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LEARNING AND SOCIAL PROCESS OF AGING AMONG KOREAN OLDER

MARRIED WOMEN: THE CULTURAL-HISTORICAL ACTIVITY THEORY

ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

The aging population has rapidly increased in South Korea. From an economic perspective, older people are too often seen in negative terms. Specifically, older women, who are traditionally at greater risk of poverty, are referred to as a social problem or as passive recipients, and the quality of life of older women in an aging society is often ignored. Consequently, little is known about how aging in society affects the lives of older women. This study examined the social process of aging among Korean older married women from older women's perspectives. It sought specifically to find the changes older women have made in order to deal with the aging-related issues that they face. Assuming that learning is one possible outcome of human activity, the study described and analyzed these changes as informal learning in a social process of aging.

This study employed an ethnographic approach from the life-course perspective. Feminist gerontology, informal learning, and cultural-historical activity theory as a theoretical framework guided the investigation. Fieldwork was conducted in major cities in South Korea. Data was collected from older married women who were born between 1933 and 1947 through participant observation and interview. The collected data was reduced and classified by categorical strategy and was then connected according to cultural historical activity theory.

The findings of this study revealed a social situation that influences the everyday life of older married women, the aging issues that women face in later life and the changes in their daily lives to solve the issues. This study showed that older women continue to develop to adapt to changing social environments through learning. Furthermore, the study verified the learning capacities of informal learning. The cultural-historical activity theory was a useful tool to describe and analyze the social aspects of informal learning.

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My doctoral journey was filled with challenge and change. I was challenged by my own academic weaknesses and my new roles as a wife and mother while writing my dissertation. Whenever I faced tough decisions and encountered pressure, God empowered me to overcome these difficulties. Therefore, I dedicate to my dissertation to God.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

This chapter provides the outline of my study. It is divided into four sections. In section one, I describe how my personal experiences and concerns are linked to my study. In section two, I provide the rationale and purpose of the study. In section three, the purpose of my research questions is detailed. In the final section of this chapter, I describe the conceptual framework that constitutes the study.

Coming to the Question

I was born and grew up in South Korea. My family was a "typical" middle class Korean family, which usually means that the parents have a college degree and the father is a professional or manager with enough income to comfortably support a household, children's education, and taking his family on a summer vacation. There were four people in my family: my mother, father, older sister, and myself. My father and mother graduated from college. My father was a white-collar worker, managing his own company since 1983. My mother was a housewife. She took care of her parents and children, supported her husband, and carried out domestic chores. My family is Christian. Most of my relatives, including my mother's side of the family, are Christian. My grandfather served as a ruling elder in his church, and his three sons, including my father, have also served as ruling elders. I was raised with a relatively strict Christian upbringing. In my family, religion has functioned as a family norm that guides relationships between family members and gender roles.

I am a woman, but as a child, I was not aware of being a girl, even though Korea is a traditional patriarchal society based on Confucian ideology. I was not viewed as a beloved daughter but rather a beloved child in my family since I do not have any male siblings. My parents taught me that I was in the center of the world and that I was God's lovely child. As a result, I had strong feelings of self-reliance and self-efficacy. However, there were two absolutes that had transcended all the limitations in my life: God and my father. They had absolute authority over all things.

God is omnipotent in my spiritual dimension, although, in reality, I now know that God is less powerful. My father was a mighty god who guided my life on behalf of God until I was old enough to realize he is not omnipotent. My mother always told my sister and me that we should obey our parents, quoting the Bible. She emphasized that obeying one's parents is God's commandment. However, in reality, my father and mother did not have equal power as parents. My mother always transferred her rights to my father in order to make a key decision as parents. At that time, it seemed that the social rule was conveyed to me—a man has the authority to create normative rules.

I became more aware of my gender as my public school years progressed. When I was in elementary school, my parents taught me a social rule— students should respect their teachers. I thought that teachers knew everything and that all that they know are correct answers. I accepted their teachings blindly without questioning them. My teachers taught me what a "good" girl is and how to conform to their ideals and expectations. I also learned through textbooks that women's roles are different than men's roles in our society. For example, in most of the pictures in my textbooks, every woman was doing something in the kitchen and every man was working in an office. When I became a high school student, I learned a new social rule—a thin, beautiful woman is desired and will be selected by a man. Since that time, keeping in shape has been one of the never-ending stressors in my life.

Now, I am a married Korean woman. I got married, vowing to be a "good wife and mother" in 2004. Before I got married, since my identities or roles as a daughter and student were given to me, I did not think of them much. I just followed the instructions that my parents and teachers had taught me. But, regarding my new roles of a wife and a mother, I had to learn about what to do in these roles, how to shape my identity as a wife and mother, and how to create a relationship with my new family, including my husband, by myself, since my life advisor, my mother, died. I asked many married women my questions. Although they gave me different answers based on their situations, there were several things in common: "family is the first priority in a woman's life," "be patient with yourself and God will bless you," "obey your husband," and "don't ask too much--just go with the flow."

I began my doctoral study in 2004 with these questions weighing heavy on my mind. Through feminism, I could see Korean married women's lives from gender perspective. I felt the need to explore the past to understand the present and to shape the future. Simultaneously, I started the journey of my mother's life since I thought that I could find clues to my questions by examining my mother's life. I reconstructed her life by refreshing my memory of her. Although I do not know exactly about the events that happened in her lifetime, I did know that most of her life after marriage was devoted to taking care of her family, especially her aging parents.

My mother was born in 1947 and got married in 1973. At that time, her mother had fought cancer for nine years. Although she had two younger brothers, since she was a daughter, she spent more time taking care of her mother than her brothers did. Her mother died the year after she got married. She supported her father and brothers in place of her mother. In the meantime, my sister and I were born. Her father got cancer when I went to elementary school. Once again, my mother had to take care of her sick, aging parent. She prepared his meals and took care of him in the hospital in the daytime when my sister and I went to school. My grandfather fought cancer for five years until he died. Three years after his death, she took care of

her mother-in-law for several months in the hospital since she could not move because of a hipbone fracture. Fortunately, she did not have to provide her with long term care since my father had a sister. After my grandmother was released from the hospital, my aunt took care of her until she died of old age. Then, my sister and I went to college. Finally, when she was forty-eight years old, my mother was relieved of her duties as a caregiver for her aging parents and children and had more time for herself. But, two years later, she was diagnosed with cancer and died.

The story of my mother's life represented the story of countless other Korean married women, a story that I wanted to explore. The role that family and society imposed on my mother as a married woman was that of a caregiver. Of course, my mother's life cannot be representative of all married Korean women's lives. But, it is true that the amount of labor involved in taking care of family increases as women age in Korea. Likewise, being a caregiver seems to be demanding work that presses women to reach far beyond their caring nature. I have heard that many married Korean women grumble about their physical and mental difficulties in taking care of their family. Not all but most married women whom I met seem to have lived oppressed lives as they have gotten older as a result of their caregiving role. However, I do not think that the role of a caregiver in itself is problematic. I think that taking care of others can be defined as a part of women's abilities and nature. The problem lies in the social norm and expectation that all women have to devote their lives to taking care of their family as they age and in the social system of male domination, which does not reward women for their work as caregivers, mothers and wives.

This study explores married women's lives focusing on their later lives. With the burdens for family care, women enter old age with less protection in health and material provisions. Thus, they are often described in negative terms in an aging society. These situations allow women to be more marginalized in their later lives.

Rationale and Purpose

The aging population has increased rapidly with a low birthrate in South Korea. The proportion of older people aged over 65 has surpassed 10. 7% of the population in 2009 (Statistics Korea, 2009). The baby boomers, born from 1955 to 1963, are approaching retirement age. In about 10 years, when they turn 65, the number of people over age 65 is expected to reach 14.9% of the population. To respond to the rapid rise in the aging population, many studies in various areas from law to medicine have been under way to solve aging problems in Korean society.

Although this social problem approach to aging has contributed to raising awareness of aging-related issues in South Korea, it has dwarfed older persons and has proliferated prejudices against aging and older people. Besides, gender generalization about older people has largely ignored older women. Many studies conducted in older men after retirement have brought out male-oriented national policies and social support for older people (An, 2009). However, recently, the studies on older women, who make up the majority of the older population, have increased with a rapid increase in the aging population (H.-o. Kim & Hoppe-Graff, 2001; M.-H. Kim, 1996; Y. Park, Kim, Schwartz-Barcott, & Kim, 2002; Yoo, Lee, & Yoo, 2007; Yoon, 2001). The researches to examine difficulties that older women face in the context of women's lives have increased (K. A. Park, 1993; M.-H. Kim, 1996; H.-o. Kim & Hoppe-Graff, 2001; Yoon, 2001 Yoo, et al., 2007). Although these studies have shown the differences between older women and older men, they often promote negative images of older women traditionally stereotyped as inactive, unhealthy, and ineffective. Little is known about how an aging society affects the lives of older women and how the aging experience of older women changes with a rapid social change.

To explore this relatively uncharted territory, in this study, I investigate social process of aging among Korean older women. A social process is a collective social phenomenon constructed by social interactions. The social process of aging is understood as the process of adapting to social changes that people experience in later life. I focus on the changes older women have made in order to deal with aging-related issues that they face in this study. The changes that occur in older women's lives as a result of their efforts to cope with aging concerns is observed through the changes in their behavior in this study. From a learning perspective, the change in behavior can be defined as learning. Youn and Baptiste assert, "Learning (those relatively stable changes in behavioral potential that are made manifest through generation of new knowledge and skills) is one possible outcome of human activity" (Youn and Baptiste , 2007, p.4).

My study examines learning as an outcome of older women's activity to deal with aging concerns. This type of learning—informal learning--is complex with multiple factors. Unlike formally organized learning, it does not have an intended or expected learning process. It can be examined by analyzing everyday human activities. Thus, informal learning is understood as a social phenomenon involving interaction between people and artifacts and people and people. The Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) provides a framework to systematically analyze learning that occurs in everyday life. It focuses on the social structure that learning occurs in examining human activities. Critical gerontology and feminist theories provide important insights to understanding aging and women's lives.

I expect that this study will confirm that people continue to learn into old age (Jarvis, 2001; Knox, 1997). Although older persons are less likely to participate in formal class-based learning with specific goals than younger adults, they continue to obtain new knowledge and skills through everyday human activities. My study extends the concept of learning, traditionally limited to a psychological or mental process, to a social phenomenon involving a lot of

interaction between people and artifacts and people and people. Furthermore, it may be able to show links between learning and development. People continue to develop to adapt to changing social environments through learning. Older women continue to alter their everyday activities to improve their senior years in an aging society. It will help draw attention to older women not as passive recipients but as agents who improve their later years in an aging society. Finally, understanding older women's everyday lives more deeply and critically would provide insight into lifelong learning for older women. It would integrate their aging concerns into relevant learning programs and activities to develop solutions and strategies for dealing with these concerns.

Research Question

My study examines the changes in the everyday activities that older women perform to deal with aging-related issues. There are many research studies that reveal older people's biological, psychological and sociological attributes (Accociation, 2002; Aiken, 2001; Bury, 1995; Cruikshank, 2003; Schoenborn, Vickerie, & Powell-Griner, 2006, April 11), but, in this study, from the perspective of learning, I observe and analyze aging-related experiences from older women's perspectives. Learning is understood as one possible outcome of human activity. In this regard, I ask how particular Korean older women deal with aging-related issues through their everyday activities. The purpose of this study is to reveal the changes in everyday activities that older women perform, i.e., learning that takes place in everyday life around the issue of women and aging. To achieve the purpose, I reveal the everyday activities of Korean women who belong to the "young old age group" and systematically analyze them using the cultural-Historical Activity Theory (CHAT). The following research questions guided this study:

a. What actions do Korean young old women perform in their everyday life? What goals direct these actions?

b. What activities are shaped by Korean young old women's everyday lives?

c. In what social structure situation do they perform their everyday lives?

d. What concerns do they have about aging?

e. What conflicts occur in their situation?

f. How do relationships with family members change and grow in the process of getting older?

g. What kind of future do they expect for themselves?

h. What changes in their behavior, beliefs, and interactions with others have occurred as they age?

Conceptual Framework

I employ critical gerontology and feminist gerontology as an ideological perspective in investigating aging and women. Critical gerontology understands that aging is a social phenomenon shaped by beliefs, customs, and traditions (Cruikshank, 2003). Thus, critical gerontologists contend that dominant discourses that relate to aging reflect the interests of the most powerful group and criticize the process of power. The so-called feminist gerontologists who study older women and their aging are based on critical gerontological perspectives. They assert that older women are a more marginalized group among women due to their age. Also, the various theories in feminist literature have implications for feminist gerontology (Brown, 1988).

Feminist gerontologists seek to understand a more comprehensive portrait of aging through the challenging of a traditional centered-on-men view in order to change beliefs that construct older women's roles and positions in society (Calasanti, 1996; Ray, R. E. 1996). They

examine the issues that are relevant to women's everyday lives and link them to structural levels of theory. Then, they critique the ageism embedded in social taken-for-granted assumptions and systems. They assert that aging women's lives are the place in which forces of sexism and ageism are connected together and affect each other (Browne, 1998; Ray, 1996). A small but growing number of feminists have been interested in the issues that relate to aging (Brown, 1988). Although feminist theory in the field of aging has drawn largely from socialist feminism, most of studies focus on women's later years that the structure of gender relations brings out from historical perspectives (Arber & Ginn, 1995; Calasanti & Hendricks, 1993). In this study, I draw on feminist gerontologists' ideas and their empirical studies. They will provide the ideas to approach the age-and gender-related issues in Korean society and culture.

In terms of learning, I assume that learning is a collective human activity involving high levels of interaction between people (Livingstone, 2001; Engeström, 1987). The CHAT will be applied to describe the process and outcome of learning. Traditional learning theories such as behaviorist and cognitivist learning theories have a limitation in explaining the relationship between learning and development and between individual and social development. Thus, they could not show the whole process from the beginning to the outcomes of learning, especially informal learning. Applying the CHAT to learning, learning is defined not as a cognitive phenomenon but human activity that occurs within continuously changing time and social relations, and researchers can show the process and outcome of learning. This study will examine what and how Korean older women learn in the process of growing older using the CHAT.

Chapter 2

Aging and Older Women

Aging-related issues are studied in various disciplinary perspectives from medicine to law. Disciplinary boundaries are reinforced or integrated in gerontology as an independent academic field (Wilmoth & Ferraro, 2007). Thus, in this chapter, I reviewed the literature that was published in gerontology in order to decide how to approach aging. Three views of aging-- biological, psychological, and sociological--may be general and inclusive classification of the perspectives, although Wilmoth and Ferraro (2007) suggest three other aspects of aging: physical, social, and public policy aspects. Biological perspectives incorporate the functional and structural changes in the body associated with the passage of time. Psychological perspectives involve the changes in cognition, personality, and emotions. Sociological perspectives refer to understanding aging within a given context. Although the perspectives are divided into three groups, it is important to keep in mind that they overlap in the aging process.

This section provides a definition of "age" and a brief overview of the biological, psychological, and sociological perspectives to understand aging. Then, critical and feminist gerontology in sociological perspectives are detailed, highlighting ways in which they explain aging.

Age

We select a specific chronological age that refers to the length of time a person has lived since birth as the indicator of entry into "old age." In the United States, traditionally, 65 years of age has been seen as the entry point for old age. Many people think of 65 as the beginning of old age since 65 is the age at which a person becomes eligible to retire with full Social Security

benefits (Social Security Administration, 2004). Thus, people in the "65 and over" age group are often called senior citizens, older people, old men or women, or elderly in the United States. Old age is divided into three age groups: young old, old-old and oldest-old, corresponding to people's chronological age. Young old represents ages 65 to 74, old-old includes ages 75 to 84, and oldest-old includes ages 85 and older (Whitbourne, 2001, p. 8).

Although the use of precise age categories may seem arbitrary, our society uses these numbers to define us since they have a bureaucratic convenience and the advantage of facilitating comparisons both over time and between and within countries (Gullette, 2004; Victor, 2005). As Whitbourne (2001) points out, age is only a number based on general events that people take for granted regardless of physical, psychological and social events that individual people undergo in their life. Although several of our organic functions seem to work according to our chronological age, it has not been revealed if these functions are related to the aging process or to changes that take place over many years (Whitbourne, 2001, p 6).

However, many studies in lifespan development and gerontology use chronological age as a variable to segregate individuals. Friedrich (2001) argues that this practice has resulted in chronological age being a generic variable in studies, separating old people as a failing population group according to concepts classified based on chronological ages (Gullette, 2004, p.10).

As an alternative to chronological age, researchers suggest the use of biological age, psychological age, social age, historical or contextual age, and functional age (Friedrich, 2001). Biological age is based on the performance of individual organ systems. Psychological age represents the degree of an individual's psychological functions such as intelligence, memory and learning ability. Social age is calculated according to conducting certain social roles such as the person's family, work, and community roles. Historical or contextual age is a relatively newer definition in lifespan development. It refers to "one's developmental age markers in the historical context" (Friedrich, 2001, p. 46). For example, in the twentieth century, the human lifespan has

increased considerably compared to that of the nineteenth century due to advances in medicine. Functional age represents the ability to engage in purposeful activity. That is, it refers to all substantial capabilities which enable a person to adapt to the environment, such as doing light housework, preparing meals, bathing, and other everyday living activities.

Biological Perspectives on Aging

In biological perspectives, appearance, which includes posture, skin texture, hair color and mobility, speed, and sensory acuity, is taken into account. Changes in such physical characteristics are an indicator of the aging process.

Appearance

With age, the skin becomes more wrinkled, rougher, drier, less resilient, and paler (Aiken, 2001). The decrease in subcutaneous fat and muscle tissue causes the skin to lose its elasticity and intensity and generate wrinkles. The number of small growths, spots, or purplish spots increases on older hands and faces since older skin is broken down more easily and heals less rapidly than younger skin. The ability of the skin to maintain fluids also declines in old age. This results in dry skin, which promotes itching.

The graying of hair, loss of hair, and loss of hair luster are other physical markers of a person's advancing age. Due to a decline in subcutaneous fat (Whitbourne, 2001), a person may undergo tooth loss and gum shrinkage. The loss of bone mass in the chin entails the changes in the structural appearance of the face in old age. The nose gets wider and longer and the cheeks sag. The effects of aging on overall body shape and stature are seen in the broadening of the hips

and waist and narrowing of the shoulders (Aiken, 2001, p. 30). Loss of collagen between the spinal vertebrae causes the spine to bow and the height to shrink.

Mobility

With age, physical changes affect a person's mobility. The structures that support movement, such as bones, muscles and joints, undergo age-related changes. According to Whitebourne (2001), from the beginning of the forties, each part that supports movement undergoes significant age-related losses (p. 79). Muscle mass and bone density decrease and the joints become stiffer; therefore, movement comes to be more difficult. In general, the speed of walking reduces and joint pain limits movement in daily activity (Bohannon, 1997).

Sensory Acuity

Changes in the functioning of all the sense organs occur with aging. A general effect of aging is experiencing duller sensations and delayed responses to sensory stimuli (Aiken, 2001). As a consequence, the average older adult tends to receive and to react to sensory information more slowly, if at all. Aiken (2001) mentions that the declines in the sensory system usually occur gradually beginning in the thirties and forties, and, in the sixties or so, these declines become even greater. Vision severely degenerates as one grows older. About 14% of older Americans from 70 to 75 years old experience trouble seeing, even with glasses (Desai, Pratt, Lentzner, & Robinson, 2001). The decrement of vision is caused by the size of pupil, the opening in the iris, and hardening of the lens (Branch, Horowitz, & Carr, 1989). An older person comes to be unable to respond to light changes as quickly as younger adults. Moreover, the ability to differentiate

colors of objects also decreases. The lenses of the eyes lose their elasticity. This results in a decline in the ability to focus on small print.

Hearing impairment starts in early adulthood, but it does not become a significant problem until much later in life. The speech of other people is heard as mumbled sounds to the older ear and hissing background noise becomes less easy to mute. Age-related hearing loss is due to gradual degeneration of the auditory nerve and a decline in the number and strength of muscle fibers supporting the eardrum (Aiken, 2001, p. 39). Particularly, sensitivity to high frequency sounds begins to decline as early as age 20. This is called *presbycusis*. According to Desai et al. (2001), one-third of older Americans over the age of 70 experience *presbycusis*. Moreover, since background noises become less easily muted, understanding speech in a noisy background is particularly difficult for older people.

Smell and taste acuity also decline with aging. The number and functioning of taste buds decrease. All four tastes—sweet, salt, sour, and bitter—are affected, but the sensitivity of sweet decreases remarkably. Along with the loss of taste, the sense of smell also dullens. The structure of all organs and organ systems become less efficient with age. The vital organ systems— the cardiovascular, respiratory, urinary, digestive, musculoskeletal, and genitourinary systems — gradually get worse in old age (See Aiken, 2001; Whitbourne, 2001). Weakening arises at all levels—cellular, organ, and organ systems--in factions.

Bodily Control System

The influence of aging can be seen in the endocrine system and immune system which control the actions of complicated networks of organ systems and tissues in order to regulate metabolism, reproduction, and control against infections (see Whitbourne 2001). Aiken (2001)

points out that a decline in the functioning of the immune system is one of the most considerable factors of the aging process.

Nervous System

In the nervous system, there is an ongoing loss of neurons across the adult years since neurons do not reproduce when they are destroyed by injury or disease. Sleeping pattern change in old age is related to the changes in the brain. Older adults have difficulty falling and staying asleep. Instead, they frequently sleep for shorter periods in a day (Dement, Miles, & Bilwise, 1982).

Theory of Aging

Scientists from various disciplines seek to discover the causes of biological aging and related issues. In the field of geriatric medicine, a branch of medicine that deals with health problems of the aged includes both the treatment and prevention of disease and injury. Why do people grow old and die? Aiken, in his book *Aging and Later Life* (2001), divides the biological theories into four categories: breakdown, substance, and hormone theories, and aging clocks. In breakdown theories, aging is considered as "the results of wear and tear, stress, or exhaustion of organs and cell" (p. 44). Stress, homeostatic imbalance, immunology, the rate of living, and the autoimmunity theory belong to this category. Substance theories explain aging at the tissue level. They argue that changes in collagen and the proliferation of mutant cells are the cause of aging. Collagen, which makes up about one-third of all bodily proteins, changes with age. This change occurs within the DNA as well as the skin. The number of mutant cells also increases with age. In hormone theories, aging is caused by the release of antithyroid hormone, which is necessary for

cell metabolism and functioning. The "aging clocks" theory is based on the assumption that aging and death are programmed in the organism. Some researchers assert that there is an aging clock in the brain. Others believe that aging clocks are in individual body cells.

The Major Advantages and Shortcomings of Biological Perspectives

The research conducted from biological perspectives allows us to learn the facts of the biological aging process. Although the facts are related to a gradual erosion of physical abilities and biological functioning, studies on biological aging find myths regarding aging. Many people believe that chronic disorders such as arthritis, hypertension, and visual impairment are common among older people. But this is not true. The average older person simply has a higher risk of disease than a normal younger adult does. Many studies have illustrated that chronic disorders are not merely the results of aging (Aiken, 2001; Friedrich, 2001). Rather, these diseases are more directly related to chronic disorders associated with gender, ethnicity, social economic status, and environmental impacts (Friedrich, 2001). Aiken (2001) argues that most cases of these disorders have origins in childhood and early adulthood or lifelong habits. Moreover, researchers have studied intervention strategies for successful aging such as hearing aids, corrective lenses and medications.

However, since most studies have focused on age-related disease and degeneration, the research conducted from biological perspectives has continued to be the origin of stereotypes of older people: "Being old means being physically disabled," and "Someone has to take care of the elderly— they just cannot take care of themselves." Moreover, the media increasingly exploits biological aging for its associated story of decline (Friedrich, 2001). This attitude of the media makes older people, especially women, dread growing older. Researchers have found that the

negative body image that older women have directly correlates with the image of aging in the media (Delloff, 1987; Vincent, 2006; Woodward, 2006).

Psychological Perspectives on Aging

There have been various age-related psychological studies. In general, these studies are categorized into cognitive abilities, personality, and psychological problems, and disorder identity. In this section, I will briefly review the age-related changes in personality, memory, and intelligence. Mental health issues are eliminated in order to focus on a sense of average aging in an average course of development. Psychological perspectives view aging as part of the developmental continuum.

Personality

Personality, in general, means an individual's unobservable quality that has influence on his or her observable behavior. Personality comprises thoughts, feelings, and behaviors that are characteristic of a person. It results from the interaction between inheritance and environment and continues to develop when physical growth ceases.

Freud and other traditional psychoanalysts understand personality as a kind of "battleground" (Aiken, 2001, p. 105) where the id, ego, and superego combat. Freud provides a basic principle with psychoanalysis. He argues that the deprivations and dissatisfactions of childhood have an influence on the developing personality. As related to aging, this may mean that childhood contributes to psychological adaptiveness in later life. Friedrich (2001) mentions that this aspect of "cognitive adaptability, having matured in childhood, should illustrate relative stability throughout adolescence and the stages of adulthood" (p. 55). However, according to

Aiken (2001), modern psychologists focus more on the role of learning and associated sociocultural variables acknowledging the role of early experiences in the growth of personality.

Erikson supposes eight stages in the growth of personality. Each stage has a crisis or conflict that a person resolves before the next step. He draws on Freud's notion of identification, but there is a definite difference between them. Erikson suggests cultural or contextual influences beyond childhood as developing the personality, whereas Freud only mentions the influence of an early experience. According to Erikson's eight stages, in early adulthood, people form an intimate relationship with others. Yet if they fail this task, they come to be isolated. In middle adulthood, people have the task of generativity. They give tender care and protect children and grandchildren or their community in order to encourage their development. If they fail this task, they experience depression. In later adulthood, the primary task is to establish and maintain a sense of integrity. People accept their failures as well as accomplishments and recognize life's inevitabilities so that they can find a positive and integrated self. If they do not develop the ego integrity in later life, they become depressed and experience a great fear of death.

Jung's theory also provides major implications for adult development. He argues that maturity is possible only well into the years of midlife. Starting in middle adulthood, people reflect on one's self, one's relations with others, and one's personal insights in order to form some meaningfulness in life. According to Jung, greater maturity is realized through balance among the psychic functions—thinking, feeling, sensing, and intuiting. As people move toward middle age, they recognize their responsibilities that lie within the unconscious (Jung, 1968; Whitbourne, 2001). Whitbourne (2001) summarizes that Jung considers the accomplishment between the conscious and the unconscious in middle adulthood.

There are specific personality traits that younger people believe older people have. We tend to think of older people as being rigid, inflexible, pessimistic, and religious and living in the past. Much early research sought to find and classify these traits. Reichard, Livson, and Petersen

(1962) found five personality types: "mature (constructive), rocking chair (dependent), armored (defensive), angry (hostile), and self-hating" (Reichard, Livson, & Perersen, 1962 cited in Aiken, 2001, p. 114). Neugarten, Havinghurst, and Tobin (1968) classified the findings into four major personality traits: "integrated, armored-defended, passive-dependent, and unintegrated" (Neugarten et al., 1968, cited in Aiken, 2001, p. 114). Although all of these are partially true and partially myths regarding the personality of the older person, these traits are thought to increase with age.

Memory

In numerous research studies *short-term memory* shows age-related deficits. There are two hypotheses related to this. The speed deficit hypothesis explains that the poor memory of older adults results from their reduced processing speed. Salthouse (1996) argues the slow response speed can refer to memory loss based on two mechanisms, the limited-time mechanism and the simultaneity mechanism. The other explanation is the inhibitory deficit hypothesis developed by Zacks, Hasher, & Li (1998). They argue that older adults do not efficiently perform short-term memory tasks. Older adults often spend time dealing with irrelevant information since they have difficulties in selecting necessary information that enters their short-term memory.

Memory is regarded as involving a sequence of stages: storing, encoding, and retrieving information in cognitive psychology. Age-related deficits in *long-term memory* are found in both the storing and retrieving stage (Aiken, 2001; Surprenant & Neath, 2006; Whitbourne, 2001). Hoyer and Plude (1980) argue that, compared with younger adults, older adults have more difficulties when they organize, associate and integrate information in permanent storage areas of the brain since they have difficulty in forming associations and using visual images in processing

information into memory (Aiken, 2001, p. 92). In the retrieving stage, since information does not effectively transfer to long-term storage, older adults experience difficulty.

Prospective memory refers to remembering to perform some action at some point in the future. It is categorized into two parts: a time-based task and event-based task. A time-based task is one that a person has to conduct at a certain time. For example, a person has to go somewhere at 3 p.m. every Thursday. On the other hand, an event-based task is one that a person has to conduct when a certain thing happens. For example, a person has to go to a certain place when she meets someone. Einstein, McDaniel, Richardson, Guynn, and Cunfer (1995) found that age affects only time-based tasks. In their research comparing older adults and college students, older persons are often better than younger students at event-based tasks although they are worse than young students on time-based tasks. Rendell and Thomson (1999) argue that older people can be better than younger people at remembering to perform real-life tasks due to greater motivation.

Older people often talk about an event that never happened in the past as if they saw, heard, or conducted it in the past. This type of illusory recollection is called *false memory*. This phenomenon often occurs in younger people (Hyman & Billings, 1998). Yet, according to Dywan and Jacoby (1990), since older adults have difficulty identifying the original memory, they are subject to false memory.

Intelligence

Most researchers in the field of adult development and aging have based their argument on the premise that there are two main categories of mental ability: verbal and nonverbal intelligence. There are several theories of intelligence on adult intelligence, but the mainstream research is based on the fluid-crystallized theory (Horn & Cattell, 1966). They propose two mental abilities: fluid intelligence and crystallized intelligence. Fluid intelligence represents the

individual's inborn abilities to carry out higher-level cognitive operations. Crystallized intelligence is defined as the acquisition of specific skills and information gained through the language, knowledge, and conventions of one's culture. They argue that unlearned and nonverbal fluid abilities decrease with age. However, the crystallized intelligence attained by learning progressively improves around the sixties and declines after that point.

The Major Advantages and Shortcomings of Psychological Perspectives

From psychological perspectives, aging is considered part of the developmental continuum. This recognition has expanded knowledge and interest in aging. Psychologists study questions related to mental health and aging and social and intellectual growth across the life span (American Psychological Association, 2002; Service & O'Neill, 2002). They argue that older people's fear of loss and deterioration in later life impacts all aspects of their lives (Centofanti, 1998). Biological health and mental health (such as depression and anxiety disorders) affect each other (Aiken, 2001; Friedrich, 2001; Whitbourne, 2001). For example, older adults with medical problems have higher rates of depression than those who are healthy. Conversely, depression in an older person negatively affects the outcome of the disease. Likewise, decreases in cognitive functioning have been associated with significant increases in depression and can have a great impact on quality of life (Comijs et al., 2004). Individuals experiencing cognitive decline lose relationships even with members of their own family, a change that does not occur with physical decline also. For example, the correlation between actual memory ability and self-judged memory ability can be quite low (Hertzog, 1996). Research from psychological perspectives helps us better understand how social and family interactions contribute to successful aging and provide information on adapting to and coping with later-life stages for psychological attempts with older people, health care providers, and families.

However, psychological research focusing on mental health issues produce stereotypes about old age: "Old people are sad and lose their minds," "Elderly people are isolated and lonely," and "The elderly don't enjoy life; old people stop learning new things." First, these perspectives have been criticized for failing to take into account the social characteristics of aging by social gerontologists. They attempt to explain or understand the aging phenomena that occur at the micro-social—individual, group and family—level without considering macro-social levels of society such as age group and population. In addition, researchers assume parallels between the young and old (Service & O'Neill, 2002) and often compare the older adult group with the younger adult group in their studies. Yet, since it is difficult to generalize about the psychological experiences of any age group, the findings of the study may be distorted.

Sociological Perspectives on Aging

Sociological perspectives focus on the social contexts of aging. The social gerontology view is that old age is socially constructed. It entails the diversity of older people's aging process and different factors that are important to the experiences of old age and aging. Researchers from sociological perspectives have investigated aspects of individual and social aging and connected these findings to establish explanations of social phenomena (Bengtson, Burgess, & Parrott, 1997). There are many theories that provide different lenses through which to view and explain the phenomena of aging. Bengtson, Burgess, and Parrott (1997) identified seven theoretical perspectives most often referenced in journal articles of social gerontology: social constructionist, social exchange theories, life course perspective theories, feminist theories, age stratification theories, political economy of aging theories, and critical theory.

Social gerontology is also based on positivistic or interpretive epistemological frameworks like other social sciences. Most analyses are positivistic research using quantitative

methodology. By contrast, research based on interpretive perspectives emphasizes the understanding and meaning of certain phenomena through a theoretical framework of the study. Critical gerontology and feminist gerontology among interpretive perspectives will be detailed in the following section. Many empirical studies report that individual features such as gender, cohort, ethnicity, social class, and religion influence the aging process (Whitbourne, 2001).

This perspective has been criticized for several reasons. Particularly, positivistic sociological gerontology focusing on the problematic nature of aging entails power issues. Victor (2005) argues that there is an issue of power in the social problem approach. He said that once researchers determine a problematic aspect of aging in their studies, from this point on, power is already intervened in the study. Focusing on this problem-focused research agenda may generate and perpetuate the negative stereotypes of old age and later life. Additionally, Victor (2005) argues that aging cannot be explained by selected characteristics in examining an older cohort. There is a wide variation due to factors such as environmental experiences and genetic material influences, which influence each individual uniquely in the aging process.

Critical Gerontology

Recently, critical gerontology has based the majority of its studies on the sociological perspective of aging. Most of the current studies in critical gerontology are rooted in critical theories from the Frankfurt School and neo-Marxism. Critical perspectives criticize the process of power. They argue that dominant discourses or ideologies about aging tend to reflect the interests of the most powerful group. Awareness of social constructions and resistance to them is crucial since aging is shaped more by beliefs, customs, and traditions than by bodily changes (Cruikshank, 2003). For example, Lloyd and Vincent (2005) explored the cultural and philosophical issues of individualism, human rights and human dignity in the final phase of life

through a micro level empirical study. Critical perspectives include a variety of theoretical trends in contemporary social gerontology, such as the political economy of aging, feminist theories, theories of diversity, and humanistic gerontology (Minkler, 1996).

Critical gerontology emerged in opposition to prevailing scientific approaches to aging. Critical gerontology questions the taken-for-granted assumptions behind each phenomenon. There are several patterns in critical gerontology. Humanistic gerontology represents critical gerontology (Bengtson et al., 1997). Humanistic gerontology draws on the perspectives of the humanities. The humanities look at things holistically and contextually in order to interpret their meaning (Cole & Sierpina, 2006). In humanities disciplines such as languages and literature, history, philosophy and religious studies, their primary tools are "interpreting, contextualizing, valuing, and self-knowing" (Cole & Sierpina, 2006, p. 247). The humanities aim at understanding rather than explaining human experience through insight, perspective, critical understanding, discernment, and creativity. Humanistic gerontology recognizes the humanistic dimensions of aging. Some critical gerontologists emphasize historical investigation. They argue that through historical investigation researchers can understand the present in order to understand social formations relevant to adult aging. Historical critique should be used to destroy taken-for-granted assumptions surrounding aging (Powell & Biggs, 2003). For example, using a humanistic critical gerontological framework, Atchley (1993) has conceptualized retirement in three ways: (1) as a social institution, (2) as a body of distributional issues, and (3) as a human life stage and he reveals who benefits from each conceptualization. He argues retirement must be understood as an emancipatory stage in the life course. Powell and Biggs (2003) introduced some of the methodological tools from Foucauldian studies in order to reveal the power to control and regulate the experiences of older people.

Critical perspectives (interpretive perspectives of aging) allow gerontologists to understand aging as a historical and cultural process. Likewise, they expanded individual-oriented

aging research at the social level. First, critical perspectives drew out power issues embedded in aging. Moody (1993) identifies four goals of critical gerontology: (1) to theorize subjective and interpretive dimensions of aging; (2) to focus not on technical advancement but on praxis, defined as action of involvement in practical change (such as public policy); (3) to link academics and practitioners through praxis; and (4) to produce "emancipatory knowledge." However, there are a few empirical research studies taking critical perspectives on social gerontology. Likewise, since some researchers employ critical theories without understanding the origin of critical perspective, critical theory itself is not concretely abstract in the study (Bengtson et al., 1997). Dannefer (1988) criticizes frameworks of social gerontology. He argues that they do not explain the diverse nature of aging. According to Dannefer, many theories frequently equate variation with deviance, and thus neglect or discount it. Although critical perspectives are not common in social gerontology, their effects are considerable.

Feminist Gerontology

Feminist gerontology is often considered to be one form of critical gerontology (R. E. Ray, 1996). It focuses on gender and gender relations as well as age-related issues based on the philosophical foundations and empirical methodologies of critical gerontology. Feminism offers an appropriate theoretical framework for the study of women in society (Browne, 1998; hooks, 1984; Smith, 1979). In its early years, feminism focused on how gender differences and gender roles shape women's social norms and expectations, yet, recently, it has moved "toward a perspective that acknowledges the salience of the issue of power—that which is oppressed and that which exists as strengths—in women's lives" (Browne, 1998, p. xviii). Yet, until recently, older women were not part of feminists' agendas. According to Browne (1998), in the past 25 years, literature on older women has increased in gerontology. She explains that this is because

"feminists themselves are aging, and because critical gerontology and postmodernism have promoted a greater awareness of feminist theory and methodology in gerontology and vice versa" (Browne, 1998, p. xix). Finally, feminist gerontology is intellectually exchangeable between feminism and gerontology (R. E. Ray, 1996).

Feminist gerontology investigates women's experiences and gender relations in later life. It seeks to understand how gender is embedded in social relationships at all levels, from individual interactions to structural or institutional processes. Further, it considers how gender relations affect government and other public policies such as care-related policies and an old-age pension (Calasanti, Slevin, & King, 2006). Feminist theorists believe that most problems faced by older women are a direct result of a lifetime of multiple oppressions. Thus, they argue that gender should be the primarily consideration when understanding older women's aging. Gender is a factor that shapes social life across the life span, which significantly alters the experience of aging (Arber & Ginn, 1995). Furthermore, they view gender as being inextricably linked with other social inequalities such as race, ethnicity, sexual preference, and class, which affect power relations. Feminist theorists argue that current theories and models of aging are insufficient because they fail to include gender relations, or the experience of women in the context of aging (Blieszer, 1993).

Feminist perspectives on aging focus on the context of social meanings at micro-level analyses (Bengtson et al., 1997). At this level, gender relations are so deeply rooted in everyday practices that they are invisible. The main research topics at the micro-level are related to social networks, caregiving and family work, social meanings and identity. At the macro-level, they investigate the economic and power relations between older men and women. Aging women's increasing impoverishment, gender stratification, power structures and social institutions are examined. At this level, critical theory provides an understanding of how social structures

influence experiences and behaviors. Feminist theories also seek to put together the micro and macro level by linking individuals and social structures (Buty, 1995).

