

## ***A Korean Mother's Cooking Notes: Maintaining South Korean Cooking and Domestic Gender Ideals in Glocal Influences***

HOJIN SONG  
University of Iowa, USA

This article examines *A Korean Mother's Cooking Notes* and analyzes the role of cookbooks in understanding the changes in South Korean cooking and the lives of South Korean women in the 1990s. Using a framework of glocalization, I examine the ways in which the cookbook redefines the components and meanings of traditional Korean cooking. I argue that this cookbook specifically portrays the anxiety and desire of South Korean housewives in preserving home cooking and values while adapting to foreign influences. The cookbook also redefines the traditional ways in which mothers-in-law educated their daughters-in-law through translating oral cooking instructions into written and mediated pedagogy.

*Keywords: cookbook, gender ideal, mediated pedagogy, South Korea*

Cookbooks have been important texts in perpetuating conservative ideologies in times of change. During World War II, food rationing in the United States challenged housewives to conceptualize cooking as fighting the war from home and strengthening their nationalistic allegiances (Bentley, 1998). After World War II, the postwar gender rhetoric of the United States idealized home and family with women at the center. It was important to preserve a middle-class identity that withstood global influences (Bentley, 1998). Housewives during the 1950s were thus required to build a fortress of a safe home to buffer against unstable climates (Meyerowitz, 1994). Cookbooks expressed ambivalence about preserving this domestic gender ideal, projecting the anxiety and uncertainty in the postwar era (Neuhaus, 1999). Nonetheless, they often reinforced concepts of femininity and instructed women in conforming to the ideal housewife image (Inness, 2001b; Neuhaus, 2001). Convenience foods took advantage of this image, and brands such as Campbell Soup exploited it successfully in their ads (Inness, 2001b). The use of convenience foods distinguished modern housewives from their older counterparts (Inness, 2005). But these industrialized and modernized cooking practices still connected housewives to the traditional ways of their grandmothers and mothers (Inness, 2001b).

Interestingly, these wartime and postwar rhetorics of cookbooks in the United States and their symbolic roles in perpetuating ideologies of gender and nation are similar to those of South Korea (hereafter Korea) during the period of development and prosperity in the 1990s. Both groups faced anxiety when confronted with newer domestic values and clashing foreign influences at the home front.

---

Hojin Song: [hojin-song@uiowa.edu](mailto:hojin-song@uiowa.edu)

Date submitted: 2015–04–27

Copyright © 2016 (Hojin Song). Licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution Non-commercial No Derivatives (by-nc-nd). Available at <http://ijoc.org>.

Following the 1988 Seoul Olympics, the first international event hosted by Korea, the country saw the changes that foreign influences could bring to its culture and society. In particular, an uninterrupted exposure to foreign food cultures transformed Koreans' everyday lives—especially the lives of housewives as primary cooks at home.

The soaring popularity of cookbooks in the 1990s reflected the ways in which housewives lived and understood themselves through cooking. Factors such as increasing numbers of women in the workforce, improvement of women's social standing at home and in the workplace, economic prosperity, and a rising middle class all led the publishing industry to create how-to guides, which traditionally have been handed down by mothers or mothers-in-law, for everyday cooking. Everyday meals, such as side dishes for lunch boxes—noodles, stews, rice, soup, and kimchi—were the focus, in contrast with the encyclopedic recipe guides popular before the late 1980s (Chung, 1987). *A Korean Mother's Cooking Notes* (hereafter *KMCN*; Chang, 1993) was the first practical cookbook published and the first best-selling instructional cookbook with everyday recipes that later became a genre.<sup>1</sup> In the mid-1990s, publications of the same genre—recipes of homemade meals—soared. Some popular cookbooks were: *Formulas of Sauce That Your Mother Doesn't Know* (Shin, 1996), *Bangbae-Dong Teacher Choi Kyung-Sook's Homemade Meals* (K. S. Choi, 1998), *Mom's Hidden Recipes* (1998), and *A Cookbook for My Daughter* (1998). These cookbooks taught strategies and tactics to make modern homemade meals more time- and labor-efficient than elaborate traditional cooking. Standardization and simple preparation were the key themes of these cookbooks, which called for a rethinking of traditional home cooking.

In addition to addressing the popular sentiment of efficiency, *KMCN* in particular was a snapshot of the sensibility of housewives of the time. Due to its small circulation and independent publication, the cookbook captured what mass-produced cookbooks did not—the shared sense of anxiety and longing felt by housewives in the wane of traditional Korean cooking. The uniqueness comes from the production and publication of the book itself. The author of the cookbook is Sun-young Chang, a woman in her 50s with two married sons and daughters-in-law living overseas at the time of publication. *KMCN* originated from cooking memos that Chang scribbled down for her daughters-in-law. Because friends admired her cooking and insisted that she should share her recipes, Chang printed 50 copies of her notes and gave them out as gifts (Y. R. Lee, 1995). One of these friends was Myung-soo Chang, a popular columnist for *Hankook Ilbo*, who wrote about this gift in her column and later was bombarded with calls and letters from readers to share the recipes, which ultimately became the cookbook (Chang, 1993). This unusual popularity and bottom-up process of publication mirrors the unrefined everyday cooking practices of Korean housewives and is a fit text for exploring the changing values of gender and traditions and how these are negotiated and instructed in the quotidian. *KMCN* also reflects how everyday oral instructions of a stereotypical Korean mother-in-law standardize as mass-produced written instructions, letting us observe the effort to preserve family and national traditions through mediated pedagogy.

---

<sup>1</sup> *KMCN* sold more than 50,000 copies within three months of its initial publication in 1993 (J.-K. Lee, 1994). In addition, more than 100,000 copies of the book were sold within two years, pushing it onto the best-seller list. In 1997, a new edition was printed and also published in English under the title *KMCN*.

Through the framework of glocalization, I argue that *KMCN* reflects the anxiety and desire of housewives to maintain traditional Korean cooking upon the popularization of newer food practices. *KMCN* redefines the practical sense of Korean home cooking through glocal tactics of standardization and hybridization, which are intertwined with the devotional roles of housewife and family and nationalistic traditions. *KMCN* instructs various ways to maintain the components and meanings of Korean home cooking, negotiating the correct mix with newer cooking practices.

