
GENDER POLITICS AND NATION-BUILDING: CONSTRUCTING A NEW IMAGE OF FEMININITY IN NORTH KOREA (1945–1957)¹

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From the beginning of state-building in North Korea, its ideology has always been developed in line with the theory of Korean revolution. Initially, the conception of the Korean revolution was based on the main postulates of the Marxist-Leninist theory of revolution, implying its development changed from a bourgeois-democratic stage to a socialist one. Regarding North Korea, after its liberation from Japanese colonialism, this conception meant a gradual transition from anti-imperialism to the anti-feudal democratic revolution and then to the current socialist regime. For the implementation of the first stage of the Korean revolution in 1946, a series of laws were adopted, which provided a solid basis for socialist transformations in North Korea. Officially, the anti-feudal democratic revolution completed in 1947 with the establishment of the People's Committee of North Korea; however, this began a transitive period that lasted until 1957. Thus, until the present time, the idea of the Korean revolution has been an essential structure of political discourse and has determined the current tasks of nation-building.

During the first and transitive stages of the Korean revolution, liquidation of socioeconomic and political inequality, including gender discrimination, was one of the main tasks of state-building. The liberation of women was understood in terms of the theory of class struggle and exploitation and implied granting women equal civil rights and freedom. Korean women were seen as a significant labor source, whose mobilization could significantly contribute to the establishment of socialism. The gender policy in 1945–1957 was mainly aimed at wakening the political conscience of women and their involvement in industrial production. Hence, the new sociopolitical regime and its policies influenced the transformation of traditional femininity and masculinity, which was primarily determined by the dominant neo-Confucian ideology. This study attempts to answer questions regarding how the theory of Korean revolution has impacted gender politics and to what extent North Korea could break with the traditional image of femininity.

Key words: North Korea, nation-building, gender politics, gender relations, femininity, revolution

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Introduction

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) was established as an independent state on September 9th, 1948. Its establishment was the result of the beginning of the cold war and the ideological division of the Korean political parties into opposing groups. However, the creation of the DPRK in the northern part of the Korean Peninsula was preceded by the establishment of the Republic of Korea on August 15, 1948. The division of Korea into two states was not a short-term achievement and required a great amount of time and effort from both the internal (namely, Korean political groups) and external political forces, e.g., those who were responsible for the military occupation of Korea since its liberation in August of 1945. Thus, the processes of state-building in North and South Korea had started long before they were declared as two independent states in 1948. During the three years of the transitive period (1945–1948), Koreans prepared for the creation of a new state, but due to the political contradictions between the rightists and the leftists, they could not achieve unity regarding what model of state governance should be established in Korea as the basis of its future national development. In this regard, the transitive period was a time of determining a new developmental model that would guarantee a prosperous Korean future.

A new strategy for national development employed radical changes in the semi-feudal land system, power structure and social relationships. It was believed that Korea should be a society of equal opportunities, irrespective of an individual's racial, religious or gender affiliation, which was a view that was equally shared by Korean nationalists and communists. The Constitution of the DPRK in 1948 guaranteed equal civil rights for all citizens and was officially confirmed to ensure gender equality. To properly assess the importance of the last measure, one needs to understand the social status of Korean women in traditional Korean society during the Joseon era (1392–1910) in which the “woman’s life was completely governed by men” [20. P. 189]. The Japanese colonial regime, which lasted for 35 years (1910–1945), provided no advancement in the development of women's rights. The most considerable changes occurred in female education, making it more accessible for Korean women than in the Joseon period. During the colonial time, Korean women had been gradually involved in the national liberation movement and industrial production, thus changing their image of being housekeepers and from the “inner quarters” (*anna*). However, these social changes were not accompanied by measures that would have provided a new legal status for Korean women or a new social attitude towards them. In this sense, the Law on Equal Rights of Men and Women, which was adopted on July 30, 1946 in North Korea and was later confirmed by the Constitution of 1948, provided a legal basis for the revolutionary transformation of the social status of women in Korea. Together with males, Korean women were to become important players in the nation-building process in the DPRK.

This study aims to answer the questions of how gender relations have changed in North Korea after the establishment of an independent state and how the political system and the new structure of power relations has influenced the formation of the new image of femininity. Initially, I planned to explore the evolution of gender politics in the DPRK from liberation until the present time; however, because of some publication requirements, I had to limit my analysis to the initial stage of gender politics. Chronologically, this study covers the period from 1945 until the end of the 1950s, and it coincides with the development of the Korean revolution from the anti-feudal democratic stage to the socialist one.