Feminist gerontologists argue that older women are facing a time in which sexism (sexual discrimination) is associated with ageism (age-related discrimination) in their lives. According to Butler (1975):

> Ageism can be seen as a process of systematic stereotyping of and discrimination against older people because they are old, just as racism and sexism accomplish this with skin color and gender. Old people are categorized as senile, rigid in thought and manner, old fashioned in morality and skills…Ageism allows the younger generation to see old people as different from themselves, thus they subtly cease to identify with their elders as human beings (p.12).

Ageism is a constriction that rearranges power relationships like sexual discrimination or prejudice (Alexander, Berrow, Domitrovich, Donnelly, & McLean, 1986). With ageism, one is shaped into something that is always less than what one really is. Browne (1998) illustrates that sex and age are phenomena that are more shaped by social structure than by biology and processes that are shaped by social relations and power relations. Feminist gerontologists argue that older women are discriminated against twice by society's ideas that degrade and ignore their opportunities and abilities due to their sex and age. Ageism towards older women also exists between older and younger women (Alexander et al., 1986). Woman-to-woman ageism is part of the female competition for a small piece of social power. Likewise, feminist gerontologists emphasize that the study of older women must be conducted from the life-span perspective on aging (Gonyea, 1994; Hess & Waring, 1983). Older women undergo diverse experiences of ageism and old age through the life course, and the issues faced by them are transformed from their experiences of degradation and ignorance. Feminist gerontologists investigate "the epistemology of gender and the potential impact of new knowledge on women and social structures" (Brown, p. xxii).

Feminist gerontology views age as a structure of social inequality (Browne, 1998; Calasanti, Slevin, & King, 2006; McMullin & Berger, 2006; Ray, 1996; Reinharz, 1986). It focuses on the point at which age and gender intersect in systems of inequality. Its purpose is to change older women's position in society, that is, "to change attitudes that construct older people's positions in society through restrictive roles, beliefs, and stereotypes" (Ray, 1996, p. 675). Reviewing previous research in feminist gerontology, most studies on women and aging are rooted in feminist empiricism, feminist standpoint theory, and postmodern feminist theory. Empirical feminists focus on social psychological study using a quantitative method, and their work is the vast majority of feminist gerontology (Ray, 1996). Feminist standpoint theorists criticize the economic relations between men and women across the life course and assert that this inequity generates poor older women (Harding, 2004; Smith, 1987). Although postmodern feminist theory is seldom employed in feminist gerontology, a number of studies based on postmodern theories have slowly increased (Ray, 1996). They focused on "what counts as knowledge of aging, who makes this knowledge, and how it functions in the world" (Ray, 1996, p. 675).

Although feminist theories in social gerontology are not often cited, Bengtson and the colleagues (1997) argue that they have much to contribute to social gerontology. First, feminist perspectives focus on the needs of the majority of the aging population, women. Feminists seek to understand a more comprehensive portrait of aging through the challenging of a traditional centered-on-men view (Calasanti, 1996). Second, by addressing issues that are relevant to the everyday life of women, feminist research in gerontology is linked to practice (Arber and Ginn, 1991). Third, feminist theorists provide models for macro-micro conceptual linkages in the sociology of aging by addressing both structural and individual levels of theory (Bury, 1995). Finally, feminist gerontologists critique the ageism embedded in mainstream feminist theories which traditionally ignore issues of age (McMullin, 1995; Reinharz).

Women and Aging in Feminist Studies

Women and men have different experiences in their aging process. Feminist scholars consider age as a structure of social inequality rather than a biological characteristic of individuals. Thus, they assert that age and gender are intersected in systems of inequality. McMullin and Berger (2006) note that gender and age are a "deep" social structure since they pervade all that we do within every aspect of our lives (p. 204). The taken-for-granted assumptions that relate to women and age affect our behavior and status positions. Feminist gerontologists focus on gender and age relations and women's experiences and public policy where gender and age intersect.

In this section, I review empirical studies that are formed by the diverse tradition of feminist theory in the field of feminist gerontology. I discuss three issues that are associated with older women: retirement, financial status, and caregiving. These three issues are the themes that have been often discussed in feminist gerontologist literature. Most empirical studies are case studies of Western countries such as the U.S. and UK. Although these empirical studies cannot be adapted to the Korean situation, they will provide insight in examining the issues that relate to age and gender in a Korean context.

Retirement

Recently feminist scholars have examined retirement from women's perspective (Cruikshank, 2003; Onyx & Benton, 1996; Simmons & Betschild, 2001; Skucha & Bernard, 2000). They argue that conventional earlier retirement research studies do not account for women's experiences since they took a theoretical framework based on a functionalist perspective, which presents men's experiences and continuous and full-time employment patterns

in retirement research (Skucha & Bernard 2000, p. 31). In the study of Australian professional older women aged 45-65, Onyx and Benton (1996) found that retirement did not fit the experience of women. They noted, "The particular mix of paid and unpaid work shifts constantly throughout our lifetime, and continues to do so whether we are officially retired or not" (Onyx and Benton, 1996, p. 100). More significantly, the women who participated in their study did not think of paid employment as a meaningful event in their lives. Rather, they were interested in having a balanced future in their senior years. Their results are corroborated by Skucha and Bernard's study (2000). They interviewed thirty-one women aged between 50 and 60 years who were working as part-time employees in the UK. They found that many of the married women in this study talked about their fears of widowhood, poverty, isolation and boredom when the women spoke of retirement (Skucha & Bernard (2000), p. 33).

Within this area, feminist gerontologists are beginning to develop an interest in the relationship between domestic work arrangement and older wives' happiness (Piña & Bengtson, 1995; Suitor, 1991; Ward, 1993). Current research studies on household labor and wives' happiness focus on the importance of the symbolic meaning of a husband's contributions to domestic labor. According to Rosen (1987), husbands' housework contributions symbolically represent love and support to wives. Yet, the older wife's perception of support from her husband has been little known since there are a few studies on divisions of household labor in regards to marital happiness for older wives (Piña & Bengtson, 1995). In G. Lee and Shehan's (1989) study, *Retirement and marital satisfaction,* it was found that husband and wife retirement transitions influence wives' marital satisfaction. Older wives who continue to work after their husbands' retirement present the lowest levels of marital satisfaction among the women. Piña and Bengtson (1995) also found that lack of spousal support leads to wives' lower marital happiness and increased depression. In addition, they found that one's subjective beliefs and structural conditions shape the symbolic meaning on their household labor.

Financial Status

Whereas women's participation in the labor market has increased, their occupational profile continues to reflect job segregation and discrimination. Women earn less than men throughout their lives, which continues in retirement due to wage-based public and private pensions. Most feminist scholars assert that inequities in the retirement resources of women present women's assigned roles and interrupted work histories, discrimination, full-time employment pattern, and work polices that are neither family-responsive or family-friendly (Browne, 1998; Cruikshank, 2003; Ovrebo & Minkler, 1993; Skucha & Bernard, 2000).

The major source of income for older adults in the U.S. is Social Security. According to Alaska's 1994 report, 95% of older adults receive Social Security benefits. Women's retirement income provided by Social Security is lower than that of men because of discriminative pension polices. The U.S. House Select Committee on Aging noted issues that affect Social Security benefits (United States House Select Committee on Aging, 1992): (a) Since the system assumes that retirees are male wage earners, their wives, dually entitled as both workers and dependents, rarely collect their own worker benefits, (b) Caregiving is not credited in the Social Security benefit calculations, (c) One's pension based on employment that is not covered by Social Security is reduced by Social Security (thus, female-dominated professions such as small businesses and homemade crafts receive fewer benefits), (d) A spouse or window of a retired government worker receives two-thirds of the value of the government pension. In addition, several feminist scholars discovered that women's marital status had a significant effect on the retirement resources of women (Choudhury & Leonesio, 1997; Gregoire, Kilty, & Richardson, 2002; Ozawa & Lum, 1998). Marital status is a great determinant of poverty for women because it often is the main eligibility criteria for Social Security and pension benefits. According to

Ozawa and Lum's findings, divorced or separated women were in the most vulnerable economic situation in old age.

Caregiving

Caregiving is a frequently debated issue by feminist gerontologists since most paid and unpaid caregivers are women. Caregiving covers everything including activity and experience from usual help for relatives or friends who are unable to provide for themselves to 24-hour total care for a person (Browne, 1998; Cruikshank, 2003). The meaning of the care that women provide to their family and friends varies according to class and ethnicity (Calasanti & Zajicek, 1993). In addition, several trends have significantly changed the definition and practice of caregiving, including longer lives, smaller families, delayed childbirth, higher divorce rates, an increasing number of women in the labor market, and devolution of government (Browne, 1998; Cruikshank, 2003). Increasing numbers of older people, especially over 85 year of age, and the cutbacks in federal funding and the privatization of care have influenced older women as caregivers (Browne, 1998; Hooyman & Gonyea, 1999).

Feminist scholars note that caregiving is invisible and devalued in society. The productivity of older women as caregivers is invisible due to the belief that caregiving is a part of women's nature. Thus, most caregiving that women provide is not converted into economic value. Hooyman (1990) argues that women's caregiving is understood not as paid labor but as "emotionally binding work" (p. 229) and "thereby perpetuates their powerlessness" (Hooyman, 1990, 221-22). Moreover, some scholars assert that caregiving work results in older women's financial suffering. Caring takes them away from the workforce entirely or forces them to do lower wage work. If women are involved in child care before caring for an older adult, they may not be able to be an active part of the (paid) work force for many years, which impacts their

financial security in old age (Phillips, 2000, p. 56). Cuts in women's Social Security benefits also make caregiving a financially risky activity for women since such work is not considered official work by the government and society as mentioned above (Browne, 1998; Hooyman, 1990; Phillips, 2000). According to Rimer (1999 cited in Cruikshank, 2003), the financial loss in wages and Social Security benefits is considerable. Feminist scholars contend that although women sacrifice not only their time and energy but their future's financial security, this huge sacrifice is taken for granted. Phillips (2000) notes that "this particular exploitation of women is not as dramatic as unequal pay or domestic violence, but it contributes to their subjugation" (p. 56).

Caregiver studies have been conducted from a psychological perspective. Existing literature highlights the psychological difficulties that caregivers experience. Caregivers do emotional work as well as chores and tasks (Cruikshank, 2003, p. 125). If women work and care together, they experience "depression, emotional stress, anxiety, financial strain and the use of vacation time to care for others" (Phillips, 2000), p. 47). Phillips (2000) asserts that this psychological illness experienced by women who have the dual roles of employee and caregiver is affected by a human resource perspective. She notes:

> Recent studies taking a human resource perspective have concentrated on the negative effect that caregiving has on productivity (Help the Aged, 1994). Such negatives include losing concentration on the job, tiredness at work, having to take time off, arriving late and leaving early from work (Phillips, 2000, p. 46)… On a personal level, such problems leave caregivers feeling guilty and worried about their job security. Feelings of dependency, and of not wanting to burden colleagues, leads to missed opportunities for promotion and restricted job opportunities (Phillips, 2000, pp. 46-47)

On the other hand, if they leave a paid job to provide home care, women feel hopeless and powerless. For many women, paid work is related to "independence and control over resources, as well as being recognized as something other than a caregiver" (Phillips, 2000, p. 43). There are many empirical studies about caring for elderly parents. For example, Abel (1989) notes that caregivers often feel lonely and lose a sense of control over their life (p. 75), and

Archbold (1983), in her study, found that caring for dependent parent results in unresolved resentment, anger and frustration (p. 43). Brandler (1998) examined the mother-daughter conflict between the increased dependence of the mother and daughter's social needs.

Despite these problems, at the same time, there are some studies that found there are emotional and psychological benefits possible in the role. Altschuler (2001) conducted open-ended interview to 53 older women, aged 55-84 years old. In her study, the participants reported that caring activities make them more self-protective over the life course. Eckert and Shulman (1996), in their study *Daughters caring for their aging mothers*, found that the women see caring for their parents as an opportunity for recognizing their parental shortcomings and achieving better adaptation. Cruikshank (2003) points out that the women in the studies with positive findings are motivated "by emotional bonds, a need to help others, reluctance to turn to community resources or institutions, and the unavailability of other family members" (p. 125). However, Doty, Jackson, and Crown (1998) argue that these result from the "ethic of care" that still strongly influences women. Rizza (1998) concluded that women provide care because their family role "leads them to see few alternatives" (p 68 cited in Cruikshank, 2003, p. 125).

Child care is the type of caregiving that has recently drawn researchers' attention in a gerontological study (Eckert & Shulman, 1996; Hall, 1999; M. Ray, 2000). Many older women take care of their grandchildren when their children cannot raise their children (Minkler, Roe, & Price, 1993). Although it is true that most grandmothers enjoy the time that they spend with their grandchildren, at the same time, for many grandmothers, the demands of parenting have caused physical, emotional, and financial stress. Many older women feel that they are far behind since many reduce or quit their social activities or job due to their parenting duties (Williams, 2003). As with other types of caregiving that are provided by older women, they are often expected to provide child care without compensation, and the current system does not fund it. Thus, Browne (1998) asserts that child care also has numerous implications for older women (p. 18).

Chapter 3

Informal Learning and the Cultural-historical Activity Theory

Recently, in Russia, Europe, North America, and Australia many theorists and researchers have been interested in the Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (CHAT). Philosophers, psychologists, anthropologists and linguists, as well as educators, seek to apply the CHAT to their work. This may be because the CHAT provides such a wide scope of analysis and serves as a clarifying descriptive tool for human activity.

Although there are lots of theories related to learning, they seem to have common defects. Most theories assume that the unit of analysis of learning is the individualized subject and the process of learning is to construct and internalize knowledge and experience from outside into his/her mind (Knowles, 1970; Mezirow, 1991; Vygotsky, 1978). The influence of this individual and cognitive approach to learning really is considerable. Many adult education theorists, as well as school-centered theorists, also accept—consciously or unconsciously--this basic assumption of learning as the individualized action or the cognitive process. However, these individualized and cognitive centered learning theories have limits. They cannot explain the relationship between learning and development and between individual and social development (Brown, 1982; Engeström, 1987).

Informal learning may be a learning practice in the middle of these limits. Informal learning is simply defined as the type of learning that is not formally organized, but rather, it is an implicit and complex phenomenon interweaving the individual with social factors that involve a lot of interaction between people. In adult education, informal learning has been ignored or unrecognized since the phenomenon has not been illustrated clearly and it has been difficult to assess in empirical investigation (Sawchuk, 2003b). That is, there was not a theory to recognize it as learning and a means to research it.

Recently, the CHAT has become the center of discussion on learning. The basic assumption of this theory is that learning is an activity based on the dialectical relationship among the subject, means, the object, the rule, community, and the division of labor (Engeström, 1987). The CHAT offers a set of concepts for describing that activity, as well as a set of perspectives on human activity. This may be exactly what traditional learning theories struggle to understand and may describe the relationship between learning and development and between individual and social development and serve as an alternative learning theory for informal leaning research. However, it still remains unclear about how to apply this theory to the analysis of various learning practices. However, Engeström (1993) notes that the activity theory does not offer ready-made techniques and procedures for research; rather, its conceptual tools must be concretized according to the specific nature of the object under scrutiny. This room for discovery may be the CHAT's other attraction for researchers.

This study is to explore the possibility of the CHAT as a powerful tool to help more effectively realize and study comprehensive informal learning practices. The first section investigates informal learning in the field of adult education. To do so, the definition of informal learning and the key distinction of informal learning will be examined. Furthermore, how informal learning has been researched in adult education in terms of adult learning theory will also be traced in order to reveal the inadequacy of the traditional adult learning theories for informal learning research. Next, the CHAT is investigated. In this section, the theories of three major figures--Vygotsky, Leont'ev, and Engeström and the key principles of the CHAT. The maid theoretical concern with the CHAT is examined. After that, the CHAT, as an alternative tool to observe and analyze informal learning, is proposed.

Informal Learning in the Field of Adult Education

Before discussing how to apply the CHAT to informal learning, in this section, I briefly review informal learning in the field of adult education. First, I define informal learning and identify the key distinction of informal learning. Then I examine how adult education has investigated informal learning in terms of adult learning theory.

Informal Learning

Informal learning, in general, refers to the type of learning that is not formally organized, although there has been theoretical confusion among adult learning researchers (D. W. Livingstone, 2001). Eraut (2004) defines informal learning as "implicit, unintended, opportunistic and unstructured learning and (in) the absence of a teacher" (p. 250). Livingstone (2001) separates informal learning into intentional informal learning and tacit forms of learning. Intentional informal learning has, as its name says, a relatively planned subject and goal of learning. For example, we often acquire a significant understanding or skill in relation to our research from colleagues outside the classroom. On the other hand, tacit learning is any activity that involves obtaining certain knowledge from everyday activities we get through perceptions or general socialization. It is understood as a social/collective phenomenon involving a lot of interaction between people and artifacts and people and people. For example, a daughter learns about the gender role given to a woman by family or social system from her mother through their everyday activities or perceptions interrelated between a mother and a daughter.

The key distinction of informal learning

Informal learning is a collective/social phenomenon. Social engagement with others is a crucial part of the knowledge acquisition process since it involves interaction between people and artifacts and people and people. For example, in *Hidden Knowledge* (D. W. Livingstone & Sawchuk, 2003), Livingstone and Sawchuk show that working people continue to get together with neighbors and friends to engage in various issues. People intentionally or unintentionally learn something ranging from using the computer to caring for older people, parenting, and the secret of success in everyday life when participating in ceremonial activities or the various day-to-day interrelationships between parents, friends, and bosses.

Informal learning has a holistic nature. Even though researchers observe a part of a performance, it is just a period broken down into successive phases. When talking about the experience regarding informal learning, we may talk about our accumulated learning from a series of episodes. Livingston (2001) argues that learning constitutes a "seamless web" (D. W. Livingstone, 2001) in our lives. Each of us is embedded in a continuous flow of experience throughout our lives. Thus, it is impossible for most of us to distinguish informal learning activities as a discrete experience.

There are processes of social differentiation within the informal learning process (Sawchuk, 2002). Sawchuk (2000) notes that people have different experiences according to their standpoint in the social world and the distribution of material and cultural resources. In this process, informal learning plays an important role as a mediated system of participation. Their participation reproduces patterns that define major social divisions and can also generate new changes.

Informal learning in the Traditional Learning Theories

In the field of adult education, informal learning has been ignored or unrecognized since the phenomenon has not been shown clearly, and it has been difficult to assess in empirical investigation (Sawchuk, 2003b). Eraut (2004) points out three difficulties in conducting such research: (1) informal learning is largely invisible, because much of it is either taken for granted or not recognized as learning; thus, respondents lack awareness about their own learning; (2) the resultant knowledge is either tacit or regarded as part of a person's general capability, rather than something that has been learned; and (3) discourse about learning is dominated by codified, propositional knowledge, so respondents often find it difficult to describe more complex aspects of their work and the nature of their expertise (p. 249). Moreover, at times, it takes a considerable amount of time to explicate the complex phenomenon.

However, interest in informal learning has increased for several reasons. It permits learners flexibility or freedom. Learners have a relatively large amount of autonomy to determine if and when they engage in informal learning activities, in contrast to the greater power, resource and prerequisite constraints involved in formal course participation (D. W. Livingstone & Sawchuk, 2003). It became prominent with social constructionism, which argues that all knowledge, including taken-for-granted common sense knowledge of everyday reality, is drawn from and maintained by social interactions (Berger & Luckmann, 1967). Adult educators recognize the significance of learning gained through interaction with other people. Likewise, they come to see the learning that takes place in everyday activities as well as in broad situations (such as in the workplace) rather than just in formal education environments. It can also support learning from experience (Eraut, 2004).

Knowles (1970), who developed the concept of andragogy, opens up the research on this subject. Knowles argues that every individual is involved in continual learning activities and that

these activities take place outside an institution. According to Knowles, adults are autonomous

beings and their learning occurs within a developmental and social context. Although he draws

adult education into the field of education and mentions informal learning beyond the realm of

institutional control, he never mentions tacit and collectively led learning.

This perspective inspired the empirical research initiated by Tough (1971) on self-

directed learning projects. Tough is one of the scholars most closely identified with theorizing

about autonomous, informal, and self-directed adult learning (Percy, Burton, & Withnall, 1994).

He considers adult learning as the way in which adults transform themselves through self-directed

learning. After his work, many studies were done in order to document the actual self-directed

learning activities in which people generally engage. However, as Sawchuk (2002) points out,

although his research includes the massive extent to which adults learn outside a formalized

setting, he does not deal with the issues associated with class, gender, and race. In addition, tacit

learning is eliminated since he just focuses on learning in formal settings.

Mezirow's (1991, 2000) transformative learning has been employed numerous times as a

theoretical framework to explain adult learning in adult education research. Mezirow (2000)

considers learning as interpreting one's experiences to guide future actions. According to

Mezirow, learning occurs through critical reflection on individual experiences in communicating

with others. His work has made most people recognize their mundane activities as significant

informal learning. Similar to the work of Knowles and Tough, however, learning has still been

discussed as an individual event within a given context. Mezirow neither recognizes the nature of

individual experience constructed in the historical and sociocultural context nor separates

collective and social transformation from individual transformation (Taylor, 1998). Moreover, by

requiring a lofty level of an ability to reason (engaging in reflective discourse with others), adult

learning came to stand apart from the real learning that occurred in everyday life or through

relationships (Merriam, 2004; Sawchuk, 2003a).

Freire's notion of *conscientization* expands the contexts in which adult learning takes place. He understands learning as being rooted in social practices in the concrete world (Freire & Macedo, 1987 p. 52). Freire reveals the power dynamics grounded in race, gender, class, and religion and relates them to learning. However, *conscientization* does not provide a means of making visible the actual social nature of the learning that occurs in everyday life (Sawchuk 2002, p. 36).

The Cultural-Historical Activity Theory

In this section, I briefly review the CHAT. First, I describe the theoretical development of the CHAT. Then key principles of the CHAT are detailed. In final sub section, I examine the main theoretical concern with the CHAT.

The Theoretical Development of the CHAT

Recently the CHAT has been noted as a way to theorize informal learning. What characteristics of the CHAT correspond to informal learning research? To answer this question, I will seek to understand the CHAT. First, in this section, I will trace the theoretical development of the CHAT, focusing on three major theorists, Vygotsky, Leont'ev, and Engeström.

The Beginning of the CHAT Approach to Learning: Vygotsky

The first generation of activity theory emerged from Vygotsky's works. Before Vygotsky's ideas, cognitivism was the dominant theory of learning. Cognitivism based on the dichotomy between the subject and the object considers learning as the cognitive process that

focuses on the internalization of knowledge. This tradition is faced with two dilemmas: the relationship between learning and development and the relationship between individual and social development (Brown, 1982; Engeström, 1987).

Vygotsky suggests a mediating factor to fill the gap revealed between these two dilemmas (Vygotsky, 1981). He puts forward tool and sign as mediating instruments in human activity (see the left triangle in Figure 3-1). The tool is externally oriented and serves as the conductor of human influence on the object of activity. That is, humans use technical or material tools in order to master and overcome nature. This activity is conducted outside of the human mind. The sign is a psychological tool that is used in regulating internal mental behavior. They are devices for cooperation and communication with others. The tool includes both technique and material.

Vygotsky notes that humans have signs to overcome limitations by concrete contextual factors. This focus on representational tools reflects the basic difference between simple and higher mental functioning. Higher mental functioning, which is distinctive to humans, is mediated by tools and by sign systems such as natural language (Cole, 1996, p. 20.) Vygotsky asserts that higher mental functioning in the individual is rooted in social life. He says, "[The higher mental functions of] composition, genetic structure, and means of action [forms of mediation]—in a word, their whole nature—is social. Even when we turn to mental [internal] processes, their nature remains quasi-social. In their own private sphere, human beings retain the functions of social interaction" (Vygotsky, 1981, p.164). According to this view, in order to understand the individual, it is necessary to understand the social relations in which the individual exists. He said, "The social dimension of consciousness is primary in time and in fact. The individual dimension of consciousness is derivative and secondary" (Vygotsky, 1979 cited in Wertsch, 1991, p. 13).

The general theme that runs throughout Vygotsky's formulation of a sociocultural approach is the claim that higher mental functioning and human action are mediated by tools and signs (Cole, 1996). Tools and signs as the mediation can be understood only when we consider historical and cultural contexts because they are affected by the change of history and culture (Engeström, 1987). Vygotsky focus on psychological tools such as human language. He believes that human communicative practices bring about mental functioning in the individual. This idea has an important implication since it seeks to overcome the traditional dichotomy between the individual and the societal construct. The introduction of cultural artifacts, so-called mediation, enables us to understand learning with a cultural-historical approach. However, Vigotsky still remains within the boundaries of intellectualist bias since he gives a somewhat one-sided emphasis on sign and word meaning (Engeström, 1987).

Activity as the Collective work: Leont'ev

Leont'ev's work is representative of the second generation (Engeström, 1987; Sawchuk, 2002). In his famous example of "a primeval collective hunt" (Leont'ev, 1981, pp. 210-213), he establishes the differences between an individual action and a collective activity. Leont'ev argues that an individual action is not sufficient as a unit of the analysis of a tool-mediated action since mediating cultural tools include broader social dimensions of practice. Thus, Leont'ev proposes activity as the molar unit of analysis. Actions serve as the collective motive of the activity system, and at the same time, they are themselves constituted by embodied operations. He explicates key terms of the basic activity theory approach: activity, subject, object, actions, objects and actions relations, operations, central technical focus, goal and tools (Leont'ev, 1974). (See Sawchuk, 2002, p. 41).

Another important contribution of Leont'ev is that he explicates that activity is based on material production focusing on the concrete, situated, and procedural nature of the activity. Motives of activity that have such an origin are conscious motives. They do not become conscious, however, of themselves, automatically. This requires a certain, special activity, some special act. This is an act of reflecting on the relation of the motive of a given, concrete activity to the motive of a wider activity, that realizes a broader, more general life relation that includes the given, concrete activity (Leont'ev, 1981, p. 238). Leont'ev's conceptualization of activity provides "the means to analyze everyday learning systematically with or without reference to conscious reflection" (Sawchuk, 2002, p. 41).
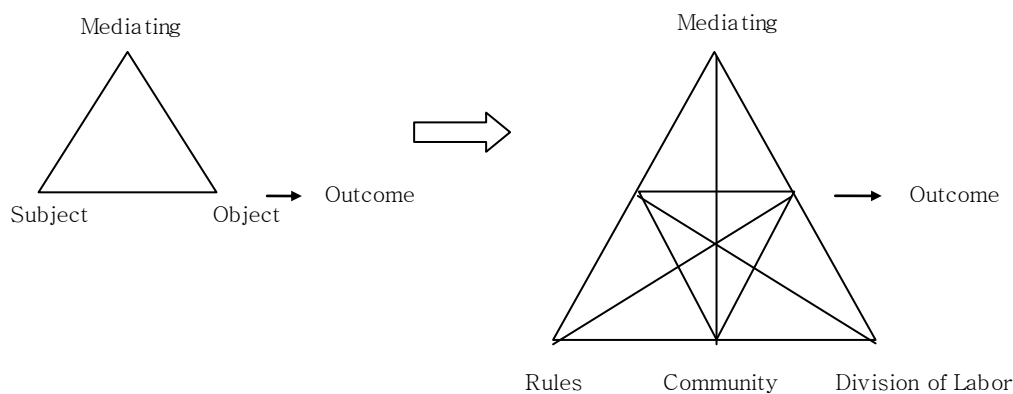
Figure 3-1. A classical model (left) and a complex model (right) of an activity theory triangle

Findings on the Role of Contradiction in Activity System: Engeström

Today's activity theory, called the third generation, has transcended its originals. As Sawchuk (2002) points out, Engeström centers on the most recent development of the CHAT. He puts together the tradition of the cultural-historical approach from Vygotsky to Leont'ev, theories on the transformation from an individual development to a collective development, and develops theoretical frameworks to show expansive learning across systems (see Figure 3-1).

Engeström (1987) visualizes Leont'ev's expanded model from Vygotsky's original

activity theory triangle. Likewise, he adds three components: rules, community, and division of

labor in order to expand the role of mediating cultural tools into broader social dimensions of

practice. As the complex model of an activity theory triangle exhibits above, activity theory is

composed of several basic elements: subject, object, mediating artifacts or tools, outcomes, rules,

community, and the division of labor. The components of the system are continually changed by

mutual reciprocal action.

> *The subject* represents the individual or group whose agency is chosen as the point of view in the analysis (Engeström, 1994).

> *The object* refers to the concrete activity held by the subject, giving the activity system a specific direction. It determines the possible goals of individual actions and is the space at which the activity is transformed into outcomes.

> *Mediating artifacts or tools* is a means by which one acts in one's activity system. From the CHAT perspective, tools include psychological tools as well such as speech, sign systems, cultural models, and art (Cole, 1996; Vygotsky, 1978). As I mentioned above, Vygotsky sets tools apart from signs. Wartofsky (1979) identifies three interrelated levels of artifacts. Primary artifacts include concrete tools such as hammers. Secondary artifacts are representations or modes of action for preserving and transmitting the acquired skills and information. Tertiary artifacts refer to imaginative perceptual models or general ideas such as habitual and unquestioned rules. As I pointed out above, all artifacts have intrinsically unstable characteristics. Each of these mediating artifacts in the system and the relations between them change during activity. The activity system incessantly reconstructs itself as well. Furthermore, an activity system has multiple mediations. The subject and the object are mediated by instruments including symbols and representations of various kinds (Engeström, 1999c, p. 66).

> *The outcomes* are the goals established for the object by the subject. These outcomes are susceptible to demands and expectations of external activity systems and are achieved through mediating artifacts.

> *The rules* refer to the literary or tacit regulations, procedures and customs which guide the actions within the activity system.

> *The community* is the collection of individuals or groups who have also shared the same object.

> *The division of labor* denotes both the horizontal and the vertical division of tasks between the actors (Engeström, 1993, p. 67). That is, it refers to the division of

task and the status relations between actors. It designates different roles to actors in the activity system. Rules, community, and division of labor are relatively less visible social mediators of activity. It is not easy to attain data in reference to these three elements due to the methodological difficulty (Engeström, 1999a).

Activity theorists before Engeström sought to investigate the development of consciousness focusing on the psychological impacts of organized activity and the social conditions in the practical social activity setting. In the third generation the attempt to link individual development to collective development emerged. The CHAT views developmental transformations as attempts to reorganize the activity system to resolve its inner contradictions. Engeström (1987) argues that development can only occur when the unit of analysis is expanded to the collective activity system.

Engeström regards "ways out of internal contradictions" (Cole & Engeström, 1993, p. 40)" as "a motive force of change and development" (Engeström, 1999d, p. 9) that result in a more culturally advanced activity system. When a new object of the activity system as a novel solution to the present tensions is projected, a zone of proximal development is constructed between the present and foreseeable future (Engeström, 1987). Engeström notes, "It is the distance between the present everyday actions of the individuals and the historically new form of the societal activity that can be collectively generated as a solution to the double bind potentially embedded in the everyday actions" (Engeström, 1987, p. 174). In this process of the development and evolution of the system, discourse plays a major role. Engeström (1994) asserts that "mutual formation of ideas" would be impossible without sustained communication and using other mediating artifacts (1994, p. 45). Furthermore, he visualizes collective activity systems, combing individual action and collective activity. Four steps are identified in an expansive visibilization: (1) to reveal and analyze contradictions and innovations, (2) to model activity systems, (3) to design new solutions to the contradictions, and (4) to monitor and revise new solutions (Engeström, 1999c, p. 68)

The third generation of the CHAT is interested in complex interrelations which exist in cross-cultural research (Engeström, 2001). He expands the second generation activity theory model into the model including minimally two interacting activity systems. In this model, the object moves from the given activity to a collectively meaningful object constructed by the activity system, and to a potentially shared or jointly constructed object (Engeström, 2001, p. 136). In networks of activity systems it may come to be a critical issue to understand dialogue and multiple perspectives.

Key Principles of the CHAT

The CHAT argues that consciousness is not a set of disembodied cognitive acts that occurs in the brain. Rather, consciousness is located in everyday practice. Likewise, the CHAT connects individual development to collective development. Thus, two dilemmas that traditional learning theories encountered--between development and learning and between individual and social development—have been resolved. In this section, I will summarize the key principles of the CHAT drawing on Engeström's work (2001).

First, the unit of analysis of the CHAT is the entire activity system. Individual or group actions function relatively well by themselves, but are inferior units of analysis (Engeström, 1999c). Researchers using the CHAT bring together the individual and individuals or a group and groups using mediational tools in local contexts. Second, activity systems get transformed over time. Thus, their development or problems have to be investigated by concrete historical analysis (Engeström, 1999a). History is revealed within a local history of the activity and their objects and theoretical ideas and mediating artifacts that have shaped the activity (Engeström, 199a, p. 136). Third, inner contradiction is the source of change of the activity system. Disruptions, contradictions, and tensions are historically accumulated between opposing forces within an

activity system and outside of them. In this way, they are differentiated from general conflicts. Disruptions, contradictions, and tensions call for new solutions, which lead to transformations in the system and of the system itself. Fourth, there is multi-voicedness in an activity system. The subject of an activity system engages in collaborative work having its own diverse histories. Thus, an activity system comes to be a system of "multipoints of view, traditions and interests" (Engeström, 199a, p. 136). Different positions for the participants are generated in the division of labor in an activity system. Engeström (1999a) notes "the activity system itself carries multiple layers and stands of history engraved in its artifacts, rules and conventions" (Engeström, 1999b, p. 136). This perspective allows researchers to examine the process of power, that is, where power is built up and maintained by some and denied to others based on characteristics such as race, gender, age, sexual preference, and social class (Engeström, 1999d p. 382). The artifact-mediated construction of objects does not happen in a harmonious manner. It is a collaborative and dialogical process in which different perspectives (Holland & Reeves, 1996) and voices (Engeström, 1999b; Sawchuk, 2002) meet, collide, and merge. Fifth, activity systems move through *the expansive cycle* (Engeström, 1999a) of qualitative transformations. The expansive cycle begins with individual subjects questioning the accepted practice, and it gradually expands into a collective movement or institution (Engeström, 1999d). The cyclic transformations allow for analysis of the activity system in terms of formation and resolution of internal contradictions in activity systems (Engeström, 1999a, p.33). Finally, the CHAT is based on a "dialectical theory of knowledge and thinking, focused on the creative potential in human cognition" (Engeström, 1999d p. 383). It moves from abstract thinking to concrete thinking. This dialectical thinking enables researchers to capture the smallest and simplest truths, the germ of the whole functionally interconnected system.

The Main Theoretical Concern with the CHAT

It is not easy to grasp the CHAT's theoretical concerns since there are several versions of the CHAT, along with scholars' theoretical inclinations and the CHAT's interdisciplinary characteristics. Moreover, it is because that the CHAT is still evolving and developing. In this section, I seek to identify some of the main theoretical concerns with the CHAT.

First, the CHAT needs to elaborate more on collective subjects. Most researchers agree that the CHAT can be employed to group or organization subjects. Engeström (1987) proposes the activity be interwoven with the individual, the object, and the community. However, he does not mention the aspects of activity theory related to group subjects. Kaptelinin (1996) points out that "the specific conceptual system necessary for analysis of social systems is still under discussion" (p. 63). Leont'ev (1978) argues that two or more activities can temporarily merge and then motivate the same action, if the goal of one action is appropriate for reaching the motives of all of the activities simultaneously. It is not necessary that all component subjects share the motive of the system they are incorporated into, but the goals of the subjects should permit various motivations of individual component of the subject. If this principle is applied to a group, the CHAT is unable to show how to combine the groups' motive and goal and his or her own motives and goals in the collective subjects. This is related to the issue that Davydov (1999) presents, how collective subjects and individual subjects are interconnected in activity systems. Lektorsky (1980) argues that collective subjects exist outside of individual subjects. Yet, as Davydov (1999) points out, splitting into two subjects pulls down some totality of an activity system and entails many subsidiary problems such as how to divide activities into personal levels and collective ones. Kaptelinin (1996) asserts that this is a limitation of the CHAT since the activity theory was mainly developed as a psychological theory of individual activity. The CHAT

needs to clarify the relationship between collective and individual subject through a more inclusive analysis.

Second, the CHAT does not mention how to deal with psychic processes such as perception, imagination, memory, feelings, and will. Are they the components of the general structure activity along with motives, problems, and actions or activity itself? I think that it depends on understanding the term *activity*. For example, in psychology, the psychic process can be considered as an activity, but many sociologists may understand it as motives or problems. As Davydov (1999) notes, it may not be problematic when specific components of a general activity structure promote the realization of its other components (p. 45). Yet, when we investigate some integral activity such as play, art and learning, we may be faced with a difficulty.

Third, although the CHAT recognizes and involves culture, values, memory, perception, identity, motivation, and personal meaning in its conceptual system of activity theory, it does not describe all these comprehensive phenomena. Due to this omission, some philosophers and psychologists have criticized the CHAT, believing that it considers human beings behind "planes, orders, and standards imposed from outside" (Lektorsky, 1999, p. 65). It focuses on only the issues related to a rational understanding of human interaction with the world. This is definitely the CHAT's strength, compared with traditional learning theory, but on the other hand, it may also be the CHAT's limitation.

The CHAT as a Powerful Tool to Observe and Analyze Informal Learning

As I reviewed the traditional adult learning theories above, I realized they are insufficient to apply to informal learning for several reasons. First, most individual biased theories do not allow researchers to show collective and social aspects of informal learning. Moreover, learning theories that rely on reflected experiences can distort informal learning conducted in social

context. Although Freire's notion of *conscientization* draws upon the issue of diversities in informal learning, it fails to propose a method to show the diversities.

In the CHAT, learning is a collective/social activity. It is a process of engaging with others using available artifacts such as language and technologies in a practical activity. Simultaneously, it is connected to social practices and also makes it possible for the subject to find the means to go beyond given possibilities. The formation of human activity is also the beginning of personality. Thus, the CHAT may be able to explicitly disclose informal learning as a collective/social phenomenon and explain a social change generated in everyday practices.

The CHAT considers learning as a form of historical human activity (Engeström, 1987; Vygotsky, 1978). Vygotsky (1978) argues that learning is a sociocultural rather than simply a cognitive phenomenon. Learning does not occur simply in people's minds. It is an activity that exists within continuously changing time and social relations. Thus, it becomes possible to examine the holistic, accumulated, participatory characters of informal learning. From the CHAT perspective, mastery and skills are viewed in terms of the degrees of being an insider, of the continued production and reproduction of oneself as a member of a particular community and of constituting the relevant practices that are valued there (Sfard, 1998).