### Changing Cooking, Changing Wives

Korean home cooking was affected by drastic changes in different sectors of society after the Korean War (1950–1953). With economic liberalization and increased market competition, Korea's gross national product grew an average of 7.6% annually from 1953 to 1994 (K. S. Kim & Kim, 1997). The military government initiated this rapid economic development.<sup>2</sup> Politically, Korea went through periods of turmoil to finally achieve democracy.<sup>3</sup> Socioculturally, these changes were closely related to changes in housewives' everyday lives, such as increased household income and leisure time and rising numbers of nuclear and dual-income families (Choo, 1997).

The restaurant industry visibly prospered during the 1990s in accommodating the busy lifestyles of nuclear families, with an annual growth rate of 17% (G. Cho, 1997). In 1995, the industry was worth about US\$1.6 million (G. Cho, 1997). Families chose Western-style fast food and franchises rather than traditional Korean ones. The number of fast food restaurants increased by 70% to 100% per year during the mid-1990s (B. Kim, 1996). Chain restaurants specializing in Western foods, such as Cocos, offered menus similar to high-end hotel restaurants but with cheaper prices, standardized cooking processes, and a homogenized taste characteristic of a franchise (Joo, 2013). Korean housewives favored what these restaurants offered—stability in taste, competitive prices, and convenience of time and labor—over home cooking.

The food industries responded to the popularization of foreign food in a nationalistic way. *Sint'oburi*, which means "the body and soil are one" or "body and earth are inseparable" (Han, 2000, p. 235), was a movement that captured not only national anxiety in the wane of domestic agriculture but the value of preserving traditional home cooking through native ingredients, spices, and cooking methods.<sup>4</sup> It was a movement promoting the thought that Korean bodies are composed of food grown on Korean land; therefore, Koreans should eat only Korean food. The movement positioned foreign—and especially

---

<sup>2</sup> The governments of Park Chung Hee (1962–1979), Chun Doo-hwan (1980–1988), and Roh Tae-woo (1988–1993) were all military governments. The Kim Young Sam government started in 1993 and was the first democratically elected government of Korea.

<sup>3</sup> Prominent democratic movements include the assassination of President Park Chung Hee followed by the June democracy movement led by students in Gwangju (Bridges, 2008).

<sup>4</sup> *Sint'oburi* first emerged in the 1990s as a cultural nationalistic agenda. The National Agricultural Cooperative Federation (Nong Hyup) used the phrase to encourage the consumption of domestic agricultural products (Han, 2000). It became a rallying cry to protect Korean products from foreign imports, becoming a brand name of products sold in Nong Hyup markets.

Western foods such as pizza and hamburgers—as creators of “ill souls” (S. Park, 1993). This social and cultural sentiment was a precursor to changes in Korean taste.

At home, convenience in meal preparation became important as housewives attained simultaneously busier and freer lifestyles. The convenience food industry slowly grew through the introduction of frozen food at a bakery in Busan in 1979 (Y.-J. Lee & Song, 1997). Housewives could opt to buy ready-made meals, frozen foods, and canned goods at their convenience; however, the reception of modernized, more convenient foods was not completely positive. The perception of housewives buying frozen food in the 1990s was that of a younger generation being lazy, having no cooking skills, and showing no interest in the health and provision of the family (Y.-J. Lee & Song, 1997). Many housewives were hesitant to buy convenience foods, and most consumers of these products were people in their teens or 20s (H. Kim & Song, 1996). Frozen foods were clearly positioned as the opposite of home-cooked meals in terms of taste. These modernized foods reflected the time and effort required for Korean home cooking.

The emotional value of investing time and effort was another major component of home cooking and eating with family. B. W. Lee (2015) emphasizes that Korean cooking essentially is everyday foods prepared by housewives with their devotional care and love. This love and care is similar to a more universal sense of maternal love and care, but it has a distinct Korean sentiment. In addition to the requirement of submission and obedience, housewives' making sacrifices for the purpose of devoting themselves to the greater good of the family and nation is an important element of traditional virtue.

This tradition that I articulate stems from Confucian cultural values. In Korea, the social and cultural habits of Confucian traditions guided the roles of housewives as they supported or actively directed the family unit. In the Confucianist patriarchal family, the family takes precedence over the individuals it comprises and is inseparably identified as a group (I. H. Park & Cho, 1995). From the 14th to early 20th centuries in Korea, the hierarchical relationship between husband and wife was stated by the law, making women both submissive and obedient to men (Yoon, 2006). A woman's position was in the domestic sphere, whereas a man's was in the public sphere—an arrangement that limited social roles for women and delegated all public tasks to men (Y. Kim, 2005). This was believed to be the foundation of the country, because a well-maintained home was the primary duty, as espoused by men in Confucian patriarchy (I. H. Park & Cho, 1995). For Korean women, the coherence of the family always came before their own personal needs and motivations.

These gender roles, however, were subject to reinterpretation while mostly remaining within the realm of family and serving traditional women's roles in the 1990s (Y. Kim, 2005). Starting in the 1960s, the urban relocation of nuclear families freed housewives from traditional family structures that required obedience to in-laws who resided with them (H. Cho, 2001). Husbands credited their wives accordingly, appreciating and acknowledging domestic work and allowing women a new standing as domestic partners rather than performers of household chores and mothers of their children (H. Cho, 2001). Thus, the position of housewives shifted from the traditional Confucian emphasis on endless sacrifice and obedience to men in the family to a more independent individual within a bigger family—a role that allowed housewives to gain domestic power (Y. Kim, 2005). Growing up in economic affluence and heavily exposed to Western cultural products during their teenage years, these women focused on self rather than

family. Marriage was not such a hindrance to a woman's desire for self-realization as her husband increasingly took part in raising, educating, and taking care of the children (Kwon & Roy, 2007). Simultaneously, men remained the predominant breadwinners in the family, and women were still expected to perform most of the housework. H. Cho (2001) describes this generation of married women as caught between the domestic duties of housewives and the realization of self. The ways in which housewives thought of and prepared meals were redefined as many—particularly the younger generation—focused on finding their own private time and space and taking charge of their work as housewives rather than seeking help from mothers-in-law or mothers (H. Cho, 2001). Some women were considered radical compared to the Confucian housewife. Younger women especially did not concur that housewives/mothers were the key to the collective identity of the family, the guardians of the moral traditions of the country, and the defenders of the home (H. Cho, 2001).

