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THE IMPLANTATION OF WESTERN THEATRE IN KOREA:
HONG HAE-SŎNG (1894-1957), KOREA'S FIRST DIRECTOR

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

in

The Department of Theatre

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ABSTRACT

While Korea experienced the threats of imperialist powers in the 19th century, and Japanese colonial rule in the early part of the 20th century, many Korean intellectuals expressed their nationalism through efforts to implant Western culture for the modernization of the Korean nation. They believed such activities would help to realize enlightenment and industrial development, the major conditions for assuring the independence of Korea and the survival of the nation. This attitude became known as Cultural Nationalism. The establishment of modern Korean theatre participated in the movement of Cultural Nationalism. Many leaders of Korean theatre tried to implant Western modern theatre, calling it the New Theatre (*sin 'gŭk*), believing it could help to enlighten the Korean people and modernize the nation.

Hong Hae-sŏng proved one of the leading figures in this effort through his activities in the Theatrical Arts Society and the Tsukiji Little Theatre in the 1920s, and the Dramatic Art Study Association in the 1930s. By practicing the function of director for the first time in Korea, he became the most distinguished theatre artist of that time. As Cultural Nationalism in Korea declined in the 1930s, however, Hong Hae-sŏng left the New Theatre movement and converted to popular theatre by joining the Tongyang Theatre. Although the rhetoric of Cultural Nationalism receded in his work at the Tongyang Theatre, he did not lose his love for his nation and maintained his pride as an artist. While almost every other leading figure in Korean theatre collaborated with Japan in the 1940s, he did not serve Japan with his art. Also, when Korean society underwent great social change after being liberated from Japan in 1945, Hong Hae-sŏng, remaining faithful to his artistic ideals, did not endorse or serve a specific political faction to secure his career. With his love for his nation and reverence for art, Hong Hae-sŏng became the most distinctive and exemplary theatre artist in the modern history of Korean theatre.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

This study examines the significance of Hong Hae-sŏng (洪海星, 1894-1957), the first director of modern Korean theatre. In facing the threat of 19th-century imperialism, leaders in Korea tried many ways to realize “modernization,” in order to secure their nation’s place and independence in the highly competitive international arena. Koreans imported Western institutions and canons (negating Korean traditions) in almost every aspect of human life, including politics, economics, technology, and the arts. The establishment of modern theatre was an important part of such efforts. In the establishing of Korea’s modern theatre, Hong Hae-sŏng contributed greatly to the importation of the Western forms and canons, shaping the identity of Korea’s modern theatre, and exemplifying the model of a theatre artist driven by his nationalism and faithfulness to his art.

Hong Hae-sŏng was born in 1894, the third of five sons of Hong Ch’i-jang, who was a government employee in Taegu, a city in the southern area of Korea. In 1917, Hong Hae-sŏng went to Japan in order to study law at Chuo University (中央大學). He soon shifted his course of study toward theatre. Hong Hae-sŏng organized the Theatrical Arts Society (Kŭgyesul Hyŏphoe, 劇藝術協會) in 1920, in Tokyo, with the aid of other Korean students; he subsequently introduced Western modern drama for the first time to Korea with a tour by the Theatrical Arts Society. In 1924, Hong Hae-sŏng joined the Tsukiji Little Theatre (Tsukiji Shōgekijō, 築地小劇場) in Tokyo, and there he gained training as a professional in Western theatre. He returned to Korea in 1930. Soon after his return, Hong Hae-sŏng founded the Dramatic Art Study Association (Kŭgyesul Yŏn’guhoe, 劇藝術研究會) with other intellectuals, where he practiced methods that would root the modern Western theatre in Korea. Also, he introduced the function of director to Korea as he led the organization’s productions of the modern dramas. Troubled by Korea’s worsening colonial oppression and his own chronic financial problems, Hong Hae-sŏng joined a commercial company,

the Tongyang Theatre (Tongyang Kŭkchang, 東洋劇場), in 1935. The Tongyang Theatre's commercialism did not allow him to realize his ideals of modern theatre. With his commitment to his art, however, Hong Hae-sŏng improved the popular theatre's artistic level and work ethic. When Japanese oppression reached its extremity in the early half of the 1940s, Hong Hae-sŏng did not collaborate with Japan but walked away from theatre, citing his heart disease which began to develop about this time. Also, after the liberation from Japan, when Korean society was undergoing great changes (and the leaders of Korean theatre were seeking political connections to secure their careers), Hong Hae-sŏng did not join any political faction and remained faithful to his artistic conviction until his death in 1957.

Hong Hae-sŏng's activities in art not only associated him with the major events and discourses that helped form today's Korean theatre but also reflected the Koreans' common efforts (especially of Korean intellectuals) at that time to advance the nation's destiny. As a result, the significance of Hong Hae-sŏng's activities extend beyond the personal satisfaction of his artistic desires, or the ups and downs of his career in Korean theatre. I intend to situate Hong Hae-sŏng's life in the socio-political background of his time, examining how his personal aesthetic activities and the grand narrative of modernization intersect.

My work will focus on two specific aspects. The first aims to understand the historical context that impacted Hong Hae-sŏng's life, and the second seeks to re-examine the logic and critical frames that Korean scholars have used to define Hong Hae-sŏng as a modern artist.

First, in understanding Hong Hae-sŏng and his historical environment, I will focus on examining how Hong Hae-sŏng's theatrical activities operated in the ideology of Cultural Nationalism, which intended to advance the Korean nation by establishing a new civilization or "culture" in the Western style. The term "Cultural Nationalism" was coined by Michael Edson Robinson in his *Cultural Nationalism in Colonial Korea, 1920-1925*. Robinson explains "Cultural

Nationalism” as the moderate or gradualist nationalists’ way of thinking that primarily advocated intellectual enlightenment and industrial expansion, aiming at gaining Korea’s independence from Japan. Since the traditional Sinocentric world-view had collapsed under the threats of the imperialist foreign powers in the 19th century, the Korean elites who adopted Social Darwinism as the new basis for their world-view began to advocate Cultural Nationalism in their efforts to establish a modern nation-state based on Western capitalistic civilization. After Korea became a colony of Japan in the early part of the 20th century, a time when any military resistance or civil protest was virtually impossible under Japanese colonial control and censorship, Cultural Nationalism became the primary and principal means of expressing Korean nationalist sentiment. (Militaristic and diplomatic efforts for restoring independence continued in the foreign territories such as Manchuria, China, Russia, and America.) The Cultural Nationalists thought that Korea at that time did not have the abilities necessary to become an independent nation-state in the Darwinian competition of international countries. They believed that, even if Korea could gain immediate independence, the Korean people would not be ready to maintain their country. As a result, the Cultural Nationalists argued that the nation should prepare for international competition and that leading the Korean people to modernization, through implanting Western modern “civilization” or “culture,” was more urgent than the instant restoration of Korea’s independence.

Even though Cultural Nationalism’s ultimate goal was political, it could lead to depoliticized ends, holding that the value of “civilization,” “culture,” or “modernization” was, at least temporarily, more urgent than the value of independence. As warring Japan’s colonial rule sought to erase the very concept of the Korean nation (the concept that premised the Darwinian competition in international society) in the late part of the 1930s, Cultural Nationalism began to wane. Under the extreme oppression of Japan, many cultural nationalists lost their hope of independence, and when their this hope was frustrated, they sought to expedite “culture” or

“modernization,” even to the extent of complying with the Japanese imperialism. While only “culture” remained (and nationalism disappeared in their rhetoric), many former cultural nationalists turned into “collaborators” who relied on Japanese power for the success of their activities.

Hong Hae-sŏng’s activities reflected the outlook of Cultural Nationalism and the changes the movement experienced. In the early 1920s, when Cultural Nationalism reached its peak, Hong Hae-sŏng in the Theatrical Arts Society sought to cultivate, as shown by his efforts to implant Western theatre in Korea, the conditions in which Korea could keep up with the Western world in terms of “culture.” He maintained this attitude throughout the 1920s. In the 1930s, he gave more focus to his directing activities, as a practitioner in the Dramatic Art Study Association, rather than spreading the rhetoric of Cultural Nationalism. When colonial control worsened and his artistic expression was limited by the notorious Japanese censorship, Hong Hae-sŏng, also plagued by chronic financial difficulty, gave up his ideal of the modern theatre and converted to popular theatre, joining the Tongyang Theatre in 1935. Hong Hae-sŏng’s conversion parallels the general weakening of Cultural Nationalism in society at that time. His move to popular theatre diminished his prestige as a leader in the Cultural Nationalism movement. During this time, as Japan strengthened its colonial oppression, many other leading figures in theatre, in order to secure their careers, collaborated with Japan as it spread its imperialist propaganda. Hong Hae-sŏng, however, did not stoop to serving Japan with his art. Although the rhetoric of Cultural Nationalism declined in his activities, he still maintained great love for his nation, and his pride as an artist did not allow him to be an instrument for any particular political interest. He maintained such an attitude toward art and politics for the rest of his life. Therefore, until he died, he stood as an example of an artist who was faithful to art and did not betray his nationalistic values.

My argument, which examines Hong Hae-sŏng's place in Cultural Nationalism and Korea's modernization, will offer a new perspective for understanding Hong Hae-sŏng himself and the nature of Korean theatre history. In view of the established scholarship on Korean theatre, my work situates the individual artistic activities of Hong Hae-sŏng in a broader and more complex cultural frame and narrative.

As considerable part of the process of modernization of Korea was interfered or forced on Korea by colonialism, one can understand how the colonial period represents a large problem in the understanding of the Korean history. In order to overcome the traumas of the colonial experiences, the nationalistic attitude has been dominant in readings of Korean history after the Liberation. It seems a natural result for the Koreans to develop nationalistic reading in order to overcome the Japanese reading of Korean history, elaborated during the colonial period, to define Koreans as a group deserving colonial rule. However, the nationalistic reading tends to look at human activities within a limited scope. Especially, in approaching all activities in the colonial period, it views according to the dichotomizing measures of "plundering vs. resistance" or "resistance vs. collaboration." This clear-cut point of view has tended to assess the life of an individual in terms of whether he or she was a warrior who defied Japan, or a betrayer who surrendered to Japan. Such an attitude proves problematic as it tends to make so-called "gray area," activities of individuals who seemed not to belong to either of the two groups invisible or excluded in reading history. At the same time, when the nationalistic reading attempts to be inclusive, sometimes it tended to appropriate the individuals' activities in the gray area as stories of resistance without enough evidences. Therefore, some historians have spoken in a new voice, arguing that historians should approach the gray areas in the colonial period in a more objective attitude. However, it seems that this kind of attitude, which tries to avoid an excessive application of nationalism to gray areas, still exhibits some problems in reading the history of Korea, especially in reading the colonial period.

These historians make imperialism seem vague and indefinite they understand conflicts during the colonial period as that of micro powers or for micro-hegemonies.

Finding influences of nationalism in Hong Hae-sŏng's theatrical activities, my study attempts to ultimately reshape nationalism more subtly and define the identity of Korean modern theatre under its influence. As many aspects in the establishment of modern Korean theatre, in which Hong Hae-sŏng was a leading figure, show considerable Japanese influence and exhibit characteristics that did not clearly fit within the warrior or collaborator categorization, it has been difficult to appropriately assess the identity of modern Korean theatre. Therefore, in many cases, theatrical activities in the so-called "gray area" of Korean history, have been rendered invisible in many accounts of the national history. However, through my interdisciplinary research, I have found that the process of establishing modern Korean theatre included many nationalistic elements. Using the concept of Cultural Nationalism, therefore, I can illuminate the formation of Korean modern theatre in a consistent and identifiable line of development in modern Korean history (one that has been recognizing the important values of fighting colonialism).

In terms of Cultural Nationalism, many activities in Korean modern theatre, although they were influenced by the Japanese, ultimately aimed to imitate the West—that is, to be like the "modern world" at that time, rather than like Japan. Cultural Nationalists wished to overcome Japanese colonial domination so that Korea could participate in the world with equal status in regard to the other nations. Therefore, by using the concept of Cultural Nationalism, we can bring many of the individual and particular efforts in establishing Korean modern theatre into a larger narrative of the history of the Korean nation. By illuminating Cultural Nationalism in Hong Hae-sŏng's theatrical activities, my study positions his artistic achievements as a legitimate part of the national legacy of modern Korea and re-shapes or re-constructs nationalism in the "gray area" as opposed to deconstructing nationalism in this context.

As for re-examining Hong Hae-sŏng's aesthetics and challenging the dominant reading of the previous studies that have understood Hong Hae-sŏng only as a realist, I will attempt to present him as an inquisitive, well-rounded, and innovative theatre artist who had a wide understanding of non-realistic aesthetics. Prior studies of Hong Hae-sŏng tend to give him meaning only as a realist in their efforts to discover certain systematic artistic theories in his work. They argue that Hong Hae-sŏng contributed to the establishment of realism in Korea. In order to justify such an argument, they most often emphasize the Stanislavskian elements in Hong Hae-sŏng's writing and practice. Meanwhile, they tend to overlook or ignore other artistic influences. This critical bias is erroneously based on the Korean scholars' view that "realism" stands as the essence of modern theatre. Scholars thus force the identity of Korean theatre into this interpretive frame. Hong Hae-sŏng studied not only realistic drama but various other styles, from the Shakespearean, to the expressionistic, the symbolist, and to other experimental styles he encountered at the Tsukiji Little Theatre in Japan. His breadth of stylistic understanding is evident in his writing and practice. Defining Hong Hae-sŏng only as a realist or a follower of Stanislavsky signifies an error which reduces not only the artistic range of Hong Hae-sŏng but also the scope of modern Korean theatre. Therefore, in this study, by exposing various artistic influences and liberating Hong Hae-sŏng from being labeled as a realist, I am hoping to draw attention to a Korean theatre with greater breadth and capacity, with a potentiality represented by the director Hong Hae-sŏng.

In order to accomplish the goals of these two central aspects of my study, I will examine how Hong Hae-sŏng's theatrical activities and the historical environment in which he lived intersect. Following this introduction, the second chapter examines the historical background of this period. I describe how the modern nationalism, especially Cultural Nationalism, of Korea emerged in response to the threat of imperialism and how the Koreans became interested in Western theatre as a result. In the third chapter, I examine Hong Hae-sŏng's activities in the 1920s

and the historical environment that influenced him. This chapter identifies the characteristics of Cultural Nationalism, which reached its peak in the 1920s, and Hong Hae-sŏng's artistic achievements (and the ideas that inspired his activities) at the Theatrical Arts Society and The Tsukiji Little Theatre. The fourth chapter describes his work at the Dramatic Art Study Association during the first half of the 1930s and highlights Hong Hae-sŏng's artistic vision, as the first director in Korea. This chapter also examines the relationship between the decline of Cultural Nationalism and Hong Hae-sŏng's move to the Tongyang theatre, underscoring how he maintained his nationalistic conscientiousness while his Cultural Nationalism waned. The fifth chapter examines Hong Hae-sŏng's political attitudes evident during the severe post-WWII period, when great social changes affected Korea following its liberation from Japan. While Korea was undergoing division, and many social leaders promoted their careers by flattering specific political powers, Hong Hae-sŏng, deploring such conflicts in the nation, did not make any commitments to political factions. This chapter holds that Hong Hae-sŏng acquired significant historical meaning by remaining faithful to his nationalistic values.

For my interdisciplinary examination of Hong Hae-sŏng's artistic activities and his socio-political environment, I made two research trips to Korea, in 2002 and 2006. I consulted many books, newspaper articles, and articles in journals and magazines at the National Library of Korea in Seoul. With the help of primary and secondary materials, in addition to the aid of the previous studies which documented and assessed Hong Hae-sŏng's life and theatrical career, I found support for my understanding of Hong Hae-sŏng's theatrical activities, as an expression of the nationalistic movement during the colonial period. My study is the first attempt to systematically evaluate Hong Hae-sŏng's theatrical activities and the impetus to establish a modern Korean theatre, in terms of nationalism, especially the concept of Cultural Nationalism. With this new perspective, my study can offer deeper understanding of the identity of Korean modern theatre.

CHAPTER 2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Hong Hae-sŏng intended to enrich the lives of the Korean people and contribute to Korean society and its modernization by his theatrical activities. His intention reflected the modern nationalism of Korea, which had been growing since Koreans had come to face the threats of foreign imperialist powers in the 19th century, and particularly Cultural Nationalism, which was widely influential among Korean intellectuals.

When Koreans confronted imperialism in the 19th century, as their traditional world-view collapsed, they embraced modern nationalism, which understood the Korean nation as a group placed in international competition based on Social Darwinism.¹ When the new century began, Korean's modern nationalism expressed itself in several major streams. Before Korea became a Japanese colony, the efforts to modernize the nation primarily appeared in two manifestations, through intellectual enlightenment and the promotion of industry, and the actions of the Righteous Armies (*ũibyŏng*, 義兵). During the following colonial period, nationalism proved influential in the military resistance that took over the tradition of the Righteous Armies, the diplomatic efforts represented by Yi Sŭng-man (Syngman Rhee, 李承晩, 1875-1965) in America, and the Cultural Movement (*munhwa undong*, 文化運動). In time, colonial control limited political and military activities in Korea; therefore, nationalism had to be expressed in various "cultural" activities that did not seem directly political. In these cultural activities based on nationalism, Koreans attempted

¹ The expression, "modern nationalism," assumes pre-modern nationalism of Korea. Koreans think their nation formed very long ago. Since Silla unified the neighboring countries in the 7th century, Korea has maintained distinctive unity in terms of ethnicity, language, and culture within the stable border. Meanwhile, Koreans, fighting against the foreign invasions, formed a common exclusive emotion against the other group of people outside the border. Especially, under the influence of the Chu Hsi Neo-Confucianism that was imported in the 14th century, Koreans considered their country the "small center of the world" (小中華)—while China was the "center" (中華)—and maintained strong cultural exclusivity against other culture and ethnic groups. Such an exclusive emotion is called the "Chu Hsi Neo-Confucianist nationalism" or "Feudal Nationalism" and considered the pre-modern nationalism of Korea.

to model Western “civilization” or “culture,” to realize modernization through enlightenment and the development of industry, so that the country might compete equally with other nations.

The efforts to establish modern theatre in Korea also began as an expression of such cultural nationalism. When the Koreans experienced Western theatre for the first time, they understood the new form of art as a legitimate part of Western civilization and tried to gain mastery of its practice. Finding that the Western form of theatre could represent human life more directly than their traditional theatre, the Koreans expected the new theatre to become an instrument for social enlightenment. The activities of Yi In-jik (李人植, 1862-1916) at Wŏn’gak-sa (圓覺社) in the 1900s and the *sinp’a* productions after Korea became a Japanese colony in 1910 were transitional forms which still included the styles of Korean traditional theatre and aspects of Japanese traditional theatre. The Koreans increasingly wished to learn more about the modern style of Western theatre. As a result, the Koreans sought new leaders of theatre who could keep pace with Western practice.

The most representative example of a new theatrical leader who met the cultural demand of the time was Hong Hae-sŏng. This chapter examines the historical conditions which brought Hong Hae-sŏng to public life.

2.1. New World-view and the Formation of Modern Nationalism

From the 14th century, when Korea began to be influenced by the Chu Hsi Neo-Confucianism, to the latter part of the 19th century, Koreans had embraced the Sinocentric world-view in their culture, based on the written Chinese language and Confucian classical teaching. According to the traditional world-view, East Asia was considered a unified world, “all-under-Heaven” (*t’ien hsia*, 天下) and under the control of the “Son of Heaven” (*T’ien-tzu*, 天子), the

emperor of China.² Such a world-view informed the traditional societies of East Asia, including China, Korea, Vietnam, and Japan. Among the people in this “sinic Zone,”³ the Koreans were especially proud of themselves as the most orthodox practitioners of Confucianism, and strongly supported such a world-view.⁴ In understanding their relation with other nations, Koreans followed the principles of *sadae* (“a small country serving a large one,” 事大) and *kyorin* (“intercourse with a neighboring kingdom,” 交隣), which established a hierarchy of neighboring countries or nations following the philosophical system that positioned China as the center of the world. Therefore, Korea officially served China, following the idea of “a small country serving a large one,” since the Chosŏn dynasty started an official relationship with the Ming dynasty in China in the 14th century. Meanwhile, other countries or nations, including Japan, were called “barbarians” and considered lower than the Koreans.⁵ Though *sadae* was being maintained, Korea was not under the direct political control of China, and China did not interfere with Korea’s domestic affairs.⁶ Under this

² John K. Fairbank, “A Preliminary Framework,” in *The Chinese World Order*, ed. John K. Fairbank (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), 1-2.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Song Si-yŏl (宋時烈) in the 17th century thought that Korea surpassed China in Neo-Confucianism study. Han’guksa yŏn’guhoe, ed., *Kŭndae Kungmin’gukkawa Minjok munje* [The Modern Nation-state and the Problems of the Nation] (Seoul: Chisiksanŏpsa, 1995), 242-243.

⁵ When the Ch’ing dynasty (清, 1644-1912) came to power in China in the 17th century, the Koreans’ attitudes toward this new power established by the “barbarian” *Manchus*, not the *Han* Chinese, could not help but arouse controversies among the Koreans, who had both complicated emotions and practical points of views. However, the Koreans had to admit Ch’ing’s superiority of power, and *sadae* continued.

⁶ About this the relationship between Korea and China, in which Korea was neither China’s colony or part of China while Korea served China, in 1878, China declared:

Korea has been serving China for long (朝鮮久隸中國). However, its reign (政令) has been being operated by its own principle (自理). That Korea is under China’s influence is known to the world (天下), and that Korea is an independent country (自主之國) is also known to the world. (my translation)

Yi Sang-ik, *Sŏguŭi Ch’unggyŏkkwa Kŭndae Han’guksasang* [The Western Impact and the Ideologies of Modern Korea] (Seoul: Tosŏch’ulp’an Hanul, 1997), 132-133; Fairbank, 110-111.

unique philosophical and political practice, Koreans did not consider *sadae* and independence (自主) incompatible until the late part of the 19th century.⁷

This traditional Korea-China relationship (and traditional world-view) was shaken around the mid 19th century by threats from the West. After China lost the Opium War (1840-1842) against Britain, China was forced to make a series of treaties with Western “barbarians,” and this meant that the traditional Sinocentric world order in Asia was to change to that of the Western inter-national relationship based on the contract. That is to say, China was no longer the center of the world, regarded as no more than one of many other countries.

Korea tried to avoid China’s situation by adopting a policy of seclusion and rejecting foreign demands for trade.⁸ However, Japan—which had been “opened up” by the U.S. in 1853 and was successfully propelling itself toward modernization for the first time in Asia—opened up Korea by cannon. As a result, the Treaty of Kanghwa (江華島條約) was forced on Korea by Japan in February 1876, and Korea became vulnerable to foreign economic and political penetration under the modern international law system.⁹

Therefore, many Koreans came to realize that the traditional world-view could not sustain the country as it faced the future. *Sadae-kyorin* was not effective for Korea’s foreign policy any longer, and the Koreans had to adjust themselves to the new international society.¹⁰ Recognizing the changing world of the 19th century, the Koreans began to reflect upon their position and

⁷ Yi Sang-ik, 132.

⁸ Carter J. Eckert, Ki-baik Lee, Young Ick Lew, Michael Robinson, and Edward W. Wagner, *Korea Old and New : A History* (Seoul: Ilchokak, 1990), 194.

⁹ Kim Se-min, *Han’guk Kūndaesawa Man’gukkongpōp* [The History of Modern Korea and International Law] (Seoul: Kyōngin munhwasa, 2002), 1.

¹⁰ Chōn Pok-hŭi, *Sahoejinhwaron’gwa Kukkasasang* [Social Darwinism and the Ideologies for the Country] (Seoul: Tosōch’ulp’an Hanul, 1996), 100.

identity in a new world-view, experiencing a desire for continuance that would spur the country's drive toward modern nationalism.¹¹

As the traditional world-view declined, Social Darwinism introduced through Japan and China appealed to the Koreans as the new principle for understanding the world. Social Darwinism used in understanding the modernization of Korea is an outlook that views human society evolving through competition; this thinking applies Darwin's biological concepts, such as the struggle for existence and natural selection, and Spencer's sociological idea, such as survival of the fittest, to national competition.¹² In general, this outlook was something new to the East Asians, including the Koreans. In the system of Confucianism that informed the traditional way of thinking, the

¹¹ Sin Yong-ha, *Han 'guk Kūndaeminjokchūiūi Hyōngsōnggwa Chōn 'gae* [The Origin and Development of Korean Modern Nationalism] (Seoul: Sōuldaehakkyo ch'ulp'anbu, 1987), 4.

¹² Pak Hong-gyu "Ilbon Singminsasangūi Hyōngsōnggwajōnggwa Sahoejinhwaron" [The Formation of the Japanese Colonialism and Social Darwinism] Kang Man-gil et al., *Ilbon 'gwa Sōguūi Singmint'ongch'i Pigyo* [The Comparison between the Japanese Colonial Rule and the Western Countries' Colonial Rules] (Seoul: Sōnin, 2004), 70.

In Japan and China, the Darwinian thinking that explained struggle among individuals applied to explain struggle among nations. For example, in Japan, applying Darwinian evolutionism to international relationships where imperialism spread, Katō Hiroyuki (加藤弘之, 1836-1916), the most famous social Darwinist in Japan at that time, said:

The citizenry of superior knowledge will exterminate the citizenry of inferior knowledge; or it will conquer and enslave it, thus civilizing it gradually. The enlightened citizenry of today will definitely not grow out of useless humaneness and benevolence. Harming others, then, is a necessary condition of the biological world. It should be understood that this is nothing but Law of Nature.

Philip C. Huang, *Liang Ch'i-ch'ao and Modern Chinese Liberalism* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1972), 56.

Katō Hiroyuki's argument concerning the imperialism of the time as a conflict between whole nations reveals that he recognized a country as an organism. Influenced by the organicism of Spencer and German scholar J. K. Bluntschli (1808-1881), Katō Hiroyuki developed his own organismic theory of the state. Considering the state as the highest organism or "true organism," he argued that an individual must sacrifice his interests for the state's interests and that patriotism was "the unchanging absolute good." See Chōn Pok-hūi, 67-69.

In China, When Yen Fu (嚴復, 1853-1921) explained about Darwinism, he considered the group, rather than an individual, as the basic unit of struggle for survival. Therefore, he argued that Darwin's struggle for survival was a struggle between groups, rather than a struggle between individuals within a species. Also, he translated Spencer's sociology as *ch'ün-hsyeh* (群學), the "study of the group," and explained it as the study of "that by which a race is made strong and that by which a group can stand." Group meant a nation or country to him, and he maintained that only a competent country could survive in the Darwinian struggle for survival. See Chōn Pok-hūi, 78; James Reeve Pusey, *China and Charles Darwin* (Cambridge and London: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1983), 64.

concept of linear evolution or progress did not come up frequently;¹³ a cyclical view organized the understanding human history and society.¹⁴ As Mencius said, “*i chih i luan*” (a period of order, then one of chaos, 一治一亂), human history was meant to repeat a cycle of ups and downs. Also, the Confucian way of thinking encouraged man to be satisfied with his political and social status, encouraging him to find his proper place and by fulfilling his duty. The notion of competition, that could shift the order of society, was not perceived as desirable.¹⁵ However, the Asians, who were overwhelmed by Western power, were forced to question their traditional view of the world and history and found the Darwinian or evolutionary thinking appealing, as the principle for understanding the new-faced world environment.

While the Darwinian way of thinking supported the concept of progress, it could justify racial and social inequality in the name of natural selection.¹⁶ Darwin wrote, “The civilized races of man will almost certainly exterminate and replace the savage races throughout the world,”¹⁷ and Spencer repeatedly extolled the advantage of “higher” races.¹⁸ If one accepts such a view, the survival of the fittest could account for the status and the adversities of low class groups, explaining the situation as “deserved failure.”¹⁹ Therefore, social welfare, aiding the people who

¹³ Chŏn Pok-hŭi, 142.

¹⁴ Yi Sang-ik, 101.

¹⁵ Chŏn Pok-hŭi, 143.

¹⁶ In fact, the members of the low classes were considered a race as their physical characteristics were distinguished from the physical characteristics of the members of the high class. Greta Jones, *Social Darwinism and English Thought* (Sussex, UK: Harvester Press, 1980), 142-148.

¹⁷ Robert C. Bannister, *Social Darwinism: Science and Myth in Anglo-American Social Thought* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1979), 180.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid., 7.

are not fit, could be seen as impeding progress,²⁰ and racism and imperialism would be justified. In such ways of thinking, Social Darwinism in the West tended to support the status quo as the “Law of Nature.” However, when Social Darwinism was introduced to the Koreans, who had to admit that they were the underdogs in international competition, this outlook prompted a different historical function.²¹ By using Social Darwinism, the Korean intellectuals attempted not only to explain how the West could achieve its overwhelming civilization (while Korea was left behind) but also to suggest to the public how their nation or country might achieve independence.²² In other words, in Korea, Social Darwinism, which could justify the powerful in the West, could also inspire aspiration, demonstrating how the weak might become more powerful. Therefore, while Social Darwinism in the West highlighted conflict among groups and classes, Social Darwinism in Korea could spur unity, fueling a nationalism that encouraged people to consider the benefit for the entire nation, transcending the differences among social groups and classes.²³

The first Koreans influenced by Social Darwinism appeared during the 1880’s. Foremost representatives among them were Yu Kil-chun (Yu Kil Chun, 兪吉潸, 1856-1914)²⁴ and Pak

²⁰ In America, after Hoffman (1865-1946), a statistician for the Prudential Insurance Company, wrote *Race Traits and Tendencies of the American Negro* in 1896 in terms of Social Darwinism, several insurance companies rejected insurance policies for the African Americans. Bannister, 190-192.

²¹ Pak Söng-jin, *Hanmal~Ilcheha Sahoejinhwaron’gwa Singminji Sahoesasang* [Social Darwinism and the Ideologies in the Society during the Late Part of the 19th Century and the Colonial Period] (Seoul: Tosöch’ulp’an Sönin, 2003), 13.

²² Chönn Pok-hüi, 47 and 139.

²³ Pak Söng-jin, 29; Chönn Pok-hüi, 32.

²⁴ Yu Kil-chun, in his “On Competition (競爭論),” written in 1883, argued that every human affair was realized through competition and that as a country’s rise and fall was dependent upon how strong its will to compete was, Koreans should be equipped with the will to compete if they want to achieve independence and prosperity for their country. After he went to Japan as a member of a governmental observation group (紳士遊覽團) in 1881, Yu Kil-chun became the first Korean student who studied in Japan by entering Keiö Academy (later Keiö University) that had been established by Fukuzawa Yukichi (福澤諭吉, 1835-1901), one of the leaders of Japanese modernization. In 1883, he visited America as a

Yŏng-hyo (朴泳孝, 1861-1939),²⁵ who were from the elite-class of the country. Social Darwinism spread more widely in the 1890s. After the Sino-Japanese War in 1894, Korea continued to face the threats of foreign powers, and, in such an environment, the Korean elite embraced Social Darwinism as an effective way of explaining the power politics of international society.²⁶ In the late part of the 1890s, Social Darwinism was spread to the public by the newspapers of the period such as *Tongnip Sinmun* (The Independent News, 독립신문)²⁷ and *Hwangsŏng Sinmun* (Capital Gazette, 皇城新聞)²⁸. While the leading figures of *Tongnip Sinmun* were the intellectuals who had studied in America, the leaders of *Hwangsŏng Sinmun* were the intellectuals schooled in a

member of the eight-man diplomatic mission led by Chief Envoy Min Yŏng-ik (閔泳翊, 1860-1914). While in America, with the help of Edward Morse, who introduced Darwinism in Japan, Yu Kil-chun had the chance to study at the Governor Dummer Academy in Salem, Massachusetts where Edward Morse worked as the head of the Peabody Museum. When he came back to Korea in 1885, Yu Kil-chun was arrested by the government due to his relationship with Kim Ok-kyun (金玉均, 1851-1894) and Pak Yŏng-hyo (朴泳孝, 1861-1939), who were the leaders of the coup in 1884, and placed under house arrest until 1892. During this confinement, he wrote *Sŏyu kyŏnmun* (西遊見聞, Observations on a Journey to the West) and published it in 1895 in order to introduce Western civilization to Koreans. In this book, he criticized the traditional way of thinking, which admired the old ways, and championed change and a progressive view toward history.

²⁵ Pak Yŏng-hyo, who was the primary progressive political figure in the 1880s, described the reality of international politics as “the stronger annexes the weaker, and the bigger preys upon the smaller” and emphasized that international law was useless in international politics in his “Memorial on Enlightenment” (국정개혁에 대한 建白書), submitted to the king in 1888.

²⁶ Pak Sŏng-jin, 34.

²⁷ In *Tongnip Sinmun*, the first nongovernmental newspaper in Korea, founded in 1896, Social Darwinism was especially championed by Yun Ch'i-ho (尹致昊, 1865-1945), the chief editor of the newspaper. In the late 1880s and early 1890s, he studied at Vanderbilt University and Emory University and was influenced by Social Darwinism, which was very popular in the United States at that time. Yun Ch'i-ho understood that the world was ruled not by justice, but in reality by power and that power was justice itself and the god of the world. Therefore, he argued that the stronger's superiority in the “survival of the fittest” was true among different races and countries. However, he also argued that it was not necessarily true among individuals or within the same race or country.

²⁸ *Hwangsŏng Sinmun*—founded in 1898, a short time before *Tongnip Sinmun* was closed by the government in 1899—defined the current period as “the period of struggle for survival” and emphasized that “the superior win, the inferior lose” as the natural result of the period. This newspaper also argued that the Koreans should actively join the struggle and work hard for 10 to 20 years in order to survive in the era of struggle. By doing that, according to the newspaper, Korea could reach a successful status in international society, as Japan had already achieved such a status after only 20 years of her effort to learn the examples of the West.

traditional Confucianist education. The fact that Social Darwinism was spread by these two newspapers suggests that the Korean intellectuals as a whole had adopted Social Darwinism and attempted to espouse it before the public.

In 1905, Korea virtually lost its sovereignty to Japan.²⁹ The efforts to overcome this critical crisis spurred a nationwide response called the Patriotic Enlightenment Movement (愛國啓蒙運動).³⁰ This movement pursued the nation's aggrandizement through various actions, from military activities to the campaign to repay national debt, and hoped to make Korea competent enough for independence. During this period, many of works by Yen Fu (嚴復, 1853-1921) and Liang Ch'i-ch'ao (梁啓超, 1873-1929)—the leading figures in spreading Social Darwinism in China—were introduced in Korea and greatly influenced the Koreans, especially, Liang Ch'i-ch'ao's collection of his essays, *Collected Writings from the Ice-drinker's Studio*,³¹ in which the author introduced Darwin, Benjamin Kidd, and Spencer. This work was imported as soon as it was published in 1903 and was widely read by Korean intellectuals.³² Under the influence of these works, the Korean writers who led the Patriotic Enlightenment Movement published many other tracts which introduced Social Darwinism.³³ Meanwhile, the concepts of

²⁹ After Japan won the Russo-Japanese War in 1904, Japan succeeded in getting the U.S. to admit Japan's domination over Korea through the Taft-Katsura Agreement of July in 1905, and received Britain's consent to Japan's control over Korea by the Anglo-Japanese Alliance. Gaining other countries' approbations of its privilege over Korea, Japan finally forced upon Korea the 'Protectorate Treaty', by which Korea would give all rights concerning international affairs to Japan. As a result of this treaty, Korea became a protectorate country of Japan in November, 1905.

³⁰ Michael Edson Robinson, *Cultural Nationalism in Colonial Korea, 1920-1925* (University of Washington Press, 1988), 28.

³¹ *Yin-ping-shih wen chi*, 飲氷室文集

³² Kōn T'ae-ōk et al., *Han'guk Kūndae Sahoewa Munhwa I* [The Modern Society and Culture I], (Seoul: Sōuldaehakkyo ch'ulp'anbu, 2003), 456.

³³ Pak Sōng-jin, 37.

Social Darwinism such as the “struggle for survival” and “the superior win, the inferior lose” became so popular among the Koreans as to appear in textbooks and songs all over the country.³⁴

An understanding of modern nationalism spread with the popularity of Social Darwinism. Although some forerunners had already shown their understanding of modern nationalism, it was during this period of the Patriotic Enlightenment Movement that the term “nationalism” (民族主義) began to be widely used among Koreans.

Koreans in this period learned the concept of nationalism from Liang Ch’i-ch’ao’s *Collected Writings from the Ice-drinker’s Studio* and other writings by the Korean students in Japan. Sin Ch’ae-ho (申采浩, 1880-1936), who was influenced by Liang Ch’i-ch’ao,³⁵ assumed “the nation” as the author that recorded history. In the introduction of his *Toksasinnon* (New Reading of History, 讀史新論) published in 1908, he wrote “the history of the country is what argues the nation’s condition”³⁶ and “if the nation is given up, history is not going to exist, and if history is given up, the nation is going to lose much of the sense of its country. Alas, how important the responsibility of the historian is.”³⁷ In his article in *Honamhakhoe Wölbo*

³⁴ For example, in 1906, the students at the Kanghwa School in P’yŏngan Province sang:

Ahem! We students should
Think of our great duty.
In what era is the world situated?
Powers are confronting each other.
Apparent is triumph for the stronger and
defeat for the weaker.
Why should each of us not strive to advance?
Without giving ourselves up to despair [sic.]
But by mobilizing our national identity,
Let us pursue our purpose of enlightenment
and development
Through education and industry.

Lee Kwang-Rin, “Korea’s Responses to Social Darwinism (I),” *Korea Journal* 18, no. 4 (April 1978): 36.

³⁵ Pak Sŏng-jin, 81.

³⁶ “국가의 역사는 민족의 소장성쇠의 상태를 주장한 것”

(湖南學會月報) published in 1909, Ch'oe Tong-sik (崔東植) understood nationalism as “the action of maintaining independence and self-rule, and blocking foreign power with the power of the group of people who are individuals having the same ethnicity, same language, same letters and same customs, possessing a territory, and considering each other to be the members of the same group.”³⁸ He also understood imperialism as the nationalism which had so expanded as to be invasive. According to Ch'oe Tong-sik, imperialism used various ways to invade: “by military troops, by commercial affairs, by industry, by police and postal service, by letters and language, by loan and colonization, or by railway and mine.”³⁹ Koreans were, thus, to compete with other nations in these various aspects. Ch'eo Sök-ha (崔錫夏), who studied in Japan, argued in his essay written in 1906 that “this 20th century is an era of struggle for survival, and that ‘the superior win, the inferior lose’ and ‘the weak fall prey to the strong’ are the principles of nature,” and that the Koreans must have “the ideology for country” (국가사상) and build a strong country in order to block the threat of imperialism.⁴⁰ In an editorial of May 28, 1909, the newspaper *Taehan Maeil Sinbo* (Korea Daily News, 大韓每日申報) argued:

What is the method for us to adopt in order to oppose imperialism? It is to display nationalism which refuses intervention by other nations. Nationalism is the only way to safeguard our nation. . .⁴¹ If our nationalism arms our people with heroic

³⁷ Pak Ch'an-sŭng, “Ilche Chibaeha Han'guk Minjokchuŭi Hyöngsönggwa Punhwa” [The Formation and Development of Korean Nationalism under Japanese Colonial Rule], *Han'guk Tongnip undongsa Yŏn'gu* 15 (2000), http://www.independence.or.kr/media_data/thesis/2000/200012_02.html (accessed March 28, 2007).

³⁸ “같은 종족, 같은 언어, 같은 문자, 같은 습속의 사람들이 한 곳의 땅을 점거하여 서로 동포로 여겨 함께 독립과 자치에 힘써서 공익을 도모하고 타족을 막아내는 것”

³⁹ Pak Ch'an-sŭng.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ I show the ellipsis by other authors as three dots like . . . while I show the ellipsis by me in the brackets like [. . .].

fortitude, imperialism will not encroach upon them no matter how fierce and sinister it might be, for it infiltrates only countries where nationalism is weak. . .⁴²

As these examples show, when the Koreans faced the crisis of losing their country (of becoming a quasi-colony of Japan), they came to emphasize nationalism—based on Social Darwinist thinking—as the means to survive against the threats of imperialism.

Social Darwinism maintained its status as the guiding world-view for the Koreans even after Korea officially became a colony of Japan in 1910. Even though they lost their country, Koreans did not lose their will to restore independence; they sought to place citizens in the best position for winning the “competition” for their nation.⁴³ For example, Sin Kyu-sik (申圭植, 1879-1922) in his book *Han’guk Hon* (Korean Spirit, 韓國魂) published in 1914 wrote, “Alas, our country has finally fallen. If our minds have not died yet, [. . .] in the mind of each of us exists Korea and our mind is the spirit of Korea.”⁴⁴ Therefore, even after 1910, the term “struggle for survival” kept appearing in newspapers, magazines, and other materials⁴⁵; the Koreans fused such Darwinism and nationalism to protest against the Imperialist Japan.

2.2. Modernization, Cultural Nationalism, and Theatre

As the Koreans embraced Social Darwinism, they realized that their urgent assignment was to survive within international competition. While the struggle for survival was understood to occur politically, economically, and culturally—through war, colonization, diplomacy, trade, etc.,⁴⁶

⁴² Lee Kwang-Rin, 44.

⁴³ Pak Söng-jin, 87-88.

⁴⁴ “아아, 우리나라는 기어코 망해버리고야 말았구나. 가령 우리들의 마음이 아직도 죽어버리지만 았았다면 [. . .] 우리들 사람마다의 마음 속에는 스스로 하나의 大韓이 있는 것이니 우리들의 마음은 곧 대한의 魂인 것이다.” Pak Ch’an-söng.

⁴⁵ Pak Söng-jin, 13.

the nation understood that it must improve and advance. The Koreans wished for their nation to become like the West and therefore sought modernization, following the Western model of modern nation-state capitalism. The ineffectiveness of tradition in this struggle with foreign powers made the progressive Koreans consider their tradition inferior (and even to seek its negation).⁴⁷ The importing Western ways, which represented true “civilization,” became an urgent matter for the Koreans. With their philosophy, the Koreans began to break with tradition and to learn Western knowledge, technology, and culture.⁴⁸ Therefore, in essence, while modernization in the West was viewed as the unfolding of new phases in its own tradition, modernization in Korea meant breaking with tradition and the importation or implantation of foreign elements. As this process was consciously propelled by the necessity to survive, the importation of new tradition was done in the name of “movement” for progress.

2.2.1. Efforts toward Modernization before 1910

From 1876, when Korea was opened by foreign powers, to 1910, when Korea became a colony of Japan⁴⁹—the period called “*kaehwagi*” (開化期)—Koreans championed modernization

⁴⁶ Chŏn Pok-hŭi, 142-143.

⁴⁷ Negating the existing civilization or culture meant that Korea was considered a space of no civilization or culture, or a space of “semi-civilized” (반문명) or “half-enlightened” (반개화) at best. Therefore, importing Western ways, which was considered true “civilization,” became an urgent matter to the people in this land that lacked civilization. The editorial in *Tongnip Sinmun* (The Independent) on February 13, 1897 shows such thoughts:

Now, due to the Korean disease, as there is no knowledge and no education in Korea, Koreans cannot compete with foreigners in any field, and as a result, any foreign country comes to behave arbitrarily... Therefore, in order to heal the Korean disease, Koreans should try to be like foreigners by learning in the foreign ways, thinking in the foreign ways, and behaving in the foreign ways [...] (my translation)

Tan’guktaehakkyo Tongyanghagyŏn’guso, ed., *Kaehwagi Han’guk kwa Segyeŭi Sangho Ihae* [The Reciprocal Understanding between Korea and the World during *Kaehwagi*] (Seoul: Kukhak charyowŏn, 2003), 169-170.

⁴⁸ Pak Ch’an-sŭng, *Han’guk Kŭndae Chŏngch’i sasangsa Yŏn’gu* [A Study of the Modern Political Ideologies of Korea] (Seoul: Yŏksa pip’yŏngsa, 1992), 158.

⁴⁹ Yi Wan-jae, *Ch’ogi Kaehwasasang Yŏn’gu* [A Study of the Early Stages of the *Kaehwa* Ideology] (Seoul: Minjongmunhwasa, 1989), 19.

using the slogan of “*kaewha*” (enlightenment, 開化) and “*chagang*” (self-strengthening, 自強) as something under their own control.⁵⁰

Facing foreign threats, the Korean government tried to strengthen its army and to import Western technology. However, as the government’s efforts operated within the traditional system, some young and progressive political elites, who were not satisfied with such efforts, questioned the traditional system in the 1880s. These young men, led by Kim Ok-kyun and Pak Yŏng-hyo, were called *Kaehwadang* (Progressive Party, 開化黨). They were interested in national independence based on the Western nation-state system.⁵¹ Influenced by the successful model of Japan, their intention was to change Korea into a modern nation by a reformation that would achieve social leveling, equitable taxation, land reform, new governmental institutions, and the termination of the tributary relationship with China. *Kaehwadang* executed a coup d’état in 1884, temporarily backed by the military power of Japan. However, Japan betrayed these young men

⁵⁰ As found in the expressions such as 開物成務 化民成俗 or 開民化俗, “開化” (*kaewha*) was an idea from the Chinese classics. It had meant promoting the new and enlightening people. However, this term was more directly from the term “*bunmei kaika*” (Civilization and Enlightenment, 文明開化) used by the Japanese. ‘*Bunmei kaika*’ was one of the policies adopted, with “Strong Army, Rich Nation” (*fukoku-kyōhei*, 富國強兵) and “Increasing Production and Promoting Industry” (*shokusan kogyo*, 殖産興業), by the Meiji government of Japan that drove modernization following the Western model. During the Meiji period, the Japanese coined new words and revived obsolete words in order to translate the new concepts from the West. *Kaika* (開化), *bunmei* (civilization, 文明), and *bunmei kaika* are representative examples of such words. The Japanese used these words in order to translate the term “civilization” which was popular in Victorian Great Britain. While *bunmei kaika* was popular in Japan, the word “*tzuch’iang*” (self-strengthening, 自強) was popular in China during the same period. This term of ‘*tzuch’iang*’ which is pronounced “*chagang*” in Korean was used during the discussion among the Korean politician Kim Hong-jip (金弘集, 1842-1896) and the Chinese diplomats, He Ruzhang (何如璋) and Huang Tsun-hsien (黃遵憲, 1848-1905) in 1880 in Japan. This discussion was about Korea’s future and how to address the domestic and foreign problems. Once the concept of *chagang* was introduced to Koreans after the diplomats’ discussion, it came to be used as a synonym of *kaehwa* by the Koreans. Therefore, *kaehwa* and *chagang* were frequently used by the Koreans to mean civilization or modernization before Korea became Japan’s colony in 1910. See Matsuzawa Hiroaki, “Varieties of Bunmei Ron (Theories of Civilization),” in *Japan in Transition*, ed. Hilary Conroy, Sandra T. W. Davis, and Wayne Patterson (Rutherford, Madison, Teaneck: Associate University Presses, 1984). 209.; Lee Kwang-Rin, *Han’guk Kaehwasa Yŏn’gu* [A Study of the History of *Kaehwa* in Korea], 3rd ed. (Seoul: Ilchokak, 1999), 35-39.

⁵¹ Robinson, 19.

only two days after the coup, and their so-called “three days’ rule” (*samil ch’ŏnha*, 三日天下) collapsed, causing another crisis in Korean society.

After a decade of witnessing Korea’s internal and international problems, the Independence Club (Tongnip Hyŏphoe, 獨立協會), a political organization pursuing the nation’s autonomy, was established in 1896 by a group of intellectuals influenced by Western bourgeois thought.⁵² The majority of the Independence Club came from the citizenry, and its leaders were the new intelligentsias advocating the Western nation-state model for Korea. The members of the Independence Club argued that the government should renovate the political system in order to arouse patriotism in people, as the strength of the Western countries derived not merely from their economy and technology, but also from the people’s patriotism. They also tried to lead people to participation in political affairs and considered public education their first priority. The Independence Club published a newspaper called *Tongnip Sinmun* in *han’gŭl* (한글), Korean vernacular, and propagated new ideas, including social Darwinism. The group hosted a debate forum to instruct the masses in matters concerning social and political reformation.⁵³ The Independence Club also showed a different attitude toward foreigners, as opposed to the xenophobia of the conservatives. Emphasizing that Korea should learn from the West and use Western knowledge to increase the country’s power in international society, the leaders of the Independence Club showed that they had a desire to “join” the international society.⁵⁴ However, the Independence Club did not rely on any foreign power. The government soon came to consider their progressive ideas and activities a threat to its traditional regime. Eventually, the government

⁵² Lee Ki-baik, *A New History of Korea*, trans. Edward W. Wagner and Edward J. Shultz (Seoul, Ilchokak, 1984), 302.

⁵³ Robinson, 25-27.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 26.

arrested the leaders of the Independence Club and quelled the mass protest that followed; the Independence Club disbanded in 1899.