Sources & Methodology

The study of North Korea, regardless of the research subject, usually encounters many problems because of the lack of reliable information about the country. Researchers who study North Korea commonly have to deal with a wide range of secondary sources, which objectivity is often questionable, while the number of primary sources is limited and specific. This study, therefore, explores the conceptual linkages between the processes of nation-building and the formation of a new type of femininity in North Korea that are based on several different types of sources. The analysis of the nation-building policy entails studying the official documents of the DPRK that were published from 1948 to the present time. These documents include public speeches, declarations and memoirs of North Korean leaders, the Constitution of the DPRK, and the laws related to the development of women's rights. The North Korean leaders' statements clearly show how they have gradually reshaped and changed the basic elements of nation-building in North Korea.

Developing from a people's democracy to Juche-oriented socialism in the 1960s, the North Korean state went through a difficult time of formulating its national self-identity, which was different from the postulates of Marxism-Leninism and free of external influences. What remained unchanged during the evolution of the nation-building ideology is their interpretation of what a nation is. According to Kim Il-sung, a nation implies the unity of blood, culture and cohesion of historical development [9. P. 26]. In early 1948, criticizing Japanese colonialism, Kim Il-sung stated that even under the tough Japanese regime, the Korean nation had managed to maintain its national culture and language, "holding dear and sacred the memory of its own country history and national dignity" [10. P. 164]. Furthermore, Kim Il-sung thought that for a long period of time Korea was developing as a united nation based on the unity of blood and culture [11. P. 450]. This understanding of nation, which is ethnocentric, ensures that Korea is a united nation without its division into the North and South. From the point of the choice and implementation of a nation-building strategy, it means that in the words of Deutsch, "the influence of the past, the environment, and the vast, complex, and slow-changing aspects of the actions and expectations of millions of people. These actions and expectations limit the speed and scope of "nation-building"..."

[3. P. 3]. After the collapse of the Japanese regime, Koreans should have built a new state that retained a succession of cultural memory and blood. What they needed to renew substantially concerned with the institutional structure of society and power relations [12. P. 235–249].

The statements of North Korean leaders are the main sources for understanding changes in their nation-building strategies and its potential effect on gender politics. However, their statements insufficiently explain in detail how the social practices of women have been developed and how femininity has changed throughout the political vicissitude. In this regard, a content analysis of the female magazine, *Korean Woman* (조선 녀성), will help to recreate a new image of femininity that explicitly reflects the narratives of the magazine's pages.

Kim Il-sung's autobiography (*Reminiscences: With the Century*) also deserves consideration in the present study. Published in 1992–1998 in Pyongyang, the memoirs provide rich information of Kim Il-sung's approach to the development of women's rights in Korea, and, in general, his understanding of a woman's life. It is interesting to analyze those parts of Kim Il-sung's memoirs in which he warmly recalled his mother, the women guerillas and the creation of a women's brigade, as well as his wife, Kim Jong-suk. Remembering his mother, Kim Il-sung said that "purely from a woman's point of view, Mothers' life was nothing but hardships, one after another" [13. P. 62]. Thus, true love and sincere compassion for his mother helped Kim Il-sung to understand all of the hardships a woman suffers during her life. By understanding exactly how subdued the social status of Korean woman was in the traditional feudal society, Kim Il-sung raised a question regarding the prerequisites of a woman's liberation from the existing social roles.

The starting point of woman's liberation, according to Kim Il-sung, was the creation of the first women's guerilla brigade in April of 1936. Having existed for only a short time (six months), it was "a historic event which led the women of this country to a revolutionary path" [13. P. 1029], making them "one wheel of revolution". He thought that as a consequence of the women's brigade, the long lasting Korean tradition of male supremacy and disregard for women was broken. Thereby, Korean women made the first step towards a revolution from traditional ways of life. Kim Il-sung strongly criticized the Joseon society (1392–1910) and Japanese rule (1910–1945) for the social discrimination of women in which he stated that "...women had no other heritage than the chain of bondage and grievances. This was the worst crime committed by the Korean feudal society" [13].