### **Cookbooks as Mediated Pedagogy**

The gender-based and nationalistic dynamics between Korean home cooking and foreign and modern cooking practices are glocal exchanges of food cultures. Glocalization is a comparable concept to globalization—centered on interactions among various local forces. While globalization focuses on the universalization of thoughts and practices of politics, economy, and culture, glocalization emphasizes localization as much as universalization (Robertson, 1992, 1995). In a sense, glocalization supplements and concretizes the specific ways that local forces relate to other local and international factors, which Kraidy (2001) argues the globalization concept fails to consider. Robertson (1992) conceptualizes glocalization as a pulling away from imperialistic or postcolonial perspectives focusing on the West. The essence of glocalization is the codependent interaction between global and local, which brings practices of everyday life into discussion.

In the context of Korean food culture, Bae (2008) applies glocalization to articulate how Korean food interacts with foreign food cultures through generalization and hybridization.<sup>5</sup> Generalization includes standardizing the taste so that the same dish or cooking methods can be preserved throughout time and space. Hybridization is the fusion of foreign or modernized cooking practices with traditional Korean foods. Bae argues that these processes redefine local traditions and, to a degree, adapt themselves to existing food practices—such as the industrialization of the food industry and the use of chemical additives. In the everyday food culture of Korean housewives, a sense of the local comes from the mediation and representation of traditional Korean cooking, which reflects dominant gender and national ideologies. This local element of home cooking is continually redefined in the moments of expansion and constriction of food culture and in the fusion of foreign elements. In the process, traditional values are the standards by which Koreans evaluate and adapt newer food cultures.

Within the framework of glocal interaction, many discussions examine texts and practices of hip-hop music, online news reporting, and television programs as interactions taking place in the global-local nexus (A. Y. L. Lee, 2005; Moran, 2006; Oduro-Frimpong, 2009; Wasserman & Rao, 2008). Cookbooks as media texts also have served as a universal text for the maintenance of traditions during glocal changes.

---

<sup>5</sup> Bae (2008) has three categories of glocalization tactics: generalization, hybridization, and specialization.

Older housewives have created community cookbooks—compiling recipes to ensure that the younger generation maintains national and/or cultural customs (Drews, 2008; Eidingen, 2012; Theophano, 2002). Women often mixed old traditions with novelty in their daily preparation of food, creating lived knowledge that was preserved and conveyed from home to home and from generation to generation (De Certeau, 1998; Inness, 2001a). Some of these cookbooks introduced and taught readers about international foods as well (Gallegos, 2005; Solomon, 2014). Solomon's (2014) analysis of Jewish cookbooks from the 1940s demonstrates how women emphasized keeping traditional rules and foods while adapting to a foreign culture.

Another important function of cookbooks is their educational potential—replacing personal, oral instruction with written pedagogy. Mass publication of cookbooks slowly became an educational tool of cooking; after they were married, women learned how to cook not from their mothers but from cookbooks (Endrijonas, 2001). Cookbooks in the United States in the 1950s taught skills to balance time and budgets while producing quality meals and investing the same level of work and dedication as the previous generation (Endrijonas, 2001). Mass-produced mediation also easily and subtly prescribed conservative gender ideologies, as Neuhaus (2001) argues of sexual manuals for married women in America vis-à-vis cookbooks in the 1950s. Even for younger girls, Inness (2001b) argues that juvenile cookbooks prospered in the 20th century when the American publishing industry realized the effectiveness of mass education. With written instructions and specific guidelines, cookbooks articulated and transmitted gradual changes of food culture and the maintenance of traditional identities of women.

### ***KMCN* as a Text**

This research starts with observations of media reactions to Korean cookbooks in the 1990s and proceeds to specific readings of texts. After collecting and reading 35 articles from major newspapers and women's magazines regarding the introduction and influence of cookbooks in the 1990s, I proceeded with the assumption that cookbooks were texts that narrate the collective sentiments and beliefs of housewives about everyday life—which are hard to find in other publicly available media. My observation led to reading literature of globalization and glocalization to find a fitting framework. I decided to take a grounded-theory approach to identifying the themes that describe the role played by cookbooks in glocal influences during the 1990s. Prior to choosing *KMCN* as the main text of analysis, I searched for cookbooks published in the 1990s in an online bookstore called Aladin.com. There were a total of 26 practical cookbooks published from 1993 to 1999, many of which were out of print. I examined the five cookbooks mentioned in the introduction because they were the most popular at the time.<sup>6</sup> Most were available at the National Congressional Library of Korea or at a secondhand bookstore. After reading each of them several times, I noted the organization and narration of recipes along with any instructions that suggested changes in Korean food culture and any expressions of emotion regarding Korean cooking and newer foods. Patterns emerged as I grouped these ideas into repeated themes and developed a definition of each theme. I categorized them into narrower groups followed by definitions of what these themes concerned.

---

<sup>6</sup> *Bangbae-Dong Teacher Choi Kyung-Sook's Homemade Meals* (K. Choi, 1998) sold 100,000 copies (Kang-Kim, 2009).

As I noticed the unique narratives of *KMCN* in its methods of pedagogy as well as the rhetoric of specific roles of housewives and the emphasis on traditions, I also learned of its unique path to publication. Deciding that *KMCN* captures not only the common themes that coincide with other cookbooks but the sentiment of everyday lives of housewives in the 1990s, I chose to focus on *KMCN*. Then I further articulated how *KMCN* instructs in the concept of Korean cooking. I analyzed the specific interactions between local Korean traditions and newer cooking practices within glocal influences portrayed in the text.

### Teaching the Ideal Housewife

*KMCN* reflects how Korean home cooking changes and is redefined upon exposure to industrialized, modernized, and foreign cooking cultures. But more fundamentally, it replaces the embodied cooking instructions of a mother-in-law. The mass-mediated instructions convey clear aims to impart the Confucian ideals of housewives—teaching the roles of sacrificial mother and carrier of family traditions. In its attempt to translate the spoken and embodied instructions of a mother-in-law into written words, traditional values were the basis by which *KMCN* gained its popularity.