When Korea became the quasi-colony of Japan in 1905 (after its early efforts in modernization had failed), the Koreans advanced the Patriotic Enlightenment Movement through various methods. Most of the leaders of this movement focused on improving education and promoting industrial production in order to realize *chagang* (self-strengthening). Taehan Chaganghoe (the Korean Self-Strengthening Society, 大韓自強會), which was founded in 1906 and was one of the leading organizations of this movement, argued that the Koreans must promote education and industry because a country could not be rich and strong if its people were not enlightened and its industries were not developed.⁵⁵ Taehan Hyŏphoe (the Korea Association, 大韓協會) which was founded in 1907—after Taehan Chaganghoe had been disbanded by the Japanese Residency-General—also aimed “to increase the true ability of each of our citizens (養成我真個國民的資格) by promoting political, educational, industrial activities, social knowledge, new virtues, and national wealth,” arguing that a country’s fate was only dependent upon its ability (*sillyŏk*, 實力).⁵⁶ These organizations stressed the importance of education and industry to the masses through their lectures, magazines and other activities. Also, Sinminhoe (the New People’s Association, 新民會), which was a secret organization founded in 1907, pursued the promotion of education and industry in its various activities, which included military instruction, the establishment of schools, and the operation of a porcelain company. In addition to these major or representative organizations, there were many smaller organizations working for similar aims

⁵⁵ Pak Ch’an-sŭng, 32.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 62-63.

such as Söbuk Hakhoe,⁵⁷ Kiho Hŭnghakhoe,⁵⁸ Yöngnam Hakhoe,⁵⁹ Honam Hakhoe,⁶⁰ and Kwandong Hakhoe.⁶¹ Through these organizations, the Patriotic Enlightenment Movement prospered and gained a nationwide network.⁶²

Some Koreans during this period began to realize that not only schools but also other cultural facilities could serve educational functions for society. When Kim Wön-gŭk (金源極), who was studying in Japan, visited Asakusa Park in Tokyo in 1908, he found that the facilities in the park (such as the temple, the aquarium, the movie theatre, the memorial hall of the Russo-Japanese War, and the folk museum) all worked as instructive devices. In the issue of *Taegŭk Hakpo* (太極學報) published in July of the year, he wrote:

Having such a park, this country shows the religion's teaching by showing the temple's sacred atmosphere, and gives lessons to the people who have deviated from the norm by offering harmonious music. Also, she teaches about the creatures by offering the fun of seeing the creatures in water and on earth and teaches the development of technology by showing the film. In addition, showing patriotism promotes the brave virtue, and showing the old and new customs makes the people know its progress. Any of these are not mere entertainment, and none of these does not make the nation evolve.⁶³ (my translation)

And then, when he made a visit to the Hibiya Park a month later and saw the library, pond, bandstand, and the lawn field, he wrote in a later issue of *Taegŭk Hakpo*:

⁵⁷ North and West Educational Association, 西北學會.

⁵⁸ Kyönggi-Ch'ungch'öng Educational Association, 畿湖興學會.

⁵⁹ Kyöngsang Educational Association, 嶺南學會.

⁶⁰ Chölla Educational Association, 湖南學會.

⁶¹ Kangwön Educational Association, 關東學會.

⁶² Robinson, 29.

⁶³ Kim Wön-gŭk, No Chöng-il, Pak Sŭng-chöl, and Hyön Sang-yun, *Singminji Chisiginŭi Kaehwa Sesang Yuhakki* [The Reports of the Colony's Students who studied in the Modernized World], ed. Sö Kyöng-sök and Kim Chillyang (Seoul: T'aehaksa, 2005), 29-30.

Ah! I can understand the purposes of this park. By showing the old and new books to people, it spreads knowledge. By showing the arms, it lets people arouse their animosity against enemies. By showing blue streams and clean sand, it lets people enjoy their leisure. By offering music, it makes people enjoy music with other people. Men and women have fun playing on the lawn. People appreciate the flower garden. This park is a big school in which people see and learn.⁶⁴ (my translation)

Experiencing these cultural functions, Kim Wŏn-gŭk deplored the reality of Korea, where such facilities did not exist, remarking “Alas! How can the people in my country share common knowledge without enjoying a park like this?”⁶⁵ It seemed to him that the cultural function of the park even had the absolute political capacity of realizing an ideal rule or regime, leading people to evolution and enlightenment, by providing them knowledge and harmony.⁶⁶ Thinking that the Japanese had accomplished what the Koreans had never achieved, Kim ended his travel sketch urging his fellow Koreans to promote various cultural facilities, which could be the instruments for social education.⁶⁷ As Kim Wŏn-gŭk shows, the Koreans during the Patriotic Enlightenment Movement were beginning to realize the importance of various cultural institutions, in addition to schools, for the enlightenment of the nation.

The leaders of the Patriotic Enlightenment Movement had different backgrounds from those of the past. Yun Hyo-jŏng (尹孝定, 1858-1939), one of the leaders of Taehan Hyŏphoe, wrote in an issue of *Taehan Hyŏphoe Hoebo* (大韓協會 會報) in December of 1908, that the

⁶⁴ Ibid., 34.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 35.

⁶⁶ Seeing the park with the annexed facilities reminded him of “the period of the great three dynasties” (三代盛時) of Xia (夏), Shang (商), and Zhou (周) that has been praised as the ideal model of ruling in the Chinese classic *Mencius* (孟子). According to *Mencius*, the ancient rulers had enjoyed peace with their people, having bells and drums hung on buildings and ponds (臺池鐘鼓 與民同樂) during their reigns. Kim Wŏn-gŭk, No Chŏng-il, Pak Sŭng-chŏl, and Hyŏn Sang-yun, 29.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 35.

members of Taehan Hyŏphoe were gentlemen (紳士), intellectuals (學士), and men of high purposes (志士) who had not only knowledge and property but also were people of rich experience, including authors, translators, journalists, novelists, students studying abroad, founders of the private schools, teachers, bankers, and company stockholders.⁶⁸ According to Yun's description, the major element of the Patriotic Enlightenment Movement grew from those considered newly emerging intellectuals or the newly forming bourgeois.⁶⁹ While the peasantry and the intellectuals who held traditional Confucianist teaching participated in the Righteous armies (that took direct military actions to expel the Japanese power), this new emerging class leading the Patriotic Enlightenment Movement focused on self-strengthening and enlightenment. Promoting education and industry, rather than military action against imperialism, these leaders saw cultured advancement as "the patriotic." This way of thinking suggests that they considered modernization based on capitalism the most urgent concept in making the nation's independence possible.⁷⁰ From that point, modernization was propelled by emphasizing education and promoting industry (based on nationalistic notions advocated by the bourgeois intellectuals). This emphasis on education and increased industrial capacity thus informed the ideological base of Korea's 20th century nationalism.

2.2.2. Korea's Contact with Western Theatre before 1910

While the efforts for the modernization of Korea continued implanting various Western elements into Korean society, one finds that a similar pattern occurred in theatre at this time. Although Koreans had a long history of traditional performing arts, the dramatic forms or Western-

⁶⁸ Pak Ch'an-sŭng, 68.

⁶⁹ Pak Ch'an-sŭng, 68.

⁷⁰ Han'guksa yŏn'guhoe, 117.

style theatre had not come to Korea. When Koreans encountered the new form of Western theatre for the first time, they considered it an aspect of Western “civilization” and imported it as “new theatre,” an agent in the process of “modernization.” They expected the new form of theatre to function as an instrument of enlightenment and modernization.

The origin of traditional Korean theatre resides in the ancient rituals or festivals which integrated music and dance. The earliest records concerning these rituals are found in “Chronicles of the Eastern Barbarians”⁷¹ in the chapter of Wei Zhi⁷² in *Sānguó Zhì* (Records of Three Kingdoms, 三國志), the Chinese history written in the 3rd century by Chen Shou (陳壽).⁷³ According to this work, there were ancient rituals or festivals established by Koreans such as *Yǒnggo* (迎鼓) in Puyǒ (夫餘), *Tongmaeng* (東盟) in Koguryǒ (高句麗), and *Much’ŏn* (舞天) in Ye (濊). People enjoyed *chaphŭi* (various performances, 雜戲) drinking and dancing day and night during these rituals or festivals.⁷⁴ Most of these rituals or festivals were performed in the sowing season or the harvesting season for several days, and everyone in these countries participated.

In Silla (新羅, BC 57-AD 935), which conquered the neighboring countries and unified the Korean peninsula by the late 7th century, various performing arts such as *Kǒm-mu* (劍舞),⁷⁵ *Muae-mu*,⁷⁶ *Ch’ŏyong-mu* (處容舞),⁷⁷ and *Ogi* (五伎) emerged.⁷⁸ In these performance forms, scholars

⁷¹ 東夷傳

⁷² History of the Wei Kingdom, 魏志

⁷³ Chang Han-gi, *Han’guk Yŏn’gŭksa* [The History of Korean Theatre], 2nd ed. (Seoul: Tongguktaehakkyo ch’ulp’anbu, 1990), 8-10.

⁷⁴ Chang Han-gi, 8-10.

⁷⁵ Kǒm-mu was a kind of sword dance.

⁷⁶ Muae-mu was a kind of mask dance.

find the influence of Western Asia, called Sōyōk (西域), imported by cultural exchanges, including Buddhism in the 4th century. For example, *Muae-mu* was created by the great Buddhist monk Wōn-hyo (元曉, 617-686) who approached the people and taught Buddhism through his singing and dancing. As for *Ch'ōyong-mu*, considering the big nose and red complexion of the mask of Ch'ōyong, scholars infer that Ch'ōyong was an Arabian merchant who visited Silla. Also, the mask dance of the lion, an animal which did not exist in Korea, in *Ogi*, clearly shows that this performance was influenced by the Western part of Asia.

In the society of the Koryŏ (高麗, 918-1392) dynasty,⁷⁹ which dominated the Korean peninsula after Silla collapsed in the 10th century, theatrical elements were practiced in the state-subsidized festivals or rituals such as *Yōndŭnghoe* (燃燈會), *P'algwanhoe* (八關會), and *Narye* (儺禮). *Yōndŭnghoe* was hosted to celebrate Buddha in spring, and *P'algwanhoe* and *Narye*, to prevent evil, were performed in winter.⁸⁰ These festivals or rituals contained various forms of

⁷⁷ Ch'ōyong-mu was a form of a dance performed in the mask of Ch'ōyong who was known as a son of the ocean god. According to the legend, one day, when he came back home, Ch'ōyong found that his wife was sleeping with plague. Instead of showing his anger, Ch'ōyong sang and danced outside the door of his house. Having moved by Ch'ōyong's generosity, plague apologized to Ch'ōyong and promised that he would not violate any place in which Ch'ōyong's portrait existed. As a result, the people in Silla came to attach Ch'ōyong's portrait in their houses in order to prevent plague and formed song and dance depicting Ch'ōyong's legend.

⁷⁸ *Ogi* literally means “five arts” which consists of the acrobatic skill playing balls, farce, mask play, puppet show, and the lion mask dance.

⁷⁹ The name of this dynasty became known internationally. The name of Korea is originated from Koryŏ.

⁸⁰ These festivals or rituals were important national events. A government office managed these events, and according to the extant records, Ch'oe Sŭng-no (崔承老, 927-989), a famous political innovator in the 10th century, even worried that these events were a serious burden to the government. The records made in the 15th century after Koryŏ collapsed described the magnitude of these events:

During the *Yōndŭnghoe*, many people enjoyed music and various performances all night long. The stage setting formed a mountain and was decorated with colorful fabrics and flowers. The music—by about 1,350 musicians wearing flamboyant costumes—shook the ground and sky. (my translation)

Chang Han-gi, 67.

performances, such as music, dance, acrobatics, puppetry, farcical skits, and mask dance.

The theatrical performances in the early Chosŏn (朝鮮, 1392-1910) dynasty, which followed Koryŏ, were under the government's control. A special office in the government, called Sandaedogam (山臺都監), produced theatrical events for the government's special occasions, such as king's trip and a reception for envoys from China. A Chinese envoy described the *paekhŭi* (百戲), which literally means "various performances," that the Korean government produced to welcome him, as follows:

The horses and wagons were moving, and the scene of dragon and ocean began [. . .] The huge stage was as big as the gate of the castle [. . .] The acrobats showed their fantastic skills on the horses and the rope [. . .] The figures of the lions and the elephants seemed to be made of horse skin [. . .]⁸¹ (my translation)

In addition to these grand events, it is certain that other theatrical activities existed. For example, there are records indicating that the king called in actors and that the actors mocked the corrupt government. Also, a record documents that students in the national academy enacted playlets showing the operation of imaginary governments on a special day.⁸²

The war between Chosŏn and Japan during the late 16th century and the war between Chosŏn and the Manchus (Ch'ing dynasty) during the early 17th century brought about abrupt changes in the latter days of Chosŏn that influenced theatrical activities. After the old economic system and social structure were seriously damaged as a result of the wars, a somewhat different economic and social order began to form. The monopolies of the merchants, who provided the

The two stages used for *P'algwanhoe* were very high. Singing, dancing, and other various shows were performed there. For these shows, the figures of the animals in the myth were used. These figures were being used since the Silla period. (my translation)

Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid., 105-107.

⁸² Yi Tu-hyŏn, *Han'guk Yŏn'gŭksa* [The History of Korean Theatre], 3rd ed. (Seoul: Hagyŏnsa, 2001), 119-122.

palace and the government offices with goods, collapsed, and a free market took hold. This time saw accumulation of capital and the emergence of mercantile cities. The power of many members of *yangban* (兩班), Confucian literati, was weakened politically and economically. At the same time, the economic and cultural growth of *sōmin* (庶民) class, which consisted of merchants, artisans, and lower employees of government offices was remarkable. As for theatre, performances managed by the central government became either rare or cancelled because of financial difficulty, and events for the regional public became more prominent. With the demand for performers at the governmental events reduced, many of the performers, formerly under the control of the state, formed wandering troupes; their performances influenced the development of the mask dances in many provinces.⁸³

Also in these years other types of performing arts for the people emerged. However, during the 19th century, which saw the fall of the Chosŏn dynasty and the accelerated modernization of Korea, the three representative traditional dramatic forms included *t'alch'um* or *sandae-nori* (mask dance), *kkoktugaksi-norŭm* (puppetry), and *p'ansori* (one-man opera).

The extant forms of the mask dance, called "*t'alch'um*" or "*sandae-nori*," were popularly performed in many regions where mercantilism was active. These forms are dramatic in the respect that the performers enact characters saying lines. However, song, music and dance movement are also performed. *Sandae-nori* or *t'alch'um* consists of many episodes not related to each other, which and primarily mock the hypocrisy of *yangban* and Buddhist monks.

When the characters in *Sandae-nori* or *t'alch'um* are performed by puppets or marionettes, the performance is called *kkoktugaksi-norŭm*. The episodes enacted in *kkoktugaksi-norŭm* are very similar to the episodes in *Sandae-nori* or *t'alch'um*. During the performance, puppeteers operate

⁸³ Yi Kang-nyŏl, *Han'guk Yŏnhŭisa* [The History of the Performing Arts of Korea] (Seoul: Pogŏnsinmunsa, 1988), 124.

the puppets or marionettes behind a small temporary stage, and the musicians sit in front of the stage and play their instruments. *Kkuktugaksi-norŭm* was usually performed during the night under torches, and the movements of the puppets or marionettes looked natural, as the threads of the puppets or marionettes were invisible during the performance.⁸⁴

The form of *p'ansori*, a kind of one-man opera, was achieved by Sin Chae-hyo (申在孝, 1812-1884). In *p'ansori*, a male or female singer enacts a long story with many characters. His or her performance consists of *ch'ang* (singing), *aniri* (recitative), and *ballim* (gesture). *P'ansori* was the most popular theatrical form during the 19th century, and there are six extant repertoires out of twelve that were purified by Sin Chae-hyo.

As previously discussed, there were many traditional performing-art forms in Korea. However, many of them were lost, and even among the forms that survived until the late part of the 19th century (when Korea began to meet the West), only *t'alch'um*, *kuktugaksi-norŭm*, and *p'ansori* exhibited dramatic form; story and characters. However, even these forms show quite different characteristics from the Western theatrical tradition, which assumed indoor space, the separation of stage and audience by the proscenium, and each actor's representation of a character (exchanging lines with another actor). These three Korean forms were based not on a written, fixed script but oral transmission; the audience's involvement was pretty much assumed during the performance.⁸⁵ At the same time, the performances were primarily executed at outdoor places not

⁸⁴ Chang Han-gi, 145.

⁸⁵ For example, in Kangnyŏng *t'alch'um*, there is a scene in which members of the audience speak to the performer. Also, in Yangju *Pyŏlsandae-nori*, the performer speaks to the audience. In *p'ansori*, audience interjection to cheer the performer is one of the most important elements in the form. See Yu Min-yŏng, *Chŏnt'onggŭkkwa Hyŏndaegŭk* [Traditional Theatre and Modern Theatre], 2nd ed. (Seoul, Tanguktaehakkyo ch'ulp'anbu, 1992), 377.

requiring designed and specially facilitated stages.⁸⁶ Also, performance in the traditional forms of Korean theatre does not try to create an illusion that represents reality, as in Western drama. Time and space can freely shift while costume and make-up function to express the characters metonymically, in many cases. In addition, characters speak to the audience, rather than converse with each other. Such differences between the Western theatre and the traditional Korean theatre suggest that the essence of the theatrical tradition in Korea had nonrealistic and presentational qualities that were very different from or opposite to that of Western theatre.

When the Koreans met Western “theatre” in their efforts toward modernization, they encountered a totally new tradition and viewed it as an element of Western “civilization” with positive social functions. In fact, in the traditional society of Korea, theatrical activities had been considered mere entertainments, even contemptible activities. Those in the traditional performing arts held the lowest status in society; female performers were in some cases engaged in both performance and prostitution. Therefore, discovering Western theatre—as an element of “civilization”—changed the meaning of theatre in Korea. As a result, some people attempted to introduce Western theatre to their fellow Koreans; Western theatre was chiefly introduced by the elites who had contact with foreign culture.

The first Korean who experienced Western theatre was Yu Kil-chun (Yu Kil Chun, 兪吉潸, 1856-1914), who studied in America from 1880 to 1884. He briefly introduced Western theatre in his book *Sōyu kyōnmun*⁸⁷—whose purpose was to introduce Western civilization to Koreans—published in 1895.⁸⁸ Yu Kil-chun explained the aspects of Western theatre that included a

⁸⁶ Pak No-hyōn, “Kūkchangūi T’ansaeng” [The Birth of the Modern Theatre in Korea], *Han’guk Kūgyesul Yōn’gu* 19 (April 2004): 12.

⁸⁷ Observations on a Journey to the West, 西遊見聞.

⁸⁸ Chang Han-gi, 168.

permanent building for the event, a stage designed only for performance, and a realistic representation of life. In introducing this new experience to the other Koreans, Yu Kil-chun suggested that theatre in the West had positive functions in society, asserting that it brought people happiness and criticized bad customs.⁸⁹

In 1896, a few of the Korean envoys who attended the coronation of the Russian Emperor Nicholai II had a chance to experience Western theatre. They reported their impressions of the Russian theatre to their leader Min Yŏng-hwan (閔泳煥, 1861-1905), and Min wrote what they reported in his diary on June 29. The characteristics of Western theatre that the envoys noticed included the following: that Western theatre had a huge permanent building designed for it, that it was a legitimate event with the emperor and the empress in attendance, and that the performance depicted human activities in realistic ways.⁹⁰

Yu Kil-chun's and Min Yŏng-hwan's descriptions suggest that the Koreans began to see

⁸⁹ Yu Kil-chun, *Sŏyu kyŏnmun* [Observations on a Journey to the West], trans. Ch'ae Hun (Seoul: Myŏngmundang, 2003), 402-403.

Now I am going to describe how western people build the buildings for theatre and the way they arrange seats in them. The windows are flamboyantly colored in golden and blue colors, and at night, lights and gaslights illuminate the buildings as brightly as day. Iron-framed chairs wrapped with silk are arranged in the way that the next chairs are placed higher than the front chairs, and there are balconies with chairs on the wall. There is a stage on the front, and it is very wide and convenient. The themes of plays are picked from famous stories in history. There are two kinds of plays. One is the kind that arouses emotions and moves people. The other is the kind that arouses pleasurable emotions and makes people happy. The former is called tragedy, and the latter is called comedy. Also, theatre satirizes the bad manners (*p'ungsok*, 風俗) of the society.

The various things built on stage represent various meanings and scenes. Castles, streets, mountains, forests, rivers and ponds in the scenes are almost real. As for the actors' costumes, they are very colorful, and the various masks are so real and perfect that one cannot question that they are real.

Because the themes of theatre are so varied, I am going to enumerate part of them: war, banquet, business, trials, repaying one's obligation, avenge, love-swear between man and woman, and loyalty between king and subject. They make one story to be a play, and a play consists of acts. When an act ends, the curtain falls in order to set up the background used for the next scene. The backgrounds, which match the story of the play, are changed following the story until the end of the show. Musicians sit in front of the stage and play music when the curtain falls. They perform a comic piece after they perform a tragedy, so the audience can dissolve their sad emotion. (my translation)

Western theatre not as mere entertainment, or contemptible activity, but as a legitimate aspect of Western civilization. Therefore, the implantation of Western theatre was welcomed by Koreans, who attempted to seize every aspect of Western culture.

It was at the beginning of the 20th century that Koreans began to practice elements of Western theatre for the first time. In December, 1902, the first permanent indoor-theatre building in Korea, Hyömnyulsa (協律社), was opened by the Korean government. There are two different explanations concerning the establishment of Hyömnyulsa. One argues that this theatre was built for an international event to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the emperor's coronation, and that, as the international event was delayed by a cholera epidemic and the prince's illness, the theatre began producing traditional entertainments for the public. The other argues that Chang Pong-hwan (張鳳煥), the head of the first Western-style military band in Korea, built Hyömnyulsa with funds from the Emperor Kojong and offered performances of traditional performing arts there in order to raise money for the military band.⁹¹ Whether either of the theories is correct, it is clear that the first permanent theatre in Korea was initiated by Western influence (international event or military band), and that the Koreans' view of theatre was changing so much that their government attempted to build a permanent building for its practice. However, this indoor site, Hyömnyulsa, for traditional entertainments run by the state soon became a problem in a society that was still under the strong influence of Confucianism, which taught "boys and girls who are over 7 years old

⁹⁰ Chang Han-gi, 169.

They said that the members of the audience seemed to be as many as 10,000, that the Emperor and the Empress watched the play too, and that while the performers enacted an old story on the stage, the scenes of a wedding and a battle were exactly the same as with real ones and remarkable. (my translation)

⁹¹ Yu Min-yŏng, *Han'guk Kūndae Yŏn'gŭksa* [The History of Modern Theatre in Korea], 2nd ed. (Seoul: Tanguktaehakkyo ch'ulp'anbu, 2000), 33-34.

should not gather in a same place.”⁹² The conservative members of the society claimed that the space in which males and females gathered together did “harm to manners” (傷風敗俗), causing fights and illicit affairs among immoral men and women.⁹³ Therefore, admitting that it was not desirable for the state to run such a controversial venue, the government closed Hyōmnyulsa in April, 1906.

The public’s desire for theatre still increased, despite the condemnation of the government’s theatre.⁹⁴ Therefore, in 1908, Yi In-jik (李人植, 1862-1916) took over the building formerly used as Hyōmnyulsa and opened a new theatre named Wōn’gak-sa (圓覺社). Yi In-jik was an intellectual who experienced Western civilization while he was in Japan from 1900 to 1903, as a student sent by the Korean government. After he came back to Korea, Yi In-jik worked as the chief editor at a couple of newspapers, *Kungmin Sinbo* (國民新報) and *Mansebo* (萬歲報), and published the first “new novel” (*sin sosŏl*, 新小說), *Hyōl ūi nu* (Tears of Blood, 血의 淚), in 1906 on *Mansebo*. A transitional literary mode between old novel and modern literature, the new novels were easy for the public to read as they were written entirely in *han’gŭl*, the vernacular. The new novels tried to spread new ideas, such as that of an enlightened society based on the new education, the eradication of superstition, and the improvement of women’s rights.⁹⁵ Opening Wōn’gak-sa, Yi In-jik advertised that he would “reform” or “innovate” (*kaeryang*, 改良) Korean theatre with a new form of theatre as he did in his novel.⁹⁶

⁹² 男女七歲不同席

⁹³ Yi Tu-hyōn, 250.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 248.

⁹⁵ Carter J. Eckert, Ki-baik Lee, Young Ick Lew, Michael Robinson, and Edward W. Wagner, 252.

⁹⁶ Yi Tu-hyōn, 252-253.

To achieve his goal, Yi In-jik trained the traditional singer-performers and opened the production of his play *Ŭnsegŭe* (銀世界, Silver World) at Wŏn'gak-sa in November, 1908. *Ŭnsegŭe* was the story of Ch'oe Pyŏng-do's family in which Ch'oe Pyŏng-do, an admirer of the radical politician Kim Ok-kyun (the leader of *Kaehwadang* in the 1880s), became the victim of an undeserving death by corrupt officials. His children acquired the modern spirit by studying in Japan and America after the death of their father. *Ŭnsegŭe* emphasized the importance of enlightenment with such a story, depicted in a way that imitated the Western form of theatre. How close the production of *Ŭnsegŭe* was to the Western theatre of the time is not clear. Scholars infer that the production was either a kind of *p'ansori* performed in "*punchang*,"⁹⁷ imitating Western theatre or an imitation of Japanese *shimpa* ("new school," 新派), a hybrid of Kabuki and Western Drama, that was popular in Japan at that time.⁹⁸

The goal of reforming Korean theatre was not Yi In-jik's personal goal or his private aesthetic exploration. It was a reaction to the demand for enlightenment led by the intellectuals who pursued "civilization" or modernization at that time. The period in which Yi In-jik ran Wŏn'gak-sa was the Patriotic Enlightenment Movement, in which the Koreans were voluntarily building the foundation of modernization that could secure Korea's independence in the face of foreign threats. During this period, many Koreans, under the influence of Social Darwinism, emphasized the importance of educating the Korean people for international competition. In this historical environment, theatre was also expected to serve the function of enlightenment. Therefore, when Yi In-jik argued that his new theatre aimed for the reformation or improvement of the Korean theatre, other intellectuals championed theatre's social and educational function.

⁹⁷ The way in which each singers act each individual character, unlike the traditional way in which a singer acts every character in a performance of *p'ansori*.

⁹⁸ Yi Tu-hyŏn, 258-260.

For example, *Hwangsoŋg Sinmun*, the leading publication of the Patriotic Enlightenment Movement, published an essay on November 29, 1907, that emphasized the enlightening function of theatre, as an aspect of Western “civilization”:

As the civilized countries have stages and theatres, they give pleasure to tired citizens by performing good plays, and the public gets knowledge from them while they arouse patriotic spirit.⁹⁹ (my translation)

This newspaper was arguing that Korean theatre (traditional performing arts) should be reformed in order to function in similar ways, even before Wŏn’gak-sa was opened.

Taehan Maeil Sinbo, the other newspaper leading the Patriotic Enlightenment Movement, also expressed its expectation of theatre’s social function. As Yi In-jik’s “new theatre” did not show enough achievement toward this aim, this newspaper criticized Yi In-jik and urged him to produce enlightening performances (in its article “Yi In-jik in Theatre” on November 8, 1908), a week before *Ŭnsegye* was opened.¹⁰⁰

Alas, reformation (*kaeryang*) of theatre is what we have been expecting. We can make the public virtuous by the reformation of theatre, and we can arouse noble emotions in people by the reformation of theatre. While everyone was repeatedly crying for reformation of theatre, we heard that Yi In-jik had opened Wŏn’gak-sa and intended reformation of theatre. Therefore, we expected to watch the story of Ondal (溫達) or Ŭlchi Mundŏk (乙支文德) on the stage. However, what we saw was Wŏlmae (月梅)’s complaints (罵女聲). While we expected to see Washington or Napoleon with pleasure, we only saw Nolbo (놀보)’s jealousy toward his brother (妬弟語). Then, although we expected to see patriots, faithful wives, and brave men in history or adventurous persons toward a new world soon, alas, there were still *Ch’unhyang-ga* (春香歌), *Sim Ch’ŏng-ga* (沈靑歌), *Hwayongdo* (華容道). Alas, Mr. Yi In-jik [. . .] if you want to contribute to the society and country somehow, you should stimulate people’s adventurous spirit by translating a story like *Robinson Crusoe* [. . .]¹⁰¹ (my translation)

⁹⁹ Yang Sŭng-guk, *Han’guk Sinyŏn’gŭk Yŏn’gu* (Seoul: Yŏn’gŭkkwa In’gan, 2001), 28.

¹⁰⁰ Yi Tu-hyŏn, *Han’guk Sin’gŭksa Yŏn’gu* [Modern History of Korean Drama], 2nd ed. (Seoul: Sŏuldaehakkyo ch’ulp’anbu, 1990), 31.

¹⁰¹ *Ch’unhyang-ga*, *Simchŏng-ga*, and *Hwayongdo* were popular repertoires of *p’ansori*.

In this quotation, Wölmae is a character in *Ch'unhyang-ga*, one of the six repertoires of *p'ansori*, and Nolbo is also a character who mistreats his brother in *Hŭngbo-ga*, another repertory in *p'ansori*. *Taehan Maeil Sinbo* attacked Yi In-jik, for producing entertainment that included such characters from the old stories to pursue commercial benefits. To *Taehan Maeil Sinbo*, reformed theatre meant a form that would raise the nation's "adventurous spirit (冒險心)" and "patriotism" (愛國心), portraying the heroes of Korean history, such as Ondal and Ŭlchi Mundŏk, or the heroic figures in Western history and literature such as Washington, Napoleon, and Robinson Crusoe.¹⁰²

Taehan Maeil Sinbo's urging Yi In-jik to offer stories of heroic figures reflected the spirit of the Patriotic Enlightenment Movement. The intellectuals during this period saw the "hero" as the ideal man in the world of severe international competition, and believed that the fate of a country depended on the role of the hero.¹⁰³ Therefore, they longed for the advent of heroes who could save the country from the crisis; the production of heroes through education was the national goal. At the same time, the public's interest in the heroic figures of history was keen, and many of their biographies were published in Korea. Many biographies translated during this period introduced the heroic figures who had helped lead their countries' prosperity or who had contributed to the independence of their countries such as Napoleon Bonaparte, Peter the Great, Otto von Bismarck, George Washington, Joan of Arc, and Giuseppe Mazzini. Also instrumental at this time were the biographies of Korean military heroes who had saved Korea from foreign invasions, such as Sin Ch'ae-ho's *Ŭlchi Mundŏk* (乙支文德, 1908) and *The Biography of Yi Sun-*

¹⁰² Yi Tu-hyŏn, *Han'guk Sin'gŭksa Yŏn'gu* [Modern History of Korean Drama], 31.

¹⁰³ Pak Sŏng-jin, 89-90.

sin (이순신전, 1909), and U Ki-sŏn's *The Biography of Kang Kam-ch'an* (강감찬전, 1908).¹⁰⁴ As Sin Ch'ae-ho wrote in the preface of *Ŭlchi Mundŏk*, that he aimed to encourage new heroes' advent by portraying and praising the hero's accomplishments,¹⁰⁵ the biographical works published in this period were based on the belief that telling stories about remarkable individuals' lives could prove the most effective way of enlightening the nation.¹⁰⁶

Under such circumstances, Yi In-jik's attempt to reform theatre necessarily drew the intellectuals' attention, seeing it as a useful medium for enlightenment, and the highest officials of the government and their wives sometimes visited Wŏn'gak-sa in order to see the performances.¹⁰⁷ However, in spite of society's expectation, Yi In-jik's Wŏn'gak-sa declined without any remarkable achievement in the "new theatre" after the production of *Ŭnsegye*. With financial difficulty, Yi In-jik finally gave up his activities at Wŏn'gak-sa in November 1909.

2.2.3. Cultural Nationalism and Efforts for Modernization during the 1910s under Japanese Colonial Rule

Despite the efforts of the Patriotic Enlightenment Movement, Korea officially became Japan's colony in August of 1910. As soon as Japan possessed Korea, Japan extremely suppressed the Koreans in order to establish its authority.

The Japanese policy in Korea during the first decade of its colonial rule, by the first Governor-General Terauchi Masatake (寺内正毅, 1852-1919), and the second Governor-General Hasekawa Yoshimichi (長谷川好道, 1850-1924), was called "*budan seiji*" (military dictatorial

¹⁰⁴ Kŏn T'ae-ŏk et al., 91.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 97.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 96.

¹⁰⁷ Yu Min-yŏng, *Han'guk Kŭndae Yŏn'gŭksa*, 45.

government, 武斷政治) even by the Japanese scholars due to its harshness.¹⁰⁸ The Governor-General of Korea, who was under the direct supervision of the Japanese emperor, was appointed from among the Japanese generals on active duty, and all powers controlling legislation, the judicial system, administration, and the military in Korea were given to him. Under his direction, a gendarmerie police system was operated. This system was a harsh military rule in which one man took both the position of the director of the police headquarters and the commanding officer of the Japanese gendarmerie. At the same time the gendarmerie took care of police affairs for civilians. Under this system, the gendarmerie and the police had strong power to arbitrarily interfere in the everyday lives of Koreans, with the right to execute punishment for minor offenses, arbitrate civil suits, collect taxes, impose fines, and give detention, etc. Japan even revived flogging, which was abolished by the Koreans in the 19th century, and had the gendarmerie police use this punishment on Koreans. As the Japanese saw themselves in boastful terms, “like the numberless stars in sky deployed like the stones on the board of *baduk*¹⁰⁹” (碁布星散),¹¹⁰ Japan directly oppressed the Koreans’ lives on the most basic levels, with a large-numbered gendarmerie police. Besides, by having colonial officials and schoolteachers wear military uniforms with swords, Japan tried to spread the oppressive atmosphere even more widely. Japan suspended all Korean newspapers, disbanded all political organizations, and prohibited all types of political gatherings as well. Also,

¹⁰⁸ Chong-sik Lee, *The Politics of Korean Nationalism* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1963), 89.

¹⁰⁹ *Baduk* is an oriental game in which two individuals with stones compete with each other deploying their stones in order to attain larger territory than the other’s. Between the two parties, one grabs small white stones and the other grabs small black stones. The two parties alternately place their stones on the specially designed board and attempt to seize each other’s stones. This game is called in different names such as *go*, *igo*, and *weiqi*, according to different cultures.

¹¹⁰ Yun Kyōng-no, “1910nyōndae Tongnip undongŭi Tonghyanggwa Kŭ T’ŭksōng” [The Development of and the Characteristics of Independence Movement during the 1910s], *Han’guk Tongnip undongsa Yōn’gu* 8 (1994), http://www.independence.or.kr/media_data/thesis/1994/199415.html (accessed March 28, 2007).

Japan established the colonial system in other social and economic aspects of the society through various administrative actions, including Land Survey (1910-1918), Company Law (1911), and Education Law (1911).¹¹¹ Due to such extreme oppression, the first decade of Japanese colonial rule is frequently called a “dark period” (*amhŭkki*, 暗黒期).¹¹²

The nationalistic movement in Korea in the 1910s could not help but decline in such a dark period. While military activities continued, primarily based in Manchuria, and Korean nationalists sustained diplomatic efforts primarily with China and America, no political activity was possible in Korea under the military dictatorial government. All of the organizations for the Patriotic Enlightenment Movement were disbanded, and many private schools for nationalist education were closed.¹¹³

However, Social Darwinian thinking was still dominant in the circles of Korean intellectuals. The intellectuals did not give up their hope that the Korean nation would realize its independence someday, if it evolved into a nation fit for the modern times. Therefore, they argued that Koreans must try to raise itself primarily through promoting education and industry.¹¹⁴ The nationalists who led such discourses were called *Sillyŏk yangsŏngnonja* (“raising ability”-ists, 實力養成論子), and their idea is called *Sillyŏk yangsŏngnon* (“raising ability”-ism, 實力養成論). As An Ch’ang-ho (安昌浩, 1878-1938) considered “the independence in mentality” (정신상 독립) and “the independence in life style” (생활상 독립) more urgent than political independence,¹¹⁵ and Yi Kwang-su argued, “independence is not urgent, but the preparation for independence is urgent

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Robinson, 42.

¹¹³ Pak Ch’an-sŭng, 112-113.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 134–140.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 136.

[. . .]”¹¹⁶ Such figures backed the preparation for independence, in through developing industry and promoting a modern way of thinking that overcame old customs, rather than calling for direct resistance against Japan.¹¹⁷ Under the harsh colonial rule in the 1910s, they had to focus on theorization and discussions. However, such thinking matured as the Cultural Movement in the next decade.

2.2.4. *Sinp’a* Drama during the 1910s

Once Korea became a colony of Japan, importing Western culture could only be accomplished through Japan, as Im Hwa (林和, 1908-1953), one of the leading literary critics of the colonial period, confessed, “The West was too far and unfamiliar, and only the words ‘Japan’ and ‘Tokyo’ were ‘civilization’ and ‘*kaehwa*’ (the modern).”¹¹⁸ The importation of Western theatre also came only through Japan. In the 1910s, a hybrid of Western drama and *kabuki*, called *shimpa* (新派), was introduced to Korea. Koreans imitated this Japanese *shimpa*, resulting in a Korean form called *sinp’a* (新派).

Japanese *shimpa* originated from the political reformation and the demand for social enlightenment in the Meiji period. In the Meiji period, which saw the collapse of the *bakufu* (幕府) system and the rise of emperor, a constitution and representative government were promised to the Japanese people for the first time in their history.¹¹⁹ As a result, various political parties formed in the new political environment. One of these parties was the Liberal Group (*Jiyu Dantai*). In 1888,

¹¹⁶ Kim Kyŏng-mi, “1910nyŏndae Yi Kwang-su Munhage Nat’anan ‘Chunbironŭi Yanggasŏng” [The Duality of *Chunbiron* shown in Yi Kwang-su’s Literature in the 1910s], Kim Kyŏng-mi et al, *1910nyŏndae Munhakkwa Kŭndae* [Literature and Modernity in the 1910s], (Seoul: Worin, 2005), 219.

¹¹⁷ Pak Ch’an-sŭng, 137.

¹¹⁸ Yi Kang-nyŏl, *Han’guk Sahoechuŭi Yŏn’gŭk undongsa* [The History of the Socialist Theatre Movement of Korea] (Seoul: Tongmunsŏn, 1992), 116.

¹¹⁹ Faubion Bowers, *Japanese Theatre* (Rutland and Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1974), 209.

one of the members of the Liberal Group, Sudō Sadanori (角藤定憲, 1867-1907), in Osaka, wrote and produced *sōshi shibai* (壯士芝居) or “Political Drama” in order to transmit political ideas to the people. *Sōshi* (壯士) refers to the political activists who belonged to the newly formed political groups,¹²⁰ and Sudō Sadanori himself was a *sōshi*.¹²¹ While political address could cause difficulties for people and bring police repression, drama was considered an ideal vehicle.¹²² Therefore, political drama was used by other political groups for delivering political ideas.¹²³ As these activists were no more than amateurs, they could only imitate *kabuki*, the only professional theatre they had experienced.¹²⁴ Some three years after Sudō Sadanori appeared, Kawakami Otojirō (川上音二郎, 1864-1911), who was once a student of Fukuzawa Yukichi and a talented political orator,¹²⁵ emerged as an important figure of *sōshi shibai*.¹²⁶ He transformed *sōshi shibai* into what is called *shimpa* (新派), “new school”—as the antithesis of *kabuki*, “old school” (*kyūha*, 舊派)—by reducing the political component and expanding the variety of themes in *sōshi shibai*.¹²⁷

Shimpa offered to its audience a much more realistic representation than *kabuki*, whose

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Komiya Toyotaka ed. *Japanese Music and Drama in the Meiji Era*. trans. and adapted by Edward G. Seidensticker & Donald Keene (Tokyo: Ōbunsha, 1956), 263.

¹²² Ibid., 264.

¹²³ Bowers, 209.

¹²⁴ Yu Sang-hŭi, “Ilbon Sinp’agŭkkwa Han’guk Sinp’agŭk” [Japanese Shinpa-drama and Korean Shinpa-drama], *Ilbon Yŏn ’gu* 8 (1993), 82.

¹²⁵ Komiya Toyotaka, 265-266.

¹²⁶ Japanese National Commission for UNESCO, *Theatre in Japan* (The Printing Bureau, Ministry of Finance, 1963), 182.

¹²⁷ Bowers, 209.

dialogue was intoned, chanted or sung, and every movement or gesture choreographed.¹²⁸ Many *shimpa* dramas portrayed the everyday problems of the new middle class in the Meiji era.¹²⁹ For example, the story of a protagonist overcoming his low birth and misfortune—popularly depicted in many *shimpa* dramas since its early period—introduced the current “political” issues of the society, including the matter of status being determined by birth.¹³⁰ The actors wore the costumes of the Meiji period and acted out the behaviors of ordinary people, but in more simple and unexaggerated ways.¹³¹ Nevertheless, many elements of *shimpa*, including its diction and movement, were not totally free from the influences of *kabuki*, and its plots exhibited melodramatic mannerisms.¹³² *Shimpa* experienced its heyday around 1904 but declined thereafter, while *kabuki* regained vitality and Western modern drama was introduced in the beginning of the Taishō period (1912-1926).¹³³

Around the time in which *shimpa* (新派) was declining in Japan, a dramatic form imitating its features emerged in Korea. This form was called *sinp'a* (新派). In 1911, Im Sōng-gu (林聖九, 1887-1921) formed the first *sinp'a* troupe in Korea, called Hyōksindan (the Reformation Group, 革新團) and began imitating Japanese *shimpa*. The first production of Hyōksindan was *Heavenly Punishment to Impiety to Parents*,¹³⁴ an adaptation of a Japanese *shimpa* drama.¹³⁵ Im Sōng-gu,

¹²⁸ Ayako Kano, *Acting Like a Woman in Modern Japan* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 67.

¹²⁹ Brian Powell, *Japan's Modern Theatre: A Century of Change and Continuity* (London: Japan Library, 2002), 15.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 13.

¹³¹ Bowers, 212.

¹³² Ibid., 209.

¹³³ Yu Sang-hŭi, 88.

¹³⁴ *Pulhyo ch'ōnbōl*, 不孝天罰.

¹³⁵ Yu Min-yōng, *Han'guk Kūndae Yōn'gūksa*, 227.

who could speak Japanese, worked as a stagehand at one of the theatres in the Japanese town that had been created in Seoul after the Protectorate Treaty of 1905.¹³⁶ While working there, he was impressed by the dramas he saw and made a resolution to enlighten Korean people through drama and performances.¹³⁷ Therefore, pursuing the slogans, “promoting good and punishing evil” (勸善懲惡), “refinement of manners” (風俗改良), “enlightenment” (民智開發), and “patriotic commitment” (盡忠竭力), he organized a theatrical troupe with Im In-gu (林仁九), Ko Su-ch’öl (高秀喆), Kim To-san (金陶山), Kim So-rang (金小浪), and Ch’ön Han-su (千漢洙) et al. The plots of most of the productions by Hyöksindan are not known. However, those that are known—for example, *Heavenly Punishment to Impiety to Parents, Tears*,¹³⁸ *The Robber with Six-Shooter*,¹³⁹ *Snow on the Front*,¹⁴⁰ and *Self-made Man*¹⁴¹—give hints that suggest Hyöksindan’s repertoires emphasized enlightenment, justice, patriotism, and a modern way of thinking that overcomes old customs.

In addition to his theatrical activities, Im Söng-gu built his reputation with his charitable works. At times, newspaper articles reported that Im Söng-gu offered free performances and clothing to the poor. For example, on May 22, 1915, the newspaper *Maeil Sinbo* reported:

[. . .] in Taegu, the members of Hyöksindan led by Im Söng-gu offered free performances on last 21st and 22nd for students and [...] invited the orphans, the

¹³⁶ The population of the Japanese in Seoul, the capital of Korea, grew to 34,000 in 1910. For the growing population of the Japanese, theatres such as Kabukijwa (歌舞伎座), Kyöngsöngjwa (京城座), Sujwa (壽座), and Ösöngjwa (御成座) were built in Seoul during 1908 to 1910 period. Ibid., 215-216.

¹³⁷ Chang Han-gi, 178.

¹³⁸ *Nunmul*, 눈물.

¹³⁹ Yukhyölp’o Kangdo, 六血砲强盜.

¹⁴⁰ *Chinjungsöl*, 陣中雪.

¹⁴¹ Söngkongkohaksaeng, 成功苦學生.

poor, and the beggars to offer new clothing and meals. Many people praised Im Sŏng-gu.¹⁴² (my translation)

The way Im Sŏng-gu practiced charitable works suggests that he aimed not only to be a leading figure in theatre, but also a social benefactor. The attitude that Im Sŏng-gu showed in his social activities strongly implies that *sinp'a* at its beginning hoped to be something to be proud of, as the vehicle for a social movement in Korea.

As Hyöksindan's *sinp'a* drew the public's attention, other *sinp'a* companies followed.¹⁴³ The notable companies among them were Munsusŏng (Excellent Literary Star, 文秀星), formed in 1912 by Yun Paek-nam (尹白南, 1888-1954) and Cho Il-chae (趙一齋, 1863-1944), and Yuiltan ("the Only" Group, 唯一團), formed in 1912 by Yi Ki-se (李基世, 1889-1945). Yun Paek-nam, Cho Il-chae, and Yi Ki-se were intellectuals who studied in Tokyo. Therefore, in *sinp'a*, they engendered a somewhat different tradition from Im Sŏng-gu's and the other groups which later split from Im's group.¹⁴⁴ However, these intellectuals' companies failed not only to accomplish greater achievements than Im Sŏng-gu's and other companies, but also to become as popular as Im Sŏng-gu's group.¹⁴⁵ Yun Paek-nam, Cho Il-chae, and Yi Ki-se also viewed their theatrical activities as social functions. Yun Paek-nam and Cho Il-chae's company also pursued enlightenment, encouraging the refinement of manners and new education, and later Yi Ki-se related that his theatrical activities aimed at enlightenment:

¹⁴² Yu Min-yŏng, *Han'guk Yŏn'gŭk undongsa* (Seoul: T'aehaksa, 2001), 144.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 128.

¹⁴⁴ According to Yi Kwang-nae, after Yun Paek-nam and Cho Il-chae had seen a production by Im Sŏng-gu's troupe, they attacked it as "unorthodox drama" (사극) for the production's crude style and decided to form a troupe to produce "orthodox drama" (정도의 연극). Yi Tu-hyŏn, *Han'guk Yŏn'gŭksa*, 283.

¹⁴⁵ According to Pak Sŭng-hŭi who was one of the leader of Korean theatre in the 1920s, "Yun Paek-nam's productions were not popular to the Korean public because the productions had too much Japanese color." Yi Tu-hyŏn, *Han'guk Sin'gŭksa Yŏn'gu*, 62.

At that time, the theatre people [. . .] had the goal of educating the society. One could say that pursuing such a goal is even childish because it is too visionary. However, we believed that theatre was the most effective means for educating the society.¹⁴⁶ (my translation)

With this view of theatre, the leading figures of *sinp'a* placed themselves in the stream of cultural nationalism. Pyŏn Ki-jong (卞基鍾, 1895-1977), who started his career as an actor by joining Ch'ŏngnyŏnpa (the Young Men Group, 靑年派) in 1912, affirmed that many theatrical artists' activities at that time drew from a nationalistic spirit:

“The situation of this country does not allow me to keep sitting down and studying irresponsibly. My country's independence must be restored. Then, first, the ignorant people must be enlightened. Theatre can be a shortcut for the goal.” That is why I stepped in to theatrical activity. Many individuals in the theatre community at that time had the same idea, and that made them choose theatre. Therefore, we did not consider hardships “hardship” and rather felt proud considering our activities a patriotic movement. (my translation)¹⁴⁷

Although *sinp'a* could not boldly express nationalism under the military dictatorial control (and expressing nationalism was not its primary goal), some *sinp'a* dramas certainly transmitted nationalistic messages. As one famous line in a *sinp'a* drama, “as a bulwark serving the great emperor upward and protecting twenty million brothers and sisters of our nation (이천만 동포) and three thousand *li*¹⁴⁸ of our territory downward . . .”¹⁴⁹ suggests, some *sinp'a* dramas stimulated nationalism in the Koreans by depicting the exploits of brave soldiers. As Pyŏn Ki-jong mentioned in his recollection of the production by Hyŏksindan, such military dramas were popular at that

¹⁴⁶ Yi Tu-hyŏn, *Han 'guk Yŏn 'gŭksa*, 287.

¹⁴⁷ Yu Min-yŏng, *Han 'guk Yŏn 'gŭk undongsa*, 141.

¹⁴⁸ *li* is a unit for measuring distance. 1 *li* is about 0.25 mile.

¹⁴⁹ Yi Tu-hyŏn, *Han 'guk Yŏn 'gŭksa*, 271.

time.¹⁵⁰ In fact, the military dramas were adaptations of Japanese *shimpa*. However, by replacing the characters and the dramatic situations with Korean elements, as the expression “twenty million brothers and sisters of our nation” and “three thousand *li* of our territory” in the quotation shows, the Korean *sinp’a* dramas reminded the Korean audience of their national identity.

Nevertheless, as *sinp’a* drew from the Japanese *shimpa*, *sinp’a* in the 1910s still gave evidence of much Japanese color in its production values. Therefore, it did not appropriately represent the lives of the Koreans. Reflecting the Japanese origins, *sinp’a* at first frequently included story elements and production values that were not Korean. For example, in a production of *Hyöksindan*, a scene depicts the son of a famous swordsman killing 13 people with the sword he inherited from his father.¹⁵¹ Such a situation was not plausible in Korean culture, but only plausible in the context of Japanese *samurai* culture, in which carrying swords was common. Besides, these stories utilized Japanese sets and props, as almost every theatre building in Korea was owned by the Japanese (and theatrical companies usually used the sets and the props owned by the theatre).¹⁵² Kim Yŏn-su (金連壽) recollected such a problem as follows:

While the characters in the play were Koreans in Korean clothing, the sets were Japanese houses with ‘*fusuma*’¹⁵³ and ‘*tatami*.’¹⁵⁴ Even though the plots were about a Korean middle class family, in which Confucian ethics ruled, they frequently made the characters appear with long Japanese swords and showed revenge stories based on the Japanese *samurai*-spirit.¹⁵⁵ (my translation)

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Yu Min-yŏng, *Han’guk Yŏn’gŭk undongsa*, 125.

¹⁵² An Chong-hwa, *Sin’gŭksa Iyagi* [The Stories of *Sin’gŭk*] (Seoul: Chinmunsa, 1955), 98-99.

¹⁵³ Japanese sliding door

¹⁵⁴ Japanese strawmats for floor covering

¹⁵⁵ Kim Yŏn-su, “Kŭktan Yahwa: Chosŏn Kŭktanŭn Ŏdero Gana?” (1) [The Night Stories of Theatre Community: Where is Korean Theatre Going?] (1), *Maeil Sinbo*, May 22, 1931.