In this reflection of Kim Il-sung on the improvement of the status of women, it is important to stress the conceptual linkage between women's liberation and the Korean revolution. The liberation of women from the feudal tradition of disdain became possible via the revolutionary struggle of the Korean people against the hated Japanese rule, and, in private, it started due to the creation of the women's brigade in 1936. Since that time, Korean women "began to write their new history on the ground of blood", thus contributing to the Korean revolution at

the cost of their own lives. It also was very important for the continual involvement of Korean women in shaping the future of Korea. The development of the Korean revolution also included the Marxist approach to women's liberation; therefore, it created a theoretical basis for sophisticated interpretations regarding the ongoing transformation of women's social status in North Korea after liberation. As a result, the restructuring of the traditional image of femininity occurred, which met the requirements of the current political regime and state ideology.

Now, we come to the questions of how nation-building policies correlate with transformations of the dominant image of femininity and to what extent it might affect gender stereotypes to cause radical changes in the perceptions of women's traditional roles (occupation, behavior, personal traits). To answer these questions, we should clarify some concepts and categories of the current analysis that are used as theoretical presumptions. First, I assume that gender is a social construction and that it is regularly constructed, changed or renewed through dominant discourses [24]. Additionally, gender, as a discursive formation, cannot be separated out from "the political and cultural intersections in which it is invariably produced and maintained" [1. P. 3]. This means that gender representation is deeply enrooted in power relations and ought to be studied regarding the close bond with power politics. In the frame of constructionism, femininity, which implies a set of traits, occupational roles and types of behavior associated with women, is also understood as a socially constructed phenomenon. The understanding of masculinity and femininity varies based on the historical context, region, and cultural tradition, which confirms there is neither a universal nor an eternal (unchangedable) type of femininity.

Second, because the nation-building policies of North Korea are a main subject of research, it seems reasonable to supplement the constructionist approach to gender with a political discourse analysis. This will allow us to determine the dominant and subverted discussions in North Korean politics and will answer the question of how the dominant discourse may impact the gender construction. In our case, political discourse analysis entails studying the public statements of North Korean leaders and the narratives of *Korean women*, which are interpreted as 'texts'. According to M. Hearn and Gr. Michelson, "texts can take many forms such as written documents, verbal reports and statements, terminology, symbols and signs. Discourse analysis involves the systematic study of these texts" [26. P. 8]. This interpretation of a 'text' has a dialectic bond with the definition of discourse as "practices that systematically form the object of which they speak" [4. P. 13]. Discourses occur in our everyday life through various human activities and interactions ('texts') and construct meanings of social actions and identities. Discourses may be used by different groups to shape and construct outcomes in their favor. "These constructive processes help to further reveal and illuminate underlying power relations in social structures as dominant meanings associated with particular discourse emerge by way of contestation. The dominant meaning occurs as alternative discourses are marginalized or subverted" [26. P. 9]. From this point

of view, a 'woman' as a social actor and gender is constituted by the existing discourses. A 'woman' is socially and discursively constituted because "evident physiological differences do not in themselves lead to similar categorization" [4. P. 13].

In accordance with these theoretical provisions on gender and femininity and the discourse analysis of nation-building-related texts, I assume that the dominant political discourse in North Korea after liberation and up to the present time has been developed through an opposition of 'revolution' and 'counter-revolution'. The modern political discourse reflected in the texts of North Korean leaders is infused with idea of the Korean revolution. This is a core indication that determines all of the processes of political development in the DPRK. The term 'counter-revolution' is rarely used by North Korean leadership, but those challenges that are caused by the counter-revolution (such as the presence of internal and external enemies, which are threats to the current revolution, and as a consequence, are threats to the well-being of the Korean nation), are always mentioned. Who are the enemies of the Korean revolution? During different stages of development in the Korean revolution, different groups have been marked as enemies; however, these are pro-Japanese and pro-American groups, American imperialists, national traitors, factionists, spies, infiltrators, land owners, and comprador bourgeoisie [12. P. 268–269]. The threat of counter-revolution has always been one of the essential prerequisites for constituting the nation-building strategy in North Korea, thus determining the DPRK development is an imperative task in Korean revolution [27].