The appeal of this cookbook lies in its style and tone, with instances of embodied pedagogy that deliver Chang's personality as well. Such examples are her uses of onomatopoeic and mimetic words. Descriptive expressions are used to explain the cooking process; examples include "*song song*" (Chang, 1993, p. 22), which describes the sound and shape of chopping soft food into small pieces, and "*ttuk ttuk*" (Chang, 1993, p. 22), which describes the sound of big and firm food snapping or being cut. Chang's tone of voice enables the rhetoric of *KMCN* as an everyday reflection of housewives' sentiments concerning the taste of home-cooked meals. *KMCN* offered easy cooking lessons without the stress of encountering the human figure of domestic power in the family that younger housewives married into (Y. R. Lee, 1995).

Chang's conspicuous characterization as a typical Korean mother-in-law—nitpicky due to concern, often nosy and passive-aggressive—fits in providing overall suggestions of house management in budgeting and time limitations, addressing everyday constraints and challenges. The realistic portrayal is most obvious in her language describing and teaching frugality and efficiency.

1. "Using kimchi leftovers are good here" (Chang, 1993, p. 36).
2. "Using Spam in the U.S. would prevent over spending" (Chang, 1993, p. 36).
3. "If you are out of spices in the middle of cooking, you would have to go out to buy it and spend a lot of time" (Chang, 1993, p. 27).
4. "If you buy too much food for some unavoidable reason, you should try cooking all of it. Preservation is the next best method, and of course, spending in a budget is the best method" (Chang, 1993, p. 27).

These quotes explain how Chang uses leftovers (1), manages time (3), and budgets (2, 4). Stressing the importance of planning before shopping for food, her instructions focus on frugality. She pays attention to

minuscule details and instructs in an educative language. The third quote sounds schoolmarmish. This typical character of a Korean mother-in-law not only mimics face-to-face personal instructions but teaches housework in extensive detail.

*KMCN* illustrates realistic concerns stemming from clash and negotiation between the values of home cooking and glocal influences such as industrialization, modernization, and foreign exchanges of food culture. Chang intensely promotes maternal duties by criticizing the wrongdoings of the current generation of children and teenagers due to family neglect of a Confucian sense of societal well-being. In the preface, Chang argues that social problems caused by teenagers come from a lack of a fundamental family education, because many Korean families do not eat dinner together. Dinner with family is when discipline occurs through conversation rather than coercive communication. She believes that "a harmonious family comes from eating meals together, this is where you learn table manners and that is how your children become good parents in the future" (Chang, 1993, p. 10). This passage conveys the Confucian idea that a strong nation comes from well-balanced—and thus, healthy—homes, stressing the importance of housewives' sacrificial devotion as well as that of family legacy in the taste of home-cooked meals.

*KMCN* especially elaborates on the importance of family recipes and the associated duty and responsibility of women that extend beyond the family—to society. Usually the customs of the husband's family are handed down person-to-person through the Confucian rituals that extend through an entire lifetime. For example, in describing the cooking process for ancestral rites, Chang explains which menus are appropriate for the rite, how best to cook the dish for the deceased, and how to find out what the guests like to eat. Short explanations of cultural traditions are also included in the recipes. For instance, she describes how rice cake for a 100th-day celebration for a newborn used to be made by collecting rice from 100 households and then making rice cakes to feed 100 people. In teaching how food can be used to express feelings—gratitude, especially—*KMCN* does not stress rigid rules, preparation, or table arrangement but rather the housewife's role in the process. This recipe includes why the time and effort of the housewife is meaningful in traditional Korean cooking. Translated into devotional love and care, the Korean housewife "defends family traditions" (Chang, 1993, p. 181), the basis of national culture in the Confucian sense.

The realistic portrayal of a mother-in-law is also grounded in this traditional value of the Confucian patriarchy. As a mother-in-law, Chang stresses that a new housewife be educated about her family: "When you start your journey as a housewife, the four ceremonial occasions (coming of age, wedding, funeral, and ancestral rites), and the four phases of life (birth, old age, sickness, and death) have different meanings to you" (p. 177). The priorities of a housewife change after her marriage as family duties become heavier in terms of time and effort. Chang expresses her gratitude to her daughters-in-law for following the conventional methods of feeding her grandchildren even with the availability of convenient store-bought options. Chang writes, "I make baby food the same way now and 30 years back, and they still eat it well so I guess the taste remains the same" (1993, p. 171). Their devotion translates into an effort to promote these traditions by praising the good family education that her daughter-in-law has received: "I was very thankful and proud of you making clean baby food with devotion even in the U.S. where you can buy store-bought stuff so easily. It also shows how your mother had educated you!"

(Chang, 1993, p. 175). Compared to the matrilineal pedagogy of cooking through the grandmother/mother line, education by the mother-in-law focuses on maintaining the patriarchal lineage and traditions. Chang explicitly states her personal belief in emphasizing traditional patriarchal values, and she advises readers to keep these—regardless of broader societal adoption of newer cooking culture.

Simultaneously, Chang acknowledges and makes an effort to redefine the gender ideal by according much value to women's domestic work. The focus on the aesthetics of food presentation in Chang's recipe narratives sways the reader to appreciate the labor and time involved in cooking tasty homemade meals. The acknowledgment of hard work is also visible in *KMCN*—unlike the emphasis on hidden sacrifice under the old Confucian patriarchy. Chang seeks validation through making visible the work of creating an aesthetic style. This can be seen in a tofu recipe: "Tofu will absorb the sauce better if you make incisions on it, although it may be cumbersome. But these incisions will make the dish look like you really made an effort" (Chang, 1993, p. 50). Presenting the dish in a professional and attractive way satisfies the cook's ego and requires the family members to acknowledge the work. By focusing on the expertise of the individual cook, Chang redefines cooking Korean food for the family as not just a house chore but an accomplishment of self. Through an acknowledgement of women's labor in Korean cooking, Chang empathizes with housewives' individualism and independence and asserts their authority in the family. Chang finally voices the hardships that only women, the newest members of the family, undergo in the kitchen under Confucian patriarchy.<sup>7</sup> Because the presentation of food shows self-respect, stressing the stylistic element raises the emotional appeal of this book. In her effort to select and reiterate the important traditions of housewives, Chang reflects the ways in which housewives redefine their roles while stressing the importance of maintaining traditional values.