Another article in *Maeil Sinbo* on September 10, 1931 reported the following:

During the past days of *sinp'a*, even though they were Koreans, the characters on stage wore Japanese shoes for their feet and carried the long Japanese swords, going to revenge for their enemies. Also, sometimes you could even see the scenes of so-called *seppuku* in which the characters commit suicide by cutting their bellies imitating Japanese *bushido*. It is very strange, like a tiger smoking a pipe, for today's people to even imagine.¹⁵⁶ (my translation)

In addition to sets and props, acting technique also exhibited Japanese qualities. The early *sinp'a* imitated the conventions of Japanese theatre in diction, gestures, and movement. *Maeil Sinbo* on March 27, 1912 pointed out the *kabuki* influence on actors' speech:

Hyöksindan's new theatre at Yönhüngsa is very good and exemplary. However, Im Söng-gu and Ko Su-ch'öl, who played the role of the fashionable woman, should not make crying sounds. That was really bothersome. You cry when you cry and you laugh when you laugh. Always making a crying sound is a problem.¹⁵⁷ (my translation)

A review in *Maeil Sinbo* on September 12, 1917 advised a *sinp'a* company:

First, as for acting, prevent bad language and strange accents by studying speech; do not make strange gestures imitating Japanese *Kabuki* actors; do not make wild movements in order to make audience laugh [. . .]¹⁵⁸ (my translation)

In addition to these elements, *sinp'a* adopted other Japanese conventions, such as *hanamichi*,¹⁵⁹ *onnagata*,¹⁶⁰ and *kuchitate*.¹⁶¹ The public criticized the Japanese colors in *sinp'a* in that they made

¹⁵⁶ Ch'iwönsaeng, "Küktan Chönmang" (2) [A Prospect of Theatre] (2), *Maeil Sinbo*, September 10, 1931.

¹⁵⁷ Yang Söng-guk, *Han'guk Sinyöng'gük Yöng'u* (Seoul: Yöng'gükkwa In'gan, 2001), 153.

¹⁵⁸ Sö Yöng-ho, *Han'guk Yöng'gügnon* [Discourses about Korean Theatre], 2nd ed. (Seoul: Taegwangmunhwasa, 1996), 20.

¹⁵⁹ The passage which connects audience and stage, 花道

¹⁶⁰ Male actor playing female role, 女形

¹⁶¹ The technique of improvising scenes by only memorizing the outline of the drama, 口建

the members of audience “confused to wonder whether it is Korean theatre or Japanese theatre.”¹⁶² Therefore, the public demanded the removal of the Japanese colors from *sinp’a* and that the shows portray Koreans’ lives more appropriately, “in Korean ways.”¹⁶³

Obedying the public’s demand for a closer approximation to their own lives, the *sinp’a* companies began to break with the Japanese conventions and apply Korean styles. For example, the *sinp’a* company Ch’wisŏngjwa, which had been criticized in 1919 for its productions in Japanese colors, produced a show well-done in Korean style and received acclamation as a result. The review of the company’s production that appeared in *Maeil Sinbo* on April 24, 1920 complimented the effort:

In *Ch’uwŏlsaek* (Autumn moonlight, 秋月色) by the company led by Kim So-rang, at Tongnakjwa in Wŏnsan, the wedding scene performed totally in Korean style was very good. Korean plays should use Korean clothing as costumes.¹⁶⁴ (my translation)

On May 5, a review praised another production by the same company:

I watched Ch’wisŏngjwa’s *sinp’a* productions many times. Oh, Mr. Kim So-rang, the tragedy of *The Humble* (Tyŏnmin, 텃민) created by you seemed to depict today’s Koreans’ situation very well. How well you understand the customs the Koreans have inherited. I cannot help but drop tears of appreciation.¹⁶⁵ (my translation)

Such evidence indicates that *sinp’a* in Korea was getting away from Japanese conventions and was beginning to better portray the lives of Koreans.

¹⁶² Yi Tŏk-ki, “1910nyŏndae *Sinp’agŭge* taehan T’alsingminjuŭichŏk Koch’al” [A Study of *Sinp’agŭk* in Terms of Postcolonialism], Kim Kyŏng-mi et al, *1910nyŏndae Munhakkwa Kŭndae* [Literature and Modernity in the 1910s], (Seoul: Worin, 2005), 257.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 258.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

In short, *sinp'a* in Korea broke with its Japanese influence at the end of the 1910s and began to create a new identity as the popular theatre in Korea although it was still called by the same name, "*sinp'a*."¹⁶⁶ However, in most aspects, this was not keeping pace with Western Modern theatre. As the Koreans gained more knowledge of the Western world, they wanted to import modern Western theatre.

With foreign threats to Korea in the 19th century, Koreans began implanting Western traditions in place of their own in many aspects of their lives. As the Koreans tried to incorporate Western civilization, they also came to value Western theatre. Since Western theatre was considered a legitimate part of Western civilization, the introduction of Western theatre in Korea, spurred by Cultural Nationalism, emerged as the instrumental rhetoric of enlightenment for modernization. In the 1910s, Koreans soon came to realize that *sinp'a* was something to overcome in order to truly keep pace with the modernity of the West. Therefore, in the 1920s, intellectuals began to introduce Western modern theatre in Korea. Hong Hae-söng appeared at this time in the history of Korean theatre as one of the leading figures in the importation of Western stage practice.

¹⁶⁶ Kim Chae-söök, "Kündaegük Chönhwan'gi Hanil *Sinp'agŭgŭi* Kündaesöngge daehan Pigyoyön'gŭkhakjök Yön'gu" [A Comparative Study of the modernity of the *Sinp'a* Drama in Korea and Japan during the Transitional Period toward Modern Theatre], *Han'guk Kügyesul Yön'gu* 17 (April 2003): 41-42.

CHAPTER 3

KOREAN THEATRE OF THE 1920S AND HONG HAE-SŎNG

Cultural Nationalism, whose influence reached back to the 19th century, achieved its peak in the 1920s and expedited various activities for modernization, collectively called the Cultural Movement (Munhwa Undong, 文化運動). At that time, young Korean intellectuals introduced modern Western theatre, known as *sin 'gŭk* (the New Theatre, 新劇), as part of the Cultural Movement. Hong Hae-sŏng started his career in theatre as a leader in this effort. Hong Hae-sŏng advanced the rise of amateur theatre in the Theatrical Arts Society (Kŭgyesul Hyŏphoe, 劇藝術協會) during the early part of the 1920s and trained himself as a professional at the Tsukiji Little Theatre (Tsukiji Shōgekijō, 築地小劇場) during the late part of the decade. This chapter examines the major aspects of the Cultural Movement of the 1920s, providing the background for Hong Hae-sŏng's theatrical activities and his work as an activist in the Cultural Movement.

3.1. Cultural Nationalism and the Cultural Movement in the 1920s

3.1.1. The March First Movement

As the harsh colonial rule of Japan continued, the Korean nationalistic spirit spread to all segments of the society, creating conditions that fermented social upheaval.¹ The surge of the nationalist intellectuals, fueled by educational changes since the 1900s, combined with the peasantry's experience of oppression under foreign rule to produce the conditions that joined intellectual leadership and mass sentiment.² At the same time, the doctrine of self-determination of nation put forward by the American president Thomas Woodrow Wilson (1856-1924) for

¹ Lee Ki-baik, *A New History of Korea*, trans. Edward W. Wagner and Edward J. Shultz (Seoul, Ilchokak, 1984), 340.

² Michael Edson Robinson, *Cultural Nationalism in Colonial Korea, 1920-1925* (University of Washington Press, 1988), 39.; Chong-sik Lee, *The Politics of Korean Nationalism* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1963), 95-96.

rearranging the world order after the First World War, led the Koreans to expect a positive Western response to their expressed desire for independence.³ The nation-wide protest called the March First Movement (Samil Undong, 三·一運動) thus broke out in 1919.⁴

What actually sparked the March First Movement was the death of the former emperor Kojong, who was still a symbol of unity and integrity to many Koreans.⁵ After he died on January 22, 1919, nationalists considered his funeral (planned for March 3) as a good chance to incite the wider participation of protesters in an anti-Japan demonstration.⁶ Therefore, on March 1, a few days before Kojong's funeral, intellectuals, students, and religious leaders started a peaceful demonstration demanding the immediate independence of Korea. Many people actively participated in this demonstration, and it sparked a nationwide movement. The Korean people listened to the Declaration of Independence being read at public parks and markets; they perpetuated the peaceful demonstration, shouting "*Taeahan tongnip manse*" (long live Korean independence) to show their solidarity.⁷ What began on the first of March continued for months. Statistics show that the March First Movement from the beginning of March to the end of May grew in magnitude, inciting 1,542 demonstrations with 2,023,098 participants. As a result, 7,509 were killed, 46,948 were arrested, and 15,961 were wounded by the Japanese.⁸

³ Lee Ki-baik, 340.-341.

⁴ Robinson, 7.

⁵ Adrian Buzo, *The Making of Modern Korea* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 22.

⁶ Carter J. Eckert, Ki-baik Lee, Young Ick Lew, Michael Robinson, and Edward W. Wagner, 277.

⁷ Robinson, 44.

⁸ Sin Yong-ha, *Han'guk Kūndaeminjokchu'ui Hyōngsōnggwa Chōn'gae* [The Origin and development of Korean Modern Nationalism] (Seoul: Sōuldaehakkyo ch'ulp'anbu, 1987), 328.

The March First Movement encouraged other nationalistic activities to follow. For example, the Korean leaders established the Korean Provisional Government⁹ in Shanghai in April of 1919, in order to unify the various efforts for independence. The government in exile tried to restore the independence of Korea by diplomatic efforts, propaganda, and military programs. With these efforts, the Koreans hoped for Western intervention on their behalf.¹⁰ Meanwhile, many in Korea, who were encouraged by the March First Movement, actively showed their commitment to their nation. The playwright Yu Ch'i-jin (柳致眞, 1905-1974) recollected the changes that came after the March First Movement in his hometown of T'ongyŏng, a small town on the southern coast of Korea:

[. . .] The March First Movement became the cause of my inner change and brought about the considerable changes in the environment around me. It was like the society in T'ongyŏng was overturned. In order to awaken the society of T'ongyŏng, the leading members of the town were busy spending their own money to build some building for the young men's association, to form some kind of organization, and to host a lecture. [. . .] T'ongyŏng had many meetings for lectures and discussions that had never been seen in the town, and the theme of the lectures was "We should learn!" [. . .] or "Let's make products by our hands!" The lectures emphasized that if we were ignorant, our survival was in danger, and we should actively meet changes of the period and be practical. [. . .] T'ongyŏng, which was quiet as if it had been dead for hundreds of years, began to change little by little. [. . .] The people's commitment for their lives seemed to be stronger too. Even my father showed certain changes. My father who had never allowed me to get more education called me in and said he would let me go and study wherever I wanted. (my translation)¹¹

As Yu Ch'i-jin suggests, the public expression of nationalism became a social phenomenon among the Koreans after the March First Movement.

⁹ Taehanmin'guk imsi chŏngbu, 大韓民國臨時政府

¹⁰ Robinson, 43.

¹¹ Yu Ch'i-jin, "Chasŏjŏn" [Autobiography], in *Tongnang Yu Ch'i-jin Chŏnjip* [The Anthology of Yu Ch'i-jin's Works] 9 (Seoul, Sŏulyedae ch'ulp'anbu, 1993), 72-74.

Frightened by the massive effect of the March First Movement, Japan appointed Admiral Saitō Makoto (齋藤實, 1858-1936) as the new Governor-General and had him adopt the so-called Cultural Policy (*bunka seiji*, 文化政治) in order to restore colonial control in a different way.¹² Through this policy, the gendarmerie police system was replaced with a civilian police force; no longer did officials and schoolteachers wear military uniforms with swords. At the same time, the colonial regime allowed limited freedom of speech, assembly, and the press.¹³ Two daily newspapers—*Tonga Ilbo* (East Asia Daily News, 東亞日報) and *Chosŏn Ilbo* (Korea Daily News, 朝鮮日報)—received permits, and intellectual journals and specialized magazines were also sanctioned in 1920. Various social organizations such as young men's associations, study circles, labor organizations and tenant groups also gained licenses in Korea.¹⁴ The Koreans' protest of the March First Movement forced the extreme coercion of the military dictatorial government of the 1910s to retreat considerably.¹⁵

3.1.2. The Cultural Movement

Even though the March First Movement changed Japanese colonial policies, it did not bring about the independence of Korea. The Western intervention that the Koreans expected never came, and Koreans had to realize that their efforts to restore independence through Western support would fail. With the hope of immediate independence frustrated, Koreans had to find new directions for their efforts in liberation. The options could be either more radical or more moderate. Remarkably, in the 1920s, one sees both. Socialism, spurred by the Russian Revolution emerged

¹² Sin Yong-ha, *Ilcheha Kangjŏmgi Han'guk Minjoksa* [A History of Korean People in the Time of Japanese Occupation, 1910~1945] 2 (Seoul, Sŏuldaehakkyo ch'ulp'anbu, 2002), 1.

¹³ Ibid., 2.

¹⁴ Robinson, 4.

¹⁵ Ibid., 45.

as an option for radical Koreans; the moderate nationalists saw independence only coming through the “raising” of national capabilities and culture.¹⁶ Although the March First Movement was noticed by the world, all of Korea’s diplomatic efforts produced little results. A series of international conferences, aimed at re-arranging the world order after the World War I, ignored appeals from Korea, and the Koreans became greatly disappointed by international reactions. Journalist Kim Tong-sŏng’s report after the Washington Conference (November 1921 to February 1922) especially influenced the Koreans. When he came back from Washington, Kim Tong-sŏng, who was the reporter sent by the newspaper *Tonga Ilbo*, related to his fellow Koreans that the favorable reactions regarding Korea’s independence shown by the Americans and other Westerners had been mere gestures for spreading their religion, and were not true expressions of the heart.¹⁷ He also related that, as Korea’s independence would be impossible for a while, Koreans must work to raise the nation’s ability—by focusing on education, developing industry, and building cultural facilities.¹⁸ Disappointed by his testimony, many Koreans came to realize that increasing the nation’s power was necessary for the nation’s survival, a conclusion based on Social Darwinian thinking.¹⁹

The moderates, who advocated gradual solutions to the problem of independence, subsequently concentrated their efforts on raising the nation’s ability and improving every aspect of

¹⁶ Yi Kyun-yŏng, “1920nyŏndae Minjok undongŭi Chŏn’gaewa Sŏnggyŏk” [The Development and Characteristics of the Nationalistic Movements in the 1920s], *Han’guk Tongnip undongsa Yŏn’gu* 8 (1994), http://www.independence.or.kr/media_data/thesis/1994/199416.html (accessed March 28, 2007).; Yŏksa pip’yŏng p’yŏnjip wiwŏnhoe, *Nonjaengŭro Bon Han’guk sahoe 100nyŏn* [The 100 Years of Korean Society Seen through the Controversies] (Seoul: Yŏksa pip’yŏngsa, 2003), 57.

¹⁷ Ko Chŏng-hyu, “Washington hoeŭiwa Han’guk minjok undong” [Washington Conference and the Korean Independence Movement], in *1930nyŏndae Yesul Munhwa undong* [Artistic and the Cultural Movement in the 1930s], ed. Han’guk minjok undong sahakhoe (Seoul: Kukhak charyowŏn, 2003), 194.

¹⁸ Pak Ch’an-sŭng, *Han’guk Kŭndae Chŏngch’i sasangsa Yŏn’gu* [A Study of the Modern Political Ideologies of Korea] (Seoul: Yŏksa pip’yŏngsa, 1992), 175.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 173-175.

the lives of the Koreans. During the 1920s, such activities were collectively identified by the unique name “the Cultural Movement” (Munhwa Undong, 文化運動).²⁰ Those who were engaged in the Cultural Movement thought that the Korean masses had not acquired the new values necessary for a modern nation. These proponents promoted such values by enlightenment and education, through proper political orientation and economic development. Considering their activities realistic alternatives, the leaders in the Cultural Movement pursued their activities within the limits of the colonial system rather than overtly resisting its constraints.²¹

3.1.3. Philosophical Aspects of the Cultural Movement

The term “Cultural Movement” reflects certain changes in the 1920s’ terminology of modernization. At the time, “culture” (*munhwa*, 文化) came to be used more frequently than

²⁰ In 1921, Sin Sik (申湜) defined the Cultural Movement as follows:

[. . .] What is the Cultural Movement? Broadly speaking, it is the cry of demanding the establishment of a new civilization. Narrowly speaking, it means organizing institutions for cultivating society. Of course, it includes not only improving school education but also social enlightenment in general, or improvement of urban and rural life. (my translation)

Pak Ch’an-sŭng, 211.

²¹ Japan was aware of the Cultural Movement’s nationalistic goal. Maruyama Tsurukichi, the head of the colonial police during the early part of the 1920s, interpreted the reason for spreading the Cultural Movement as follows:

In short, Koreans began to realize that an independence movement leaning on others’ power is a mere dream. Therefore, the realization that the only way to independence is to achieve it only by their own power has spread to all Koreans. That is the dominant idea of both the upper class and lower class of the Koreans, I think. However, when they reflect on themselves with the idea that they can only rely on their own ability [. . .] they came to realize that the average of the ability of 17,000,000 Koreans, considering the level of their culture, their economic power, or each individual’s ability, is not enough to keep the independence even if they restored independence right away. [. . .] If they are not good enough to be independent right away, by what means can they accomplish their absolute goal? After all, the Koreans must try to develop their culture with great efforts. Promoting industry to increase Koreans’ wealth is a natural step [to approach independence]. Developing industry and developing culture have recently become the idea that dominates Koreans’ thoughts. (my translation)

Recognizing the Cultural Movement’s dual purposes, Maruyama thought that the Cultural Movement’s legal self-strengthening programs were hiding a long-range program that was a threat to the foundations of Japanese rule. He warned that the Cultural Movement’s long-term effects could be disastrous to Japanese colonial rule. See Pak Ch’an-sŭng, 291; Robinson, 76-77.

“civilization” (*munmyōng*, 文明), which had formerly been the popular term signifying modernization.²² Although the notion of modernization still embraced both material and mental aspects as it had before, it now stressed “cultural” aspects such as art, religion, academism, and morals.²³

This change in the meaning of modernization was influenced by a new trend of the time, one emphasizing “reconstruction” (*kaejo*, 改造) and “culture.” In the early part of the 1920s, “reconstruction” and “culture” became popular as fashionable terms in the newspapers and magazines. “Reconstruction” originated from the idea of “the reconstruction of the world” and “the reconstruction of society” which was prevalent in the late 1910s and the early 1920s. The world, immediately after the World War I, saw various events that shook the old world order. Revolutions in Russia in 1917 and in Germany in 1918 ended traditional monarchies and established new polities. The rising up of labor movements in many European countries was remarkable. Meanwhile, the voices that reproached international aggression and militarism were increasing, and nationalistic movements by small nations were active. Under these circumstances, the idea of “the reconstruction of the world” spread internationally.²⁴ In Japan, “reconstruction” was so popular that a magazine titled *Reconstruction* (*Kaizō*, 改造) was launched in April 1919.²⁵

Facing this international trend, the Koreans also began to see the necessity of reconstructing old customs and updating the backward economy. An article titled “Hope and

²² Pak Sōng-jin, *Hanmal–Ilcheha Sahoejinhwaron’gwa Singminji Sahoesasang* [Social Darwinism and the Ideologies in the Society during the Late Part of the 19th Century and the Colonial Period] (Seoul: Tosōch’ulp’an Sōnin, 2003), 51-52.

²³ Ibid., 52.

²⁴ Pak Ch’an-sūng, 177.

²⁵ Ibid., 178.

Criticism” (Hūimanggwa Pip’yǒng, 希望과 批評) written by Chang To-bin (張道斌) in April,

1920 emphasized the necessity of reconstruction:

Today’s world is the world of reconstruction. [. . .] The whole humanity in the world began the great reconstruction. The world necessarily comes to meet changes and reconstruct itself after it maintained its stable state for a while. Therefore, a society which well applies itself to the opportunity to reconstruct itself survives and grows, and a society which cannot apply itself to such a period and reconstruct itself unfortunately becomes the inferior, the lost, the weak, and the dead. [. . .] As our Korea failed to reconstruct itself many times becoming narrow and slow in the past, we are undergoing today’s situation. In this period of reconstruction, if we fortunately join reconstruction, we can expect Western help (桑榆의 補). However, if we cannot join reconstruction, there will be only misery in our future.²⁶ (my translation)

Still influenced by Social Darwinism, the Koreans considered the realization of reconstruction critical to the survival of their nation.

The move toward “reconstruction” in Korea bifurcated into “socialist reconstruction” (社會主義的 改造論) and “idealist reconstruction” (觀念論的 改造論). Socialist reconstruction was influenced by the revolutionary ideas of the Russian revolution of 1917; idealist reconstruction was influenced by the ideas of Bertrand Russell (1872-1970) and Edward Carpenter (1844-1929), and the Culturalism (*Bunkashugi*, 文化主義) from Japan. The Cultural Movement in Korea was dominated by the influence of the “idealist reconstruction.”²⁷

The ideas of Russell and Carpenter were primarily introduced by the magazine *Kaebiyōk* (開闢, Creation), which appeared under the changed colonial policies after the March First Movement. *Kaebiyōk* introduced the articles that explained Russell’s and Carpenter’s ideas of reconstruction, notions derived from Russell’s *Principles of Social Reconstruction* and Carpenter’s *Civilization and Towards Industrial Freedom*. According to the articles in *Kaebiyōk*, Russell

²⁶ Ibid., 198.

²⁷ Ibid., 375.

understood “impulses” as that which controlled man’s life, and he divided the “impulses” according to the Possessive Impulse and the Creative Impulse. Holding that the Possessive Impulse was dominant while the Creative Impulse was suppressed, Russell saw this as modern civilization’s problem, one that needed to be reconstructed. Disavowing any ideal of humanity, Carpenter understood modern civilization as a disease that man had to pass through, like children’s measles. Therefore, in order to treat this unhealthy stage of history, he argued that man needed to vitalize the social and industrial life with a new spirit, one that demonstrated the liberated Creative Impulse of Russell. The “reconstruction” argued by Russell and Carpenter was a very idealistic concept, emphasizing mental aspects rather than practical policies for the reconstruct of social institutions. The influence of these figures resulted in the Koreans focusing on the abstract aspects of reconstruction in their society.²⁸

Culturalism or *Bunkashugi*, which is pronounced “*Munhwa chuŭi*” in Korean, was very popular in Japan during the 1920s,²⁹ and it also greatly influenced the Koreans. “Culture” (*Bunka*) in the term of “Culturalism” (*Bunkashugi*) was the Japanese translation of the German word “Kultur,” which was developed by the Germans as the counterpart of the French and English concept of “civilization.”³⁰ While “civilization” signifies human achievements, including “political or economic, religious or technical, moral or social facts,” German “Kultur” essentially refers to the more heightened or spiritual aspects of human life such as “intellectual, artistic and religious

²⁸ Ibid., 179-180.

²⁹ Miyakawa Toru and Arakawa Ikuo call the 1920s in Japan “the period of Culturalism.” Miyakawa Toru and Arakawa Ikuo, ed., *Ilbon Kūndae ch’ōlhaksa* [The History of Japanese Modern Philosophy], trans. Yi Su-jōng (Seoul: Saenggagūi Namu, 2001), 156.

³⁰ Ibid., 293.

facts,” and excludes “political, economic and social facts.”³¹ Unlike the bourgeoisie in France and England, the pride or self-image of the German middle-class intelligentsia in the 18th century could only come from inner enrichment of the personality through intellectual, scientific or artistic accomplishments, as they were removed from political activity and the commercial middle class remained undeveloped. Therefore, *Kultur*, which referred to the purely spiritual sphere, came to function as the watchword of the German intelligentsia.³² Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), in the 18th century, understood *Kultur* as the process of the intellectual formation—*Bildung*—of the human as a rational being³³ and argued that its absolute goal was to realize morality and a cosmopolitan society as an ethical community.³⁴ Kant’s philosophy regained influence during the late 19th century, helping to form neo-Kantianism in Germany.³⁵ Among the neo-Kantianist philosophers, Baden or the Southwest German school drew a line between natural sciences and cultural sciences,³⁶ identifying universal values that make culture.³⁷ For example, Wilhelm Windelband (1848-1915) argued that all logical thought was guided by a value; he linked the classical divisions of philosophy such as logic, ethics, and aesthetics to the values of Truth, Goodness, and Beauty.³⁸ Heinrich Rickert (1868-1936), further developing Windelband’s philosophy, argued that values

³¹ Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process*. trans. Edmund Jephcott. rev. ed. (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2004), 6.

³² Ibid., 24.

³³ Han’guk Kant hakhoe, ed., *Kant and Cultural Philosophy* (Seoul: Ch’olhakkwa hyönsilsa, 2003), 188.

³⁴ Ibid., 34-36.

³⁵ Frederic Copleston, *A History of Philosophy* VII (New York: Doubleday, 1963), 361.

³⁶ Ibid., 364.

³⁷ *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*, 2nd ed., s.vv. “neo-Kantianism,” “Baden School.”

³⁸ Copleston, 364.

possessed reality and that the subject connected the realm of values and the sensible world.³⁹ This concept of *Kultur* in Germany and the neo-Kantianists' "the philosophy of values" (價值哲學), or "the philosophy of culture" (文化哲學), greatly influenced two Japanese philosophers, Kuwaki Gen'yoku (桑木嚴翼, 1874-1946) and Sōda Kiichirō (左右田喜一郎, 1881-1927). Kuwaki and Sōda introduced "Culturalism" in Japan in 1919, and the Culturalism began to be popular in Japan.⁴⁰

Culturalism in Japan emphasized the realization of values and realization of personality based on cultural values. Kuwaki Gen'yoku argued that "culture" was opposed to nature and possessed the absolute values of truth (眞), goodness (善), and beauty (美). According to him, truth, goodness, and beauty are combined with consciousness (자아), and this combination forms "personality" (인격).⁴¹ He also maintained that every individual was equal only when he or she possessed such a personality; he applied that same principle to countries and nations, that is, Kuwaki maintained that every country or nation could not have equal rights. Only the countries or nations that had achieved "personality" could join the reconstruction of the world and engage in international democracy with the realization of "self-determination."⁴² Sōda Kiichirō also understood that culture was opposed to nature. Culture, to him, was the whole in which human efforts such as arts, knowledge, religion, moral, technology, and law were organically combined. He argued that culture had meaning only when it was in the process of realizing "cultural values"

³⁹ Ibid., 365.

⁴⁰ Miyakawa Toru and Arakawa Ikuo, 293.

⁴¹ Pak Ch'an-sūng, 182.

⁴² Ibid.

as absolute values. Also, he maintained that personality existed only in the man who had realized “culture” (文化人).⁴³

Since only the realization of culture could give proper position to an individual or a nation, both in the local society and in the international order, according to Culturalism, no individual or nation without culture could join the world with status and pride equal to that of other individuals or nations. Therefore, under the influence of Culturalism, “building new culture” would be an urgent assignment for the Koreans in order to give themselves a proper position in international society.⁴⁴ At the same time, Culturalism’s emphasis on the realization of personality meant that the reconstruction of mental or abstract traits was also important in the Koreans’ efforts toward modernization.⁴⁵

3.1.4. Practical Aspects of the Cultural Movement

The Cultural Movement that pursued the reconstruction of society and the realization of “culture” included numerous aspects. However, the most remarkable among them were the efforts in education, young men’s associations, and Korean product promotion.

After the March First Movement, the zeal for education exploded among Koreans. Organizations to promote education were founded,⁴⁶ and the number of people who wanted to enter school greatly increased.⁴⁷ As a result, many schools were built by the Koreans, and for the people

⁴³ Ibid., 183.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Such a way of thinking even developed into the idea that Koreans change their nation’s “personality” or character (民族性). Yi Kwang-su was the representative ideologist of such a way of thinking. Pak Ch’an-sŭng, 375-376.

⁴⁶ For example, Chosŏn Kyoyukhoe (朝鮮教育會) and Chosŏn Kyoyuk Kaesŏnhoe (朝鮮教育改善會).

⁴⁷ For example, in 1922, the number of the people who wanted to enter elementary school was 134,437 while the number of openings was 74,891. Pak Ch’an-sŭng, 246.

who could not afford to enter the schools, many Koreans offered so-called improved *sōdang* (village study halls) and *chuyahak kangsūphoe* (night school, 晝夜學講習會).⁴⁸ Such a boom in education was a result of the realization that education was a nationalistic necessity, crucial to Korea's future. Kim Pyōng-jun (金秉潛) explained this boom in education in his article in *Kaebyōk* in May 1922 as follows:

We, who are backward in scientific knowledge and who have become the loser in the competition for survival, must know like others and must learn like others in order to improve our future and live like others. That is the propellant of the current education-fever of the Koreans [. . .]⁴⁹

This realization increased the desire for higher education as well. Since Japan had avoided building any school for higher education in Korea, many Koreans had to go to foreign countries to study. Therefore, the number of students who studied abroad also increased. For example, in 1921, the number of students who studied abroad was approximately twice the number of the previous year. Most of these Koreans chose to go to Japan.⁵⁰

As the resources for education and social improvement were deficient, young men's associations (Ch'ōngnyōnhoe, 青年會), an alternative means of social enlightenment and personal cultivation, were organized all over the country, initiating a new movement. The Young Men's Association Movement aimed "to raise ability" and "to develop culture" through the promotion of education, refinement of manners, innovation of rural life, and the cultivation of personality. Also,

⁴⁸ Pak Ch'an-sūng, 377.

⁴⁹ Pak Ch'an-sūng, 246.

⁵⁰ Meanwhile, the National University Movement (Minnip Taehak Kisōng Undong, 民立大學期成運動) that intended to build a university by the Koreans was propelled during the early part of the 1920s. Pak Ch'an-sūng, 247.

it endorsed “contributing to the world’s culture” as one of its slogans.⁵¹ In order to accomplish these goals, the young men’s associations hosted various events including lectures, night schools, sports events, and theatrical performances in their communities. The colonial authority recognized that the Young Men’s Association Movement had nationalistic qualities. The Governor-General’s Secretary for Political Affairs (政務總監), Mizuno Rentarō (水野練太郎), commented in September, 1920:

We need to worry especially about the young men’s associations that have recently been born in each area. As you know, these young men’s associations were outwardly enumerating various beautiful purposes such as individual cultivation and encouraging sports. However, many of their structures and activities are not innocent. In their clever activities, they tend to engage in a so-called Independence Movement.⁵² (my translation)

The colonial authority tried to keep the Young Men’s Association Movement under its watchful eye.

The young men’s associations frequently cooperated with the activities of student associations. During the 1920s, there were many organizations, for social support among the students who studied in cities far from their homes. Most of these student associations usually hosted lectures for enlightenment as their special activities during vacations, and many of them brought a number of cultural enrichments to the provincial areas by hosting sports events, musical concerts, and dramatic performances.⁵³ These events were often accomplished through the help of the area’s young men’s association. Also, with close connections to the peasantry organizations and the worker’s organizations, the young men’s associations organized local people as a political

⁵¹ Pak Ch’an-sŭng, 224-231.

⁵² Ibid., 234.

⁵³ See the table in Cho Tong-gŏl, *Han’guk Minjokchuŭi Palchŏn’gwa Tongnip undongsa Yŏn’gu* [A Study of the Development of Korean Nationalism and Independence Movement] (Seoul: Chisik sanŏpsa, 1993), 214-224.

bloc. These various activities of the young men's associations made them the driving force behind the Cultural Movement during the 1920s.

In the economic realm, the Korean Production Movement⁵⁴ began in August 1920 in the city of P'yŏngyang.⁵⁵ The leaders of this movement were the leading Korean capitalists, intellectuals and bourgeois nationalists who championed the idea of *silyŏk yangsŏng* (as in "raising ability" to compete).⁵⁶ The newspaper *Tonga Ilbo*, owned by Kim Sŏng-su (金性洙, 1891-1955), who was the foremost Korean entrepreneur and also owner of the Seoul Textile Company,⁵⁷ was not only a sponsor of the movement but also the central leader of the movement.⁵⁸ Expanding this movement to a nationwide level in 1922, *Tonga Ilbo* argued that "the best way for Korean people to regain power and achieve ideals is to 'increase wealth'" and proposed that Koreans practice the following as the way to achieve economic independence.

First, Koreans buy from Koreans and sell through Koreans. Second, Koreans use products made by Koreans and try to give benefit to Koreans. Third, by doing so, accomplish economic independence. At the same time, work hard, be frugal, and save up. Get economic knowledge on the one hand, and adopt scientific methods of management on the other hand.⁵⁹

As this excerpt reveals, the Korean Production Movement was not only an effort to pursue economic modernization emphasizing "production," but also an anti-Japanese movement which

⁵⁴ Mulsan Changnyŏ Undong, 物産獎勵運動.

⁵⁵ Pak Ch'an-sŭng, 274.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 377.

⁵⁷ Kyŏngsŏng Pangjik Hoesa, 京城紡織會社.

⁵⁸ Yi Sŭng-nyŏl, "Ilche Fascism-ki Chosŏnin Chabon'gaŭi Hyŏnsil insikkwa Taeŭng" [The Korean Entrepreneurs' Understandings and Reactions to the Circumstances under Japanese Fascism during the Colonial Period], in *Ilcheha Chisiginŭi Fascism Ch'eje Insikkwa Taeŭng* [Korean Intellectuals' Perception and Response to the Japanese Fascist Regime under the Japanese Control], ed., Pang Ki-jung (Seoul: Hyeon, 2005), 277.

aimed at boycotting Japanese goods. The nationalists endeavored to raise Korean economic power and to strengthen national unity at the same time through this movement.⁶⁰

3.1.5. Decline of the Cultural Movement and its Aftermath

Although the Cultural Movement of the 1920s was quite fruitful as a nationalistic movement, it encountered problems as it was operating within the limits of the Japanese colonial policy. The cultural nationalists were only focused on raising the competitive ability of the nation for the time being, accepting the colonial status quo,⁶¹ only assuming the possibility of independence in the distant future.⁶² This attitude disregarded the primary nationalistic value of resistance against Imperial Japan and made the absolute goal of the nation's independence vague. Therefore, the moderate attitude of the Cultural Movement brought attacks from those who argued for active resistance. For example, Kim Ki-jŏn (金起田), who had once been actively engaged in the Cultural Movement, criticized the movement as the term “raising ability” became mainstream, while efforts toward restoring independence became less of a priority. Also, an article written under the pen name K. H. in *Tongnip Sinmun*—the organ of the Korean Provisional Government at that time—criticized the Cultural Movement declaring, “The Cultural Movement or ‘increasing production’ is, of course, right for development or improvement of life and it is the highest ideal of humanity. However, it is not a movement for independence. It is something that should be done after the independence movement is accomplished.”⁶³

⁵⁹ Pak Ch'an-sŭng, 264.

⁶⁰ Robinson, 78-79.

⁶¹ Ibid., 76.

⁶² Ibid., 104.

⁶³ Pak Ch'an-sŭng, 300.

In fact, the moderate attitude of those in the Cultural Movement naturally had an inclination to comply with the Japanese imperialist policies. From the point of view of Japan, which needed to allow a certain level of modernization for exploitation in its colony, the Cultural Movement was something to be tolerated as it shared common benefits with Japanese imperialism. By giving this movement some freedom, Japan tried to induce the Cultural Movement to stay in the colonial system or even to become a pro-Japanese.⁶⁴ At the same time, from the point of view of the cultural nationalists who advocated gradual solutions to the problem of independence, they might cooperate with the colonial system only in those aspects that could expedite “culture” or “civilization.” While the cultural nationalists and imperialist Japan shared common interests in this way, the value of “independence” tended to be eclipsed by the emphasis on establishing “culture” or “civilization.”⁶⁵ This sort of accommodating attitude of the moderate cultural nationalists ordained the unhappy result that many of them would forget or give up the idea of establishing their own nation-state, while the power of Japan’s imperialism continued to expand.

The opportunistic actions of the leaders of the Korean Production Movement well demonstrate the limits of the Cultural Movement. As the Korean Production Movement was declining, its leaders shifted their direction from hidden resistance to submission to Japan’s colonial rule.

The effect of the Korean Production Movement became less productive after it passed the mid-20s. Although the demand for products by Koreans increased as a result of the Korean

⁶⁴ A document made by the Government-General in August, 1920 said about the Cultural Movement:

We should not attempt to dissolve this phenomenon by suppression. However, at the same time, it is too dangerous to let it happen without doing anything about it. By any means, we must induce it to serve the slogan “Japan and Korea are One Entity,” which is the great spirit or ideal of Japan’s annexation of Korea. (my translation)

Pak Ch’an-sŭng, 290.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 208.

Production Movement, the Korean factories did not have enough productive capacity, and new companies or factories were not developed. Meanwhile, the spirit of the Korean Production Movement, which appealed for nationalism, only implored Koreans to continue sacrificing, that is, to buy Korean products despite the high prices.⁶⁶ Besides, most of the profit from the movement only returned to the merchants, driving prices even higher.⁶⁷ The attack from the radicals who argued for overt resistance and social revolution—under the influence of socialism—also weakened the Korean Production Movement. The radicals criticized this movement, maintaining that “as the entire benefit will be plundered by the Korean capitalists, even though industry in Korea could be advanced, there will be no difference to the Korean proletariat who are exploited by the foreign capitalists” and “[it] makes revolution delayed.”⁶⁸ Meanwhile, many young men’s associations, which had been eager supporters of the Korean Production Movement, converted to the socialist line, and therefore, the Korean Production Movement lost its major supporters.⁶⁹

The controversies surrounding the Korean Production Movement revealed that the unity of the nationalistic movement had been broken; an irreparable separation occurred. The radical view of the socialists, who attacked the Korean Production Movement, indicated a rejection of the rough agreement among Korean nationalists that the national development of Korea would follow the model of Western capitalist democracies. Since the time of the Independence Club at the end of the 19th century, the Korean nationalist intellectuals had shared this agreement about their national development. However, the conflict surrounding the Korean Production Movement revealed that

⁶⁶ The Korean manufacturers advertised their products using the rhetoric of the Korean Production Movement. For example, Kim Sŏng-su’s Kyŏngsŏng Pangjik Hoesa (京城紡織會社, Seoul Textile Company) used the slogan of the movement “Koreans, Korean Products” (조선사람 조선 것) saying “Koreans who love Korea use Korean fabrics” in their advertisement in *Tongmyŏng*. Pak Ch’an-sŭng, 271.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 277-278.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 275.

this tacit agreement was no longer effective and that there was an irreconcilable difference between the goals of the nationalists and the socialists—although many of the socialists were still engaged in national liberation efforts.

Seeing the Korean Production Movement's decline, the leading Korean entrepreneurs, who virtually led the movement, came to realize that the movement was not helpful to them any longer and that the socialists were a threat. They then changed tactics and began to appeal to the Government-General for more protection and support for Korean companies. For example, Kim Sŏng-su's Seoul Textile Company, which had gone into the red 21,280 *wŏn* in 1923, went into the black 25,279 *wŏn* in 1925 after it received a granted subsidy from the Government-General.⁷⁰ Although Kim Sŏng-su may have thought that insuring the survival or the growth of the Korean company was necessary, even by such a means, this conversion shows that the cultural nationalists could become more accommodating and easily come to neglect nationalistic values, when "raising ability" became their highest priority.

The leading Korean entrepreneurs also felt the need of attaining a certain degree of political power to protect their rights and interests. They formed a self-rule movement (*chach'i undong*), which intended to petition Japan for Korean self-rule. The self-rule movement was represented by Yi Kwang-su (who wrote a five part editorial entitled "National Statecraft,"⁷¹ published in *Tonga Ilbo* beginning on January 2, 1924) and the organization Yŏnjŏnghoe (研政會, political study club), which was founded in 1924 by Ch'oe Rin (崔麟, 1878-1958), Song Chin-u

⁷⁰ Kim Hyŏn-yŏng, "Ilcheha *Tonga Ilbo*ui Minjok undongsajŏk Koch'al: Munhwa jŏngch'i kigan (1920-1928)ui Sasŏl punsŏgŭl Chungsimŭro" [A Study of the Meanings of *Tonga Ilbo* in the Nationalistic Movement: through the Analysis of the Editorials during the Cultural Policy (1920-1928)], (master's thesis, Hanyangdaehakkyo, 1987), 6.

⁷¹ Minjokchŏk kyŏngnyun, 民族的經綸.

(宋鎮禹, 1889-1945), Kim Sŏng-su, et al.⁷² They argued that Koreans should organize a political association that would compromise with Japanese rule. However, this movement, which sought political participation in the colonial system in order to improve conditions, was soon frustrated, with no significant achievements due to attacks from other nationalists.⁷³

Even though the self-rule movement was thwarted, the controversies around it caused another conflict among the Korean nationalists. As a result of this conflict, the division between the nationalists who would comply with the colonial system and the nationalists who refused to concede to the colonial system became clearer. This established three major branches of the nationalistic movement in the 1920s: those who argued for self-rule and “raising ability” and avoided political confrontation against the colonial system, those who maintained overt anti-imperialist sentiments toward Japan and a rebellious attitude, and the socialists or the radicals who pursued the idea of building a socialist country through revolutionary methods.

These divisions, formed during the 1920s, continued during the rest of the colonial period and became political factions after the Liberation in 1945. The ups and downs of these political groups, and the conflicts among them, profoundly influenced the subsequent new identity of Korean society.

3.2. The Introduction of the Discourse of the New Theatre before Hong Hae-sŏng

In the 1920s, theatrical activities became more varied in the changed environment after the March First Movement. In this period, *sinp'a* was escaping from Japanese influences and trying to evolve into something different, as the popular theatre of Korea. At the same time, the efforts to

⁷² Yŏksa pip'yŏng p'yŏnjip wiwŏnhoe, 82.

⁷³ Pak Ch'an-sŭng, “Ilche Chibaeha Han'guk Minjokchuŭi Hyŏngsŏnggwa Punhwa” [The Formation and Development of Korean Nationalism under Japanese Colonial Rule], *Han'guk Tongnip undongsa Yŏn'gu* 15 (2000), http://www.independence.or.kr/media_data/thesis/2000/200012_02.html (accessed March 28, 2007).

establish modern Korean theatre by implanting Western modern theatre, called the New Theatre Movement or *sin'gŭk undong* (新劇運動), was begun by the intellectuals. Rejecting the blatant emphasis on enlightenment—represented by the slogan of “promoting good and punishing evil”—in *sinp'a*, these intellectuals in the New Theatre Movement, tried to achieve high artistic values, as opposed to the crude style of *sinp'a*. At the same time, by not indulging in the excessive emotions of *sinp'a*, they hoped to realize the critical way of thinking about “reality” or “truth” represented in modern Western drama. Hence, the New Theatre Movement in the 1920s is considered the true beginning of the modern theatre of Korea.

The implantation of modern Western theatre, called the New Theatre or *sin'gŭk* (新劇) in Korea, was influenced by the *shingeki* (新劇, “new theatre”) activities in Japan.⁷⁴ Although *shingeki* sometimes tried to introduce the Western classics—for example, Shakespeare—as an element of Western civilization, Japanese *shingeki* primarily concerns the efforts to introduce modern Western theatre. The founding of the Literary Arts Society (Bungei Kyōkai, 文藝協會)⁷⁵ in 1906 and the founding of the Free Theatre (Jiyū Gekijō, 自由劇場)⁷⁶ in 1909 are usually

⁷⁴ Yi Tu-hyŏn, *Han'guk Yŏn'gŭksa* [The History of Korean Theatre], 3rd ed. (Seoul: Hagyŏnsa, 2001), 301.

⁷⁵ The Literary Arts Society was organized in 1906 by Tsubouchi Shōyō (坪内逍遙, 1858-1933), who was a professor at Waseda University. With new plays by Japanese playwrights, the Literary Arts Society performed famous Western plays including *A Doll's House* by Henrik Ibsen (1828-1906), *Die Heimat* by Hermann Sudermann (1857-1928), *Twentieth Century* by George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950), and *Alt Heidelberg* by Wilhelm Meyer-Förster (1862-1934). This troupe also translated and performed some of Shakespeare's works such as *Hamlet*, *Julius Caesar*, and the trial scene from *The Merchant of Venice* thinking that Shakespeare's masterful playwriting technique could be helpful in reforming the Japanese traditional theatrical form of *kabuki*. Meanwhile, Tsubouchi produced a new breed of actors by training amateurs. The Literary Arts Society's progress fell into a crisis when the love affair between Shimamura Hōgetsu (島村抱月, 1871-1918), one of the directors of the group, and Matsui Sumako (松井須磨子, 1886-1919), the best actress in the group, caused problems in the group. The Literary Arts Society disbanded in 1913. Benito Ortolani, *The Japanese Theatre* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1990), 230-231; Brian Powell, *Japan's Modern Theatre: A Century of Change and Continuity* (London: Japan Library, 2002), 30.

⁷⁶ The Free Theatre (Jiyū Gekijō, 自由劇場), named after Le Théâtre Libre led by André Antoine (1858-1943),⁷⁶ was formed by Osanai Kaoru (小山内薫, 1881-1928) in 1909. The Free Theatre produced

considered the inception of *shingeki* in Japan.⁷⁷ Along with these two groups, Shimamura Hōgetsu's the Art Theatre (Geijutsuza, 藝術座)⁷⁸ became the forerunner of the Japanese *shingeki*. Due to the efforts of these pioneers, the popularity of *shingeki* increased, and new *shingeki* companies were born all over Japan. With their efforts, *shingeki* showed primarily Western characteristics such as pursuing a more realistic representation than *kabuki*, giving greater respect to the script, combining of all aspects of performance in art, and rejecting the commercialization of theatre.⁷⁹ *Sin'gŭk* (the New Theatre) in Korea was begun by the Korean intellectuals who either witnessed the *shingeki* activities in Japan or actively participated in them.

The intellectuals who introduced the New Theatre in Korea attempted to keep up with the West by introducing the theories of modern Western theatre. At first there was no theatrical activity other than *sinp'a*. However, a number of central pioneers, including Yun Paek-nam (尹白南, 1888-1954), Hyŏn Ch'öl (玄哲, 1891-1965), and Kim U-jin (金祐鎭, 1897-1926), introduced discourses about Western modern theatre. They introduced Western theatre to the public through newspapers and magazines. In their writings, they justified the necessity of theatre on account of its social function as an instrument of enlightenment. They, unlike the practitioners

John Gabriel Borkman by Ibsen, *Half an Hour Before Departure* by Frank Wedekind (1864-1918), *A Proposal of Marriage* by Anton Chekhov (1860-1904), *The Lower Depths* by Maxim Gorki (1868-1936), *The Death of Tantalus* by Maurice Maeterlinck (1862-1949), *Lonely Lives* by Gerhart Hauptmann (1862-1846), and *Facing Death* by August Strindberg (1849-1912) as well as plays by Japanese playwrights. While Tsubouchi Shōyō gave equal importance to Shakespeare and Ibsen, Osanai Kaoru considered the playwrights before Ibsen not appropriate for the modernization of Japan. The activities of the Free Theatre began to decline after 1913, and it officially disbanded in 1919. Benito, 232; Powell, 35.

⁷⁷ Ortolani, 229.

⁷⁸ After the Literary Arts Society disbanded, its members formed several new troupes. Among them, the most successful group was the Art Theatre (*Geijutsuza*, 藝術座) organized by Shimamura Hōgetsu, Matsui Sumako, and others. This group performed many Western plays, including *L'Intérieure* and *Monna Vanna* by Maeterlinck, *Salome* by Oscar Wilde (1854-1900), *The Lady from the Sea* by Ibsen, and *Resurrection* and *The Power of Darkness* by Leo Tolstoy (1828-1910). The Literary Arts Society was also financially successful. However, it disbanded due to the death of Shimamura Hōgetsu from influenza in November, 1918 and Matsui Sumako's hanging herself in January, 1919.

of *sinp'a*, also strongly emphasized the value of theatre as art. From the beginning of the 1920s, theatre in Korea tended to highlight its autonomous value as art while its obligatory instrumentalism (shown in the rhetoric of *sinp'a*) gradually declined.

It was Yun Paek-nam who first introduced the discourse of the New Theatre to the Korean public. In 1920, the very next year of the March First Movement, Yun Paek-nam wrote a serialized essay titled “Yŏngŭkkwa Sahoe” (Theatre and Society, 演劇과 社會) in the newspaper *Tonga Ilbo*, which ran from the 4th to the 16th of May. This was the first essay that attempted to bring a systematic and theoretical approach to “theatre” in Korea.⁸⁰

In “Yŏn'gŭkkwa Sahoe,” Yun Paek-nam explained what meaning theatre could have in the Korean society of the time. He argued that theatre could be a social movement, that it could strengthen the unity of the nation in the new era after the World War I. Yun Paek-nam, like other intellectuals, understood his time as “the period that cries for and practices reconstruction of everything.”⁸¹ In his estimation, the pains of humanity had become greater due to “the feeling of uneasiness, doubt, fear, and agony about the reality of human life and discrimination and oppression from the inequality between capital and labor.”⁸² The desire to alter institutions and old customs had been growing, and the suffering of the World War I proved the decisive cause of change. Therefore, people after the war came to desire new ideas and reconstructions in various fields, including politics, economics, industry; these sentiments spread like the force of a wild fire (燎原). In order to lead such social unease in a desirable direction, Yun Paek-nam argued for the

⁷⁹ Powell, 30.

⁸⁰ Yang Sŭng-guk, *Han'guk Kŭndae Yŏn'gŭk pip'yŏngsa Yŏn'gu* [A Study of the History of Modern Korean Theatre Criticism] (Seoul: T'aehaksa, 1996), 49.

⁸¹ Yun Paek-nam, “Yŏn'gŭkkwa Sahoe” 1, *Tonga Ilbo*, May 4, 1920.