The CHAT is a system of multipoints of view. It acknowledges and analyzes different positions for the participants in an activity system. Most adult learning theories, except those of Freire, do not help us understand the social class dimensions of learning practices associated with opportunities for individual and social transformation. The CHAT recognizes learning as both a differentiated and differentiating practice. It is able to examine the possibility of competing standpoints and conflicting cultural formations in informal learning. For example, Sawchuk (2002) researched the learning of working class people from their standpoint using the CHAT. He found that they have great learning capacities and gain knowledge or skills through informal learning and tacit knowledge. Working class people's learning and learning capacities have been

denied or degraded within most formal education and adult education institutions (Livingstone & Sawchuk, 2005) since many working class people neither have a formal degree nor participate in formal education programs.

The CHAT is a developmental theory that seeks to explain qualitative changes in human practices. Through the conceptual tools that I mentioned above, the CHAT explains individual and societal development. It allows the researcher to investigate the input, process and outcome of changes in activity. Traditional learning theories investigate the processes in which people are involved, but they do not reveal the results of learning in informal learning. This may be one of the reasons that informal learning is degraded and ignored. Yet, the CHAT is able to show the whole process of informal learning from the input to outcome. Through the CHAT researchers can verify the learning capacities of informal learning.

Chapter 4

Methods

This chapter describes my research methods and is composed of four sections. In the first section, I describe the research methods that I employed in this study. In the second section, I describe the research site and the target group of this study and explain how I selected the participants in the group. In the third section, data collection is detailed, and I explain how I utilized participant observations and interviews as data collection methods. Although there were areas of overlap when collecting data, in this chapter, I separate these areas in order to describe the techniques of gathering data. The last section is devoted to data analysis.

Ethnographic Approach from the Life-course Perspective

My study examines what older women have learned through their everyday activities as they have aged. Older women have obtained new knowledge and skills through their involvement in various activities and interactions in daily life. This type of learning is usually invisible and is understood as a social phenomenon. In examining this invisible learning, some educationists influenced by social constructionism observe social interactions like these within the research setting, focusing on the social structure that generates new knowledge and skills (Sawchuk, 2000; D. W. Livingstone, 2001). Based on this perspective, to explore the informal learning that takes place in older women's daily lives, this study examines activities and interactions that the participants have performed within a natural setting. For this research, ethnography is an appropriate approach to describe what goes on in the older women's everyday lives and to reveal the social structure that determines their behaviors.

Ethnography is, in basic terms, defined as "the art and science of describing a group or culture" (Fetterman, 1997, p.1). Yet, as Delamont (1992) notes, ethnography does not just depict a culture, but rather, it is an understanding about how a particular cultural process is developed and sustained. Wertsch (2000)'s and Singleton's ideas help make the "cultural process" clear. Wertsch (2000) defines culture as the recurring social practices and their artifacts that provide order, purpose, and continuity to social life. Singleton (1974) distinguishes that there are two parts to the cultural process: "enculturation, the process of generational continuity, and acculturation, the process of individual and group change, caused by contact with various cultural systems" (p. 27). The ethnographic approach is also a useful method for investigating socially subordinated groups such as women and older people. Ethnography admits that there can be no "value-neutral account of a culture and its ways" (Denzin, 1997, p. 512) so that it can provide researchers with a critical perspective in describing and interpreting the way of life of a group. In this study, from a feminist perspective, social inequities related to gender and age in Korean society are revealed.

Another methodology is needed in order to obtain experiences through which the individual undergoes as she ages. Aging occurs from birth to death and is understood as the continuously changing product of the interaction of the individual and social process. In this study, I introduced the life-course perspective into an ethnographic study in order to explain how women's lives and family relations change as they age. The life-course perspective is a method or approach that focuses on the interplay between an individual's life and how the situation is connected to others' lives (Kertzer, 1991). It has developed as a subfield of sociology in order to describe the roles, activities, and status of an individual in relation to changing social, cultural, and economic circumstances (Shanahan & Porfelli, 2002). It has been the preferred method of feminists since it shares two assumptions with a feminist age perspective: first, that aging involves a biological, psychological, and social process, and second, that earlier lives are firmly

attached to diverse phenomena in old age. Feminist scholars have applied the life-course

perspective to their studies on the lives of aging women in order to find the forces that shape

individual aging experiences beyond women's location and age-related inequality (Browne,

1998). Browne (1998) notes that the life-course perspective is an appropriate framework to

examine the lives of aging women and to conceive age issues from older women's voices (p.

149). In this study, I focused on the women' lives after marriage to the present time.

Selection and Sampling

I conducted this research in Seoul and the suburban areas around Seoul, South Korea

because of my familiarity with this location and the Korean language. I was born and grew up in

Seoul for 28 years, so I have, to some extent, recognized the tendencies, lifestyles, and speaking

styles that people who live in Seoul have. Although I have lived in the U.S since 2004, I have

kept myself aware of changes in South Korea since I go back to visit once a year, listen to the

latest Korean news on the web, and get updates from my family in South Korea. Therefore, I

have remained aware of current events in South Korea, which minimizes the fact that I have lived

away for several years. Moreover, there was merit to conducting the research in Korean. Since I

was comfortable communicating with the participants in my native language of Korean, it was

relatively easy to build rapport with them. Because of these reasons, I chose South Korea as the

research site; however, it was an inconvenience to be so far away from the site of my research.

Traveling from my university to Seoul is approximately a 13 hour flight, so I had to complete my

fieldwork in the short time I was in Seoul.

I selected the participants from a Korean "young older women" group between the ages

of 60-74. The "young older women" group is a culture-sharing group as a cohort born within the

same time span (Ebersole & Hess, 1998). As discussed in Chapter 2, each cohort has a different

view, and each individual within the cohort, to some extent, shares their values, beliefs, norms, and particular social events. In general, the "young older women" group is composed of women between the ages of 65-74 (Whitbourne, 2001, p. 8). In Korea, according to the Korean Social Welfare Law for the Elderly, people aged 65 and older demographically belong to the older population, but, traditionally, 60 years of age has been viewed as the entry point for old age in Korean society. This is the age at which a person becomes eligible to retire with full Social Security benefits, and many people retire between the ages of 50-60. According to the Korean family life cycle (Park, 2004), women between the ages of 55-60 usually become a grandmother. Thus, this study defines the "young older women" group as women who are between 60 to 74 years old.

I sampled members of my target group using a purposeful sampling strategy—ethnographers select the most appropriate members of a given group or site based on their selection criteria. To conduct purposive sampling, I used two selection criteria associated with family and health. First, the participants had to be married women who are not employed. Also, they had to have children. As discussed in Chapter 4, the Korean family system has strongly influenced the roles of women. There would be significant differences between married and unmarried women and between married women who have children and those who have no children. Second, they had to be older women who have experienced "normal or usual aging" in their later adulthood. Normal or usual aging is characterized by "adults who are (a) functioning well, but (b) are at increased risk for either life-threatening disease and/or serious impairment" (Friedrich, D. D., 2001, p. 140).

Initially, I selected fifteen participants among the friends of my parents, the parents of my close friends, and people recommended to me by my adult education colleagues. Before I left the U.S. for the study, I emailed and called my parents, friends, and colleagues in order to ask them to recommend potential candidates. From this information, I was able to create a list of potential

candidates, and then I called each individual in Korea, using the telephone script for research recruitment requests (see Appendix), in order to confirm they were willing to be interviewed and were able to contribute rich and valuable data for my study. Among the original fifteen people, I excluded two people from the study because of their unique situations after the first interview. For instance, one of them has suffered from her husband's morbid suspicion about her chastity since the early years of their marriage. Two people refused to participate in the study since they were reluctant to open up their private life to an acquaintance. Some seemed to feel comfortable since I, a researcher, was a daughter of their friend or a friend of their daughter, while others seemed to feel uncomfortable about that. At last, eleven people completed the whole research process, which included two or three follow-up interviews and observations.

Data Collection

Ethnographers engage in extensive work for a relatively long time in their "natural setting," called the "field." I carried out my research in the field from September 2007 to January 2008. Fetterman (1998) mentions that six months to one year or more is an ideal duration in the field to learn the language and observe social actions. Four months in the field was not enough for me to immerse myself into the culture, but I was able to find patterns of the actions of people under study in a given period of time since I was familiar with their language and culture. The first two weeks of my fieldwork were devoted to meeting the intermediaries who introduced the participants to me. Since this study was not about the culture which a designated community or organization shares, but about the culture of people who were born during a particular period, I recruited each participant through several intermediaries. I had five intermediaries: my father, mother-in-law, friend, and two colleagues. My father introduced me to two people, his college friends' wives. Four other people were my mother-in-law's old friends. They lived in the same

neighborhood for over 20 years. One person was my high school friend's mother, but I had not met her before. My two colleagues introduced me to four more people. Two people were the students whom one of my colleagues had taught in a "silver" (senior) college. There seemed to be a relatively close personal relationship between the instructor and the students. Another colleague referred me to the program coordinator of a public senior center in Seoul. The coordinator introduced me to two people who have participated in programs at the senior center. Except for the two people introduced to me by the program coordinator of the senior center, the intermediaries all had a close relationship with the participants whom they introduced to me. Their close relationship stretched out to me, a researcher. Thus, I did not need to prove myself to be a reliable person when making contacts with an individual. This created "a halo effect," as Fetterman (1998, p. 34) calls it. Moreover, a trusting relationship between the intermediaries and participants saved time normally needed to build rapport with the participants in the field. The participants seemed to view me as their daughter, daughter-in-law, or instructor according to the relationship they had with the intermediaries.

I needed another strategy to make contact with two people at the senior center. At the beginning of the data collection process, since the study was not on the senior center, but on individual experiences, I did not think that I would need to obtain organizational gatekeepers' permission to pursue the study. Yet, at the first meeting with the program coordinator of the senior center, in order to gain permission from the center director, I had to provide detailed information on the study: who I am, what study I will conduct, what questions I will ask in the interview, and what I will observe in the center. I gave the program coordinator a copy of the informed consent form, interview questions, and telephone script for the study and then was able to obtain the permission of the center director.

Participant Observation

Ethnographic research is characterized by participant observation, even if participant observation is not sufficient for defining ethnography (Adler & Adler, 1994; Angrosino & Mays de Pérez, 2000; Atkinson & Hammersley, 1994; Brewer, 2000; Fetterman, 1997). The purpose of participant observation is to discover complexity directly by participating in the world chosen for study. Observational techniques are categorized into non-participant and participant according to the role of the investigator in the setting. For this study, I employed participant observation. Yet when I observed learning activities which occurred in classes at the senior center, I had to use the non-participant technique since the center did not permit me to interact with people in the class. I just watched people and jotted down notes sitting in the back of a classroom.

In the beginning of my fieldwork, I had no definite plan for conducting observations in the field. Since age-related experiences or changes are not salient in daily life, it was hard to capture them by observation, especially short-term observation. To be honest, at that time, I was frustrated to find no concrete ideas for observation. As Fetterman (1988) mentions, it was completely "uncontrolled and haphazard" (p. 35). I began my participant observation with an interview. During the initial interview, I was aware that the participants do not recognize age-related experiences or changes in their everyday lives; only a researcher can find these things in their lives. I observed their daily lives. I listened to their life stories. This allowed me to grasp what goes on in their everyday lives. Older women usually do housework such as cooking, cleaning, and washing clothes in the morning and in the evening. During the daytime, they go out and spend time on social activities. Those who take care of grandchildren have a different daytime schedule from others. If they take care of a baby or toddler, they spend all day with their little grandchildren. However, those who take care of school-age children have time to themselves when the children go to preschool or school. Thus, I decided to observe three areas:

daily household chores/activities, social activities, and taking care of grandchildren. Among their

daily routine, I was not able to observe family time with adult children because of the difficulty of

identifying suitable times. The participants irregularly met their married children and their family

depending on their adult children's schedules or got together on a special day such as a father's

birthday and national holidays. In the case where a participant had lived with their single

children, the children came home from work at night. So I had no alternative but to interview

them to learn what goes on between the participants and their adult children.

Table 4-1 Observation

	Daily household chores	Social activities	Taking care of grandchildren
Participant observation	-Grocery shopping -Clean house in the evening	-Tea time with neighborhood -Lunch with friends -Activities in the senior center -Volunteering at church	-The participants' house -Daughter's house -Playground
Non-participant observation		-Learning Activity: Janggu (Korean drum) class and ping-pong class	

Once I arrived at the designated location for participant observation, I jotted down

context information: a description of the place, who and what I observed there, what they had

been doing, the clothing, hairstyle, and make-up of the participant, and so on. During my

observation, I watched and recorded the behavior of the observed person, interactions between

persons, and the routines taken for granted in the activity. I took part in activities as their

daughter. For example, when taking care of their grandchildren, I played the role of their

daughter. I talked with the participant about the difficulties that a working mother has while I was

playing with the children. But sometimes they seemed to refer me to their daughter-in-law. For

example, a person talked to me about the troubles she had with her daughter-in-law and defended herself in order to convince me. In the senior center, they regarded me as a teacher. After an intensive observation, I tried to note what I remembered as soon as possible. The notes that I jotted down before and after my observation became a good data resource in order to proceed with my fieldwork. Audio recordings and written field notes were used to turn what I saw and heard into concrete data.

Most of the actions that occurred in the observations were speech actions. I tried to take part in their conversations in as unobtrusive a manner as possible. Carspecken (1996) mentions that passive observation is the best way to take part in some activity at the beginning of participant observation to reduce the effects of researcher presence (p. 51). In this study, unobtrusive manner was employed as a strategy to participate in the activities and to maintain a relationship with participants. In Korea, older people do not like it when younger people speak their mind in their presence. Older Korean people seem to have the responsibility to provide exhortation to younger people under any situation. On the other hand, young people seem to have the responsibility to carefully listen to the advice that older people give. So, if you observe a conversation between the old and the young in Korea, you would realize the conversation is unilateral. Although I took a passive attitude in the activities, I was not completely ignored as a member of the activities by the participants. The participants always gave me a speech of exhortation when the participant observation came to an end. For example, they often told me, "You have to live together not with your father but with your parents-in-law even though your father lives alone."Their exhortation was a highly rewarding data source on social normative pressures that Korean married women have.

In addition to the intensive observations mentioned above, in order to see patterns of behavior that these women have, I also conducted observations at other sites in which activities were performed by Korean "young older women." I regularly attended women's Bible study at

my church. Whenever I found women over 60 in my daily life while conducting my fieldwork, regardless of the location, I observed them and jotted down notes. The subway, bus, grocery store, and church were all good places to observe women over 60.

Interview

A sizeable portion of the data was collected through interviews in ethnographic research (Merriam, 1998). Much of the data gathered in participant observation comes from informal interviewing in the field (Lofland, 1971). Ethnographers interview participants when they are interested in past events that they cannot directly observe or in the feelings, thoughts and intentions of participants (Merriam, 1998; Patton, 2002). Ethnographers usually choose an unstructured, open-ended, and in-depth approach. This flexible structure allows the researcher to focus on specific events that are of interest and can provide more "thick and rich data" than other types can (Fontana & Frey, 2000).

I interviewed 11 people introduced by the intermediaries. All of the 10 people consented to participant observation and a follow-up interview. Their ages ranged from 61 to 66 years old, and they were relatively healthy. None of them had ever been divorced, and all of them had had two or more children. They lived in a metropolitan area with their spouse or their spouse and children. With the exception of two people who did not want to reveal their level of education, all of the participants had a high school education or above. Judging from their reaction to the question, it was assumed that the two people who chose not to answer either had no school experience or completed only elementary school. Four of the 11 people had single children and three of the four people lived with adult children over the age of 30. Three people who perceived that their economic status to be "high" had enough personal assets to support their married children. Five people who classified their economic status as "average" had personal assets or

pensions for the present and the future which were inadequate to support their children and to live comfortably in their later years. Two people who identified themselves as poor ("low") had regular income to make a living for the present but had no financial security for the future.

I conducted the interviews two or three times at locations selected by the interviewees. Most of the interviews were conducted at the homes of the interviewees, on the playground, or at the Catholic Church near their homes. Two interviews were conducted at the lobby of the senior center. I provided free beverages in order to help make the interviewee feel more relaxed. Each interview lasted a maximum of two hours and was audio-taped and transcribed verbatim.

I started the interview by asking the interviewee to read and sign the consent form (Appendix) introducing myself and my study. In the first interview, I used face-to-face individual interviews with open-ended protocol (Appendix). Although it has somewhat limited flexibility in interviewing, it allowed individual participants to define the world in their unique ways (Merriam, 1998, p. 74). Likewise, it made it easy to find and compare data at the analysis level. Following collection of demographic information, the interview opened with the survey or grand tour question in order to elicit a broad picture of the participant's world and to map the cultural outline (Fetterman, 1998, p. 40). The focus of the interview questions was to explore each participant's life events that occurred in the last five years. Yet, in order to highlight the formative roles of historical time and social location in shaping an older woman, the interviews approached their lives from the life-course perspective. In their life stories, I focused on life events after marriage to analyze what happened to the families. More abstract questions were asked when I gathered specific evidence on the participant's response.

The second interview was devoted to asking follow-up questions. The domains of experience identified in the first interview were questioned and examined beyond superficial appearances. The interviews were guided by the following predetermined topics based on my literature review: (a) changes in marital relationship and the relationship with other family

members, (b) conflicts with their family members about the distribution of housework and caretaking, (c) conflicts with other significant persons especially young people, (d) concerns about their future, and (e) strategies that they used to cope with their conflicts, problems, and concerns. The interviews were more dialogical than the first interview. I worked together with participants as partners in generation of meaning (Cortty, 1999). I was sometimes their daughter who listened to their valuable life lessons. Other times, I was their daughter-in-law who argued against them. At the end of interview, I realized that I became their friend who shared many things. I wept and laughed together with them. When I watched a TV drama during the fieldwork period, I analyzed what had happened to each character from an older woman's perspective. I experienced the transformation of the stance of a researcher (Adler & Adler, 1994). I began as an outsider, but after I was fully involved in the setting, I became an insider of the group under study. During the interview, I was careful not to hold a sense of control over the interviewee. Fontana and Frey (2000) note that in the typical interview, a hierarchical relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee exists (p. 658). In this study, to some extent, the mutual sharing of life events was able to alleviate the unbalanced power between the researcher and participant. I shared my experiences related to my mother's death, worry about my widowed father and conflict with my mother-in-law with the participants.

Table 4-2 Interview Participants

Name	Age	Formal Education	Year of Marriage	Family	Members of House-hold	Economic Status*
Sook	61	College	1970	Husband, married daughter, married son, and single son	Husband and single son	Average
Hyun	61	Master's degree	1971	Husband, married son, and single daughter	Husband and single daughter	High
Young	63	Did not answer	1968	Husband, married son, and single daughter	Husband and single daughter	Low
Jeong	64	High school	1969	Husband, married son, and married daughter	Husband	Between average and low
Kyung	63	Did not answer	1968	Husband, two married daughters and married son	Husband	Average
June	62	College	1970	Husband, three married sons and married daughter	Husband	High
Chang	66	College	1966	Husband, married son and married daughter	Husband	High
Soo	64	College drop-out	1968	Husband, married son and single son	Husband and single son	Average
Sun	60	High school	1969	Husband, married son, married daughter, and single daughter	Husband	High
Won	61	Agricultural high schools	1970	Husband, two married daughters and a single daughter	Husband, daughter and two grandchildren.	Average
Yoon	63	High school drop-out	1970	Husband, two single sons and a married daughter	Husband	Average

* Self perceived economic status

I conducted the interviews two or three times at locations selected by the interviewees. Most of the interviews were conducted at the homes of the interviewees, on the playground, or at the Catholic Church near their homes. Two interviews were conducted at the lobby of the senior center. I provided free beverages in order to help make the interviewee feel more relaxed. Each interview lasted a maximum of two hours and was audio-taped and transcribed verbatim.

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concerns. The interviews were more dialogical than the first interview. I worked together with

participants as partners in generation of meaning (Cortty, 1999). I was sometimes their daughter

who listened to their valuable life lessons. Other times, I was their daughter-in-law who argued

against them. At the end of interview, I realized that I became their friend who shared many

things. I wept and laughed together with them. When I watched a TV drama during the fieldwork

period, I analyzed what had happened to each character from an older woman's perspective. I

experienced the transformation of the stance of a researcher (Adler & Adler, 1994). I began as an

outsider, but after I was fully involved in the setting, I became an insider of the group under

study. During the interview, I was careful not to hold a sense of control over the interviewee.

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interviewer and the interviewee exists (p. 658). In this study, to some extent, the mutual sharing

of life events was able to alleviate the unbalanced power between the researcher and participant. I

shared my experiences related to my mother's death, worry about my widowed father and conflict

with my mother-in-law with the participants.

Data Analysis

Analyzing qualitative data is characterized as an "ongoing process" and as a process of

"deep immersion" in the data collected. Although I address data analysis in a separate section, it

is concurrently conducted with data collection. Researchers reflect on the data referring to their

conceptual framework, ask analytical questions, and write memos with their feelings and

impressions as they collect data (Rossman and Rallis, 2003, p. 272). Then, they modify their data

collection based on their analysis. There are several data analysis strategies. Merriam (1998)

suggests four strategies: ethnographic, narrative, and phenomenological analysis, and the constant

comparative method by Glaser and Strauss (1967). Rossman and Rallis (2003) note that

qualitative data analysis is, in general, recognized as two sets of overall analytic strategies: categorical analysis and holistic analysis (p. 273). Categorical analysis develops analytic categories using a constant comparative method in order to generate theory to explain the phenomenon of interest (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Rossman and Rallis, 2003). The other strategy describes "connections among the data in the actual context" (Rossman and Rallis, 2003, p. 274) in order to describe the phenomenon of interest. Although, depending on scholars, data analysis strategies are differently categorized and named, I think that the strategies can be categorized generally into three strategies: categorical analysis, thematic analysis, and narrative analysis. However, in practice, researchers analyze data in their own way combining the strategies. In this study, I used categorical analysis. The procedure of categorical strategy developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) to code data, and Engeström's extensive triangle helped me systematically analyze data. During the progress of data analysis, data was classified and put together to reconstruct meanings. Although a categorical strategy tends to make a researcher insensible to issues that have been socially and culturally constructed, the issues were revealed at the stage of connecting data with Engeström's extensive triangle (1987). I used Microsoft Office Word 2007 to manage the data because of my familiarity with the program. It was useful to draw tables and diagrams, to insert comments, and to organize data. However, when categorizing, this program was unable to glance over many codes at one time. In order to display coded data, I had to create a new word processing file.

Classifying Data

Data analysis in this study began with data collection. After each observation and interview, I listened to the digital recording of each observation and interview and wrote a brief summary in order to prepare for a follow-up interview and observation. In this stage, I focused on

objective features of data, that is, "what happened" and "what they did." Also, I corrected or added interview questions to guide upcoming interviews or observations based on what I learned. However, formal analysis began after the digital audio recording was transcribed into text. I had 44 hours of audio recordings of interviews and observations and transcribed all recordings into text.

In the strategy developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967), a researcher seeks what data itself says through the process to reduce data and links data to help us better understand some phenomenon. Glaser and Strauss (1967) suggest three steps to code data: open, axial, and theoretical coding. Labeling is the first step in classifying data. In this stage, data is broken down into discrete incidents, ideas, events, and acts. This enables a researcher to group similar events, happenings, and objects under a common heading or classification (Strauss, 1998, p.103). I started by highlighting some sentences that looked meaningful, keeping Engeström's extensive triangle (1987) in mind, and then sorted the highlighted sentences by incidents, events, routine housework, and ideas and created their names. When creating names, Strauss and Corbin (1967) suggest two critical points. First, names or labels should stand for the attributes to which they point. Second, the conceptual name should be suggested by the context in which an event is located (1998, p. 106). Then, I categorized the codes by a concept (meaning unit). In this stage, I was able to perceive the situation of older women in South Korea.

After creating some concepts, Strauss and Corbin suggest that a researcher stops the act of labeling and reinvestigates a verbatim transcript to discover if there is anything new and to gain greater understanding. It is an in-depth detailed analysis of data that enables a researcher to discern the range of potential meanings contained within the words used by respondents and to develop them more fully in terms of their attitudes or properties (Strauss and Corbin 1998, p. 109). In this stage, I coded field notes and combined the codes with the concepts. I re-read the transcripts and field notes, casting away perceptions I already had. I tried to articulate what was

taking place in the way in which the participants articulated it. In so doing, I created new codes and corrected several names of the concepts to reveal the attributes to which they point. My literature review, as well as some creativity, was embedded in this process.

Next, I grouped the concepts under a more abstract concept. In categorizing concepts, theoretical sensitivity (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss and Corbin, 1998) works as an important skill of a researcher. Theoretical sensitivity refers to a personal quality of the researcher. It indicates an awareness of the subtleties of the meaning of data. Strauss and Corbin believe that theoretical sensitivity comes from a number of sources, including professional literature, professional experiences, and personal experiences. Eisner (1991) argues that the credibility of qualitative research relies heavily on the researcher's ability to be sensitive to the data. Comparing each concept to other concepts at a human action level, I categorized the concepts into the goal of actions. I created four categories.

-Maintaining routine household chores

-Keeping connected with adult children

-Relaxing and socializing to have fun

-Taking care of family members

Connecting concepts with Engeström's extensive triangle

In the process of connecting data with Engeström's extensive triangle, the concepts were organized along Engeström's extensive triangle (1987). Once clear activities were made, I used axial coding. I described in detail how I differentiated the activities from the actions in Chapter 6. Axial coding relates categories to subcategories along the lines of their properties and dimensions to reassemble data that was fractured during open coding (p. 124). The concepts were related to the activities along the components of the activity system—tool, mediating artifacts, outcome,

community, and the division of labor. Strauss and Corbin suggest several techniques: writing the storyline, using diagrams, sorting and reviewing memos, and using computer programs to facilitate the integration process. In this study, I used Engeström's extensive triangle (1987).

Chapter 5

The Older Korean Married Woman

In this chapter, I provide an overview of the life of a Korean married woman. The chapter consists of two major parts. The first part is devoted to an overview of the life of a married woman. I review how a Korean married woman is situated in her family and society according to the social relationships defined by Confucian ideology. Then, as a result of these circumstances, the issues that a Korean married woman faces later in her life are examined. The issues of mental health, financial status and caregiving, are explored and developed based on previous studies of older women from diverse disciplines such as psychology, public health administration, family studies and social welfare. The second section focuses on the lives of the participants, who were born from 1933 to 1947. I briefly review the changes and development of Korean society and culture that the participants have experienced and shared with me . Next, the participants are introduced by sharing a brief personal story. With the social, economic, and cultural experiences that the participants have shared, their individual experiences and background construct the realities of the participants involved in the research.

This chapter is organized into two major sections. The first section presents an overview of the life of a married woman, which is divided into three subsections: (1) married women in the family, (2) married women in society, and (3) married women later in their lives. The second section, in which the lives of the participants are briefly reviewed, has two subsections: (1) the cohort of women born in South Korea from 1933 to 1947, and (2) profiles of the participants.

Overview of the Life of a Korean Married Woman

This section presents an overview of the life of a Korean married woman. South Korea has a strong family system based on Confucian ideology, which is considered the greatest set of virtues in South Korea (Breen, 1998; Steinberg, 1989; Yoon, Eun, & Park, 2000). In the first subsection, I review the life of a married woman constructed by social relationships based on Confucian ideology. Confucian ideology can be discussed according to five relationships: ruler to subject, father to son, husband to wife, elder brother to younger brother, and friend to friend. These relationships have had a significant influence on the way in which Korean women relate to others as well as on social structures, such as family and school in South Korea. The second subsection is devoted to the issues that older Korean women face. The issues provide insight on the current situation of older Korean women.

Married Women in the Family

Relationships in the family are defined by a rigid hierarchical order between males-females and older-younger people according to the relationships in Confucianism. The hierarchical structure imposes obligations on each family member. Thus, in the Korean family, there is a relatively clear boundary between women's and men's roles and between elders' and younger persons' tasks. Traditionally, men have worked outside the home and domestic work has been reserved for women. The husband is expected to be the breadwinner, major decision maker, head of the family, and enforcer of rules (K. Lee et al., October 2004). On the other hand, the wife's role is to provide emotional care to her husband and children and to assume full responsibility for the household tasks, taking care of aging parents-in-law, and raising and

educating the children. With respect to parental role, the mothers are expected unselfish devotion to their children.

The husband-wife relationship is vertical. Once a woman gets married, she is forced to obey her husband. According to Confucianism, the husband has the authority to make decisions about the majority of family issues. His wife obeys his decisions in nearly all affairs. The wife is expected to be passive and submissive to her husband and his family. There is an old Korean saying, "If the hen cries, the house is ruined." This means, when the wife has equal or more authority than the husband does, it becomes a crucial danger to the family. Yet, as a woman gets older, she establishes her position as a housewife who has authority based on emotional competence in the area of family relations and household issues (H.-o. Kim & Hoppe-Graff, 2001). Things, however, have been changing with the younger generation. Lee (1992) argues that the increasing number of women in the labor force has been enhancing women's power in the relationship between husband and wife (N. Lee, 1992). Nevertheless, there does not seem to be a positive correlation between married women's empowerment and employment rate since many Korean women become a housewife after giving birth to a child. According to M. H. Kim (1992), Korean middle class women with a high level of formal education especially have a tendency to stay home due to the cultural emphasis on women's roles as a wife and mother.

Regarding the older-younger person relationship in families, Koreans have been taught that a younger person should respect any person older than he or she is. In regards to the parents-to-children relationship, Confucius advocated filial piety, the responsibility of children to respect their parents and ancestors. Children, especially sons, should fulfill this filial responsibility. Kim and Choi (U. Kim & Choi, 1994) made an abstract of the obligations that children have to fulfill. First, the children must obey their parents' opinions and authority. Second, the children must support the materialistic needs of their parents. Third, they have to provide solace and reassurance to the parents. In addition to showing respect and caring for one's parents, filial piety places a

strong value on honoring one's ancestors. Koreans traditionally worship their ancestors through the paternal line. Thus, a man needs a son to perform an ancestral memorial ceremony and to carry on the family line. A married woman, first, as a daughter-in-law, has the duty to give birth to a son. In the past, women who produced a son gained a higher status as a wife and daughter-in-law, while women with no sons were rejected by the family. This still remains true to some extent. Although men do not divorce their wives for failing to give them a son, women are still expected to produce a son.

When children become adults who are able to take care of themselves, the adult children are expected to financially, instrumentally, and emotionally support their parents. It is essential for offspring to repay their parents for the love and care that they received from them in filial piety. Reciprocity plays a major role in Korean parent–child relationships (Schwarz, Trommsdorff, Kim, & Park, 2006). Specifically, the oldest son has the responsibility of caring for his aging parents and assumes the role of family patriarch (Yoon, et al., 2000). The oldest son has more power in what the family does, but he also has more responsibility to ensure things go right. The oldest daughter-in-law carries much weight with her in-laws, although she gains a powerful position in the family according to her husband's birth order. The oldest daughter-in-law is instrumental as a source of household labor in fulfilling the filial duty of the eldest son. In my mother's generation, it was common for the oldest daughter-in-law to support her husband's siblings as well as her parents-in-law.

It is important, however, to distinguish that the age order relationship is secondary to the male-female relationship. For example, when a father dies, his adult son, rather than his wife, gains power as the representative of the family. This Confucian tradition has played a pivotal role in women's lifelong subordination in South Korea. A woman is forced to obey three men: her father, husband, and son. There is an old Korean saying, "Before marriage a woman should obey

her father; after marriage, a woman should obey her husband; and after her husband dies, a woman should obey her son."

Korean Married Women in Society

Korean people believe that society is the expanded group unit of family. Thus, the relationships in family are automatically expanded to society in the patterns of social interaction between men and women and the old and the young. The segregation based on gender has defined rights, duties, expectations and behaviors that women have to fulfill in society. Steinberg (1989) pointed out, "Paternalism on the part of government or business management was an extension of the familial concept that had its origins and philosophic rationale in Confucian thought" (p. 74). Patriarchal culture in traditional Korean society also has influence on social status of women (K. A. Park, 1993). Patriarchal attitudes—men work in the public sphere while women remain in the domestic sphere and men control over the family gives men a higher status than women in society. A woman is not expected or encouraged to be an excellent employee; rather she is expected to provide emotional nurturance and perform subordinate work. Women are directly or indirectly forced to support and serve men in an office. Furthermore, these women's jobs are assumed to be less valuable than those of men. Besides, the rigidity of traditional roles makes it difficult for women to negotiate the sharing of household and child-rearing tasks with their husbands (Ho, 1987). After the 1960s, industrialization changed the role of women in the Korean family and society. More married women began working outside the home. According to the Korean National Statistical Office report, the employment rate of housewives has continued to rise gradually; in 2007, 49.9% of Korean married women were employed (Cho, 2008). However, feminist scholars argue that the situation of women has worsened. Married women now have the double burden of fulfilling dual duties as an employee and a housewife. Employed married

women suffer from physical fatigue and mental stress due to their combined labor for society and the household. Chung (1995) reported that, in many cases, married women work thirteen to fourteen hours a day, including domestic labor. Furthermore, most full-time housewives experience psychological conflicts since their housework is neglected or is considered inadequate by their family and society (Chung, 1995).

This patriarchal ideology has influenced law as well. South Korea's constitution established the principle of equality between the sexes in 1948. Korean women gained legal equality, which has improved women's participation in educational and economic areas (K. A. Park, 1993). Yet, it has not guaranteed women's equality of social status. South Korea' family law enforced in 1960 South Korea's family law had been a legal foundation of women's social inequality. The law based on a male-oriented patriarchal ideology had male-dominant provisions in marriage, divorce, and inheritance. Yet, the law has improved to reflect the principle of equality between the sexes in the constitution through constitutional amendment. The *Hojuk* system that came into force for 109 years from 1898 to 2007 is the representative example of Korean male-oriented systems under the family law. The *Hojuk* system, also known as *Hojuje*, is a male-oriented family registry system. In the absence of birth certificates that document the birth of a child in the U.S., Korea utilized the *Hojuk* registry system. This system records the person's name and date of birth, the names and dates of birth of one's paternal grandparents, parents, and siblings, family's original hometown, deaths, marriages and divorces (Jeong, 2003). All official personal forms of identity, such as identity cards and passports, were issued based on the *Hojuk*. The system is based on the patriarchal idea that each family has a '*Hoju*'— a male head of the family, and all family members are under the *hoju*. Each individual was identified through the male line. With this system, women were unable to be a *Hoju*. It was succeeded in the order of son and grandson. Women who got married were legally no longer members of their original families and became their husbands' family members. Thus, the system built a male-dominated

and hierarchical order in a family and restricted women's legal rights within family relationships (The Headquarter of Anti-Hojuje Movement, 2003). It generated unreasonable conflicts in a family. For instance, a woman who got divorced could not transfer her children to her register, even though she had legal child custody and guardianship. Likewise, in the case of a single mother who never got married, she could not put her children's names into her register. Thus, she usually enrolled them in their father's or brother's register. Her children legally became her siblings or cousins. Despite a conservative argument against abolishing the male-oriented family registry system, recently, Korean women have finally been successful at reforming the *Hojuk* system; these changes just came into effect in January 2008. A new registry system, *The Family Census Registry,* allows a woman to be a *Hoju* and improves women's legal rights within the family, although it still has some problems. The abolishment of the *Hojuk* system is a significant change in gender equity that was made possible because of the long struggle of many feminist organizations. Wonhyung Lee (E. Choi, 2008), a feminist activist at *Korean Womenlink*, however, insists there are still many policies and systems based on a strong male-oriented familism.

Married Women in Their Later Years

Mental Health

Previous studies show that differences in gender-related social roles and relations have an influence on patterns of mental health in men and women (Jeon, Jang, Rhee, Kawachi, & Cho, 2007; Turner & Turner, 1999). Caring for children and aging parents affect women's mental health more strongly than that of men's (Jeon, et al., 2007). According to the study on stress and health behaviors in Japanese multigenerational families by Takeda and colleagues (Takeda, et al.,

2004), women in multigenerational families experience more stress than women living with only their husband do. Older Korean women tend to report lower levels of subjective well-being compared with older Korean men, regardless of marital status. Koo and Park (2004) asked 2,529 older people (956 males and 1,573 females) aged 43 to 102 about the positive and negative effects of aging. According to their findings, women reported a higher level of negative effects and a lower level of positive effects than men did. Jeon and colleagues (2007) found that older Korean women living with their married children tend to experience higher levels of distress. Most women prefer to live separately from their adult children since they are expected to support and care for their grandchildren, whereas men want to live with them (Jeon, et al., 2007). In addition to gendered social roles, opportunities for social activities are correlated with mental health among South Korean older women. In Koo and colleagues' study, older women identified a lack of social activities geared towards older people as one of the major causes of decline in emotional well-being in old age (Koo et al., 2004, p. S269). Chung (1995) noted that Korean society has not provided older women with appropriate support for community participation or labor rights. Jeon and colleagues (2007) also found a strong association between household income and mental health in older Korean women. They affirm that inadequate social safety nets for elders foster greater dependence on children. Thus, many older women have experienced mental and emotional pain due to financial difficulties later in their lives.

Financial Status

Older Korean people have a relatively high risk of becoming poor due to the family-based support system in their later years. Family support has played an important role in old-age support. Co-residence of aging parents with an adult son has been the ideal and norm of Korean society. In addition, adult sons provide their aging parents with health care and financial support

as a part of filial piety. Although the percentage of households with aging parents has diminished (National Statistical Office, 2004), according to the financial circumstances of older people surveyed by Seok and Kim in 2000 (Seok & Kim, 2000, p. 35), 56.6 % of people over 60 years old are still dependent on their family members for most of their living costs. In comparison with 6.6% in Japan and 1.6% in the U.S. (Seok & Kim, 2000), the rate of family support in Korea is high. Yet as the average number of children decreases and the life expectancy increases, it is expected that it will become more difficult to maintain this traditional family support system (Park, 2005). A recent study shows that people over age 60 who are financially independent from their children increased to 8.7% from 1994 to 2002 (National Statistical Office, 2004).

Older Korean married women are far more likely to be poor later in their lives than older men are (M.Y. An, 2009; Y. J. Choi, 2006; Phang, 2004). Despite the fact that Korea has implemented the National Pension Scheme and public assistance systems as income maintenance programs for older people, many older married women are not eligible for these programs. The National Pension Scheme is composed of three types: senior citizen, survivor, and disability pensions. The senior citizen pension, which is calculated according to an individual's earnings and the length of the contribution period, is provided for individuals aged 65 or older (National Pension Corporation, 2009). Korean feminist scholars argue that the senior citizen pension financially benefits men more than women (M. Y. An, 2/2009; Korean Women's Development Institute, 2002; Y.-J. Lee & Palloni, 1992). There are significant gender differences in labor force participation and the wages of workers in Korea (M. Y. An, 2/2009). Although the labor force participation rate of Korean women has been increasing (National Statistics Office, 2007), women tend to drop out of the formal labor force earlier and then stay home in order to bear and raise children. A recent survey shows that 22.6 percent of female workers continued their work after marriage and only 20.6 percent of women remained in the labor force after their first childbirth (Korean Women's Development Institute, 2002). Some married women continue to

work in a family business without pay. Yet unpaid domestic and family works are excluded from the benefit calculations for senior citizens' pensions. In addition, it has been reported that female workers earn lower wages than their male colleagues do (M. Y. An, 2/2009; Korean Women's Development Institute, 2002). After taking time off to raise children, women face difficulties going back to work since the labor market requires skilled workers. Thus, many women tend to re-enter the labor force as part-time or non-regular workers. This discontinuous work history has also reduced the total number of women's work hours (Y. J. Choi, 2006). Even though women continue to work until full retirement age, they tend to receive a small employed pension since they earn less and spend less time in the workforce than men.