### **Redefinition of Korean Cooking**

Based on the ideal of the traditional housewife, Chang redefines the specific components of traditional home cooking—ingredients, spices, and cooking methods—to maintain the food's taste and preserve Confucian gender ideals. These components interact with industrialized and modernized cooking cultures that seek efficiency in time and labor. Time and effort spent in cooking are relative to feelings of devotional love and care.

As these elements are negotiated upon contact with newer food cultures, Korean home cooking is redefined. Bae's (2008) glocalization tactics of standardization and hybridization are two tactics of redefinition. Standardization is to preserve family traditions and perform social customs through measuring ingredients and following standardized recipes. The essay-like cookbook explains the foundational Korean recipes by successfully tackling the difficulties of home cooking, provides with each recipe a detailed step-by-step guide, and provides clear measurements in the metric system. This gives traditional cooking a more structured form, making Korean food more independent of regional or personal

---

<sup>7</sup> In Confucian patriarchy, men carry the family name and thus the "blood." Women marry into the family and thus are outsiders coming into the group. When a woman is married, she is no longer regarded as a part of her birth family; however, conceptually, she is not fully incorporated into the husband's family either.

variation. Standardization tackles the components of both time and effort that are proportional to housewives' devotional love and care as well as ingredients, spices, and cooking methods. Reduced time and effort through standardization addresses the effort to overcome and simplify Korean cooking so that store-bought foods are not favored over home cooking. Standardization in the amount of ingredients and spices teaches housewives to preserve the Korean taste by adding ingredients to store-bought spices and enhancing the natural flavors of traditional foods. In terms of hybridization of Korean home cooking and foreign foods, Chang assimilates foreign ingredients and spices to better suit the traditional Korean palate, even for older Koreans who are less accustomed to foreign foods. The author teaches various ways to negotiate the components of home cooking to adapt to glocal influences while maintaining conservative meanings of taste and gender ideals.

### ***Standardization and Hybridization of Korean Cooking***

Through the rhetoric of everyday life as a housewife and mother-in-law, the author successfully reiterates the importance of preserving Confucian traditions. Chang especially recognizes the changing components and meanings of Korean home cooking as well as the need for written instructions. She mentions this in the preface:

My mother-in-law taught me to cook with unclear explanations, such as "one fistful" or "bring to bubbly simmer." But we live a busy life, what I like isn't what you like to eat, and I can't physically be next to you all the time. (Chang, 1993, p. 9)

In addition, Chang acknowledges the inaccuracy of old cooking instructions in the preface: "Whenever I asked my older sister how to cook, she always said 'you just do it' making it very hard to learn. I'm writing easy instructions after thinking about what was hard for me then" (1993, p. 9). Embodied instruction was face-to-face and hands-on, often lacking precise measurements. Learners had a sensory experience rather than systematic instruction. *KMCN* illustrates specific attempts to translate fleeting face-to-face instructions and various ways of cooking onto paper. Such translation expands family legacy to a wider social and cultural template for Korean home cooking and taste.

Standardization of measurements in recipes was an important task for Chang, because it allowed housewives to produce stability in the quality of taste in home cooking.<sup>8</sup> More specifically, this includes converting loose Korean measurements into metric or U.S. standard measurements as well as clarifying exact sizes of ingredients and the amounts of spices.<sup>9</sup> Chang instructs cooks to make incisions 5 millimeters apart on rib meat or cut ingredients such as tofu, onion, and red pepper in 1-centimeter cubes. Chang addresses everyday concerns related to spices—such as making spice substitutions—and tells readers to use one-third of the amount of coarse salt when replaced with finely grated salt.

---

<sup>8</sup> This is one of the major themes emphasized by the cookbooks of the 1990s. The other four cookbooks that I examined also focus on the standardization of ingredients and spices by adopting precise measurements.

<sup>9</sup> This is similar to what Fannie Farmer did in her cookbook in the 1950s United States, believing precise measurements would produce the best results (Shapiro, 2008).

Compared to other cookbooks of the later 1990s, *KMCN* sometimes provides less clear measurements and language.<sup>10</sup> As the first cookbook to experiment with precise didactic language, *KMCN* captures the grassroots desire to maintain the taste of home cooking through standardization. In the process, Chang considers details that other mass-produced cookbooks ignored. In the standardization of a mung bean pancake recipe, the amount of salt is “impossible to instruct because it depends on the saltiness of kimchi” (Chang, 1993, p. 78). Deciding whether the food is salty or not is a personal preference and taste. The taste of saltiness is even harder to assess in raw ingredients. Chang makes an effort to explain the process systematically through an action plan to streamline the cooking process as much as possible. For example, cooking and tasting a pancake before dumping the whole batter into the pan allows the cook to check the food’s saltiness. Chang’s directions are action based, similar to those of embodied pedagogy. She starts out with raw ingredients and a measured amount of spice. This case shows specific ways Chang tries to overcome the limitations of cookbook instructions through standardization.

Standardization also enhances the benefits and reduces the inconvenience of Korean home cooking. First, reducing housewives’ time and effort relieves the burden of home cooking in comparison with restaurant options and store-bought ready-made foods. Maintaining the homemade taste through traditional cooking also maintains the role of housewives as devotional figures for the home and society. The need to preserve the taste of homemade food efficiently instead of buying convenience foods is best illustrated in Chang’s kimchi recipe. Kimchi is the most difficult and yet one of the most traditional processes of Korean cooking, because it involves fermentation. Kimchi recipes vary by region and person, yet Chang measures spices and describes her kimchi recipe in descriptive and scientific language. “If the cabbage looks like it contains much water within, then the amount of salt should increase” (Chang, 1993, p. 107). She also emphasizes the emotional value of kimchi. The reason why young children do not like to eat kimchi, according to Chang, is because young mothers do not put much effort into making it but buy kimchi instead. The Confucian duty emphasizing women’s labor in maintaining the taste of home extends to preserving the Korean taste. Chang believes that if children help with the process of making kimchi from a young age, then they will enjoy eating the food, keeping the sense of a traditional taste of home.<sup>11</sup>

Standardization of traditional ingredients, spices, and methods of cooking involves hybridization of traditional Korean cooking and the taste of industrialized and convenient food practices. Such examples include enhancing the traditional taste of fermented paste. Chang describes ways to enhance store-bought *jang*. *Jang* refers to various types of fermented paste incorporating basic spices—such as *gochujang* made

---

<sup>10</sup> Cookbooks in the 1990s became more comfortable in using precise metric measurements. They focused on proper proportions of ingredients and formulas of spices that would consistently produce the same traditional taste. The point of comparison was foreign cooking methods, which Shin (1996) argued Korean cooking should adopt in order to make traditional cooking easier and more comfortable for cooking novices, especially “newly-wed housewives” (p. 10).