⁸² “人類社會의 實生活에 대한 不安 疑懼 煩悶 또는 資本과 勞動의 優劣의 差別 壓迫” Ibid.

necessity of developing and reconstructing a cultural organ (*munhwa kigwan*, 文化機關) that could be considered “the artery of our life.” Among possible cultural organs, theatre for Yun Paek-nam was the most effective given to the demands of the time for enlightening the nation.⁸³ According to him, theatre causes people to reach the highest emotion at one time by giving them special impressions and strong stimulations. Also, the tremendous effect of theatre forces the members of the audience to reflect on their lives and to experience something of an awakening. Theatre represents “condensed” reality⁸⁴ and is more “universal” (普遍的)⁸⁵ than other artistic forms such as music or fiction because it is easily understood by the audience without any problems of literacy or unfamiliarity with the form. The importance of theatre is well known to other nations. Therefore, according to Yun Paek-nam, other nations are doing their best to promote theatre for the people (民衆劇) in order to teach new ways of life and to increase the vitality of these new nations after World War I.⁸⁶

Even though the social function of theatre took primary focus, Yun Paek-nam emphasized that theatre’s artistic qualities must not be neglected. Influenced by *The Art of the Theatre* by Edward Gordon Craig (1872-1966), Yun explained that “action,” “words,” “line and color,” and “rhythm” were the essential elements of theatre,⁸⁷ and that if any of these elements were lacking or the balance among them was broken, the theatrical production would fail.⁸⁸ He believed that, through the condensation of life expressed through its elements, theatre naturally stimulated the

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Yun Paek-nam, “Yŏn’gŭkkwa Sahoe” 2, *Tonga Ilbo*, May 5, 1920.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Yun Paek-nam, “Yŏn’gŭkkwa Sahoe” 4, *Tonga Ilbo*, May 8, 1920.

⁸⁷ Yun Paek-nam, “Yŏn’gŭkkwa Sahoe” 2.

⁸⁸ Yun Paek-nam, “Yŏn’gŭkkwa Sahoe” 3, *Tonga Ilbo*, May 6, 1920.

audience's emotion, senses, and imagination, and brought enlightening effect.⁸⁹ If theatre tried to give a lecture or teach a lesson overtly, it would produce a counter result.⁹⁰

Considering the characteristics of theatre and its desirable conditions, Yun Paek-nam thought Korean theatre, that is, *sinp'a* at that time, needed great improvement. In his view, *sinp'a* in Korea did not use a completed script; the sets for the productions were poor; the actors lacked creativity; and rehearsals for effecting the unity of theatrical elements were impossible because this theatre had no director. The theatrical companies used movie theatres because there was no space designed for stage art. In addition, there was incompetence in the management of the *sinp'a* companies, and the companies failed to improve their artistic level, focusing too much on commercialism.⁹¹ Criticizing the realities of Korean theatre, Yun Paek-nam urged the practitioners of *sinp'a* to address such problems.

Another important figure who introduced discourses about modern theatre at this time was Hyŏn Ch'ŏl. Hyŏn Ch'ŏl, who had gone to Japan in 1913 to study law at Meiji University, entered the drama school of the Art Theatre (Geijutsuza)—led by Shimamura Hōgetsu—in the middle of his law study and appeared in some of the Art Theatre's productions.⁹² After he returned to Korea, Hyŏn Ch'ŏl eagerly introduced Western literary theories and promoted theatre through his translations, compositions, and criticism as the head of the literary department at the magazine *Kaebŏk* (Creation, 開闢), a publication founded in June of 1920 under the changed Japanese

⁸⁹ Yun Paek-nam, "Yŏn'gŭkkwa Sahoe" 2.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Yun Paek-nam, "Yŏn'gŭkkwa Sahoe" 10, *Tonga Ilbo*, May 16, 1920.

⁹² Yu Min-yŏng, *Kaehwagi Yŏn'gŭk Sahoesa* [A History of Theatre in the Society during the *Kaehwagi*] (Seoul: Saemunsa, 1987), 203.

colonial policy after the March First Movement.⁹³ Like Yun Paek-nam, he argued that theatre in Korea could be important as a nationalistic or social movement.

Influenced by Kuwaki Gen'yoku,⁹⁴ Hyŏn Ch'ŏl approached theatre in terms of Culturalism and championed the concept of a People's Theatre (*minjunggŭk*, 民衆劇). Hyŏn Ch'ŏl wrote: "Today, the 20th century, is the era of people"⁹⁵ because "that everything is meaningless without people has become today's phenomenon."⁹⁶ In this view, while the ideology of the past had demanded obedience to a monarch, a hero, a few noblemen, or politicians, the ideology of the 20th century considered people as the center of society, and championed "people's thought" (民心), "humanism" (人道), "public opinion" (輿論), "democracy" (民本), "social contract" (民約), "freedom" (自由), and "self-awakening" (自覺).⁹⁷ According to his understanding, every human activity in the 20th century aimed at enlightening people under the slogan of "culture."⁹⁸ "Culture" completed personality using the mental processes found in science, morals, and religion.⁹⁹ Such a definition of "culture" recalls the German concept of *kultur*, rather than the English concept of

⁹³ Hyŏn Ch'ŏl showed remarkable activities in literature and theatre during the 1920s. He translated Shakespeare's *Hamlet* for the first time in Korea and introduced expressionism for the first time in Korea through his article "The Artistic Movement and Expressionism in Germany" (Togilŭi Yesul undonggwa P'yohyŏnjuŭi) in *Kaebŏk* in September, 1921. Also, Hyŏn Ch'ŏl dabbled in playwriting a little and trained actors at his short-lived acting schools such as the Art Academy (Yesul Hagwŏn, 藝術學院) in 1920 and the Acting School of Korea (Chosŏn Paeu hakkyo, 朝鮮俳優學校) in 1925. However, he did not show any remarkable theatrical activities after the 1920s. Yu Min-yŏng, *Han 'guk Yŏn 'gŭk undongsa* [The History of Korean Theatre Movement] (Seoul: T'aehaksa, 2001), 206.

⁹⁴ Pak Ch'an-sŭng, *Han 'guk Kŭndae Chŏngch'i sasangsa Yŏn 'gu*, 181.

⁹⁵ "現今의 二十世紀는 民衆時代이다." Hyŏn Ch'ŏl, "Munhwa saŏbŭi Kŭpsŏnmuro Minjunggŭgŭl Chech'angham" [I Suggest People's Theatre as the Most Urgent Matter for the Cultural Movement], *Kaebŏk* 2, no. 3 (April 1921): 107.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 108.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 109.

“civilization.”¹⁰⁰ What introduced this concept of “culture” was Culturalism, and Culturalism was the highest goal in human life in Hyŏn Ch’öl’s thought.¹⁰¹ Under the unique circumstances of the time, Koreans for him could not help but pursue their quest for the “culture” necessary for Korea’s advancement. While Korea sought to abandon everything from the past, it, in confusion, could not decide what new elements it would adopt. As a result, no institution in society was well developed or working properly.¹⁰² In such a context, the way for people—“whether ordinary people, learned people, the illiterate, the old, or the young”—to gather and be *munhwa toenŭn* (文化되는, cultivated or “culture”-ized) “in the shortest period of time, in the biggest flock, and in the most universal way” was theatre.¹⁰³ Consequently, “the most urgent matter” (*kŭpsŏnmu*, 急先務) for Korea was the promotion of theatre, and especially that of a People’s Theatre. According to Hyŏn Ch’öl, other nations were well aware of the cultural function of theatre. Europeans focused on people’s theatre; in Japan, students at the Imperial University, Waseda University, and Keiō University formed groups that studied theatre; in China, a professor at Beijing University, Hu Shi (胡適, 1891-1962), and others led the new theatre movement. For him, Koreans also should be aware of theatre’s function as a cultural organ and should keep pace with other nations’ efforts for a People’s Theatre.¹⁰⁴

Referring to Ibsen, Shaw and other playwrights, and by using the term “realism drama” (*sasilgŭk*, 寫實劇), Hyŏn Ch’öl explained that the essential goal of theatre was to portray reality as

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 108.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 108-110.

¹⁰² Ibid., 110.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 112.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 114.

it is. According to him, the theatre of the past depicted “the reality of mood” (機分の 現實), accommodating the morals and customs of the time. However, modern realistic drama directly portrays “the ugly and bad aspects of reality.”¹⁰⁵ Unlike the old dramas given to “promoting good and punishing evil,” realistic drama challenges and questions the existing values and arouses ideas and emotions that oppose existing morals.¹⁰⁶ At this time (1921), a period of severe struggle for survival and self-centered individuals, the dark side of society portrayed in realistic drama might give the audience pessimistic emotions.¹⁰⁷ However, the playwright does not write his play with the aim of leading his audience in a specific direction. He only tries to describe reality as it is.¹⁰⁸ If the playwright writes a good play with depicting the reality of society, the play naturally comes to reflect his view of life and possess the power to influence the audience like hypnosis.¹⁰⁹ This is how theatre works as an organ for enlightenment (教化機關), that is, its enlightening function comes as “a kind of side effect.”¹¹⁰ Like Yun Paek-nam, Hyŏn Ch’öl argued that, while theatre was useful for enlightenment, theatre could only be effective when it had its own autonomy as art.

Considering theatre as art, Hyŏn Ch’öl found the practice of *sinp’a*, which lacked artistic qualities, very problematic. Theatre is realized by the unity of “letters (文字), music, painting (繪畫), sculpture (彫刻), and architecture (建築),” and it requires “various conditions (設備), facilities such as lighting (光線), location (位置), and theatre building (劇場).” Also, theatre needs

¹⁰⁵ Hyŏn Ch’öl, “Hyŏndang Kŭktam” (Mr. Hyŏn’s Chatting on Theatre, 玄堂劇談) 9, *Chosŏn Ilbo*, February 2, 1921.

¹⁰⁶ Hyŏn Ch’öl, “Hyŏndang Kŭktam” 10, *Chosŏn Ilbo*, February 3, 1921.

¹⁰⁷ Hyŏn Ch’öl, “Hyŏndang Kŭktam” 13, *Chosŏn Ilbo*, February 6, 1921.

¹⁰⁸ Hyŏn Ch’öl, “Hyŏndang Kŭktam” 14, *Chosŏn Ilbo*, February 7, 1921.

¹⁰⁹ Hyŏn Ch’öl, “Hyŏndang Kŭktam” 19, *Chosŏn Ilbo*, February 15, 1921.

¹¹⁰ Hyŏn Ch’öl, “Hyŏndang Kŭktam” 20, *Chosŏn Ilbo*, February 16, 1921.

trained people such as a “stage-director (舞臺監督) and good actors.”¹¹¹ *Sinp’a* is not equipped with these necessary elements and does not satisfy the necessary conditions. Therefore, even though it is called “theatre,” it is not theatre in terms of its contents.¹¹²

So-called *sinp’a* of today does not have the concept of location as it uses the same background for every production even though each of them has a different title. As the lines are improvised, acting is not consistent, and as dialogues are incoherent without unity and connections, there is no expression of character and no vitality in character. It is not theatre, therefore, but some kind of pastime at best.¹¹³ (my translation)

Even if it termed theatre, to Hyŏn Ch’öl, *sinp’a* was something “weird” (奇怪한), “never found in the history of theatre” or “found only in Korea.”¹¹⁴ By showing such extreme animosity to *sinp’a*, Hyŏn Ch’öl suggested that overcoming *sinp’a* was the assignment and aim of Korean theatre.

Kim U-jin was another leading figure who introduced discourses on Western modern theatre in Korea at the beginning of the 1920s. He was a close friend of Hong Hae-sŏng and founded the Theatrical Arts Society (Kŭgyesul Hyŏphoe, 劇藝術協會) in 1920 with Hong Hae-sŏng and other Korean students in Japan. He introduced and explained the characteristics of modern theatre in his short article titled “About So-called Modern Theatre,”¹¹⁵ which appeared in June, 1921, in *Hakchigwang* (The Light of Learning, 學之光), the journal published by the Korean students in Japan.

Kim U-jin explained the goal of modern theatre as the pursuit of “the liberation and

¹¹¹ Hyŏn Ch’öl, “Hyŏndang Kŭktam” 22, *Chosŏn Ilbo*, February 18, 1921.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Hyŏn Ch’öl, “Hyŏndang Tokp’ye (玄堂獨吠): Hŭigogŭi Kaeyo” [Mr. Hyŏn’s Lonely Barking: Introduction to Drama], *Kaebiyŏk* 58 (November 1920): 122.

¹¹⁴ Hyŏn Ch’öl, “Hyŏndang Kŭktam” 23, *Chosŏn Ilbo*, February 19, 1921.

¹¹⁵ Sowi Kŭndaegŭge taehaya, 所爲 近代劇에 대하여)

salvation of human soul.”¹¹⁶ Effort for “the liberation and salvation of human soul” can be realized by criticizing and overcoming old customs and traditions; examples of this appear in Ibsen’s work and that of Richard Wagner, whose art expressed “new culture” formed by the unity of national culture, established through a national art.¹¹⁷

In order to realize the ultimate goal of modern theatre, Kim U-jin’s view of theatre highlights the role of elites. The “ignorant masses,” who are the slaves of old customs and tradition, are the “big enemy” of every cultural activity and valuable human activities, not only of theatre.¹¹⁸ Such a “big enemy” must be conquered. Otherwise, “creation of soul” (영혼의 창조) is impossible, and life is meaningless.¹¹⁹ According to Kim U-jin, cultural history is no more than the record of the victories of heroes or geniuses over the masses: Jesus conquered the Jewish masses who were politically and religiously corrupted; Luther challenged and conquered the feudal masses who had blindly obeyed the pope and been far from true faith; Confucius, Buddha, Caesar, Alexander the Great, and Napoleon all illustrate triumphs over the masses of their times. Likewise, the mission of modern theatre has such a role in cultural history.¹²⁰ Modern theatre tries to conquer the corrupted masses through enlightenment.¹²¹

Although theatre carries such a social or historical value, Kim U-jin argued that this should not detract from theatre’s essential status as art. According to Kim U-jin, although modern theatre

¹¹⁶ Kim U-jin, “Sowi Kūndaegūge taehaya” [About So-called Modern Theatre], in *Kim U-jin Chōnjip* [The Complete Works of Kim U-jin] II, ed. Sō Yōn-ho and Hong Ch’ang-su (Seoul: Yōn’gūkkwa In’gan, 2000), 32.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 32-33.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 33.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 34.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Ibid., 33.

seeks the goal of enlightenment, it should not succumb to the “corruption” or “blindness” of being an instrument of “political party or socialism” or “a faction in the field of literature” (문단의 一流派).¹²² It should realize a proper combination of enlightening ideas and artistic autonomy. Kim U-jin considered the work of Max Reinhardt (1873-1943) as the model of such a combination.¹²³

In order to achieve modern theatre in Korea, Kim U-jin argued that there was no alternative but to introduce works by Western geniuses.¹²⁴ In his view, Koreans should translate as many Western plays as Osanai Kaoru did in Japan. During some periods when cultural aspects remain undeveloped, a nation might retain and follow its own principles; however, in the contemporary time, when “awesome and powerful” (威哉壯哉) incursions of modern trends are inevitable, a nation should learn new principles from others.¹²⁵ The Independent Theatre in Britain and le Théâtre Libre in France have developed the talents, reached the highest goal of modern theatre, and realized cultural summits in their countries by actively translating the great works of foreign playwrights.¹²⁶ Therefore, Kim U-jin argued that Korea, with its old, corrupted culture and its slumbering public should also translate good foreign plays and introduce them to its people.¹²⁷

Kim U-jin maintained that talented directors and competent managers were necessary in order to realize the ideals of modern theatre. Theatre combines the efforts of various artists such as the architect, painter, and musician; the manager and director function as the “brain” (主腦) that

¹²² Ibid., 35.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 36.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

brings these efforts into unity. Emphasizing the “regisseur” as the “ruler” (지배자) of the “unified art” (통합예술), Kim U-jin views the director as central to the goal of theatre, and he rejects the old notion of theatre that elevates the actor.¹²⁸

The New Theatre in the 1920s, represented by Yun Paek-nam, Hyŏn Ch’ŏl, and Kim U-jin, tried to help the Korean people keep pace with the more updated and authentic elements of modern civilization through an introduction to modern Western theatre. The leaders of the New Theatre still emphasized the social function of theatre, reflecting Cultural Nationalism. However, they did not display any wholehearted devotion to the simplistic enlightenment dramatized in *sinp’a*; they rather emphasized theatre’s significance as art. By understanding modern theatre as a unification of various elements, they also welcomed the advent of director, as the function that secured such unification in theatre.

Therefore, primarily due to its crude production values, excessive emotionalism, and lack of reality, *sinp’a* had to yield its status as a marker of “civilization” to modern drama, called the New Theatre or *sin’gŭk*. *Sinp’a* not only lost the glory it enjoyed during the previous decade, but it was derogatorily viewed as something to be overcome. Even Yun Paek-nam, who had been one of the leaders of *sinp’a*, criticized *sinp’a*, and Hyŏn Ch’ŏl, who had no connection with *sinp’a*, strongly attacked it, even expelling it from the category of art; the illegitimization of *sinp’a* thus informed the common opinion attitude of those who pursued the implantation of modern Western theatre in the early 1920s. Even though *sinp’a* improved many of the faults for which it was attacked, and evolved into something different, what would become Korean melodrama or popular theatre, it was still called “*sinp’a*,” “*kaeryang sinp’a*” (improved *sinp’a*, 改良新派), or “*kodŭng sinp’a*” (high *sinp’a*, 高等新派),” still colored by a sense of degradation, viewed as inferior by the

¹²⁷ Ibid.

intellectuals who were engaged in the New Theatre or *sin'gŭk*. Since the 1920s, Korean theatre came to be divided into two streams, the *sin'gŭk* or the New Theatre and “*sinp'a*” or popular theatre, and a large and uncomfortable gap remained between them.

3.3. The Theatrical Arts Society

The New Theatre or *sin'gŭk*, initially only theorized, was finally practiced for the first time in Korea by the Theatrical Arts Society (Kŭgyesul Hyŏphoe, 劇藝術協會). As one of the leading members of this organization, Hong Hae-sŏng made his appearance in the history of Korean theatre at this time. As previously discussed, many young men's associations and students' organizations were formed for various purposes after the March First Movement. They worked to promote friendship among their members on the one hand and also contributed to the Cultural Movement by their efforts to improve Korean society on the other hand. In such an atmosphere, the first Korean organization for studying modern theatre, the Theatrical Arts Society (Kŭgyesul Hyŏphoe, 劇藝術協會), was founded in Japan. The Theatrical Arts Society was formed in March 1920 by a group of Korean students who were studying in Japan. Among them were Kim U-jin (金祐鎮, 1897-1926), Hong Hae-sŏng (洪海星, 1894-1957), Cho Myŏng-hŭi (趙明熙, 1894-1938), Yu Yŏp (柳葉, 1902-1975), Ma Hae-song (馬海松, 1905-1966), Hwang Sŏk-u (黃錫禹, 1895-1960), Hong Nan-p'a (洪蘭坡, 1898-1941), and Yun Sim-dŏk (尹心惠, 1897-1926), and others.¹²⁹ The members of the Theatrical Arts Society gathered every Saturday and studied the canons of Western theatre, including classics by Shakespeare and Goethe and modern plays by Gogol, Gorky, Chekhov, and Hauptmann.¹³⁰ As Hong Hae-sŏng put it, the purpose of this group was to offer

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Hong Hae-sŏng, “Han'guk yŏn'gŭk Yaksa” [A Brief History of Korean Theatre], in *Hong Hae-sŏng Yŏn'gŭngnon Chŏnjip* [The Complete Works of Hong Hae-sŏng], ed. Sŏ Yŏn-ho and Yi sang-u (Kyŏngsan: Yŏngnamdaehakkyo ch'ulp'anbu, 1998), 296.

theatre as “nutrition for the minds of Koreans who were suffering under the heavy chain” of colonial oppression.¹³¹ The organization’s approach to theatre definitely exhibited the qualities of a nationalistic or social movement.

The Theatrical Arts Society toured Korea during the members’ summer vacation in the next year. This became the first instance in Korea where modern drama caused a social repercussion by its production.¹³² In 1921, Tonguhoe (the Companions Association, 同友會), an organization of Korean workers and students in Tokyo, requested the Theatrical Arts Society to form a troupe for a tour of Korea. The Tonguhoe wanted to advertise its agenda and to raise a fund for its own building, from the donations the touring troupe would collect. The Theatrical Arts Society considered this request an opportunity to help poor workers and students in Tokyo, and to introduce modern drama to Koreans. The members of the organization succeeded in forming the Tonguhoe Theatrical Troupe (同友會 演劇團), which toured many major cities in Korea during their summer vacation. They prepared three plays for their tour: *The Glittering Gate* by Lord Dunsany (1868-1924), *Final Handshake* (최후의 악수) by Hong Nan-p’a, and *The Death of Kim Yŏng-il* (金英一의 死) by Cho Myŏng-hŭi. Among these three plays, Kim U-jin directed *The Glittering Gate* and *Final Handshake*, and Hong Hae-sŏng directed *The Death of Kim Yŏng-il*. This was Hong Hae-sŏng’s first directing experience.¹³³

¹³⁰ Yu Min-yŏng, *Han’guk Kŭndae Yŏn’gŭksa* [The History of Modern Theatre in Korea], 2nd ed. (Seoul: Tanguktaehakkyo ch’ulp’anbu, 2000), 518.

¹³¹ Hong Hae-sŏng, “Han’guk yŏn’gŭk Yaksa” [A Brief History of Korean Theatre], in *Hong Hae-sŏng Yŏn’gŭngnon Chŏnjip* [The Complete Works of Hong Hae-sŏng], ed. Sŏ Yŏn-ho and Yi sang-u (Kyŏngsan: Yŏngnamdaehakkyo ch’ulp’anbu, 1998), 295.

¹³² Im Hwa, “Chosŏn Kŭmdaegŭgŭi Palchŏn’gwajŏng” [The Process of the Development of Korean Modern Theatre], *Yŏn’gŭgundong* [Theatre Movement] 1, (May 1931).

¹³³ Sŏ Yŏn-ho, *Uri sidaeŭi Yŏn’gŭgin* [Theatre Artists in Our Time] (Seoul: Yŏn’gŭkkwa In’gan, 2001), 13.

The purpose and performances of the Tonguhoe Theatrical Troupe of the Theatrical Arts Society were greatly welcomed by Korean society. *Tonga Ilbo*, one of the official supporters of the Tonguhoe Theatrical Troupe and the leading publication of the Cultural Movement during the 1920s, reported the troupe's arrival in a sympathetic and admiring tone on July 7, 1921.

Since last Spring, Tonguhoe, an organization that consists of three thousand Korean workers in Tokyo, had planned to form a theatrical troupe that would tour Korea, and finally formed a touring troupe with about 30 male and female students for this Summer. They arrived in Pusan yesterday morning. The members of Tonguhoe are people who are undergoing great adversities in the far foreign land after they had left their loving motherland and parents. Some of them may have gone there in order to work to find a way to overcome poverty, and others of them may have gone there with the desire to experience civilization [. . .] No matter what their goals may be, all of them are fighting against the strong waves of the struggle for existence. [. . .] Having realized that the reformation of the dark society of Korea rests upon their shoulders, they prepared these theatrical productions. The three plays, *the Death of Kim Yŏng-il*, *The Glittering Gate*, and *Final Handshake*, which will be performed by them express the cries of the new men in modern Korean society . . . ¹³⁴ (my translation)

Tonga Ilbo supported the Tonguhoe Theatrical Troupe, not only with its detailed reports about the troupe's activities, but also with its special editorial to encourage the troupe.¹³⁵ In addition to *Tonga Ilbo*, various social organizations that were engaged in the Cultural Movement—such as the Korean Workers' Mutual Aid Association,¹³⁶ the Korea Education Association,¹³⁷ the Ch'ŏndogyo¹³⁸ Young Men's Association,¹³⁹ the Buddhist Young Men's Association,¹⁴⁰ the

¹³⁴ “Tonguhoe Sunhoe yŏn'gŭktan” [Tonguhoe Theatrical Troupe], *Tonga Ilbo*, July 7, 1921.

¹³⁵ Yu Min-yŏng, *Kaehwagi Yŏn'gŭk Sahoesa*, 172.

¹³⁶ Chosŏn Nodong Kongjehoe, 朝鮮勞動共濟會

¹³⁷ Chosŏn Kyoyukhoe, 朝鮮教育會

¹³⁸ 天道教, Religion of the Heavenly Way

¹³⁹ Ch'ŏndogyo Ch'ŏngnyŏnhoe, 天道教青年會

¹⁴⁰ Pulgyo Ch'ŏngnyŏnhoe, 佛教青年會

Taejonggyo Young Men's Association,¹⁴¹ and other local young men's associations— supported the Tonguhoe Theatrical Troupe.¹⁴²

The Tonguhoe Theatrical Troupe's performances had a great impact upon Korean audiences that had only experienced *sinp'a*. Their productions showed new and impressive stage sets and lighting,¹⁴³ and were considered “very successful, for they performed based on consistent scripts, and their acting was more realistic than the other existing touring theatrical troupes.”¹⁴⁴ The most successful production was *The Death of Kim Yŏng-il* directed by Hong Hae-sŏng.¹⁴⁵ The play depicts a story about a poor Korean student in Japan, Kim Yŏng-il, who is arrested by the Japanese police due to a conflict with a rich Korean student, Chŏn Sŏk-wŏn. Kim finally dies of an illness caused by his confinement and deteriorating health. As Kim Ŭl-han (金乙漢, 1905-1992), a member of the 1920s' professional drama company T'owŏlhoe, recollected, many of the Korean students who were studying in Japan during the early part of the 1920s were students and workers at the same time. They supported themselves working as milk-delivery men or newspaper delivery boys.¹⁴⁶ *The Death of Kim Yŏng-il* realistically portrayed the lives of the Korean students in such conditions, and the public enthusiastically supported such a play. *Tonga Ilbo* on July 18 described the atmosphere of the audience during *the Death of Kim Yŏng-il* in Masan as follows:

¹⁴¹ Taejonggyo Ch'ŏngnyŏnhoe, 大倣教 青年會

¹⁴² Yu Min-yŏng, *Kaehwagi Yŏn'gŭk Sahoesa*, 171.

¹⁴³ Yi Tu-hyŏn, *Han'guk Sin'gŭksa Yŏn'gu* [Modern History of Korean Drama], 2nd ed. (Seoul: Sŏuldaehakkyo ch'ulp'anbu, 1990), 107.

¹⁴⁴ Yu Min-yŏng, *Kaehwagi Yŏn'gŭk Sahoesa*, 174.

¹⁴⁵ Yi Tu-hyŏn, *Han'guk Yŏn'gŭksa*, 305.

¹⁴⁶ Kim Ŭl-han, *Sillok Tonggyŏng yuhaksaeng* [Report, Korean Students in Tokyo] (Seoul: T'amgudang, 1986), 31.

While the show continued, the members of the audience applauded many times saying “Good. Good. Very good.” Also, the members of the audience continued saying to each other “This is true theatre.” The acting of Mr. Hō Ha-ji who played the role of Kim Yōng-il’s friend Pak Tae-yōn was especially remarkable. During the fighting with Chōn Sōk-wōn, the student from the wealthy family, many people shouted, “Kill that Sōk-wōn!” When Kim Yōng-il died in the third Act, many people in the audience lamented and cried. The theatre was like a funeral place.¹⁴⁷ (my translation)

As the situation depicted in the play could be commonly sympathized with at that time, this production achieved “a big unity of thought” (큰 사상의 일치되는 것), achieving more than the applause of the audience, according to *Tonga Ilbo* on July 30.¹⁴⁸

The performances by the Tonguhoe Theatrical Troupe of the Theatrical Arts Society proved a series of successes. When this troupe toured the major cities in Korea such as Chinju, Taegu, and P’yōngyang, a crowd of over 1,000 gathered for each show. In Seoul, their performance was extended for two days due to the public’s strong reaction. These additional shows were also huge successes as reported by *Tonga Ilbo* on August 2:

Around seven o’clock in the evening, the street in front of Tansōngsa (團成社) was crowded. Even though the notice of “sold out” was hung and the doors were closed, the crowd continued to grow, and some of the people yelled, demanding to enter the theatre. As the street filled and the mob created a commotion, the police from the Chongno Police Station arrived to control the traffic and disperse the crowd. However, dismissing the crowd was not easy.¹⁴⁹ (my translation)

Encouraged by such successes, the Tonguhoe Theatrical Troupe of the Theatrical Arts Society ended its 40-day-long tour on August 18.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁷ “Taehwanyōngūi Tonguhoe” [The Tonguhoe Theatrical Troupe Welcomed], *Tonga Ilbo*, July 18, 1921.

¹⁴⁸ Yu Min-yōng, *Kaehwagi Yōn’gūk Sahoesa*, 174.

¹⁴⁹ Chang Han-gi, *Han’guk Yōn’gūksa* [The History of Korean Theatre], 2nd ed. (Seoul: Tongguktaehakkyo ch’ulp’anbu, 1990), 221.

¹⁵⁰ Yu Min-yōng, *Kaehwagi Yōn’gūk*, 176.

Although the Tonguhoe Theatrical Troupe existed only briefly during the students' summer vacation, it signifies a great deal in the history of Korean theatre. The productions of this group were the first Western-styled modern dramas performed for the Korean public. The troupe inaugurated the new tradition of the New Theatre, *sin 'gŭk*, in Korea. Also, the Tonguhoe Theatrical Troupe's tour functioned as an expression of the nationalistic or social movement, combining the goals of the Theatrical Arts Society (providing nutrition to Koreans' souls) and Tonguhoe (helping workers and students).

Another contribution of the Tonguhoe Theatrical Troupe concerns its impact on the theatrical activities of other amateur companies.¹⁵¹ After the tour of the Theatrical Arts Society, many theatrical performances, organized by the student associations and the young men's associations, followed. Amateur theatrical troupes were so active that critic Im Hwa (林和, 1908-1953) recollected that "the young men's associations and churches in each region presented amateur productions as their annual events, and the students who studied in the cities always brought theatrical performances to their hometown every year during vacation." Im Hwa reported this in his 1932 article¹⁵² "the Process of Development of Modern Theatre in Korea."¹⁵³ Although many of these amateur troupes did not introduce modern plays to their audience as the Theatrical Arts Society did, they performed plays that suggested that old customs should be discarded in favor of a new way of life; the income from the performances was used for public purposes or charity, supporting a building for a workers' organization, helping orphans and the poor, and funding schools.¹⁵⁴ Amateur productions were greatly supported by society. For example, *Chosŏn Ilbo*'s

¹⁵¹ Yi Mi-wŏn, *Han'guk Kŭndaegŭk Yŏn'gu*, 151.

¹⁵² Chŏng Ho-sun, *Han'guk Hŭigokkwa Yŏn'gŭgundong* [Korean Drama and Theatre Movement] (Seoul: Yŏn'gŭkkwa In'gan, 2003), 15.

¹⁵³ Chosŏn Kŭndaegŭk Palchŏn'gwajŏng, *조선 근대극 발전과정*

editorial on July 5, 1923 shows how favorably Korean society viewed the amateur troupes' activities. The editorial of the newspaper writes the following about the student troupe organized by Hyöngsölhoe (螢雪會):

Now you are on tour for improvement of culture in Korea and development of the society despite hot weather and a short vacation. Is it not a great thing to do? Is it not the light of dawn for our society? Look, did Shakespeare's plays not contribute to that brilliant civilization of Britain? We are moved by your good spirit to serve the society. And we believe that stagnant Korean culture will find a way to resurrect itself by your performance.¹⁵⁵ (my translation)

A citizen named Ch'oe Hyön (崔鉉) praised a student troupe, using very strong rhetoric in his writing, in *Tonga Ilbo* on April 25, 1925:

Your troupe is like a division or a brigade of an army that sacrifices itself to secure its country. It is natural for soldiers not to come back alive unless they triumph, even if they experience the great tragedy of mountains of corpses and rivers of blood. [...] Because your responsibility is like that of soldiers who die for their country, no one should mistake your activity as a mere leisure pastime [rather than take it as a serious and courageous struggle].¹⁵⁶ (my translation)

Given such support and expectations, amateur theatre activities by Korean youth experienced a nationwide boom.¹⁵⁷

In many cases, the activities of amateur troupes that did not seem "theatrical" conflicted with the colonial authority. The Japanese often censored the contents of the performances, and police officers often observed the performances so they could warn the performers and even stop the show if they found anything provocative. Even when the Tonguhoe Theatrical Troupe

¹⁵⁴ Sö Yön-ho, *Han'guk Yöngüksa* [A History of Korean Theatre] (Seoul: Yöngükkwa In'gan, 2003), 165.

¹⁵⁵ Yu Min-yöng, *Han'guk yön'gü'güi Mihak* [The Aesthetics of Korean Theatre], rev. ed. (Seoul: Tanguktaehakkyo ch'ulp'anbu, 1987), 264.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 265.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 263.

performed *The Death of Kim Yŏng-il*, the attending policemen arbitrarily stopped the performance in P'yŏngyang, arguing that the line “Freedom may have existed ten years ago, but it doesn't exist now” in the third act was suspicious.¹⁵⁸ Such oppression continued to occur in the productions by other troupes. For example, *Tonga Ilbo* on January 16, 1925 reported:

In Tongch'ŏn in Kangwŏndo, at 6 o'clock on the 6th, when the Hŭpgok Youth Club and the students hosted a “Night of Music and Musical Drama” at the Hŭpgok Church, the crowd gathered inside and outside the church like a mountain of humans and sea of humans. When the play titled, *Miser's Repentance* (守錢奴의悔改) was being performed after a musical play titled, *Ch'oroinsaeng* (초로인생) had finished as scheduled, Mr. Pyŏn In-hyŏn fervently shouted that Koreans surrender to guns and swords, not to ethics and morals. (朝鮮人は銃부리와 칼날 아래에는 屈服하나 義理와 道德에는 不服한다) Then, the policeman observing the performance suddenly gave a warning and ordered the performance be stopped. The audience became enraged at such an arbitrary order and violent chaos ensued. The policeman allegedly ran away.¹⁵⁹ (my translation)

On December 30 of the same year, according to the newspaper *Sidae Ilbo* (시대일보):

In Yŏngdŏgŭp, Kyŏngbuk, the play being performed by a branch of the Salvation Army and a Presbyterian church on the 26th, the day after Christmas, was stopped and the audience was dismissed by the policeman who had been observing the show. The detail of the incident is as follows. The play called *Wilderness* (Kwangya) depicted the Koreans who had to leave their home due to exploitation and wander Manchuria suffering from by the Chinese. During the play, one actor says, “Poor proletariats, this society does not have any mercy on you,” and the policeman observing the performance warned about the line. The audience shouted to the policeman “shut up” and “down with him,” and maybe encouraged by these reactions, another line, “Koreans, you have no land in which to live. You are falling even in Manchuria which was considered a paradise. While only death is waiting for you wherever you go, Koreans, where shall you go?” was followed by huge applause from about 600 members of the audience even before the actor had finished it, and the police again ordered a stop to the performance.¹⁶⁰ (my translation)

¹⁵⁸ Chang Han-gi, 222.

¹⁵⁹ “Sonyŏn'gŭgŭl Chungjisikyŏ” [The Amateur Theatrical Performance Stopped], *Tonga Ilbo*, January 16, 1925.

¹⁶⁰ “Sŏnggŭk Pulonhadago Haesan myŏngnyŏng” [Religious Play Stopped Under Suspicion], *Sidae Ilbo*, December 30, 1925.

The Japanese authorities often interfered in every aspect of production, and anyone could be arrested arbitrarily. For example, when the local social organizations in T'ongyŏng produced a theatrical performance in order to raise money for a famine relief fund, the local police forced the leaders of the event to eliminate the expression “salvation of famine” from the title of the event; finally the production went ahead without the expression in its title.¹⁶¹ According to *Tonga Ilbo* on December 7, 1925, when a Korean school in Manchuria performed an anti-Japanese play titled *The Peninsula of Tears* (Nunmurŭi Pando, 涙의 半島), the Japanese authority arrested the teacher who wrote the script and the students who performed in the play.¹⁶² Newspaper articles in the 1920s show that the conflict between the amateur troupes and the Japanese authorities frequently occurred.

Among the amateur troupes of the early 1920s, T'owŏlhoe (the Earth-Moon Association, 土月會), which was formed in 1922 by the Korean students who studied in Japan such as Pak Sŭng-hŭi (朴勝喜, 1901-1964), Kim Ki-jin (金基鎭, 1903-1985), Yi Sŏ-gu (李瑞求, 1899-1981), and Kim Ŭl-han (金乙漢, 1905-1992), also transformed itself into a professional company.¹⁶³ Indeed, T'owŏlhoe became the first professional company that performed modern Western drama and proved the best-known professional company during the 1920s. As the leader of modern theatre in Korea, with its more realistic and artistic productions, T'owŏlhoe expedited *sinp'a*'s

¹⁶¹“Kugi hwaltong Chungji” [Activity for Salvaging Hunger Stopped], *Tonga Ilbo*, May 23, 1925.

¹⁶² “Kangdange Paeilgŭk” [Anti-Japan Play in the Auditorium], *Tonga Ilbo*, December 7, 1925.

¹⁶³ The name of T'owŏlhoe meant “The group is rooted in reality (*to*, 土) while its ideals are high like the moon (*wŏl*, 月),” as proposed by Kim Ki-jin. At first, the interest of the members of this group was art in general. The members brought their works (novels, poetry, sculpture, and designs) to their meetings and criticized each other's works. However, while they were discussing the activities of the Cultural Movement that they would do in their homeland during the next year's summer vacation, they decided to concentrate their efforts on a theatrical production following Pak Sŭng-hŭi's proposal that theatre was the most effective medium to approach and enlighten people. Yu Min-yŏng, *Han'guk Yŏn'gŭk undongsa* (Seoul: T'aehaksa, 2001), 224.

decline and prompted those in *sinp'a* improve their artistic level.¹⁶⁴ However, financial difficulty caused T'owŏlhoe to soon flounder,¹⁶⁵ and the New Theatre represented by T'owŏlhoe

¹⁶⁴ According to Kim Yŏn-su, the decline of *sinp'a* was the contribution of the T'owŏlhoe to Korean theatre.

T'owŏlhoe toured the southern area of Korea, including Taegu, in November, 1926. After its tour, the people in that area no longer came to watch the shows by other companies, which used to tour successfully in the area for 10 or 20 days. Therefore, the companies had to disband. (my translation)

Kim Yŏn-su, "Kŭktan Yahwa: Chosŏn Kŭktanŭn Ŏdero Gana?, (3) [The Night Stories of Theatre Community: Where is Korean Theatre Going?] (3), *Maeil Sinbo*, May 26, 1931.

Also, Pyŏn Ki-jong (卞基鍾, 1895-1977), who had started his career as a professional actor in a *sinp'a* company called Ch'ŏngnyŏnp'a (the Young Men Group, 青年派) in 1912, later confessed that he came to pursue more realistic acting after he was stimulated by T'owŏlhoe's style.

By 1923, there was a big impact in our theatre. That was the birth of T'owŏlhoe. . . Later, after I saw T'owŏlhoe's performance and compared it with *sinp'a* in which I had been trained, I realized that *sinp'a* was contaminated by its somewhat too stylish diction and somewhat exaggerated movement. . . From that time forward, I tried to improve my acting by checking if there were still remnants of *sinp'a* in it and decided to compete with T'owŏlhoe in art. I began to work harder in theatre. (my translation)

Yi Tu-hyŏn, *Han'guk Sin'gŭksa Yŏn'gu*, 133-134.

¹⁶⁵ The leading members of T'owŏlhoe came to find that while their performances pursuing the New Theatre were understood by intellectuals like themselves, the public turned away. T'owŏlhoe had to make profits from their performances in order to survive as a professional company, and the company could not be successful performing artistic plays in which the audience was not interested. T'owŏlhoe had trouble selecting plays that satisfied the ideal of the New Theatre and satisfied the public at the same time. Kim Ŭl-han, one of the leading members of T'owŏlhoe, complained in *Chosŏn Ilbo* on June 7, 1926 about the problem the company was facing in determining its repertoires:

The general public does not understand any play that is appropriate to the *sin'gŭk* (New Theatre) Movement. Just like they welcome more such action movies [...] like the Universal company's Westerns than Paramount's or United's better films, they say, "Aha, sleepy," "Is this theatre? Ha-hamm," or "I can't understand at all" here and there in the audience when the play's artistic quality is high brow. Then, empty seats begin to appear here and there, and the once-packed audience becomes empty in the middle of the show. The company, therefore, unwillingly produces popular, low brow plays, and many people like them. However, intellectuals who allegedly understand theatre become discontented. They blamed the company, scoffing and saying "Is this the *sin'gŭk* movement? This is *sinp'a* movement!" This is the biggest headache to the people who are engaged in the theatre movement. I call this headache "the headache of the standard of audience." (my translation)

Hong Chae-bŏm, *Han'guk Taejungpigŭkkwa Kŭndaesŏngŭi Ch'ehŏm* [The Korean Popular Tragedy and the Experience of Modernity in Korea] (Seoul: Tosŏch'ulp'an Pagijŏng, 2002), 191.

Under the dilemma that it could not satisfy the intellectuals and the masses at the same time, T'owŏlhoe declined within two years after its first production, and finally T'owŏlhoe gave up its ideals and began to produce commercial plays. Although T'owŏlhoe sometimes performed plays by western playwrights such as Tolstoy, Chekhov, and Gabriele D'Annunzio (1863-1938), many of T'owŏlhoe productions were melodramatic commercial plays and even adaptations of Japanese *shimpa* plays such as *Changhanmong* (長恨夢), *The Origin of Chijanggyo* (Chijanggyoŭi yurae, 地藏教의 유래), and *Listen to*

consequently slowed down. Meanwhile, Korean intellectuals longed for the advent of new leaders to revive modern theatre in Korea. This waiting during the latter part of the 1920s continued until Hong Hae-sŏng came back to Korea after his training as a professional director in the 1930s.

Through his theatrical activities in the Theatrical Arts Society and its Tonguhoe Theatrical Troupe during the beginning of the 1920s, Hong Hae-sŏng joined the Cultural Movement as a student activist. After he directed *The Death of Kim Yŏng-il*, Hong Hae-sŏng crystallized his dream of becoming a director and decided to devote himself to developing modern theatre in Korea.¹⁶⁶ According to Ko Sŏl-bong, who was one of Hong Hae-sŏng's students at the Tongyang Theatre, Kim U-jin advised Hong Hae-sŏng to become a theatre artist because a young man from a colony at best would become an instrument to oppress his nation after his law study.¹⁶⁷ After the tour of the Tonguhoe Theatrical Troupe, he transferred from Chuo University (中央大學) to the Department of Arts (藝術科) at Nihon University (日本大學).¹⁶⁸ Hong Hae-sŏng's next step in theatre was more ambitious. In order to realize the essentially modern theatrical art of directing, he decided to train himself as a professional director.

3.4. The Tsukiji Little Theatre

Several years after his tour with the Tonguhoe Theatrical Troupe of the Theatrical Arts Society in 1921, Hong Hae-sŏng found an opportunity to improve both the quality and the quantity

My Words (Inaemalssŭm Tŭrŏbosiyo, 이내말씀 드리보시오). Therefore, T'owŏlhoe was criticized because the company did "*sinp'a*" as Kim Ŭl-han said.

In spite of its commercialization, the financial situation of T'owŏlhoe did not improve. After T'owŏlhoe exhausted the entire wealth of Pak Sŭng-hŭi—one of the sons of Pak Chŏng-yang (朴定陽, 1841-1904) who was the first Korean Minister to the U.S. and the prime minister under Emperor Kojong—it finally disbanded in 1931. Pak Sŭng-hŭi lived in poverty during the rest of his life and died a lonely death.

¹⁶⁶ Chŏng Ch'ŏl, "Hong Hae-sŏng Yŏnch'ul Yŏn'gu" [A Study of Hong Hae-sŏng's Directing], *Inmunhak yŏn'gu* 18 (December 1996): 45.

¹⁶⁷ Ko Sŏl-bong, *Chŭngŏn Yŏn'gŭksa* [Testimony of the History of Theatre] (Seoul: Tosŏch'ulp'an Chinyang, 1990), 122.

of his theatrical experience as a professional. That came with the birth of the Tsukiji Little Theatre (Tsukiji Shōgekijō, 築地小劇場), which became the leader of the *shingeki* movement in Japan.

Hong stayed in this company from 1924 to 1929. Hong Hae-sōng's joining the Tsukiji Little Theatre was the result of a mutual plan between himself and Kim U-jin. After Hong Hae-sōng had joined Tsukiji Little Theatre, an article in *Maeil Sinbo* on October 30, 1924 suggested that there was a special compact between these two men.

According to Mr. Hong, he will come back to Korea after he studies theatre there for quite a while and “comfort the mind of Koreans, which have many scars, with new and true theatre art.” He said he would lead the *sin'gūk* movement with Mr. Kim U-jin who graduated from Waseda University and is now in Mokp'o, Chōlla Namdo Province.¹⁶⁹ (my translation)

To further this pact, Kim U-jin had introduced to Hong Hae-sōng Tomoda Kyōsuke (友田恭助, 1899-1937), a fellow alumnus of Waseda University who was a *shingeki* actor. Tomoda was one of the earliest members invited to join the Tsukiji Little Theatre, and Hong Hae-sōng joined the theatre through Tomoda's help. Hong Hae-sōng trained himself in various styles of modern theatre until the company divided into the New Tsukiji Little Theatre (Shin Tsukiji Shōgekijō) and the Tsukiji Little Theatre Company (Gekidan Tsukiji Shōgekijō) in 1929.

The Tsukiji Little Theatre was founded by Hijikata Yoshi, who was a member of a well-known aristocratic family, and Osanai Kaoru, who had already established himself as a leading figure in *shingeki* through his activities with the Free Theatre. Hijikata Yoshi (土方與志, 1898-1959), who was one of Osanai Kaoru's students, had been living in Europe, studying Western

¹⁶⁸ Yu Min-yōng, *Han'guk Kūndae Yōn'gūksa* [The History of Modern Theatre in Korea], 2nd ed. (Seoul: Tanguktaehakkyo ch'ulp'anbu, 2000), 717.

¹⁶⁹ Yang Sūng-guk, *Kim U-jin, Kūi samgwa Munhak* [Kim U-jin: His Life and Literature] (Seoul: T'aehaksa, 1998), 132.

theatre since November, 1922.¹⁷⁰ When he heard the news of the Great Kantō Earthquake, which caused mass destruction and loss of life on September 1, 1923, he quickly ceased his travel and came back to Japan. His intention was to build a small theatre under the relaxed building regulations after the earthquake, using the funds he had for his study in Europe and to form a company.¹⁷¹ He asked his teacher, Osanai Kaoru to join in his plan, and they built a theatre called the Tsukiji Little Theatre in the Tsukiji district near Ginza in Tokyo¹⁷²; they then formed a company with the same name.¹⁷³

With its historic opening show on June 13, 1924,¹⁷⁴ the Tsukiji Little Theatre led the *shingeki* movement in Japan. The Tsukiji Little Theatre was the first *shingeki* group that had its own building and had the most advanced and the most well-organized system in Japan at that time, including specific departments divided by expertise (i.e., production, performance, décor, properties, effects, lighting, costume, management, publicity, translation, and literature).¹⁷⁵ The Tsukiji Little Theatre provided theatre for a wide range of people, not only for the privileged class, and sought to raise the standards of theatrical performance.¹⁷⁶ Also, it tried to function as a model

¹⁷⁰ Sō Yōn-ho, “Yōnch’ulga Hong Hae-sōngnon” [A Study of the Director Hong Hae-sōng], *Hallim Ilbonhak Yōn’gu* [Hallim Japanese Study] 1 (November 1996): 214.

¹⁷¹ Sugai Yukio, *Tsukiji Sogūkachangūi T’ansaeng* [The Birth of the Tsukiji Little Theatre], trans. Pak Se-yōn (Seoul: Hyōndae mihaksa, 2005), 41-42.

¹⁷² J. Thomas Rimer, ed., *A Hidden Fire: Russian and Japanese Cultural Encounters, 1868-1926* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), 79.

¹⁷³ Powell, 58.

¹⁷⁴ Sugai Yukio, 46.

¹⁷⁵ Japanese National Commission for UNESCO, *Theatre in Japan* (The Printing Bureau, Ministry of Finance, 1963), 217.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 218.

for modern theatre in Japan, as a “laboratory” for the training of theatrical artists; they also performed many modern plays in a very wide variety of styles.¹⁷⁷

The stylistic variety in Tsukiji Little Theatre’s productions indicated the different interests of the two leaders, Osanai Kaoru and Hijikata Yoshi, who were the company’s primary directors. Osanai Kaoru chiefly showed his passion for realism by directing plays by Gorky, Gogol, Chekhov, Tolstoy, and Strindberg. Meanwhile, Hijikata Yoshi revealed his interest in the nonrealistic theatre and stylization he had witnessed in Europe. Therefore, he was eager to direct plays by playwrights who employed experimental styles such as Luigi Pirandello (1867-1936), Karel Čapek (1890-1938), and Georg Kaiser (1878-1945).¹⁷⁸

Osanai Kaoru’s aspirations toward realism were strongly influenced by the Moscow Art Theatre led by Konstantin Stanislavsky (1863-1938). Osanai traveled in many European countries, including Russia, France, and Britain from December 15, 1912 to August 8, 1913. During his travels he was so impressed by the productions of the Moscow Art Theatre that he later wrote of the “artistic ecstasy” he felt watching the productions.¹⁷⁹ He viewed many of the Moscow Art Theatre’s performances and even made private acquaintances with the members of the theatre. Actress Higashiyama Chieko (東山千榮子, 1890-1980), who was living in Moscow with her diplomat husband at that time, recollected Osanai’s great interest in the Moscow Art Theatre:

Osanai told me [at that dinner] that he had come to study the work of the Moscow Art Theatre. [...] While in Moscow, Osanai saw virtually none of the Japanese living there; he spent every day at the theatre. As the company performed in repertory, there was a different play to see each night, as well as matinees on Sundays. Osanai was permitted to observe the rehearsals, from which he learned a great deal. He didn’t know much about the Russian language, but he did know German, so he was able to make himself understood. He was invited to a year-end

¹⁷⁷ Rimer, 87.

¹⁷⁸ Powell, 59.