Ideological background of nation-building in North Korea: Analyzing the initial stage of the Korean revolution

After the liberation of Korea from Japanese imperialism, Korean leftists conceived the ongoing sociopolitical process in their country as a bourgeois-democratic and anti-feudal revolution. The leader of South Korean communists, Pak Heon-yeon, in his famous "August theses" (1948) determined the current stage of revolution in Korea as a bourgeois-democratic one. Meanwhile, the leader of the North Korean leftists, Kim Il-sung, wrote: "Though our country had liberated but in all spheres of society remained deeply rooted harmful remnants of the period of Japanese imperialism and feudalism. Without eliminating these vestiges it would impossible either to complete an establishment of independence, nor the democratic development of a society. Hence, we define the modern character of the Korean revolution as anti-imperialist and anti-feudal democratic revolution" [14. P. 39]. As can be seen, Kim Il-sung did not use the term "bourgeois-democratic revolution". Instead, he spoke about the anti-imperialist and anti-feudal democratic revolution in Korea. According to the North Korean historiography, this period of the Korean revolution completed in 1947 with the establishment of the People's

Committee, and after its founding, there was a transition period to socialism [29] (1947–1957).

The political opponents of Korean communists, the nationalists, did not interpret the period after liberation as a revolution. However, they did understand that it was the most challenging time in modern Korean history. Both the Korean nationalists and the leftists precisely knew after liberation that the future development of Korea depended on how Koreans would respond to these challenges. Overall, these challenges concerned a future form of governance, and, in particular, a new system of power relations and a model of socioeconomic development. This was a development issue that had to be solved by the combined efforts of the Korean people and their allies. The allies had liberated Korea from Japan, and as liberators of Korea who was a colony of Japan, they strongly influenced the future choices of the public governmental system. In this respect, it is important to remember that Korea was divided along the 38th parallel between the Soviet Union and the US. North Korea was placed under Soviet control, and the South was placed under American control.

The role of the Soviet Union in the creation of the new political regime has been considerable since the liberation of Korea. Conditionally, until the 1960s, when Juche ideas became the essential basis of North Korean state ideology, Kim Il-sung often stressed in his public speeches the significant role of the Red Army in the liberation of Korea from Japanese colonialism. In the December of 1945, he said that the Soviet Army, having expelled the Japanese imperialists from Korea, brought freedom and independence to the Korean people [15. P. 11]. The contribution of the Soviet army to the liberation of Korea and to the establishment of the DPRK, was, therefore, a common idea in North Korea from 1945 to the 1950s. The first women's magazine, *Korean woman* (조선 여성), which was edited in North Korea since September 1946, usually opened with political articles in which the liberation aims of the Soviet Army were clearly stressed. Moreover, in the second half of the 1940s to the early 1950s, the magazine published several articles on the Soviet system of education, famous political figures (Nadezda Krupskaya, Maria Kollontay) and literary works [6], [7]. Looking over these articles, it becomes evident that the Soviet experience was initially presented as an example of nation-building to be followed by North Koreans in all spheres of life.

Therefore, in the early stages of North Korean state-building, it was officially recognized that a new future of Korea had been made possible due to the great and heroic contribution of the Soviet Army and its leadership during the liberation. Nothing was ever said about the US and the UK, who also contributed to the victory over Japan and to the collapse of Japanese colonialism in Korea. The division of Korea along the 38th parallel, in addition to the close supervision of the Soviet civil authorities in North Korea, led to the new DPRK leadership's major reliance upon the Soviet Union. Although this thesis may be questioned in regard to the future choice of national governance, the Soviet Union successfully adopted the people's democracy as a system of governance in the DPRK. More-

over, the Soviet Union helped the Workers Party of North Korea (WPNK, which was created via the unification of the former North Korean Orgburo of the Korean Communist Party with the New People's Party) to assert its political power in North Korea. The political monopoly of the WPNK confirmed the results of the first election of the people's committee (in provinces, towns and counties) in November of 1946, when it obtained 36% of the vote, followed by the Democratic Party and the Chonudan Party with a total of 26% of the vote. The remaining votes belonged to the delegates without party membership (38%) [29. P. 251].

Immediately after the Soviet Army entered North Korea, the people's committee started to appear all over the northern part of Korea, whereas in its southern part, they were strictly forbidden by the American Military Government. Thus, since the liberation of the people's committee, it has become one of the most imperative sources of administrative power in North Korea. In February of 1946, however, the Temporary People's Committee (TPC) was established, which factually functioned as a provisional government of North Korea under the guidance of the Soviet Civil Administration. During the transitive period, the TPC initiated a few structural reforms, which provided a basis for the social and political revolution in Korea. In accordance with the ideas of the anti-feudal and anti-imperialist democratic revolution, the TPC implemented a land reform in March of 1946 and adopted the Law on Labor, the Law on Equal Rights of Men and Women, and the Law on Nationalization of industrial enterprises, railroads, and banks owned by the Japanese and national traitors. These measures were implemented into all of the main tasks of the anti-feudal democratic revolution and, therefore, created conditions for a smooth transition into socialism [16. P. 537–538].