<sup>11</sup> Not all cookbooks in the 1990s prioritized preservation of traditional taste to maintain gender ideals and national traditions. Shin (1996) includes a table of spices that provides exact proportions for specific ingredients such as chicken, beef, and seafood for finding the perfect scientific harmony.

from spicy red pepper—or *doenjang*, fermented soybean paste. The long and laborious process of making and fermenting *jang* is a national tradition. Conventionally, it is made at home and is regarded as the basis of the cooking process. During fermentation, which can take years, it is the housewife's responsibility to check the humidity and temperature to keep the taste. Due to the intensive process, it is almost impossible to make *jang* in modern times, when most Koreans live in high-rise apartments. Thus, Chang's suggestions to add ingredients such as ground anchovy powder, minced garlic, sesame oil, and wheat powder or to use store-bought *doenjang* to get a homemade taste are tips that negotiate the process and outcome of industrialization and traditional values. This recipe shows the author's desire to maintain traditional home cooking and taste by negotiating the convenient lifestyle of the modern housewife and the devotional efforts of the traditional housewife figure.

Spices are especially important when home cooking meets glocal influences. The standardization of Korean cooking calls for an understanding of foreign cooking and food cultures and how these affect traditional homemade food. Chang argues that Korean recipes should adapt to any environment and conditions—both overseas and for the foreign palate. In her explanations of basic spices of Korean cooking, Chang specifically advises using one-third less of the amount of garlic, onion, and ginger, which are representative flavors of Korean food. Chang mentions: "Consuming a lot of raw garlic could offend foreigners because of its strong smell, so be careful" (1993, p. 35). Chang reminds readers that the amount of garlic is not proportional to the enhancement of taste and that cooks should be especially careful when feeding foreign guests.

As an extension of standardization, Chang also recategorizes complex Korean recipes using Westernized language—not only to help her daughters-in-law but to shift Korean cooking into a more modern style. This is best illustrated in the desserts section. Chang notes that Korean desserts are difficult to make at home and are hard to cook from a cookbook: "I am including recipes that are easier with little risk for mistakes" (1993, p. 149). These foods include dessert *chŏn* (pancake), *ttŏk* (rice cake), and *yakpap* (sweet and savory rice with nuts and dried fruits). Her instructions are basic and specific, assuming a minimal skill set on the part of the reader. In stir-fried and poached dessert recipes, Chang's explanation begins with the order in which ingredients should be added and moves to the required pot or pan, the stove setting, the cooking process, and how to make the food glossy to appear more appetizing. The simplification of recipes and the labeling of sweet foods as desserts recategorize traditional Korean food items. By standardizing the traditional recipes and putting them into the same category as desserts in the Western sense, *KMCN* changes laborious Korean cooking into a more convenient and accessible practice.

Standardization redefines components of Korean home cooking—time and effort and the use of ingredients, spices, and cooking methods. *KMCN* negotiates these components to maintain the homemade taste while adapting to more convenient options. Through this process, home-cooked meals and taste become more accessible to housewives adapting to glocal changes. The attempt to measure out ingredients and standardize the cooking process establishes stability in preserving the taste of homemade meals. *KMCN* reflects housewives' struggles with standardizing ingredients and spices of home cooking in detail as well as the desire to maintain traditional taste—which was a blooming need in the early 1990s.

### ***Hybridization and Assimilation of Foreign Food***

*KMCN* involves the concept of hybridization in how it redefines home cooking through interaction with foreign foods. Foreign foods not only were well liked as restaurant choices but also changed how Korean housewives used spices, ingredients, and cooking methods at home—especially with the popularization of foreign recipes that were now being published in practical cookbooks.<sup>12</sup> Younger housewives especially were already familiar with and more willing to bring foreign cooking into the home. The taste of home cooking in terms of ingredients and spices met a new era upon the introduction and instruction of foreign recipes adapted to traditional Korean cooking familiar to the homemade taste. *KMCN* worked as not only an educator in foreign cuisine but a preserver of Korean cooking.

First, the introduction of Western menus was an important task for *KMCN*. Recipes such as scrambled eggs might seem odd two decades after the initial publication. But in the early 1990s, scrambled eggs were a fancy item served at hotels. The directions of the recipe are very simple—to whisk a couple of eggs into a bowl and then cook it on the stovetop. However, Chang's inclusion of this recipe exemplifies her attempt to incorporate foreign practices as a part of everyday cooking for Korean housewives.

Chang's spaghetti recipe is representative of an active process of hybridization as ingredients, spices, and cooking methods of Italian food are negotiated in terms of Korean cooking. Italian pasta was not a familiar everyday menu item in the early 1990s. Thus, the language used to describe a modified version was basic and instructional. Chang omits breadcrumbs and cheese and adds sesame seeds "to make it in Korean style" (1993, p. 131). She suggests putting the pasta in water and bringing it to a boil for 5 minutes; then waiting 25–50 minutes with the heat and the lid off. This may be an attempt to allow time to finish the sauce, making it easier for the cook. Chang also translates words such as *meatball* and *spaghetti* into Korean, although now the English terms are used by most Koreans. Although Chang makes much effort to familiarize spaghetti for Koreans, she does not explain in detail the texture of the cooked pasta. This shows the distance between Western and Korean cuisines in the early 1990s as well as the author's estimation of how much importance readers place on incorporating and adapting foreign cuisines in their everyday lives.