The condition or period of living alone imposes severe constraints on older women's economic situations (Kinsella, 1988; Y.-J. Lee & Palloni, February 1992). Women tend to live longer than men. According to the 2005 report by the Korea National Statistical Office, women made up 60% of the population aged 65 or older and 75 % of the population aged 85 or older (National Statistics Office, 2006). In addition, as the divorce rate has been rising and the marriage rate has been declining, the number of people aged 65 and older who live alone will rise. Differentials by marital status affect older women's financial status since most women have a strong reliance on their husbands for income (Y.J. Lee & Palloni, February 1992). The National Pension Scheme provides survivor pensions in order to protect widows. An (2005), however, argues that the government does not provide sufficient support since it assumes the husband should and/or can take care of his spouse. She mentions that "the type of dependency inherent within the NP (National Pension) is not just a matter between husband and wife. The dependency in the NP is such that the male breadwinner of the family takes responsibility for all other members of the family" (M. Y. An, 2/2009, p. 82). As a consequence of the Korean pension system for financial security in old age, An (2007) insists that older Korean married women are more likely to be in a position leading to familial dependency.

Caregiver

The rise of the average marriage age, the decrease in birth rate, and the rise in average life expectancy has resulted in changes in the family life cycle (Chung, 1995; Park, 2004). Due to the rising average marriage age, Korean women support their children until a relatively advanced age. Likewise, the increased life expectancy prolongs the period of caregiving for their elderly parents. Women, especially daughters-in-law, are traditionally expected to be caregivers of their family members in South Korea (H. K. Choi, 1993; J. S. Kim, 2001; Lee, Farran, Tripp-Reimer, & Sadler, Spring/Summer 2003). Particularly, the eldest daughters-in-law have been socially expected to care for their older parents-in-law due to their husbands' filial responsibility. Regardless of their relationship with parents-in-law, cultural norms and expectations force them to accept this (H. K. Choi, 1993; S. J. Choi, 1996; J. S. Kim, 2001). In the West, as in Korea, women are usually the primary caregivers for their parents, yet daughters are more likely than sons to provide care and support to their older parents based on affection toward them (Youn, Jeong, Knight, & Benton, 1999; Zhan & Montgomery, April 2003). In the United States, daughters tend to live with or closer to their aging parents than sons do in order to take care of them (Horowitz, 1985). In Korea, as married daughters have traditionally been given over to husbands' families according to patriarchal tradition, they do not have the obligation and social expectations to care for their own parents. According to J. S. Kim's research (J.S. Kim, 2000), daughters tend to see themselves as the assistants of their male siblings in regard to parent care and even feel guilty and sorry for their husband, parents-in-law, and other relatives in their husbands' family when they take care of their own parents (J. S. Kim, 2001).

The caregiving behavior of Korean adult children has been widely attributed to the deeply rooted traditions of filial piety and familism (S. J. Choi, 1996; J. S. Kim, 2001; Sung, 2000; Yoon, Eun, & Park, 2000). Filial piety as a cultural value has determined specific norms of

behaviors related to parent care such as who the primary caregiver should be. Choi (1993) argues that social pressure also enforces people to act in accord with these norms. Under familism, Korean people tend to solve family problems within their family. They are reluctant to receive personal care from non-family members or use a nursing home to take care of frail older parents (Youn, et al., 1999). J. S. Kim (2001) notes that there is a stigma against placing aging parents in a long-term care facility or nursing home (p. 401). As a result of these sociocultural factors, there are not enough health and social programs and facilities for older people and their caregivers in South Korea. J. S. Kim (2001) argues that Korean married women suffer from "combined pressures of cultural norms, societal expectations of family caregiving (p. 401)," and a lack of social support for older people and their caregivers. Youn and his associates (1999) found that familism was highest among Korean caregivers but that Korean caregivers reported higher levels of depression and anxiety than Caucasian-American and Korean-American caregivers did. In Choi's research on Korean caregivers (1993), most research participants expressed feelings of entrapment and isolation associated with their role as a caregiver.

However, an increase in women's participation in the paid labor force, geographical mobility of the young, and demographic changes in South Korea have contributed to some social changes in familial factors. Mutigenerational households and family size have decreased and the number of people aged 65 and older who live alone has risen (National Statistical Office, 2004). Moreover, a decrease in the patriarchal value within the family has allowed daughters to care for their older parents. Despite current changes, J. S. Kim (2001) argues that family-centered caregiving behavior deeply rooted in South Korea still suppresses women. Married women who are active members of the paid labor force have encountered significant emotional and physical challenges in order to combine their traditional familial roles with their employment outside of the home (Lee, et al., Spring/Summer 2003).

In addition, as women age, they are more likely to care for their spouses as well as their grandchildren. More older women have raised their grandchildren in place of their working daughter or daughter-in-law, increasing the labor force participation of married women with children. Most young women consider the child's grandparents to be the best replacement in their absence. Moreover, the lack of social support for working mothers also affects the transition to grandparenthood. Although there are few studies about older women's lives in South Korea, the role as a caregiver may be a large part of their life in their later years. This does not seem much different than what Western studies have reported. Caring for a disabled spouse is another caregiving burden that women shoulder. Previous studies show that caring for a disabled family member tends to require more time and effort in caregiving than caring for other family members does (N. G. Choi, Burr, Mutchler, & Caro, 2007; Enright, 1991). Most spousal caregivers experience mental or emotional strain or tension along with physical health strains. According to N. G. Choi, Burr, Mutchler, & Caro (2007), "most spousal caregivers do not feel that they have a choice to disengage from their caregiving responsibilities, for reasons of both affection and obligation (p. 103)".

The Overview of the Lives of the Participants

This section provides an overview of the birth cohort in South Korea from 1933 to 1947 and a profile of the eleven women who participated in my study. The participants who were born from 1933 to 1947 share common experiences as a birth cohort. In the subsection "The Birth Cohort from 1933 to 1947," I briefly review the changes and development of Korean society and culture that the birth cohort experienced. In addition to their common experiences, I provide the unique personal history of the participants, focusing on their current situation. Pseudonyms

substitute the names of the participants and their families in order to protect the identities of the research participants.

The Birth Cohort in South Korea from 1933 to 1947

The age ranges of the birth cohort from 1933 to 1947 were 60 to 74 in 2007 when I interviewed the participants. Their ages are often classified as "older" people in South Korea, but some of them are demographically "soon-to-be older" people. They were born when South Korea underwent dynamic social changes. Although they were children at the time, they experienced the division of the Korean peninsula in 1945, the Korean War in 1950, political swirls and economic poverty (Buzo, 2002; Cha, 2004). Since 1960, South Korea has substantially accepted Western politics and economics in order to achieve an advanced industrial economy status. This endeavor encouraged education, which enabled more people to receive a formal education. The Korean economy dramatically grew under the military authoritarian government in the 1970's and 1980's. The cohort of participants currently over age 60, at that time, worked hard as an economically active population, and at the same time, experienced severe authoritarianism. Korea has achieved continuous economic growth and evolved into an advanced developing country in the latter half of the twentieth century in regard to political development (Cha, 2004, p. S45).

Forty years of rapid social and economic changes have impacted the Korean family. Smaller and nuclear families and the rate of divorces and remarriages have increased, whereas marriages have decreased (Yoo, Winter 2006). Whereas today's older women had to support and care for their immediate and extended family in their early years, they are unable to expect their children's support in their own senior years. They were so busy supporting and caring for their children, as well as their aging parents, that they could not prepare for their own golden years. In addition, the peculiarities of Korea—where a strong academic background is stressed and

learning is respected—lengthened the education period of students' lives. Korean parents usually educate and support their children until their children obtain a full-time job. As a result, parents' financial burdens have also increased. Thus, most of these individuals have been facing increasing social and economic uncertainties. However, some individuals who own their housing in urban areas, especially in Seoul, have increased their financial security in their later years as rapid urban growth increased housing prices (Vos & Lee, 1993).

These changes have affected the attitude of the aged. The oldest son is no longer strongly expected to reside with his parents, although they still hold the traditional attitude that the oldest son has to take care of his older parents (Cha, 2004). The status and role of older people within the family or in society has been reduced and lowered by industrialization, urbanization, mass education, and the development of technology (Cha, 2004, p. S45). Compared with Western countries, older people's situation in South Korea is still adequate as in other parts of Eastern Asia in which Confucianism is strong, but it has been reduced (Vos & Lee, 1993).

Profiles of the Participants

Sook

Sook is 62 years old. She got married to her husband in 1970 and has been married for 37 years. She has three children and three grandchildren. Two of her children are married, and her (32-year –old) youngest child is single. Her husband is 64 years old. He retired from the military in 1988 before he reached his full retirement age. After his retirement, he worked for a small company and the Military Veteran Association until his late 50's.

Sook previously had no religion, but after she got married to her husband, she became Catholic by adopting her husband's family religion as her own. She has taken medicine once a

day to lower her high blood pressure. But it is not a serious health problem. She lives in her own three bedroom apartment in Seoul with her husband and youngest son. She and her husband have lived off his military pension. She does not think that the pension is enough for a good life, but it is an appropriate income to keep their house without her children's financial support.

She is the first of three daughters-in-law, but she did not live with her parents-in-law for a long time since her family moved around a lot due to a change in military. Once she got married did she live with her parents-in-law for two months, and then 17 years later when her family settled down in Seoul, she lived with them again for several months. Her father-in-law had enough financial security to live comfortably in his senior years, so her parents-in-law were financially independent from their oldest son. She told me she is very lucky since she did not have the responsibility of taking care of her parents-in-law as the oldest daughter-in-law.

After her three children went to college, she came to have free time to spend for herself. She passionately participated in voluntary works such as taking care of old people who live alone when she was in her forties and early fifties. In addition, she had twelve social gatherings in which she got involved. She still takes part in ten of these regular meetings. Recently she took care of her granddaughter for seven months for her working daughter.

Hyun

Hyun is a very healthy 62-year-old woman. She sometimes feels tired, but compared with her friends, her biological aging is relatively slow. All of her sense organs still function well. She reads the newspaper without glasses. She has been married for 36 years to her husband. She has two children; her oldest son is married and has two children. Her unmarried daughter is a student who is completing her doctoral degree. Her husband is two years older than she is. He owns a business which he began in his forties. She lives in a multifamily housing unit in Seoul with her

husband and daughter. Her family is the owner of the multifamily housing unit. The building was originally designed for her family but recently they altered their house into a multifamily housing for their financial security later on in life. She gets about 4,500,000 won (about 3, 960 U.S. dollars) rent every month.

Hyun lived with her mother-in-law, sisters-in-law, and brothers-in-law under one roof once she got married. Her husband, as the oldest son, had financially supported his family since her father-in-law passed away. The whole family lived together in one household until all four siblings were married. She lived with her widowed mother-in-law for 24 years until she died. Her mother-in-law raised her children and was a housekeeper in her place.

Hyun has a Master's degree in public health administration. Her undergraduate major was nursing, but after she gave birth to her son, she began her graduate study in public health administration. She taught students in a two-year nursing school for 15 years and then became a nurse. She worked at the hospital for 19 years and retired at 56. Now she has been volunteering at a non-profit Christian hospital that helps homeless, abandoned older people and foreign workers. On Sundays, she volunteers at church for infant and toddlers. She often goes on medical mission trips to Burma, China, or Vietnam on long holidays like *Chuseok* (Korean Thanksgiving Day) since she has retired.

Young

She is 64 years old. She was married at 24 and has two children. Her oldest son is married and has two children. Her single daughter, who is over 30, still lives with her. Her husband is currently working at a temporary job in a bank. He was originally a bank teller. After he retired, he was reemployed in a temporary job for the retirees who worked for the bank. She mentioned that her economic status is low. She does not have financial problems, but there are no

set financial plans for the future. The little money that her husband has earned as a temporary worker is all she can expect.

Her husband is the oldest son of 8 siblings. He came to *Seoul* from the country for a better life in his early years. Once she got married, her mother-in-law sent her brother-in-low to a newly wedded couple in Seoul. Three years later, after her father-in-law died from cancer, her mother-in-low joined them. She lived together with her mother-in-law until she died at 80. Now she lives with her husband and daughter at a three bedroom apartment in Seoul.

She worked until she was 49 years old. After she quitted her job and her son was married, her family returned home where she grew up. She lived there for three years until his son asked her to take care of his children. She and her husband lived together in her son's home. Yet, because of inconvenience, two years later, they left them and settled down in the current apartment very near son's home. Her son usually drops his two children off early and picks them up late. She spends most of her time to take care of two grandchildren during weekdays. Only between 10 am and 2pm when they go to school and child care center, she can do something she wants. She learns flower arrangement and yoga, volunteers in the hospital, and goes to the cathedral in order to participate in choir regular practice during breaks.

Jeong

She is 65 years old and has been married to her 68-year-old husband for 38 years. She has two married children and three grandchildren. Her husband owned a small-sized manufacturing company but the company went bankrupt thirteen years ago. As a result, her family got into heavy debt. She used to work as a waitress and housemaid in her fifties in order to pay the debt that her husband owed their family. After bankruptcy, her husband has been unemployed for almost thirteen years. She is on a tight budget at the moment. She lives with husband at small two

bedroom apartment that she rented from her friend in Sungnam-si, a new metropolitan town around Seoul.

She lived together with parents-in-law, two sisters-in-law and a brother-in-law once she got married. Her brother-in-law was an elementary school student at that time. Her husband as the oldest son financially supported his parents and siblings. His family had no money except what came from him. After his siblings were independent of her husband, her parents-in-law lived separately from her family until several years before they died. Her father-in-law died in 1990 and mother-in-law died in 1991. She experienced a severe depression at 49. At that time, she was in menopause, lost near vision due to age and her mother-in-law was very sick.

She quitted her job when her first grandchild was born for taking care of her daughter-in-law after birth. Two years later, her second grandchild was born and she again cared for her daughter-in-law after birth. And then her daughter gave birth to her first son and moved near her apartment. She has taken care of him for her working daughter. Her husband takes him her home every morning and then she takes care of him all day long. At night before her daughter comes back home, she goes to her daughter's house with her grandchild. She usually cleans up the house, prepared dinner for her daughter's family, and comes back home around 10pm. When her daughter has a night duty, she gives the baby a bath, and sleeps with him. Recently, she and her husband began to take care of her near neighbor's daughter. Her husband gives her ride to after school program and she cares her until her mother comes home. After 10pm, she can have time for herself. She usually checks her email, surfs the internet and writes English Bible.

She has a passion for learning something. She mentioned she seems to have more passion for leaning since she did not go to college. She completed the adult education program at Ewha University, one of a leading university in Korea in her forties. She used to participate in English Bible study at the Cathedral and free computer class at the community center before she takes care of her grandchild. She sometimes goes out to have launch with her friends. Before her

husband's bankruptcy, there were a few social meetings in which she regularly participated. But now she is unable to join them due to financial problem.

Kyung

Kyung is 63 years old and has been married to her 70-year-old husband for 39 years. Although he is seven years older than she is, he is healthier than she is. She has two married daughters and one married son. She often had a part-time or full-time job when rearing her children. After their children grew up, she worked at a factory. But, after her children had their own babies, she could not continue to work in the factory since she often helps them. Her two daughters got married young, so she became a grandmother at 51. So, for her, being a grandmother was not a critical event that signified she had reached old age. She helped her daughters for about a month whenever they gave birth to a baby. Yet, she refused to take care of her grandchildren on a regular basis. So, her two daughters quit their jobs and have reared their own children. However, she sometimes takes care of her grandchildren when her children ask her for help. After retiring, her husband obtained a part-time job. His income is not sufficient for their living expenses. Fortunately, they rent out part of their house and the monthly rent compensates for this deficit. She said she is not well-off but can afford to give her grandchildren money to celebrate a special day. She has a good relationship with her husband. Her husband kisses her on the lips every single time he leaves the house. In South Korea, kissing is not common. Particularly, older husbands and wives rarely use physical expressions of affection and love. He often calls her during the day to say hello. When I asked about her plans for the future, she said she is not afraid to die but she is afraid that her husband will die before she does.

Kyun's parents died when she was a child. She does not have any siblings. She grew up with her aunts in the country. Although her aunts replaced her parents' love, they failed to support

her education. When I asked about her education, she avoided answering my question. Instead, she said she really likes formal class-based learning in the senior center since she did not receive formal education. Among these classes, she prefers to participate in physical activities, such as janggu and swing dance. She spends all day long at the senior center. She said she is happy in her old age since she can do whatever she wants. When she was young, she had family responsibilities.

June

June is 62 years old. She got married to her husband in 1970. She was the youngest daughter among four daughters and four sons in a well-off family. She grew up receiving lots of attention and love from her family. She graduated from a university. After she finished college, she had several job opportunities, but her father did not support her. He believed that a woman's job was to be a wife and mother. She got married to the eldest son of a well-off family. Her father-in-law was an owner of a big company. She has three sons and one daughter who are married. She lives with her husband, who has chronic diseases, but he has managed to stay healthy. She and her family go to a Catholic church.

I met June twice for interviews. The interviews with her were the longest ones among those of all the participants. Her life story was very interesting, like a story in a captivating novel. Once she got married, she, as the eldest daughter-in-law, served her aging parents-in-law. Her father-in-law was a very authoritative man who based his beliefs on Confucianism. Although he had many servants, he believed that the eldest daughter should primarily serve her parents-in-law. Her mother-in-law had suffered from asthma, often going to the emergency room. When her parents-in-law were alive, June spent most of her time focusing on her parents-in-law. Therefore, June's house maid did the housework and reared her children in her place. After her youngest

child went to kindergarten, her husband became sick with tuberculosis, diabetes, kidney disease, liver disease and rheumatism. Her days were very busy taking care of her parents-in-law and her husband. She compared her marriage to the cross Jesus shouldered. Before I met her, I had heard that housewives often compare their marriage to the cross of Jesus. They seem to regard their hard or unhappy married lives as the pain that God bestows on them. In fact, June was able to bear up her cross for the purpose of evangelizing her in-laws. Meanwhile, she experienced spiritual and mystical events. She sometimes heard the voice of God in her dreams.

After June's parents-in-law died, her husband's health improved. She had a conflict with her eldest daughter-in-law until quite recently. Recently, everything has been going well for her. She participates in a flower arranging class, dance class and yoga class. Additionally, she also volunteers at the hospital. She prefers physical activities since these are good stress relievers for her. She also looks after her grandchild twice a week when her daughter-in-law goes to school.

Chang

Chang, at 66 years old, was the oldest participant in this study. She graduated from the best women's college in South Korea. She got married to her husband at the age of 26. She has two married children; her son is a medical doctor, and her daughter works as a part-time-instructor at a university. She is financially comfortable and lives with her husband in a luxury apartment. Before she got married, she had a job. But, after she got married, she quit her job to devote herself completely to her role as a wife and mother. She supported her husband in devoting himself to building up his career and took on all of the housework and parenting responsibilities. Her husband graduated from the best college in South Korea and worked at a bank, retiring as the chairman.

Chang lived with her parents-in-law until they died. Her husband is not the eldest son, but he undertook the eldest son's duties. She lived on a tight budget when she was young since her husband took on the debt of her husband's eldest brother. In addition to taking on his brother's debt, her husband took care of his parents and his brother's children as a substitute for his brother. She supported his children, who lived with them until they got married. Fortunately, since her mother-in-law shared the housework with her, she occasionally had time for herself on busy days. So, she was able to keep in good touch with her old friends while raising her children and taking care of her elderly parents-in-law.

Chang feels that she is at the peak of her life since becoming a grandmother in her fifties. Chang said that she now spends more time enjoying her social life than ever before. She often travels; in fact, she spends a third of the year on trips, often traveling long distances outside of South Korea with her husband or friends. She attends Mass almost everyday and participates in the learning activities at her Catholic church twice a week. She exercises on a regular basis; she has gone walking or hiking in the early morning since her daughter left for college.

Soo

Soo is 64 years old has been married to her husband for 40 years. She was born in a well-off family and got married to the youngest son of a well-off family. Her husband received a large inheritance from his father, but he squandered all his money on his business. She blames her husband for the financial difficulties that she has faced in her later years. She said her husband has done everything his way. She had tried to communicate with him when she was younger, but she gave up. Now she no longer cares what he does. She has focused on what she has to do as a wife and a mother. Despite the fact they have been married for 40 years, it seemed to me that Soo does not have any affection for her husband. Instead, she showed a deep affection for her two

sons. She seemed to think her two sons are compensation for a marriage without affection for her husband. She really feels thankful for her sons' attempt to financially and emotionally support her in her later years.

Soo's eldest son is married but her 37-year-old second son is still single and lives with her and her husband. Her son wants to move out of their house, but she has discouraged him from doing so. She thinks her son should save money to buy his own house after he gets married since she cannot afford to buy a house for him. When her eldest son got married, she felt sorry for him since she could not buy a house for him. She wants to give her sons more support, but she cannot afford to do so. Therefore, she always feels sorry for her sons. Also, she took care of her infant granddaughter for one year for her working daughter-in-law.

Soo is eager to participate in activities at her church; these are the only social activities in which she has participated. She is a member of the older women's choir. She makes friends at church and spends time with them. Yet, recently, her leg joint pains have interrupted her involvement in church activities. She feels that her body has been declining since her 60th birthday. She often has chest pains from indigestion and leg joint pains. She is not able to do housework like she could before.

Sun

Sun is 60 years old. She has been married to her husband for 38 years. She is financially comfortable. She has one son and two daughters; two of her children are married. Her youngest daughter is single, but she does not live with her. Her youngest daughter is a friend of mine whom I first met when I was a high school student 15 years ago. When I met Sun for this study, I was little surprised at how much she has aged. Although she is still a slim and good looking woman,

her body is slightly bent forward and her skin has begun to sag. She was crowned a beauty pageant winner in her younger days, but she could not escape the effects of time.

Sun said that she had been busy until her husband retired. Her husband was a pharmacist who owned a drugstore. She assisted him with his business. In addition, she served her parents-in-laws, who lived in her neighborhood, for 36 years, due to her responsibility as the first daughter-in-law. Her husband is the eldest son among five children. Her husband, who graduated from college, supported his five siblings until they were married. She did her best to fulfill her responsibilities as a wife and a daughter-in-law, raising her three children on her own. She said her husband is a traditional Korean man who is taciturn and authoritative. He took responsibility for the financial needs of his family. Although he did not help her with any of the housework, raising the children, or taking care of his aging parents, she said she cannot blame him since he was caged in his drugstore his entire life in order to support his family. It was most important to Sun that, he had enough savings for them to live comfortably in their later years.

Sun goes to a fitness center on a regular basis to stay healthy. She participates in church activities. Sun also enjoys interacting with her friends in church activities. Particularly, she seems to be happy with her social role as an older woman who gives young people advice. In addition, she volunteers to baby-sit her twin grandchildren on days when her daughter goes to school. She often cooks and makes Kimchi on a regular basis for her married son and daughter.

Won

Won is 61 years old and got married to her husband in 1970. She is a friend of my mother-in-law; they lived in the same village for 29 years. Before I met her for this study, we already knew each other. Therefore, I was able to build rapport with her in a short period of time. I felt comfortable when I met first her, and she seemed to feel comfortable with me as well. Her

husband is a professional photographer who owns a film processing laboratory. He managed a film processing laboratory by himself when he was young, along with Won's assistance. Won also had her own business, a stationery shop, for 13 years. She lived with her widowed mother-in-law for 28 years. She did the housework and raised her three daughters for her working daughter-in-law.

Won has three daughters. Her eldest daughter got divorced and moved back home with her two children. After her daughter got divorced, her parents' life dramatically changed. Won has helped her daughter financially and, for nine years, she has taken care of her two grandchildren when her daughter goes to work. Her second daughter works for a big company, earns a high salary, and gives her mother "pocket money" every month. She is proud of her second daughter since she plays the role of a son. Her youngest daughter is single but does not live with her.

Although she is always busy due to taking care of her grandchildren, Won has actively participated in various social activities. She goes to a flower arranging class and dance class offered through her county office with her friends. She prefers formal class-based learning. She said she became aware that she enjoys learning. Recently, free lifelong learning programs for older people have increased in South Korea. Won has really enjoyed them. She does not have financial difficulties, but she does not have enough money for her social activities. In addition to the classes, she likes to spend time with friends having fun and sharing laughs.

Yoon

Yoon is 63 years old and got married to her husband in 1970. Her husband still works. She is not well-off but is not struggling financially. She has two single sons over 30 and one married daughter. Her parents died early, so she had to support her siblings as the first daughter.

She dropped out of high school and made a living for her family. Before she met her husband, she had decided not to get married in order to support her brothers and sisters. Her parents and parents-in-law passed away before she got married, so she did not have to take care of her aging parents and parents-in-law. She said this had a positive effect on her relationship with her husband since she did not have to experience the stress that caring for parents-in-law poses.

Yoon spends most of her days at the senior center. For her, this was an opportunity for continued growth since it has enabled her to go back to school later in life. In order to spend the day at the center, she has to do her housework quickly in the morning and late at night. Since she feeds and washes clothes for her two sons and husband, she still has a lot of housework. Additionally, she has to help do her daughter's housework. Recently, her daughter got married, but she does not know how to do housework. Although she is exhausted at night due to housework, she said she cannot give up the pleasure of leaning.

Chapter 6

Actions That Older Korean Women Perform in Their Everyday Lives

In this chapter, I provide the actions that older Korean women perform in their everyday routines. The actions were organized according to the goals that direct the actions. The four goals emerged from the actions. The process of developing the goals is described in detail in Chapter 3. The four goals are managing the house, keeping connected with adult children, socializing to have fun and taking care of family members. This chapter presents the actions classified by the four goals.

The chapter is organized in four sections based on the four goals: (1) managing the house, (2) keeping connected with adult children, (3) socializing to have fun and (4) taking care of family members. In each section, I describe the actions and the troubles or conflicts that arose in the actions. I focus on disturbance, troubles or conflicts with regard to women and aging in the actions. Yet, the troubles or conflicts are not discussed in detail from feminist perspectives: this paper is aimed at contributing to the analysis of informal learning and applying the CHAT as an analytical tool to the analysis of informal learning.

Managing the House

In this section, I describe routine household tasks that participants perform in the morning and at night. Although all participants do not have the same pattern of house work, there seems to be a general pattern among them. Most participants are supposed to do almost all of their housework alone; this includes cooking, cleaning the house, and washing clothes. They usually start their housework in the early morning. Preparing meals and doing kitchen chores gets accomplished by around 9 or 10 a.m., when their husbands leave for work or go out for other

reasons. Their afternoon is saved for their social lives. They return home around dinner time and prepare dinner. After they eat dinner, they resume their housework at night. If there is another family member, such as grandchildren or adult children, living at home in addition to their husbands, they are likely to spend more time on housework.

The participants who have lived as housewives after marriage assume that household labor is their obligation to their husband and children. After their grown children moved away from home, their work load at home decreased. When they take care of their grandchildren or when they support their working daughter or daughter-in-law, however, they come to undertake more housework. On the other hand, their social activities decline due to the amount of time they must spend on housework. Recently, they become fatigued easily and quickly due to their aging. In some cases, the women's weaker bodies do not allow them to continue to do housework. However, the changes that they have experienced as they get older rarely have an effect on their attitude toward household labor.

The participants have a busy morning. They wake up early in the morning and start their day by preparing breakfast. Some participants who are religious spend quiet time praying and reading the Bible in the early-morning. After they have breakfast and their husbands and children leave for the day, they wash dishes and prepare lunch or dinner in order to have the afternoon to themselves. Sun, who lives with her retired husband, explained her busy morning:

> I wake up early in the-morning. Usually, I wash my face and then read the
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> Bible… I read the Bible for 30-40 minutes. Then I fix and eat breakfast. After
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> breakfast, I prepare another meal, dinner, so that it is ready to eaten later on that
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> evening. If my husband does not go out for lunch with his friends, I have to
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> prepare lunch for him, too. I am so busy from the time I get up in the morning
>
> that I do not have time to watch the morning news.

Won, who lives with her divorced daughter's family, is even busier than Sun is. She takes care of her grandchildren during the day until her working daughter returns home. She does the things that wives and mothers typically do on a daily basis. She gets up early in the morning, fixes breakfast for the family, helps the kids get ready for school, and then helps her husband get ready for work. I met Won for the interview at the playground of her apartment at 10 a.m. She said she hurried in order not to be late for the interview. In spite of this, she was able to put on light makeup and looked pretty. Won said:

> My husband used to go out around 9 a.m. but, recently he has been leaving at 10
> a.m. I like it better when he goes out at 10 a.m. When I have something to do,
> like today, for example, I have a flower arranging class at 10 a.m. … I have to
> leave home earlier because it starts at 10 a.m. So I start getting ready to go out at
> 9 a.m. What is worse is that my husband prefers steamed rice to bread for
> breakfast. Fixing steamed rice with some side dishes takes longer than making
> bread. So I have to prepare breakfast beginning at 7 a.m. I help the kids get ready
> for school and then fix my husband breakfast. And then after he leaves, I am able
> to go out to learn flower arranging, dance, and play the harmonica. I clean, wash
> clothes or do other household chores at night. I am really busy. Anyway, to do
> what I like, I have to rush around, from the very start of my day.

Yoon, who spends most of the day in the senior center, prepares her husband's lunch in the morning. She puts steamed rice and several side dishes with a spoon and chopsticks on a serving tray and then places the serving tray in the refrigerator before she goes out in the morning.

Although their little children have grown up and moved out, they still have a busy morning in order to serve their husbands or grandchildren. However, Sun, who served her

parents-in-laws who lived in her neighborhood for 36 years, said, "Things are better now than they were when my parents-in-laws were alive." There is an old proverb, "A man may work from sun to sun, but a woman's work is never done." Before I met these participants, I had thought that this old proverb referred only to young women with little children. I soon realized that the proverb also applied to women over age 60. Won recently gave up a signing class that she liked since this made it hard for her to complete all of her household tasks. She said, "If I had a housemaid, I would be able to get some rest. I… I have to do housework every night." After they return home, they do other household chores that they did not get to in the morning. Yoon said:

> I do not have an hour to rest and sit on the couch. After I return home from the center, once again, I have to do housework. I go grocery shopping on the way home. I cook and wash clothes until late at night in order to spend the day at the center. I do what I have to do. I have to prepare meals and help my family get ready for work. And then, I am finally able to go out to do what I want to do.

These women seem to be less eager to do housework than they used to be. They do not set a regular routine for housework, but rather, they just try to keep up with the house and laundry. Kyung always carries a reusable shopping bag to shop on the way home from going out. She does not go grocery shopping everyday. She goes shopping every now and then, when she feels like it. She said:

> I do not clean and wipe things down everyday. When someone visits my house, I thoroughly clean the house. A washing machine washes the clothes. We have a simple dinner. Cleaning... There is a vacuum to clean the floor. I just give it a lick with the mop.

Yoon's comment above, "I must do what I have to do," reveals that these women assume that they are still responsible for doing the housework, even though they are over 60 years of age.

Soo feels that her body has been declining since her 60th birthday. She often has chest pains from indigestion and leg joint pains. When I met her at church after choir rehearsal on a Wednesday morning, she was suffering from indigestion. She suspected that the cold steamed rice that she had eaten the night before for dinner had brought about this indigestion. She often eats leftover cold and stiff steamed rice when her husband has a dinner appointment. She said, "I am 64, and sometimes I really feel my age when I am doing housework. If I did not have a husband whom I have to take care of, I would not cook." I was surprised since this was what I often say to myself when I prepare meals for my husband. Before I got married, I had a healthy appetite. Yet, after I got married, I lost my appetite and obtained less joy from eating. Of course, this change could be attributed to physiological factors, but I surmise that the obligation to cook each meal has contributed to my lack of enjoyment of food. When I look at the rising sun, I think of what I will cook for breakfast. When I look at the setting sun, I think of what I will cook for dinner. This obligation always pushes me to focus not on the pleasure of eating food but on the necessity of preparing food. When I become over 60, perhaps I, too, like Soo, will eat cold and stiff steamed rice to cut down on housework. She continued:

> The most important thing is doing the housework. And then, getting involved in church activities and spending time with friends of mine… That's all that matters to me because I do nothing else.

Soo went on to explain:

> I have treated my husband like a king. But my children do not do things the way I have been doing them. Anyway, recently, I have not been able to serve my husband like a king because my body does not work as well anymore. So, he began helping with the housework. He actually takes out the trash now!. It is a historical change!! When he goes out to smoke after dinner, he puts the trash in

the dumpster. And, he irons his dress shirts since I am not able to sit on the floor

to iron because of pain in my leg joints. It has been like this for one or two years.

When I asked Won if doing the housework is difficult at her age, she said:

I have to fix meals for my husband 365 days a year. It is not difficult because I

have done it since I got married. I have become accustomed to that and have the

mindset, 'I must do this.' Furthermore, it is my obligation. Since the Chosen

Dynasty, men have been the sky (king), while women have been the ground

(servant). I am a person who is used to treating my husband like a king. I think I

must do this, and my husband wants to be a king. And so I have been doing

things this way all these years.

As Soo and Won mentioned, women's compliance about doing all of the housework

seems to be motivated by their responsibility to serve their husbands. The majority of Korean

women have the traditional idea that a family and husband are the center of a woman's life. Thus,

after their parents pass away and their children leave home, they seem to have only one

responsibility: to serve their husbands. They continue to do all of the housework by themselves

after their husbands' retirement. In the Western studies on the domestic work arrangement and

older wives' happiness (Piña & Bengtson, 1995; Suitor, 1991; Ward, 1993), a husband's

contributions to domestic labor are correlated with older women's marital satisfaction. But,older

Korean women neither ask nor expect their husbands to assist them with housework. Moreover,

most participants manifested neither affection nor aversion toward their husbands during the

interview and observation. They just talked about their obligations.

Although these women have experienced a general physical decline, it is assumed that

they will keep doing the same housework that they have always done. There is, however, a

difference between now and when they were young: they became aware that their husbands are no longer the king of their home. Older men are relatively marginalized from household affairs as they age, while women's authority in the household, including managing their sons and daughters-in-law, rise (Das Gupta, Zhenghua, Li Bohua, & Woojin Chung, January 3, 2003). Chang described her husband as "a wet fallen leaf." Chang and I laughed about that for a while. I have heard my mother-in-law compare her older husband to "a little son" who needs a mother's care. In her expression "a little son," I can sense a feeling of affection for an aging husband, but "a wet fallen leaf" seems to imply that an old husband is just a nuisance later on in life. Chang continued:

> A husband cannot live without a wife. Korean husbands never live alone. They cannot do anything; they are simply a wet fallen leaf. Do you know how hard it is to wipe wet fallen leaves out? They stick on wives… (Laughs) They stick on their wives to survive when they come to stay home. They got used to doing this. When I have a lunch appointment, my husband prepares lunch for himself, only something simple, like instant noodles or dumplings. (Laughs) … If I am able to fix lunch, I make steamed rice in a rice cooker, put main and side dishes on a serving tray and place the tray in the refrigerator. He just takes it out from the refrigerator. It is the only thing that my husband is capable of doing. He is totally a wet fallen leaf. (Laughs) … And yet, he still behaves like a king.

When she was young, Chang quit her job to devote herself completely to her role as a wife and mother after she got married. She believes that a woman's job is to stay home and that a man's job is to take financial responsibility for the family. She supported her husband in devoting himself to building up a career and took on all of the housework and parenting responsibilities. Her husband left home in the early hours and returned merely to sleep for many years until he

retired from the bank. She recalled that he was too busy to help her. When her mother-in-law was alive, there was no opportunity to receive any help from her with the household chores. Chang said:

> After my mother-in-law passed away and my husband retired, he started doing
> the housework. Not much, but a little, for example, vacuuming. You know what
> he says when he vacuums? 'If my mother was alive, what she would say?' I
> answer, 'She would say, 'Good job, good job'.'"

Husbands spend more time at home after they retire, so they come to have enough time to help with the household chores. Some people start doing the housework for a specific reason, like Soo's husband. But many older women do not seem to be willing to share their work with their husbands. They hesitate to ask their husbands for help with the housework and even want to keep doing "their work," regardless of age-related changes that may make this challenging. They tend to criticize the labor, or lack thereof, performed by today's stay-at-home wives. Kyoung said with a peremptory tone:

> (My husband) helps me wash clothes. When the washing machine has run its
> cycle, he takes the clothes out and hangs them on a clothes rack. He does not
> clean the house. I do that because I am able to. Young women complain, 'My
> husband does not take out the trash… blah, blah, blah.' Why don't they take out
> the trash themselves? They ask their husbands who have a full-time job to do
> that. I heard that some husbands clean their own bathroom. But I do not ask my
> husband to do that. (I do not understand) why women who do not work outside
> the home ask their husbands to do the housework.

Keeping Connected with Adult Children

In this section, I describe the actions that the participants perform to keep connected with their adult children. Most participants get together with their married adult children on special family occasions and on holidays such as Thanksgiving and New Year's Day. In some families, family members gather for ancestor worship held on the anniversary of parents' or grandparents' death. Additionally, adult children visit their parents, or parents visit their children when they are not busy. So, they seem to meet their adult children one to two times a month. But, as technology has evolved, cell phones and email have enabled the participants to contact their adult children whenever they want to talk to them. The participants, as the unofficial "real" authority figures in their families, manage family relations and family finances. They are responsible for managing harmonious relationships among family members and for transferring traditional values such as obedience to husbands and married women's obligations to their daughters and daughters-in-law.

The participants are deeply involved in their adult children' lives. They seem to assume that their adult children are still their responsibility. They assume that they should take care of their adult children even after their children get married. They contribute to buying their sons' house and help with their housework. But, on the other hand, they seem to want to keep their distance from their adult children since they would like to focus on other aspects of their lives as they get older. Although they still want to be connected to their adult children, they also want to be free from their responsibility as a mother and to spend time on themselves. However, they assume that they will need to depend on their children someday. This motivates them to take care of their health in order not to financially burden their children later on in life with hefty medical bills due to age-related diseases.