After the Korean War (1950–1953), the DPRK government adopted a 3-year economic plan that aimed to restore the national economy and the industrialization and large scale nationalization (collectivization) of private property in all sectors of production. By 1958, the socialist property (state and collective) became the dominant form of property rights in North Korea [30. P. 163]. From a political point of view, it meant a transition from the people's democracy regime to a socialist democracy that was based on the monopoly rights of the state and the governing party in the distribution of national income. Theoretically, it also meant the completion of the transitive period in the Korean revolution and the beginning of the development of the socialist stage.

Toward gender equality in North Korea

No notable results have been achieved in North Korea regarding gender relations. Following the Marxist idea of the discrimination of women in a capitalist society, the Korean leftists began their gender policy with the adoption of the Law on Equal Rights for Men and Women on July 30, 1946. The law gave Korean women equal rights to men in all areas of state, economic, social and political life, including the ability to work and rest, to receive equal pay for equal work, to re-

ceive social security, and to receive education [31. P. 334–336]. The law prohibited polygamy, concubines, the selling and buying of women, prostitution and *kisaen* activities. Korean women were granted the same rights of men with respect to marriage, the selection of a spouse, the dissolution of marriage, assignment of alimony rights and inheritance (property division rights). The marriageable age was 18 years for men and 17 years for women. However, there must be mutual consent for marriage between a man and a woman because forced marriage was strictly prohibited. Until the Act of Civil Affairs was adopted in 1986, all laws and rules related to family relationships were enacted on an *ad hoc* basis [21. P. 173].

The emancipation of women was exclusively interpreted in the terms of class liberation or liberation from class exploitation. As Marx wrote in the “Manifest of a Communist Party”, “The bourgeois looks at his wife as a mere instrument of production ... He does not even suspect that there is a need to do away with such a status of woman as a mere instrument of production...” [25]. Marx’s theory of exploitation extends to the social relations of patriarchy. “Patriarchy and the bourgeois family system embody exploitation of women, within the household and within the workplace” [23]. In this regard, gender inequality is understood as a consequence of class inequality and exploitation, whereas the inequalities associated with gender were given little attention. Formally, the Law on Equal Rights of Men and Women was aimed at emancipating women from class exploitation and destroying the patriarchy institute, which was seen as an obstacle in the anti-feudal democratic revolution. In reality, the true aim of the law was for class mobilization of women for the creation of a new, socialism-oriented state and its consolidation around the governing Workers Party of Korea. The social liberation of women was, therefore, seen as a compulsory condition for the implementation of the next socialist stage of the Korean revolution [17. P. 210]. Since that time, Korean women have been deprived of the privacy that they had during the Joseon era and have been pushed into public relations. Thus, women began to be considered as an integral part of the working and social class and could be mobilized for all work and tasks set by the governing political party.

After liberation, different public organizations were established in North Korea that focused on the class conscience of Korean peasants and workers, including women. Created in November of 1945, the Democratic Women's Union of Korea (DWUK) was the biggest women’s public organization. They fought to facilitate further involvement of Korean women in all spheres of social life, including female education (it helped to liquidate women's illiteracy), creation of kindergartens, extrication of various old-fashioned prejudices, and religious beliefs. The most important mission of the DWUK was propagandist work. As Kim Il-sung pointed out, in his speech during the opening conference of the DWUK, the Union had to concentrate its efforts on forming correct views of women regarding the people's power and the current tasks of nation-building [17]. In this regard, the activity of the DWUK was completely determined by the political course of the Workers Party in Korea. The effectiveness of the Women's Union depended upon the large

scale involvement of adult North Korean women for its activities. Thus, it was practically compulsory for all adult women to participate in DWUK meetings (in towns and counties). By November of 1965, the DWUK's membership was 2,730 thousands members [30. P. 158] and they published the female magazine, *Korean Woman*, the first state-sponsored monthly magazine for women in Korea.

In addition to the DWUK, Korean women participated in all other national public organizations, such as the All-Korea Trade Union, the Union of Socialist Labor Youth, and the Korean Union of Agriculture Workers. Participation in all public organizations facilitated the involvement of women in political activities. For the first time in Korean history, women took part in the election of the people's committee in November of 1946, and among the 3,459 deputies of the people's committee, 14% were women (453) [29. P. 252] Following this, a quota for women's legislative and political participation was adopted and raised to 20%. According to statistical data, in the second half of the 20th century, the rate of seats held by women in the national parliament was very stable at 20.1, but after 2009, it dropped to 15.6 [5]. As for the women's share of government ministerial positions in the DPRK, there were no women ministers. In 2008, unexpectedly, the share of women holding ministry positions increased to 5.7. However, by 2012, it dropped to 0 as before [5].