Chang's effort to mitigate the Western taste to suit the Korean taste is evident more explicitly in the use of the term *nŭkkihada*, which means the food is greasy, buttery, and/or rich. The meaning of this word conforms to a widespread cultural belief of dishes lacking the garlicky, spicy, or other flavors that are typically used in Korean food. In making a raw vegetable salad to go with a meat dish, Chang includes a Japanese-style dressing recipe. She says: "This would taste better and spicier than greasy American dressing" (Chang, 1993, p. 100). Chang injects Korean spices into Western cuisine, altering the dish so that it is specific to Korea. The process, compared to other assimilation processes in Western cultures, is unique in that the assimilated culture puts in the effort to assimilate the foreign rather than foreign food culture making the effort by itself. In the instances of U.S. and Japanese foods, on the other hand, Japanese cuisine as the assimilating food melts into the assimilated culture by reconstructing its flavors,

---

<sup>12</sup> Specific titles are *Italian Cuisine* (M. Choi, 1997) and *Very Delicious French Cuisine* (Daussy, 1997).

texture, and ingredients. The popularization of the California roll is partly due to its inverted structure of nori (dried seaweed) and rice to reduce the unappetizing appearance of the initial black color. Korean housewives, who serve as active agents of assimilation, are quick to adopt foreign influences to glocalize Korean home cooking.

Compared to Western items, Chinese food has been a part of Korean culture for a longer time. *KMCN* introduces more exotic and complex Chinese recipes that show the closer emotional connection for the Korean audience. Chang freely modifies the spices and ingredients of recipes to "suit the Korean taste" (1993, p. 135). This usually includes using less oil or not adding strong or unfamiliar spices such as coriander. In addition, her cooking tips to enhance the taste for Korean palates include kneading the shrimp ball batter for a chewy texture; using a Swanson brand chicken broth for convenience; and substituting hoisin sauce by mixing sugar and oyster sauce in a Chinese *chachang* (sauce made with black paste). Updating fusion recipes of Chinese and Korean foods, Chang mentions that "cooking foreign recipes at home is not hard, it just requires knowledge" (1993, p. 134). Chang negotiates and assimilates foreign recipes to suit the environment of Korean cooking as well as the traditional taste, so that "the traditional ways of home cooking is preserved wherever you are" (1993, p. 134).

The hybridization of Korean recipes with foreign foods focuses on maintaining the Korean taste by mitigating foreign ingredients and spices. The standard of assimilation always remains within the traditional components of Korean home cooking. This is similar to the practice of *sint'oburi*, which emphasizes maintenance of the national taste. *KMCN* tightly guards the boundaries of Korean home cooking and the meanings of national traditions.

### **Cookbooks as Mediated Instructions of Traditions**

As did other cookbooks in the 1990s, *KMCN* captures the general effort in redefining Korean cooking—especially of standardization. The value of *KMCN*, however, lies in its ability to reflect the grassroots needs to standardize Korean cooking and hybridize newer and foreign cooking. *KMCN* reveals housewives' desire and anxiety to maintain the components of Korean cooking and preserve the meanings of home cooking—the conservative ideologies of gender and nation.

*KMCN*'s glocal tactics in redefining Korean cooking start from Chang's authority—as a housewife and mother-in-law who tries to maintain the sacrificial devotion of a housewife as well as home-cooked taste. This emphasis on the role of housewife is assumed throughout the tactics of standardization and hybridization. Chang makes an effort to educate cooks on how they can maintain the meaning of Korean cooking by focusing on the meaning of family food culture that extends to Confucian customs. *KMCN* also redefines home cooking and taste to fit a global standard, suggesting the maturing of Korean cultural interactions with the rest of the world in the process of glocalization.

The reception of the book is beyond the scope of this article, but we can examine comments written by one of Chang's daughters-in-law:

When my mother-in-law visits my family the first thing that she does is to make kimchi. She mixes up vegetables and spices without gloves because “the taste of the hand” is important. . . . Her food always tastes good because she stays away from chemical additives and cooks with devotion. . . . Because we live far away, she lets us experience the food of family in a cautious and considerate manner. (Chang, 1993, pp. 196–197)

Chang’s daughter-in-law notes Chang’s efforts to standardize Korean cooking, her dedication to the maintenance of home-cooked taste, and the value of family traditions and gender ideals present throughout the cookbook. The daughter-in-law’s appreciation of Chang’s instructions and effort reflects her own desire to maintain traditional Korean home cooking and taste.

The comment by Chang’s daughter-in-law also acknowledges *KMCN* as an educational medium. This example of an everyday effort to preserve Korean cooking by a mother-in-law figure—and the willingness of the audience to listen—leaves us to wonder about the next generation of cookbooks and their mediated pedagogies. The degree to which housewives preserve traditions notwithstanding, the redefinition process will continue. Thus, I suggest that temporal development and changes of cookbooks beyond the 1990s serve as pedagogical texts of the traditions and cultural values of Korea.

### References

- Bae, Y.-D. (2008). Today’s food culture with blurring boundaries between cultures. *Journal of Practice Folkloristics*, 11, 83–106.
- Bentley, A. (1998). *Eating for victory: Food rationing and the politics of domesticity*. Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press.
- Bridges, B. (2008). The Seoul Olympics: Economic miracle meets the world. *International Journal of the History of Sport*, 24(14), 1939–1952.
- Chang, S.-Y. (1993). *A Korean mother’s cooking notes*. Seoul, Korea: Ehwa Women’s University Press.
- Cho, G. (1997). Research on globalization of domestic restaurant brands. *Journal of the Korean Research Society for Food and Beverage*, 8, 199–204.
- Cho, H. (2001). Living with conflicting subjectivities: Mother, motherly wife, and sexy woman in the transition from colonial-modern to postmodern Korea. In L. Kendall (Ed.), *Under construction: The gendering of modernity, class, and consumption in the Republic of Korea* (pp. 165–196). Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press.
- Choi, K. S. (1998). *Bangbae-dong teacher Choi Kyung-Sook’s homemade meals*. Seoul, Korea: Dong-A Ilbo Publishing.
- Choi, M. (1997). *Italian cuisine*. Seoul, Korea: Design House.