This section is composed of four sections: In the first section, I describe the events that cause relationship issues with family members. The events are classified by family members:

daughter-in-law, son, and daughter. Although the events are individual and incidental experiences that emerge in everyday life, they illustrate the historically accumulated dynamic tension between the participants and family members. The second section is devoted to the wedding preparation that a son's mother experienced. Since all participants except for Won have a son, wedding preparation was often mentioned during the interview and observation. In the third section, the action of making Kimchi and the dynamics in this action are described. The last section is devoted to the participants' exercise and nutrition habits.

Relationships with Adult Children

Relationship with a daughter-in-law: They are different from us

Women usually become a mother-in-law between the ages of 55-65 years old. Accepting a daughter-in-law into the family is not always easy, while a son-in-law tends to be welcomed with open arms. Korean people accept a daughter-in-law as a family member, but a son-in-law is revered as a lifelong guest according to paternal tradition in South Korea. A mother-in-law makes an effort to involve a daughter-in-law in her family affairs and to teach her family traditions. This can pose problems because the family traditions often seem strange to a new daughter-in-law who comes from a different culture, and the daughter-in-law will often start avoiding her mother-in-law if she is too pushy about her adopting these customs. Additionally, the wife of the first son of my mother's generation had to undertake supporting her parents-in-law and the siblings of her husband. Although the first son and wife have taken full responsibility for their aging parents until recently, the first daughter-in-law has been relieved of the burden of a large family since many people no longer live with their parents and siblings.

Sun's son recently got married. He and his wife attend the same church that Sun and her husband attend. Sun grew up in a Christian family with a long history. Her great-great-grandfather was the first Christian in her family, and his descendants have sustained and developed his faith. She said he may have been one of the first Christians in South Korea. Sun is very proud of her Christian family and tries to maintain this faith as an important tradition in her own family. After Sunday services, her family usually has lunch together. She really enjoys these Sunday family lunches. Her single daughter, her married daughter's family, and her son and his wife get together at her house. But, after her daughter-in-law became pregnant, her son and daughter-in-law were often absent from this family lunch. She understood her daughter-in-law's situation since she knows pregnancy made her tired. Her grandson was born several months ago. He is her son's first son. She already had two grandsons from her daughter, but her son's son was different from her other grandsons. He is more special to her. She wants to see him as much as possible. She could not wait for Sunday to come because of him, but her son's family does not attend the family lunch every Sunday. Although her son and daughter-in-law did not say anything about their absence, she felt that they had some kind of conflict with regard to the Sunday family lunch. This made her uncomfortable. She said:

> I encouraged my daughter-in-law to talk about her complaints. 'Tell me what is
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> bothering you and what you want,' I told her. She told me everything that she
>
> thought. (She said she wants to spend Sunday with her own family.) Even if I
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> asked her to tell me the truth, this was rude! How could she do that, huh? I went
>
> to visit my parents-in-law whenever they asked me to. Of course, going to see my
>
> parents-in-law everyday was not something I particularly enjoyed. However,
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> since my husband went to see them every day, I had to do this, too. When he
>
> asked me to go to their house with him, I always said yes. I could not tell him, 'I
>
> do not want to go there, or I am unable to do.' But, young women nowadays stop

their husbands from visiting their own parents since they do not want to go to see their parents-in-law. When they visit their parents-in-law, they have to please them and fix meals and wash dishes for them. Even if a mother-in-law makes her daughter-in-law a lot of food, she does not seem to like it. I cannot understand young people, including my daughter-in-law.

She continued:

It was my duty to obey and please my parents-in-law since it was what my husband wanted. It is obligatory that a daughter-in-law does something for her parents-in-law. Frankly, a daughter-in-law seldom cares for her parents-in-law with affection. Just because my husband wanted this … and in order to prevent family trouble, I did that.

I often hear older women complaining about their daughters-in-law who control their son. As Sun mentions above, older women tend to think that a woman who has a loud mouth and teases her husband will create trouble for the family. Young also said that "a young woman leads her husband by the nose." One of the biggest complaints mothers-in-law have about their daughters-in-law of today is that a wife controls her husband. Yet, since Young's son has kept his authority as a husband in the family, he makes her feel more comfortable about her daughter-in-law. This is because most women of my mother's generation want their daughter-in-law to keep the husband and wife relationship based on Confucianism. Many older women, especially Sun and Hyun, coped with a large responsibility as the first daughter-in-law in middle and upper class families and seem to emphasize that a woman keeps her house in order based on Confucianism. Older women's past experiences seem to build up the expectations about how a daughter-in-law should act. Yet, when a daughter-in-law does not behave in the way that a mother-in-law expects,

most older women seem to fail to understand their daughter-in-law. Hyun was embarrassed by her daughter-in-law's unexpected behavior. She said:

> There are several types of cheese made by Maeil. I had bought my grandchildren strawberry cheeses. They are sweet and have a strawberry flavor. My grandson only ate this cheese, begging, 'Strawberry chee, strawberry chee-.' So I brought them 10 bundles of strawberry cheese when I visited my son's house several months ago. My daughter-in-law saw a lot of cheese and said, 'I compared this cheese with other cheeses. It has a lot of sugar and … So I decided not to feed my children this anymore. I will feed them other cheeses instead.' I said, 'Okay.' But if you put yourself in my shoes, you would be displeased with my daughter-in-law. (She was rejecting something that) a mother-in-law brought for her grandchildren!

My mother's generation was taught to obey a mother-in-law. When a mother-in-law scolded her daughter-in-law, the daughter-in-law could not defend herself. Yet, as Das Gupta (1995) mentions, women's status changes over the lifecycle; when a daughter-in-law becomes a mother of her grown children, her power and autonomy in the household rise. There is an old Korean saying that a daughter-in-law has to live like she is deaf for three years, blind for three years, and mute for three years. This means that a daughter-in-law has to obey her husband and his family until she is old enough to have her voice as a family member. In this context, the young daughter-in-law who spoke her mind would be considered rude from a mothers-in-law's perspective. They might expect to hear, "I am sorry," and "Thank you" from their daughters-in-law. Sun just blamed her daughter-in-law, but I could see Hyun's efforts to understand her daughter-in-law from a different perspective. She realized and acknowledged that there are cultural differences between generations and families. Hyun said:

Because I personally experienced the relationship between a mother-in-law and a daughter-in-law after living together with my mother-in-law for a long time, I was aware that I do not have to scold or command my daughter-in-law, which often happens in Korea. When a mother-in-law is displeased at her daughter-in-law, she says, 'Why didn't you do this properly?'" This would hurt a daughter-in-law's feelings and result in a conflict between a mother-in-law and a daughter-in-law. Yet, I think that conflict occurs due to the cultural differences between my daughter-in-law and me.

Relationship with a daughter-in-law: I want to be a great mother-in-law

Older parents seem to want to see and call their son's family as often as possible. If they have small grandchildren, they look forward to seeing them. A daughter-in-law of my mother's generation obeyed her parents-in-law's wish not to annoy them. June said:

I lived together with my parents-in-law for three years and then moved out. But, I had to go to see them everyday even though I lived separately from them. When I skipped a day, my father-in-law said that it had been a long time since he had seen me.

Kyung explained that her action was the "integrity" of her work:

When I lived in Seoul, (my parents-in-law lived in) Incheon. I went there with my two kids. By this time, my mother-in-law had passed away at the age of 61. So my father-in-law got remarried. When I think of that time, I did not need to go to my parents-in-law once a week. She was just a stepmother-in-law to me. And there is a saying that it is better for grandkids to leave than to come.(Laughs)

This was 35 years ago. However, I went there by bus and train. I tried to preserve my integrity then.

But they said their daughters-in-law are different from them now. June said that it is hard to be a great mother-in-law. She explained that there are several guidelines to get an "A" from a daughter-in-law. One of the guidelines is that a mother-in-law does not call a daughter-in-law before a daughter-in-law calls her. A daughter-in-law wants her to respect that her son and daughter-in-law have their own lives. A daughter-in-law does not want her to call them as often as she wants to see them. Sun said:

> And… my daughter-in-law did not even call me once a week. I had called her once they got married and she became pregnant. I called her to ask 'How are you? How is your morning sickness? Is there anything you want to eat?' And, I was glad to get a phone call from her. Yet when she did not call me, I called her and said, 'I called to hear your voice. Why didn't you call me last week?' in order to remind her to call me. But, I do not know if she truly understood what I was trying to say. She said, 'I will call you.' But she only calls me whenever she has something specific to tell me.

Sun wanted to have a close relationship with her daughter-in-law, similar to the intimate attachment that she has with her daughters. Yet she was aware that her daughter-in-law does not want to be her daughter. For example, when Sun offers to help her daughter-in-law, she often refuses her help, unlike her daughters. I can understand her devotion toward her children, including her daughter-in-law, but at the same time, as a daughter-in-law myself, I can understand why her daughter-in-law is reluctant to accept her loving offers to help. Although my generation is different from earlier ones, the foundations of family relationships still have norms rooted in Confucian ideology. Filial piety has played a significant role in guiding children' behavior toward

their parents. Children are expected to repay their parents for their many years of love and care (Sung, 1998). As the parents provide their children with material and nonmaterial things that they need when they grow up, their children have the obligation of supporting their aging parents. In this context, a daughter-in-law might feel obligated to compensate a mother-in-law for her devotion, which could put a strain on a daughter-in-law. Furthermore, mothers-in-law also expect rewards for their affection or devotion from their children. Sun said, "I experience the emotion of regret when she does not thank me." Although Sun has felt regretful over her daughter-in-law, she said that she was able to set boundaries in their relationship. Sun said:

> A daughter-in-law is different from a daughter. I am aware that I have to set
> boundaries in the relationship with my daughter-in-law not to disappoint myself.

Hyun asserts that money is also required to be a great mother-in-law:

> And, when I go to my son's house, I ask, 'What do you want to have for dinner?'
> My daughter-in-law says, 'I want to have steak. Can we go out for steak?' So we
> go out for dinner and I treat them. So, money is required. What if a mother-in-
> law wants to have dinner at home since she cannot afford to treat them and fixes
> it herself? Would a daughter-in-law like this? I was aware of this. The power of
> money makes my life easier. When we have dinner at home, we have to cook and
> wash dishes. Even if a mother-in-law cooks, a daughter-in-law has to help her.
> She has to go grocery shopping and cook something special whenever a mother-
> in-law comes. A daughter-in-law experiences a lot of stress in this situation, so a
> mother-in-law would not be welcomed.

Relationship with a daughter-in-law: I give up a privileged position

A mother-in-law has traditionally been deeply involved in her son's family in South Korea. She helps her son select his lifelong partner. Some mothers serve as a matchmaker for their sons and even select and pursue a woman whom she would like her son to marry. She provides all or part of the costs of marriage including the house. After her son gets married, she wants to keep her privileged position of controlling her son's family as a mother. A mother-in-law tends to hold a dominant position in her son's family, while a mother of a daughter-in-law is in the subordinate position. Housework or post-birth care requiring great labor tends to be arranged as the duty of a daughter's mother. Jeong took care of her daughter-in-law after the birth of her two grandsons, although the mother of her daughter-in-law did not do anything at that time. She said that this is an unusual case in South Korea. Soo said:

Some blame the mothers of their daughters-in-law since they do not play the role

of a mother of a daughter-in-law. I do not like that. I scold those women in my

daughter-in-law's position. If a mother-in-law is able to make Kimchi, she does

it. If her mother is able to make Kimchi, she does it. Or, when both mothers make

Kimchi for her, a daughter-in-law can give some to her next door neighbor. This

is the right way to handle the situation. You do not have to keep all of the

customs. People usually expect that the mother of a daughter-in-law will take

care of the grandkids, but I took care of my granddaughter for a year. Now my

daughter-in-law takes care of her second child. She went on a three-year

maternity leave. Some people get divorced because of this issue. Usually, a

mother-in-law causes her son to get divorced. Of course, a daughter's mother

may account for divorce as well. The conflicts between a mother-in-law and a

daughter's mother often result in divorce. It is so sad.

Soo said that a mother-in-law of her generation just wanted a daughter-in-law to serve her and her family without any concern about caring for her daughter-in-law and her family. Yet, most of the participants, including Soo, began to question the superior position assigned to a mother-in-law, which generates conflict between her son and daughter-in-law. She said:

> My daughter-in-law gave me $200 on Thanksgiving Day. I told her, 'You have to
>
> care for your mother as you do for me.'

Sook has told her first son that he now has to become a filial son to his parents-in-law since he married their daughter. She is worried that her first son's burden to take care of his parents may create conflict between him and his wife. However, she always feels sorry for her son who has been taking care of his recently widowed mother-in-law. In South Korea, a son's filial piety toward his wife's parents is still not expected. He often goes to see his mother-in-law who lives in Daegu. He drives about five hours each way to go there. She said:

> So, I have said nothing about all this driving he does for a long time. But I still do
>
> not like it in my mind. Isn't it difficult to drive for a long time? It wastes time.
>
> Above all, it is not good for his health. However, I try to understand this
>
> situation. 'He has to take care of his mother-in-law.' There are two thoughts—
>
> positive and negative in my mind. I sometimes think, 'How tired is he? If she
>
> lived in Seoul, it could be better.'

Relationship with a son: I am aware of my preference for my son

Korean people traditionally prefer a son to a daughter. Son preference in South Korea is attributed to patriarchal family systems and Confucian values (Das Gupta, et al., January 3, 2003). Sons are valued more than daughters, since only men are able to pass on the family name.

Continuing the family line is one of the filial duties that a son has to fulfill. Thus, a newly married woman's first duty has traditionally been to bear a son. If she fails to bear a son as her first child, she feels guilt and pressure until a son is born. Although this norm has decreased in value due to low fertility rates, the fact that the sex ratio at birth is skewed towards more males than the normal biological range shows that there is an extant son preference in South Korea (Das Gupta, et al., January 3, 2003). I often hear young married women say, "I finished my assignment," after giving birth to a son. During our interview, Won, who has three daughters and no sons, mentioned the pressure and anxiety she felt to bear a son:

> What could I do to have a son? It lies beyond the abilities of a human. (Laughs)
> … So, I tried to bear a son for a long time. I really wanted a son, but now, I am
> okay without one.

A mother waits with great anticipation to have a son, so once he is born, he is spoiled and favored by his mother. Hyun said:

> I doted on my son. I was more attentive to my son than to my husband. (Before
> he married) when my son asked me to buy something for him, I could not say
> 'no.' I said, 'I will think about it' and bought whatever he wanted. Yet, I would
> tell my daughter, 'I cannot afford to buy what you want. So you have to handle
> this.' And I scolded her. My daughter complained about my behavior and told
> me, 'You always favor my brother!' But I ignored her complaint at that time.
> But, now, I am aware of my preference for my son.

Bearing a son is important with regard to women's autonomy in the family. A woman who has a son seems to gain power in her husband's household. According to Das Gupta and colleagues' ethnographic research, in countries that have a strong preference for sons, "a woman's main source of standing in her husband's family is as the mother of the future men of

the family (Das Gupta, et al., January 3, 2003, p.17)." This tendency can be found in women's early lives. As a woman gets older, a woman tends to gain autonomy in the household through the support of adult sons. Sun said:

Her (Sun's mother-in-law's) neck was in a cast. She always stood up in front of me with her stiff neck. I was oppressed by my mother-in-law. Her power came from my husband's filial affection. She had an authoritative manner, as if to say, 'You are unable to defy my authority because of my son.' She was really bossy.

The participants still believe their sons, especially their oldest sons, will become a reliable source of support for them in their old age. Yet, they seem to be different from their mother-in-laws, who achieved power in the household by subordinating their daughters-in-law using a strong mother-son bond. They seem to think that it is much more important to prevent relationship issues by distancing themselves from their sons than to gain power by binding their son to themselves. Sook said:

Yes. Although he (her eldest son) does not say so, I know that he thinks of me. I am able to depend on him.

She continued:

Mothers say, 'You have to think that your son is the husband of this woman (your daughter-in-law)' He is not my son but her husband. If you refer to your son as her husband, you can distance yourself from your son. I want to keep some distance between us rather than have him too close to me (and create problems).

Relationship with a son: I do not want to live with my son

Currently older women do not seem to want to live with their sons. While older women do not want to go back to multigenerational living arrangements, the number of married sons who want to live with their parents has increased, especially when help is needed to take care of their child. The women seem to be aware of the fact that they are expected to support their daughter-in-law. Young, who lived with her son's family for two years, said:

I moved into my son's house because my son asked me to take care of my 100 day-old grandson. I lived with them for two years. But two years was the limit of my ability. I could no longer live with them. Because… well, my daughter-in-law is easy to get along with and a polite person. The problem was actually with myself. I was so meticulous about doing housework that I exhausted myself. I think that current mothers-in-law might be in the same situation as me. My generation is in the worst situation. We supported our older parents-in-law in our early years and now support our (working) daughters-in-law in our later years. Of course, the present is better than the past. The family size is smaller now, and my son employed a babysitter to help me. But, I felt, when she (my daughter-in-law) returned home, she was thinking, 'What did you do all day? You didn't clean up the house?' But, actually, she did not say anything.

Chang lived with her son and daughter-in-law in her house for six months when her son first got married, and then they moved out of her house. She is happy to have some physical distance from her son since she no longer has to infringe upon the lifestyle that her son and daughter-in-law had, being young adults. Chang said:

(I had to put a lot of effort and care into the way I dressed and the food I made. When I live with only my husband, food does not matter. We, old people, have

similar taste in food. But, when I was living with my son's family, I had to

prepare three different categories of foods: food for babies, food for young

people, and food for old people. This was inconvenient. For example, my

grandchild likes curry rice, while my husband does not like it. It was hard to

compromise. But, now, since we live with people who are like ourselves, it is

much easier and more convenient.

Although Sook has not lived with her son's family, she is sure that it would not be good

for her. Sook's married son and daughter visit her once or twice per month. She feels that it is not

easy for her to serve them. After they leave, she often aches all over. She said, "I am happier

when their children leave my house than when they arrive at my house." She has to take care of

her grandchildren and prepare meals when their children come to her house. She said:

Uh, to make my senior years easier, I have changed my mind (about living with

my son). I won't live with them after all (Laughs).

Older women's economic and emotional well-being still seems to depend on their eldest

son, despite the remarkable social changes in South Korea. Older women who have sons seem to

feel safe because of the fact that their eldest sons are around them, although they do not want to

depend on them. Stay-at-home mothers who depend on their husband for income especially tend

to rely more on their eldest son when they become older. The eldest son serves as their "pension"

in their later years. This may help to explain why Soo has been proud of the filial affection of her

son. Soo feels thankful for her eldest son's attempt to fulfill his filial duties. Soo said:

I am different. Others think that they have to get back the money they invested in

their sons. But I do not think so. It was my obligation. … I am not well-off

because my husband failed several years ago. My eldest son, as the eldest son,

does better than expected. I always tell him that he has to love his wife and serve

his parents-in-law. I have never told him that he has to do something for me,but

he really cares about me.

Hyun also said:

My son tells me that he will live with me at Suji, which has a great view. I

cannot assert,'I won't live with you' because I do not know my future. But, if I

say, 'Why don't you look for a house where we can live together?' he would feel

uncomfortable with this. So I just smile when he talks about that.

She continued:

I do not want to live with my son. … I do not want to live with my son, eating

and sleeping under the same roof. I guess this means that I am not enough old to

need someone's help. I am healthy now. But, when I am totally dependent on

others, I am bound to rely on my son.

Relationship with a daughter: My daughter wants to get involved in my family affairs

Daughters in South Korea used to assume that they would become a visitor in their

family of birth after they got married. Until my mother's generation, once a woman got married,

she rarely had a chance to visit her own family. Even if her father's house was near her home, she

could not go there as often as she wanted since a woman who often went to her father's house

was perceived as having marriage problems. A father's house was not a socially acceptable place

for a married woman. Soo remembered:

I handled issues and problems involving my marriage by myself. I did not go to

my mom. I did not stay more than a day at my father's house. The neighbors of

my father teased me, saying, 'You should go home since you miss your

husband.' But, it was not true. My thought was that I had returned back to the

place to which I belong.

A decline in discrimination against women due to less emphasis on the rigidly patrilineal family system currently not only allows daughters to visit their parents often but also permits them to get involved in their family of birth. Sook said:

When my son and daughter-in-law missed my birthday, my daughter reminded

them of my birthday. I did not get involved in my parents' family affairs, such as

my mother's birthday. I rarely went to see my mom on her birthday. I did not

take care of my mom. I did not want to make my life complicated by getting

involved in my family of birth. I thought that I could not do anything for my

mom. But my daughter is different. She maintains order in my family and wants

to get involved in my family affairs.

Sun feels tension between her and her daughter-in-law, but her two daughters often tell her that they will support her when she gets older. Sun said:

And, my daughters says, 'Mom, do not expect your daughter-in-law to take care

of you. You have us, your two daughters. You do not need to worry about your

life later on. We will manage your elderly years.'

Moreover, currently daughters financially contribute to their parents' wellbeing. I think this is a major difference between my mother's generation and my generation. In the past, even if a woman had her own income, it was assumed that her earnings would be set aside for her husband's family, not for her parents, since she was totally extracted from her own family. Yet increasing women's status in the family and decision-making power within the household has enabled married daughters to be able to financially support their parents. Daughters who are

employed and have their own income seem to contribute more to their parents. This means that they have extra money to spend and independence to make their own decisions about what to do with their earnings. Won's second daughter, who has a good paying job, sends Won $300.00 dollars every month. Although Won does not have a son, she does not envy women who have a son.

Relationship with a daughter: The first duty is to serve your husband and his family

Won, who does not have a son, has plans for her later years that differ from those of women who have a son. Although her three daughters say one of them will live with her when she needs someone to help her, Sun thinks that this would not be good for her daughters. She said:

> My daughters say they will take the responsibility of caring for me. If not
> …um… I do not expect them to do that. I always tell my daughters that I will go
> to a nursing home. I would be able to live there for the rest of my life if it doesn't
> cost too much. I think I can afford to pay for nursing home care. I say, 'I won't
> inconvenience you as long as I live.' Then, they say, 'Now I have heard enough.'
> They do not like the idea of a nursing home. Rather, they suggest alternatives,
> such as home care instead of a nursing home. You do not need to rely on your
> children if you have money. You can live comfortably at the facilities for the old.

Hyun has been aware that her daughter has become more valuable to her since her son got married. She recently purchased several types of insurance for her daughter. However, she says her daughter is like an "eternal love" with whom she cannot live. She said:

Sure. I think it (parents living with their son) is the right thing to do, although many people often say they will rely on their daughter.

Young has similar thoughts. She said:

Do I intend to live with my daughter? No way! I won't live with my daughter. If I need to live with my children, it would be better to live with my son. It (living with a daughter) is wrong. If she is to support an aging parent, the aging parent must be her mother-in-law. A daughter is a visitor who was extracted from her family. She has to live with her mother-in-law. Why would she live with her mother? It would not make sense. It is wrong. Later, you must live with your mother-in-law, not your own mother.

Sun always talks to her first daughter about the responsibilities and obligations of married women, which she learned from her mother. She said, 'I tell her, the first duty is to serve your husband and his family.' Although she feels thankful for the affection that her daughter shows her, she seems to believe that she must become more active in the family of her son-in-law. Kyung is proud of her daughters who are devoted to their husbands and in-laws. She said:

Men, they like to be respected. We say men are the sky, while women are the ground. They like it that way. Today's young women are too arrogant. I have two daughters, but they are different from the other young women of today. They are subdued. My sons-in-law like them very much. They seem to have learned this from me.

Wedding Preparation

South Korea has a wedding custom in which the groom's family prepares a house for the couple to live in and the bride's family prepares the electronics, goods, and furniture to fill the house. The net expenses of a son's marriage are estimated to be three to four times higher than that of a daughter's marriage because of high real estate prices (Bae, 1996). This contemporary wedding custom has pressed parents. Although the groom and bride are becoming more independent from their parents, many grooms and brides still leave the wedding expenses up to their parents. Both parents tend to be eager to be a part of the wedding preparation since they are wired to believe this is one of their parental responsibilities, and at the same time, they want to give all they can for their children's once-in-a-lifetime event. If the groom's parents do not prepare a house for the couple, they tend to feel sorry for their son, and at the same time, they do not think they can fully exercise their rights as parents-in-law to their daughter-in-law. Yet, in reality, few parents are able to buy a house for their son because of high real estate prices. Parents usually pay a portion of the total amount of a house.

Jeong, who is impoverished due to her husband's bankruptcy, felt the pressure to prepare a house for her son's family. Jeong has been the sole provider of income since her husband's company filed bankruptcy. She worked in a restaurant and in private homes as a housemaid. She said it is easier than young people think for older women to find jobs in food service, cleaning services and child care since older women have a good housework skills. Although these jobs pay minimum wage and have inferior working conditions, such as variable hours and days of the week, if an older woman is healthy, she can work. Above all, she was satisfied with the fact that she is still able to make money. Recently, she has made money babysitting the son of her daughter and her neighbor's daughter. The money that she earns every month is not much, but it

can pay the monthly rent and the minimum cost of living for her and her husband. Yet, she was unable to save money for her children's wedding.

Fortunately, her children were financially independent after they graduated from high school. Since her son was an outstanding student who received a scholarship, she was able to save a lot of money on her children's education. He went to one of the top-ranked universities in South Korea without any private tutoring (a common practice in Korea) and received a full college scholarship for four years. Korean parents, especially mothers who are responsible for the success of their children in school, have devoted a great deal of energy and expense on their children's education. They believe education, that is, their children's successful academic career, guarantees their children to achieve status and power in society (Seth, 2002). Moreover, when their children go to top-ranked colleges and then obtain a high paying job, mothers are able to earn enough prestige to be called a "wise mother" (H.O. Kim & Hoppe-Graff, 2001; Seth, 2002). Whenever other mothers ask Jeong how she reared her own son, she feels thankful and sorry at the same time for her son. She looked very proud of her son when she talked about him during the interview.

Her brilliant son graduated from college and then went to the United States to get his doctorate. He returned home from the U.S. last year and became a professor. Yet, once her son's family returned to Korea, he had neither a job nor a house to call his own. Jeong said last year was difficult because of her daughter-in-law. I was able to see her bitterness through the uneasy look on her face. Her daughter-in-law complained about her parents-in-law having no money. Jeong said:

> Since (my daughter-in-law) kept pestering my son and me, I depleted my savings
> and gave them 6,500,000 won (about $6,500.00) for a down payment on a house.
> I have spent all my life savings, so now I am broke. I wanted to help them
> because of my son. If I had more money, I would give them more.

Won and Soo have also experienced the same pressure that Jeong described. Won said:

There are young people who get help from their parents when buying a house. Yet, my daughter moved into my house to save money. She had a plan to buy her own apartment by herself.

Soo explained why she refuses for her 37-year-old single son to move out of her house:

My son wanted to move out of my house and to rent a studio apartment. But I appeased him. I told him that he could move out after he got married. There is a conflict between us . If he lives alone, he has to spend a lot of money on living expenses. And, I would have to take care of him, too.… So he did not save money to buy his own house.

Won and Soo, who cannot afford to buy a house for their children, insist that adult children live with their parents until they are ready to leave. They want to help their children save money by living together. They often mentioned during the interview that, at their age, it is hard to live with their adult children. Yet no matter how old their children are or how hard it is to live with them, living together with adult children is another way for them to reduce the pressure of preparing a house for their children.

In addition to the wedding preparation, Korean parents seem to have the pressure of financially supporting their adult children. Even after the children get married, they often ask their parents for help when they need money for a new house or for a new business. The parents also expect that they will financially support their adult children. If the parents do not have enough money for their children, they tend to feel very sorry for their children. Yet, since ordinarily older parents (who are not rich) come to live on a tight budget after the husband retires, in reality, it is challenging to financially support their adult children. Sook said:

I have given my children one hundred thousand won or more (one hundred

dollars or more) when they have a special event like moving into a new house or

a grandchild's first birthday. I can afford to do enough to save face but I cannot

help more than that. I am sad… I want to help them. But the reality is… I am sad.

. .When they are young, my job is to help them establish themselves.

Sook has planned and budgeted home finances as the head of the household. After her husband was discharged from the army, she made changes in order to adjust to the current economic situation. She supported their children's college tuition and weddings by downsizing their home and selling her possessions. Now, she must depend on her husband's retirement pension. Fortunately, she can afford to pay their monthly bills on his monthly benefits, but she cannot cover the cost of supporting her adult family and maintaining an active social life. Yet, for her, it is hard to say to her children, "I cannot help you." She said:

If I refuse any of their requests, they would think of me as a stingy old person.

Making Kimchi

It was November when I met the participants to interview them. November and December are traditionally when mothers begin to make winter Kimchi. Kimchi is a traditional Korean pickled dish made of vegetables with varied seasonings and a staple at every Korean meal. Mothers have their favorite recipes that we refer to as "my mother's Kimchi." The recipes come from old recipes, but Kimchi is usually made from memory, passed down from women's mothers or mothers-in-law. Women in the family--mothers, daughters, and daughters-in-law--get together in the mother's home to make Kimchi in the early winter. This has been a cultural tradition and important role for women in the family. Yet, I have not made Kimchi with my mother-in-law because I left South Korea once I got married. Instead, my mother-in-law always calls me when Kimchi season arrives and tells me how delicious her Kimchi is and how much my husband likes her Kimchi.

During the winter Kimchi season, "Did you make Kimchi?" is a kind of greeting among mothers. I started a conversation with this greeting when I met Hyun. Hyun proudly answered:

Of course, it is mandatory!! I cannot ask others to make Kimchi for my children. I have to make it for my family. It is the primary duty of a mother.

I asked her what a primary duty is, and she responded:

At the very least, a mother has to make Korean traditional foods. It is essential to prepare enough Kimchi to consume for a year. There are many delicious Kimchi brands in grocery stores, but children's favorite Kimchi is always their mother's homemade Kimchi. This was my mother's philosophy. So I make Kimchi by myself, even if I am very busy. Whenever they say, 'We ran out of Kimchi,' I make Kimchi and send it to them. Kimchi, Gochujang and Doenjang.

Hyun has sent her son's family Kimchi every winter since her son got married. It is not easy for women over age 60 to make Kimchi for two families since the process to make Kimchi is time- and labor-intensive. It takes more than a day, including preparation time, to make Kimchi. A woman stands up and sits down on the floor for quite a long time while making Kimchi. Women also often have to bend down to lift heavy objects while making Kimchi. So many mothers complain about back, shoulder, or wrist pain after making Kimchi, even if they are young.

Obligation vs. Sacrifice

Most women over age 60, however, seem to assume that making Kimchi is still a mothers' obligation for her adult children, as Hyun mentioned above. All of the participants whom I met for the study have made Kimchi for their children. When Sun and Hyun talked about

their mothers-in-law who lacked a sense of responsibility, they mentioned that their mothers-in-law did not make Kimchi for their family when they were alive. Sun said:

> I am healthy. Since I am healthy, I like to do that. I want to be the mom who can
> do anything that my children want. I want to do that.

She continued:

> I think it is not a sacrifice but an obligation, something that one is expected to do
> out of obligation. A mother should give her children anything they want. And,
> 'no pain, no gain,' right? My children feel thankful when I do something for
> them. And it would motivate them do something for me and for their children. As
> a result, a grandchild would come to love his grandmother. My grandchildren call
> me to say, 'I love you, Grandmother.' You cannot imagine how happy I am
> when I get their phone calls.

Some participants, however, have a different perspective on doing things for their adult children. They think it is a sacrifice. Yoon has devoted several days a week to making some side dishes as well as Kimchi for her daughter's family. When she cooks food for her working daughter, her housework continues until late in the night. Yoon said, "I am also serving her family. They cannot make a living without my help. … It has become my burden in my later years…" She seems to be unsatisfied with the lack of time in her life since she spends a lot of time doing things for her adult children. Yoon, however, explained it in the following way:

> … Nevertheless, a great mother makes sacrifices for her children. She has an
> attitude of sacrifice for her children, even though her husband does not help her.
> A mother should make sacrifices for her nation, society and children.

Won also mentioned her sacrifice:

It is a generous activity to share my time and money. I have sacrificed my life for my daughter. I thought that supporting my children would end when they got married. I financially supported my children until college. But the situation in which I am… I am not able to spend time on myself in my later years.

I think that my mother's generation, which was more influenced by Western culture, tends to consider this a "sacrifice," while my grandmother's generation refers to it as an "obligation." From Korean traditional perspectives based on Confucian ideology, since one assumes that a person exists in a relationship with others, especially family (S. C. Choi & Choi, 1994; Markus & Kitayama, 1991), most of one's actions for others are performed out of obligation to meet another's expectations. On the other hand, from the Western perspectives based on individualism, one's actions for others, including family, is interpreted as a sacrifice or a service. Yet, regardless of how they view the action, women seem to believe that they are doing what is right for the sake of something on which they place a higher value.

Unwelcomed Mother-in-law's Kimchi

Women over age 60 hesitate to continue to do something like making Kimchi for their children, although they still believe that their action is justified. Yoon, who often encounters young women in her aerobics class, said:

I realized that I do not have to run their lives to do what is right. Young mothers said that they throw away Kimchi that their mothers-in-law make because they think the Kimchi is dirty, that is to say, because an old woman made it.

Yoon was recently aware that she would not be welcomed by her daughter-in-law because of her age. From an older person's perspective, Yoon understood a daughter-in-law's act

of throwing away Kimchi that an old mother-in-law made as a form of ageism. People tend to

view elderly people negatively, and senior citizens receive different treatment than younger

people. An older person's talent and value tend to be degraded by a young person because of their

age. Yet, people are not aware this is happening since ageism is not obvious. In South Korea, in

which respect for the aged is deeply rooted in Confucian ideology, older people here especially

tend to veil the unfair treatment or abuse of older people since they think that it is shameful for

both an individual and the family. Returning to the issue, however, there is another issue related

to the relationship between mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law. This shows a poor relationship

between mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law. Actually, I was a little surprised by Yoon's

understanding of the Kimchi discarding incident. From my perspective, that is, from a daughter-

in-law's perspective, throwing away a mother-in-law's Kimchi is a nonverbal behavior intended

to express hard feelings towards a mother-in-law. A daughter-in-law does not typically think that

the Kimchi her older mother-in-law makes is dirty. Yet, I did not comment about Yoon's

understanding then. I thought my comment might influence Yoon, since I am viewed as an

authority figure to her since her level of education was lower than mine, and she was respectful

about my education level during the interview.

Although in most cultures the mother-in-law / daughter-in-law relationship has tensions,

the tensions that Korean women have are often caused by hierarchical relations in the family

system based on Confucianism. In South Korea, a mother-in-law assumes that she has an

obligation to teach her daughter-in-law in order to raise her family. According to Das Gupta, et al.

(January 3, 2003), this is a way to keep their position within the family. So, a mother-in-law often

oppresses and scolds her daughter-in-law. Thus, in many cases, a daughter-in-law often feels hurt

and angry by her mother-in-law. The hurt and anger continuously built up in the mind of a

daughter-in-law becomes resentment. The resentment sometimes causes verbal, emotional, or

physical abuse by a daughter-in-law when her mother-in-law is elderly.

Exercise and Eating Healthy

The older women whom I met were interested in staying healthy in their later years. Before the participants described the actions they take to manage their health, most of them expressed why they have to stay healthy. They said the only way to reduce the financial burden on their children for elder care is to stay healthy. Young said, "If I have good health, my children would not need to pay much attention to me and could save their money." I was surprised by what she said. I asked again, "You really think that the main reason to be healthy later in life is just so you can avoid being a financial burden to your children?" She answered, "Yes." This surprised me. I expected to hear an answer like,"To be independent," or at least "To be independent from my children." based on aging people's personality traits that developmental psychology has revealed (see Chapter 2). However, older Korean women seem to be worried only about their children's financial losses resulting from caring for their aging parents. On my way home after finishing the interview with Young, I deliberated the life of my mother's generation. It looks like the tree in *The Giving Tree* (Silverstein, 1964). Isn't a mother always supposed to provide her children with what they want? If a mother asks her children for anything she needs, doesn't she become a burden to her children?

The participants believe that they can stave off age-related diseases by eating healthy and with regular exercise. Every individual has different ways to manage her health. For exercise, Hyun rides the subway instead of driving, Sook walks around a shopping center, and Sun goes to a fitness center. Eating healthy is also important to stay healthy in later on in life. Won buys fresh produce and fruit at a local market. Soo prefers homemade food for good health. So, when her granddaughters visit her, she always cooks at home instead of eating out. Won tries to eat more traditional Korean food, such as Kimchi and Gochujang-jjigae, which contain healthy garlic and soybeans. Although they are not able to pay as much as young people do for health and fitness

management due to their tight budgets, they know how to eat healthy and exercise within a budget. Sook said it comes from 40-years' experience in managing a house.

The women want to stay healthy, but they said that deterioration of physical strength due to old age is inevitable. Most of them said they have experienced aging more quickly since their 60th birthday. Sun said, "My experience from last year (when she was 59 years old) is different from this year." June has had knee joint pain often since she turned 60. According to clinical studies, lifestyle, genetic makeup and hormones affect how you age. So every individual will experience aging differently. Yet, most of the participants said they began to become aware of age-related physical changes after their 60th birthday, which is referred to as the entry point for old age in South Korea. Sixty-four-year-old Soo has already experienced age-related changes in her bones, which bothers her every day. Soo said:

> I still want to take a trip, but because of my knee joint pain… I am not able to go
>
> . If I walked well, I could take a trip, right? Since my joints hurt, I am not able to
>
> take a trip. I mean taking a trip alone. I often watch a TV travel show in which
>
> Yang, Hui-eun (a Korean singer) stars. When I see her go to the country on TV, a
>
> strong compulsion to take a trip pops up into my mind. If my joints got better, I
>
> would be able to do this.

Sixty-six -year-old Chang is the oldest of the participants, but she looks younger than her age. Although she is slightly heavy like other women her age, her posture and gait also look healthy and younger than her age. She engages in moderate exercise to maintain her health. She walks around a local park early every morning. Chang said:

> I do not have age-related illnesses. I keep doing exercise. I do not go to the
>
> fitness center to exercise. I have been walking or climbing in the early morning
>
> since my daughter went to college, 1988. I lived in Gwacheon, which has

mountains. Mountains are good for exercise. I climbed the mountain every

morning.

As she mentions above, Korean women who stay at home tend to begin to do exercise regularly after their children graduate from high school. Children's education is a very important responsibility of a mother in South Korea. Finishing high school and going to a college allow her to be able to have more time for herself. A mother does not feel free from the responsibility of motherhood until her children get married. Sook remembered that her forties was a peak time when she was eager to do something for herself. She learned to play the piano and swim at this time. When women reach their fifties and experience menopause, they often come to be more interested in their health. Kyung, who reported poorer health than her husband who is seven years her senior, said:

When I worked for a while, I used to eat breakfast standing up. A mother lives in

this way. But the father of my children (my husband) was very interested in his

health. It seems like I am criticizing him, but I am not. Anyway, it is better for

me because he is healthy now. (If he was sick), it would be the brunt of my later

years. I would rather say thank you to my husband (for taking care of his health).

