Critique: Madang-guk, Ritual, and Protest', *Positions: East Asia Cultures Critique* 11:3, 555–584.
- McCann, Carole. 2017. *Figuring the Population Bomb: Gender and Demography in the Mid-Twentieth Century* (Feminist technosciences), Seattle: University of Washington Press.
- McKittrick, Katherine. 2015. *Sylvia Wynter: On Being Human as Praxis*, Durham: Duke University Press.
- Morgan, Lynn Marie, and Meredith W. Michaels. 1999. *Fetal Subjects, Feminist Positions*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Moto-Sanchez, Milla Micka. 2016. 'Jizo, healing rituals, and women in Japan', *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 43:2, 307–331.
- Murphy, Michelle. 2017. *The Economization of Life*, Durham: Duke University Press.
- Nam, Sanghui. 2010. 'The Women's Movement and the Transformation of the Family Law in South Korea. Interactions between Local, National and Global Structures', *European Journal of East Asian Studies* 9:1, 67–86.
- Patel, Tulsi. 2007. *Sex-Selective Abortion in India: Gender, Society and New Reproductive Technologies*, New Delhi, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Scheper-Hughes, Nancy. 1992. *Death without Weeping: The Violence of Everyday Life in Brazil*, Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Solinger, Rickie, and Mie Nakachi. 2016. *Reproductive States: Global Perspectives on the Invention and Implementation of Population Policy*, Oxford; New York: Oxford UP.
- Suh, Moon Hee. 1995. 'Area Differentials of Sex Imbalance in Birth', *Health & Society Studies* 15:2, 143–173.
- Sung, Woong Kyu. 2012. 'Abortion in South Korea: The Law and the Reality', *International Journal of Law, Policy and the Family* 26:3, 278–305.
- The Ministry of Health and Welfare of South Korea. 2016. 50 Years of Korean Population Policy: From Antinatalist to Pronatalist.
- Wilson, Jeff. 2009. *Mourning the Unborn Dead: A Buddhist Ritual Comes to America*, Publisher: Oxford University Press.
- Woo, Hai Ran. 2009a. 'Korean Buddhist Ritual for the Unborn Dead and Women', *Religion and Culture* 17, 133–173.
- Woo, Hai Ran. 2009b. 'A New Type of Buddhist Death Ritual: The Ritual for the Unborn Dead', *The Critique for Religion and Culture* 16, 170–201.
- Yang, Hyunah. 1997. 'Revisiting the Issue of Korean 'Military Comfort Women': The Question of Truth and Positionality', *Positions: East Asia Cultures Critique* 5:1, 51–71.
- Yang, Hyunah. 2005. 'From the Criminal to the Right: Abortion Right as a Reproductive Right' in Hyunah Yang (eds.), *From the Criminal Abortion to Reproductive Right*, Seoul National University, BK21 Center for Public Interest and Human Rights Law, Seoul: Human Think Publishing, 203–242.

Documentary

Jo, SeYoung. 2013. *Let's Dance*, (Ja, I-je Daen-seu-ta-im), South Korea, 81 mins, HD, Color.

Online sites and News sites

Dae-won temple website, accessed May 1, 2017. <http://www.daewonsa.or.kr>.

Kwon, Ki Jung. 2013. 'A highschool girl suicided due to the wrong rumor', The Kyung-hyang Shinmun, 29 October, accessed 20 April 2017. http://news.khan.co.kr/kh_news/khan_art_view.html?artid=201310291349261&code=950306.

The Korea Ministry of Government Legislation, accessed May 1, 2017. <http://www.law.go.kr/lsInfoP.do?lsiSeq=138767#0000>.

Paul Quinn, A review of Let's Dance, accessed December 6, 2016. <http://www.hangulcel-luloid.com/letsdance.html>.

Sridharan, Vasudevan. 2013. 'China Becoming Abortion Haven for South Korean Women', International Business Times, 10 August, accessed 28 April 2017. <http://www.ib-times.co.uk/south-korea-china-abortion-one-child-policy-498125>.

The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (fall 2014 Edition), accessed May 1, 2017. <https://plato.stanford.edu/>.

Twitter, accessed May 1, 2016, <https://twitter.com/byuckunsa>.

World Bank, accessed May 5, 2017. <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/korea/overview>.