- Choo, S. (1997). Research on the development of Korean restaurant industry. *Journal of Culinary Society of Korea*, 3, 343–365.
- Chung, S.-H. (1987, August 20). Popularity of practical cookbooks. *Dong Ah Ilbo*, 11.
- A cookbook for my daughter*. (1998). Seoul, Korea: Jubu Life Publishing.
- Daussy, I. (1997). *Very delicious French cuisine*. Seoul, Korea: Seoul Media Group.
- De Certeau, M. (1998). *The practice of everyday life: Living and cooking* (Vol. 2). Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Drews, M. I. (2008). Cooking in memory's kitchen: Re-presenting recipes, remembering the Holocaust. In K. LeBesco & P. Naccarato (Eds.), *Edible ideologies: Representing food and meaning* (pp. 53–77). Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Eidinger, A. (2012). Gefilte fish and roast duck with orange slices: A treasure for my daughter and the creation of a Jewish cultural orthodoxy in postwar Montreal. In F. Lacovetta, V. J. Korinek, & M. Epp (Eds.), *Edible histories, cultural politics: Towards a Canadian food history* (pp. 189–208). Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto Press.
- Endrijonas, E. (2001). Processed foods from scratch: Cooking for a family in the 1950s. In S. A. Inness (Ed.), *Kitchen culture in America: Popular representations of food, gender and race* (pp. 157–174). Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Gallegos, D. (2005). Cookbooks as manuals of taste. In D. H. Bell (Ed.), *Ordinary lifestyles: Popular media, consumption and taste* (pp. 110–121). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.
- Han, D. (2000). Korean *sint'oburi* movement and identity politics. *Society and History*, 58, 235–266.
- Inness, S. A. (2001a). *Dinner roles: American women and culinary culture*. Iowa City, IA: University of Iowa Press.
- Inness, S. A. (2001b). *Kitchen culture in America: Popular representations of food, gender, and race*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Inness, S. A. (2005). *Secret ingredients: Race, gender, and class at the dinner table*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Joo, Y. H. (2013). *The history of Korea from the dinner table: Cultural history of Korean food of the 20th century through menus*. Seoul, Korea: Humanist.

- Kang-Kim, A. (2009, March 18). Wanna know the secret of the teacher? *Hankyoreh Shinmun*. Retrieved from <http://www.hani.co.kr>
- Kim, B. (1996, May 6). Western chain restaurants opening up again. *Hankook Ilbo*. Retrieved from <http://www.hankookilbo.com>
- Kim, H.-Y., & Song, Y.-H. (1996). A study on the quality control for the circulation steps including production, transportation, selling about hamburger and sandwich in convenience store. *Journal of the Korean Society of Food Culture*, 11(4), 465-473.
- Kim, K. S., & Kim, J.-J. (1997). Korean economic development: An overview. In D.-S. Cha, K. S. Kim, & D. H. Perkins (Eds.), *The Korean economy 1945-1995: Performance and vision for the 21st century*. Seoul, Korea: Korea Development Institute.
- Kim, Y. (2005). *Women, television and everyday life in Korea: Journeys of hope*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Kraidy, M. M. (2001). From imperialism to glocalization: A theoretical framework for the information age. In B. Ebo (Ed.), *Cyberimperialism? Global relations in the new electronic frontier*. Westport, CT: Praeger.
- Kwon, Y. I., & Roy, K. M. (2007). Changing social expectations for work and family involvement among Korean fathers. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, 285-305.
- Lee, A. Y. L. (2005). Between global and local: The glocalization of online news coverage on the trans-regional crisis of SARS. *Asian Journal of Communication*, 15(3), 255-273.
- Lee, B. W. (2015). The story of homemade meals (1). *Serial Prose*, 238-243.
- Lee, J.-K (1994, April 24). "Want to be a good housewife": Popularity of basic cookbooks for younger generation. *Kyunghyang Shinmun*, 23.
- Lee, Y. R. (1995, June 25). Ms. Chang, Sun-young, the writer of "A cookbook for daughters-in-law." *Maeil Kyungjae*, 14.
- Lee, Y.-J., & Song, Y.-H. (1997). Subconsciousness of consumers in food purchase. *Marketing*, 10, 88-94.
- Meyerowitz, J. (1994). *Not June Cleaver: Women and gender in postwar America, 1945-1960*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.
- Mom's hidden recipes*. (1998). Seoul, Korea: Jubu Life Publishing.

- Moran, C. (2006). The global expansion of children's television: A case study of the adaption of Sesame Street in Spain. *Learning, Media & Technology, 31*(3), 287–300.
- Neuhaus, J. (1999). The way to a man's heart: Gender roles, domestic ideology, and cookbooks in the 1950s. *Journal of Social History, 32*(3), 529–555.
- Neuhaus, J. (2001). The joy of sex instruction: Women and cooking in marital sex manuals, 1920–1963. In S. A. Inness (Ed.), *Kitchen culture in America: Popular representations of food, gender, and race* (pp. 95–118). Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Oduro-Frimpong, J. (2009). Glocalization trends: The case of hiplife music in contemporary Ghana. *International Journal of Communication, 3*, 1085–1106.
- Park, I. H., & Cho, L.-J. (1995). Confucianism and the Korean family. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies, 26*(1), 117–134.
- Park, S. (1993). Sint'oburi. *New Family, 432*, 112–113.
- Robertson, R. (1992). *Globalization: Social theory and global culture*. London, UK: SAGE Publications.
- Robertson, R. (1995). Glocalization: Time-space and homogeneity-heterogeneity. In S. M. Lash & R. Robertson (Eds.), *Global modernities* (pp. 25–44). London, UK: SAGE Publications.
- Shapiro, L. (2008). *Perfection salad: Women and cooking at the turn of the century*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Shin, M. H. (1996). *Formulas of sauce that your mother doesn't know*. Seoul, Korea: Sejong Books.
- Solomon, E. (2014). More than recipes: Kosher cookbooks as historical texts. *Jewish Quarterly Review, 104*(1), 24–37.
- Theophano, J. (2002). *Eat my words: Reading women's lives through the cookbooks they wrote*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Wasserman, H., & Rao, S. (2008). The glocalization of journalism ethics. *Journalism and Popular Culture, 9*(2), 163–181.
- Yoon, H. (2006). The change in the roles of women in traditional Korean culture. *Oxford Journal of Anthropology, 1*–14.