But, recently, I have become aware of it (the importance of taking care of one's

health). Well, I should have taken care of myself.

She continued:

I always advise my daughters to take care of their health in their forties and

fifties. I did not know about that when I was that age. I did not have time to

spend on my health. I was busy supporting my family. Neither did I spruce

myself up. I was thrifty. But you need to take care of your health in your forties

and fifties. After menopause, your health declines. Nobody told me about that.

Although she did not regret her dedication to her family, she wished she had started taking care of herself at a younger age. Arber and Cooper (1999) assert that women are more likely to be socially and materially disadvantaged than men in the area of health. , Specifically, mothers who stay at home seem to have fewer opportunities to take care of their health. Working mothers have a little extra money to spend on themselves since they have their own income. Also, those who work in decent occupations have an opportunity for regular health-checkups. Most participants who were stay-at-home mothers did not have the time to regularly keep up a work-out schedule and did not have extra money to go to the gym. When they reach their sixties, since they experience a lack of adequate income due to their husbands' retirement, few older women can spend money on their health. Thus, they tend to choose forms of exercise for which they do not need to pay, such as a free exercise class, walking or climbing. Young said:

> I have a yoga class on Wednesday. … I do not need to pay for it. It is free!! The
>
> Mapo-gu Office offers free classes for adults. The yoga class is free, too.

Eating well is another strategy the participants employ to stay healthy. When I interviewed or observed the participants, they spent a considerable time talking about food. There are several short notes complaining of their never-ending food stories in my field notes. Before I interviewed the participants, I already knew that older women are very interested in food. My mother-in-law always talks about food and how to eat well. When I did not have my own child, I hated her never-ending food stories since I thought she was pushing me in order to make me a "good wife." Yet, after I gave birth to my son, she became a nutrition guide for my child, so now I am able to listen to what she says. I was aware that food and cooking are common topics of conversation which older housewives discuss together. Chang said her conversations focused on people when she was younger, but as she has been aging, she came to focus on food-related issues, such as how to eat well and how to stay healthy.

They share their experiences and exchange information about healthy food and cooking, fruits and vegetables in season, dietary supplements, food and cooking television shows, and so on. Sook said that older women talk about food and health so much that young people cannot stand it. Jeong said:

> Chungbuk, I went there with friends of mine for some reason. It was fall. Wow, how beautiful it is! But, they kept talking about making Gochujang. 'I put this in mine…' So, I said 'Enough, stop making Gochujang.' 'Hey, look over there! Look how wonderful the red leaves are!' One of them said, 'I went to see the scarlet maple leaves several days ago.' And then they continued to talking about making Gochujang.

Due to increasing health problems that environmental pollution causes, many people prefer to buy organic food to protect their health in South Korea. Organic food is more expensive than non-organic food, so few older people can afford to eat organic food. Most participants who live on a tight budget seem to find alternatives to organic food. Kyung said:

> However, we, older women, do not buy organic food although we know it is good for our health. I buy food that I am used to eating. It (organic food) is very expensive. I buy non-organic vegetables and food and rinse them as many times as necessary. After I rinse lettuce, it becomes ragged since I rinse it many times, four to five times. This is all I can do. Instead (of buying organic food), we can rinse them (non-organic foods) several times.

Sook knows how to eat well without overspending:

I have wisdom that age brings. I cook healthy meals with inexpensive

ingredients, thinking of nutrition. I have to live within my budget, which limits

purchasing expensive foods. Age brings wisdom. (Laughs) I did housework for

37 or 38 years.

The Fear of Being a Burden to One's Children

The participants seem to perceive their aging with the fear of becoming a financial

burden to their children. A generation ago, older Korean women did not necessarily have to be

financially independent. They were dependent on their husbands for financial support. After their

husbands died, they took it for granted that they would rely on their children. The oldest sons also

thought they should be responsible for taking care of their aging mothers instead of other siblings.

In the case of an untimely death of their husbands, like Won's and Hyun's mother-in-laws, they

depended on their oldest sons for financial support, living with them for 20-30 years until they

died. Yet, the participants seem to have no expectation that someday they will be taken care of by

their children since they do not think young people can afford to fulfill the responsibility of

providing financial support to their elderly parents. Of course, since families have been the only

source of support for the elderly in South Korea, in times of hardship such as tremendous medical

bills, they seem to expect financial support from their children. Sook said:

> I told my children, 'Although I do not know when I will die, it would be better
>
> for you if I am healthy. If… if I am sick, you and I would have a hard time. Let's
>
> do our best to stay well.' I said this to my children.

In addition to children's anticipated financial difficulties, they seem to be afraid that their

children will refuse to pay for their living expenses since young people who lack filial morality as

well as filial piety regard old people as a burden. Many of the participants seem to be familiar

with extreme examples of uncared-for old people. When I observed Won in a dance class, she

talked about the abandoned Korean old man in the Philippines that aired on a television

newsmagazine with her friends. The old man sold his two hundred million-dollar house to help

his son's new business in the Philippines. His son left Seoul with the money promising to live

with his father in the Philippines. Several months later, the old man packed and left for the

Philippines to live with his son's family. But his son declined to accept his father in the

Philippines. So a poor old Korean man had to stay at the shelter in the Philippines. Won and her

friends blamed the son in a loud voice and decided to defend their homes under any condition for

their elderly years. They seem to believe that defending the homes that they possess is one way to

ensure their continued financial security. Recently, Sook became serious about selling her home

to help her children. Yet, she hesitated to sell her home. Sook said:

> I want to help them. But the reality is… I am sad. When they are young, I have to
>
> help them settle down. … I will have to sell my house to afford the cost of living
>
> when I am older. So I cannot help them more. I often think that I would be able
>
> to help them if I sell my house. But, soon, I change my mind. Keeping my house
>
> is the only way to protect my unknown future. … When I am older, I do not want
>
> to be their burden. If I ask for help, they would be in big trouble because they
>
> have their own family.

My mother-in-law also often says that her apartment would cover her living expenses

later in her life. Five years after her husband's retirement, she decided to move into a rural area

from the city to reduce their monthly bills. She plans to support herself and her husband by

depleting their biggest asset-- their home. In my mother's generation, a typical Korean middle-

class family lived on the income of a single breadwinner. They struggled to provide for their

family. They spent most of their income on housing and on their children's education, including

private tutoring. Additionally, the need to save for their children's college tuition and weddings

put retirement further out of reach. Yet, fortunately, for those who have their own homes, the skyrocketing home prices due to the real estate boom became their retirement plan. Thus, they seem to think that they have to defend their homes in order to remain independent from their children.

However, their fear seems to have less to do with saving for their future financial situation. Like Chang and Sun, those who have enough savings for financial comfort in their later years also have the fear of financial insecurity later on in life. Sun said, "I think that living longer would be a burden on our children."

She was worried about unexpected age-related diseases, which entail expensive hospital bills. She seems to believe that aging comes with chronic and disabling illnesses such as cancer or Alzheimer's disease. Although an unhealthy lifestyle and dietary pattern or a person's genetic predisposition to disease tends to trigger these illnesses, many people believe that old age is responsible for them (Hall, 2007). Yet, the fact that we cannot deny is that the incidence of these illnesses goes up as people age and these illnesses bring about terrific hospital bills that are linked to the major financial difficulties of the elderly (Harper, 2004; Muhlbarer, 2007). Thus, older women seem to assume that in the end, they are doomed to become a burden to their children.

Socializing to Have Fun

The participants have more free time now that they have finished raising their children and taking care of their aging parents. In this section, I describe the actions and duties that they perform during the day. Most participants tend to be more involved in social activities as they get older. In general, they spend time socializing with friends, traveling, participating in formal class-based learning, and volunteering.

Most participants do not like to stay home in the daytime. If they are home, they tend to feel bored or depressed. They feel lazy or tired and just want to lie down. Even if they have the things to do, they feel no desire to do them. Thus, they go out. Although they began to participate in social activities simply to avoid boredom, new social groups and roles and tasks in which they are involved motivate them to have fun and enjoy their later years. Older Korean women perceive volunteering, formal class-based learning and physical activity as meaningful social activities.

This section is organized in three subsections: (1) depressive symptoms, (2) going out to have fun, (3) meaningful social activities: volunteering, formal class-based learning and physical activity.

Depressive Symptoms

I was finally able to reach Yoon after attempting to contact her for two weeks. I called her several times but she did not answer the phone. I met her at the lounge of the senior center. She looks younger than her age and is very active. Her long blue colored vest and oversized green colored handbag made her look far younger. Once she sat down in for the interview, she said she is too busy to answer the phone during the day. During our first meeting, she talked extensively about her activities in the senior center. When I met her again, she said she had nothing to talk about except for the activities in the senior center. She said she feels no desire to do anything as she gets older. She said:

> Yeah. When you reach my age, (you will understand what I mean). When I was
> young, I had the desire to dust my furniture and to organize my home. But now, I
> feel no desire to do anything. I am often tired, but I have no desire. I do
> something just to do it. When I get together with my friends, we often talk about

this. We feel no desire to do anything as we age. A friend of mine told me that dying brain cells are a major cause of old people's depression.

Soo has experienced similar symptoms:

I feel no desire to do anything because I am old. Do not laugh! (Laughs) … A long time ago, when I bought plates, my mother-in-law said, 'It is your high time. You enjoy your life.' At that time, I could not understand what she meant. (But now I do.) I have no desire to buy brand-new things anymore. I have enough plates that I can use. Of course, I can afford to buy new plates. But I do not feel the desire to buy new ones.

Although Soo does not feel the desire to do anything, since staying home alone aggravates her depressive symptoms, she tries to go out. She feels isolated when she stays home alone. Although she was talking about her depression as one of the symptoms she has experienced as she has gotten older, to me, it sounded like she was saying that she does not know how to spend time alone. She said:

Yesterday, I went out around 2 pm. It is not good to stay home alone all day. I went out and returned home around 5:30 pm. When I stay home, I often lie and… Anyway, I feel weird. I do not have lots of housework to do: cooking, cleaning and washing dishes and clothes. They do not take a long time. I am able to finish everything within a couple of hours. Or, if I do not want to do these things, I can do them tomorrow. So, I went out and strolled along the neighborhood.

Sook was aware how dreadful depression is. Her neighbor, a young mother with three small children jumped off her apartment several months ago. Sook heard that she suffered from depression. She said:

> Her poor little kids! Her family was so sad. In life, you have to be patient with yourself and find ways to console yourself. But, she was (not able to do this)… I create something for myself to do so that I won't feel blue. I go to church or go out to meet my friends. Someone asks me, 'Seong's mom, do you feel blue? I thought you are too busy to feel blue.' But, I feel blue every now and then.

Old women seem to think that depression is a normal part of aging. Although people of any age can feel blue, in our youth-oriented culture, depression is often attributed to aging (Tafler, 1998). Of course, as Young mentioned above, chemical changes in the brain bring about mood change as the body grows older. Yet, in many cases, the changes in their lives and in their perspectives resulting from individual experiences contribute to depression in old age (Tafler, 1988). According to studies (Y. Lee & Shinkai; Ryff, 1995), especially Korean studies, housewives who place a greater emphasis on their husband and children tend to show depressive symptoms and lower life satisfaction as they age after their children or elderly parents whom they took care of move out or pass away.

In contrast to Yoon, Soo, and Sook who have to make a schedule to "kill time," Chang is happy since she finally gets time to spend on herself doing enjoyable activities. When she was younger, it was hard to take advantage of opportunities to get involved in activities. Chang feels that she is at the peak of her life since becoming a grandmother in her fifties. She said:

> When I raised my children, I was overwhelmed by my worries, my children's education, managing the household, and the pressure of my children getting married. But now, I am free from it all. My granddaughters are not my liability. I

don't have primary responsibility for them, right? I have indirect responsibility,

though. It makes me free that I am not fully responsible for them. Um.. So, I am

really happy and high on life.

She goes out almost everyday. She is too busy to see her children:

When my son wants to see me, he calls and asks me when I am available. But, I

do not let him come to my house because I am very busy. My husband and I go

see my son when we are free.

Chang said that she now spends more time enjoying her social life than ever before. She

travels often, attends Mass almost everyday, and participates in the learning activities at her

Catholic church twice a week. Furthermore, she sets aside some free time to meet up with her

friends. She has kept in good touch with her old friends while raising her children and taking

care of her elderly parents-in-law. She regularly has three meetings with her friends from

elementary school, high school, and college. This is a major difference between Chang and the

other participants. After they got married, most participants, like Yoon and Soo, limited their

relationships to their husband and children. This is true not only of the participants but also of

most married Korean women, who tend to follow their husbands' social lives. Thus, it is hard to

maintain their own friendships. Chang said:

It is hard to meet friends when you are raising kids. But, I never missed out on

these get-togethers. I have attended every one of my school reunions since I

graduated in 1959.. And, I have attended every one of my college reunions since

1963.

I thought that her financial status allowed her to keep her active individual social life. She

often travels abroad, and these trips can be expensive. I asked her if her financial ability was

what allowed her to continue her active social life. She said that her family was poor when she was young since her husband took on the debt of her husband's eldest brother. In addition to taking on his brother's debt, her husband took care of his parents and his brother's children as a substitute for his brother. She thought her strong effort to keep her individual life and splitting up and sharing the housework with her mother-in-law seemed to make it possible for her to continue her social life. S. M. Rose (2007) explains that the limitations on women's friendships show patriarchal definitions of women's place as secondary and subservient to men (p. 116). Particularly, housewives who do not have their own income rarely meet their friends due to a tight budget and family and household responsibilities as their children grow up. Thus, Rose (2007) says, in order for women to keep their own separate friends, they have to make an extra effort to see their friends.

Going out to have fun

Younger Friends

My second interview with Sun took place on a Tuesday. Sun had a regular schedule that day. In the morning, she went to the gym after finishing her housework, and, in the afternoon, she was supposed to take care of her twin grandsons in her daughter's house. She said she was excited since she had an appointment to meet with me. I met her at her first daughter's house while she was babysitting. She said:

> I do not need to stay home alone, feeling helpless. I feel bored and cramped when
> I stay home. So, I schedule to go out. I go to the gym and church. And I meet
> friends and eat lunch together with them. I stay home only when I am ill. I cannot
> stay home all day long since I feel bored and cramped.

Her husband was a pharmacist who owned a drugstore. He shut down his store and retired from business five years ago. When her husband worked, she had to prepare three meals a day for him. After her husband ate breakfast and went to work, she delivered home-cooked meals to him at work during lunch and dinner everyday. Sometimes she worked at the drugstore, when her husband needed someone to run things in his place. So, after her children and parents-in-law no longer lived with her, she kept busy until her husband retired. Now, she came to have enough time to spend on herself. Although she has lived as a housewife, she was as busy as a working mother. Once her husband shut down his drugstore, she did not know how to manage her increased free time. She just stayed home for several months. Yet, as she said above, she was aware that people tend to feel depressed without an active social life. She has tried to connect with others. Although she initially started her social activities to simply get out of the house, these activities have been beneficial as well. It gives her a new joy to have fun with her friends, and these activities provide her with a new social role. Among her social activities, Sun prefers church activities since she is able to discover new social roles. She has participated in small women's groups at church to serve people who need help. She said:

> I have fun with young women who are my daughter's age, conversing in a
> friendly way. Although I am older than them, I do not want them to respect me as
> an old person. I prefer more casual, comfortable interactions, like the ones
> friends have. But, I want to be a positive role model for young mothers. I try to
> speak and behave correctly in the small women's group at church. I like to act as
> a consultant and give young mothers advice.

During her interview, I felt she was conscious of her role as an older person who has to serve as a role model to younger people. For example, when she talked about her hard feelings towards her mother-in-law, she emphasized her obedience to her mother-in-law at the end of her

story. This reflects her conservative disposition based on Confucian traditions. She often complained that modern-day young people tend to trivialize the traditional values and order in Korean society. In my reflective journal, I wrote about how uncomfortable I feel imposing the Confucian tradition on young people.

Sun enjoys interacting with friends in church activities. Particularly, she seems to be happy with her social role as an older woman who gives young people advice. Yet, Sook, who often meets young women in the volunteer group at her Catholic Church, has different thoughts. She said:

> I think young people are wise and smart. They manage their lives in a clever
>
> way. They live better than I did when I was their age. I do not need to worry
>
> about them.

She continued:

> We (old women) should not come forward like a stupid person. Give young
>
> people the road and support them by closing your mouth. We do not need to be
>
> angry and sad (if they ignore us) since I feel like they are my children.

The statement "I feel like they are my children" shows older Korean people's traditional attitude towards young people. Traditionally, in South Korea, an individual is perceived according to the person's status in society based on inherited characteristics such as age, gender, and family. People at each status/level have a designated way of doing things that is accepted by society. Korean people tend to think that younger people are immature, regardless of their individual differences, which established social norms such as "older people have to be generous to young people" and "older people have to teach young people." On the other hand, Sook judges young people by their own achievements. This is based on North American cultures in which people obtain status in society by their own achievements. I observed her interactions with the

younger members of her volunteer group. They were preparing to perform a play for their Christmas program. Sook received a supporting role in the play. Although she did not generate new ideas at rehearsals, she seemed to act as an encourager and harmonizer, going along with the group.

Kyung, who actively interacts with young people in her aerobics class, also said that older women do not need to act like a "fussy grandmother." She said young people are smart enough to find their own way so older people do not need to nag them. Sook and Kyung suggest that the new role of older people is to support young people. However, the achievement-based culture has decreased the traditional role of older people as advisers who have wisdom, since it has become a youth-oriented culture. Even though, in nearly all countries, the ability to offer wisdom has been attributed to older people, particularly, in South Korea based on Confucian ideology, the wisdom of the old was highly regarded. However, currently in South Korea, older people tend to be withdrawn from society. Even their act of sharing advice or wisdom is often deemed as a stubborn and defensive characteristic of old people. Kyung said, "Young people do not like it when old people take issue with their ideas. So, I accept their ideas without questioning them. They really like it better this way." To her, this seems to be a strategy to get along with young people.

Senior Friends

Although older women enjoy their new role developed by interacting with young people, they tend to get along best with women who are a similar age and who live in similar areas. Although most older Korean women neither socialize with many friends nor participate in many organizations, they have a close relationship with three to four friends. In organizations such as church and senior college groups, they tend to have closer bonds with three to four members

within the organizations. Chang, who is well educated and is financially comfortable, said "When it comes to relationships with others, I meet friends through the Catholic Church, or senior college, and befriended the mothers of my children. Since I did not have a job, most of my friends are housewives." Soo said, "Women over 50 do not place value on friends' appearance, education and money. Everyone is the same." They seem to become friends if they are able to meet often and share their experiences as a housewife.

Won left Yeouido, where she lived for 29 years, and moved to Mapo four years ago. She made good friends who live close to her apartment in Yeoido. Since she gave birth to her children when she lived in Yeouido, most of the friends she made there are mothers of her children's friends. So they are familiar with how her children and family grew up. Won is able to talk frankly about herself and her family to her old friends. When her first daughter returned to her house after she got divorced, she was able to explain this openly to her friends. In South Korea, especially for her generation, in many cases when women return home after their marriage breaks up, their parents have to struggle to make it work, because divorce is not culturally acceptable. Her friends provided sympathy and solace, which emotionally supported her when she had a hard time. She still keeps in touch with her friends who live in Yeoido. When she settled down in Mapo, she did not expect that she would make any good friends since she thought she was too old to make friends. Yet, fortunately, she did make good friends who are around her age, although she is less intimate with them than her Yeoido friends who share her personal life history. She likes to spend time with them, having fun and sharing laughs. She said:

> I really like my friends. Although I moved here just four years ago, I met really
>
> good people here. They also say that it was good luck to meet me in their old age.
>
> They often say it was good luck. I really like them, too.

Won goes to flower arranging class and dance class offered through her county office with her friends. In addition to the classes, they often get together to talk at someone's house. They also help each other with shopping and running errands. When I observed Won, Won was grocery shopping with three friends. Once they get together, they talk constantly and eat snacks. When I met Won, she and her friends did, indeed, talk a lot and eat a lot. I was surprised by their hearty appetite. I had previously assumed that people lose their appetite as they get older, but this was not the case in their situation. They talked about cooking, working out, aging and health problems that they have. What is especially pleasant is that older women tend to criticize each other less than young people do in conversations. Chang said:

> When we were young, once we got together, we criticized each other. So, there
>
> were many troubles among friends. But, as we get older, my friends and I rarely
>
> find fault with each other.

Developmental psychologists attribute this change to an age-related emotional change. These researchers found that older people have a stronger intention to do good and explained that this trait makes older people hold favorable attitudes toward other people (Roy, 1992). Thus, in general, older people experience negative emotions less frequently than younger ones (Morczek & Kolarx, 1998;   Carstensen, Pasupathi, Mayr, & Nesselroade, 2000)

Travel

Although the most common social activity is getting together to talk at home, modern-day older women seem to enjoy traveling for pleasure more than previous generations did. Most participants take pleasure in traveling. Of course, socioeconomic factors such as limited time and money affect their travel patterns with respect to trip destinations and lengths (Hall, 2007).

Chang, who spends a third of the year traveling, often travels long distances outside South Korea with her husband or friends. She said:

> Recently, my husband and I went with my sister, her husband and their child to
> France where my brother lives. We traveled to England, Switzerland, Monaco
> and so on for about a month, staying at my brother's house.

Sook prefers overseas trips to domestic trips, but, since the cost of overseas travel is prohibitive, it is affordable once a year for her. She went to Janggak, China with her church friends last month. She and her friends have created a financial plan for overseas trips every year. They calculate the monthly payment for the trip and save a certain amount every month. In addition to overseas trips, she also enjoys day trips with her friends. She sometimes goes on bus trips designed specifically for senior citizens in order to save money. She said, with a little investigating, she can easily find cheap trips offered by companies that want to advertise or sell their merchandise. Older people who have a desire to continue living independently are invited to health care product exhibitions that showcase walkers, wheelchairs and bath aids. My husband's grandfather, who is 83 years old, often goes to medical equipment exhibitions simply in order to escape boredom. Free food and beverages are usually provided in these exhibitions for the elderly. Occasionally, a concert featuring an old singer even takes place. He said that the exhibition is a place where old people can spend time without being conscious of young people.

Sook went to a cosmetic company with her church friends several days ago. The company provided a bus trip, breakfast and lunch. She said:

> I went there to save on the cost of lunch with my church members.
> (Laughs)… It was in Onyang. I got free cosmetics, shampoos, toothpastes and
> whatnot and bought shampoo. There were women who bought more than me.
> (Some bought) six items, I think … Four women from my Catholic church went

there. It was a good opportunity to escape from my everyday routine. I think

cheap bus trips are good for day trips for older women.

Jeong stopped attending regular social meetings after her husband's bankruptcy since she could not afford her dues. Her friends in the regular meetings saved 200,000-300,000 won (about 179-269 U.S. dollars) every month for overseas trips. Instead of expensive overseas trips, she now enjoys low-cost domestic backpacking trips. She said:

> People my age stay in hotels… But, not in my case. I said to a friend, 'Sister, we
>
> can sleep at a 24-hour spa if I have 5,000 won or 6,000 won (about 4.4 or 5.3
>
> U.S. dollars). I enjoy low-cost travel. Do you want to join me, sister?' She said,
>
> 'Yes, I prefer your way.' So, we slept two nights at a 24-hour spa. It cost 6,000
>
> won a night. We went out in the early morning and ate instant Ramen noodles for
>
> breakfast at a 24- hour convenience store. I got used to low-cost backpacking. …
>
> At my age…I do not think this is a normal circumstance, butI still enjoy it. And,
>
> in the future, I'd like to enjoy this form of traveling more. I enjoyed a two-day
>
> overnight backpacking trip without a highcost. We roamed around Mudeungsan.

Meaningful social activities: Volunteering, formal class-based learning and physical activity

As I get older, I often look back on my life thinking of how to spend the rest of my life. I was really busy for many years taking care of my husband and my kids. Although every housewife is busy, I think I was busier than others since my life was complicated. Of course, I will take care of my kids in my later years, but now, I am facing the question of how to spend my senior years, which excites me.

These were the words of Won's friend, who heard the interview and decided to join in. As people get older, they start perceiving their life as the amount of time remaining before they die. This sense of time remaining until death seems to be a motive for finding meaningful social activities later on in life. The older women whom I met prefer volunteering, formal class-based learning and physical activity. They seem to think that these social activities have special meaning and importance for them.

Volunteering

Sook often went to a *Norebang* (a Karaoke room that has karaoke equipment in a private room) with her friends in her forties and fifties. She liked to sing songs and dance there. Yet, as she ages, she does not feel the desire to go to a *Norebang* anymore. Recently, she has found it fun to participate in volunteer work. She has volunteered at a local welfare facility to assist with preparing lunch. She said:

> I go there as part of a small church group once or twice a month. … We make
> several side dishes. If we prepare chicken drumsticks, we cook about 90 or 100
> chicken drumsticks. Mothers are good at cooking. If we have the ingredients, we
> are able to cook anything. Besides, it is really fun to spend time with my church
> members.

Sun has experienced a similar emotional change in her social activities. She said:

> I really liked to play with my friends when I was young. I went to a *Norebang*, played
> *Hwatu* (Korean playing cards) and hiked up mountains. I had an active social life. But, as I get
> older, um, I find that I am not interested in these mundane pleasures. And, I used to like to go to
> the movies, too. Yet, now, I am not interested in them at all.

Sun has become more involved with her church by volunteering with fellow church members. Her volunteer work previously consisted of assisting autistic children and older people who needed help. She did this until she was in her late fifties. Yet, since she turned 60 years old, she has felt that she is too old to provide physical labor. So, recently, she signed up to become a part of the small women's group that assists with funerals. When one of her church members dies, she and other group members go to the funeral and help with errands in an attempt to provide solace to the family. She said older women play a pivotal role in performing volunteer work in her church. She said:

> In my church, older women do a lot of work with regard to volunteer work. We
>
> plan for various volunteer activities and visit places where people need our help,
>
> such as jails and funerals. There are many places in which we have volunteered.

I often see that older women play a certain role in which they undertake the tasks that others are reluctant to do . For example, in my church, many older women volunteer for the tasks that require hard work, such as preparing a free lunch for church members and taking care of newborn babies during the Sunday service. People seem to expect that older women will volunteer to help with cooking, cleaning, taking care of children, and encouraging or providing solace to those in need. On the other hand, older men as elders belong to groups that make decisions about crucial issues.

> Young wants to continue helping others for the rest of her life, however long that may be:
>
> I have nothing to pursue. But, if my body works well in later on in my life, I'd
>
> like to volunteer even more. I have thought of hospice service for cancer patients.
>
> I wanted to be a professional caregiver who takes care patients in the hospital,
>
> not for money but for volunteer work. I applied for a position as a caregiver, but,
>
> because of pain in my back, they said I am not eligible to be a caregiver. So I

have been volunteering two hours a day in the hospital. This works for me. I'd

like to continue to volunteer.

Formal class-based learning

June was excited at her dancing lesson. She said that she feels happy when she dances in her belly dance class. She has enjoyed dancing since she was a little girl. She wanted to be a professional dancer, but her father did not support her since he did not think a dancer was an appropriate job for his daughter. In modern society, I often see teenage girls who experience conflict with their parents due to their career ambitions. Particularly, the girls who want to be actresses and singers often experience the most serious conflicts with their parents. Korean parents, who apply far stricter sexual morality standards to women than to men, point out the moral decay of these careers, including the sexual immorality of the film, television and theater industry. Finally, when she turned 60, she had an opportunity to learn a type of dancing that she had wanted to learn when she was school-aged.

Yoon takes several classes in the county senior center. She said:

I really like these classes. I am able to learn something which I could not learn in

my school days. I have gained many things by taking these classes.

Yoon, who was the first daughter born in her family, dropped out of high school since she had to make a living and support her parents. In previous generations, Koreans regarded a first daughter as a substitute for parents, a person who could help raise and support the family, while a first son was viewed as an heir who could bring the family fame. So, in the case of the early death of the parents, the first daughters sacrificed her life for her siblings. They dropped out of school and made money to support their siblings as a substitute for their parents. At church, I met an

older Korean woman who lives in a small village in Pennsylvania. She reflected on her arduous life that was sacrificed for her siblings. She came to the U.S. with her husband about 53 years ago. Although she could not speak English, she married a soldier in the U.S. army since she heard people who went to the U.S. made a lot of money. Her parents died during the Korean War and she, as a first daughter, had to support her siblings. She worked hard with her husband, who was a poor peasant in a small village in Pennsylvania, to send money to her brothers and sisters back in South Korea. She said she spent many nights crying due to longing for her home and family. Thanks to her sacrifice, her eldest brother was able to graduate from high school.

Yoon always had the desire to go back to school. To her, the county senior center offers a formal class-based learning program that she thinks she can finish. When I observed her in the center, she was always listening intently to what the teacher was saying and sat in the first row in order to be closer to the teacher. She asked the teacher questions and led her classmates to support the teacher. She always did her homework. She said she had an opportunity for continued growth by going back to school later in life.

Won also discovered the pleasure of learning at an advanced age. Initially she signed up for a singing class offered by her county office simply to pass the time, but, soon, she became aware that she enjoys learning. However, her opportunities to learn are somewhat limited due to a lack of money. She is interested only in free community education classes. Although she has some extra money, she thinks she has to limit what she spends on social activities and save her money for her elderly years. She said:

> If I learn something, I believe that I am developing, but I forget most of this
> (knowledge). But, I really like learning something at the moment. I find out and
> learn about something I did not previously know. Anyway, I like to learn about
> anything. Learning! I enjoy learning. I'd like to continue to learn about anything
> that is new to me.

Physical activity

Chang is 66 years old. Although she is the oldest participant of this study, she is the most physically active among the participants. On the day that I met her for observation, she had golfed in a park in the morning and had Pungmul (a Korean folk music tradition that includes drumming, dancing, and singing) class at the senior college in the afternoon. She said:

> When I started senior college, I signed up for English conversation class because I have to speak English when traveling outside South Korea. But I was aware that taking an English conversation class cannot improve my proficiency in English. … So it would be a waste of time for me to learn English. So, I went to a dance class to have fun instead.

Kyung, who spends about eight hours a day in her local senior center, prefers to take physical activity classes to stay healthy and active. She takes belly dance, swing, jazz, Korean dance and aerobic classes. She believes that taking physical activity classes is the most meaningful social activity since it improves her health. She thinks that the most important thing for her is to maintain her health in order not to become a burden to her children later in life. She said:

> Yeah, physical activity promotes health since it facilitates blood circulation. The older we get, the more important health is. I had taken classes that require reading books to improve brain performance. But, I was too nervous about it to enjoy learning. So, recently, I have taken classes that relate only to physical activity. Exercise might improve my blood circulation and pick me up.

There are many women who enjoy physical activity as they get older. Although reading and foreign language classes that require more mental activity are popular in lifelong education

programs in South Korea, older women tend to take physical activity classes. In the senior centers and college that I visited for this study, most of the students in reading and foreign language classes were men, while most women were enrolled in physical activity classes. It seems that older women who have stayed at home as a housewife their whole life especially prefer physical activity classes. They tend to feel uncomfortable learning through reading books sitting at a desk. Besides, there is a long standing belief that an old dog cannot learn new tricks. Whether or not they actually learn something new in a class, the pleasure of using the body in a physical activity seems to be rewarding in itself. Furthermore, this pleasure seems to contribute to maintaining a positive mental attitude against age-related losses in their lives.

Taking Care of Family Members

After their children grow up and leave the nest, women face another responsibility: taking care of their parents, grandchildren or spouse. As people live longer and get married later, the traditional caregiving role that women assume is broader and longer than at any time in the past (Kulik, 2007, p. 140). South Korean women, especially my mother's generation which places value on caring for family, tend to shoulder more of the burdens of family care. Seven of the 11 participants have taken care of their grandchildren. Of these 11, two have parents who are still living and are over 90 years old.

Most participants (with the exception of Yoon and Kyung) have experienced taking care of their parents-in-law. The longest period of time that a participant took care of her parents-in-law was 36 years. In some cases, help and affection between a mother-in-law and a daughter-in-law were a reciprocal exchange. But, in other cases, a daughter-in-law had to serve her parents-in-law as a compulsory obligation under the hierarchical family system. When elderly parents-in-law were independent, a son and daughter-in-law provided personal care such as bathing and

assistance in the bathroom, as well as financial support. After their parents-in-law died, most participants assume the new task of taking care of their grandchildren for their working daughter or daughter-in-law. They tend to think that caring for one's grandchildren is a parental obligation. However, grandmothers who provide child care on a regular basis tend to receive a salary from their own children.

This section is organized in two subsections: (1) taking care of parents-in-law, and (2) taking care of grandchildren.

Taking Care of Parents-in-law

As I mentioned in a previous chapter, in South Korea, daughters-in-law take on the caregiving role for their parents-in-law due to the traditions of filial piety. Particularly, eldest daughters-in-law are expected to be the primary family caregivers. In my mother's generation, since parents-in-law living with their son's family was common, there were many daughters-in-law who lived with their parents-in-law for 20-30 years until the parents died. They accepted the fact that aging parents would depend on their eldest son. Even if elderly parents were healthy enough to perform everyday tasks such as driving, shopping and doing laundry without someone's help, their eldest-daughter-in-law was expected to provide assistance. Sun said:

> Although I did not live with my mother-in-law under the same roof, I had to
> prepare meals for her. And, when she needed to see a doctor, I took her to the
> clinic. When she was sick, I had to take care of her … I served her, but she never
> did anything for me. She had never made Kimchi for me. I decided not to be like
> my mother-in-law.

With a harsh expression on her face, Sun appeared angry to me. I could imagine how difficult the period with her mother-in-law was. June's mother-in-law was even harsher than Sun's mother was. June mentioned a specific story about her mother-in-law. She said:

> When my mother-in-law went to worship at a Buddhist temple, I had to go with her. My mother was unable to bow (to sit on your heels and bend forward until you touch the floor with your forehead) since she had asthma. So, I bowed for her. I had to repeat kneeling and bending until she told me to stop. At that time, I was pregnant. I had to repeat this action with my big belly. Even now, I still cannot understand how she could make a pregnant daughter-in-law bow like that?

> Although she said this in a disinterested tone, I saw tears in her eyes. .

Jeong's mother-in-law is different from Sun's and June's mothers-in-law who expected a daughter-in-law to serve her aging parents-in-law. She supported her daughter-in-law when she was healthy. Jeong, as the eldest daughter-in-law, served her parents-in-law, living with them for 15 years during her 30-year marriage. Fifteen years of living with her parents-in-law was not easy for her. In her early days, she had trouble with her father-in-law, who treated women like subordinates. Her mother-in-law tried to reduce conflicts between her father-in-law and her. In addition to emotional assistance, her mother-in-law helped her with the housework. Jeong remembered her mother-in-law and began to weep:

> I went to her grave yesterday. Once my mother-in-law passed away, I cried for almost one year. I missed her so much… Hmm… 30 years… I was with my mother-in-law for about 30 years. After she died, I felt that 30-years with her was too short. But, at that time when she was alive, I felt 30-years was a long time.

Hyun thinks that the reciprocal exchanges of help between her mother-in-law and her helped cultivate her positive attitude towards taking care of her mother-in-law. Once she got married, she lived with her widowed mother-in-law and siblings of her husband. She supported her sister-in-law and brother-in-law until they got married while she took care of her mother-in-law for 24 years. Although she struggled with a large family, she thought that she could keep her career moving forward since her mother-in-law stayed at home in her place. She said:

> Of course, I had trouble with my mother-in-law throughout the 24 years I lived
>
> with her. But, since my mother-in-law brought up my children, they grew up to
>
> be good people. If someone who was not a member of my family raised my
>
> children, it would have been impossible (for them to turn out so well).

When elderly parents were too frail to perform everyday activities , their eldest-daughter-in-law provided assistance with their personal care, including bathing and dressing. Jeong assisted with bathing, feeding, going to the bathroom, and dressing when her mother-in-law was close to death. She said:

> I … really… I even gave her an enema.

She was in a reminiscent mood for a while. She continued to say that she thought that taking care of a frail old person is physically more demanding than childcare since eldercare tends to run according to the health of an old person, while childcare is regularized. Besides, her own aging made it more difficult. Although her husband was involved in taking care of his mother, he served as backup. Rather, her sisters-in-law provided the majority of the assistance. They sometimes took their mother to their house and took care of her for two or three days in order to give her a break. Arber and Ginn (Arber & Ginn, 1990) assert that there are significant gender differences when taking on the caregiver role. In comparison to women, they claim that men provide "circumscribed and sporadic care" (p. 133) in providing personal care. In addition to

physical labor, eldercare is invisible emotional work (Harland & Cuskelly, 2000). Jeong said, "Although I devotedly took care of her, emotionally…, my emotions ran deep." Particularly, in my mother's generation, restricted social activity caused by a long period of taking care of aging parents-in-law was likely to have a negative influence on the psychological well-being of daughters-in-law. In many cases, eldercare provided by a daughter-in-law based not on love and affection but on social norms created a strain in the relationship between the mother-in-law and daughter-in-law. So, this "invisible emotional work" seemed to compel the participants to talk more about their caregiving difficulties and poor relationship with their mother-in-law rather than the positive aspects of taking care of aging parents. June lost her friends since she took care of her parents-in-law for such a long time. She said:

> So, I have no old friends with whom I keep in touch. I had no time to go out and to think about other things. When my mother-in-law and husband were very sick at the same time and my frail father-in-law was still alive, I had to take care of everyone at once. … . My mother-in-law stayed at my house while she was very sick. My mother-in-law had diabetes and asthma. My husband had tuberculosis and diabetes. … I managed two kinds of meal plans for them like a hospital would. They could not eat the same thing. So I had to prepare two meals each meal time. … I was too exhausted to work on my marriage. So I wrote a letter to my mother who lived in L.A.: 'I cannot live like this any longer. If I get divorced and go to the U.S, what can I do to make a living? Let me know how I can prepare to earn a living in the US in Korea.'

The issues related to caring for aging parents have often brought about conflicts between a wife and a husband and between a daughter-in-law and her in-laws in South Korea. Nowadays, as people are living longer, in order to relieve the burden of family care, eldercare services such

as adult day care, long term care and nursing homes have increased. Yet, when my mother's generation took care of their aging parents, there were few eldercare services in South Korea. Back then, only a small amount of poor elderly people who had no family caregivers were eligible for these services. Moreover, since most people perceived a nursing home as an institution for abandoned old people, adult children as well as seniors tended to avoid it. Thus, women took on intensive physical and emotional work without any help for a long time.

Although informal caregiving by the family is considered as reproductive work by women in Western countries (Rose & Bruce, 1995), in South Korea, it is not regarded as work but as part of family life based on Confucian ideology. Thus, women's work for aging parents has not been rewarded, even by their families. Young, as the eldest daughter-in law, took care of her mother-in-law until she died. She said:

> I have complained to a friend of mine about this. My mother-in-law died in
> Seoul. My father-in-law was the first son of his entire family and had eight
> siblings. So, there were a lot of guests who attended the visitation or the funeral.
> … My husband drew the line and was adamant that women could not interfere in
> allocating the monetary gifts that the guests gave my family in order to avoid
> trouble. I had never seen the money, and I had not said anything about it. His
> five brothers split the sum equally. It really pissed me off (because they did not
> compensate me for my efforts).