Along with political empowerment, women were highly involved in industrial production. The Law on Labor, adopted on June 24, 1946, was created so that women could work in comfortable conditions and have equal rights as men in the workplace. Korean women were granted rights of two to four weeks of paid leave, 77 days of maternity leave with pay, and social insurance. To increase the labor force participation of Korean women, the TPC (later, the DPRK government) with the support of public organizations, including the DWUK, opened kindergartens to help women to cope with their double-burdened life. Care for children was declared a state policy, according to the Constitution of 1948 (article 22). This labor policy substantially changed the everyday life of thousands of North Korean women, making them important players in national production. By 1965, however, there were more than 70,000 engineers and other qualified specialists who were women. Moreover, 64 women were Heroes of the DPRK and Labor Heroes [30. P. 152]. Comparing this gender policy with another socialist country, it reminds one of the Soviet Union in the 1930s to 1950s. This was a period when women were viewed as "working mothers", and the strengthening of families was the core principle of the Soviet society.

Here two questions arise: First, how has the image of femininity changed by this gender policy and to what extent has it really changed and broken the traditional style? Traditionally, Korean women were taught to be diligent, caring, quiet, loyal, and balanced. These traits trained women to become dutiful wives, caring mothers and obedient daughters. "The inequality of the sexes was ingrained in children's minds from birth" [20. P. 190–193]. As a result, it formed very solid gender stereotypes for women that implied strict occupational and behavioral seg-

regation. In general, women were occupied with spinning, sericulture, silk-weaving, and doing household chores, although the occupation types undertaken depended on their social status. Before Korea entered the “socialist modernity” [19. P. 11], it was one of the most class-divided and stratified societies in the world [2], whereby the everyday life of women commoners (peasants) essentially differed from that of women aristocrats. One could even say that women of upper and lower social classes had nothing in common. However, what they equally shared was a deprivation of public life. Both women peasants and aristocrats (yangban) had no idea about what was going on outside of the inner quarters (house). Thus, leadership was exclusively associated with masculinity as well as all types of work that produced the household income.

In this cultural context, it was not enough to adopt the Law on the Equal Rights of Men and Women to make women socially and politically active. It was an impossible task for several reasons. First, the life of women peasants, who constituted the majority of the female population in the mid-20th century, was a chain of hardships as Kim Il-sung correctly noted in his memoirs. Living in poor and backward conditions, the everyday life of Korean women was very hard and substantially limited their social or political activity. Second, the level of illiteracy was very high in North Korea at the time. By 1945, there were 2,300 thousands within the illiterate population with only 35% of children attending primary schools and 1.8% going onto secondary school [30. P. 221]. This meant that the North Korean government began its gender policy regarding female education to engage women in public life. Finally, the inertia of any sociocultural development should also be considered: it required time to change the existing gender stereotypes and form new attitudes towards women.

The high illiteracy level was a hot issue after liberation, which required the combined efforts of the North Korean government and public organizations to cope with it on a short-term basis. By 1949, however, the illiteracy issue was almost resolved. The process of the liquidation of illiteracy was accompanied by raising awareness of women because the educational policy tasks were much broader than just teaching reading and writing. Women were to know about their rights and opportunities under the new socio-political regime, and one of the main tools of enlightenment politics included the female magazine, *Korean Woman*.

In the 1940–1950s, *Korean Woman* focused on forming new images of women who were socially active, educated and caring. The entertainment function of the magazine was absent, however, at the time. All editions of *Korean Woman* opened with articles on political topics, whereby the content depended on the current responsibilities of the socio-economic and political course of the governing party. As a rule, Kim Il-sung’s utterances and declarations of the DWUK’s leadership were published on the first pages. Although the personality cult of Kim Il-sung was forming in the 1950s and early 1960s but it was not so evident and eye-catching then compared with what it became in the 1970s. There was a reserved

attitude towards the North Korean leader, who was called the chief of state (원수) prime minister (수상), that did not include praising epithets such as ‘great’ (위대하다), and the ‘reverent’ (경애하다). An extensive praising of Kim Il-sung as the founder of the Korean state, mythologizing his role in the Korean revolution, started to determine the magazine's content in the end of 1960s – early 1970s. This, in turn, began a radical change in the magazine's publications in which Kim Il-sung's first wife, Kim Jong-suk, was the main and exclusive subject of attention. Thus, it was an absolute politicization of the magazine's narrative and of gender politics.