¹⁷⁹ Rimer, 69.

party at the home of Stanislavsky. Osanai told us that all the company was assembled there and that although he was a foreigner, he was treated just as nicely as though he had been part of the company. He was absolutely thrilled. . . . During the two weeks that he spent in Moscow, Osanai took detailed notes on all the performances that he saw.¹⁸⁰

After such experiences in Europe, Osanai Kaoru adopted the art of Stanislavsky and the Moscow Art Theatre as the primary performance model for the rest of his life. He brought home his notes about the productions of Stanislavsky, and these notes were called “the Bible” by the staff at the Tsukiji Little Theatre—along with Osanai’s notes about the productions of Max Reinhardt (1873-1943).¹⁸¹ Using his notes, Osanai reproduced productions as he had seen at the Moscow Art Theatre. As a director, he tried to model “the standard of *shingeki*” in Japan.¹⁸² According to actress Yamamoto Yasue (山本安英, 1902-1993), Osanai Kaoru frequently told his actors:

I pondered in many ways how I could teach the most correct skills to you. And I found that directing based on the collection of the pictures of the excellent foreign productions I had watched and the detailed notes I had taken about the productions would be the best way to teach you to find your skills for the future [. . .]”¹⁸³ (my translation)

When Osanai directed *The Cherry Orchard*, copying Stanislavsky’s direction at the Moscow Art Theatre, he related:

Thus I first created an atmosphere for this production using in virtually every particular the forms adapted by the Moscow Art Theatre. Why is this? Because, at this time, I cannot find a more coherent method with which to mount this play on the stage.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 86.

¹⁸¹ Komiya Toyotaka, 304.

¹⁸² Ozasa Yoshio, *20segiūi Ilbon yŏn’gŭk* [Japanese Theatre in the 20th century] ed. and trans. Kim Ŭi-kyŏng et al. (Seoul: Yŏn’gŭkkwa In’gan, 2005), 161.

¹⁸³ Sugai Yukio, “Ch’ukchi Sogŭkchangŭi Mudae yŏnch’ulgwa Yŏn’giūi Pangsik” [The Tsukiji Little Theatre’s Directing and Acting], trans. Ma Chŏng-hŭi, *Kongyŏn yesul jŏnŏl* Ch’anggan chunbiho (2001): 15-16.

How “authentically”¹⁸⁵ he wanted to make his productions is indicated in Yamamoto Yasue’s recollection:

[...] in many cases he just followed the director’s plan of the Moscow Art Theatre.

Sets, props, costumes, position and movement of the actors on the stage were determined by his surprisingly detailed notes.

He concentrated great effort on precise representation of the scenes in the foreign plays. [...] For example, when we could not find oak trees for *Three Sisters*, he sent to X X mountain in the far distance to cut the trees; he managed to get a really good samovar for the props despite great trouble; even when he looked for a small picture-frame or a lampshade that would appear for only a moment on stage, he tried hard to find the items that looked similar to the ones used in the foreign countries. Even now, I clearly remember him frequently scolding the people who were engaged in props and effects during the rehearsals. Sometimes, the ones who had seen the Moscow Art Theatre’s production were surprised because [...] everything was almost the same.¹⁸⁶ (my translation)

According to Pak Se-yŏn, who compared the photograph of the production of *The Inspector General* directed by Osanai Kaoru at the Tsukiji Little Theatre with the photograph of the production of the same play at the Moscow Art Theatre, the set in Osanai’s production was very similar to that of the Moscow Art Theatre, with the same inclined roof, the same locations of the door, furniture, window, and kitchen table. Even the shape of the chair was the same.¹⁸⁷

How Osanai Kaoru instructed his actors may be considered Stanislavskian. For instance, when rehearsing *The Cherry Orchard*, in the first scene where Lopakhin appears, Osanai asked questions to help the actor in his own efforts to understand the character’s psychology (rather than giving the actor specific directions). By asking such questions as “Why did you come to the room

¹⁸⁴ Rimer, 88.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ Sugai Yukio, “Ch’ukchi Sogŭkchangŭi Mudae yŏnch’ulgwa Yŏn’giŭi Pangsik,” 15-16.

now?” and “Why was the book in your hand?” Osanai encouraged the actor to realize that Lopakhin had been reading the book to escape from the boredom of waiting, that he had fallen asleep while reading, had been suddenly awakened by the whistle of the train, and then had rushed into the room.¹⁸⁸

Osanai Kaoru had another opportunity to visit Europe when he was invited to the Soviet Republic in January 1927 for the 10th anniversary of the October Revolution. During this second visit to Russia, he frequented the Moscow Art Theatre and Vsevolod Meyerhold’s theatre, maintaining and securing his friendship in art with both Stanislavsky and Meyerhold.¹⁸⁹

Unlike Osanai Kaoru, Hijikata Yoshi was not satisfied with the naturalistic productions of the Moscow Art Theatre.¹⁹⁰ He was influenced by German expressionist theatre¹⁹¹ and amazed by Meyerhold. Hijikata Yoshi saw Meyerhold’s actors, who were trained in biomechanics, and the constructivist sets he used in performance. After he visited Meyerhold in Russia in 1923, Hijikata Yoshi described his feelings:

The unadorned hall, the empty stage lit only by spotlights, a sidecar running through the audience, the actors’ stark movement—everything startled me and took my breath away. . . . I felt that here was the real sense of theatrical liberation that I, who questioned “naturalistic” and “impressionistic” styles of directing, had been seeking. Unaware of how long I would suffer from the influence of the formalism that I had learned in Germany, I was simply overwhelmed by Meyerhold’s ingenious and novel direction. I felt that all the years of theatre study

¹⁸⁷ Pak Se-yŏn, “Tsukiji sogŭkchang Yŏn’gu: Kongyŏn inyŏmgwa Kongyŏn hwaltongŭl Jungsimŭro” [A Study of the Tsukiji Little Theatre: Its Theatrical Ideology and Performances] (master’s thesis, Chungangdaehakkyo, 2001), 53.

¹⁸⁸ *ibid.*, 43.

¹⁸⁹ Yi Sang-u, “Hong Hae-sŏngŭi Yŏn’gŭngnone daehan Yŏn’gu” [A Study of Hong Hae-sŏng’s Theatrical Theory], *Han’guk Kŭgyesul Yŏn’gu* 8 (June 1998): 225.

¹⁹⁰ Song Sŏn-ho, “Hong Hae-sŏngŭi Yŏn’gŭkkwan Chaego” (1) [Re-examining Hong Hae-sŏng’s View of Theatre 1], *Kongyŏn yesul jŏnŏl Ch’anggan chunbiho* (2001): 100.

¹⁹¹ Yang Sŭng-guk, “Kŭgyesul yŏn’guhoewa Han’guk yŏn’gŭk” [The Dramatic Art Study Association and Korean Theatre], *Kongyŏn yesul jŏnŏl Ch’anggan chunbiho* (2001): 34.

that I had spent in Japan and Germany were no match for what I saw in Moscow that night.¹⁹²

Yamamoto Yasue later recollected Meyerhold's influence upon Hijikata Yoshi's style and sensibility:

[. . .] Mr. Hijikata showed Meyerhold's influence. Mr. Hijikata was a very creative man, and I found some kind of force that was very strong and tough, and therefore endlessly fresh, in his directing. He strictly urged the actors and the people in lighting and scene design to develop their specialties, saying that they should not depend on the director and train themselves because the director only exists to give unity to a production as a whole. He always chose the plays considered progressive in those days—plays by Romain Rolland, Georg Kaiser, Čapek, Shaw, Romashiv, Pirandello, and Martinet.¹⁹³ (my translation)

Hijikata Yoshi, no longer limited to realism, clearly tried to keep pace with the stylization of a fast-developing world theatre.¹⁹⁴

The Tsukiji Little Theatre did support another director, Aoyama Sugisaku (青山杉作, 1891-1956), although he did not have as major an influence as Osanai Kaoru and Hijikata Yoshi. Aoyama displayed his own technique when he directed plays by Western playwrights, including those of Wedekind, Maeterlinck, Eugene O'Neill (1888-1953), and Arthur Schnitzler (1862-1931). Yamamoto Yasue, in her later days, claimed that she could recognize Aoyama's style from the way an actor taught by Aoyama moved his hands; that made her smile, remembering the old days.¹⁹⁵ She described Aoyama Sugisaku's method as follows:

Like the conductor of an orchestra, he directed by holding a baton and saying, "Yes! Close your eyes there. . . Yes. . . Slowly look at the person. Yes. . ."

¹⁹² Rimer, 64.

¹⁹³ Sugai Yukio, "Ch'ukchi Sogükchangüi Mudae yöñch'ulgwa Yön'giüi Pangsik," 16.

¹⁹⁴ Powell, 59-60.

¹⁹⁵ Sugai Yukio, "Ch'ukchi Sogükchangüi Mudae yöñch'ulgwa Yön'giüi Pangsik," 16.

The actor raised his hand, turned his eyes, and breathed, just following how his baton led. To Aoyama Sugisaku, teaching actors without a specific style must have been a lot easier than teaching actors with characteristic styles (or habits) because he could more easily achieve his purpose with the former.¹⁹⁶ (my translation)

Yamamoto's recollection suggests that Aoyama Sugisaku developed his unique ways to give various shadings and qualities to the productions at the Tsukiji Little Theatre.

Although the selection of plays was determined by a meeting of the leading members of the company, the director's preference was the chief factor in deciding on a play for the repertory of the Tsukiji Little Theatre.¹⁹⁷ Following the directors' tastes, the Tsukiji Little Theatre performed plays of various styles. This variety was so wide that some people attacked it as "meaningless and arbitrary enumeration, which is not artistic."¹⁹⁸ However, Hong Hae-sŏng gained extensive experience with modern theatre by working under directors with such different stylistic tastes.

Hong Hae-sŏng appeared in over 100 plays during the period 1924-1929, including:

► 1924 – 13th Production (of Tsukiji Little Theatre): Maxim Gorky's *The Lower Depths* (Oct 15-24), 14th Production: Luigi Pirandello's *Six Characters in Search of an Author* (Oct. 25-27), 16th Production: August Strindberg's *Wife* (稻妻) (Nov. 15-24), 17th Production: Georg Kaiser's *From Morn to Midnight* (Dec. 5-20).

► 1925 – 24th Production: Eugene O'Neill's *Emperor Jones* (Mar. 15-24), 25th Production: Gogol's *The Inspector General* (Apr. 1-10), 26th Production: Karel Čapek's *The Insect Play* (Apr. 15-24), 28th Production: Frank Wedekind's *Spring's Awakening* (May 15-24), 29th Production: August Strindberg's *Heavily Drunken* (爛醉) (June 1-10), 32nd Production: August Strindberg's *Miss Julie* (July 17-26), 33rd Production: Walter Hasenclever's *Man* (人間) (Sep. 12-24), 37th Production: Maxim Gorky's *The Lower Depths* (Nov. 13-23), 38th Production: Luigi Pirandello's *Each in His Own Way* (Nov. 27 - Dec. 6), 39th Production: Maurice Maeterlinck's *The Blue Bird* (Dec. 11-27).

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁹⁷ Powell, 63.

¹⁹⁸ Sugai Yukio, *Kūndae Ilbon yŏn'gŭk Nonjaengsa* [A History of controversies in Modern Japanese Theatre], trans. Sŏ Yŏn-ho and Pak Yŏng-san (Seoul: Yŏn'gŭkkwa In'gan, 2003), 152.

► 1926 – 40th Production: William Shakespeare’s *The Merchant of Venice* (Jan. 1-17), 5th Matinee: Romain Rolland’s *The Wolves* (Jan. 2-31), 41st Production: Romain Rolland’s *The Game of Love and Death* (Jan. 20-26), 43rd Production: Anton Chekhov’s *Three Sisters* (Feb. 12-28), 6th Matinee: Wedekind’s *Spring’s Awakening*, 44th Production: Shaw’s *Saint Joan* (Mar. 5-14), 8th Matinee: William Butler Yeats’s *The Hour-Glass* (Apr. 24-May 23), 48th Production: Tolstoy’s *The Power of Darkness* (May 14-30), 49th Production: Georg Kaiser’s *From Morn to Midnight* (June 4-20), 9th Matinee: Karel Čapek’s *R.U.R.* (June 5-27), 50th Production: Mushanokōji Saneatsu’s *Passion* (Aiyoku) and Osanai Kaoru’s *Naraku* (July 1-17), 10th Matinee: Wilhelm Meyer-Förster’s *Alt-Heidelberg* (July 3-25), 52nd Production: Georg Kaiser’s *From Morn to Midnight* (Oct. 22-31), 53rd Production: Nakamura Kichijō’s *Osio Heihachiro* (Nov. 5-21), 11th Matinee: George Bernard Shaw’s *Horse Thief* (馬盜人) (Nov. 6-28), 54th Production: Marcel. Martinet’s *La nuit* (Nov. 26-Dec. 10), 55th Production: Osanai Kaoru’s *Son* (Musuko) (Dec. 10-19)

► 1927 – 56th Production: Gogol’s *The Inspector General* (Jan. 6-16), 12th Matinee: Anton Chekhov’s *The Bear* (Jan. 8-30 and Feb. 5-6), 57th Production: George Bernard Shaw’s *The Devil’s Disciple* (Jan. 24 - Feb. 6), 59th Production: Anton Chekhov’s *The Cherry Orchard* (Mar. 4-20), 60th Production: Kitamura Komatsu’s *Persimmon Seed Received from a Monkey* (Apr. 1-10), 61st Production: Fujimori Seikichi’s *What made her do it?* (Apr. 15-24), Asakusa Production: Maxim Gorky’s *The Lower Depths* (Apr. 27 - May 1), 15th Matinee: Nikolai Evreinov’s *The Theatre of the Soul* (May 14-29, June 4-19), 63rd Production: Eugene O’Neill’s *The Hairy Ape* (June 5-10), 65th Production: Osanai Kaoru’s *The Cinematograph* (July 1-17), 67th Production: Luigi Pirandello’s *The Imbecile* (Sep. 16-25), 17th Matinee: Akita Ujaku’s *Grenade* (手投彈) (Oct. 1-23), 69th Production: Boris Sergeevich Romashov’s *Souffle* (空氣饅頭) (Oct. 14-23), Asakusa Production: Osanai Kaoru’s *Hell* (Naraku) (Dec. 21-29).

► 1928 – 72nd Production: Fujimori Seikichi’s *Love Story* (想戀記) and Maedako Hiroichiro (前田河廣一郎)’s *Deceived Man* (Feb. 10-26), 3rd Imperial Theatre Production: Henrik Ibsen’s *Peer Gynt* (Mar. 26-30), 75th Production: Nikolai Erdman’s *The Mandate* (Apr. 7-19), 4th Imperial Theatre Production: Friedrich Schiller’s *Wilhelm Tell* (Apr. 26 - May 2), 76th Production: Frank Wedekind’s *Spring’s Awakening* (May 4-20), 77th Production: Maxim Gorky’s *The Lower Depths* (devoted to the 60th anniversary of the birth of Gorky) (May 25 – June 3), 78th Production: Georg Kaiser’s *Two Orpheus* (二人のオリイウエル) (June 13-24), The Empire Hotel Production: Wilhelm Meyer-Förster’s *Alt-Heidelberg* (July 7-15), 5th Imperial Theatre Production: William Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (July 26-30), 79th Production: Chikamatsu Monzaemon’s *The Battles of Coxinga* (Oct. 11-30), 81st Production: Kitamura Hisao (北村壽夫)’s *Self-made Man* (當世立志傳) (Dec. 5-23).

► 1929 – 82nd Production: John Masefield’s *The Faithful* (忠義) (Jan. 1-20), 83rd Production: Anton Chekhov’s *The Cherry Orchard* (to the memory of Osanai Kaoru) (Feb. 2-21), 84th Production: Maxim Gorky’s *The Lower Depths* (to the memory of Osanai Kaoru) (Mar. 5-24).¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁹ Chŏngg Ch’ŏl, “Hong Hae-sŏng Yŏnch’ul Yŏn’gu,” 47.

This list includes a great number of playwrights and a great variety of styles, from realism to expressionism, symbolism, and other modernist styles. Through the productions, Hong Hae-sŏng certainly gained considerable understanding of and experience in the modern theatre.

Hong Hae-sŏng's extensive experience in the various styles is considered not only the richest among Koreans at that time but also rare even for today's Korean actors.²⁰⁰ Hong Hae-sŏng was the first Korean who acquired knowledge of such a wide variety of modern Western theatre, an awareness he gained through his practical and professional experiences at the Tsukiji Little Theatre. Also, because Hong concentrated on studying various aspects of theatrical arts, in addition to acting and directing, he became more knowledgeable about modern Western theatre than any other Korean at that time.²⁰¹ Hong Hae-sŏng wished to enable Korean theatre to join the modern world theatre and ultimately contribute to the modernization of Korea. To achieve this end, he worked to implant the advanced methodologies he learned and experimented with at the Tsukiji Little Theatre.

3.5. Hong Hae-sŏng's Theatrical Ideals in the 1920s

Hong Hae-sŏng began to express his ideals and ambitions in theatre after his professional training at the Tsukiji Little Theatre. He left about 40 writings from his life. Hong Hae-sŏng's writings fall into four categories: 1) writings about the establishment of the New Theatre (연극운동론); 2) writings about theatre practice (실무적 연극론); 3) writings about dramatic literature and modern theatre in foreign countries (희곡론 및 해외연극론); and 4) writings about

²⁰⁰ Sŏ Yŏn-ho, "Uriŭi Yŏn'gŭk, Chaebalgŭn—Hong Hae-sŏng Sŏnsaeng'ŭl Tasi Saenggakhanda" [Our Theatre, Rediscovery—Rethinking Hong Hae-sŏng], *Han'guk Yŏn'gŭk* 19 no. 10 (October 1994): 11.

²⁰¹ Chŏng Ch'ŏl, "Han'guk Kŭndae Yŏnch'ulsa Yŏn'gu" [A Study of the History of Directing in Korea] (PhD diss., Chosŏndaehakkyo, 2000), 75.

various other topics (연극사론 및 기타).²⁰² Articles composed in the 1920s include two series, “Our New Theatre Movement’s First Step,”²⁰³ published in *Chosŏn Ilbo* from July 25, 1926, to August 2, 1926, and “The Theatrical Art Movement and the Cultural Mission,”²⁰⁴ published in *Tonga Ilbo* from October 15-27, 1929. “Our New Theatre Movement’s First Step,” which appeared in installments, was co-authored by Hong Hae-sŏng and Kim U-jin.²⁰⁵ “The Theatrical Art Movement and the Cultural Mission” was composed of essays written by Hong just before his return to Korea after he had broken with Tsukiji Little Theatre. In these articles, Hong Hae-sŏng described ways to root modern theatre in Korea. These important essays presented the most developed treatment of the New Theatre in Korea at that time.²⁰⁶

The absolute goal of Hong Hae-sŏng’s ideals, suggested in his writings in the 1920s, was to enable Koreans to participate in international society of the 20th century by establishing “culture” through the New Theatre. He argued that the cultural mission of the Koreans of the time was to contribute to the world’s culture and attain a proper position in the world by building the

²⁰² These four categories follow Sŏ Yŏn-ho and Yi sang-u’s categorization in the book, *Hong Hae-sŏng Yŏn’gŭngnon Chŏnjip* [The Complete Works of Hong Hae-sŏng]. Hong Hae-sŏng, *Hong Hae-sŏng Yŏn’gŭngnon Chŏnjip* [The Complete Works of Hong Hae-sŏng], ed. Sŏ Yŏn-ho and Yi sang-u (Kyŏngsan: Yŏngnamdaehakkyo ch’ulp’anbu, 1998). The category of “writings about various other topics” includes Hong Hae-sŏng on the History of Korean Theatre and his recollection of a meeting with Yun Paek-nam before Yun’s death.

²⁰³ Uri sin’gŭk undongŭi ch’ŏtkil, 우리 신극운동의 첫 길

²⁰⁴ Kŭgyesul undonggwa munhwajŏk samyŏng, 극예술운동과 문화적 사명

²⁰⁵ When the co-authors wrote this article, Kim U-jin, who had returned to Korea to take care of the family business after his graduation from Waseda University, came back to Tokyo again with his passion for theatre. Even though this article was co-authored, as the main topic of my study is Hong Hae-sŏng, I will only refer to Hong Hae-sŏng in examining the ideas in “Our New Theatre Movement’s First Step.”

²⁰⁶ Hong offered more concrete and practical ways to establish modern theatre than the essays by Yun Paek-nam, Hyŏn Ch’ŏl, and Kim U-jin in the beginning of the 1920s. That was probably because he more practically experienced the New Theatre Movement in Japan at Tsukiji Little Theatre and that he also understood his identity as a practitioner.

unified culture which could be considered the expression of the character of the Korean nation.²⁰⁷

Hong Hae-sŏng understood theatre as “a mirror or kaleidoscope of the life of the period” with which a nation expressed its life, thoughts, hope, and demands as well as “the highest expression of the creativity of the whole nation.”²⁰⁸ According to him, the new emerging nations in the world actively expressed their culture through theatre, and a nation which did not have their own culture and their own theatrical art would fall into a state of mental or spiritual ruin (정신적으로 멸망하는 지경).²⁰⁹ Besides, the nation that had not developed culture could not give or get a proper measure of help and sympathy from other nations.

Such a nation cannot proudly show its face in front of civilized nations. Even if it sadly cries, some other nations, claiming that the sound is cacophonous, would maltreat it, secretly confining it in a dark cave in order to prevent the sound of crying from being heard by cultured nation (문화인). Even if it cries with grievance, it would be discriminated against and stigmatized as a ‘savage race’ (野蠻種), and even its descendants—who are the life of the nation—would bear a dishonorable ‘stigma’ forever thanks to their ancestors [. . .]²¹⁰ (my translation)

Hong Hae-sŏng, thus, argued that Koreans should develop their culture through promoting theatre in order to prevent the other nations’ contempt and to be able to associate with other nations equally.

Only after we establish theatrical art that can be considered the expression of our new life (신생활), we can finally stand on the wide stage of world-class theatre art with the others and energetically join the wide sea of world culture. Only on such a day, can all Koreans belong to an artistic nation (예술화한 민족) and enjoy all of the privileges of a cultured people (문화적 민족).²¹¹ (my translation)

²⁰⁷ Hong Hae-sŏng, “Kŭgyesul undonggwa munhwajŏk samyŏng,” [The Theatrical Art Movement and the Cultural Mission] in *Hong Hae-sŏng Yŏn’gŭngnon Chŏnjip* [The Complete Works of Hong Hae-sŏng], ed. Sŏ Yŏn-ho and Yi sang-u (Kyŏngsan: Yŏngnamdaehakkyo ch’ulp’anbu, 1998), 33.

²⁰⁸ Ibid., 31.

²⁰⁹ Ibid., 32.

²¹⁰ Ibid., 32-33.

Hong Hae-sŏng's view of theatre, which reveals the influence of Culturalism—that only the nations that have realized “culture” can join the world—suggests that to him, theatrical activities meant nationalistic activities. The task of establishing the New Theatre becomes part of forming modern culture, and achieving modern culture brings to the Korean nation a proper status in the world, enabling Koreans to acquire equal standing with the other nations. In other words, implanting modern theatre measured the improvement of national ability, and went beyond mere personal aesthetic quests. Such an attitude placed him within the same political position as the cultural nationalists, who attempted to secure national stature through modernization.

Despite its importance in developing modern culture, the development of theatre in Korea proved very slow in its realization, and Hong Hae-sŏng deplored that, as stated:

[It seems to me that] the activists in the New Theatre Movement are a miserable group of people, with hearts burdened with grief and sadness, who are gravely walking and wandering on a wide wasteland bearing the heavy, bloody cross of ‘the spirit of Korea’ on their backs.²¹² (my translation)

Hong Hae-sŏng understood that the Korean nation had enjoyed its greatest culture, of which Koreans could well be proud, in ancient times. According to him, in those times, the various arts that had expressed the character of the Korean nation had exhibited a high degree of development; theatre reflected this development as well.²¹³ However, the performers' fortune changed under “the extremely absurd oppression”²¹⁴ following various political changes, and they became nomadic;²¹⁵

²¹¹ Ibid., 46.

²¹² Ibid., 41.

²¹³ Ibid., 33.

²¹⁴ “극도의 불합리한 압제하에서”

²¹⁵ Hong Hae-sŏng, “Kŭgyesul undonggwa munhwajŏk samyŏng,” 36.

Korean theatre subsequently declined. According to Hong Hae-sŏng, after the great theatrical tradition declined,²¹⁶ Korea did not redevelop a proper theatrical culture. *Sinp'a*, colored largely by the Japanese elements, could not but fail,²¹⁷ and *sin'gŭk*, the New Theatre, had not yet taken root and was struggling. Many of the required conditions for the New Theatre in Korea had not yet been realized.

Hong Hae-sŏng sought to create new conditions that would overcome the ancient decline and establish a new theatrical art. He suggested four directions for the establishment the New Theatre in the unique environment of Korea. They were: “promoting the audience,” “pursuing Little Theatre and a membership system for the audiences” (소극장식과 회원제), “introducing of Western plays,” and “yielding stage artists.”

Among these four directions, Hong Hae-sŏng argued for promoting the audience, for “the generalization of passion toward the New Theatre” (신극에 대한 정열의 일반화),²¹⁸ as the most urgent. According to him, the stage, playwright, and audience are the necessary elements of theatre, and audience was the most important among them. Based on his understanding of theatre history, he pointed out that the birth of a new audience was the crucial element for creating a new style of theatre and determining the identity of the contemporary theatre.

The people in the British Renaissance of the Elizabethan period made Shakespeare and his stage; Shakespeare did not make the Elizabethan stage and play. Likewise, in modern theatre, Antoine did not cause the New Theatre Movement in the Little Theatre; the desire of the people [. . .] brought about Antoine. [. . .] In Japan, the

²¹⁶ Hong Hae-sŏng’s view of traditional Korean theatre suggests that he did not negate the tradition. According to Song Sŏn-ho, such a positive attitude toward traditional theatre was the 20th century’s first example of admitting the tradition of Korean theatre. Song Sŏn-ho, “Hong Hae-sŏngŭi Yŏn’gŭkkwan Chaego (1)” [Re-examining Hong Hae-sŏng’s View of Theatre] (1), *Kongyŏn yesul jŏnŏl Ch’anggan chunbiho* (2001): 97.

²¹⁷ Hong Hae-sŏng, “Kŭgyesul undonggwa munhwajŏk samyŏng,” 38.

²¹⁸ Hong Hae-sŏng, “Uri sin’gŭk undongŭi ch’ŏtkil” [Our New Theatre Movement’s First Step], in *Hong Hae-sŏng Yŏn’gŭngnon Chŏnjip* [The Complete Works of Hong Hae-sŏng], ed. Sŏ Yŏn-ho and Yi sang-u (Kyŏngsan: Yŏngnamdaehakkyo ch’ulp’anbu, 1998), *Ibid.*, 15.

new class's demand, which was not the existing *kabuki* or traditional stage, formed the New Theatre Movement which copies Western theatre; the Art Theatre (Geijutsuza) or the Free Theatre (Jiyū Gekijō) did not start the New Theatre Movement.²¹⁹ (my translation)

Likewise, the New Theatre in Korea would take root when the audience that needed it had formed. However, in Hong Hae-sōng's opinion, "the backward Korean people"²²⁰ were not likely to realize the New Theatre. In his eyes, most of the audience members who attended theatre were like those of the traditional performances and of *sinp'a*. That is, they were people who pursued cheap entertainment.²²¹ The taste of an "audience which has entered an evil way" (邪道로 들어간 관중)²²² could not accept modern theatre. He pointed out that the failure of T'owōlhoe, which had led the new Theatre Movement during the early part of the 1920s, was due to the fact that the company had not recognized the disposition of their audience. According to Hong Hae-sōng, T'owōlhoe's dilemma was that they had to satisfy both the *sinp'a* audience (for financial viability) and "a few young drama buffs" (소수의 극청년) who wanted art. Meanwhile, the conundrum of accommodating the two opposite needs at the same time caused T'owōlhoe to lose its identity. Hong Hae-sōng, therefore, decided to deal with only one of the two opposite types—the audience with the higher level of intellect. He argued that the audience for the New Theatre should expand from this elite demographic. Therefore, the most urgent issue, to Hong Hae-sōng, was promoting "the members of the audience who would want to be the pioneers working together, encouraging each other, and being encouraged together under the flag of the New Theatre Movement."²²³

²¹⁹ Ibid., 15-16.

²²⁰ Ibid., 16.

²²¹ Ibid., 17.

²²² Ibid., 27.

²²³ Ibid., 18.

The specific method for promoting the audience as recommended by Hong Hae-sŏng, involved “pursuing Little Theatre and a membership system for the audience.” This would be an independent theatre movement without a theatre building. According to him, an independent theatre movement did not have to depend upon a theatre building. In the reality of Korea at that time, it was not easy to find funding for a theatre construction, and even if one built a theatre, it would not be easy to sustain it, as the people who would manage it and the audience who would attend it were still underdeveloped. To have a theatre building for the New Theatre Movement, which did not pursue financial profit, at this time in its early development was “impossible.”²²⁴ Therefore,

A town hall may be fine. Or, an outdoor temporary stage may be fine. A performance at such a place might even make some money if it could move the audience. Then, [when we have made enough money,] let’s build a theatre and found a school. Let’s try enough lighting and set, then, and go abroad and buy machinery. However, if we want to realize all these today, that is nothing but a dream.²²⁵ (my translation)

Hong Hae-sŏng argued that Koreans should actively try to find alternatives to overcome the current problems, and not just deplore the realities. The most effective alternative given the circumstances involved human resources. He urged his readers, if they had money, to support theatre practitioners rather than raise a theatre building. Koreans thus would create the community of audience and artists who would share a passion and experimental spirit. That would be the first step in the creation of the New Theatre Movement.

Building a community in theatre would be possible by forming a membership system. Hong Hae-sŏng intended to deal only with selected members of the audience through such a

²²⁴ Ibid., 25-26.

²²⁵ Ibid., 26.

membership system. According to him, as performances aimed at satisfying the masses would only lead the New Theatre to failure, the New Theatre should produce shows only for a small number, for an elite audience, and should try to gradually increase the number of that audience. He found examples of the membership system in the independent theatre movement overseas. He introduced his readers to le Théâtre Libre, led by André Antoine, the Freie Bühne led by Otto Brahm (1856-1912), the Independent Theatre and the Stage Society in Britain, and the Provincetown Players in the United States, as models of the New Theatre Movement to be pursued in Korea. Furthermore, he enumerated the Free Theatre (Jiyū Gekijō) and the Literary Arts Society (Bungei Kyōkai) in Japan as similar examples in Asia.²²⁶

In addition to the membership system, Hong Hae-sŏng proposed other ways to educate the public in order to increase the audience for the New Theatre. He suggested the methods to educate the audience as follows:

We propose to publish research and opinions in newspapers or any other media, to host lectures, exhibitions, or private performances (私演會) cooperating with students' organizations—like theatre study associations at colleges—in order to increase enthusiasm for artistic theatre. We also propose to encourage the newspapers to hire reporters who know artistic theatre in order to drive out the audience of the existing theatre—the audience which has entered an evil way—to publish a theatre magazine, or to make columns devoted only to theatre in newspapers.²²⁷ (my translation)

In these ways, Hong Hae-sŏng intended to form an elite cadre first, and then gradually to convert the masses as new members of the audience for the New Theatre. He knew that practicing theatre only for the small numbers of the “comrades” could be seen as ignoring or excluding the people or the general public.²²⁸ Nevertheless, he argued that there was no other way for the New Theatre to

²²⁶ Ibid., 27-30.

²²⁷ Ibid., 18-19.

take root in its early stage.²²⁹ The implantation of the New Theatre as a fledgling tradition was still to be led by the intellectuals. These specific methods suggested by Hong Hae-sŏng, to increase the enlightened audience by education and to strengthen the leadership of the intellectual class, were realized later in the 1930s through lectures about theatre and columns and articles in the media by the members of the Dramatic Art Study Association (Kŭgyesul Yŏn'guhoe, 劇藝術研究會) in which Hong Hae-sŏng was a member.

Another important method for advancing the New Theatre Movement proposed by Hong Hae-sŏng included the importation of Western plays, that is, the introduction of translated plays. He argued that introducing “foreign plays” (외국극) was more important than encouraging the writing of “created plays” (창작극) by Koreans, because the New Theatre in Korea, which was taking its “first step,” needed to learn from and imitate the model of Western modern theatre. He thought that a nation could realize the development of culture by its own reactions to stimulation from foreign culture, and that cultural isolation could only cause the fall of the nation. The Greeks, who had admired only their own cultures collapsed under invasion from the nations of the north. In contrast, Rome, which had accepted Greek culture, developed its own new culture, which led eventually to the Renaissance. Likewise, according to Hong Hae-sŏng, France overcame Romanticism with foreign plays—by Ibsen, Strindberg, Tolstoy, and others—imported by Antoine, and Japan was developing their new theatre by imitating Western drama.²³⁰ Hong Hae-sŏng’s belief that new culture was realized through the implantation of foreign culture inspired him to use the metaphor of the “seed.” Korea, which lacked the tradition of Western theatre, was comparable to a wasteland. For this wasteland, sowing the new and good foreign “seeds” was most urgent.

²²⁸ Ibid., 27.

²²⁹ Ibid., 27.

²³⁰ Ibid., 20.

Today, in Korea, unless we imported new seeds, with what are we going to start the New Theatre Movement in this wasteland on which there has been no theatre building, stage, director, and play with true meaning? Imitation, copy, or importation would not be mere imitation, copy, or importation in incessant creation of new life.²³¹ (my translation)

Under the circumstances, we cannot get anything useful for the new theatre movement from our tradition. We are in a wasteland. If we only insist on “creation” and our own playwrights, only weeds will grow and flourish. We consider the foreign countries’ modern theatre as our starting point. Importing the foreign plays,—of course is not our final goal. In order to get greater vitality and creation, we first consider importation, practice, and criticism of modern theatre of the West and Japan.²³² (my translation)

It was natural to assume that the people who could facilitate the importation of the foreign seeds, rather than those who dealt with old or indigenous seeds, would be needed. In other words, the people who helped import foreign plays would be valued above original, native creators. Hong Hae-sŏng argued, therefore, that those scholars, critics, and translators who could introduce Western plays should be encouraged.²³³ The importance of introducing foreign plays as emphasized by Hong Hae-sŏng would be stressed again by the Dramatic Art Study Association in the 1930s.

Hong Hae-sŏng also emphasized the necessity of “producing stage artists” (무대 예술가의 양성) for the development of the New Theatre. His insistence on producing stage artists was based on his understanding of the characteristics of modern theatre, in which each element unites under the leadership of a director for the realization of the playwright’s purpose, rather than allowing everything to depend on a star-actor. According to Hong Hae-sŏng, the actor had been the center of the theatre of the past. People had gone to theatre not to see the play but to see the star or main

²³¹ Ibid., 19.

²³² Ibid., 20-21.

²³³ Ibid., 21.

actor. That had been the audience pattern in the French neoclassical period, the Elizabethan period in England, the heyday of *kabuki*, and those days of *sinp'a*. In those periods, the script had not been important; the success of the main actor had been the only important matter.²³⁴ However,

[. . .] in modern theatre, actor, set, effects, lighting, and music exist only to realize the playwright's purpose, as the position of playwright became superior to the position of actor. Therefore, the 'regisseur' who studies, interprets, and realizes the playwright's purpose appeared. At the same time, to assist the regisseur's directing, every element on stage came to demand its specialty (분담과 전념).²³⁵ (my translation)

Therefore, Hong Hae-sŏng emphasized expertise in each aspect of theatre. He understood that the debilitation of the New Theatre in Korea was also due to the fact that the stage artists were lacking in skill.²³⁶ He longed for stage artists who had not only the commitment to devote themselves to theatre but also "knowledge" (교양) and "technique."²³⁷

Hong Hae-sŏng's answer to the problem of producing experts was, again, "education." He argued that colleges and universities should offer theatre courses and the students should voluntarily organize clubs for studying theatre. Also, he recommended that the students going through such processes should stage their own theatrical productions, driven by their own "energy" (힘), "passion" (열성), and "sincerity" (순직한 기분), and contribute to theatre by forming troupes for the New Theatre.²³⁸ He explained that there were many schools for producing theatrical specialists in foreign countries and that he wished to have such a school in Korea. He emphasized

²³⁴ Ibid., 22.

²³⁵ Ibid.

²³⁶ Hong Hae-sŏng, "Kügyesul undonggwa munhwajŏk samyŏng," 44.

²³⁷ Ibid., 43.

²³⁸ Hong Hae-sŏng, "Uri sin'gük undongŭi ch'ŏtkil," 22-23.

other countries' efforts to create competent artists, even enumerating the specific theatre schools in Europe, America, and other Asian countries such as India, China, and Japan.²³⁹

Hoping that Korea would have a school for theatre someday, Hong Hae-sŏng enumerated the subjects to be taught in the school. First of all, he recommended Introduction to Theatre (연극론), the History of World Theatre, the History of Theatrical Aesthetics (연극미학사), Introduction to Drama (희곡론), Sociology, the History of Customs of the East and the West (동서풍속사), and the History of Theatre Architecture as common subjects for every stage artist.²⁴⁰ While taking these common subjects, the students would be expected to take subjects in their specialty, either one of two departments: the acting department (演技部) and the stage department (舞臺部). Curriculum in the acting department would include subjects such as Korean language, which includes training related to speech, studying in attitude and movement, musical training (including singing and the history of music), studies in puppetry and masks, the study of facial expression (including make-up), and the study of actors' outer expressions (外裝論), which included costuming and other fields.²⁴¹ Curriculum in the stage department would include such subjects as set, lighting, sound, and costume. Along with these subjects, these students would be expected to take other courses, including the history of theatre architecture, set design, sculpture, miniature, electricity, lighting design, sound, the history of costume, and the history of customs.²⁴²

These ways of developing the New Theatre proposed by Hong Hae-sŏng during the 1920s informed the experimentations of the Dramatic Art Study Association, with which he was briefly associated during the early part of the 1930s. If Kim U-jin, who had been his partner in theatrical

²³⁹ Hong Hae-sŏng, "Kŭgyesul undonggwa munhwajŏk samyŏng," 45-46.

²⁴⁰ Ibid., 47.

²⁴¹ Ibid., 47-48.

ideals, had survived, perhaps Hong Hae-sŏng could have accomplished more of his goals for the New Theatre. As previously explained, Hong Hae-sŏng and Kim U-jin together had planned to implant and root the New Theatre in Korea, and Hong's training in the Tsukiji Little Theatre inspired part of that plan. They agreed that Kim U-jin would build a theatre in Seoul and write plays, while Hong Hae-sŏng would direct them and train actors at the theatre.²⁴³ This partnership was similar to the connection between Osanai Kaoru and Hijikata Yoshi at the Tsukiji Little Theatre, which was considered by Hong and Kim as the ideal model of the New Theatre Movement.²⁴⁴ However, just after the appearance of their newspaper serial essay, "Our New Theatre Movement's First Step," Kim U-jin committed suicide with Yun Sim-dŏk, the actress and opera singer who was known to be his mistress, on August 4, 1926.²⁴⁵ Kim U-jin was a member of a rich family, which let him pay all the expenses of the tour by the Tonguhoe Theatrical Troupe of the Theatrical Arts Society.²⁴⁶ If he had remained alive, in addition to contributing his talent as a critic and playwright, Kim U-jin might have taken care of the finances of their theatre, as Hijikata Yoshi did for the Tsukiji Little Theatre. Hong Hae-sŏng and Kim U-jin could have advanced the New Theatre Movement significantly based on the stable situation of having their own theatre and sharing a strong creative bond. Kim U-jin's death negated all such possibilities, and Hong Hae-sŏng had to pursue his ideal of the New Theatre on his own. Later, in an interview on the death of his friend, Hong Hae-sŏng explained:

His death is not only a loss to Korean theatre but also of critical damage to me. He and I planned to build a theatre in Seoul with about 100,000 *wŏn* budget and propel the New Theatre Movement forward with our colleagues. That is why he

²⁴² Ibid., 49-50.

²⁴³ Sŏ Yŏn-ho, *Uri sidaeŭi Yŏn'gŭgin*, 13.

²⁴⁴ Yu Min-yŏng, *Han'guk Yŏn'gŭk undongsa*, 241.

²⁴⁵ Yang Sŭng-guk, *Kim U-jin, Kŭŭi samgwa Munhak*, 222.

²⁴⁶ Yu Min-yŏng, *Kaehwagi Yŏn'gŭk Sahoesa*, 173.

majoring in theatre at Waseda University, and I became Mr. Osanai's student in order to practice theatre. Since Kim U-jin died, I have been feeling like a bird that lost its wings.²⁴⁷ (my translation)

Although his plan was seriously damaged by Kim U-jin's death, Hong did not give up his ideals but kept training at the Tsukiji Little Theatre. Soon, however, the company became divided, by a conflict between Marxists and the non-Marxists among its members, into the New Tsukiji Little Theatre (Shin Tsukiji Shōgekijō) and the Tsukiji Little Theatre Company (Gekidan Tsukiji Shōgekijō) in 1929. Due to such tension, Hong Hae-sōng finally came to leave the Tsukiji Little Theatre and returned to Korea in 1930.

In the 1920s, the Korean theatre began to eradicate the customs of *sinp'a*. The intellectuals who studied in Japan made great efforts to introduce styles of Western theatre that were not infected by the *kabuki* tradition. The productions by troupes in the 1920s such as the Tonguhoe Theatrical Troupe of the Theatrical Arts Society and T'owōllhoe introduced true New Theatre, *sin'gŭk*, through their more naturalistic acting and well-organized scripts which featured more modern ways of thinking. Many theatre historians thus argue that true "modern" theatre in Korea began in the 1920s. Hong Hae-sōng certainly functioned as a pioneer of the New Theatre during the 1920s, through his activities in the Theatrical Arts Society, and he began to realize his ambition of rooting modern theatre in Korea as he trained himself at Tsukiji Little Theatre. To Hong Hae-sōng, such efforts for his modernization of theatre in Korea as a director indicated not just his

²⁴⁷ Kim Yŏn-su, "Kŭktan Yahwa: Chosŏn Kŭktanŭn Ŏdero Gana?" (5) [The Night Stories of Theatre Community: Where is Korean Theatre Going?] (5), *Maeil Sinbo*, May 28, 1931.

personal aesthetic quest, but the wider expression of Cultural Nationalism, which proved a strong influence on Korean intellectuals at that time.

CHAPTER 4

HONG HAE-SŎNG'S ACTIVITIES AFTER HE RETURNED TO KOREA

Around the time when Hong Hae-sŏng returned in the 1930s, the social environment in Korea began to change considerably. During this period, Japan waged war, increased its militarism, and re-organized its social structure to accommodate warfare. The so-called Cultural Policy of the 1920s was discarded. Meanwhile, control and oppression in Korea increased in the extreme until the end of World War II. As Japanese colonial control became harsher and Japan's power kept growing through a series of military victories, many Koreans came to lose any hope of independence. Consequently, in the Koreans' efforts toward modernization, nationalist rhetoric decreased and only the hope of realizing modern "civilization" or "culture" remained.

Hong Hae-sŏng's activities also reflected the changes in Korean society. Soon after he came back to Korea, Hong Hae-sŏng founded the Dramatic Art Study Association (Kŭgyesul Yŏn'guhoe, 劇藝術研究會). This association became the leader of the New Theatre (*sin'gŭk*, 新劇) Movement in Korea, allowing Hong Hae-sŏng to fulfill his dream of establishing the New Theatre that he had been imagining on since the 1920s. In this time period, Hong Hae-sŏng tended to show less nationalistic rhetoric in his activities and focused more on art and theatrical practice itself. Thus, Hong Hae-sŏng concentrated more on directing; his writing also described more of the practical aspects in theatre rather than theatre's nationalistic significance. In other words, while "nationalism" decreased, "culture" became more prominent in the "cultural nationalism" of Hong Hae-sŏng's activities in the 1930s. Such de-politicization, leading from the grand narrative of nationalism to a focus of the personal and professional, would cause Hong Hae-sŏng to relinquish the ideal of the New Theatre and join the Tongyang Theatre (Tongyang Kŭkchang, 東洋劇場), the leading company in popular theatre—this move provided his theatrical activities with a more stable financial condition and allowed him to use more well-equipped facilities. Meanwhile, Hong Hae-

sŏng lost his preeminence as an activist in the Cultural Movement. Finally, his career virtually ended in the early part of the 1940s when he left the Tongyang Theatre, allegedly due to heart disease.

Upon his return to Korea, Hong Hae-sŏng clearly made a great contribution to Korean theatre in each phase of his career. Directing productions for the Dramatic Art Study Association, he was highly instrumental in the realization of the independent theatre movement in Korea. His activities at the Tongyang Theatre heightened the artistic level of Korea's popular theatre. And while other leading figures in Korean theatre followed self-interest and abetted imperialist Japan, Hong Hae-sŏng maintained his conscience as an artist by leaving theatre completely for a time and giving up any benefit that his fame might bring to him.

This chapter examines how Hong Hae-sŏng's career attained historical significance in the period of increasing Japanese oppression from the early part of the 1930s to the middle of the 1940s. In order to accomplish the chapter's goal, I examine the characteristics of the political environment of the period and each phase of Hong Hae-sŏng's career during this time: his years with the Dramatic Art Study Association, his tenure at the Tongyang Theatre, and his later temporary retirement. Also, this chapter examines Hong Hae-sŏng's writings on theatre and discusses their artistic significance.

4.1. Worsening Japanese Colonial Rule

From the early 1930s to August of 1945, Japan engaged in advancing its imperialism. This resulted in a series of wars and an increase in the suppression of nationalistic activities of Koreans. Japan invaded and occupied Manchuria in September, 1931, and established the puppet state of Manchukuo in March of the following year. Japan started the Second Sino-Japanese War in 1937, and finally caused the Pacific War (of World War II) by attacking Pearl Harbor in December of 1941. Under such militarism, Japan discarded the so-called "Cultural Policy" in Korea of the

1920s in order to strengthen its control over and oppression of Korea. As a result, the nationalistic movement in Korea virtually came to standstill.

As Japan's power continued to grow through the wars with no diminution in sight, Koreans began to lose hope of achieving independence.¹ Many Koreans came to believe that it would be better for them to expedite "modernization" by collaboration, which might bring more rights for Koreans and a certain degree of development of capitalism under Japanese imperialism. As a result, many among the intellectuals who had led the nationalistic movement lost their rebellious spirit and began to collaborate with Japan.² Those who advocated raising national ability especially showed such a conversion. In fact, their way of thinking, in which achieving modern "civilization" or "culture" through "raising ability" was a more urgent task than independence for Koreans, was much more likely to acquiesce before the Government-General's policies. For example, they showed an attitude of cooperation toward the Government-Generals' policy, evident in the early part of the 1930s, of promoting agriculture and industry at the same time in Korea (農工並進政策). This policy, promoted by Ugaki Kazushige (宇垣 一成, 1868-1956), the sixth Governor-General, was meant to increase production in Korea in order to build the Japan-Korea-Manchuria block, in which Japan functioned as the area for high-level industry, Korea for low level-industry, and Manchuria for natural resources.³ This policy had certain elements in common

¹ Yi Chun-sik, "Fascism-ki Kukche jöngseüi Pyönhwawa Chönjaeng Insik" [The Changes in the International Politics and Koreans' Understanding of the Wars under Japanese Fascism], in *Ilcheha Chisiginüi Fascism Ch'eje Insikkwa Taeüng* [Korean Intellectuals' Perception and Response to the Japanese Fascist Regime under the Japanese Control], ed., Pang Ki-jung (Seoul: Hyeon, 2005), 110.

² Kim Yöng-böm, "1930nyöndae Tongnip undongüi T'üksöng" [The Characteristics of the Independence Movement in the 1930s], *Han'guk Tongnip undongsa Yön'gu* 8 (1994), http://www.independence.or.kr/media_data/thesis/1994/199417.html (accessed March 30, 2007).

³ Pang Ki-jung, "Chosön Chisiginüi Kyöngje T'ongjeron'gwa 'Sinch'eje' Insik" [The Korean Intellectuals' Understanding of the Economic Control and the 'New Order'], *Ilcheha Chisiginüi Fascism Ch'eje Insikkwa Taeüng* [Korean Intellectuals' Perception and Response to the Japanese Fascist Regime under the Japanese Control], ed., Pang Ki-jung (Seoul: Hyeon, 2005), 27.

with that the raising-ability intellectuals had maintained—such as developing the economy and increasing agricultural products in order to establish modern capitalism in Korea. Thus, the raising-ability intellectuals showed cooperative attitudes with the forces of the Japanese occupation. The influx of Japanese capital and the larger market created by the Japanese occupation of Manchuria created great expectations for industrial and economic growth among Korean entrepreneurs and intellectuals.⁴ Korean newspapers such as *Tonga Ilbo* (East Asia Daily News, 東亞日報) and *Chosŏn Ilbo* (Korea Daily News, 朝鮮日報), therefore, featured many articles arguing that Koreans should utilize this political situation to their advantage.⁵ After the Manchurian Incident, the Seoul Textile Company⁶ owned by Kim Sŏng-su (金性洙, 1891-1955), invested in Manchuria by building its new factory there in 1939, capitalizing on the expansion of Japanese imperialism.⁷ While they focused on building a modern capitalist civilization and felt that they could use Japanese power to realize their goal, the supporters of “raising ability” advocated accommodation and assimilation.⁸

⁴ Ibid., Pang Ki-jung, 28; Yi Sŭng-nyŏl, “Ilche Fascism-ki Chosŏnin Chabon’gaŭi Hyŏnsil insikkwa Taeŭng” [The Korean Entrepreneurs’ Understandings and Reactions to the Circumstances under Japanese Fascism during the Colonial Period], in *Ilcheha Chisiginŭi Fascism Ch’eje Insikkwa Taeŭng* [Korean Intellectuals’ Perception and Response to the Japanese Fascist Regime under the Japanese Control], ed., Pang Ki-jung, 291.

⁵ Yi Chun-sik, “Ilche Kangjŏmgi Ch’inil Chisiginŭi Hyŏnsil insik—Yi Kwang-su” [The Understanding of Reality by Pro-Japanese Intellectuals during the Japanese Occupation: Yi Kwang-su], *Yŏksawa Hyŏnsil* 37 (September 2000): 187.

⁶ Kyŏngsŏng Pangjik Hoesa, 京城紡織會社

⁷ Kim, Choong Soon. *A Korean Nationalist Entrepreneur: A Life History of Kim Sŏngsu, 1891-1955* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998), 70.