However, the accomplishment of caring for her parents-in-law seems to be a source of satisfaction in her life. Jeong said:

> That is… I am 65 years old, although I do not feel my age. Although I am saying
> this playfully, I am officially done with what I was supposed to do in my life. I

devotedly took care of my parents-in-law and had meaningful memorial services

for them.

Hyun defined her hard times with her mother-in-law as an opportunity for self-growth:

Of course, I went through hard times during the 24 years when I lived with my mother-in-law. And I supported my husband's siblings until they got married. Yet, now, I think it was an opportunity for myself to grow. I am really thankful for it. I became a person who can understand my children and others when they go through hard times. It was really good for me.

Their caregiving experiences also impacted how they plan to spend their later years. At the end of the interview, Jeong decided that she does not want to live with her son:

Although people say children have to take care of their aging parents, I do not

want to make my children struggle with old people. It was a hard time for me,

even though I am a person who likes to spend time with old people.

Sun, who can afford to pay for expensive care, has a plan to use assisted living facilities called "Silver town." She said:

My husband saved money for our senior years. If I have age-related diseases, I

am going to Silver town with my husband. I do not want to become my

children's burden. I can withdraw money from my bank account for my later

years.

She continued to talk about how important money is in one's elderly years. She said that nowadays aging parents need financial wealth in order to obtain filial piety from their children. She said:

We, old people, always say that children do not fulfill their filial duty if their

parents do not have money. There is an old saying. Imagine you are disabled later

in life. If you put a lot of money under your bed, your children would compete with each other to clean your excrement up since you are paying them to do that. It's like the saying, if you have money, your children are willing to clean your dirty waste up. So, I will put money under my bed later in my life. Do not give your children all your possessions. If you keep them, your children take care of you to earn your money. This is the truth.

Taking Care of Grandchildren

Soo's first grandchild was born when she was 62 years old. Although people are getting married later in South Korea, she thinks her first son's marriage was too late. Her son got married at the age of 35 years old, and her first grandchild was born the next year. She took care of her infant granddaughter for about one year for her working daughter-in-law. When she took care of her infant granddaughter, she was exhausted. In addition to the hard work infant care requires, her own aging made her even more tired. As in Soo's case, as the timing of expected life-course transitions such as marriage and having children are delayed, women who take care of their grandchildren at an older age have increased. Particularly, grandmothers, in general, usually take care of their grandchildren who are under three years old since there are too few child care services for children under three for the demand in South Korea (Hong, 2009). If families struggle to manage the cost of care, a grandmother is the only one who can help mothers. Furthermore,, mothers' belief that only family can provide good quality care for their children makes working mothers prefer for their older mothers or mothers-in-law to baby-sit.

Assuming the obligation to my own children

Jeong anticipated her sixties with excitement since she assumed that her sixties would give her freedom from her responsibilities. Yet, Jeong in her sixties is still facing the responsibility of taking care of her grandson. When her daughter asked her to take care of her son, she was primarily concerned about her daughter, regardless of what was good for her. She said:

> Before my daughter was pregnant, I announced that I wouldn't be taking care of my grandchildren. I often said that taking care of grandchildren is worse than working as a housemaid. I told my daughter who worked outside the home, 'You will need to hire a nanny to take care of your baby.' It was a selfish attitude. But, once my daughter was pregnant, she moved near my apartment. I could not turn my back on her.

Sun is always worried about her daughter who pursued her doctorate with little children. So, she volunteered to baby-sit her grandchildren on days when her daughter goes to school. She said:

> I am physically tired when I take care of my grandsons. Um… My daughter is always tired. It is better for me to be tired than for my daughter to be tired. At a time in my life when age often forces a person to stay in bed, I have to go out and help my daughter.

Hyun said that she is able to spend most of her time volunteering since her daughter-in-law takes care of her children by herself. She seemed to believe that taking care of one's grandchildren is a parent's obligation. She said that it is mandatory that a grandmother take care

of her grandchildren, in the same sense that a mother must take care of her own children. She said:

> As a responsible parent, I have to do what I have to do. If someone who is not a member of my family takes care of my grandchildren and I volunteer for others, this does not make any sense. If you volunteer for others without taking care of your own family … No way! This is unacceptable. I must set a fine example for my children to respect me. Family comes first.

When it comes to childcare, most importantly, older Korean women are concerned about what is good for their own children. They also seem to be concerned about their relationships with other family members. If the participants have more than one daughter or daughter-in-law, they seem to worry about their children becoming jealous of their siblings. Most participants strive for equality among family members. Kyung, who has two daughters and one son, said that although she would like to pay more attention to her son's first son, she cannot care for him since she did not take care of her two daughters' children. Jeong, who has provided regular care to her daughter's son, said:

> Because my daughter-in-law does not have a job, (she can stay home and raise her children, and) I am able to take care of my daughter's son, since she works.

Unlike Jung, Hyun and Sun, for Chang, caring for her grandchildren seems to come after caring for herself. Although she acknowledges that caring for her grandchildren is a joyful experience, she does not think it is the greatest source of happiness in one's later years. According to , the changes in women's perceptions of self-fulfillment and aspirations in life have inspired more older women to destroy the prevailing image of a grandmother simply as a caregiver for her grandchildren (p. 134). Chang was supposed to take care of her granddaughters

once a week for her daughter, who is a part-time-instructor at a four year university. Yet, she often skipped her "job" of caring for her grandchildren because she wanted to travel instead. She said:

> When my daughter has to lecture, her mother-in-law has been taking care of my granddaughters. But, since I feel sorry for her mother-in-law, who takes care of our grandchildren on a daily basis, I was supposed to watch them once a week. But, when I took a trip or had another schedule conflict, I often missed the appointment. So, one day I was fired from this job. (Laughs)… But, I told myself, 'This is better for me.' My daughter said that my taking care of my grandchildren inconsistently was confusing for her young children. (Laughs)… so, her mother-in-law became the primary caregiver of our grandchildren.

Sook refused to continue taking care of her infant grandson after she cared for him for seven months. So her daughter quit her job and became a stay-at-home mother. However, she is still ambivalent about her choice not to take care of her grandson, although she believes a grandmother is not responsible for taking care of her grandchildren. She said:

> It was too much for me. Although I was really enjoying it, I was physically tired,. But I could not tell my daughter this. If I told her I am tired, wouldn't she feel bad about that? I know that having only one breadwinner in the family is not enough. If I took care of her son, my daughter would be able to support her husband. One of my friends said, 'We took care of our own children. That was enough. It does not make sense for us to take care of their children.' This inspired me to refuse to take care of my grandson. So, I told my daughter, 'I am exhausted. 'I feel sorry, but I don't need to, right?

Grandmothers as working mother substitutes with fewer responsibilities

As (Gattai & Musatti, 1999) found in their qualitative research on grandmothers' involvement in their grandchildren's care, most participants who take care of their grandchildren felt less responsibility for their grandchildren's care than they did as mothers. This is especially true of grandmothers who take care of school-age grandchildren, which is the traditional role played by a grandmother. Young, who takes care of her 10-year-old grandson, manages her grandson's daily schedule, including piano lessons and swimming lessons, which his mother arranged according to his educational needs. Young says that she just ensures that her grandson and granddaughter stay as safe as possible when their mother goes to work. Young said:

> My first concern is their safety. I must protect them against danger. Keeping my
>
> grandchildren safe from injury . . . this is the only thing that my daughter-in-law
>
> asked me to do. So, I don't feel much responsibility.

Most grandmothers who are actively involved in their grandchildren's lives tend to differentiate between the parent and grandparent roles. They are reluctant to interfere in their grandchildren's upbringing related to instruction and education selected by the parents since they do not want to take over the mother's role. Young said:

> A friend of mine said, 'Do not help with your grandchildren's homework.'
>
> (Laughs) … I say, 'Because Granny does not know what the answer is, go ask
>
> your mom.' I decided not to help with his homework.

However, Won, who takes care of the children of her divorced daughter, gets more involved in her grandchildren's education. She seems to play the mother role to substitute for their actual mother who works full-time due to financial necessity. In cases like these, the grandmother's role is expanded by problems in the grandchild's family such as parents' divorce.

(John A, Phillipson, & Downs, 2006) mention that grandparents are needed more now than ever to take care of their grandchildren due to an increasing number of parents who are unable to provide parenting because of divorce, drug abuse or some other incapacity. Won said:

> My mother-in-law just fed my children and washed their clothes. And, she always emphasized their health. But, I am different. In addition to these things, I have knowledge on how to support their education. So, I fulfill my educational responsibility to them based on the knowledge I have. I am not sure if any of the various private lessons that I provide my granddaughter with have had an effect on her intelligence, but she is very smart.

The psychological and monetary rewards of caring for grandchildren

Although older women take on a caregiving role for their grandchildren to assist their children, there is no denying the feeling of affection they have towards their grandchildren. Furthermore, being recognized and appreciated by their grandchildren increases grandmothers' happiness and joy in their golden years. When the participants talked about their grandchildren, they lit uplike children who received candy unexpectedly. Young said: "When my grandson jumps into my arms to get his school backpack, the joy I feel makes my heart flutter." Soo feels immense pleasure when her granddaughter shows her sweet gestures. She said:

> The birth of my granddaughter (has been one of the most exciting experiences in my life.) (I am) so happy, happy. Now, she sings a song for me. She repeats it over and over again. And she says, 'I love you, Granny.'

Young hesitated to accept a caregiving role for her grandchildren when her son asked her to take care of his children. She went to her 80-year-old mother to get some advice. Young said:

'Mom, Inseong asked me to take care of his children.' My mom said, 'You have only one son, Inseong. If you do not take care of them (your grandchildren), would it make you healthier? Or, could you make money? Take care of your grandchildren. Kindly offer to care for them, and keep your mouth shut.' So, I was prepared to accept this. … I have taken care of my grandchildren for the last ten years.

She acknowledged that caring for her grandchildren has been a meaningful task in her later years, and at the same time she was satisfied with her contribution to her daughter-in-law's social achievement (pursuing her doctorate). Since a feeling of uselessness often accompanies old age, this probably makes caring for her grandchildren seem even more worthwhile. She said:

If I did not take care of them, how would I spend my time? Meeting with friends everyday seems to be a waste of time. And, my daughter-in-law was able to earn her Ph.D. since I've taken care of her children. I was proud of myself even before others recognized my contribution to her PhD. I'm happy I could help make this happen. I did it by myself.

In addition to psychological rewards such as joy and feelings of increased self-esteem, some grandmothers receive a monetary reward for the child care they provide. Of course, most grandparental child care was unpaid in my mother's generation, but, now, most grandmothers who provide child care on a regular basis tend to get paid. Jeong, Sun, and Won are among the grandmothers who receive payment for taking care of their grandchildren. Yet, most participants mentioned feeling uncomfortable about being paid to take care of their grandchildren. Young said: "They (her son and daughter-in-law) are salaried workers. It would seem like I am motivated by money if I accept money for taking care of my grandchildren." Instead of refusing wages, Sun has saved the money that her daughter pays her and presents her grandsons with this

money on special days such as their birthdays. Unlike Young and Sun, Jeong accepts and uses the money she earns, about 1,000, 000 won (about 897 U.S. dollars) a month, from her daughter for child care, as it is a financial resource needed for living. She said:

> I earn a salary by taking care of my grandson. I told you, taking care of my grandson is my job. But, that's not my only reason for taking care of him… some grandmothers who are relatively well-off (and have to take care of their grandchildren) often complain about their isolation, saying, 'I have to give up my social activities (in order to baby-sit my grandchildren).' But, now, I have to work to make a living. I really appreciate the birth of my grandson, which has provided me with financial assistance. I am really happy because he was born when I needed a job.

She repeated that she is not a burden on her daughter. She said the money she receives is simply a salary that her daughter gives to an employee in return for the services provided by her. Although Jeong is anxious about her financial insecurity, she has confidence that in exchange for financial support from her children, she can provide them with physical labor, such as taking care of the grandchildren and cooking, as long as she is healthy. At this point, she said, "Old women are better than old men for the children." But, when she becomes a dependent older person, she predicts that she might rely on her children since they are her only source of support. Jeong said, "I think that living longer would be a burden on our children." In my journal, I wrote, "Aging makes people powerless. Having a long life is no longer a blessing in South Korea."

Chapter 7

Everyday Life Activities of Korean Older Women

In this chapter, I describe the activities that are performed by the older women and analyze the activity using the CHAT in order to reveal learning as a result of the efforts to deal with issues that women face in their everyday activities as they get older. For this goal, first, I identify the activities from the actions that the older women have performed in their everyday lives and expand a central activity—a caring activity--into the activity system. Then, I examine the caring activity system in the past and in the present using the CHAT to bring out contradictions in the activity system. The collective effort to solve contradictions of the activity opens up the possibility of a qualitative change of the activity (Engeström, 1987). In this step, I explore what knowledge and skills emerge as the results of the collective effort. Finally, the zone of proximal development between the past, the present and the alternative future of the activity are described.

The chapter is organized into four sections: (1) the activity, (2) the activity system as a unit of analysis, (3) analysis of the activity system; in this section, there are three subsections: contradictions, outcomes, and the zone of proximal development.

The Activity

When I chose the CHAT as a tool to demonstrate the social and cultural process of growing old, my colleagues worried about my attempt since they think that aging is a natural flow of an individual life. But, if you investigate the phenomena of aging that is socially constructed from sociological perspectives, you can define a collective subject. In this study, the collective subject is older women who belong to the "young-old age group" of women, who were born from

1933 to 1947. They, as a birth cohort, have shared particular experiences, beliefs, and social norms and have experienced relatively similar biological aging. The collective activity that the subject performs was identified from their everyday actions. In general, in the studies that employ the CHAT, an activity is identified with the question that asks why an action occurred or with an intended outcome to develop an activity in the initial stage of the study. Yet, in this study, individual actions were identified (see Chapter 3) before an activity in order to explore activities that compose the subject's daily routine. In the initial stage of the fieldwork, I just discussed and observed their everyday lives. In addition to meeting with the participants, I participated in a Bible study for older women and spent time with my mother-in-law. Meanwhile, I was able to depict the ordinary everyday lives of the participants.

After I garnered data from the field, I distinguished actions from the mundane behaviors that the participants perform in Chapter 3. Actions are a set of operations that people perform to achieve a particular goal (Leont'ev, 1981). They are arranged in a goal. The actions were classified into four groups: (1) managing the house, (2) keeping connected with adult children, (3) relaxing and socializing to have fun, and (4) taking care of family members according to the goals to direct the actions. Then, in order to identify an activity, I identified the motives. Engeström (1999) argues that a collective activity is driven by a motive that everyone in a group shares. Compared to goals, motives are more fundamental and abstract drives or desires (Youn & Baptiste, 2007). I went back to the cultural-historical review of Korean married women's lives (see Chapter 4) and the actions that I garnered in the field (see Chapter 5). I thoroughly read and analyzed them to identify the motives to direct the actions. Life-span developmental psychology provided insight into identifying the motives (Aiken, 2001; Atchley, 1997; Ryff, 1982, 1995; Whitbourne, 2001). I found the motives that give impetus to Korean older women's activities: they hold beliefs that give them a purpose in life and have a need for trusting relationships with others, recreation, doing good deeds for others, social connectedness, and personal growth.

The older women in this study set their husbands and children as the top priority of their lives. Supporting their husband and children was their purpose in life. They thought the housework that they perform everyday is a service for their family. They assumed that caring for grandchildren is one of their parental obligations. Yet, as they get older, the time they spend on their husband and children has decreased. On the other hand, their free time has increased. In some cases, such as taking care of their grandchildren or a husband with a chronic and/or debilitating disease, older women become busier. But, most of the participants whom I met have more free time than before. There were no participants who were taking care of a disabled husband. Although several participants who take care of their grandchildren on a regular basis have experienced a sense of time pressure, due to having less responsibility, they also had more free time than during the period when they raised their own children. The majority of the participants were new to the circumstance in which they are free from their responsibilities. They often feel depressive symptoms when they are home alone, which has caused them to go out. The older women have spent their increased free time traveling and socializing with friends. They seem to enjoy their new roles and relationships with others that emerge in social activities. Yet, as they get older, they become more aware that their time on earth is "running out." This was one of the reasons that they prefer a meaningful social activity such as participation in formal class-based learning for personal growth, volunteering to help others, and physical activity for health promotion.

The motives are embedded in the object, which identify the activity (Leont'ev, 1978). I established three objects that have the potential to fulfill the motives based on the findings: husband, children, and increased free time. The object, in turn, identified the concrete activities that are held by the subject. The two activities, caring activity and social activity, occur every day of the participants' lives. The central activity of women's everyday lives is caring activity.

Table 7-1 Identifying an activity from actions

The goals	The motives	The object	The activity
Managing the house	-Hold beliefs that give purpose in life	Husband	Caring activity
Keeping connected with adult children	-Hold beliefs that give purpose in life -Needs for trusting relationship with others	Children	Caring activity
Socializing to have fun	-Needs for social connectedness -Needs for recreation -Needs for personal growth -Needs for doing good deeds for others	Free time	Social activity
Taking care of family member	-Hold beliefs that give purpose in life	Children	Caring activity

Activity System as Unit of Analysis

Engeström (1987) extended an activity into an activity system as a unit of analysis that explicates the cultural and historical contexts of the activity. Rules, community of practice, and division of labor were added to Vygotsky's basic triangular model (subject-object-instruments). Thus, the system consists of seven components— subject, instruments, objects, rules, community, divisions of labor, and outcomes. Each component is described in detail in Chapter 2. In this section, I extend the central activity—caring activity into an activity system following Engeström's extended activity theory model. This provides the means to systematically analyze the actions that the participants perform in everyday life.

The Activity System of Caring Activity

The caring activity as Korean women's purpose in life seems to occupy the primary position at any stage of Korean women's lives. The older women who participated in this study feel that caring activities really matter to them. Yet, as women get older, the object changes from parents and siblings to husband and children, and the time they spend on the activity decreases.

The subject of the caring activity is a group of women born in South Korea between 1933 to 1947. The group is limited by marital status, residential area, and occupation in this study. The group of the subject is a group of housewives between the ages of 60 and 74 who live in an urban area. The objects of the activity are a husband and children. Engeström argues that "the object of any activity is internally contradictory. In capitalism, the pervasive primary contradiction is that of commoditization: between the use value and the exchange value of objects (1999, p. 63). In housewives' lives, husband and children are the purpose in life that makes their lives meaningful concurrently with a financial source. Women have been kept from joining the work force due to the traditional women's roles expected in South Korea. Marxist-feminist scholars argue that capitalism solidifies women's subordinate position by separating the family household from commodity production (Cliff, 1984). As a result, women who have been stuck performing unpaid housework and childrearing throughout their lives become economic dependents of their husband and children. The object is constantly changing (Engeström, 1999). Rapid urbanization and industrialization of South Korea in the 1960s and 1970s have brought changes to the family structure and family life. In addition, globalization has affected historical relations between members of the family. Korean family-centered culture has changed into an individualistic culture of the West that values an individual's subjective feeling and experience (Kwon, 2008; Suh, 2000). Thus, the responsibility of children to show reverence to and support their aging parents has changed. Subjects and objects are always connected via mediating artifacts

(Vygotsky, 1981). The mediating artifacts as a cultural accumulation are a material tool or a conceptual sign (Engeström, 1987; Sawchuk, 2003a). The subject and the object of the caring activity are mediated by talk, text and telecommunication devices such as cellular phones and the Internet. In addition, Korean traditional holidays such as Seol (the first day of the year in the lunar calendar) and Chuseok (the autumnal full moon festival) and family ceremonies such as weddings, Dol (a baby's first birthday), and Hwan-gap (one's 60th birthday) play an important role as a mediating artifact. The holidays are important for Korean family life. Close family members and remote relatives get together to celebrate and spend time with family, feasting together. On those days, women learn family traditions and history from female family members such as their mothers-in-law or aunts while preparing traditional ceremonial meals. They may develop their knowledge, attitude, and practice to care for their husband and children.

Rules are guides to action and interaction with others. In the care activity, Korean women use Confucian ideology as a key criterion when distinguishing between appropriate and inappropriate behaviors. For instance, the participants expect that they will rely on their son for support based on Confucian ideology. Confucian ideology also defines the patterns of interaction between a husband and a wife and parents and children in a family. In Confucian ideology, the patriarchal ideology attributed to a patriarchal family system directs women's actions. It affects women's subordinate position in a family. Women tend to perceive themselves as a person who supports others. The community refers to a group of people who have shared the same object. In the caring activity, female members in a family such as daughters, daughters-in-law, sisters and sisters-in-law have interacted on the same objects. When women are young, mothers, mothers-in-laws, and sisters-in-law provide mutual support. But, after their parents-in-law die and daughters-in-law come into their family, the community comes to be reorganized. In the later part of life, daughters, daughters-in-law, and sisters support each other. For instance, an older woman takes care of her grandchildren when her daughter or daughter-in-law is working. The individuals of

the community have different points of view, traditions, and interests according to their position

in a family.

The division of labor denotes "the distribution or assignment of responsibilities among

various actors" (Youn & Baptiste, 2007, p. 2). In the caring activity, the participants assume

that the household labor, childrearing, and building family harmony are the basic responsibilities

of a married woman. The responsibilities consistently change according to family lifecycle. When

children are young, a woman supports the occupational activities of her husband and her

children's education. When children become adolescents, a woman begins to take care of her

aging and ailing parents-in-law or parents. After children and elderly parents leave, a woman

often undertakes caring for her grandchildren for a working daughter or daughter-in-law.

Analyzing the Activity System of Caring Activity

I describe how older women's everyday activities have changed to deal with aging-

related issues that occur in their later years using the CHAT. In examining the change in their

everyday activities, the informal learning that occurs in the developmental change is revealed.

This chapter is organized into three sections: (1) contradictions within the activity system

of caring activity, (2) outcome of the activity system of caring activity, and (3) the zone of

proximal development.

Contradictions within the Activity System of Caring Activity

A new qualitative change of activity starts with a progressive attempt to solve the

contradictions of the dominant form of activity (Engeström, 1987). Contradictions are not just

problems, but they are historically accumulating structural tensions. Thus, contradictions can be

clearly visible by analyzing activity systems. Engeström manifests contradictions by classifying them into four levels. The primary contradictions designate the inner conflict within components of the activity system. The secondary contradictions appear between components. The tertiary contradictions emerge "when representatives of culture (e.g., teachers) introduce objects and motives of culturally more advanced forms of the central activity into the dominant form of the central activity" (Engeström, 1987, p. 87). The quaternary contradictions appear between the activity and its neighboring activities.

The contradictions of the caring activity manifested themselves through disturbances and innovations in the division of household labor. Most of the disturbances and innovations did not appear as observable incidents in the participants' everyday actions. The emotional disturbances that the participants stated and unremarkable changes in an action revealed the secondary contradictions within activity systems. This may be attributed to women's role of integrating the tension. However, older women have made their voices heard when it comes to solving these contradictions, compared to their past years. Older women seem to focus on what they want and actively pursue it.

The contradictions between a husband and a wife

The tensions between a husband and a wife in the division of household labor were seldom observed and reported. They did not express any expectation or dissatisfaction toward their husbands in the division of household labor. Women doing housework is so taken for granted by the participants that gender inequality in the division of household labor is invisible to them. However, I found that older women have recognized that there is a historically accumulated inequality between a husband and wife in the division of household labor. This arose out of their reminiscence and of their dissatisfaction about their worn-out bodies caused by too

much household labor. Hyun recalled that she performed most of the domestic tasks during her childrearing period and when she was pursuing her Master's degree. She said her husband helped her with "his silence." Although her husband did not assist her with the housework, she said that it was a big help that he did not complain about her busy life. Kyung complained that her health was not as good as that of her husband, who was seven years her senior. She said, "When I worked for a while, I used to eat breakfast standing up. A mother lives in this way. But the father of my children (my husband) was very interested in his health." Her husband often went out to go mountain climbing on weekends when she spent time with their three young children at home. In the cases of Jeong, June, Sun, and Young, they, as the eldest daughters-in-law, did at least twice as much as routine housework than an ordinary housewife performs. Yet, the situation where a husband did not do housework was the same. June, who raised four children while taking care of her harsh parents-in-law, said, "When my husband returned home earlier, my father-in-law scolded him since he believed a man should not hover around a woman like he did. When he finished work earlier than usual, he went to a pub to kill time because of what his father said. He always came home around 12 a.m. So, my husband had never helped me care for our children." Husbands neither shared the housework and childrearing duties with their wives nor rewarded their wives for the housework that they undertook. Young, who took care of her mother-in-law for 15 years until she died, was vexed at her husband's unappreciative attitude about the extra labor she performed caring for her elderly mother-in-law. She said, "I complained to a friend of mine about this… My husband drew the line that women cannot interfere in allocating monetary gifts that the guests gave my family in order to avoid some trouble among the women. I had never seen the money. I had not said anything about the money. His five brothers ended up splittling the sum equally. It really pissed me off."

Although their family and home responsibilities decreased, women over 60 years of age continue to bear responsibility for housework and caring for their adult children. They do all the

routine housework, cook the meals, clean the house, wash the clothes, and provide financial and emotional help to their adult children. They take care of their grandchildren and sometimes do the housework that their working daughters or daughters-in-law cannot get to. Some participants thought they spend too much time on housework and, as a result, they do not have enough time for themselves. Yet, even though a husband stays home after retirement, he seldom shares the housework with his wife. Sun has to prepare meals for her husband who spends a lot of time at home since he retired. Sun said, "After breakfast, I prepare another meal, dinner, so it is ready for him later. If my husband does not go out for lunch with his friends, I have to prepare lunch, too. I am busy from the time I get up in the morning. I do not have time to watch the morning news." Yoon also mentioned the bulk of housework that she has undertaken. "I do not have even an hour to rest and sit on the couch. After I return home from the center, once again, I have to do housework. I go grocery shopping on the way home. I cook and wash clothes until late at night in order to spend the day in the center. I do what I have to do. I have to prepare meals and help my family get ready for work. Only then am I able to go out to do what I want to do." When the participants take care of their grandchildren, their husbands do not help them. Young, who has looked after her grandchildren on a regular basis, said that "taking care of my grandchildren is one of (her) tasks." She had the expectation that her husband would not share this task with her, just as she took care of their own young children by herself.

No matter how old the participants are, they seem to strive to fulfill their obligation as a wife. Although women come to have more power as a decision maker in family matters and family finances compared to when they were younger, they assume that housework is still their primary task. Yet, when they were younger, they served their husbands as the head of the family, but, now, as they get older, to some extent, their compassion for their aging husbands seems to motivate them to perform daily housework. Chang said, "A husband cannot live without a wife. Korean husbands never live alone. They cannot do anything. They are like a wet fallen leaf. Do

you know how hard it is to wipe wet fallen leaves out? They stick on wives. [Laughs]… They stick on their wives to survive when they come to stay home. They got used to it. When I have a lunch appointment, my husband prepares lunch for himself. Instant noodles or dumplings. [Laughs]… If I am able to fix lunch, I make steamed rice in a rice cooker, put main and side dishes over a serving tray and place the tray in the refrigerator. He just takes it out from the refrigerator. It is the only thing that my husband can do. He is totally a wet fallen leaf. [Laughs]… And yet, he still behaves like a king." Whether a husband is a king or a wet fallen leaf, it is an important fact that husbands still do not do housework after retirement. Older women's compassion for their aging husbands has reinforced structural and cultural gender inequality in household labor in their later years.

However, their aging has brought out a significant change in men's domestic behavior. Soo, who has health issues brought on by aging, said, "Anyway, recently, I am not able to serve my husband like a king because my body does not work well. So, he began helping me with the housework. He has taken out the trash. It is a historical change!! When he goes out to smoke after dinner, he puts our house garbage into a dumpster. And, he has ironed his dress shirts since I am not able to sit on the floor to iron because of joint pain in my leg. He has been doing this for the past year or two." Similarly, Chang said, "After my mother-in-law passed away and my husband retired, he started doing the housework. Not much, but a little, for example, vacuuming." Yet, as Chang mentioned, men's contributions to housework have slightly increased.

However, the transformation of gender roles in the division of household labor does not make them feel great. For Kyoung, it is beyond her beliefs about the appropriate roles of men and women. She said, "(My husband) helps me wash clothes. After the washing machine runs its cycle, he takes the clothes out and hangs them on a clothes rack. He does not clean the house. I do that. I am able to do that… I do not ask my husband to do that. (I do not understand) why women who do not work outside the home ask their husbands to do the housework." She assumes

housework is so inconsequential that it is not suitable for men. Similarly, Won said, "I have to fix meals for my husband 365 days a year. It is not difficult because I have done it since I got married. I have become accustomed to that and think, 'I must do this.' And, isn't it my obligation? Since the Chosen Dynasty, men have been the sky (king), while women have been the ground (servant). I am a person who is used to treating her husband like a king. I think I must do this and my husband wants to be a king. And so I have been doing it." Soo said, "I have treated my husband like a king." As Kyoung, Soo, and Won mentioned above, Korean women have learned the way to live as a wife based on Confucianism. A wife, as a domestic worker, should perform housework for her husband. This means a husband, as the head of the family, has the authority to decide most of the family issues and a wife should support her husband so that he can commit himself to his job. A wife, as a domestic master, is responsible for supporting her husband and children and doing almost all of their housework. She prepares three meals, cleans the house and washes the clothes for their husband and children. This normative expectation associated with gender-appropriate behavior clearly appeared in their attitudes about their married daughters. Sun always advises her first daughter, "I tell her, the first priority is to serve your husband and his family." Kyung spoke highly of her daughters who are devoted to their husbands, "Men, they like to be respected by someone. We say men are the sky, while women are the ground. They like it that way. Today's young women are too arrogant. I have two daughters. But, they are different from modern-day young women. They are subdued. My sons-in-law like them very much. They seem to have learned this from me."

Contradiction between a mother-in-law and a daughter-in-law

By the time women reach the age of 60, their children have usually gotten married and their husbands have retired. Won said a woman's children's marriage is "another milestone in

life." For women, it is significant because mothers get to enter a new stage in their life. The participants have accepted new members into the community of the activity system; daughters-in-law and daughters. Daughters are still one of the objects with a husband and son, but, after they get married, their daughter also becomes a member of the community who can support each other under the same objects.

Accepting a new member into the activity system always creates disturbances but mixes with the established system in an innovative way. Particularly, accepting a mother-in-law and a daughter-in-law is marked by conflicts or problems among Korean married women. In previous generations, accepting a daughter-in-law meant that a woman would be able to spend less time on housework by turning the majority of the housework over to her daughter-in-law. Even if a mother-in-law was healthy enough perform the things she normally did in daily living without someone's help, she expected that her daughter-in-law would cook, clean up, and wash the clothes for the family in her place. When the participants were young, it was the daughter-in-law's role in a rigid family structure based on Confucianism. Sun said, "Although I did not live with my mother-in-law under the same roof, I had to prepare meals for her." Sook also did all most of housework instead of her mother-in-law when she lived with her parents-in-law once she got married. She said, "I had to prepare their meals, even when I went out. It was uncomfortable when I lived with them. My mother-in-law did not do the housework, such as cooking. I had to prepare their meals, even if my mother-in-law was home. They had to be ready to eat. I cooked rice and then put it into an electric rice cooker to warm it up." In the process of carrying over housework from a mother-in-law to a daughter-in-law, a mother-in-law occupied a dominant status as a skilled worker in household labor. In addition, a strong mother-son bond that son preference produced in a strict patrilineal family system solidified a hierarchical order between a mother-in-law and a daughter-in-law. Sun said, "Her (Sun's mother-in-law's) neck was in a cast. She always stood up in front of me with her stiff neck . I was oppressed by my mother-in-law.

Her power came from my husband's filial affection. She had an authoritative manner, as if to say, 'You are unable to defy my authority because of my son.' She was really bossy." This asymmetric power relation seems to produce a typical interaction style between mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law. That is, a mother-in-law treats her daughter-in-law oppressively, while a daughter-in-law acts compliantly to her mother-in-law. This has been so passed on generation after generation that it came to be a historically accumulated rule between a mother-in-law and a daughter-in-law in the context of Korean family life. The superior position assigned to a mother-in-law and a mother-in-law's oppressive attitude toward her daughter-in-law has triggered conflicts between her son and daughter-in-law. Particularly, in the context of Korean family life in which a mother-in-law is deeply involved in her son's family, the issues related to a mother-in-law often lead to a son's divorce (M.-H. Kim, 1996).

However, aging mothers-in-law seem to have lost their superior position to daughters-in-law over time. A strong mother-son bond has been weakened by an increase in nuclear families and in wives' decision-making power in the family, and the traditional women's role has become less relevant since industrialization and an increase in women's paid work. Thus, aging mothers-in-law have lost grounds for power to guarantee the superior position to their daughters-in-law. Aging mothers-in-law have begun to question the superior position assigned to a mother-in-law, which often generates conflict between her son and daughter-in-law. Soo, who has two sons, said, "Usually, a mother-in-law causes her son to get divorced. Of course, the mother of a daughter-in-law may account for divorce, too. [Laughs]… The conflicts between a mother-in-law and the mother of a daughter-in-law often result in divorce. It is so sad." They have changed their attitudes toward the relationship between a mother and a son. They have distanced themselves from their sons in order to prevent conflicts between a mother-in-law and a daughter-in-law. Sook said, "Mothers say, 'You have to think that your son is the husband of (your daughter-in-law).' He is not my son but her husband. If you refer to your son as her husband, you can distance

yourself from your son. I want to keep some distance between us rather than have him near me."

When having conflicts with their daughters-in-law, they try to listen to what their daughters-in-law say and attempt to understand their daughters-in-law instead of taking an oppressive attitude towards them. Sun said, "I encouraged her [my daughter-in-law] to talk about her complaints. 'Tell me what disappoints you and what you want.'" Hyun tries to accept differences between her and her daughter-in-law. She said, "Because I experienced the relationship between a mother-in-law and a daughter-in-law while living with my mother-in-law for a long time, I was aware that I do not have to scold or command my daughter-in-law. This often happens in Korea, right? When a mother-in-law is displeased with her daughter-in-law, she says, 'Why didn't you do this properly?' This would hurt a daughter-in-law and result in conflict between a mother-in-law and a daughter-in-law. Yet, I think that the conflict occurs from the cultural differences between my daughter-in-law and me." However, the changes seem to be challenging. Although the participants have considered and adopted new strategies to solve contradictions with their daughter-in-law, their underlying belief systems still seem to say the changes are inappropriate. The participants still expected their daughter-in-laws to have a compliant attitude and believed that a husband is the only one who has authority in the family. Sun said, "She said all that she thought (she wants to spend Sunday with her own family). Even if I asked her for the truth, it is rude! How could she do that, huh?" Hyun felt discomfort from her daughter-in-law's behavior, "I said, 'Yes.' But if you put yourself in my shoes, you would be displeased at my daughter-in-law." Young said, "A young woman leads her husband by the nose."

An increase in women participation in the paid labor force has changed the pattern of sharing household labor between female family members. Contrary to the previous generation of the participants, current older women have undertaken their daughters-in-laws' and daughters' housework instead of working married wives. Young compared her situation to a sandwich, "I think my generation is in the worst situation. In my early days, I had to serve my parents-in-law.

And, now, I have supported my daughter-in-law. It looks like a sandwich." When grandchildren are born, older women are also expected to take care of them. Particularly, a lack of social support for working mothers and husbands who do not share household labor have contributed to a grandmother being the only one who can help working mothers. Women joining the work force has not led to a redistribution of household labor between men and women, but between mothers and grandmothers. Older women also perceive that they would take care of their children so that their daughters or daughters-in-law could go to work. Yet, most participants have proclaimed that they will not take care of their grandchildren, even before they are born. From their experiences of taking caring of their own children and elderly parents-in-law, they have learned that caring for family members is a stumbling block in determining the way they live their lives, as well as a physically demanding task. Yoon said, "I have already announced that I won't care for my grandchildren. 'I have to go to the senior center. So, do not expect me to take care of your child.'" Jeong, who assumed that her sixties would give her freedom from her responsibilities to care for others, said, "Before my daughter was pregnant, I announced that I won't take care of my grandchildren. I often said that taking care of grandchildren is worse than working as a housemaid. I told my daughter, who works outside the home, 'You will need to hire a nanny to take care of your baby.'" However, after their grandchildren are born, it is often inevitable that they will care for their grandchildren. Korean mothers, who believe that motherhood is one of the most important roles in their life (U. Kim & Choi, 1994), cannot say no to their children. Jeong said, "Once my daughter was pregnant, she moved near my apartment. I could not turn my back on her." Sun also said, "My daughter is always tired. It is better for me to be tired than for my daughter to be tired. At a time in my life when age often forces a person to stay in bed, I have to go out and help my daughter." Hyun believes that taking care of one's grandchildren is part of the obligations imposed by parenthood. She said, "As a responsible parent, I have to do what I have to do. If someone who is not a member of my family takes care of my grandchildren and I

volunteer for others, it does not make sense." Similarly, Yoon said, "Nevertheless, a great mother makes sacrifices for her children. She has a sacrificing attitude for her children, even though her husband does not help her. A mother should make sacrifices for her nation, society and children."

However, modern-day older women do not seem to think that a grandmother has to take care of her grandchildren as if she were their mother. When they feel discontent with their everyday lives due to physical exhaustion and interruption of social activities caused by caring for their grandchildren, they think that they are able to control the pace in or refuse caring for grandchildren. As I mentioned in a previous chapter, since grandmothers, in general, take care of their grandchildren under three years old, most of the participants who take care of their grandchildren said that they have experienced physical fatigue caused by excessive household labor. They have to bear as much housework as when they raised their own children. Sook, who refused to take care of her infant grandson after she cared for him for seven months, said, "It was too much for me. I was physically tired, although I was really enjoying it…So, I told my daughter, 'I am exhausted.'" Kyoung said, "Ah… I cannot look after my grandchild. I took care of my two daughters after birth. I felt completely worn out. When I reared my three young children, I did not feel exhausted. But, when caring for my grandchildren, I am too tired to look after them. So, I cannot take care of them everyday. But, when my children need a babysitter, I am willing to do it." In the case of Chang, she chose her social activities. She would be scheduled to watch her grandchildren, but she often missed her "shifts" when she had another activity planned. She said, "One day I was fired from the job. [Laughs]… But, I told myself, 'It will be better for me.'" Besides, current grandmothers who provide child care on a regular basis tend to earn wages from the children's parents. Yet, the participants mentioned feeling uncomfortable about receiving payment for taking care of their grandchildren. Young said, "I seem to have a commercial purpose if I earn money for taking care of my grandchildren." They were conscious of the symbolic meaning attached to household labor done by women. That is, they believe that

their unpaid housework displays their love for family. Nonetheless, earning wages for caring for their grandchildren shows that women's belief that housework and childcare are unpaid responsibilities has changed over time. It is also likely that an "acceptable level of unpaid work" (Sayer, 2005, p. 297) has changed .

