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THE HISTORIOGRAPHY CONCERNING THE HISTORY OF KOREAN WOMEN: A CRITICAL EXAMINATION

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Abstract

The advent of modern technologies during the era of globalization has significantly expanded the array of sources available for historical research. Visual materials, encompassing various forms of pictorial media such as photographs, phonographs, and video images, stand out due to their diversity and capacity to directly convey information. Concurrently, there is a growing scholarly emphasis on investigating the roles and experiences of women in historical contexts. In this context, the utilization of visual materials in studying the history of Korean women during the late 19th and early 20th centuries holds profound relevance in contemporary historical research.

Keywords Visual materials, photography, anthropology, Korean women's history.

INTRODUCTION

The use of visual materials in historical research represents a relatively recent scholarly direction. The exploration of visual materials' history within international academic discourse finds seminal works in R. Barthes's 'Image-Music-Text' [1] and P. Bourdieu's 'The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature' [2]. These foundational texts examine the role of photography and the rhetoric of visual representation, respectively. Additionally, an art-historical perspective on visual materials is articulated in R. Krauss's influential 1982 essay, 'The Discursive Space of Photography', which introduces unique methodological approaches not found in other disciplines [3].

MAIN PART

Researchers like M. Mead and G. Bateson [4], along with John and Malcolm Collier [5], N.D. Clark [6], A. Bernard [7], D. Poole [8], Lee Seung-hee [9], D. Xarper [10], I. Ortega-Alcazar [11], S. Carta [12], A. Macfarlane [13], S. Pink [14], A. Cant [15], O.V. Lazareva [16], have contributed to visual anthropology through fundamental studies that

extend beyond the depiction of certain group of society, for instance, women or craftsmen and et cetera. These studies encompass visual representations of diverse peoples and cultures.

In the realm of global historical research, the examination of visual representations of women in Korea has predominantly involved using a limited number of photographs as supplementary material in the study of women's history, with little emphasis on the concept of visual imagery itself. In Korean historiography, the study of women's history runs parallel to inquiries into gender and feminist issues, where visual materials play a crucial role in deciphering and contextualizing contemporary trends.

In the Republic of Korea, most of the historians involved in the study of the use of visual materials, or use visual materials as a source in their research are representatives of the newer generation, including Eui Yong Yu [17], Jihang Pak [18], Shin Ki Yong [19], Kyung Moon Hwan [20], Sin Ch'on Sik [21], Nan Yeong Park [22], Hyaweol Choi's [23] research are considered to be valuable. Hyaweol

Choi, in particular, has conducted comprehensive research on various aspects of Korean women's history from the late 19th century to the present day. Choi's contributions include translating periodicals, biographies, and memoirs from 1876 to 1945 into modern Korean and English, which is invaluable for both expert and non-expert researchers, especially with translations of Japanese and Chinese texts. Choi's publications also feature many valuable visual materials from the period. Jong Kyu Lee has focused on the role of Christianity in Korean women's education and the introduction of Western culture in late 19th-century Korean society. Eui Yong Yu has conducted comparative studies between modern and traditional Korean women, analyzing the transition process from traditional to modern roles. Jihang Pak's research has explored the impact of higher education on the worldview and attitudes of Korean women during the Japanese colonial period. While these studies do not directly delve into visual anthropology, they significantly contribute to the broader field of world history.

Outside of Korea, numerous studies have explored the visual representation of Korean women within the realm of world history. Scholars such as K.M. Wells [24], K. Maynez [25], M. Motokazu [26], H. Todd [27], A.S. Shmakova [28], E. Buja [29] have made significant contributions to this field. M. Deuchler, renowned for her extensive research on Korean women's interaction with Neo-Confucianism during Choson dynasty, stands as a notable figure in this discourse [30]. E. Buja, meanwhile, has examined the impact of World War II on Korean women, particularly through studies on "comfort women". H. Todd's work on cultural changes in Seoul during the colonial period offers insights into how these transformations affected Korean women's lives, with a periodization spanning 1910-1925, 1925-1937, and 1937-1945. Todd's analysis includes comparisons of attire worn by Japanese and Korean women at public events, highlighting cultural policies toward women under colonial rule. M. Motokazu has explored the roles of Christian missionaries during this era, emphasizing the significant changes brought about in missionary schools and their implications for Korean women. However, these

studies primarily focus on women's roles in social, political, and economic spheres, and the evolving concept of 'woman' in gender relations. They do not extensively address the woman herself as a visual entity shaped by Korean societal attitudes, internal and external factors, and the increasing influence of media ('the fourth estate') in shaping perceptions.

However, existing scientific and research works primarily concentrate on examining women's roles in social, political, or economic contexts, alongside the evolving meanings of the "woman" within gender relations. They tend to treat women as subjects within these spheres rather than delving deeply into their visual representation. There is a notable gap in addressing the woman herself as a visual entity shaped by societal attitudes in Korea, both internal and external factors influencing her portrayal, and the growing influence of media as the "fourth estate" in shaping these representations.

Several practical studies have been conducted on the importance of photographs in researching the Turkestan region. For instance, in 1895, under the leadership of N.I. Veselovsky, a historical memorial expedition was organized to study and restore the mausoleums and mosques in Samarkand [31]. Photographer S.M. Dudin, on the other hand, captured images of the Shahi Zinda mausoleum ensemble and other historical monuments in Samarqand at the beginning of the 20th century [32].

M. Isakova's candidate thesis explored visual materials through the formation of funds on the cultural history of Uzbekistan at the Central State Archive of Kinophotophonic Documents (now the National Archive of Kinophotophonic Documents of Uzbekistan) [33]. J.G. Inoyatov's dissertation aimed to study the formation and development characteristics of photography as an art form in Turkestan [34]. Additionally, S.B. Shadmanova conducted a series of studies examining visual materials from the perspectives of source studies and anthropology [35].

The historiography concerning the history of Korean women in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, particularly regarding the formation of their visual representation, has not been separately

explored within Uzbekistan. Conversely, Uzbekistan has produced numerous scholarly works on the history of Uzbek women, whose methodologies and findings provide valuable insights into the study of women's history in Korea. Researchers such as M.A. Ayyubjanova [36], Sh. Masharipova [37], K.N. Yan-Borisova [38], D.A. Alimova [39], Z.E. Raupova [40], Q.V. Nishonboyeva [41], S.B. Shadmanova [35], and N.D. Jorayeva [42] have focused on the social, political, cultural, ideological, and economic roles and transformations of Uzbek women within comparable time frames.

Summary. As evident from the foregoing discussion, the utilization of visual materials, not only in the study of women's history but also in broader world history research, represents a relatively nascent area that demands further exploration. Similar to other disciplines, the field of history must leverage contemporary technological advancements to facilitate research and address unresolved inquiries. Nonetheless, historians face substantial tasks ahead in fully harnessing the potential of these modern tools and techniques.

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