⁸ Pak Ch’an-sŭng, “Ilche Chibaeha Han’guk Minjokchuŭi Hyŏngsŏnggwa Punhwa” [The Formation and Development of Korean Nationalism under Japanese Colonial Rule], *Han’guk Tongnip undongsa Yŏn’gu* 15 (2000), http://www.independence.or.kr/media_data/thesis/2000/200012_02.html (accessed March 28, 2007).

Meanwhile, Sin'gan Hoe (the New Foundations Society, 新幹會), the organization that united the socialists and the nationalists who were not willing to concede to colonial authority, disbanded in May, 1931 after failing to overcome ideological differences.⁹ From that time forward, nationalists and socialists would never again be united; they would struggle with each other over who would have the more dominant influence over the Korean people. Many Korean organizations that had legally worked within the colonial system were either disbanded by the Government-General or absorbed by the organizations controlled by the Government-General, and by the 1940s most Koreans came to be associated with at least one pro-Japanese organization. Meanwhile, only secret organizations of students, peasants, and workers under the influence of the socialists kept up the rebellious nationalist activities.¹⁰

As the radicals continued to maintain their political activities through secret organizations, the moderate nationalists focused on cultural activities after the dissolution of Sin'gan Hoe. The nationalists who worked within the colonial system tried to take a leadership role in the nationalistic movement, primarily by reinforcing the cultural activities that had slowed down during the late part of the 1920s. *Tonga Ilbo* and raising-ability intellectuals advocated the “*vnarod* (going to people) movement” that pursued enlightenment.¹¹ *Tonga Ilbo*, whose chief editor was Yi Kwang-su (李光洙, 1892-?), sent students “into the people” to educate them against illiteracy until

⁹ Han'guksa yŏn'guhoe, ed., *Kūndae Kungmin'gukkawa Minjok munje* [The Modern Nation-state and the Problems of the Nation] (Seoul: Chisiksanŏpsa, 1995), 343.

¹⁰ Cho Tong-gŏl, *Han'guk Minjokchuii Palchŏn'gwa Tongnip undongsa Yŏn'gu* [A Study of the Development of Korean Nationalism and Independence Movement] (Seoul: Chisik sanŏpsa, 1993), 294-303.

¹¹ *Vnarod* was a form of enlightenment movement driven by the Russian intellectuals during the late part of the 19th century. *Tonga Ilbo* used the expression “*vnarod*” without any direct relation to the Russian movement. Kang Sŏn-bo and Ko Mi-suk argue that *Tonga Ilbo*'s borrowing of the Russian expression was due to *Tonga Ilbo*'s desire to attract the progressive Korean intellectuals who were influenced by the Russian Revolution. Kang Sŏn-bo and Ko Mi-suk, “Nongch'on Kyemong undonge Nat'an an Kyemongchuii Sajoŭi Sŏngkyŏk Koch'al: *Vnarod* undongŭl Chungsimŭro” [The Characteristics of the Enlightenment Movement for the Rural Areas: the *Vnarod* Movement], *Anam Kyoyukhak Yŏn'gu* 3, no.1 (1997): 8.

the colonial authority banned the movement in 1935. In this movement, 5,751 activists taught 97,598 people at 1,320 places, and about 210,000 copies of textbooks were distributed.¹² The other group of nationalists who refused to comply with the colonial authority also came to focus on enlightenment, around An Chae-hong (安在鴻, 1891-1968) and *Chosŏn Ilbo*, after they had lost their political organization by the dissolution of Sin'gan Hoe. They also fought against illiteracy and promoted the Korean Study (朝鮮學), which emphasized Korean history and culture.¹³ These two nationalist groups worked together for a while for the “historic site preservation movement”¹⁴ led by *Tonga Ilbo* in order to rediscover the cultural legacies of the Korean nation and to further nationalism.¹⁵

However, the Cultural Movement as a nationalistic movement was destined to decline.¹⁶ After the outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese War in 1937, colonial control in Korea became more severe. The 7th Governor-General, Minami Jirō (南次郎, 1874-1955), who took office in August, 1936, initiated a policy that used Korea as a military supply base (兵站基地化政策) and changed the previous slogan of Japanese rule, “harmony between Japan and Korea,” (*nissen yūwa*, 日鮮融和) to “Japan and Korea are One Entity” (*naisen ittai*, 內鮮一體) to erase the very concept of the “Korean nation.” Under the stronger colonial control, every social movement and cultural movement came to an end. After the Government-General began to disband Korean organizations

¹² Yi Chi-wŏn, “Fascism-ki Minjokchuŭijaŭi Minjok munhwaron” [The Nationalists’ National Culture Movement under Japanese Fascism], in *Ilcheha Chisiginŭi Fascism Ch’eje Insikkwa Taeŭng* [Korean Intellectuals’ Perception and Response to the Japanese Fascist Regime under the Japanese Control], ed., Pang Ki-jung (Seoul: Hyeon, 2005), 412.

¹³ Yun Hae-dong, *Singminjiŭi Hoesaekchidae* [The Gray Area of the Colony] (Seoul: Yŏksa pip’yŏngsa, 2003), 245-246.

¹⁴ Kochŏk pochon undong, 古蹟保存運動

¹⁵ Yi Chi-wŏn, 416.

¹⁶ Kim Yŏng-bŏm, “1930nyŏndae Tongnip undongŭi T’ŭksŏng.”

of all types in 1937,¹⁷ the moderate nationalists virtually ceased their nationalistic activities, and many moderate nationalists began to collaborate with Japan. At the same time, the socialists also underwent difficulties as they were either arrested or converted by the Japanese authority.¹⁸ Therefore, Cultural Nationalism, which intended to raise national ability based on Social Darwinist concepts, virtually ended, and only military activities and diplomatic efforts by the Koreans in China and America represented Korean nationalism.

In many aspects, Japan attempted to erase the Korean nation and mobilize it for wars. For example, in 1936, Japan began to force Koreans to attend Shintō ceremonies, the traditional Japanese religious practices. Koreans had to recite “the oath of imperial Japanese subjects” (皇國臣民의 誓詞), which expressed faith in the Japanese emperor, after singing the Japanese national anthem during all school ceremonies from 1937; students had to bow in the direction of the Japanese emperor’s palace (東方遙拜) at every school from 1938.¹⁹ Also, in 1937, Japan organized the Korean League for the General Mobilization of the National Spirit (국민정신총동원연맹), with branches at various levels of the community such as city, province, and work place.²⁰ In 1938, Japan passed the National Mobilization Law (국가총동원법),²¹ and in 1939 promulgated the Name Order, which forced Koreans to change their family and personal

¹⁷ Carter J. Eckert, Ki-baik Lee, Young Ick Lew, Michael Robinson, and Edward W. Wagner, *Korea Old and New : A History* (Seoul: Ilchokak, 1990), 316.

¹⁸ Sŏng Chu-hyŏn, “1930nyŏndaemal Kangwŏndo Kosŏng chiyŏk Munye pimil kyŏlsa undong” [The Secret organizations’ Activities in the Area of Kosŏng, Kangwŏn Province, during the Late Part of the 1930s], in *1930nyŏndae Yesul Munhwa undong* [Artistic and the Cultural Movement in the 1930s], ed. Han’guk minjok undong sahakhoe, (Seoul: Kukhak charyowŏn, 2003), 54-55.

¹⁹ Kim Kyŏng-mi, “Hakkyo unyŏng nollwiwa Fascism kyoyuk cheje” [Fascist Education System and Running the Schools], *Ilcheha Chisiginŭi Fascism Ch’eje Insikkwa Taeŭng* [Korean Intellectuals’ Perception and Response to the Japanese Fascist Regime under the Japanese Control], ed., Pang Ki-jung (Seoul: Hyeon, 2005), 222.

²⁰ Bruce Cumings, *The Origin of the Korean War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 27.

names to Japanese forms, attempting to erase identities of the Koreans.²² In 1940, the two Korean newspapers, *Tonga Ilbo* and *Chosŏn Ilbo*, were abolished, and the next year, Korean magazines met the same fate. In 1942, young Koreans began to be drafted into the Japanese military.²³

In this harsh environment, the leaders of Korean society came to either passively accept this political reality or actively cooperate with Japan, unless they had decided to either exile themselves or risk arrest for their resistance. As for the elites who passively accepted the reality, the journal of an organization controlled by the Government-General described their outlook in 1939 as follows:

How do they live as Koreans from now on? It would not be an exaggeration to say that only few refuse to join with Japan facing this question. However, over half of the members of the educated class in Korea feel “not enthusiastic about that, nevertheless.” While their reason shows the way, their emotion refuses it. The more “Japan and Korea are One Entity” is cried, the more this feeling grows. However, they do not resist. Silence, feelings of absurdity, dejection, and sad anger are around them. The educated Koreans are in great agony now.²⁴ (my translation)

However, unlike those who followed passive resignation, there were Korean intellectuals who actively collaborated and wanted to assimilate with Japan. The representative example of this kind was Yi Kwang-su, who had been the ideologist of the moderate nationalists. Following the Japanese propaganda that Koreans’ participation in the war was “the way to practice the most glorious way of the subject of the empire” and the way to abolish the discrimination toward

²¹ Pang Ki-jung, “Chosŏn Chisiginŭi Kyŏngje T’ongjeron’gwa ‘Sinch’eje’ Insik,” 37.

²² Carter J. Eckert, Ki-baik Lee, Young Ick Lew, Michael Robinson, and Edward W. Wagner, 318.

²³ Cho Tong-gŏl, 123.

²⁴ Pak Sŏng-jin, *Hanmal~Ilcheha Sahoejinhwaron’gwa Singminji Sahoesasang* [Social Darwinism and the Ideologies in the Society during the Late Part of the 19th Century and the Colonial Period] (Seoul: Tosŏch’ulp’an Sŏnin, 2003), 281.

Koreans,²⁵ Yi Kwang-su encouraged the other Koreans to volunteer to join the war and mobilization. He thought, “If Japan wins the war, we [Koreans] could get the same rights as the Japanese in Japan at least.”²⁶ Furthermore, Yi Kwang-su even came to believe that what was important to the individual Korean was true membership in the Japanese nation, rather than merely becoming included within the country of Japan. Therefore, in his article entitled “New Order in Mind and the Direction for Korean Culture”²⁷ published in *Maeil Sinbo* (毎日申報, Daily News) in September 1940, Yi Kwang-su argued that Koreans should give up the identity of their nation in order to be absorbed into Japan, writing “Koreans must forget they are Koreans. . . . Their blood, flesh, and bones must become those of the Japanese. This is the only way for Koreans to get eternal prosperity. . . . Koreans must dissolve their national consciousness and tradition in a progressive attitude [. . .]”²⁸ When Yi Kwang-su—who had deplored that Koreans had not gained the “power” (military, economic, or political) to join the international competition, a view expressed in an article he had written right after the Manchurian Incident had occurred²⁹—came to believe that Koreans had not yet acquired the ability to realize modernization and independence by themselves, he turned to active collaboration and chose voluntarily to assimilate with Japan. He wanted Koreans to join the modern world in the empty name of “a subject of the great Japanese

²⁵ Yi Sŭng-nyŏl, 296.

²⁶ Pak Ch’an-sŭng, “Yi Kwang-suwa Fascism” [Yi Kwang-su and Fascism], Kim Kyŏng-il et al., *Han’guk Sahoe sasangsa Yŏn’gu* [The Studies of the History of the Social Ideologies in Korea] (Seoul: Nanam ch’ulp’an, 2003), 341.

²⁷ Simjŏk Sinch’ejewa Chosŏn Munhwa’ui Chillo, 心的新體制와朝鮮文化의進路

²⁸ Yi Chun-sik, “Ilche Kangjŏmgŭ Ch’inil Chisiginŭi Hyŏnsil insik—Yi Kwang-su,” 190-191.

²⁹ As Yi Kwang-su said in his article “Himŭi Chaeinsik” [Re-recognition of Power] in *Tonggwang* in December, 1931,

The clouds of war are swirling in the sky on the continent of Asia. Bugle for march and crying for a dashing. . . . This is the expression of national power. [. . .] However, what he does not have is this power. [. . .] Therefore, we are nameless people who are having no

empire” rather than the name of a member of a “colony” or a “weak nation.”³⁰ The case of Yi Kwang-su represents an ugly transformation, that of a nationalist to a “collaborator,” as a “raising-ability” intellectual blindly pursued the value of “modernization” and building “civilization” above all. He might have thought his advice was the wisest choice for the advancement of Koreans. However, such a way of thinking was a mistake that could have led Koreans to far more critical disasters.

The Pacific War (1941-1945), which was the last phase of the 35 years of Japanese occupation, represents perhaps the most painful period in Korean history. After the mobilization policy of Japan had begun, many Korean leaders in various fields ultimately collaborated (whether they wanted to or were coerced). Many among them had also been the leaders of nationalism. Many leading intellectuals, such as Yi Kwang-su, Sō Ch'un (徐椿, 1894-1944), Hyōn Sang-yun (玄相允, 1893-?), Ch'oe Nam-sōn (崔南善, 1890-1957), and Chang Tōk-su (張德秀, 1895-1947), spread the Japanese war ideology through their writings and lectures. Also, many artists, such as Sō Chōng-ju (徐廷柱, 1915-2000), Sim Hyōng-gu (沈亨求, 1908-1962), Hong Nan-p'a (洪蘭坡, 1898-1941), and Yu Ch'i-jin (柳致眞, 1905-1974), produced literary works, paintings, musical works, and dramas to transmit Japanese propaganda.³¹ In addition, the leading entrepreneurs, such as Kim Yōn-su (김연수, 1896-1979) and Pak Hūng-sik (朴興植, 1903-1988), served the war effort by donating their money and goods. Even the religious leaders, such as Yun Ch'i-ho (尹致昊,

role—only squatting behind the curtain of the stage on which all other human beings parade themselves.” (my translation)

Cho Kwan-ja, “‘Minjogūi Him'ul Yongmanghan ‘Ch'inil Nationalist' Yi Kwang-su” [The ‘Collaborator-Nationalist’ Yi Kwang-su who desired ‘Nation’s Power’], *Kiōkkwa Yōksaui Tujaeng* (2002): 329.

³⁰ Yi Chun-sik, “Ilche Kangjōmgi Ch'inil Chisiginūi Hyōnsil insik—Yi Kwang-su,” 190-191.

³¹ Im Chong-guk, “Ilchemal Ch'inil gunsangūi Silt'ae” [The Collaborating Figures’ Activities during the Latter Days of the Colonial Period], Song Kōn-ho et al., *Haebang Chōnhusaui Insik 1* [Understanding the Time around the Liberation] 3rd ed. (P'aju: Han'gilsa, 2004), 218-321.

1865-1945), Sin Hŭng-u (申興雨, 1883-1959) and Ch'oe Rin (崔麟, 1878-1958), worked for assimilation and the war. Meanwhile, the number of young Koreans who were drafted from the attack of Pearl Harbor to the end of the Second World War reached 364,186, and almost half of them either died or went missing in action.³² Young, unmarried Korean women were also sent to the front to serve as “comfort girls” for Japanese soldiers.³³ The number of Koreans who were mobilized during the war reached almost six million.³⁴ Koreans most probably underwent the most miserable time in their history before Japan surrendered in 1945.

4.2. Hong Hae-sŏng in the Dramatic Art Study Association

Hong Hae-sŏng returned to Korea in June 1930 after gaining experience in modern theatre for about six years at the Tsukiji Little Theatre in Japan. As soon as he came back to Korea, he began working to establish modern theatre in Korea. His efforts brought about the founding of the Dramatic Art Study Association, in which he implemented the plans he had developed in the 1920s for establishing the New Theatre.

4.2.1. Frustrations after Hong Hae-sŏng's Return to Korea

Hong Hae-sŏng's return was welcomed by the theatre community as a new stimulation for modern theatre in Korea. Theatrical activity in Korea had slowed during the late part of the 1920s. T'owŏlhoe (the Earth-Moon Association, 土月會) had declined, and although the other *sin'gŭk* (the New Theatre, 新劇) companies such as Sanyuhwa Hoe (山有花會), Chonghap Yesul Hyŏphoe (Synthetic Art Association, 綜合藝術協會), Mudae Yesul Hyŏphoe (Stage Art Association, 舞臺藝術協會), and Hwajo Hoe (the Fire Bird group, 火鳥會) appeared during this period, they

³² Kim, Choong Soon, 114.

³³ Lee Ki-baik, *A New History of Korea*, trans. Edward W. Wagner and Edward J. Shultz (Seoul, Ilchokak, 1984), 353.

disbanded after they engaged in only one or two productions.³⁵ In the meantime, small popular theatre companies, which were selling “cheap entertainment”³⁶ rather than art, continued to appear and disappear.³⁷ Under the circumstances, it was expected that Hong Hae-sŏng’s return would revitalize Korean theatre,³⁸ and Hong Hae-sŏng himself aimed to contribute to the modern theatre of Korea, planning to express his talent as a director, the leading functionary in modern theatre.

However, Hong Hae-sŏng’s ambition soon met obstacles. Hong Hae-sŏng idealized the system of the Tsukiji Little Theatre, which was the leader of modern theatre in Japan at that time, and intended to implant it in Korea. However, such an ambition was too hasty or possibly too visionary in face of the realities of Korea, as Hong had no organization or capital.³⁹ The distance

³⁴ Kim, Choong Soon, 114.

³⁵ Kim Chae-ch’ŏl, “Chosŏn Yŏn’gŭksa” [The History of Korean Theatre] (37), *Tonga Ilbo*, July 10, 1931.

³⁶ Munŏ, “Kŏriŭi Megaphone: Sin’gŭgŭi Tugihwa” [The Megaphone on the Street: the New Theatre Speculated], *Chosŏn Ilbo*, October 3, 1939.

³⁷ Kim Chae-ch’ŏl.

³⁸ Ha Ch’ŏng, “Ch’imch’ehan Kŭgundong” [Theatre Movement Stagnant], *Maeil Sinbo*, December 7, 1930.

³⁹ The conflict between Hong Hae-sŏng and the realities of Korea was revealed even at the first meeting he had with some other theatre artists in Korea. Soon after Hong Hae-sŏng’s return to Korea, Yun Paek-nam, a senior in the Korean theatre community, and the leading members of T’owŏlhoe such as Pak Sŭng-hŭi, Kim Ŭl-han, and Pak Chin, hosted a party to celebrate Hong Hae-sŏng’s return. When the other people asked his plans for Korean theatre, Hong Hae-sŏng answered he would “open a new way for our New Theatre by just implanting the Tsukiji Little Theatre’s system.” Pak Chin recollected the party as follows:

At the place, they suggested to Hong Hae-sŏng that he join T’owŏlhoe and make a new way with them for the New Theatre Movement by the “new T’owŏlhoe.” However, Hong Hae-sŏng insisted on having his own company. Despite the fact that he did not have a comrade or a group of people around him and he was only on his own, he was too ambitious. [. . .] Everyone who gathered there, except Hong Hae-sŏng, was embarrassed [. . .] They asked how he wanted to lead Korean theatre. Without any hesitation he said, “Tsukiji Little Theatre.” Everyone there became embarrassed and disappointed. (my translation)

Hong Hae-sŏng probably did not want to join T’owŏlhoe, which he had already attacked in his article “Our New Theatre Movement’s First Step,” written in 1926, as an organization showing no achievement. However, at the same time, Hong Hae-sŏng’s dream of using “the Tsukiji Little Theatre’s system” was too visionary to the other theatre artists who well knew the fact that every aspect of Korean theatre was too underdeveloped to apply the Tsukiji Little Theatre’s system. Pak Chin, *Seseyŏnnyŏn* [Many Years] (Seoul:

between his ambition and the harsh realities of the period made Hong Hae-sŏng experience a series of frustrations.

In order to help Hong Hae-sŏng, Yun Paek-nam (尹白南, 1888-1954) and Pak Sŭng-hŭi (朴勝喜, 1901-1964) attempted to form a new troupe with members of T'owŏlhoe. Therefore, within two months of Hong Hae-sŏng's return to Korea, according to the articles in *Maeil Sinbo* and *Chosŏn Ilbo* on August 28, this group of theatre practitioners had already formed a theatrical company called the Kyŏngsŏng Little Theatre Company (Kyŏngsŏng Sogŭkchang, 京城小劇場). Wealthy Poet Yi Sang-hwa (李相和, 1901-1943), who was from Hong's hometown, was their sponsor, and Yi Ki-se (李基世, 1889-1945), who had been one of the leaders of *sinp'a*, joined the company as an advisor.⁴⁰ The unification of these big names in theatre created great expectations in Korean society. The mission statement of the Kyŏngsŏng Little Theatre Company reflects Hong Hae-sŏng's theatrical dream for Korea.

Our Kyŏngsŏng Little Theatre pursues the New Theatre Movement through the Free Theatre Movement. It will gather theatre artists and educate them in order to satisfy new hope and desire of the public. Also, the group will attempt through artistic means to establish a new culture that reflects this new period through theatre arts and a totally new tradition of theatre.⁴¹ (my translation)

This mission statement shows the ambition of this company, (following Hong Hae-sŏng's wish to introduce the concepts of the Tsukiji Little Theatre), which was intended to be a "laboratory" for the education of artists and the independent theatre movement; it did not pursue commercial ends but sought to do theatre for the people. However, sponsor Yi Sang-hwa failed to adequately

Kyŏnghwa ch'ulp'ansa, 1966), 83; Yang Sŭng-guk, *Han'guk Kŭndae Yŏn'gŭk pip'yŏngsa Yŏn'gu* [A Study of the History of Modern Korean Theatre Criticism] (Seoul: T'aehaksa, 1996), 161.

⁴⁰ "Sagye 3gŏdui Aksuro Kyŏngsŏng Sogŭkchang Ch'angsŏl" [The Kyŏngsŏng Little Theatre Established by Handshakes among the 3 Big Names], *Maeil Sinbo*, August 28, 1930.

⁴¹ Ibid.

support the company,⁴² and the Kyōngsōng Little Theatre was dissolved without even completing a performance. The dissolution of the Kyōngsōng Little Theatre Company damaged not only Hong Hae-sōng's standing but also that of the many people who expected to revitalize the New Theatre in Korea.⁴³

After the Kyōngsōng Little Theatre was disbanded, another troupe was formed “with great difficulty” (千辛萬苦하야). This time Ko Han-sūng (高漢承, 1902-1950), a young millionaire, was the sponsor.⁴⁴ On October 24, *Chosŏn Ilbo* reported that the new theatre called Sinhŭng Theatre (Sinhŭng Kŭkchang, 新興劇場) was founded by Hong Hae-sōng, Ch'oe Sŭng-il (崔承一), Pak Hŭi-su (朴熙秀), and Hong No-jak (洪露雀, 1900-1947), et al. The Sinhŭng Theatre chose *Morandŭnggi* (牧丹燈記) as its first production. *Morandŭnggi* was an adaptation of a part of the Chinese classic *Chōndŭngsinhwa* (剪燈新話). A love story between a dead woman's ghost and a living man who is dissatisfied with the oppressive reality of his society, this play was intended to convey a political comment on society. The show finally opened on November 11. However, this production of *Morandŭnggi* turned out to be as an “unprecedented disaster” (미증유의 대실패).⁴⁵

The *Morandŭnggi* production was reviewed as suffering from bad translation and errors in directing. Ko Hye-san (高惠山) pointed out that presenting the Japanese adaptation to the Korean audience which had different customs and a different social environment was a mistake. He wrote

⁴² Kim Yŏn-su, “Kŭktan Yahwa: Chosŏn Kŭktanŭn Ōdero Gana?” (6) [The Night Stories of Theatre Community: Where is Korean Theatre Going?] (6), *Maeil Sinbo*, May 29, 1931.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ko Han-sūng was one of the members of the Theatrical Arts Society in which Hong Hae-sōng and Kim U-jin worked together during the early part of the 1920s.

⁴⁵ Kim Yŏn-su, “Hŭnghaenggyeŭi Sunansidae” (2) [Hard Time for Theatre] (2), *Maeil Sinbo*, January 3, 1931.

that the bad translation was a bigger mistake.⁴⁶ According to him, there were many awkward expressions in the translation, and such a bad translation caused laughter when the tension of the drama reached its peak.⁴⁷ Also, under the directing style “in the very way of the Tsukiji Little Theatre” (축지소극장 그대로),⁴⁸ the actors’ acting showed less energy than that of T’owŏlhoe’s productions.⁴⁹ Kim Yŏn-su (金連壽) thought that the “failure of directing” in the production of *Morandŭnggi* was due to characteristics of Hong Hae-sŏng’s personality, which did not fit in with the current “reality” of theatre in Korea, rather than any lack of talent.

After the failure at Sinhŭng Theatre, everyone would say that Mr. Hong Hae-sŏng has a beautiful mind like a jewel. However, he failed in many affairs because his personality is so weak and he does not know the realities in Korea. [. . .]

Mr. Hong Hae-sŏng is a wise man. Yet, he spent many years at a theatre in a foreign country and was assimilated to their ways. He came to see Seoul and Sinhŭng Theatre the same as Tokyo and the Tsukiji Little Theatre. [. . .] In reality, you have to admit that Seoul is several decades behind Tokyo. This is one of the reasons for the failure.

In Tokyo, everything is well developed, and specialization of each field is realized. As a result, playwright, director, actor, and producer are independent of each other, and they can focus only on their own functions. [. . .]

However, what is the reality in Korea? Here, if you want to run a theatrical company, you should be good at management and also able to write scripts and to direct. You should even be prepared to jump up onto the stage with make-up just in case. Here, everything is not in order [. . .]

The production of *Morandŭnggi*—the first production of Sinhŭng Theatre, and probably the last production of the company at the same time—was a kind of test for Mr. Hong as a theatre practitioner. Nearly everyone agrees on the following results of the test:

1. Mr. Hong has a beautiful personality.
2. Mr. Hong is a man of innocence—this is a rare quality among

⁴⁶ Yi Tu-hyŏn, *Han’guk Sin’gŭksa Yŏn’gu* [Modern History of Korean Drama], 2nd ed. (Seoul: Sŏuldaehakkyo ch’ulp’anbu, 1990), 159.

⁴⁷ Ko Hyesan, “Sinhŭng Kŭkchangŭi Ch’ŏt Kongyŏn *Morandŭnggi* Insanggi—Pogo Tŭtko Saenggangnanŭndaero” (3) [The Impressions of Sinhŭng Theatre’s First Production, *Morandŭnggi*—as I Saw, Hear, and Thought] (3), *Maeil Sinbo*, November 16, 1930.

⁴⁸ Pak Chin, 84.

⁴⁹ Ko Hyesan, “Sinhŭng Kŭkchangŭi Ch’ŏt Kongyŏn *Morandŭnggi* Insanggi—Pogo Tŭtko Saenggangnanŭndaero” (4) [The Impressions of Sinhŭng Theatre’s First Production, *Morandŭnggi*—as I Saw, Hear, and Thought] (4), *Maeil Sinbo*, November 18, 1930.

actors and even among all the people in theatre community—and does not lie.

3. Because he has an indecisive personality, he cannot take care of many matters at the same time. Therefore, he should focus on his specialty, directing, rather than be a leader of a company, who has to take care of everything.

Mr. Hong Hae-sŏng is the rarely encountered nice man. Who would appreciate such a character in this world, in which an honest good man is considered stupid while a wicked man is considered smart, especially in the theatre community, a group of people who do not seem quite ethical?⁵⁰ (my translation)

Although Kim Yŏn-su's analysis suggests that Hong Hae-sŏng's failure was due to problems inherent in the "realities" of Korean theatre, rather than from some lack of talent, such "realities" were what should have been overcome, rather than merely deplored. Probably, the Koreans had expected Hong Hae-sŏng to exercise leadership in every way in addition to directing, based on his experience and talent, and to overcome such "realities." However, either Hong Hae-sŏng was too visionary or his personality was too accommodating to overcome the problems of Korean theatre at that time. The failure of *Morandŭnggi*, revealing Hong Hae-sŏng's limits, again disappointed both Hong Hae-sŏng himself and the others who had such grand expectations for him. After *Morandŭnggi*, Hong Hae-sŏng was not active in any remarkable way for a while except for directing a student production of *The Cherry Orchard* performed at Ihwa (Ewha) Girls School (梨花女高普) in November. The production of *The Cherry Orchard* was received as especially meaningful by Kim Yŏn-su.

The big fruition [. . .] of this year is the amateur production at the Ihwa (Ewha) Girls School. *The Cherry Orchard* by Chekhov [. . .] is known as a play which is very difficult to perform successfully even by the companies like Tsukiji Little Theatre in Tokyo. The students adequately performed this play and made the audience understand what kind of lives *The Cherry Orchard* is about. That deserves to be called an unforgettable achievement of this year.⁵¹ (my translation)

⁵⁰ Kim Yŏn-su, "Kŭktan Yahwa: Chosŏn Kŭktanŭn Ŏdero Gana?" (7) [The Night Stories of Theatre Community: Where is Korean Theatre Going?] (7), *Maeil Sinbo*, May 30, 1931.

⁵¹ Kim Yŏn-su, "1930nyŏn Chosŏn Yŏn'gŭkkye" (2) [Korean Theatre in 1930] (2), *Maeil Sinbo*,

In the meantime, Hong Hae-sŏng's financial difficulties continued to worsen. Hong Hae-sŏng, who married in 1921, had to support his wife and four children after his return to Korea.⁵² Without adequate income, he was, for the most part, destitute. Sŏ Hang-sŏk (徐恒錫, 1900-1985), who worked at the newspaper *Tonga Ilbo*, recollected Hong Hae-sŏng undergoing financial straits:

In those days, Mr. Yun Paek-nam wrote a novel in installments in *Tonga Ilbo*. Everyday, after he finished his work of the day, he came over to the news department on the third floor in order to chat with me. Because he had a wonderful sense of humor, chatting with him was always fun. Sometimes Mr. Hong Hae-sŏng joined this conversation. However, it seemed that Mr. Hong did not come by to join the fun of chatting. It seemed to me that Mr. Hong came to see Mr. Yun for certain urgent matters and joined chatting unwillingly because he could not find a chance to discuss the matter while I was with Mr. Yun. Sometimes I left them alone so they could converse in secret. However, as time went by we all became close, and Hong no longer felt uncomfortable revealing his situation in my presence: no rice to eat and no fuel to heat, etc. Then, Mr. Yun rummaged in his pockets. When he did not have enough money, Mr. Yun handed his watch to Hong, saying "Please bring me the pawn ticket." Sometimes Mr. Yun did not have enough money and his watch was still in the pawnshop. In such cases, I would rummage my pockets or hand my watch. He did not hesitate to receive. His situation was so serious [...] ⁵³ (my translation)

Such harsh realities that Hong Hae-sŏng endured after his returning home to Korea meant continued day-to-day struggling. He simply had no opportunities to realize his theatrical ideals for a while.

4.2.2. Dramatic Art Study Association

Hong Hae-sŏng's painful situation prompted his friends to make another effort to help him. This effort proved an important event in the history of Korean theatre. In order to help Hong Hae-sŏng in his financial difficulties, Yun Paek-nam and Sŏ Hang-sŏk arranged an event called the Theatre and Film Exhibition (Yŏn'gŭgyŏnghwa Chŏllamhoe, 演劇映畫展覽會); this led to the

January 3, 1931.

⁵² Sŏ Yŏn-ho, "Yŏnch'ulga Hong Hae-sŏngnon" [A Study of the Director Hong Hae-sŏng], *Hallim Ilbonhak yŏn'gu* [Hallim Japanese Study] 1 (November 1996): 219.

founding of the Dramatic Art Study Association (Kŭgyesul Yŏn'guhoe, 劇藝術研究會) and opened a new phase of modern theatre in Korea.

The Theatre and Film Exhibition was designed as an event to help Hong Hae-sŏng with the benefit from the fee charged for admission to the exhibition (which would show various items related to theatre and film offered by Hong Hae-sŏng and some others). Sŏ Hang-sŏk and Yun Paek-nam, who worked for *Tonga Ilbo*, which led the Cultural Movement at that time, borrowed facilities from the newspaper and prepared the Theatre and Film Exhibition. Sŏ Hang-sŏk thought there should be a host of the event and, therefore, improvised an organization named the Theatre and Film Club (Kŭgyŏng Tonghohoe, 劇映同好會).⁵³ Sŏ Hang-sŏk, who had studied German literature in Japan, invited a group of his fellow foreign literature scholars called “the foreign literature faction” (Haeoe munhakup'a, 海外文學派), to which he also belonged, to join. This nominal organization suddenly came to have real members and finally “hosted” the Theatre and Film Exhibition when it opened on June 18, 1931. The Theatre and Film Exhibition displayed numerous materials of traditional theatre, Western theatre in Korea, Western theatre in Japan, puppetry, Korean and Japanese movies, as well as masks and photographs. The core of the exhibition comprised about two thousand items, including scripts, posters, and stage plans, which Hong Hae-sŏng had collected in Japan.⁵⁴ While the Theatre and Film Exhibition was running, the Theatre and Film Club also hosted Theatre Arts Lectures (Yŏn'gŭgyesul Kangyŏnhoe, 劇藝術講演會), sponsored by *Tonga Ilbo*, at Yŏnhŭi College on June 20. The lectures were Hong Hae-sŏng's “The New Theatre Movement and the Tsukiji Little Theatre,” Sŏ Hang-sŏk's “About

⁵³ Yu Min-yŏng, *Han'guk Kŭndae Yŏn'gŭksa* [The History of Modern Theatre in Korea], 2nd ed. (Seoul: Tanguktaehakkyo ch'ulp'anbu, 2000), 720.

⁵⁴ Sŏ Hang-sŏk, “Yŏn'gŭksachŏk Chasŏjŏn” [Theatre-historical Autobiography], in *Kyŏngan Sŏ Hang-sŏk Chŏnjip* 5 (Seoul: Hasan ch'ulp'ansa, 1987), 1862.

Expressionism,” Kim Chin-söp’s “Acting and Actor,” Yi Ha-yun’s “The New Theatre Movement in Ireland,” and Chöng In-söp’s “Theatrical Culture and Student Theatre in other countries.”⁵⁶ The Theatre and Film Club’s exhibition and the lectures aroused great interest about theatre. The Theatre and Film Exhibition was even extended for two days due to popular response.

Nevertheless, the Theatre and Film Exhibition unexpectedly went into the red. According to Sö Hang-sök, maybe the admission price was too cheap even though the number of the audience was large.⁵⁷ While the event did not accomplish its goal, “helping Hong Hae-söng,” the Theatre and Film Exhibition signaled a new phase of Hong Hae-söng’s career. After the exhibition ended, the intellectuals who gathered for this event found that they wanted more than ever to continue their cultural activity. Therefore, Sö Hang-sök led meetings to form a new organization, and Yun Paek-nam, Hong Hae-söng, and the members of “the foreign literature faction”—such as Sö Hang-sök, Yi Ha-yun (異河潤, 1906-1974), Chöng In-söp (鄭寅燮, 1905-1983), Ham Tae-hun (咸大勳, 1906-1949), Kim Chin-söp (金晉燮, 1903-?), Yi Hön-gu (李軒求, 1905-1983), Yu Ch’i-jin (柳致眞, 1905-1974), Chang Ki-je (張起悌), Cho Hui-sun (曹希淳), and Ch’oe Chöng-u (崔琰宇)—founded the Dramatic Art Study Association on July 8, 1931. The birth of the Dramatic Art Study Association gave Hong Hae-söng a theatrical organization in which he could work. As soon as it was formed, the Dramatic Art Study Association, which consisted of big names in theatre such as Yun Paek-nam and Hong Hae-söng and the newly emerging young intellectuals of the “the foreign literature faction,” became the most prominent theatrical organization in Korea.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Yi Tu-hyön, 170.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 171.

⁵⁷ Sö Hang-sök, 1863.

⁵⁸ The members of the “the foreign literature faction” were college professors (Chöng In-söp, Cho Hui-sun, and Yi Hön-gu), newspaper reporter (Ham Tae-hun, Sö Hang-sök, and Yi Ha-yun), and teachers. Yu Min-yöng, *Han’guk Yöng’guk undongsa* (Seoul: T’aehaksa, 2001), 266; Yu Ch’i-jin, “Chasöjön”

The members of the Dramatic Art Study Association pursued their theatrical goals based on Cultural Nationalism, in which they introduced Western theatre to Koreans and, by doing so, led them into the modern world. As examined in the previous chapter, Hong Hae-sŏng's theatrical activities were based on Cultural Nationalism,⁵⁹ and the members of the “foreign literature faction” were of the same persuasion. They had gone to Japan in the “education-fever” after the March First Movement in 1919 and studied foreign literature,⁶⁰ hoping that they would absorb Western culture.⁶¹ As Chŏng In-sŏp recollected, some of them dabbled in a secret political organization and economic activities which can be considered part of Korean Product Movement.⁶² Also, the members who studied English literature intended to begin a cultural Renaissance in Korea by expressing nationalism through theatre, as the Irish did.⁶³ In addition, their activities were frequently supported by *Tonga Ilbo*.⁶⁴ With such a background, the founding members of the Dramatic Art Study Association, refusing to accept a Marxist such as Pak No-a in their group,⁶⁵

[Autobiography], in *Tongnang Yu Ch'i-jin Chŏnjip* [The Anthology of Yu Ch'i-jin's Works] 9 (Seoul, Sŏulyedae ch'ulp'anbu, 1993), 99-100.

⁵⁹ In his book *Uri sidaeŭi Yŏn'gŭgin*, Sŏ Yŏn-ho explains that ‘the declaration of the independence of Korea’ by the Korean students in Tokyo on February 8 and the March First Movement in 1919 changed Hong Hae-sŏng's mentality. According to Sŏ Yŏn-ho, after these events, Hong Hae-sŏng decided to devote himself to nationalistic activities rather than to his personal well-being. However, Sŏ Yŏn-ho does not show what is the source of such information. Sŏ Yŏn-ho, *Uri sidaeŭi Yŏn'gŭgin*, 10.

⁶⁰ They majored in English (Yi Ha-yun, Chŏng In-sŏp, Ch'oe Chŏng-u, Chang Ki-je and Yu Ch'i-jin), French (Yi Hŏn-gu), German (Sŏ Hang-sŏk and Kim Chin-sŏp, Cho Hŭi-sun), and Russian literature (Ham Tae-hun) at the universities in Japan.

⁶¹ Yu Min-yŏng, *Han'guk Kŭndae Yŏn'gŭksa*, 806.

⁶² Chang Han-gi, *Han'guk Yŏn'gŭksa* [The History of Korean Theatre], 2nd ed. (Seoul: Tongguktaehakkyo ch'ulp'anbu, 1990), 242.

⁶³ Yu Min-yŏng, *Han'guk Yŏn'gŭk undongsa* (Seoul: T'aehaksa, 2001), 67.

⁶⁴ When Sŏ Hang-sŏk became a reporter at *Tonga Ilbo*, the chief editor at that time was Yi Kwang-su. Also, Song Chin-u was the chief editor when Sŏ Hang-sŏk was greatly devoted to the theatrical activities during the early stages of the Dramatic Art Association. Sŏ Hang-sŏk, 1859.

⁶⁵ Sŏ Hang-sŏk's recollection about Pak No-a suggests the political stance of the founding members

showed the temperament of a moderate, bourgeois nationalist organization. The direction pursued by the Dramatic Art Study Association is well shown in the manifesto for the first issue (創刊辭) of *Kŭgyesul* (劇藝術), the organ of the Dramatic Art Study Association.

“Establish true theatre culture in Korea.”

This one sentence states the intention and the aim of *Kŭgyesul*.

In order to satisfy this intention and aim, we, with most sincere and tenacious commitment, will concentrate the whole of our new creative efforts on the fundamentals for theatrical arts of Korea with global vision and a Korean view.

Dramatic art is always the only living record that totally or synthetically shows the nation's or the country's destination and reality. Therefore, theatre does not mean mere enlightenment of people. Sometimes great enlightenment, however, is realized in true dramatic art. Here we find the mystery of life and the eternal greatness which drama has.

As we feel and see the decadent degradation and the threat of life in the current severities and silent groans of our society, we promise to continue propelling our effort until we experience the creation of new life through high artistic levels of dramatic art as realized by our deeper recognition of various agonies and our reflection [on the past] and resolution [for the future].⁶⁶ (my translation)

This manifesto suggests that the Dramatic Art Study Association's activities were based on the attitude of the “raising-ability” intellectuals, in that they understood the “severities” in contemporary Korean society and tried to address them, and in that they expressed a “global vision” for catching up with the world with the realization of the modern. However, by suggesting that “true dramatic art” or the “high artistic level of dramatic art” was more essential and important

of the Dramatic Art Study Association. Sŏ Hang-sŏk said:

There was an individual who was different in kind, and I did not like it. The individual was Pak No-a (朴露兒). As he did not have a particular specialty or major and was a leftist, I knew his thoughts and acts would not be in accord with the other individuals. Therefore, after Chŏng In-sŏp and I made a sign with the eyes to each other, we intentionally quarreled to ruin the atmosphere of the meeting, and it ended without any decision. Although it was not a gentleman's behavior, it was inevitable under the circumstances. Several days later, when I came to know that Park No-a was on a trip to Suwŏn for 2 months, I hurried to contact the other members to explain why I disturbed the last meeting and told them to gather again at the Chŏndong restaurant (典洞食堂). (my translation)

Sŏ Hang-sŏk, 1863.

⁶⁶ The Dramatic Art Study Association, *Kŭgyesul* [Dramatic Art] 1 (April 1934). 1.

than “enlightenment,” the Dramatic Art Study Association also revealed that they had a more aesthetic attitude in justifying their theatrical activities than did the leaders of *sinp’a* in the 1910s, who emphasized a straightforward instrumentalism, or the forerunners of *sin’gŭk* in the 1920s, who began to emphasize the autonomy of theatrical arts. With such an attitude, the members of the Dramatic Art Study Association placed greater emphasis on pursuing the global modern civilization or culture than pursuing nationalism. Such an abatement of nationalist rhetoric in theatrical activities reflected the common tendency among the “raising-ability” intellectuals in the Cultural Movement; they came to focus more on modernization than nationalism under the increasing Japanese oppression and censorship during the 1930s.

As the Dramatic Art Study Association focused more on art itself, it tended to concentrate its efforts on the more concrete and practical matter of how it would bring theatre to the people—which Hong Hae-sŏng had already begun to systematically examine in the 1920s—rather than the matter of how it would justify the implantation of Western theatre. The most urgent goal for the Dramatic Art Study Association in bringing theatre to the people was “increasing the people’s understanding of theatre and eliminating the bad influence of the existing theatre.”⁶⁷ By trying to achieve this goal, the Dramatic Art Study Association intended “to establish ‘our *sin’gŭk*’ in true meaning” as the modern theatre.⁶⁸

In order to accomplish these goals, the Dramatic Art Study Association organized the Study Department (硏究部) and the Practice Department (事業部) under its umbrella. The Study Department was designed to study plays, dramatic theory (戯曲論), theory of playwriting, theory of directing, and criticism on the one hand, and encouraged members to write plays, to translate

⁶⁷ “극예술에 대한 일반의 이해를 넓히고 괴성극단의 邪道에 흐름을 구제하는 동시에 나아가서는 진정한 의미의 ‘우리 신극’을 수립하려는 목적” “Sin’gŭk Suribŭl Mokp’oro Hoekkichŏk Tanch’ech’ulh’yŏn” [An Innovative Organization for the New Theatre Appears], *Tonga Ilbo*, July 19, 1031.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

foreign plays, and to adapt foreign plays, on the other. The Practice Department was designed to teach dramatic art to students or others; to provide the ones who wanted to be on stage or those who had talent with practical training for theatrical expression; to give encouraging criticism to the existing theatrical companies, examining their attitude, expression, and influence; to offer scripts and directing to the existing companies under the condition that these efforts would not become commercialized; to host various events, including workshops, lectures, and exhibitions, in order to spread the understanding of theatre in society; to publish books and magazine in order to spread the understanding of theatre in society; and to create theatrical productions.⁶⁹ In order to achieve these goals, which reflected the major aspects of Hong Hae-sŏng's ideals in the 1920s, the members of the Dramatic Art Study Association concentrated their efforts, and maintained the Association's fundamental structure—although sometimes it added small changes—pursuing theoretical works and practical applications at the same time.

The output of the Dramatic Art Study Association showed remarkable progress, even from the early stages of the organization. The members of the Dramatic Art Study Association tried to increase the public's interest and understanding of theatre by publishing many articles about dramatic literature and theatre in the newspapers and magazines.⁷⁰ Also, they offered lectures and workshops such as the First Summer Theatre Workshop⁷¹ for two weeks from August 10, 1931,⁷²

⁶⁹ Yu Min-yŏng, *Han 'guk Kŭndae Yŏn'gŭksa*, 809.

⁷⁰ The members of the Dramatic Art Study Association published over 10 articles about theatre within the first 6 months of their activities in the organization, from July in 1931 to the end of the year. The members of the Dramatic Art Association published over 200 articles about theatre during the life of their organization.

⁷¹ Che Il Hoe Hagi Kŭgyesul Yŏn'guhoe, 第一回 夏期劇藝術研究會

⁷² The members of the Dramatic Art Study Association taught various subjects such as "Introduction to Theatre," "Theatre History," "Acting," "Speech," and "Basic Gymnastics," to the students during this workshop. Sŏ Hang-sŏk, "Han'guk Yŏn'gŭksa" (2) [The History of Korean Theatre] (2), in *Kyŏngan Sŏ Hang-sŏk Chŏnjip* 6 (Seoul: Hasan ch'ulp'ansa, 1987), 2050.

the Silhŏm Mudae's Novice Actor Workshop,⁷³ for the twenty newly recruited actors for its own troupe called Silhŏm Mudae on November 8, 1931, the Dramatic Art Study Association Lectures⁷⁴ on November 28, 1931,⁷⁵ and the Short Term Theatre Workshop for Women⁷⁶ from March 15, 1932 until two weeks later.⁷⁷ In addition, the Association encouraged students' theatrical activities at Severance College, Yŏnhŭi College, Ihwa (Ewha) College, the Kyŏngsŏng Training School for Kindergarten Workers, and the Kŭnhwa Girl's School.⁷⁸ Also, the members of the Association suggested desirable directions for future Korean theatre by publishing reviews of the popular theatre companies and the Marxist theatre (called "proletariat theatre") companies such as Myŏngil Kŭkchang (Tomorrow Theatre, 明日劇場), Yŏn'guksa (Theatre House, 演劇舍), and Sin'gŏnsŏl (New Construction, 新建設). The members of the Association translated many Western plays into Korean,⁷⁹ and in 1934, the members began to publish its journal, *Kŭgyesul* (劇藝術). All these activities aimed to expedite the independent theatre movement as modern theatre in Korea. These steps were among those suggested by Hong Hae-sŏng in the 1920s such as the spreading of knowledge of new theatre in society through lectures and columns in magazines or newspapers and

⁷³ Silhŏm Mudae Che Il Hoe Yŏn'gusaeng Kangsŭphoe, 實驗舞臺 第一回 研究生講習會

⁷⁴ Che Il Hoe Kŭgyesul Yŏn'guhoe Kangyŏnhoe, 第一回 劇藝術研究會 講演會

⁷⁵ For this event, the members of the Dramatic Art Study Association such as Cho Hŭi-sun, Yi Hŏn-gu, Ham Tae-hun, and Chŏng In-sŏp, gave lectures about Western and Korean theatre to about 1,000 members of the audience. Yi Tu-hyŏn, 173.

⁷⁶ Yŏja Tan'gi Kŭgyesul Kangjwa, 女子短期 劇藝術講座

⁷⁷ Sŏ Hang-sŏk, "Han'guk Yŏn'gŭksa," (2), 2066.

⁷⁸ Yi Hŏn-gu, "Kŭgyŏn Inyŏn'ganŭi Ŏpchŏkkwa Pogo" (2) [Reporting the Dramatic Art Study Association's Achievement during the Last Year] (2), *Tonga Ilbo*, July 9, 1932.

⁷⁹ All of the Western plays performed by the Dramatic Art Study Association were translated by its members. The members translated about 20 Western plays during the life of their organization. See Min Pyŏng-uk, ed., *Han'guk Hŭigoksa Yŏnp'yo* [The Chronological Table of the History of Korean Drama] (Seoul: Kukhak charyowŏn, 1994), 485-494.

developing new artists and audiences through student organizations. Through such activities, the Association contributed remarkably to establishing the New Theatre in Korea.

However, the most important contribution of the Dramatic Art Study Association was its productions. As the best way to help the public experience or get accustomed to theatre is performance, its productions became the focal point of the activities of the Association. In order to present their own productions, the Association formed its own performing troupe, called Silhŏm Mudae (the Laboratory Stage, 實驗舞臺) in November 1931.⁸⁰ Silhŏm Mudae was, as its name suggested, a troupe intended only for the establishment of the New Theatre, not for pursuing financial benefit.⁸¹

The Dramatic Art Study Association chose Gogol's *The Inspector General* as Silhŏm Mudae's first "experimental production" (*siyŏn*, 試演). The members of the Association finally reached an agreement that *The Inspector General* was a play that could not only pass the Japanese censorship, but also would convey certain comments on society. The notorious censorship in Korea became harsher in the 1930s. For example, according to Kim Hae-ryong, while 400 scripts were censored in 1930 by the public-security division in Kyŏnggi Province, this number increased to 1030 in 1931, and the police were even ordered to investigate each individual actor's political stance in December 1931.⁸² Under the circumstances, whether a play could pass the censorship was the most important matter in choosing a play for repertory. Yu Ch'i-jin recollected why the

⁸⁰ Yi Hŏn-gu, "Kŭgyŏn Inyŏn'ganŭi Ŏpchŏkkwa Pogo" (3) [Reporting the Dramatic Art Study Association's Achievement during the Last Year] (3), *Tonga Ilbo*, July 11, 1932.

⁸¹ Yi Hŏn-gu, "Chosŏne issŏsŏŭi Kŭgyesul undongŭi Hyŏndan'gye" (ha) [The Current Stage of the Theatre Movement in Korea] (2), *Chosŏn Ilbo*, November 17, 1931.