The magazine's section on politics from 1945 to the 1950s also included articles on the development of women's rights and movements in the European socialist countries. It outlined outstanding women in world politics, female representatives of the Stakhanov movement, and women heroes (Zoya Kosmodemyanskaya). All editions of *Korean Woman* contained poems (partly traditional, partly modern ones), patriotic songs, short stories of both national and foreign literature. Through these texts, Korean women were gradually taught to perceive themselves as an integral part of the world's working class without national borders. They were to go beyond their local, traditional views on female behavior and occupational roles, and they were to have high political and cultural views in socialist countries (mostly, the Soviet Union, which was a sample for development). Therefore, the wakening and internalization of the political conscience of Korean women was the essence of gender politics during the first and second transitive stages of the Korean revolution.

In spite of the evident progress in women's development from 1945 to the 1950s, the daily life of North Korean women retained its traditionalism. This is confirmed by a selective analysis of *Korean Woman* editions in the 1960s. In the magazine's section “Love, Marriage and Family”, one can find interesting articles about the problems that Korean women encountered after getting married, including complicated relationships with their mother-in-laws and elder sister-in-laws and the husband's position in unfolding family conflicts. It shows that throughout the 1950s, Korean women still suffered the same family problems as in traditional society [7]. Confucian family tradition was alive and relatively strong even under the new socio-political regime, regardless of its official propaganda against feudal remnants in family relationships. Moreover, it also shows that there was gender segregation within families and between females regarding both status and age (subdued status of woman to the female relatives of her husband).

The visual image of Korean woman was largely traditional. From 1945 to the 1950s, the front cover of the magazine had photos or pictures of Korean women working in factories or in the field (e.g., marching). The women usually wore traditional dresses, called hanbok, and in some cases wore work clothing. However, traditional clothing was dominant in pictures, and some rare photos of public places in the 1950s editions showed that the hanbok was the basic clothing style

for daily life. Despite this, it does not mean that this was the type of clothing worn in real life. For instance, in the magazine in the 1960s, the hanbok was one of the basic types of women's clothing, but according to evidence from Russian scholars who visited North Korea during this time, women's fashion was very similar to that of Soviet women. Women often wore European style dresses and skirts in Pyongyang, which was similar to the women in Moscow. Perhaps, the regular visualization of Korean woman in hanbok was to maintain a traditional image of the femininity, which focused on maternity and care. It was not without reason that subjects, such as maternity (pregnancy and the problems of getting pregnant and of bearing healthy offspring) and the upbringing of children, were recurring themes in *Korean woman*. Maternity care received particular attention from the DPRK government, especially after the Korean War, which resulted in a significant loss of Korea's population.

An adoption of Juche, as the basis for the nation-building strategy, substantially influenced gender politics in North Korea. However, it took time from the first mentioning of Juche in 1955 to its full scale implementation in the early 1970s [18]. Retaining the revolutionary phraseology in political discourse, Kim Il-sung and his son Kim Jong-Il substantially revised Marxism-Leninism. The creative application of Marxism-Leninism factually meant its Koreanization and strengthening of nationalistic components [22. P. 112]. The conception of the Korean revolution was also reviewed. Since then, the development of the revolution was closely connected with Kim Il-sung's activity, whereas it was previously interpreted in line with the Leninist approach to revolution. In comparison to the 1950s and the 1970s, the 1960s appeared to be the most liberal time from the point of society openness regarding the discussion of female issues. This was vividly shown by the editions of *Korean woman* with its narratives on family problems, advice on health, beauty, and maternity care. In some cases, in the magazine's section "Love, Marriage and Family", gender discourse was very intimate and touching. The analysis of these publications goes beyond the tasks of this article; thus, I can only state my opinion here.