In addition to caring for grandchildren, the pattern of sharing housework labor between female family members has changed when holding family get-togethers and other family events that require women's intensive domestic labor of cooking and cleaning. First, older women have diminished or avoided visiting their adult children. Sook said, "I prefer for my children to come to my place. Even though I have to prepare meals for them, I am comfortable when they come to my home… When I freeload several meals at their houses, I feel very uncomfortable." She wants to avoid the situation in which she takes advantage of a daughter-in-law's or daughter's labor. Sun said, "I do not visit my son once a month. They come to my place two or three times a month." When her daughter-in-law comes to her house, she always cooks, and her daughter-in-law is in charge of doing the dishes and cleaning. Hyun said that money, which reduces housework for women, is required in order to avoid conflicts in the division of household labor between a mother-in-law and a daughter-in-law. She said, "What if a mother-in-law wants to have dinner at home since she cannot afford to treat them [her son and daughter-in-law to dinner at a restaurant]? Would a daughter-in-law like this? I was aware of this. It is the power of money that makes life easy. When we have dinner at home, we have to cook and wash the dishes. Even if a mother-in-law cooks, a daughter-in-law has to help her. She has to go grocery shopping and cook something special whenever a mother-in-law comes. A daughter-in-law would be under a lot of stress. So a mother-in-law won't be welcomed."

Outcome of the Activity System of Caring Activity

Women Dependent on Their Children in Their Later Years

Most of Korean women directly or indirectly have learned that their purpose in life is to be a dutiful daughter-in-law, a good wife, and a wise mother, which motivate the actions to care for their family. The concept of being a dutiful daughter-in-law is based on Confucianism and has been the most philosophical and ethical influence on women's social life in South Korea since the 14th century (H.-o. Kim & Hoppe-Graff, 2001). A good wife and a wise mother based on a patriarchal ideology have been normative expectations for married women's behavior since the Japanese Colonial Period (Yoon, 2001). In this study, the older women believe that being a good wife and a wise mother are their obligations as a married housewife. At the same time, they seemed to think that these obligations are the purpose of their lives. They have learned how they should behave in order to become a good wife and wise mother since early in life. When they were young, they were obligated to be subordinate to their husbands and to support them, their parents-in-law, and their children. A husband, as the head of the family, had the authority to decide most of the family issues, and a wife supported her husband in order for him to commit himself to his job. Women were to prepare three meals a day, clean the house, wash the clothes, and take care of their family. As they get older, they have achieved the status of a domestic master (H.-o. Kim & Hoppe-Graff, 2001) and have extended the sphere of power in their family. After their husbands' retirement, they undertake the role of the financial manager in family. They also believe that they have the responsibility to manage family relations to maintain family harmony and to transmit the cultural and historical values associated with gender-appropriate behavior to the next generation, to their daughters and daughters-in-law.

Caring activity done by women under the Confucianism and patriarchal family system has made women become more dependent on their children than men in regard to financial issues in their later years. Since most women of my mother's generation perform unpaid household labor over the course of their lifetime, they depend on their family to support them later on in their life. Feminist theories provide insights into gender inequality in women's later years. They argue that women's unpaid caring work and domestic tasks affect women's poverty status in old age (Ferguson, 2004). Division of labor by gender separates women from economic activity. In addition, a Korean cultural tradition, filial piety, makes women's dependence on their sons a natural process. Filial piety has played a significant role in guiding adult children's behavior toward their aging parents in South Korea. The children are expected to repay their parents' love and care based on the Confucian principle of filial piety (Sung, 1998). Women have had the expectation that someday they will be taken care of by their children. If aging parents do not have the financial ability to support themselves or if the husband dies, children, especially the eldest son, have the obligation to support their aging parents or widowed mother by living with her. Hyun said, "But, when I am totally dependent on others, I am bound to rely on my son." Young also said, "If I need to live with my children, it would be better to live with my son. (Living with a daughter) is wrong. If she is able to serve an old parent, the old parent must be her mother-in-law. A daughter is a visitor who was extracted from her family. She has to live with her mother-in-law. Why would she live with her mother? It does not make sense. It is wrong. Later, you must live with your mother-in-law, not your mom."

Mitchell (Mitchell, 1972 cited in Ferguson, 2004) asserts caring activity done by women socializes women and men to have different identities and personalities. According to the studies of Korean married women's personality attributes, Korean married women tend to draw less attention to the self in the social context (Suh, 2000), have a strong commitment to traditional values, and are enduring (Y. Park, et al., 2002). As a result, women may have less psychological

power in relation to men and children. Although women over 60 often feel physical fatigue due to their increased housework caused by caring for their adult children and grandchildren, it seems to be hard for them to decline their children's requests. Jeong said, "Once my daughter was pregnant, she moved near my apartment. I could not turn my back on my daughter." She said that saying no to her children when they ask for something is a selfish behavior. When older widowed women receive inheritance from her husbands, they tend to transfer a practical power to their eldest sons to control their husbands' inheritance and to depend on their sons. Besides, older women tend to emphasize mental rewards for taking care of their family. They believe that caring for adult children and grandchildren is their obligation and a meaningful activity in their later years. Young said, "If I did not take care of them, how would I spend my time? Meeting with friends everyday seems to be a waste of time. And, my daughter-in-law was able to earn her Ph.D. since I've taken care of her children. I was proud of myself even before others recognized my contribution to her PhD. I'm happy I could help make this happen. I did it by myself." Sun believes that their physical labor for their children and grandchildren engenders love and respect for parents. "No pain, no gain,' right? My children feel thankful when I do something for them. And it would motivate them do something for me and for their children. As a result, a grandchild would come to love his grandmother. My grandchildren call me to say, 'I love you, Grandmother.'"

Older women become more self-protective

However, the older women in this study seem to realize that their generation cannot expect material support from their children in later life. The Confucian principle of filial piety that rules their sons' behavior has grown weaker under tremendous social and cultural changes and globalization. Particularly, the American individualistic culture has changed a family-

centered collectivistic culture in South Korea (U. Kim & Choi, 1994; Kwon, 2008). Thus,

younger people tend to put more importance on an an individual's happiness than on roles and

obligations as a family member. Furthermore, an increase of financial uncertainty and of

educational expenses for children has increased financial pressure on young people. Thus,

recently, many young people have failed or refused to support their aging parents. In addition, the

contradictions between a mother-in-law and a daughter-in-law in the division of household labor

and lifestyle differences related to age have made them give up their expectations of living with

their sons. Sook said, "Uh, to make my senior years easier, I have changed my mind (about

living with my son). I won't live with them after all. [Laughs]" Thus, the older women in this

study have become self-protective on the issues that have limited their later lives such as financial

ability and taking care of grandchildren under conditions of uncertainty. (Altschuler, 2001) also

reveals that older women become more self-protective over the life course in their qualitative

study to explore the meaning and conditions of caring activities for ethnically and economically

diverse older women. Altschuler (2001) asserts this is the developmental trait of older women.

Although older women cannot be completely independent from their children in the

social and cultural context of South Korea, they do not think that their children should suffer

financial losses due to caring for aging parents. They believe that preventing unexpected age-

related diseases which entail expensive hospital bills is a way to reduce children's financial loss.

So, they try to eat healthy and engage in regular exercise to stay healthy. Hyun rides the subway

instead of driving, Sook ambles around a shopping center and Sun goes to a fitness center. Won

tries to eat more Korean traditional food such as Kimchi and Gochujang-jjigae, which contain

healthy garlic and soybeans. Soo prefers homemade food for good health. Older women share

their experiences and exchanged information about healthy food and free exercise classes. I

observed that the participants spent a considerable time talking about food. Sook said that older

women talk so much about food in relation to their health that it annoys young people. The other

solution to be independent from their children is to keep their properties. Sook agonized about selling her house to help their children, "I want to help them. But the reality is… I am sad. When they are young, I have to help them to settle down. … I will have to sell my house in order to support myself when I am older. So I cannot help them more now. I often think that I would be able to help them if I sell my house. But, soon, I change my mind. Keeping my house is the only way for me to prepare for an uncertain future. … When I am older, I do not want to be their burden. If I ask for help, they would be in big trouble because they have their own family." Sun believes that money encourages their children to fulfill their filial duty. She said, "We, old people, always say that children do not fulfill their filial duty if their parents do not have money. There is an old saying. Imagine you are disabled later in life. If you put a lot of money under your bed, your children would compete with each other to clean your excrement up since you are paying them to do that. It's like the saying, if you have money, your children are willing to clean your dirty waste up. So, I will put money under my bed later in my life. Do not give your children all your possessions. If you keep them, you can sell them when needed. This is the truth." Jeong, who has earned a salary by taking care of her grandson, actively struggles with her financial difficulty in later life. She thought that she has to make a living instead of relying on her son. She said, "I have to work to make a living. I really appreciate the birth of my grandson, which provides me with financial assistance. I am really happy because he was born when I needed a job."

The majority of women interviewed wanted to be independent from their children even in the situation where they need to someone's help in the future. Particularly, the older women who do not have a son or the older women who can pay for high quality eldercare services seem to prefer professional care services for the future if they become disabled. Well-off Sun does not want to live with her son in order to avoid strains in her relationship with her daughter-in-law. Sun said, "My husband saved money for our later years. If I get an age-related disease, I am

going to 'Silvertown' with my husband. I do not want to be my children's burden." Won, who does not have a son, said, "I always tell my daughters I am going to a nursing home. I would be able to live there until I die if it does not cost too much. I think I can afford to pay for nursing home care… You do not need to rely on your children if you have money. You can live comfortably at the facilities for the old." Jeong, who experienced a hard time taking care of her disabled mother-in-law, said, "Although people say children have to take care of their aging parents, I do not want my children to have to struggle with old people. It was a hard time for me, even though I am a person who likes to spend time with old people."

Although women expect to be free of housework and childrearing responsibilities as they reach their 60s and beyond, the women in this study still undertake much housework in order to care for their adult children and grandchildren. However, unlike their previous generations, they have more psychological power. They set limits on housework for themselves. Furthermore, the majority of women in this study thought that doing anything for their adult children is a sacrifice rather than an obligation. So, they seem to be able to choose what they want instead of simply doing something for their adult children. Soo set time limits to protect her health when her son asked her to take care of her daughter on a regular basis. She took care of her infant granddaughter for only one year. Yet most participants seem to feel ambivalent about determining how to spend their free time and their labor because of the expectations that older women should care for their grandchildren. They want to be a loving grandmother who is devoted to their family, but at the same time, they want to spend their later years doing what they want. (Arber & Ginn, 1991) argue that financial ability, as well as caring, is a constraint when older women determine the way they live their lives. Sook refused to take care of her infant grandson any longer after she cared for him for seven months. Although she hesitated to say no to her daughter's request for assistance, her friend encouraged her. She said, "One of my friends said, 'We took care of our own children. That was enough. It does not make sense to care for their

children.' This inspired me to refuse to take care of my grandson. So, I told my daughter, 'I am

exhausted.' I felt sorry about this, but I do not need to feel this way." Young lived in her son's

home for two years once her son asked her to take care of her grandchildren. Yet, because of the

stress related to her daughter-in-law, two years later, she decided to move out. Chang chose to do

something for herself instead of caring for her granddaughters. She said, "But, when I took a trip

or had another fun activity scheduled, I often missed my baby-sitting shifts." Chang said that she

now spends more time enjoying her social life than ever. They also actively cope with their

depressive symptoms that they feel in their later years after their family and household

responsibilities decrease. They do not expect emotional support from their family but go out to

have fun in their later years. Sook said, "You have to live being patient with and consoling

yourself… I create something to do so that I won't feel blue. I go to church or go out to meet my

friends." Sun also said, "I do not need to feel helpless staying home alone. I feel bored and

cramped when I stay home. So, I schedule to go out. I go to the gym and church. And I meet

friends and eat lunch with them. I stay home only when I am ill. I cannot stay home all day long

since I feel bored and cramped." Similarly, Sook feels isolated when she is alone at home. She

said, "Yesterday, I went out around 2 p.m. It is not good to stay alone at home all day. I went out

and returned home around 5: 30 pm. When I stay home, I often lie around and… Anyway, I feel

weird… So, I went out and strolled along the neighborhood." Loneliness no longer seems to be a

part of the image of older women.

The zone of Proximal Development: The Expansion of a Social Activity

The Korean older women of today step into an uncertain future as they age. Their

concerns about material resources and caretaking resources when they are elderly and disabled

have grown as they have gotten older. In South Korea, where the eldest son has an obligation to

support aging parents, older women feel sorry for their sons who would undertake their aging-related concerns. Sun said, "I think that living longer would be a burden on our children." Particularly, for Korean mothers who place a high value on their children, being a burden to their children seems to be a source of pain. The burden they speak of does not simply refer to children's financial losses resulting from caring for their aging parents. They are also concerned about the emotional and physical labor that accompanies taking care of aging parents-in-law that their daughters-in-law would have to endure. Their previous experiences with their own aging parents-in-law made them realize that taking on the role of caregiver can decrease the sense of well-being of middle-age and older women. Besides, they are expected to share the household labor, including childrearing, with their mothers-in-law or daughters until they are disabled. This is one of their aging-related concerns since it limits their later years. Older women have accepted the contradictions between a wife and a husband related to household labor. Normative and cultural values associated with gender-appropriate behavior assume that men do not share housework and childrearing responsibilities. Yet, with regard to the change in the sharing of housework with daughters-in-law or daughters, they identified themselves as a victim of an improvement in the social status of young women. They tended to feel that work that they do for working daughters-in-law or daughters is burdensome and exploitative.

Older women reconsider their caring behavior that they have performed their everyday lives under conditions of uncertainty. They reallocate their time and labor comparing gains or losses relative to their future. They set self-protective limits (Altschuler, 2001) in helping their adult children and caring for their grandchildren to stay healthy. They increase social activities involving exercise. Older women are most sensitive to their health since they think that staying healthy is the only solution to becoming less of a burden on their children in their later years. They also believe that having fun by participating in social activities has a positive influence on their health. Although social activities have always been present in a housewife's everyday life,

social activities appear to be a conscious choice made by aging women as a result of their effort to improve their later years. When the caring activity takes up most of their time, the time and importance for the social activity relatively decreases. So, when women have a very busy period raising young children or taking caring of their elderly parents-in-law, the caring activity is not their main concern and interest. After children go to college, women begin to pay attention to the social activities that they have put aside. At the beginning of social activities, the older women participated in social activities to deal with their free time and the depressive symptoms that resulted in that period. But, I found that their social activities have been developed by these motives: their needs for social connectedness, for recreation, for personal growth, and for doing good deeds for others as time goes by. In addition to their specific motives, their sense of having limited time left on earth draws their attention to meaningful social activities. Thus, as they get older, the frequency of participation in volunteering, formal class-based learning and physical activities that are meaningful for them has increased.

Concrete actions in the zone of proximal development

The expansion of a social activity appears in the zone of proximal development. I went to back to the actions to reveal concrete actions in this zone. In this study, the social activity of the older women is not analyzed in detail. Yet, I briefly describe their actions based on my observations to provide insight into lifelong learning for older women. Lifelong learning can contribute to leading a possible expanded activity in which the contradictions are resolved. Particularly, South Korea, where lifelong learning is dominated by the government (S.-J. Park, 2002), may be able to intervene in the process of the development of older women to improve their lives.

Most of the participants participated in formal class-based learning that local senior centers and religious groups provide for the welfare of the growing elderly population. With the institutionalization of adult education in South Korea (S.-J. Park, 2002), the education and activities for the elderly also tend to be managed by institutions. Public institutions such as local senior centers and local lifelong education centers provide a large part of elder education in South Korea. Private institutions and religious groups also play an integral role in providing elder education. Most of the programs that public institutions provide are free. Thus, old women who are economically dependent favor participating in the free programs. The senior centers where I met participants have three kinds of elder education programs: personal development programs, leisure programs, and volunteer programs to help older people implement social responsibility. They pay most attention to personal development programs and leisure programs to improve individuals' life quality. In general, the formal class-based learning that I observed has a formal education classroom setting, composed of a teacher/facilitator and students/group members. The teacher and student relationship in South Korea is similar to a parent/child hierarchy based on Confucian values. The participants showed a very passive attitude toward their teacher and facilitator in a classroom or a group. They respected and followed their teacher/facilitator's directions. Also, they seemed to have a passive attitude toward the institution's policy and staff members. Among group members, the age of an individual member defines the patterns of interaction based on Confucian values. Older people played the role of supporting and advising younger students. At the same time, older people held the belief that younger people revere their elders.

Small socialization with neighbors or with class/group members was prior to the social activity in institutions. Most participants have a group of close relationships with three or four female friends similar in age. Other-focused emotions such as sympathy and empathy in the collectivist culture (Kwon, 2008) direct interactions in a smaller group. Particularly, older

women's interaction with others seems to be affected by emotion. Female friends in neighborhoods, churches, and senior centers as the community of the social activity system shared the same object.

Most tasks seem to be assigned based on volunteering in a social activity. Yet it is believed that older women in a group are responsible for preparing meals, cleaning up, and assisting others before younger women. That is, older women are more expected to undertake the tasks identified with household labor than younger women in social groups. For instance, at church, older women have engaged in volunteer activities such as assisting with food preparation, serving, and clean-up and nursery services for worship services, while younger women volunteer as greeters who stand at the entrance doors before services and as ushers.

Chapter 8

Conclusion and Implication

In this chapter, I summarize the conclusions of this study. Additionally, I discuss the limitations of this study and provide suggestions for further study. In the first section, I describe women and aging in South Korea. In the second section, I show how I observed and analyzed informal learning using the CHAT. In the third section, the limitations and suggestions are discussed.

Women and Aging in South Korea

I am 34 years old. Although I started to age officially the day I was born, I have recognized my aging with the arrival of my gray hair. I started noticing gray hair when I was about 23. Then the gray began to sprout. Now, 10 years later, my hair is sprinkled with white. It shows up more quickly than it used to. I fought the grays in my twenties since I thought that gray hair was not appropriate for women in their twenties. I pulled out my gray hairs whenever I found them. But, now, I let my gray hair grow out. I think that I have reached the age when I can accept gray hair. As my experience with gray hair shows, each age group, such as the teens and twenties, has different expectations about its appearance, behavior, and role in a society. Socially constructed meanings of old age are generally viewed as the loss of roles accompanying physical decline (Gorman, 1999). In South Korea, the years of 60 and above are generally accepted as the age at which a person becomes old. Older people are regarded as a less active and more dependent group due to their physical decline. However, Korean older people have enjoyed the privileges that Confucian ideology bestows on old age. In Korea, older persons have been revered by younger persons and have been financially and emotionally supported by their children.

In this study, the participants, all of whom were 60 years of age or older, said their physical health is fair. Three of these women have health problems, but they do not interfere with their important daily activities. Contrary to the common image of old age, in this study, the older women still have the burdensome responsibilities of taking care of their husband and adult children. They clearly separate and divide women's roles and men's roles based on Confucian ideology and accept that women are fully responsible for the housework and childrearing over their life course. They continue to do housework to serve their husband in old age. After their children get married, they take partial charge of their children's responsibilities, including caring for their grandchildren and performing household labor on behalf of their working daughters or daughters-in-law. They feel the role that they undertake for their daughters or daughters-in-law is oppressive or burdensome.

However, urbanization, the nuclear family system, and weakening of Confucian ideology have increased uncertainty about their future. Most of today's older women who have relied on their husbands for their principal financial support are likely to have a lower standard of living as they age. Spending most their lives doing unpaid household work has caused economic problems in women's later years. Fortunately, the oldest son's filial duty to support aging parents has been a safeguard against their uncertain future. Yet, weakening of Confucian ideology has undermined the belief that children should take care of their aging parents. Also, many children have failed to support their aging parents due to their financial difficulties. Thus, in this sense, older women have become a burden to their children and society. An aging society has shed light only on the social loss due to increasing number of older women. Older women's contributions to the family economy through taking care of grandchildren for working mothers and to society through community activity and volunteering have been overlooked.

In this circumstance, at the individual level, older women have concerns about their financial uncertainty and caring resources when they become disabled and/or elderly. They have

modified their everyday lives in order to protect themselves from the challenges of aging. They have set self-protective limits on household work relaxing Confucian ideology that has guided their behaviors. So, they eventually set limits about their responsibilities in order to safeguard their health. While they try to decrease the amount of household labor that they do, they actively engage in social activities that they previously had to set aside due to their past responsibilities of childrearing and caregiving for elderly parents-in-law. They enjoy socializing with their neighbors and with class/group members. As they get older, they tend to seek out meaningful social activities such as volunteering, formal class-based learning, and physical activity.

The CHAT and informal learning

Informal learning designates the implicit and unconstructed learning that occurs in everyday life. People obtain new knowledge or skills through interaction between people and people and people and artifacts in everyday life. Thus, the learning phenomenon is not always easily or clearly identifiable. Informal learning is so difficult to assess in empirical studies that it has been ignored in the field of adult education. The CHAT has been noted as an alternative to the traditional adult learning theories that fail to show the social aspects of informal learning. The CHAT is a powerful tool used to help more effectively realize and study comprehensive informal learning practices. In the CHAT, learning is defined as one possible outcome of human activities. Learning does not occur simply in people's minds but exists within continuously changing time and social relations. In examining human activity, the CHAT focuses on the social structure in which learning takes place. In this way, the CHAT explains individual and societal development. It allows the researcher to investigate the input, process and outcome of changes in activity. Thus, the CHAT is able to show the whole process of informal learning from the input to outcome. Through the CHAT researchers can verify learning capacities of informal learning.

This study examined the changes made in older women's everyday activities in order to deal with issues that they face as they age. Among their everyday activities, "caring activity" was revealed as a central activity. Caring activities occupy the primary position at any stage of Korean women's lives. For older women who have lived as stay-at-home mothers, performing caring activities to support their husbands and children was their purpose in life. The change in older women's caring activities as they age was the social phenomenon observed and analyzed in this study to reveal informal learning. The activity was extended into an activity system to explicate the cultural and historical contexts of the activity. Although the amount of time spent on caring activities has decreased as women get older, the women in this study still undertake much housework in order to care for their adult children and grandchildren. Today's older women have undertaken their working daughters-in-laws' and daughters' responsibilities, including housework and childrearing. The loss of the superior position bestowed on mothers-in-law has changed the pattern of sharing household labor between mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law. However, older women's concerns about their future have made them more self-protective. They set self-protective limits (Altschuler, 2001) about helping their adult children and caring for their grandchildren in order to stay healthy. They increase social activities involving exercise. As they get older, they focus on engaging in meaningful social activities.

In this study, the CHAT showed the shift of the central activity of older women's everyday lives from caring activities to social activities. In this process, the shift was learning as one possible outcome of human activity. The shift of the central activity can be explained as a result of qualitative changes in human practices. Older women alter their everyday activities so that they can improve the quality of their elderly years in the future.

Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research

This study had two limitations in adopting ethnography. First, there was a limitation in gaining access to the field. Since my study focused on housewives' caring activities, most of the activities occur in private places and times. The participants were very reluctant to open up their homes and family time to me, making actual participation in their daily lives seldom possible. I observed the daily routine of only two out of 11 participants at home. Thus, the description of their caring activities relied solely on interview data. Second, I could not spend long periods of time collecting data in the field due to time constraints. I carried out my research in the field for about four months from September 2007 to January 2008. Although this was not enough time to understand how a particular cultural process is developed and sustained, familiarity with the language and culture helped me to find the recurring social practices and their artifacts in a given period of time.

Aging is a complex phenomenon involving biological and psychological changes and a social context. Yet, since this study focused on sociological perspectives on aging, unobservable individual experiences related to aging, such as thoughts and feelings, were left out. Thus, a limited understanding of the aging phenomenon was provided in this study.

For further research, I suggest more studies on power relations among women in order to examine older women's lives. In this study, I found that power relations among women affect older women's everyday lives more than gender inequality in South Korea under Confucian ideology and a strong patriarchal family system. Additionally, to improve the quality of older women's lives, the challenges of aging that older women face in society need to be considered and addressed by social services in order to help them. I found that many older women feel guilty or unhappy about their longevity due to the aging-related issues that they face in this study. Thus, more studies on social services for older women will be required. In the field of lifelong learning

in South Korea, programs and activities to provide training, resources, and information need to be developed to increase employment opportunities for older women. Modern-day older women are thinking and becoming more proactive about their future in terms of their financial and well-being. This is a strategy to empower women in old age with social services.

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Appendix A

Research Recruitment Request: Telephone Script

Project Title: Women and Aging in South Korea: An Ethnographic Study of Informal

                                        Learning

Principal Investigator: Hyunmin Lim, 315 Keller Building, Penn State University, PA, 16802,

                                        412-523-5745; hxl232@psu.edu

Hello Name,

I'm Hyunmin, a Ph.D. student of Adult Education Program in Penn State University in the USA. How's it going? (Greetings)… May I ask a favor of you? I am recruiting voluntary research participants for my research. This research is for my dissertation and has been supervised by my academic advisor, Fred M. Schied, professor of Penn State University.

My dissertation research is about the informal learning that takes place in everyday life around the issue of women and aging. The participants will be women in the age group of 60-74 years old who got married having children and have experienced normal aging. The purpose of this study is to have a better understanding of the learning of older South Korean women on aging.

I will talk about aging with you and observe your everyday life in order to investigate how the informal learning that relates to aging takes place in your life. This research can help you reflect on your experiences of aging. And the process of reflection will help you develop your identity as a woman and contribute to your plan for your later life.

For the purpose of this project, I will conduct the observation and interview. Participant observations will be conducted in the places in which your everyday life occurs such as your house and Bible study. I will discuss the places for participant observation with you. The interview will be conducted face-to-face. If you agree to be interviewed, an appointment will be scheduled. An interview will last approximately 60-90 minutes, and we would meet two or three times. It will be conducted in your home or somewhere you choose. Your name will not be used

in any reports prepared or presented as a result of this study. I promise to maintain confidentiality and to keep your privacy. If you want more information regarding the research procedure, I can explain what you want to know.

Could you participate in my research?

Appendix B

Informed Consent Form for Social Science Research

The Pennsylvania State University

<table>
<tr><td>ORP USE ONLY: IRB#26042 Doc.#1
The Pennsylvania State University
Office for Research Protections
Approval Date: 08-23-2007 DWM
Expiration Date: 07-11-2008 DWM
Social Science Institutional Review Board</td></tr>
</table>

Title of Project: Women and Aging in South Korea: An Ethnographic Study of Informal Learning

Principal Investigator: Hyunmin Lim, Graduate Student
315 Keller Building, Penn State University, PA, 16802
(412) 523-5745; hxl232@psu.edu

Advisor: Dr. Fred M. Schied
315 Keller Bldg. University Park, PA 16802
(814) 863-3499; fms3@psu.edu

1. Purpose of the Study: This study is a research for a doctoral dissertation in adult education. The purpose of this study is to examine the informal learning that takes place in everyday life around the issue of women and aging. I want to learn what assumptions that relate to aging about behavior older women learn and to describe the process of this informal learning using Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (CHAT). I also want to learn how the social inequities in age and gender show in older women's everyday lives.

2. Procedures to be followed: You will be asked to participate in interviews on your experiences that take place in your everyday life around the issue of women and aging. The interview activity will take place in a comfortable place and time according to your schedule. The process will entail one or two interviews. The whole discussion will be recorded by voice recorder. In addition, participant observations will be conducted in the places in which your everyday life occurs such as your house and Bible study. I will discuss the places for participant observation with you. The data will be protected at safe location until this study is finished. I will protect your identities as participant by using pseudonyms.

3. Discomforts and Risks: There are no known discomforts and risks in participating in this research beyond normal daily living. However, if some of the questions make you uncomfortable or anxious, you do not have to answer the questions. Some of the questions may seem personal or of a private nature.

4. Benefits: You will have a chance to reflect on your life and to make a plan for your later life. This research will help you develop yourself and have a positive meaning of aging.

5. Duration/Time: Participant observation will be conducted at least three times for three months. Two or three interviews of approximately one and half hour each will be conducted.

6. Statement of Confidentiality: Your participation in this research is confidential. Only the person in charge, the investigator, will know your identity. The data will be stored and secured in the investigator's personal computer in a password protected file. The following may review and copy records related to this research: The Office of Human Research Protections in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Penn State University's Social Science Institutional Review Board, and Penn State University's Office for Research Protections. In the event of a publication or presentation resulting from the research, no personally identifiable information will be shared. Moreover, the audio files where the recordings will be stored will be stored on the principal investigator's password protected laptop and only the principal investigator will have access to them. The audio files will be permanently deleted the principal investigator's password protected laptop after 3 years. Please note that the investigators are obligated by ethical standards to report to the appropriate agencies any concerns for personal safety or illegal activity.

7. Right to Ask Questions: You can ask questions about this research. Contact Hyunmin Lim at +1-(412) 523-5745/+82-(02) 599-6485 or e-mail: hxl232@psu.edu with questions. You can also call this number if you have concerns about this research, or if you feel that you have been harmed by this study. If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, or you have concerns or general questions about the research, contact Penn State University's Office for Research Protections at (814) 865-1775. You may also call this number if you cannot reach the research team or wish to talk to someone else.

8. Voluntary Participation: Your decision to be in this research is voluntary. You can stop at any time. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to answer. Refusal to take part in or withdrawing from this study will involve no penalty or loss of benefits you would receive otherwise.

You must be 18 years of age or older to consent to take part in this research study. If you agree to take part in this research study and the information outlined above, please sign your name and indicate the date below.

You will be given a copy of this signed and dated consent form for your records.

_____   _____
Participant Signature   Date

_____   _____
Person Obtaining Consent   Date

Appendix C

Interview Protocol

Title of Project: Women and Aging in South Korea: An Ethnographic Study of
                       Informal Learning
Principal Investigator: Hyunmin Lim, 315 Keller Building, Penn State University, PA,
                       16802, 412-523-5745; hxl232@psu.edu

Interview No: _____

Interviewee' name (pseudonym) : _____   Date: _____

First Interview

1. Personal background (age, family, health, education and family income)

2. When did you marry your husband?

3. When did you give birth to your first baby?

4. Did your first child get married? If so, when did he or she get married?

5. Do you have old parents who you have to take care of?

6. Can you tell me about what has happened to your family in the last five years?

   - What activities have you conducted?
   - What do you think the important activity is? Why is the activity important to you?
   - Can you describe the activity that has had the most influence on you? Why is it so influential to you? What is your role in this activity?
   - Can you describe the activity that has had the least influence on you? Why is it so uninfluential to you? What is your role in this activity?

   7. Can you tell me about what has happened to your life excluding family in the last

five years?

   - What activities have you conducted?

- What do you think the important activity is? Why is the activity important to you?
- Can you describe the activity that has had the most influence on you? Why is it so influential to you? What is your role in this activity?
- Can you describe the activity that has had the least influence on you? Why is it so uninfluential to you? What is your role in this activity?

Second Interview

1. Have you experienced changes in marital relationship and the relationship with other family member in the last five years? If so, what changes?

   - Do you have conflicts with your family member in the process of these changes? If so, can you describe the conflicts?

2. Have you experienced changes in the relationship with other significant people especially young people in the last five years? If so, what changes?

   - Do you have conflicts with other significant people especially young people in the process of these changes? If so, can you describe the conflicts?

3. How have you drawn up to cope with their conflicts?
4. Do you have any concerns about your future? If so, can you say them?

   Third interview will be conducted, only if the first and second interviews are incomplete. In third interview, the questions that are not finished in the first and second interviews will be repeated.

Appendix D

Interview Transcript

An edited transcript of the 1st interview with Won

Date: 10/11/2007

Place: the playground of her apartment

Duration: 54:58

임: 시작하기 전에 간단한 인적상항 여쭤보겠습니다. 연세가?

원: 지금 62. 46 년생.

임: 46 년생이세요? 아… 저희 엄마가 47 년생이시거든요. 친정엄마가.

원: 친정엄마가…

임: 근데 돌아가셨어요.

원: 아… 그래 맞아. 어머니한테 얘기들었어. 아… 그러면 우리 또래네.

임: 엄마가 살아계셨으면 60 이 넘으셨네요…하하

원: 그러니깐, 그래 언제 돌아가셨어?

임: 2000 년 1 월에요.

원: 세상에 어떻게 그렇게 일찍 돌아가셨어. 그래… 아프셔가지고?

임: 네, 3 년 고생하시다가 돌아가셨어요.

원: 에구… 근데 신랑 잘 만나서 괜찮을 거야. 그리고 시어머니가 너무 좋은 분이야. 지금까지 우리가 수십년 동안을 같이 지내오고 있지만 너무 좋은 분이야. 그 어머니의 그 딸이라고 그러던가, 그 아버지의 그 아들이라고 그러던가. 하하… 너무 좋으신 분들이야.

임: 가족관계는 어떻게 되세요?

원: 지금 우리 냄편하고 할아버지하고 둘이 살았었는데, 우리 둘째 있잖아 제 있잖아 (놀이터에서 놀고 있는 손녀를 가리킴). 제가 큰 딸이야. 난 딸만 셋인데. 큰 딸이

결혼해서 제 오빠 아들하나 나서는 필리핀으로 다가 아… 그러니깐 몇 년도냐…
97 년도에 필리핀으로다가 사위가 무역업을 하기 때문에 이제 필리핀으로다가 갔다고.
가서 그러니깐 이제 몇년 동안 있다 우리집으로 온 거야. 젊은 사람들이 이제 정말
집에서 많은 도움을 받아서 뭐… 집이라도 장만하고 그러는 자식들도 있겠지만, 우리는
이제 지내들이 벌어서 뭐 집이라도 아파트라도 사겠다고 그래서 아예 지출같은 것도
줄이기 위해서 아에 우리집으로다 예네가 온 거야. 우리가 여의도에 살 때지. 그래서
저기 거기서 살다가 예 둘째를 난 거야. 큰 애만 낳고 필리핀으로 갔다가 와갖고 둘째를
여기서 난거야. 그때부터 여짓까지 내가 키운거여…

임: 그럼 지금 이렇게 손녀딸하고.. 딸가족하고?

원: 우리 이런 얘기는 해도 괜찮고 안해도 괜찮고
어머니가 다 알고 있는 거야. 어머니가 누구보다도
우리 가정생활을 다 알고 있는 거야. 인제 우리 **사위**가 아파갖고 뇌… 저기… 뭐라고

> 사위에 대해 이야기 하면서 눈을 맞추지 않고 멋 곳을 바라보며 가끔 다리를 쭉쭉 뻤었다. 무언가 말을 다 하지 않는 듯한 느낌도 있었고, 하기 싫은 말을 하는 듯한 느낌도 있었고, 거짓말을 하는 듯한 느낌도 있었다. 그녀에게 있어서 마음에 안 드는 현실임이라는 느낌을 들게 했다.

그러나 혈압으로 다가 뇌졸증. 쓰러져서 병원에서 대수술해갖고 한쪽을 못 써. 이젠
걷기는 걸어. 못 걸었었는데. 인제 예는 우리하고 있는 게 아니구 지내 엄마아버지
있는데, 거기가 인천이거든. 거기 가서 있어 지금. 있다가 여기 왔다가. 왔다갔다해.
그리고 예네는 예엄마하고, 아들 딸, 그런니깐 예오빠하고 우리 할아버지하고. 우리 이제
26 살 먹은 막내딸이 있는데. 늦게 낳어. 게가 예네가 필리핀에 가 있을 때 그때 고 1 때
언니네 집에 놀러갔다가 그냥 거기서 공부를 하게 됐어. 그래가지고, 거기서 고등학교
나오고 고등학교 나오니깐 그 때 거기서 8 학년인가 외국에서는 그렇더라고. 그리고
대학교까지 거기서 나와서 (…어..저기) 취직을 (어…) 뭐지 비자 맨들어주고 그러는데…
뭐라고 그러는거야…

임: 대사관

원: 어… 대사관. 대사관에 한 2 년 근무하다가 작년 제작년 가을 10 월달에 와가지고
여기 파주 영어마을에 이제. 선생노릇하고 있는 거지. 지금 거기에 근무하고 있는 거야.
28 살 먹은 딸이. 게는 이제 마포에서 다니기가 어려워 갖고 대화역인가 거기에다가
오피스텔 하나를 얻어줬어. 거기서 인제 통근버스 타고, 주말마다 우리집으로 오는 거야.
그래서 게까지 식구가 있다고 하면 6 식구고 그렇지 않으면 5 식구지. 사위는 또
그쪽으로 가서. 호적에 다 있지만은…

VITA

Hyunmin Lim

Education

Pennsylvania State University, PhD, Adult Education, 2010
Yonsei University, South Korea, Master in Education, 2003
Yonsei University, South Korea, BA, Public Administration, 1999

Teaching and Professional Experience

Part-time lecturer, Sangmyung University, South Korea	*Sep. – Dec. 2010*
Teaching Assistant, the Penn State University World Campus	*Sep. 2005 – May. 2007*
Assistant Instructor, Songpa Community Center, South Korea	*Oct. – Nov. 2003*
Part-time Lecturer, Myongji College, South Korea	*Sep. – Dec. 2003*
Assistant Instructor, Bukbu Community Center, South Korea	*Jun. – Jul. 2003*
Part-time Lecturer, Kimpo College, South Korea	*Mar. – Jul. 2003*
Translator, Korea-Japan International Education Seminar, South Korea	*Sep. 2002*
Assistant Staff, the School of Education, Yonsei University, South Korea	*Sep. - Dec. 2000*
Staff, the Adult and Continuing Education of Korea Conference, South Korea	*Nov. 1999*
Continuing Education Consultant, Kangnam YMCA, South Korea	*Jul. - Aug. 1998*

Presentations

Lim, H. (Nov. 2010) "The change of Korean older women: the social process of aging", the Adult and Continuing Education of Korea Conference at Yonsei University, South Korea
Lim, H. (Sep. 2000) "Analysis of Traditional Housewife Character portrayed in Japanese TV Soap Opera *Osing.*" Adult Education Seminar at University of Thukuba, Japan.
Lim, H. (Nov. 2000) "Comparative Analysis of Japanese Social Education System and Korean Lifelong Education System" Educational System Seminar at University of Thukuba, Japan

Awards

Received the Miriam E. Gray Scholarship in the College of Education, the Penn State University, in 2007-2008
Received the graduate assistantship from The Adult Education Program, the Penn State University, in 2005- 2007.
Received the Brain Korea 21 scholarship for outstanding student by Ministry of Education & Human Resources Development, South Korea in 2002.
Received a teaching assistance grant from Yonsei Graduate School of Education in 2000
Received a national scholarship for outstanding student from Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, Japan in 2000–2001