⁸² Kim Hae-ryong, *Kwnagbokchŏn Chungjo yŏn'gŭksa Pigyo yŏn'gu* [A Comparative Study of the History of Chinese Theatre and Korean Theatre before the Liberation] (Seoul: Han'guk munhwasa, 2000), 214.

members of the Dramatic Art Study Association chose *The Inspector General*:

As a matter of fact, to decide the repertory was very difficult for us, and the biggest reason for that was the extreme censorship from the Japanese Government-General. Even though each of us had different opinions, there was one thing in common. That was the view that we would show our nation's pain in any way if we could pass the censorship. Finally, we chose the Russian playwright Gogol's *The Inspector General*, following Hong Hae-sŏng and Ham Tae-hun's opinion. There were several valid points for this decision.

First, as this play depicted and attacked corrupted public officials, it would allude to our reality. Second, as this play was considered a modern play and a patriotic or nationalistic play in the history of theatre, it corresponded to the spirit of the theatre we were pursuing.⁸³ (my translation)

Another reason that *The Inspector General* had a higher possibility of success, was that it was one of the plays in which Hong Hae-sŏng performed at the Tsukiji Little Theatre.⁸⁴ When rehearsal began, the novice actors who were recruited the previous year took the major roles and the members of "the foreign literature faction" took the minor roles.

The production of *The Inspector General* was a major success, presented for an audience that primarily consisted of members of the educated class, including students. According to *Tonga Ilbo*'s report, people rushed in, despite the "heavy rain" on the first day of the show, May 4, and the second performance on May 5 also became "a big success filled with members of the educated class and the students from the drama club at the schools in the city" despite the "light rain."⁸⁵ This production earned a series of good reactions. In his review in *Tonga Ilbo* from May 7 to May 13, Na Ung (羅雄) wrote that the production of *Silhŏm Mudae* showed "ardor and truth" (熱誠과

⁸³ Yu Ch'i-jin, "Chasŏjŏn," 105.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ "Silhŏm Mudae che 1 hoe Siyŏn kŭm 6 il yaro Kkŭt" [Silhŏm Mudae's First "experimental production" ends in the Night of the 6th], *Tonga Ilbo*, May 7, 1932.

眞實) that could not be found in the productions of the commercial theatre companies.⁸⁶ He especially praised the ending scene, in which the curtain dropped while the characters stood frozen for about ten seconds at the news that real inspector general had arrived, as very effective.⁸⁷ Yi Kwang-su praised this production, saying “I saw the first show that deserves to be called ‘theatre’ in the ten years since T’owŏlhoe,” and Chi Tu-han (池斗漢), who was one of the leaders of popular theatre, expressed his embarrassment, deploring “Now we cheap entertainers are going to die not winning bread.”⁸⁸ Ko Hye-san praised Hong Hae-sŏng’s directing in his review, relating that Hong Hae-sŏng, who was damaged by the failure of *Morandŭnggi*, showed his “true value” in *The Inspector General*.⁸⁹ A reviewer, whose pen name was Muusaeng (the One without Trouble, 無憂生) also suggested that the success of *The Inspector General* was due to Hong Hae-sŏng’s directing. Muusaeng analyzed the difference between the success of *The Inspector General* and the failure of *Morandŭnggi* in that the actors of Silhŏm Mudae, who were trained by Hong Hae-sŏng from the beginning of their careers, did their best to follow the director, while the actors of the Sinhŭng Theatre, who had been previously the members of T’owŏlhoe, did not follow the director’s direction very well.⁹⁰ Sin Ko-song, who was engaged in “proletariat theatre,” also admitted the success of *The Inspector General*. Although he pointed out the limited significance of the production as “petty bourgeois theatre movement,” noting that the audience consisted of members of the intelligentsia petty bourgeois class, including students, Sin Ko-song admitted that

⁸⁶ Na Ung, “Silhŏm Mudae che 1 hoe Siyŏn Ch’oirŭl Poko” (3) [After Watching Silhŏm Mudae’s First “experimental production”] (3), *Tonga Ilbo*, May 13, 1932.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Sŏ Hang-sŏk, “Yŏn’gŭksachŏk Chasŏjŏn,” 1783.

⁸⁹ Ko Hye-san, “Silhŏm Mudae che 1 hoe Siyŏn Kŏmch’algwanŭl Pogo” (2) [After Watching Silhŏm Mudae’s First “experimental production,” *The Inspector General*] (2), *Maeil Sinbo*, May 10, 1932.

the Dramatic Art Study Association's production "succeeded in rooting" their theatre movement.⁹¹ Also, Sin Ko-song said about Hong Hae-sŏng that he could not help but praise him, in that Hong Hae-sŏng accomplished such an achievement with such inexperienced actors.⁹²

The success of *The Inspector General* impressed the Korean public in terms of not only the work of director Hong Hae-sŏng but also the function of director itself. There was no function of director in its true meaning before Hong Hae-sŏng's return to Korea—only the function of "stage manager" (*mudae kamdok*, 舞臺監督), who was the leader in the production process and sometimes also playwright and manager at the same time, as had existed in Japan before the Tsukiji Little Theatre.⁹³ The success of *The Inspector General* finally came to make the public fully understand the concept of the modern director, who, as an independent artist, "correctly interprets the script and harmoniously unifies every element forming theatre [. . .] controlling it"⁹⁴ and "originated from the Duke of Saxe Meiningen and Wagner and was established as the modern meaning through Craig, Stanislavsky, and Reinhardt [. . .]"⁹⁵ According to the newspaper advertisements of theatrical productions in *The Collection of the Materials of the History of Korean Modern Theatre*⁹⁶ compiled by An Kwang-hŭi, the newspaper advertisements for theatrical productions prior to the Dramatic Art Study Association's *The Inspector General* had not shown

⁹⁰ Muusaeng, "Kŏmch'alghanŭl Pogo" [After Watching *The Inspector General*], *Sinhŭng Yŏnghwa* 1 (June 1932): 23.

⁹¹ Sin Ko-song, "Silhŏm Mudaeŭi Kŏmch'alghan" (1) [Silhŏm Mudae's *The Inspector General*] (1), *Chosŏn Ilbo*, May 10, 1932.

⁹² Sin Ko-song, "Silhŏm Mudaeŭi Kŏmch'alghan" (wan) [Silhŏm Mudae's *The Inspector General*] (final), *Chosŏn Ilbo*, May 12, 1932.

⁹³ Han No-dan, "Yŏnch'ullon" [About Directing], *Chogwang* 25 (December 1937): 214.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 213.

⁹⁵ Ibid. 213-214.

⁹⁶ *Han'guk Kŭndae yŏn'gŭksa Charyojip*, 韓國近代演劇史資料集

the directors' names, but only shown the titles of the plays and the troupes. It was the Dramatic Art Study Association's Silhŏm Mudae that was the first troupe to show the director's name in their advertisement. The Association continued to show the director's name in a separate line in the advertisement for each production after *The Inspector General*. That suggests that the Association for the first time understood the function of the modern director as the one who was responsible for the entire process of a theatrical production. After Silhŏm Mudae's *The Inspector General*, other Korean theatrical troupes also began to show the directors' names in their advertisement, and the notion of director came to be widely known in Korea.

The Dramatic Art Study Association presented its second "experimental production" on June 28, 29, and 30 at the Chosen Theatre (Chosŏn Kŭkchang).⁹⁷ The bill consisted of *The Magnanimous Lover* by St. John Greer Ervine (1883-1971), *The Gaol Gate* by Lady Augusta Gregory (1852-1932), and *Seabattle* by Reinhardt Goering (1887-1936), all directed by Hong Hae-sŏng. This second production, which consisted of two realistic dramas, *The Magnanimous Lover* and *The Gaol Gate*, and one expressionistic drama, *Seabattle*, did not get as enthusiastic a reaction from the public as the first production. As Pak Yong-ch'ŏl (朴龍喆, 1904-1938) noted, the reaction of the public was primarily due to the repertory.⁹⁸ The two realistic dramas, each of which were only about thirty minutes long, and the expressionism drama, which the Koreans had never experienced, did not impress to the audience. *The Magnanimous Lover* (the story of a woman who refuses a marriage proposal from the man who had abandoned her with their lovechild for ten years and finally came back because of his hypocritical religious compunction) and *The Gaol Gate* (the story of a young man's mother and his wife who finally find out that their man was

⁹⁷ Yi Hŏn-gu, "Kŭgyŏn Inyŏn'ganŭi Ŏpchŏkkwa Pogo" (4) [Reporting the Dramatic Art Study Association's Achievement during the Last Year] (4), *Tonga Ilbo*, July 12, 1932.

executed after their long trip to the prison to meet him) received relatively positive reactions.⁹⁹ However, *Seabattle* (the story of seven navy soldiers who share their feelings before a sea battle, and finally died in the battle) received only negative reactions. The script of this verbose expressionistic play was problematic, as Chu Yǒng-ha (朱永夏) pointed out that “a critic said ‘this play is not a play in its true meaning while it indulges in ideas’.”¹⁰⁰ According to Pak Yong-ch’öl, as both the actors and the audience dealt with an expressionistic play for the first time, both the performers, in terms of expression, and the audience, in terms of appreciation, had difficulty. He said that from the point of view of a member of the audience, “spending quite a while listening to the lines that could not be comprehended was really a pain.”¹⁰¹ Many audience members left early because they “soon became tired” of watching the show they could not understand.¹⁰² Chu Yǒng-ha suggested that the reason of the actors’ failure to deliver the lines to the audience was too much rehearsal, relating, “The speeches were not audible as if they [the actors] had hurt their vocal chords due to over-rehearsing.”¹⁰³ However, that only reveals either that the actors were not skillful enough in their job or that the directing was not effective during the rehearsal process. Pak Yong-ch’öl also pointed out that the show was not equipped with enough mechanical elements such as

⁹⁸ Pak Yong-ch’öl, “Silhōm Mudae che 2 hoe Siyōn Ch’oirül Pogo” (4) [After Watching Silhōm Mudae’s Second “experimental production”] (4), *Tonga Ilbo*, July 5, 1932.

⁹⁹ Pak Yong-ch’öl, “Silhōm Mudae che 2 hoe Siyōn Ch’oirül Pogo” (1) [After Watching Silhōm Mudae’s Second “experimental production”] (1), *Tonga Ilbo*, June 30, 1932.

¹⁰⁰ Yi Tu-hyōn, 177.

¹⁰¹ Sin A-yōng, *Han ’guk Kūndaegūgi Iron ’gwa Yōn ’gūksōng* [The Theories and Theatricality of Modern Korean Theatre] (Seoul: T’aehaksa, 1999), 59.

¹⁰² “Sōyōldo Pulguhago Silhōm Mudae Ch’oil Sōnghwang” [Silhōm Mudae’s First Night Successful despite Hot Weather], *Tonga Ilbo*, June 30, 1932.

¹⁰³ Yi Tu-hyōn, 177.

set, lighting, and sound, to realize the effects of the drama.¹⁰⁴ Therefore, choosing such a play for the repertory was not appropriate in every aspect for the Korean “reality.”

The Dramatic Art Study Association may have been overly encouraged by the success of its first production, and may have ambitiously tried more experimental elements, such as expressionistic play as *Seabattle*, which the public had trouble understanding. This caused the Association to undergo more criticism—that the organization only pursued theatre to satisfy the intellectuals’ dilettantism and “art for art’s sake.” In fact, the Association’s repertory was pointed out to be problematic even from its very first production. For example, Sin Ko-song, one of the leaders of the “proletariat theatre,” made the point in his review of *The Inspector General* that the production could not have any meaning to anyone in Korean society except the intelligentsia.¹⁰⁵ Novelist Sim Hun (沈熏, 1901-1936), in his article titled “Taking a Walk in the Entertainment and the Art Field” in *Tonggwang* (Light of East, 東光) in October, 1932, commented about the first and the second production of the Association, saying that “such plays were far from the reality of Korea” and that the members of the Association who were only absorbed in foreign literature could not understand “the reality and the audience in Korea.”¹⁰⁶ Yet, the Association justified performing foreign plays as a result of its stated purpose—that it should present Western plays as the model of well-wrought drama. There were few Korean plays that came close to meeting this high aesthetic standard. Kim Kwang-sŏp (金光燮, 1906-1977), a member of the Association, expressed this purpose in his article in *Chosŏn Ilbo* on January 15, 1933.

¹⁰⁴ Pak Yong-ch’ŏl, “Silhŏm Mudae che 2 hoe Siyŏn Ch’oirŭl Pogo” (3) [After Watching Silhŏm Mudae’s Second “experimental production”] (3), *Tonga Ilbo*, July 3, 1932.

¹⁰⁵ Sin A-yŏng, 58.

¹⁰⁶ Sim Hun, “Yŏnyegye sanpo” [Taking a Walk in the Entertainment and the Art Field], *Tonggwang* 38 (October 1932).

Using foreign plays as our spine is necessary under the reality of Korea that has no legacy of theatre and no plays that deserve to be called a “play.” And doing such [using foreign plays] is not unusual. We can find such phenomena in the New Theatre Movement in the foreign countries. The New Theatre Movement in Britain began with the translation of Ibsen, and such is generally common in the European countries that underwent the New Theatre Movement. The New Theatre Movement in Japan also well shows such a phenomenon. Although [Western] plays translated into Korean sometimes yield unfair criticism, the Dramatic Art Study Association is focusing on foreign plays based on convictions derived from the history of the New Theatre Movement [. . .] (my translation)

This kind of thought had already been expressed by Kim U-jin and Hong Hae-sŏng in the 1920s and was repeatedly affirmed in other articles such as Yi Hŏn-gu’s “The Report of the Achievements Made for One Year by the Dramatic Art Study Association (5)” (劇研 一年間の業績과 報告 五) in *Tonga Ilbo* on July 13, 1932 and Kim Kwang-sŏp’s other articles “Before the Third Production of the Dramatic Art Study Association (middle)” (劇研 第三回 公演을 앞두고 中) in *Chosŏn Ilbo* on February 2, 1933 and “Our Theatre and the Influence of Foreign Theatre” (우리의 演劇과 外國劇의 影響) in *Chosŏn Ilbo* on July 30, 1933. However, as playwright Pak Yŏng-ho (朴英鎬) asked, “What on earth is the theatre for if theatre made in Korea neglects Koreans’ thoughts (民情), customs, characters, and emotions?”¹⁰⁷ Under the severe historical conditions of Korea during the Japanese occupation, the demand for direct depiction of such a reality was hard to ignore. Especially, the demand that Korean theatre portray the lives of the Korean people came from the Marxists, who were actively discussing “realism” under the influence of the discourse of socialist realism. Productions by the Dramatic Art Study Association could be called “realism” in that they tried to comment on real problems of life or social problems, unlike the melodramas by the popular theatre companies. However, at the same time, the

¹⁰⁷ Pak Yŏng-ho, “Chosŏnsŏngŭl Poksŭphago Hŭigok ch’angjagŭi Chaech’ulbal” (sang) [Restudying Koreanness and Restarting Playwriting] (1), *Chosŏn Ilbo*, June 15, 1934.

productions were also attacked as “non-realism.” As they were translations of foreign plays, critics argued that there existed a distance between the lives these plays portrayed and the real lives of the Koreans. In the political landscape in which the nationalists and the socialists were competing, in order to become more influential over the Korean people, the demand for productions that could be understood by Koreans and reflect the life of Koreans could not be ignored. Therefore, the demand that the work of the Association try to come closer to the public grew not only outside of the group, but also inside it as well.

The third production of the Dramatic Art Study Association was performed on February 9 and 10, 1933 at the Kyōngsōng Public Hall (Kyōngsōng Konghoedang, 京城公會堂). The bill consisted of Chekhov’s *The Anniversary* directed by Hong Hae-sōng, Yu Ch’i-jin’s *T’omak* (Mud Hut, 土幕) directed by Hong Hae-sōng, and Georg Kaiser’s *Juana* directed by Ch’i-jin. From this third production on, the Association removed the name of “Silhōm Mudae” and the title of “experimental production” from their productions due to its increased confidence.¹⁰⁸ The third production also succeeded in filling the audience with “salaried men, the sons of landowners and their wives, and male and female college students, who were members of the educated class” according to the review written by the novelist Yu Chin-o (俞鎮午, 1906-1987) who used the pen name, Hyōn Min (玄民).¹⁰⁹

The third production of the Dramatic Art Study Association did not produce a remarkable artistic accomplishment except for the play *T’omak*. As for *Juana* directed by Yu Ch’i-jin, despite the fact that this play was explained as “an expressionist lyrical poetic drama” (表現派의

¹⁰⁸ Yu Ch’i-jin, “Chasōjōn,” 110.

¹⁰⁹ Hyōn Min, “Che 3 hoe Kūgyōn Kongyōnūl Pogo” (1) [After Watching the 3rd Production of the Dramatic Art Study Association] (1), *Chosōn Ilbo*, February 13, 1933.

絃情詩劇)¹¹⁰ by Kim Kwang-söp, it was “a[n example of] plainly realistic staging and the characters’ speech and movement were also such.”¹¹¹ In *The Anniversary*, most of the members of “the foreign literature faction”¹¹² played roles. Many of these actors did not concentrate on the situation in the play and ruined the play’s effect, laughing for themselves during the performance. Among the actors, only Yu Ch’i-jin was faithful to the situation in the play and saved the show from complete failure.¹¹³

T’omak was ambitiously prepared by the Dramatic Art Study Association, after the group underwent the attacks for only performing foreign plays. This play, written by Yu Ch’i-jin, was about a poor family that lived in a mud hut (*t’omak*). In this play, the family received the bones of its son who had been executed by the Japanese authorities for joining a “liberation movement.” While Yu Chin-o criticized this play for lacking unity,¹¹⁴ Kim Kwang-söp praised the play, asserting that it was artistic enough to be performed by the Association and was “the true starting point of Korean peasantry-drama.”¹¹⁵ Despite problems,¹¹⁶ the performance of this Korean play “on which the Dramatic Art Study Association must have concentrated its best efforts in its third

¹¹⁰ Kim Kwang-söp, “Kügyön che 3 hoe Kongyönül Aptugo” (2) [Before the 3rd Production of the Dramatic Art Study Association] (2), *Chosön Ilbo*, February 2, 1933.

¹¹¹ Hyön Min, “Che 3 hoe Kügyön Kongyönül Pogo” (2) [After Watching the 3rd Production of the Dramatic Art Study Association] (2), *Chosön Ilbo*, February 14, 1933.

¹¹² such as Yu Ch’i-jin, Ham Tae-hun, Yi Hön-gu, Kim Chin-söp, Cho Hui-sun, Chöng In-söp, Sö Hang-sök, and Ch’oe Chöng-u.

¹¹³ Hyön Min, “Che 3 hoe Kügyön Kongyönül Pogo” (2).

¹¹⁴ Hyön Min, “Che 3 hoe Kügyön Kongyönül Pogo” (4) [After Watching the 3rd Production of the Dramatic Art Study Association] (4), *Chosön Ilbo*, February 16, 1933.

¹¹⁵ Kim Kwang-söp, “Kügyön che 3 hoe Kongyönül Aptugo” (2).

¹¹⁶ For example, Yu Chin-o argued that the scene in which the father poured his son’s bones out of the box making them scattered on the ground bothered him. Hyön Min, “Che 3 hoe Kügyön Kongyönül Pogo” (4).

production”¹¹⁷ was well received by the audience. According to Yu Ch’i-jin, some of the members of the audience rushed into the dressing room after the show and hoisted the playwright, Yu Ch’i-jin, and the director, Hong Hae-sŏng, shoulder-high to praise them. Also, Yi Kwang-su excitedly praised the play suggesting that the dramatic literature of Korea was finally born.¹¹⁸

The results of the third production of the Dramatic Art Study Association foreshadowed certain changes in the inner structure of the organization. Yu Ch’i-jin proved he had not only the ability to act, but also the ability to direct, and came to possess the status of the best playwright in Korea due to the success of *T’omak*.¹¹⁹ As Yu Ch’i-jin in “the foreign literature faction” showed his talents, his influence in the Association increased,¹²⁰ and Hong Hae-sŏng’s importance decreased at the same time. As scholars of foreign literature, the members of “the foreign literature faction,” who may have been proud of their abilities to deal with texts as their forte, did not admire Hong Hae-sŏng’s ability to interpret plays. While Hong Hae-sŏng did not show overwhelming ability in his expertise—directing—and was not entirely trusted by the members of “the foreign literature faction,” who were the majority of the founding members of the Association and were “too proud of themselves as the highest intellectuals of the time,”¹²¹ Hong Hae-sŏng’s position in

¹¹⁷ Hyŏn Min, “Che 3 hoe Kŭgyŏn Kongyŏnŭl Pogo” (3) [After Watching the 3rd Production of the Dramatic Art Study Association] (3), *Chosŏn Ilbo*, February 15, 1933.

¹¹⁸ Yu Ch’i-jin, “Chasŏjŏn,” 111.

¹¹⁹ In 1936, Kim Kwang-sŏp suggested that Yu Ch’i-jin was an influential figure in playwriting by saying, “[. . .] These days, new playwrights in Korea tend to try to be like Yu Ch’i-jin in terms of theme and playwriting technique. This tendency is found in most of the plays that have recently won the contests given by the newspapers [. . .]” Yi Mi-wŏn, *Han ’guk Kŭndaegŭk Yŏn ’gu* [A Study of Modern Korean Theatre] (Seoul: Hyŏndae mihaksa, 1994), 262.

¹²⁰ Yang Sŭng-guk, “Kŭgyesul yŏn’guhoewa Han’guk yŏn’gŭk,” [the Dramatic Art Study Association and Korean theatre] *Kongyŏn yesul jŏnŏl* Ch’anggan chunbiho (2001): 28.

¹²¹ Yu Ch’i-jin, “Chasŏjŏn,” 99.

the organization suffered. Yu Ch'i-jin revealed the view of "the foreign literature faction" toward Hong Hae-sŏng in his recollection of the third production as follows:

Actually, I was not afraid to have my directing compared to the directing of Hong Hae-sŏng, the experienced senior director, on the same stage. Although Hong Hae-sŏng had an industrious and pleasant personality, he had not shown great ability in interpreting plays.¹²² (my translation)

Hong Hae-sŏng's expertise as a director may not have impressed the other leading members of the organization. Thus, his life in the Association must have grown uncomfortable during this period. Hong Hae-sŏng did not encourage any noticeable tension due to his personality which was so nice that Yu Ch'i-jin said about him, "due to the nice personality, he frequently induced, with his warmth, the young men to reconcile when there were conflicts among them. In short, he was benevolent like a father."¹²³

During this period of change in the Dramatic Art Study Association after the third production, Hong Hae-sŏng was suffering from chronic financial problems. To increase his income, he directed some shows at Chosŏn Yŏn'gŭksa (the Theatre House of Korea, 朝鮮演劇舍), the leading popular theatre company at that time. He worked with the company until he later directed the next production of the Dramatic Art Study Association in the following Spring. The independent theatre movement at the Association performed only a limited number of times per production and did not pursue commercial benefit; this did not help Hong Hae-sŏng's financial situation. In fact, the Association never had enough funds for its productions during its life. Even *The Inspector General*, which greatly attracted the public's attention as the first production of the

¹²² Ibid., 111.

¹²³ Yu Ch'i-jin, "Sin'gŭgŭi Sŏn'gakcha Hong Hae-sŏng Sŏnsaeng" [Hong Hae-sŏng, the Forerunner of Sin'gŭk], in *Tongnang Yu Ch'i-jin Chŏnjip* [The Anthology of Yu Ch'i-jin's Works] 8 (Seoul, Sŏulyedae ch'ulp'anbu, 1993), 404.

Association, lost money.¹²⁴ Since then, funding for the productions was primarily based on Sŏ Hang-sŏk's salary from *Tonga Ilbo*, except for two productions for which Kim Kwang-sŏp and Pak Yong-ch'ŏl provided money.¹²⁵ Unlike the other leading members of the Association who had stable occupations, Hong Hae-sŏng had no significant source of income. Therefore, he had to temporarily join Chosŏn Yŏn'gŭksa in May, 1933, in order to relieve his financial problems.

Hong Hae-sŏng directed *Kaehwa chŏnya* (the Night before Revolution, 開化前夜), *In'gan ilchŏngmok* (人間一丁目), *Illiyu Yangsimgwa Katchi Issŏra*¹²⁶ and *Ch'ŏngdang Manwŏn* (No Vacancy in Heaven, 天堂滿員) at Chosŏn Yŏn'gŭksa in May, 1933.¹²⁷ According to the review of *Kaehwa chŏnya*, written by Yu Ch'i-jin in *Tonga Ilbo* on May 5, "Hong Hae-sŏng's directing" for Chosŏn Yŏn'gŭksa attracted many people to come see the production, and the production achieved high artistic values.¹²⁸ Yu Ch'i-jin attributed this accomplishment to Hong Hae-sŏng.

I thought that technique was not everything in theatre and artists' minds could develop technique up to a certain level. I saw an example at Yŏn'gŭksa. Yŏn'gŭksa currently is not in good condition in terms of technique. It lost good actors except Kang Hong-sik and his wife. Nevertheless, their production was not bad. I think their spirit were renewed with the arrival of their new leader, Mr. Hong Hae-sŏng.¹²⁹ (my translation)

¹²⁴ Sŏ Hang-sŏk, "Kŏmch'algwanesŏ P'ungnyŏngikkaji" [From *The Inspector General to Good Harvest Season*], *Samch'ŏlli* 10, no. 11 (November, 1938): 194.

¹²⁵ Sŏ Hang-sŏk, "Han'guk Yŏn'gŭksa" (1) [The History of Korean Theatre] (1), in *Kyŏngan Sŏ Hang-sŏk Chŏnjip* 6 (Seoul: Hasan ch'ulp'ansa, 1987), 2030.

¹²⁶ Humanity, with Conscience, 人類야良心과 갖치 잇씨라

¹²⁷ The themes and the styles of these plays are not known. However, Yu Ch'i-jin's review and the titles of the plays suggest that *Kaehwa chŏnya* seems to be a historical play which was romantic or melodramatic, *Illiyu Yangsimgwa Katchi Issŏra* seems to be a melodrama which depicted the life of the Korean people in the 1930s, and *Ch'ŏngdang Manwŏn* seems to be a comedy.

¹²⁸ Yu Ch'i-jin, "Kŭkp'yŏng: Yŏn'gŭksa Kongyŏnŭl Pogo" (1) [Review: Yŏn'gŭksa's Production] (1), *Tonga Ilbo*, May 5, 1933.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

As Yu Ch'i-jin saw, Hong Hae-sŏng's directing improved the artistic level of Chosŏn Yŏn'gŭksa, which had lost its major stars and was now using minor actors. Hong Hae-sŏng's achievement at Chosŏn Yŏn'gŭksa stimulated other companies in popular theatre toward artistic improvement. These companies began to realize the importance of directing. According to Pak Chin, after Hong Hae-sŏng directed at Chosŏn Yŏn'gŭksa, when the provincial companies toured to Seoul, the capital, they made it a rule to ask a famous director to direct their shows.¹³⁰ After the success in Seoul, Hong Hae-sŏng worked with Chosŏn Yŏn'gŭksa for a while and accompanied the troupe on its tour of the provincial cities.

To the members of the Dramatic Art Study Association, an organization fighting against commercial theatre, Hong Hae-sŏng's activities for Chosŏn Yŏn'gŭksa were considered an unforgivable betrayal. Their attitude toward popular theatre was so negative that Kim Kwang-sŏp even said "commit suicide or retire!"; such a view certainly attacked popular theatre's commercialism and its low artistic level in 1933.¹³¹ Therefore, Chosŏn Yŏn'gŭksa's advertisement of a "production celebrating the joining of Mr. Hong Hae-sŏng, the Maestro in theatre" greatly provoked the Dramatic Art Study Association.¹³² As a result, the other members of the Association could not see him in the same way again, even after Hong Hae-sŏng came back and promised to be faithful to the artistic spirit of the Association. During Hong Hae-sŏng's absence, the Association presented *Arms and the Man* by George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950) for its 4th production on June 27 and 28, 1933 and *The Imbecile* by Luigi Pirandello (1867-1936), the court scene from *The*

¹³⁰ Pak Chin, 120.

¹³¹ Sin A-yŏng, 35.

¹³² Yu Min-yŏng, "Hae-sŏng Hong Chu-sik Yŏn'gu" [A Study of Hae-sŏng Hong Chu-sik], *Korean Theatre* 19, no. 11 (November, 1994): 58

Merchant of Venice by William Shakespeare (1564-1616), and *The Landscape of the Village with Willow* (Pödünamu Sön Tongniüi Punggyöng) by Yu Ch'i-jin on November 28, 29, and 30 of the same year. Chang Ki-je directed for the 4th production and Yu Ch'i-jin directed for the 5th production. Realizing that they could produce shows without Hong Hae-söng, some of the members even argued they should expel Hong Hae-söng and have Yu Ch'i-jin direct shows from that time forward. Sö Hang-sök recollected these controversies in the Association.

Yu Ch'i-jin made his future as a playwright seem promising by his *The Landscape of the Village with Willow* following *T'omak*. Also, he was somewhat successful as a director in the shows directed solely by him. Also, playing the main role in *The Imbecile*, he showed good skill as an actor. [...]

At that time, Hong Hae-söng's being engaged to direct productions at Chosön Yöñ'güksa became a problem among the members of our group. Most coteries maintained that Hong Hae-söng should be kicked out and Yu Ch'i-jin should be appointed as the only one who would direct the productions by the Dramatic Art Study Association. However, I opposed their opinion. "I am not opposing to Yu Ch'i-jin's directing, but Hong Hae-söng's exclusion is a rash judgment." This was my opinion. I maintained that we should learn more from his experience accumulated at the Tsukiji Little Theatre in Japan even if we could not expect new creativeness from him—as the other members argued—insofar as Hong Hae-söng had not yet lost his faith in the New Theatre. The other coteries and I did not yield to each other.

I did not pull back my insistence. Soon, Yu Ch'i-jin left for Japan, not giving any word to me about his trip. According to friends, he left crying "where is my ground?" He did not understand my true heart. I felt pain in my heart.

Now I think the beginning of the tensions between Yu Ch'i-jin and me which occurred during our middle ages started at that time.¹³³ (my translation)

Amid these conflicts among the members of the Dramatic Art Study Association, Yu Ch'i-jin went to Japan to train himself as a director in March 1934. How he trained himself as a director until he returned to Korea in May 1935 is not known.¹³⁴ However, while Yu Ch'i-jin was in Japan, he developed close relationships with the members of the Tokyo Student Art Troupe (Tonggyöng

¹³³ Sö Hang-sök, "Yöñ'güksachök Chasöjön," 1870.

¹³⁴ Pak Yöng-jöng, *Yu Ch'i-jin Yöñ'gügnonüi Sachök Chöñ'gae* [The Development of Yu Ch'i-jin's Theatrical View] (Seoul: T'aehaksa, 1997), 59.

Haksaeng Yesulchwa, 東京學生藝術座), whose major members were Yi Hae-rang (李海浪, 1916-1989) and Kim Tong-hyök (金東赫, 1916-2006),¹³⁵ among others. This relationship later became a great aid for him in forming a power base in the theatre community in Korea around him.¹³⁶ Hong Hae-söng came back to the Association and directed for the organization while Yu Ch'i-jin was in Japan. The controversy about him seemed to have calmed down. However, Hong Hae-söng never again was a leading figure in the Association.

After he came back to the Dramatic Art Study Association, Hong Hae-söng directed *A Doll's House* by Henrik Ibsen (1828-1906) for the 6th production (April 18 and 19, 1934),¹³⁷ *Carrot Hair* by Jules Renard (1864-1910) for the special event for the flood victims in the southern area,¹³⁸ and *The Cherry Orchard* by Anton Chekhov (1860-1904) for the 7th production (December, 7 and 8, 1934).¹³⁹ However, Hong Hae-söng finally decided to leave the Dramatic Art Study Association, and when the Tongyang Theatre was built, he joined the theatre, saying, "Even though my body leaves for the Tongyang Theatre, my soul does not leave the Dramatic Art Study Association."¹⁴⁰

¹³⁵ Kim Tong-wön, 金東園.

¹³⁶ Pak Yöng-jöng, 61.

¹³⁷ Na Ung praised Hong Hae-söng's directing technique in this production. He said, "If an inexperienced director had directed *A Doll's House*, it would have been very boring because the arrangement of the actors on the stage would have become inflexible and the actors would have become unnaturalistic marionettes." Na Ung, "Kügyön che 6 hoe Kongyön *Inhyöngüi Jibül Pogo*" (3) [After Watching *A Doll's House*, the 6th Production of the Dramatic Art Study Association] (3), *Tonga Ilbo*, May 1, 1934.

¹³⁸ 三南水害救済 '音樂, 舞踊, 演劇의 밤,' on September 6, 1934

¹³⁹ About this production, An Yöng-il said, "[. . .] I could see Mr. Hong Hae-söng's efforts accomplished the performance in the environment of the stage which was not well equipped with lighting and everything. Therefore, I wanted to pay my respect to him." An Yöng-il, "Che 7 hoe Kügyön Kongyön *Aenghwawönnül Pogo*" (2) [After Watching *The Cherry Orchard*, the 7th Production of the Dramatic Art Study Association] (2), *Chosön Ilbo*, December 19, 1934.

¹⁴⁰ Sö Hang-sök, "Naüi Iryöksö" [My Resume], in *Kyöngan Sö Hang-sök Chönjip* 5 (Seoul: Hasan ch'ulp'ansa, 1987), 1790.

The reason why Hong Hae-sŏng left the Dramatic Art Study Association—the organization which practiced his ideal of the New Theatre—is not clear. Hong Hae-sŏng himself did not leave any evidence to suggest his reason for doing so and other people around him also did not leave any records that directly explained the reason. Therefore, previous studies of Hong Hae-sŏng speculated on his financial difficulty and the uncomfortable relationships with some other members of the Dramatic Art Study Association, caused by his directing at Chosŏn Yŏn'gŭksa, as circumstantial evidence of his breaking with the Association. Such speculations have some validity. However, the political environment in which he was placed at the Association also should be considered. Hong Hae-sŏng's financial difficulty was something to which he may have been accustomed. In addition, Hong Hae-sŏng showed a patient personality that was “benevolent like a father.” It would not have been very likely for him to give up his ideal of the New Theatre only because of some uncomfortable relationships. Therefore, we can speculate on other circumstantial evidence that suggests that Hong Hae-sŏng thought that the value of his activities in the Dramatic Art Study Association and that of his work with other organizations were not essentially different from each other.

This other circumstantial evidence lies in the fact that the activities of the New Theatre were extremely limited under the colonial oppression at that time. Imperialist Japan strengthened its colonial control over Korea, and the New Theatre could not convey any political purposes as a result. Thus, Hong Hae-sŏng probably found that his activities could not help but be depoliticized and the distinction between the New Theatre and popular theatre became more vague. This hazy distinction probably led him to his transfer to the Tongyang Theatre. As Japan intensified its imperialism after the Manchurian Incident in 1931, any play that was politically suspicious could not be produced, even in Japan around 1934. Meanwhile, theatrical activities in Korea underwent

harsher control.¹⁴¹ The Dramatic Art Study Association, which experienced tension with censorship even at its first step, had to face more limitations imposed by a worsening enforcement of censorship. For example, the repertory of its 6th production in 1934 had to be changed, including *A Doll's House* in place of *The Silver Box*, as the play of John Galsworthy (1867-1933) could not pass censorship while being rehearsed.¹⁴² The censorship was so harsh and arbitrary that Yu Ch'i-jin later could not understand why the play did not pass censorship.¹⁴³ Even the production of *A Doll's House* was mounted under the condition that it would be the last production of the play in Korea.¹⁴⁴ Hong Hae-sŏng had to feel the frustration of this process. The colonial oppression on theatrical activities continued to worsen. For the 8th production of the Dramatic Art Study Association in 1935, even though Hong Hae-sŏng was not involved this time, *So* (Ox, 소) by Yu Ch'i-jin, *Chulhaenange Sanŭn Saramdŭl*¹⁴⁵ by Sim Chae-sun (沈載淳), *T'osŏngnang* (토성낭) by Han T'ae-ch'ŏn (韓泰泉), and *Juno and the Paycock* by Sean O'Casey (1880-1964) did not pass censorship. Therefore, the performances scheduled to be held in the early part of the year were postponed to November, and changed to Yi Mu-yŏng's *The Daydreaming People*¹⁴⁶, Yu Ch'i-jin's *Chesa*¹⁴⁷, and Courteline's *Le Paix chez soi*. While the productions were delayed, in July the colonial police arrested and tortured Yu Ch'i-jin, charging that his *So* encouraged socialist

¹⁴¹ Yi Tu-hyŏn, 195.

¹⁴² Ibid., 195; Yu Min-yŏng, *Han'guk Yŏn'gŭk undongsa*, 270-271.

¹⁴³ Yu Ch'i-jin, "Chasŏjŏn," 128.

¹⁴⁴ Yi Tu-hyŏn, 180.

¹⁴⁵ 줄행낭에 사는 사람들

¹⁴⁶ Hnannaje Kkumkkunŭn Saramdŭl

¹⁴⁷ Ancestor Worship Rite, 祭祀

revolution.¹⁴⁸ In such an environment, Hong Hae-sŏng probably felt that the New Theatre could not properly execute its nationalistic and social function. At the same time, once he found that the New Theatre, as a cultural movement based on nationalism, came to lose its socio-political meaning, Hong Hae-sŏng may have seen his activities in the Dramatic Art Study Association and his activities in the Tongyang Theatre as essentially similar. Such a changed environment probably became another factor that encouraged Hong Hae-sŏng's transfer to Tongyang Theatre.

Hong Hae-sŏng directed for only about two and a half years (from May, 1932 to December, 1934) at the Dramatic Art Study Association. However, the significance of his activity in the organization is very important in the history of Korean theatre. He became the decisive factor in forming the Dramatic Art Study Association, which practiced tenets of the independent theatre movement virtually for the first time in Korea. While the other members of the Dramatic Art Study Association did not have practical experience in theatre,¹⁴⁹ as the only practitioner in the group (based on his experiences at the Tsukiji Little Theatre), Hong Hae-sŏng played very important functions in the Dramatic Art Study Association in its early stages. He was influential in choosing the plays for the repertory of the Association. Furthermore, his directing gave the organization a foundation, on which it continued to grow as the leader of the New Theatre, by providing high artistic standards in its early productions—standards which were not found in popular theatre productions. The Association truly personified the independent theatre movement while he was in the group, and it officially gave up interest in the movement soon after he left the group. Also, as a director for the Association, Hong Hae-sŏng introduced many important modern dramas to Korea.

¹⁴⁸ Yu Ch'i-jin, "Chasŏjŏn," 135.

Hong Hae-sŏng tried to introduce exemplary plays of modern Western theatre in Korea, as he believed that foreign plays should be the “new seed[s]” for modern theatre in Korea since the 1920s. While Hong Hae-sŏng stayed in the Dramatic Art Study Association, 12 plays out of the 14 produced by the organization were foreign plays translated by the members of the Dramatic Art Study Association. The two Korean plays produced by the association during this period were Yu Ch’i-jin’s *T’omak* and *The Landscape of the Village with Willow*.¹⁵⁰ Among these 14 plays, Hong Hae-sŏng directed 9 plays: *The Inspector General*, *The Magnanimous Lover*, *The Gaol Gate*, *Seabattle*, *The Anniversary*, *T’omak*, *A Doll’s House*, *Carrot Hair*, and *The Cherry Orchard*. Among these 9 plays, 6 plays—*The Inspector General*, *Seabattle*, *The Anniversary*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *The Imbecile*, and *The Cherry Orchard*—were plays produced by Tsukiji Little Theatre.¹⁵¹ This data suggests Hong Hae-sŏng had influence in choosing the Dramatic Art Study Association’s repertoires, and intended to import the models of Western drama he experienced at the Tsukiji Little Theatre.

It seems that Hong Hae-sŏng tried to introduce not only the models of Western dramatic literature, but also the aesthetic models of stage production that he considered ideal or canonical while he directed the plays which had been produced at the Tsukiji Little Theatre. Therefore, when Hong Hae-sŏng directed the plays he had experienced at the Tsukiji Little Theatre, he re-presented the production values of the productions he had seen there. For example, Hong Hae-sŏng’s directing had already shown “the very way of the Tsukiji Little Theatre”¹⁵² in the production of

¹⁴⁹ According to Yi Tu-hyŏn, Yun Paek-nam was not an active member of the Dramatic Art Study Association. Yi Tu-hyŏn, 171-172.

¹⁵⁰ Yi Sang-u, “Kŭgyesul yŏn’guhoe taehan Yŏn’gu: Pŏnyŏkkŭk Rep’ŏt’ŏrie taehan Koch’arŭl Chungsimŭro” [A Study of the Dramatic Art Study Association: Its Repertoires of Translated Play], *Han’guk Kŭgyesul Yŏn’gu* 7 (1997): 97.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 99-100.

¹⁵² Pak Chin, 84.

Morandŭnggi at the Sinhŭng Theatre, and his *The Inspector General* at the Dramatic Art Study Association was criticized that it resembled the Tsukiji Little Theatre's production "like direct importation" (직수입적).¹⁵³ According to Pak Se-yŏn, the photographs of the productions of *The Inspector General* at the Moscow Art Theatre, the Tsukiji Little Theatre, and the Dramatic Art Study Association were very similar.¹⁵⁴ Also, according to Ko Sŭng-gil, the blocking lines drawn in Hong Hae-sŏng's directing note for *The Inspector General* were similar to Osanai Kaoru's and Stanislavsky's.¹⁵⁵ Such a tendency was probably not due to his lack of talent, but more the result of the influence of his teacher Osanai Kaoru, who tried to implant in Japan the aesthetics of modern theatre in practice by copying the exemplary productions of the West—especially Stanislavsky's.

Hong Hae-sŏng's re-presenting the production values of the Tsukiji Little Theatre seems to have done both good and harm to him. The production values of the Tsukiji Little Theatre were so academic that Sim Hun described "the stage of the Tsukiji Little Theatre spread[ing] the scent of boiling minerals in a tube [. . .]"¹⁵⁶ Such production values must have been reflected in productions directed by Hong Hae-sŏng, and they thus became the base of his achievements. Hong Hae-sŏng gave his productions qualities that differed from the qualities of the popular Korean theatre companies' productions. However, at the same time, sticking to his ideal images of the Tsukiji Little Theatre's productions may have caused an inflexibility that caused him trouble in

¹⁵³ Kim Pang-ok, "Han'guk Yŏn'gŭgŭi Sasiljuŭijŏk Yŏn'giron Yŏn'gu" [A Study on the Theory of Realistic Acting in the Korean Theatre], *Han'guk Yŏn'gŭkhak* 22 (2004): 162.

¹⁵⁴ Pak Se-yŏn, "Yŏkcha Sŏmun" [Foreword of the Translator] to *Tsukiji Sogŭkchangŭi T'ansaeng* [The Birth of the Tsukiji Little Theatre], by Sugai Yukio, trans. Pak Se-yŏn (Seoul: Hyŏndae mihaksa, 2005), 29.

¹⁵⁵ Pak Se-yŏn, "Tsukiji sogŭkchang Yŏn'gu: Kongyŏn inyŏmgwa Kongyŏn hwaltongŭl Jungsimŭro" [A Study of the Tsukiji Little Theatre: Its Theatrical Ideology and Performances] (master's thesis, Chungangdaehakkyo, 2001), 75.

¹⁵⁶ Sim Hun, "T'owŏlhoe Irŏnham" (2) [Giving a Word to T'owŏlhoe] (2), *Chosŏn Ilbo*, November 6, 1929.

dealing with Korean audiences' taste and understanding. For example, Chu Yǒng-ha's review of *Seabattle*, pointing out that the production should have cut more of the verbose parts,¹⁵⁷ suggested that Hong Hae-sǒng might not have been easily willing to give up his ideal image of the Tsukiji Little Theatre's production. Probably, the doubt concerning Hong Hae-sǒng's directing ability—for example, the other members' negative view that they “could not expect new creativeness” from Hong Hae-sǒng as seen in the previous quotation of Sǒ Hang-sǒk—was partly caused from Hong Hae-sǒng's sticking to the production values of the Tsukiji Little Theatre's productions. These values were canonical to him.

However, even if Hong Hae-sǒng was not a great director, there is no doubt that he greatly contributed to the development of the Dramatic Art Study Association. Also, in the Dramatic Art Study Association's development, Hong Hae-sǒng greatly aided in making modern theatre in Western style take root in Korea and thereby helped Korean theatre keep pace with World (Western) theatre of the 20th century. Hong Hae-sǒng's cultural nationalism, his intent to contribute to the modernization of Korea through his theatrical activities, had its fruition.

4.2.3. Dramatic Art Study Association after Hong Hae-sǒng's Departure

After Hong Hae-sǒng stopped working with the Dramatic Art Study Association, Yu Ch'i-jin, who came back to Korea from Japan in May, 1935, took over the artistic leadership of the organization. He declared that the Dramatic Art Study Association would no longer produce plays for an elite audience in a small venue, and would begin productions for the less-educated public. This effort would include producing Korean plays more frequently at bigger theatres in order to bring theatre to a wider audience. This choice on the part of Yu Ch'i-jin was an official relinquishing of the Independent Theatre Movement.

¹⁵⁷ Chu Yǒng-ha, “Kǔkp'yǒng: Silhǒm Mudae Siyǒn,” [Review: Silhǒm Mudae's “experimental production”] *Chosǒn Ilbo*, July 1, 1932.

This new phase of the Dramatic Art Study Association could boast a certain merit, in bringing theatre closer to the public. However, it could also bring the risk of mere commercialization and producing plays whose artistic level was rather low (while the Association's spirit was being frustrated by the colonial authority). For example, concerning two Korean plays, Yu Ch'i-jin's *Chesa* and Yi Mu-yŏng's *The Daydreaming People* in the 8th production in November, 1935,¹⁵⁸ the reviews described them as "a failure as a play"¹⁵⁹ (*Chesa*) and "the novelist Yi Mu-yŏng's failure, which is innocent and not savable" (*The Daydreaming People*).¹⁶⁰ Also, Tolstoy's *Resurrection*, as the 16th production in April, 1937, showed bald commercialism, as it was performed in the way that the *sinp'a* company Yesŏngjwa (藝星座) performed the play in the 1910s.¹⁶¹ The review of *Resurrection* in *Maeil Sinbo* on April 14, 1937, wrote: "the inconsistent directing, lack of rehearsal, and the actors' not-respecting the script resembling the attitude of the actors in popular theatre" in this production "made the faces of the members of the audience blush."¹⁶²

Meanwhile, colonial oppression under the stifling Japanese imperialism became even harsher. The colonial authority attempted to dissolve every organization engaged in the Cultural Movement after the break out of the Second Sino-Japanese War. The authority demanded that the Dramatic Art Study Association disband, pointing out that "Study Association" (Yŏn'guhoe,

¹⁵⁸ These plays were performed with Courteline's *Le Paix chez soi*.

¹⁵⁹ Yi Ŭn-yŏng, "Haengdongŭi Yesul: Kŭgyŏn 8 hoe Kongyŏnŭl Pogo" (3) [Art of Action: After Watching the 8th production of the Dramatic Art Study Association] (3), *Chosŏn Chungang Ilbo*, December 1, 1935.

¹⁶⁰ Kim Mun-jip, "Kŭgyŏn che 8 hoe Kongyŏn Insanggi" (2) [Impressions of the 8th production of the Dramatic Art Study Association] (2), *Chosŏn Ilbo*, November 28, 1935.

¹⁶¹ Yu Ch'i-jin, "Chasŏjŏn," 145.

¹⁶² Yi Tu-hyŏn, 211.

研究會) in the name of the organization implied a political purpose.¹⁶³ Therefore, the Dramatic Art Study Association transformed itself into a professional company, as the colonial police suggested a bureaucratic solution—that the organization could remain as a professional company, whose goal was nothing but commercial benefit.¹⁶⁴ Finally, the professional theatrical company called Kŭgyŏnjwa (the Kŭgyŏn Company, 劇研座), formerly the Dramatic Art Study Association was formed in March 28, 1938.¹⁶⁵ However, Kŭgyŏnjwa did not last long. After only a year, introducing some new plays such as *The Cuckoo* by Jeanette Marks, *Winterset* by Maxwell Anderson (1888-1959), *Awake and Sing* by Clifford Odets (1906-1963), *The Steamboat Tenacity* by Charles Vildrac (1882-1971), *Kil* (Road, 길) by Kim Chin-su (金鎭壽, 1909-1966), and *Tonyŏm* (道念) by Ham Se-dŏk (咸世德, 1916-1950), and re-running some popular plays such as *Kach'usha*,¹⁶⁶ *Nunmŏn Tongsaeng*,¹⁶⁷ and *Ch'unhyang-jŏn*¹⁶⁸ by Yu Ch'i-jin, it stopped functioning around June 1939. The exact reason of the dissolution of Kŭgyŏnjwa is not clear. The members of Kŭgyŏnjwa explained that the colonial authority forced them to disband. However, some scholars argue that the dissolution of Kŭgyŏnjwa was due to the conflict among the members about the methods of running the company.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶³ Sŏ Hang-sŏk, “Yŏn'gŭksachŏk Chasŏjŏn,” 1797.

¹⁶⁴ Sŏ Yŏn-ho, *Han'guk Yŏngŭksa* [A History of Korean Theatre] (Seoul: Yŏngŭkkwa In'gan, 2003), 364.

¹⁶⁵ “Chŏnmun kŭktanŭro Chŏnhyanghan Kŭgyesul yŏn'guhoe Chinsang” [The True Story of the Dramatic Art Study Association's Transformation to a Professional Company], *Chogwang* (May 1938): 274.

¹⁶⁶ Tolstoy's *Resurrection*.

¹⁶⁷ An adaptation of Arthur Schnitzler's *Blind Geronimo and His Brother*

¹⁶⁸ The story of Ch'unhyang, 春香傳

¹⁶⁹ Pak Yŏng-jŏng, 123-127.