The implementation of Juche ideas came along with revolutionizing women's social position. The North Korean leadership based its new gender policy on the assumption that there was no work that a women could not do. It meant that women could be equally mobilized alongside men during the Juche revolution and for building Korean-styled socialism. The government started to engage women in services that were earlier considered exclusively male occupations, including the maintenance of tractors and managing agricultural machines. This policy led to the reconstructing of gender in public conscience in which no woman was just a woman and no man was just as a man. Instead, there was only the subject of the Juche revolution. The official political discourse no longer referenced gender as it was too concentrated on the maintenance of Kim Il-sung's personal cult and

the formation of a new type of social actor that did not have a gender affiliation [29]. As a result, the political discourse included unprecedented citation of Kim Il-sung's works and the absolute elimination of female issues in *Korean Woman*. Gender issues have also disappeared from the public narrative, therefore making it extremely politicized and one-sided.

Conclusion

After the liberation of Korea in 1945, gender politics were closely linked to nation-building strategies based on the conception of the Korean revolution. The implementation of the anti-imperialist and anti-feudal democratic revolution implied the liquidation of gender inequality, which was seen as a shameful remnant of the colonial past. The class approach to a women's liberation resulted in the political awareness of women and their involvement in industrial production, whereas the problems of inequality associated with gender received less attention. As a consequence, the internalization of a women's conscience and their new perceptions about themselves as equals came about by retaining gender segregation and inequality in private aspects of life. In spite of some limitations in the gender equality policy, it facilitated the transformation of the traditional image of femininity. The most substantive changes concerned the occupational roles of women and types of behavior they must exhibit. Since then, politically and socially active woman have been regarded as models of femininity. Women's education has also been highly assessed in the new society so that female intellectual activity is no longer ignored and disdain by men, as was present in the Joseon era. Care and maternity, however, have still remained basic components of the image of femininity in North Korea.

After analyzing the evolution of gender politics in North Korea and the image of femininity, it is important to bear in mind the development of the Korean revolution. The image of a revolutionary mother, who is dedicated to the Party and its leader, became the primary model of a woman in the 1970s, whereas previously it was a behavior-based model. Thus, the formation of the totalitarian political regime inevitably resulted in a wider standardization of the types of women behaviors and the elimination of internationalist rhetoric from gender discourse.

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**ГЕНДЕРНАЯ ПОЛИТИКА
И НАЦИОНАЛЬНОЕ СТРОИТЕЛЬСТВО:
ФОРМИРОВАНИЕ НОВЫХ ПРЕДСТАВЛЕНИЙ
О ЖЕНСТВЕННОСТИ В СЕВЕРНОЙ КОРЕЕ (1945–1957)**

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С началом складывания северокорейской государственности политика национального строительства формировалась в строгом соответствии с теорией развития Корейской революции. Изначально концепция Корейской революции базировалась на основных постулатах марксистско-ленинской теории о революции, предполагавшей наличие двух этапов в ее развитии: буржуазно-демократическом и социалистическом. Применительно к Северной Корее после освобождения от японского колониализма речь шла о постепенном перерастании антиимпериалистической, антифеодальной демократической революции в социалистическую. С целью реализации задач первого этапа Корейской революции еще в 1946 г. в Северной Корее был принят ряд законов, заложивших основу для дальнейших социалистических преобразований. Антифеодальная демократическая революция формально завершилась созданием Народного комитета Северной Ко-

реи в 1947 г., после чего начался переходный этап в ее развитии, длившийся до 1957 г. Идея Корейской революции по сей день является структурной основой политического дискурса Северной Кореи, исходя из которой формируются текущие задачи национального строительства.

На начальном и переходных этапах развития Корейской революции ликвидация социально-экономического и политического неравенства в обществе, включая гендерное неравенство, являлась одной из важных задач государственного строительства. Освобождение женщин понималось в терминах теории классовой борьбы и эксплуатации, и, как следствие, сводилось к предоставлению женщинам в первую очередь равных с мужчинами гражданских прав и свобод. Корейские женщины рассматривались в качестве важного трудового ресурса, мобилизация которого имела огромное значение для строительства социалистического общества. В силу существующего подхода гендерная политика в 1945–1957 гг. была направлена, главным образом, на пробуждение политического сознания женщин и активное вовлечение в промышленное производство. В условиях новой социально-политической реальности и проводимой гендерной политики неизбежно должны были меняться представления о женственности и маскулинности, определявшиеся в традиционном корейском обществе неоконфуцианской идеологией. Автор настоящей статьи поставил себе задачу ответить на вопросы, как теория развития Корейской революции повлияла на формирование задач гендерной политики и в какой степени Северной Корее удалось порвать с традиционными представлениями о женственности, сформировать новый взгляд на женщину.

Ключевые слова: Северная Корея, национальное строительство, гендерная политика, гендерные отношения, женственность, революция