4.3. Hong Hae-sŏng in the Tongyang Theatre

When Hong Sun-ŏn (洪淳彦), the husband of the famous dancer Pae Ku-ja (裴龜子, 1905-?), opened the Tongyang Theatre on November 1, 1935, Hong Hae-sŏng joined the theatre. Hong Sun-ŏn had become interested in theatre while helping his wife, and decided to open the Tongyang Theatre, which was the only theatre building wholly devoted to theatre at that time in Korea. As soon as it was opened, the Tongyang Theatre emerged as the leader of popular theatre with its groundbreaking facilities and management. However, as popular theatre (which evolved from *sinp'a* of the 1910s) only pursued commercial benefits by pandering to the masses' vulgar taste and neglecting the problems of real life, it was attacked as the enemy of modern theatre, by both the people who were engaged in the New Theatre and those who were engaged in the "proletariat theatre."¹⁷⁰ While popular theatre was considered "not modern" or "anti-modern," and his conversion to popular theatre was viewed as a betrayal of his belief in the New Theatre, Hong Hae-sŏng lost his stature as an activist in the Cultural Movement. Therefore, as a result of losing his standing as a leader of modernization, he was in danger of becoming forgotten in history. On the other hand, Hong Hae-sŏng's presence in and his working with the Tongyang Theatre contributed to the development of the artistic level of popular theatre and made it considerably more legitimate. As a result, he helped bring about the blurring of the distinction between the New Theatre and popular theatre which had existed since the 1920s.

In addition to the political reasons discussed in the previous section, Hong Hae-sŏng's joining the Tongyang Theatre was probably the result of how Hong Sun-ŏn and Hong Hae-sŏng met each other's personal needs. The Tongyang Theatre was the only theatre devoted to dramatic art in Korea at that time, with the most well-equipped facilities, including a 700-seat theatre, a

¹⁷⁰ Hong Chae-bŏm, *Han'guk Taejungpigŭkkwa Kŭndaesŏngŭi Ch'ehŏm* [The Korean Popular Tragedy and the Experience of Modernity in Korea] (Seoul: Tosŏch'ulp'an Pagijŏng, 2002), 13.

revolving stage, and a cyclorama (*kuppelhorizont*—which the Tsukiji Little Theatre also had).¹⁷¹ Hong Sun-ŏn probably needed Hong Hae-sŏng, who had acquired abundant knowledge about various aspects of theatrical production at the Tsukiji Little Theatre, in order to effectively utilize the facilities and satisfy the demand for good directing in popular theatre. As Sin Pulch’ul (申不出), an actor in popular theatre, had said that actors in popular theatre could not show good acting because they had not had chances to work with good directors,¹⁷² the demand of good directing was already growing in popular theatre. Also, Hong Sun-ŏn could have intended to use Hong Hae-sŏng’s well-known name for his theatre’s advertisement.¹⁷³

Hong Hae-sŏng may have thought that the Tongyang Theatre was a good environment in which he could focus only on theatrical activities, as well as relieve his financial difficulties. The Tongyang Theatre formed its own troupe to present theatrical performances on a continuous basis during the entire year, and paid a monthly salary to its members. As the other companies usually paid their actors only when they had performances and the performances made enough benefits,¹⁷⁴ the Tongyang Theatre fostered an environment in which theatre came to function as a “profession” in the word’s true meaning for the first time in Korea.¹⁷⁵ Therefore, Hong Hae-sŏng, who suffered

¹⁷¹ Sŏ Hang-sŏk, “Han’guk Yŏn’gŭksa” (2), 2072.

¹⁷² Sin Pulch’ul, “Hyŏnha Kŭktanŭi siljŏngŭl nonhaya (sang)” [About the Current Situation of Theatre 1], *Tonga Ilbo*, August 28, 1932.

¹⁷³ In a conference hosted by *Tonga Ilbo* in 1939, Yu Ch’i-jin said about Hong Hae-sŏng, “Although popular theatre companies invite people like Mr. Hong Hae-sŏng, they don’t give them enough opportunities to express their talents. They invite them just for advertisement [. . .]” “Chosŏn Yŏn’gŭgŭi Naagal Panghyang” [The Direction to Which Korean Theatre Should Go], *Tonga Ilbo*, January 13, 1939.

¹⁷⁴ Ko Sŏl-bong, *Chŭngŏn Yŏn’gŭksa* [Testimony of the History of Theatre] (Seoul: Tosŏch’ulp’an Chinyang, 1990), 43.

¹⁷⁵ Yu Ch’i-jin, “Chosŏnŭi Yŏn’gŭgŭn Ŏdiro” [Where is Korean Theatre Going?], in *Tongnang Yu Ch’i-jin Chŏnjip* [The Anthology of Yu Ch’i-jin’s Works] 6 (Seoul: Sŏulyedae ch’ulp’anbu, 1993), 345.

from chronic financial problems, may have wanted to establish a stable subsistence for the first time after he had returned to Korea by joining the Tongyang Theatre.

In addition, Hong Hae-sŏng may have been attracted by the fact that the Tongyang Theatre had its own theatre building. The lack of buildings devoted only to dramatic performance was one of the oldest problems of Korean theatre at that time. Even though this problem had been pointed out in Yun Paek-nam's "Yŏngŭkkwa Sahoe" (Theatre and Society, 演劇과 社會) in 1920,¹⁷⁶ the problem had not been solved through the 1930s, until the Tongyang Theatre appeared in 1935. In the article "The Theatre Movement Decline" (沈滯한 劇運動), a writer whose pen name was Ha Ch'ŏng (Clean River, 河淸) in *Maeil Sinbo*, wrote on December 9 that there were four theatre buildings for Korean audiences in Seoul. Owners of these buildings were not quite willing to lend the places out for dramatic arts (as their original purpose was showing movies). In addition, the rent for these places was too expensive for troupes to make a profit on their productions.¹⁷⁷ Therefore, the Dramatic Art Study Association's productions directed by Hong Hae-sŏng were performed at the Kyŏngsŏng Public Hall, the stage of which was about 5 feet deep and about 20 feet wide. Even this place was available only for several days at best, and the atmosphere was not quite appropriate for dramatic performances, as the hall had not been built as a theatre. According to Yu Ch'i-jin, the public hall with such an environment "is not a stage."¹⁷⁸ Hong Hae-sŏng himself longed to have a theatre building in Korea in his article "Let's Have a Theatre" (극장을 가지자) in *Chosŏn Ilbo* on July 7, 1935, writing:

¹⁷⁶ See Yun Paek-nam, "Yŏn'gŭkkwa Sahoe" 10, *Tonga Ilbo*, May 16, 1920.

¹⁷⁷ Yu Ch'i-jin, "Chosŏn Yŏn'gŭgŭi Apkil" [The Future of Korean Theatre], in *Tongnang Yu Ch'i-jin Chŏnjip* [The Anthology of Yu Ch'i-jin's Works] 6 (Seoul: Sŏulyedae ch'ulp'anbu, 1993), 318.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

How poor Korean society is. While even a fox had its den and the flying birds have their wings, the Korean society does not have a theatre in which its mind could take a rest, even though they say that Korea has four thousand years' history of culture. Meanwhile, theatre people, who are walking on the road of asceticism in theatre, giving up their families and homes, are emaciated ascetics. If our society built a theatre that could be rented with a low budget and rented by both professional and amateur troupes so they could feel comfortable while performing at least once, that is the true realization of Korean Theatre. Korean society, give the theatre artists in Korea a theatre building!¹⁷⁹

Although Hong Hae-sŏng in the 1920s had suggested that Koreans find alternative stages (while it was impossible for Koreans to build a theatre), once a theatre building for Koreans was erected in Seoul, he may have been attracted by the facility, and that probably made him choose to join the Tongyang Theatre.

In December, 1935, The Tongyang Theatre formed its own troupe called Ch'ŏngch'unjwa (the Youth Theatre, 青春座), which pursued realistic drama, and gave birth in February, 1936, to another troupe called Tonggŭkchwa (the East Dramatic Theatre, 東劇座). This new troupe, which pursued historical drama, was needed, as one troupe could not cover all the production schedule. In March, 1936, the Tongyang Theatre formed a third troupe called Hŭigŭkjwa (the Comedy Theatre, 喜劇座), which focused on comedy. These three troupes tried to help the Tongyang Theatre operate without any interval between performances. However, Tonggŭkchwa, with its historical plays, became less popular than Ch'ŏngch'unjwa, and Hŭigŭkchwa also declined, as Koreans loved tragedy much more than comedy. As a result, Tonggŭkchwa and Hŭigŭkchwa joined together to form a new troupe called Hohwasŏn (the Luxurious Ship, 豪華船) in September, 1936. However, even this troupe was not as popular as Ch'ŏngch'unjwa, and Hohwasŏn was finally reorganized as Sŏnggun (the Cluster of Stars, 星群) in November, 1941. With these troupes, the Tongyang Theatre presented three to five productions (maximum) per month, and frequently

¹⁷⁹ Yu Min-yŏng, *Han'guk Kŭndae Yŏn'gŭksa*, 439.

sent the troupes outside Seoul for tours. When the troupes toured the provincial areas, they usually brought their two most successful productions and stayed a day in each city.¹⁸⁰ The Tongyang Theatre's tour was such an important source of income that the troupes usually toured for six months a year.¹⁸¹

As the head of the directing department at the Tongyang Theatre, Hong Hae-sŏng usually directed the productions of Ch'ŏngch'unjwa. Sometimes he directed the other troupes' shows when it was necessary. As Hong Hae-sŏng could not take care of all the shows alone, Pak Chin, who was the head of the literature department, and An Chonghwa (安鐘和, 1902-1966), the guest director, also directed during the early years of the Tongyang Theatre. Later Yi Sŏ-hyang (李曙鄉) and An Yŏng-il (安英一), as resident directors, and Na Ung as the guest director joined the directing department.¹⁸²

Although Hong Hae-sŏng was one of the highest ranking of the leading members of the Tongyang Theatre, he was an employee after all. Therefore, he could not overcome the limitation of the identity of the Tongyang Theatre in which commercial interest took precedence over everything, and did not have conditions that would allow him to realize his artistic talent as a director. The repertory of the Tongyang Theatre consisted mostly of melodramas, which flattered the masses' tastes, and were far from the modern dramas with which he wanted to be engaged. At the same time, the busy schedules of the Tongyang Theatre did not let him show his directing ability through well-rehearsed performance.

¹⁸⁰ Ko Sŏl-bong, 34-41.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 61.

¹⁸² Sŏ Yŏn-ho, *Uri sidaeŭi Yŏn'gŭgin*, 28.

The Tongyang Theatre especially focused on producing plays that appealed to the sentimental tastes of female members of its audience. Ch'oe Tok-kyŏn (崔獨鵲, 1901-1970),¹⁸³ who was the manager of the Tongyang Theatre, recollected the characteristics of the repertoires of the theatre in his article “The Days of the Romantic: Life and Theatre”¹⁸⁴ in *Chosŏn Ilbo* on April 13, 1965, using the term “*sinp'a*,” which was usually used to refer to popular theatre at that time.

In many cases, the playwrights who belonged to the Tongyang Theatre began to write their plays after they had decided which role would go to which actor, considering the targeted audience and the actors' fortes. Also, considering women to be the “fans” of theatre, *sinp'a* dramas cleverly tried to satisfy their taste. Female audience always enjoyed plays that made them shed tears. To them, this was good drama.¹⁸⁵ (my translation)

Therefore, the Tongyang Theatre's plays followed, in many cases, the typical formula, in which the innocent good women underwent adversities caused by bad fortune or wicked characters, resulting in interest and sympathy or empathy primarily in female members of the audience. The advertisement of one of the productions by the Tongyang Theatre in *Maeil Sinbo* on August 28, 1936 revealed the type of the most popular plot as follows:

[She is] deprived of her lover who is more cherished than her own life and finally commits the murder of her lover's enemy by stabbing him. On top of that, the officer who arrests her is none other than her own brother. What a cruel fate God set on her! What will the next step of this courtesan, Hong-do, be? A court drama produced for the first time in this country! Come and see! What judgment is made by the fair judge? Will Hong-do and Sim Yŏng-ho marry each other or not? After it causes sighs and tears one more time, the play ends.¹⁸⁶ (my translation)

¹⁸³ Ch'oe Sang-dŏk

¹⁸⁴ Nangman Sidae-Insaenggwa Yŏn'gŭk, 浪漫時代-人生斗 演劇

¹⁸⁵ Hong Chae-bŏm, *Han'guk Taejungpigŭkkwa Kŭndaesŏngŭi Ch'ehŏm*, 193.

¹⁸⁶ The advertisement was for the sequel of Im Sŏn-gyu (林仙圭)'s *Sarange Sokgo Tone Ulgo* (Deceived by Love and Suffered by Money). Yi Tu-hyŏn, *Han'guk Yŏn'gŭksa* [The History of Korean Theatre], 3rd ed. (Seoul: Hagyŏnsa, 2001), 362.

This kind of playwriting technique, which tried to pander to and reflect the taste of women, was at its most extreme in an episode of the playwright Yi Sŏ-gu (李瑞求, 1899-1981), as recollected by Pak Chin. According to Pak Chin, one day Yi Sŏ-gu suddenly disappeared, not having submitted a new play, even though he was supposed to submit a new play to the theatre on that very day. Later, he called Pak Chin to ask him to bring some money and to pay for him to go to a brothel called Hwanggŭmnu (Gold House, 黃金樓). When Pak Chin arrived at the brothel with money, he found that Yi Sŏ-gu, whose official name was Kobŏm (Lonely Sail, 孤帆), surrounded by five or six prostitutes in a large room.

The prostitutes' eyes were red, and each of them had a handkerchief in her hand. [...] After he said to me "Wait a minute" and turned to the prostitutes, Kobŏm asked them "Now, shall I kill this guy or let him live?" Very excited, the prostitutes yelled "Kill, kill him" in a chorus. [...] Kobŏm asked them again: "How shall I kill him?" Fantastic ideas poured out from the prostitutes' mouths. Shoot him, stab him, amputate his body, execute him after throwing him in a prison and give him a life sentence. . . all of them chattered.¹⁸⁷ (my translation)

Suiting such a low brow taste, the plays produced by the Tongyang Theatre pursued commercial benefit, rather than offering any deep observation of life or portraying the essence of life, and did not require special directing ability expressed through a particular style or profound interpretation.

At the same time, as confirmed in Ch'oe Tok-kyŏn's confession about casting at the Tongyang Theatre, the plays of the Tongyang Theatre at that time were written for star actors and depended on the stars' popularity. Therefore, the performances tended to be propelled by personal technique rather than ensemble.¹⁸⁸ Besides, the length of the rehearsal period per show was usually only several days at best because repertories were changed almost every week.¹⁸⁹ Under these

¹⁸⁷ Pak Chin, 181-182.

¹⁸⁸ Kim Pang-ok, 168.

¹⁸⁹ Ko Sŏl-bong, 56.

conditions, it was virtually impossible for the actors to have enough time to study the playwright's purpose and the meaning of their characters in the play.¹⁹⁰ In fact, the schedules of the Tongyang Theatre were so busy that its members even complained "[I] don't have time to read a book [. . .]" and "I would have fallen ill if it had lasted a year," as noted in the article "A Table Talk of Actors" (Yŏn'gŭk Paeu Chwadamhoe, 演劇俳優座談會) in the magazine Chokwang (朝光) in December 1937. Under such restrictions, while it was impossible for a director to realize his plan in a production (as Pak Chin confessed),¹⁹¹ Hong Hae-sŏng directed over eighty melodramatic productions for the Tongyang Theatre¹⁹² and also shouldered responsibility for tours of the provincial areas.¹⁹³

Even though he was limited within the commercial system of popular theatre at the Tongyang Theatre, that did not mean the death of Hong Hae-sŏng's artistic spirit. Hong Hae-sŏng never lost his confidence about the meaning of his theatrical activities¹⁹⁴ and never gave up his pride as an artist. Therefore, although he could not show off his talent, Hong Hae-sŏng contributed to improvement of the artistic level of popular theatre by functioning as a good teacher and model of a theatre artist for the actors at the Tongyang Theatre with his sincere attitude toward theatre. According to Ko Sŏl-bong (高雪峰, 1913-2001), who joined the Tongyang Theatre in 1937, Hong

¹⁹⁰ See Chi Kyŏng-sun, "Yuchŏng Muchŏng" [With Emotions, without Emotions], *Chogwang* (December 1940): 158.

¹⁹¹ Pak Chin, 135.

¹⁹² Chŏng Ch'ŏl, "Han'guk Kŭndae Yŏnch'ulsa Yŏn'gu" [A Study of the History of Directing in Korea] (PhD diss., Chosŏndaehakkyo, 2000), 71-72.

¹⁹³ Pak Chin, 139.

¹⁹⁴ In the conference reported on January 13, 1939, in *Tonga Ilbo*, when someone asked Hong Hae-sŏng, "Do you think your activities in the commercial theatre are culturally meaningful?" he answered "Of course, I do." "Chosŏn Yŏn'gŭgi Naagal Panghyang," *Tonga Ilbo*, January 13, 1939.

Hae-sŏng showed reverence toward theatre, and trained the young actors in the theatre by emphasizing both ethics in the mental aspect and actual experience in the practical aspect.

According to Ko Sŏl-bong, Hong Hae-sŏng emphasized that his actors have an artist's demeanor. Hong, who was the biggest name in theatre at that time, was always formally attired and always seen carrying a book.¹⁹⁵ Ko Sŏl-bong recollected,

A stage artist who incessantly worked, he studied in every bit of time he had, always carrying a book about theatre. If he saw actors just idle at a café, he scolded them, saying that they should read plays or books about theatre rather than just wasting time. One day, he passed me a book titled *Yŏn'gŭgŭi Chinsu* (the Essence of Theatre) saying, "read this book if you didn't bring one" at a café.¹⁹⁶ (my translation)

Hong Hae-sŏng always showed that he was a man with pride and dignity as an artist,¹⁹⁷ and taught his actors to follow his example. Ko Sŏl-bong recollected Hong Hae-sŏng's teaching as follows:

He especially emphasized the attitudes that an actor should have. According to him, an actor should always be tidy and gentle, and never do a thing that a gentleman wouldn't do. Also, an actor should always work hard so he could be respected as an exemplary artist by the other citizens. If he saw an actor who didn't respect such principles, he excluded the actor from casting.¹⁹⁸ (my translation)

When he dealt with the practical aspects of theatre, Hong Hae-sŏng considered the actors' creation to be mysterious and divine. Thus, he emphasized to his actors that they should have the required sincere attitude toward their work. He allowed no one but the actors to enter the dressing room while the actors prepared a performance, arguing that the moments of change in which an

¹⁹⁵ Ko Sŏl-bong, *Iyagi Kŭndae Yŏn'gŭksa* [The Stories of the History of Modern Theatre] (Seoul: Ch'angjak Maŭl, 2000), 256.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ Sŏ Yŏn-ho, *Uri sidaeŭi Yŏn'gŭgin*, 29.

actor creates the second “I” must not be revealed to other people.¹⁹⁹ Also, he believed that actors must be on time for the beginning of rehearsal and the raising of the curtain, in deference to both members of the creative group to which they belonged and the contract between the creative group and the audience.²⁰⁰ Therefore, performances at the Tongyang Theatre always began on time, at seven o’clock in the evening. Hong Hae-sŏng—whose nickname was “the standard clock”²⁰¹ because of his punctuality—arrived at the theatre at five to seven and rang a bell. At that moment, all members of the Tongyang Theatre became alert and were able to open the show on time. According to Ko Sŏl-bong, the influence of Hong Hae-sŏng’s punctuality spread to other theatrical companies in Korea. Ultimately, these other companies came to raise their curtains on time.²⁰²

In actor training, Hong Hae-sŏng had the young actors at the Tongyang Theatre experience practical aspects of theatre through involvement in actual productions. Ko Sŏl-bong recollected Hong Hae-sŏng’s ways of training the actors as follows:

The one who was in charge of actor-training at the Tongyang Theatre was Mr. Hong Hae-sŏng. Actor training at the Tongyang Theatre was completely based on practice. In order to learn the basics of theatre, we student-actors observed the senior actors’ acting when the show began, squatting on the corner of the stage after the show began. After the curtain descended, we observed how sets and props were changed. Student-actors’ work primarily consisted of trifling tasks such as cleaning the stage, cleaning the dressing room, transcribing scripts, and moving the props. What was interesting was the fact that the student-actors were observing the shows’ basic make-up even when they were not playing any roles. They learned not only acting but also make-up in that way. Sometimes, the student-actors went to the dressing room early in order to see and imitate how the senior actors put on their make-up. Also, sometimes Mr. Hong Hae-sŏng gathered the student-actors in the dressing room and gave them lectures about theatre,

¹⁹⁹ Ko Sŏl-bong, *Iyagi Kŭndae Yŏn’gŭksa*, 125.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 255.

²⁰¹ Pak Chin, 84.

²⁰² Ko Sŏl-bong, *Iyagi Kŭndae Yŏn’gŭksa*, 255.

including make-up and speech. Mr. Hong Hae-sŏng had an overwhelming knowledge of make-up. He was an expert who could do any special make-up.²⁰³

Although it was probably partly due to the constraints of Tongyang Theatre, which could not provide adequate time to train its actors, such training through real production was also the result of Hong Hae-sŏng's belief that actors should be familiar with the stage.²⁰⁴

Hong Hae-sŏng's training, which emphasized both an ethical attitude and practical experience through real production, yielded many good actors at the Tongyang Theatre such as Hwang Ch'ŏl (黃澈), Sim Yŏng (沈影), Sŏ Il-sŏng (徐一星), Ch'a Hong-nyŏ (車紅女), Chi Kyŏng-sun (池京順), Yu Kye-sŏn (劉桂仙), Kim Sŭng-ho (金勝鎬, 1918-1968), and Ko Sŏl-bong.²⁰⁵ These actors became the leading actors of the Korean stage, and as a result of their achievements, the Tongyang Theatre maintained its position as the leading theatrical company in Korea.

Hong Hae-sŏng's activities at the Tongyang Theatre also contributed to the formation of a new identity of Korean theatre by making the separation between the people in the New Theatre (*sin'gŭk*) and popular theatre (*hŭnghaenggŭk*) vague in the end, and by fermenting an environment in which some members of the two groups could work together. During the latter part of the 1930s, the sharp distinction and tension between the New Theatre and popular theatre considerably decreased. Actors in the Dramatic Art Study Association were becoming so experienced as to find themselves possessed of professional standing, and actors in the Tongyang Theatre were developing a more sincere attitude toward theatrical arts under Hong Hae-sŏng's mentorship. In fact, the people in both groups either learned theatre directly from Hong Hae-sŏng or were at least

²⁰³ Ibid., 118-119

²⁰⁴ Ibid., 255.

²⁰⁵ Sŏ Yŏn-ho, *Han'guk Yŏngŭksa*, 258.

indirectly influenced by Hong Hae-sŏng's enduring legacy in the Dramatic Art Study Association and the exemplary behavior Hong Hae-sŏng displayed at the Tongyang Theatre. Therefore, though the purpose of these two theatres—commercial versus more purely aesthetic—may have differed, these actors did not seem to display any essential differences that could characterize them as members of two totally different or opposite groups. This was true, despite the revelations of Yi Hae-rang, who was a member of the Tokyo Student Art Troupe and would soon become a member of Kŭgyŏnjwa as a follower of Yu Ch'i-jin. Yi Hae-rang revealed his lingering prejudice and feelings of superiority against popular theatre by saying “[. . .] the brains of *sinp'a* actors are far different from the ones in the people who have noble personalities and developed emotions.”²⁰⁶ Nevertheless, in 1937, despite any remaining prejudice, some actors who had left the Tongyang Theatre—such as Pak Che-haeng (朴齊行), Sŏ wŏl-yŏng (徐月影), Namkung-sŏn (南宮仙), and Sim Yŏng—and some other actors who had left the Dramatic Art Study Association—such as Maeng Man-sik (孟晩植) and Song Chae-no (宋在魯)—formed a new theatrical company called the Center Stage (Chungang Mudae, 中央舞臺) with other actors whose training had a different origin, including Pok Hye-suk (卜惠淑, 1904-1982).²⁰⁷ The formation of the Center Stage foretold that the dissolution of the distinctions between the New Theatre and popular theatre would be expedited. Also in 1939, some actors who had left the Dramatic Art Study Association such as Pak Sang-ik (朴商翊) and Yi Paek-hŭi (李白姬) joined the Tongyang Theatre.²⁰⁸ Although the greater fusion of theatre people in the New Theatre and popular theatre was due to the political influences

²⁰⁶ Yi Hae-rang, “Yŏn'gijawa Tunoe” (2) [Actor and Brain] (2), *Chosŏn Ilbo*, August 9, 1938.

²⁰⁷ Sŏ Hang-sŏk, “Han'guk Yŏn'gŭksa” (2), 2081.

²⁰⁸ Ko Sŏl-bong, *Iyagi Kŭndae Yŏn'gŭksa*, 108.

that would come later, Hong Hae-sŏng's activities in the Tongyang Theatre formed a common denominator that made the two groups' fusion possible before the political influences came to bear.

Even though Hong Hae-sŏng did not craft all the achievements of the Tongyang Theatre, his activities there raised the theatre's artistic level.²⁰⁹ The Tongyang Theatre, with its well developed performances, received the public's love and maintained its status as the leader of popular theatre, which comprised most of the theatrical activities in Korea at that time. Hong Hae-sŏng's presence and the artistic development of productions in the Tongyang Theatre legitimized the status of a Korean popular theatre that, until then, maintained a negative image as the purveyor of low, cheap entertainment. However, in pursuing the national goal of modernization by which the Koreans would keep pace with 20th century culture, Korean popular theatre was not what could be as respected as the New Theatre. As Hong Hae-sŏng complained at a table talk in 1939, the critics and the press ignored the activities of popular theatre, while they noticed the activities of the New Theatre. This critical ignorance happened even though popular theatre, performed everyday, and had a much larger audience than the New Theatre, which performed only several shows in a typical year.²¹⁰ In such an environment, Hong Hae-sŏng's achievements and presence became invisible. In 1942, Hong Hae-sŏng resigned his position at the Tongyang Theatre allegedly due to heart disease.²¹¹ That virtually resulted in the end of his career as a director.

4.4. Hong Hae-sŏng's Theatrical Ideals in the 1930s

During the first half of the 1930s, in which his career reached its peak as a director in the New Theatre, Hong Hae-sŏng expressed his theatrical ideas not only through directing, but also

²⁰⁹ Sŏ Yŏn-ho, *Han'guk Yŏngŭksa*, 258.

²¹⁰ "Chosŏn Yŏn'gŭgŭi Naagal Panghyang."

²¹¹ Hong Hae-sŏng, "Han'guk yŏn'gŭk Yaksa" [A Brief History of Korean Theatre], in *Hong Hae-sŏng Yŏn'gŭngnon Chŏnjip* [The Complete Works of Hong Hae-sŏng], ed. Sŏ Yŏn-ho and Yi sang-u (Kyŏngsan: Yŏngnamdaehakkyo ch'ulp'anbu, 1998), 313.

through his writing. He wrote his most representative essays in this period. These essays are direct sources which allow the student of Korean theatre history to study Hong Hae-sŏng's artistic ideals. In this section, I use these essays to examine Hong Hae-sŏng's theatrical ideas expressed during the 1930s. Articles in which these essays appeared, which show his ideas concerning the practice of theatre, include "Stage Art and Actor,"²¹² "How to Direct,"²¹³ "About the Discourse of Directing,"²¹⁴ "A Glance of the New Theatre Movement in Other Countries in the World,"²¹⁵ and "A Pilgrimage to the Great Directors."²¹⁶ Of the four categories into which Hong Hae-sŏng's writings are divided, these articles belong in the category of "writings about theatre practice." As explained in the previous chapter, Hong Hae-sŏng's writings fall into four categories: 1) writings about the establishment of the New Theatre, 2) writings about theatre practice, 3) writings about dramatic literature and modern theatre in foreign countries, and 4) writings about various other topics. The topics falling under "writings about the establishment of the New Theatre" and "writings about dramatic literature and modern theatre in foreign countries" were more adequately dealt with by the members of "the foreign literature faction" after the Dramatic Art Study Association had been founded. As for "writings about various other topics," Hong Hae-sŏng's writings falling into this category were all published in the 1950s. Hong Hae-sŏng did not actively write after the Tongyang Theatre opened in November, 1935, and those articles written after 1935

²¹² Mudae Yesulgwa Paeu, 舞臺藝術과俳優. This article appeared in *Tonga Ilbo* from August 14 to September 26, 1931.

²¹³ Yŏnch'ulbŏbe taehaya, 演出法에對하야. This article was published in *Kŭgyesul*, the organ of the Dramatic Art Study Association, in April, 1934.

²¹⁴ Yŏnch'ullone Taehaya, 演出論에對하야. This article was published in *Kŭgyesul* in December, 1934.

²¹⁵ Segye Kakkuge Itsŏŏi Sin'gŭk Surip Undong Ilbyŏl, 世界各國에있어서의新劇樹立運動一瞥. This article appeared in *Tonga Ilbo* from April 12 to April 14, 1935.

²¹⁶ Myŏngyŏnch'ulga Sullye, 名演出家巡禮. This article appeared in *Tonga Ilbo* from April 16 to April 28, 1935.

can be considered as recollections of his ideas before joining the Tongyang Theatre. These later articles do not show any notable revision or innovation. Therefore, examining Hong Hae-sŏng's ideas through his writings in the first half of the 1930s virtually reveals the entire essence of his theories on theatre.

Hong Hae-sŏng emphasized theatre's social or historical function again in the 1930s. According to him, theatre, that is the New Theatre, expressed the "will" of the "nation or class."²¹⁷ Theatre was a medium that helped the Koreans to join international society and culture, rather than the mere expression of anyone's personal aesthetic inspirations, including his own. Therefore, Hong Hae-sŏng emphasized that a theatre artist's "mission" was to express "the destiny of humanity of that period" (인류의 시대적 운명), rather than to express "the private destiny of the individual" (사적인 개인의 운명), and that the mission of the new theatre artists in Korea should aim to become theatre artists of the world who would express the destiny of humanity.²¹⁸

Given this understanding of the social meaning of the New Theatre, Hong Hae-sŏng extrapolated that other components of the contemporary theatre included 1) the Independent Theatre Movement, (as opposed to commercial theatre), 2) new plays that promoted new thoughts and revealed segments of life, as opposed to plays that were only entertaining, and 3) the advent of directing.²¹⁹ Among these, Hong Hae-sŏng especially emphasized the importance of directing,

²¹⁷ Hong Hae-sŏng, "Mudae Yesulgwa Paeu" [Stage art and Actor], in *Hong Hae-sŏng Yŏn'gŭngnon Chŏnjip* [The Complete Works of Hong Hae-sŏng], ed. Sŏ Yŏn-ho and Yi sang-u (Kyŏngsan: Yŏngnamdaehakkyo ch'ulp'anbu, 1998), 111.

²¹⁸ Ibid., 113.

²¹⁹ Hong Hae-sŏng, "Segye Kakkuge Itsŏŏŭi Sin'gŭk Surip Undong Ilbyŏl" [A Glance of the New Theatre Movement in Other Countries in the World], in *Hong Hae-sŏng Yŏn'gŭngnon Chŏnjip* [The Complete Works of Hong Hae-sŏng], ed. Sŏ Yŏn-ho and Yi sang-u (Kyŏngsan: Yŏngnamdaehakkyo ch'ulp'anbu, 1998), 124-129.

explaining it as an important function that gave realization to a script by synthesizing dialogue, sets, costumes, and actors' bodies and voices.²²⁰

According to Hong Hae-sŏng, even though the synthesis of a theatrical production is guided by dialogue and stage directions in a script, it is the directing that gives them final expression and specific values to form "theatre."²²¹ It is necessary for a play to be understood as a performance. Then, according to Hong Hae-sŏng, such an understanding may be best realized if it is realized by the playwright himself. However, because a stage production is a complicated and expansive process, the realization of synthesis is more effective if it is coordinated by a director, who has expertise in all the practical functions for stage and acts as the agent of the author.²²² As many interpretations are possible for a play, the possibilities of directing a script on stage also vary. Therefore, even though the same play is performed, each director expresses it in a different way.²²³ For example, the production of *Salome* directed by Reinhardt and the production of *Salome* directed by Tairov are very different from each other, even though they are based on the same play. Even though the two directors start with the same play, they create a different beauty and different art on stage.²²⁴ If a director directs a play according to his own interpretation, the production is his own creation. Therefore, while a director is an agent or an assistant, he also acquires the status of a creator.²²⁵

²²⁰ Hong Hae-sŏng, "Yŏnch'ulbŏbe taehaya" [How to Direct], in *Hong Hae-sŏng Yŏn'gŭngnon Chŏnjip* [The Complete Works of Hong Hae-sŏng], ed. Sŏ Yŏn-ho and Yi sang-u (Kyŏngsan: Yŏngnamdaehakkyo ch'ulp'anbu, 1998), 115-116.

²²¹ Ibid., 115.

²²² Ibid., 116-117.

²²³ Ibid., 115.

²²⁴ Ibid., 115-116.

²²⁵ Ibid., 117.

Hong Hae-sŏng suggested that a director, as an independent artist or creator, creates a new reality on stage through his understanding of the characteristics of the stage art. Art is not reality itself, but rather the stylization of nature.²²⁶ Each art requires different conditions and conventions, as it stylizes nature. Theatre also requires its own unique conditions. Therefore, theatre cannot be realized if nature itself is demanded on stage without satisfying the unique conditions for theatre.²²⁷ Referring to his experience at the Tsukiji Little Theatre, Hong Hae-sŏng explained that stage art required its own unique means of expression or its own unique artificial stylization.

This is an episode that happened at the Tsukiji Little Theatre when the theatre was preparing a production of Chekhov's *Three Sisters*. Until this point, every time the crew in the scene shop made artificial white birch trees (白樺) for the garden in the play at the scene shop. One day, in order to achieve a better effect for the scene, they decided to send someone to the northern area of Japan in order to buy several of the best white birches there. When we saw the stage from the back of the audience after we built the Russian garden set, surprisingly, the real white birch did not look like a white birch but looked like something else. That was disappointing.

As a result of this disappointment, the head of the scene shop had his crews make an artificial tree and rebuilt the set in the way they had previously created it. We saw the garden again. The white birch on the stage whispered the human agonies of the characters in the play to my ears, and the melody of the broken heart tore out my heart. Oh! How sacred and realistic the white birch was!²²⁸ (my translation)

Also, Hong Hae-sŏng explained that stage art gave “the belief of reality” or “inner belief” by its unique way of expression by referring to an episode in *The Art of the Actor* by Constant Coquelin (1841-1909). In the episode, the clown mimicking the cry of a suckling-pig was applauded by the people who considered the sound to be real, while the peasant pinching a real pig

²²⁶ Hong Hae-sŏng, “Yŏnch’ullone Tachaya” [About the Discourse of Directing], in *Hong Hae-sŏng Yŏn’gŭngnon Chŏnjip* [The Complete Works of Hong Hae-sŏng], ed. Sŏ Yŏn-ho and Yi sang-u (Kyŏngsan: Yŏngnamdaehakkyo ch’ulp’anbu, 1998), 118.

²²⁷ Ibid., 119.

²²⁸ Ibid., 119-120.

hidden under his cloak was hissed by the people who considered the sound not realistic.²²⁹ Hong Hae-sŏng referred to another episode in which Thomas Betterton (c. 1635-1710) advised a high priest of London that people did not believe priests because priests said real things as if they had been fabricated, while people did believe actors because actors said fabricated things as if they had been true.²³⁰

Hong Hae-sŏng particularly offered detailed and practical explanations about the unique modes of expression in stage art for the first time in Korea by describing the techniques related to acting and directing in his article “Stage Art and Actor.” This article reveals the ideals Hong Hae-sŏng held as a practitioner in directing and actor-training more systematically and specifically than any other sources, which are either too short, conceptional or philosophical. “Stage Art and Actor” was written as a serial, which consisted of limited installments that were only profitable enough to make up for the losses incurred by the Theatre and Film Exhibition. Also, it was written rather hastily, right after the event. Therefore, “Stage Art and Actor” could give the impression that Hong Hae-sŏng is explaining only limited topics, and that it was not systematically-organized writing. However, this article expressed a certain inner flow of logic, and the limited number of the topics dealt with clearly suggests what aspects he considered important. I am going to examine the elements emphasized by Hong Hae-sŏng in “Stage Art and Actor,” following the inner flow of his logic.

According to what Hong Hae-sŏng reveals in this article, he endeavored to offer certain basic methods that could be applied to the Koreans’ practice of Western theatre. Also, this article suggests that he had an understanding of the acting style based on an actor’s inner necessity that is

²²⁹ Constant Coquelin, *The Art of the Actor*, trans. Elsie Fogerty (London, George Allen & Unwin Ltd.: 1932), 67.

²³⁰ Hong Hae-sŏng, “Yŏnch’ullone Taehaya,” 121-122.

reminiscent of Stanislavsky, the traditional techniques for stage-expression in Western dramatic art, and the methods for achieving the theatricality of the stylist directors of that time.

In “Stage Art and Actor,” Hong Hae-sŏng began his explanation of the practical aspects of dramatic art with a discussion of language. According to him, language is a sign by which not only humans, but also animals, birds, and insects express their desires. However, especially for humans, it becomes an instrument for social communication. After he explained the general characteristics of language and the characteristics of Korean language, Hong Hae-sŏng proceeded to explain personal linguistic operation. He explored anatomical elements that make up the human voice and articulation, and how to effectively utilize such elements. As he expressed ways to increase the actor’s ability to produce well-wrought speech, Hong Hae-sŏng offered to the reader sentences that make tricky sounds with similar vowels and consonants as exercises to increase control over articulation. These sentences included:

- 1) *Chŏ kŏnnŏchip chibung wie nŏrŏdun kongkkakchiga kan kongkkakchinya an kan kongkkakchinya.* (Is the shell pea on the roof of the house over there a hulled shell pea or not a hulled shell pea?)
- 2) *Chŏ kŏnnŏchip madange pakhin malttugi mal mael malttuginya mal mon mael malttuginya.* (Is the post in the court yard of the house over there available for tying a horse or not available for tying a horse?)
- 3) *Chŏ kŏnnŏ chinsanim taek sirŏng wie ŏnchŏjin sini kŭn chinsanim taek chinsininya chagŭn chinsanim taek chinsininya.* (Do the ‘muddy road shoes’ on the shelf in the house of the reputable family belong to the family’s elder son or the family’s younger son?)²³¹

In these sentences, the repetition of similar, hard to pronounce sounds in succession such as “*kongkkakchi* [. . .] *kan kongkkakchi* [. . .] *an kan kongkkakchi*,” “*mal mael malttuginya mal mon mael maltuginya*,” or “*chinsanim taek chinsin*” are presented as exercises to enhance articulation. After these exercises, Hong Hae-sŏng provided more developed exercises by presenting a short

²³¹ Hong Hae-sŏng, “Mudae Yesulgwa Paeu,” 74.

poem by Ch'oe Sin-gu (崔信九). Such exercises suggested that Hong Hae-sŏng tried to develop a methodology for Koreans in his efforts to implant Western theatre in Korea.

After language, Hong Hae-sŏng moved to the topic of bodily expression, in which he presented exercises for facial expression, walking, and entering and exiting the stage.²³² As for facial expression, he presented 23 assignments for laughing and 18 for crying. His exercise for laughing covered expressions based on relatively simple emotions such as “merry laughter” and “unstoppable laughter,” as well as expressions based on more complicated emotions such as “a smile after waking up from shallow sleep” and “a servant’s smile after he has been exonerated from an unfair suspicion,” and “laughter mixed with crying when a group of brothers become parted.” His exercise for crying also covered everything from expressions based on relatively simple emotions such as “crying of a drunken guy” and “crying of one when his parent dies,” to expressions based on more complicated emotions such as “a tactful crying while looking at others’ reactions” and “the crying of a woman who is stroking her skirt while suffering from surging sadness without a cause.” As for walking, Hong Hae-sŏng offered 25 assignments. They ranged from expressing simple depiction of outer characteristics such as “the walking of an old man whose back is bent” and “a crippled person’s walking,” to expressing more complicated situations such as “walking to visit a lover” and “the walking of a man who is suffering from hunger and tears.” As for entering and exiting the stage, he presented 12 assignments. These assignments consisted of various situations in which a character could express his emotions before he would meet another character such as “going to visit a friend who is sick in bed” and “coming in from outside with an extremely excited heart.”

When Hong Hae-sŏng moved over to the communal relationship of actors on stage, he emphasized “acting without speech” and “pause.” Once an actor appears on stage, he must

²³² Ibid., 75-79.

incessantly express certain dramatic actions.²³³ Therefore, even if he does not have any lines to speak, the actor must react to the other actor or actors in appropriate ways, and never show any action that would distract from the dramatic unity.²³⁴ However, the actor did not need to premeditate specific reactions because the appropriate reactions naturally appear from the actor's understanding of the role.²³⁵

Hong Hae-sŏng argued that an actor must not break the unity on stage in order to look impressive.²³⁶ According to him, an actor who attempts such a thing is “the worst egoist” (極히 低劣한 利己主義者)²³⁷ and nothing but an “obstacle” (妨害物)²³⁸ to the dramatic action. Hong Hae-sŏng's views about acting while the actor is not speaking are reminiscent of Stanislavsky's acting theory, in which an actor plays his role by inner motive based on an understanding of the role and pursuing a sense of ensemble with the other actors. Particularly by noting, “when the actor hears the other actor's line, he should act as if he heard it for the first time,”²³⁹ Hong Hae-sŏng shows a similarity with Stanislavsky, who argued that actors experience the dramatic situation in every performance rather than performing by merely repeating techniques.²⁴⁰ Also, Hong Hae-sŏng emphasized the importance of the “pause” in acting, writing that the more noble the form of

²³³ Hong Hae-sŏng, “Mudae Yesulgwa Paeu,” 80.

²³⁴ Ibid., 81.

²³⁵ Ibid., 82.

²³⁶ Ibid., 81.

²³⁷ Hong Hae-sŏng, “Mudae Yesulgwa Paeu,” 82.

²³⁸ Ibid., 83.

²³⁹ Ibid., 82.

²⁴⁰ Constantin Stanislavski, *An Actor Prepares*, trans. Elizabeth Reynolds Hapgood (New York: Routledge/Theatre Arts Books, 1989), 19.

the play is, and greater the play's aesthetic emotions, the more the actor comes to feel the necessity of a "pause" (*sai*, ㅅㅏㅣ).²⁴¹

According to Hong Hae-sŏng, the most important sources for perceiving the taste of a drama are dialogue and actions. Next, in order of importance, are the intervals between a speech, and another speech and the intervals between a movement and another movement.²⁴² Therefore, a well-used "pause" can have good effects. For example, a pause before a speech can make the speech more effective.²⁴³ However, Hong Hae-sŏng argued that using a pause must have a purpose or a reason.²⁴⁴ By arguing that the pause be used following an inner necessity, Hong Hae-sŏng again suggests that his acting theory is based, to a certain degree, on the modern inner acting style represented by Stanislavsky.

In addition to such arguments, Hong Hae-sŏng explained that action is the result of an impulse,²⁴⁵ and emphasized that actors must discard their personal mannerisms. Even if a personal mannerism could make a good expression for the role, according to Hong Hae-sŏng, using such a mannerism is not artistic.²⁴⁶ As such arguments about acting were most emphasized and effectively pointed out by Stanislavsky,²⁴⁷ they are considered to be Stanislavsky's crowning achievements in modern theatre. Therefore, Hong Hae-sŏng's acting theory, in essence, kept pace with

²⁴¹ Hong Hae-sŏng, "Mudae Yesulgwa Paeu," 83.

²⁴² Ibid.

²⁴³ Ibid., 84.

²⁴⁴ Ibid.

²⁴⁵ Ibid., 85.

²⁴⁶ Ibid., 88.

²⁴⁷ Stanislavski, 23-26.

Stanislavsky's system that emphasized acting by inner necessity through exploring an actor's inner psychology.

In fact, as previously discussed, Osanai Kaoru, who was Hong Hae-sŏng's teacher at the Tsukiji Little Theatre, was greatly influenced by Stanislavsky and applied Stanislavskian elements in his productions. Therefore, it is natural that Hong Hae-sŏng, who was influenced by Osanai Kaoru, should show certain elements in his own acting theories that are reminiscent of Stanislavsky. Also, the fact that in the section about Stanislavsky in his article "A Pilgrimage to the Great Directors," Hong Hae-sŏng translated and introduced a part of René Fülöp Miller and Joseph Gregor's book *The Russian Theatre*, in which the co-authors discussed Stanislavsky's activities at the Moscow Art Theatre and the essence of his system,²⁴⁸ suggests that Hong Hae-sŏng certainly knew Stanislavsky's methods.²⁴⁹

Hong Hae-sŏng was well aware not only of the modern inner acting style but also of the traditional or conventional techniques of the Western stage. Therefore, in "Stage Art and Actor," Hong Hae-sŏng explained some major aspects of the traditional or conventional techniques in acting such as that an actor stand on stage at oblique angles to the audience, that two actors on stage should have a certain distance between them, and that an actor should not cross in front of another actor when the other actor is speaking. He also explained that an actor who appears through a door from stage down right should use his left hand to open the door, while an actor coming in from down left should use his right hand to open a door, and that when an actor says something

²⁴⁸ In their book, René Fülöp Miller and Joseph Gregor's explain that Stanislavsky's system argue that an actor should feel the emotions of the character portrayed. René Fülöp Miller and Joseph Gregor, *The Russian Theatre: Its Character and History, with Especial Reference to the Revolutionary Period*, trans. Paul England (London: G. G. Harrap, 1930), 43-47.

²⁴⁹ When Hong Hae-sŏng translated part of this book and introduce it in "Myŏngyŏnch'ulga Sullye" [A Pilgrimage to the Great Directors], he did not tell its source and the fact that it was a translation. Therefore, Na Sang-man points out that the part about Stanislavsky in "Myŏngyŏnch'ulga Sullye" is "plagiarism." Na Sang-man, *Stanislavsky, Öttöke Pol Kösin 'ga?* [How should we approach Stanislavsky?] (Seoul: Yeni, 1996), 201.

while exiting, he should raise his voice because the set is between him and the audience, blocking his sound.²⁵⁰

The techniques enumerated by Hong Hae-sŏng were directly based on the second chapter of Halliam Bosworth's book, *Technique in Dramatic Art*, published in 1926. Hong Hae-sŏng summarized most of the topics treated in the chapter entitled "Elementary Principles," in which Bosworth intended to explain "some of the A B C principles of acting,"²⁵¹ such as: How to Stand, Distance, The Centre of the Stage, "What Shall I Do with My Hands?", Crossing in Front and Behind, How to Turn, Entrances and Exits, Speaking Off Stage, Anticipating Cues, Finding the Objective, "Oh," "Ah," and "Well," Repose, and How to Commit Lines to Memory. Hong Hae-sŏng directly followed the order in which the topics were deployed in Bosworth's book.²⁵² Hong Hae-sŏng must have summarized Bosworth's explanations either after he read the whole or at least part of the book translated into Japanese or after he learned about such topics from someone at the Tsukiji Little Theatre. No matter the exact source, what is important is the fact that Hong Hae-sŏng was aware of the traditional methods or conventional principles of the Western stage, which were still considered important enough to be published as a book at that time. Hong Hae-sŏng not only approached the globally-spreading acting style that pursued realistic representation based on the actor's inner psychology, but was also well aware of the existing conventional techniques of acting, which still had a strong influence.

In addition, Hong Hae-sŏng also had stylist or presentational directing ideas. Referring to Tairov, Reinhardt, and Meyerhold for the topic of "acting on a spatial stage" (空間的 舞臺의 演技

²⁵⁰ See Hong Hae-sŏng, "Mudae Yesulgwa Paeu," 88-94.

²⁵¹ Halliam Bosworth, *Technique in Dramatic Art* (New York: the Macmillan Company, 1926), 14.

²⁵² *Ibid.*, 14-56.

), Hong Hae-sŏng explained that the essence of modern acting or stage aesthetics was the pursuit of a new style, “in what way to express?” (어떻게 표현할까?).²⁵³ Especially referring to Reinhardt’s directing, Hong Hae-sŏng explained that Reinhardt brought about “revolutionary” (革命的)²⁵⁴ change or “transformation” (變型) from the old method of theatrical expression on a level stage by having actors perform on steps with gradient.²⁵⁵ Also, based on Emile Jaques-Dalcroze’s Eurhythmics, Hong Hae-sŏng described ways to control an actor’s body and emotion, and to style a group-scene on stage. Dalcroze invented eurhythmics, “a system of education in the arts based on rhythm, musical theory, and gymnastics,”²⁵⁶ in the late part of the 19th century and argued that his system could be useful not only to musicians but also to stage artists for controlling their minds and bodies.²⁵⁷ Accepting it in his art, Hong Hae-sŏng explained that the training of eurhythmics increased an actor’s technique, as it gave actors the power to control their body and emotions.²⁵⁸ Practicing eurhythmics helped actors to express intended effects in the mutual reactions among the actors on stage as it makes the actor’s speech and movement manifest in precise rhythms.²⁵⁹ Hong Hae-sŏng intended to use eurhythmics especially in the composition of the chorus in lyric drama, which required precise style. In Modern spoken drama, each individual in the chorus can act independently. However, in lyric drama, the chorus should express the poet’s emotions or the

²⁵³ Hong Hae-sŏng, “Mudae Yesulgwa Paeu,” 94.

²⁵⁴ Ibid.

²⁵⁵ Ibid., 95.

²⁵⁶ Clark McCormack Rogers, “The Influence of Dalcroze Eurhythmics in the Contemporary Theatre” (PhD diss., Louisiana State University, 1966), 12.

²⁵⁷ Ibid., 41.

²⁵⁸ Hong Hae-sŏng, “Mudae Yesulgwa Paeu,” 100-102.

²⁵⁹ Ibid., 101-102.

atmosphere in unison through collective movement.²⁶⁰ Therefore, the members of the chorus in a lyric drama would be orchestrated by the director, with the chorus giving up their individual qualities.²⁶¹ For example, if each member of the chorus makes a movement successively following a certain rhythm, that can effectively express the movement of a group effectively. Also, if the members of the chorus create “polyrhythm,” it can have a very strong effect. For example, if an individual stands up while the others are kneeling down, that can have a stronger effect than the whole group’s standing up at the same time.²⁶²

Such ideas of Hong Hae-sŏng were based on “The Crowd” in the 9th chapter, “Rhythm and Gesture in Music Drama and Criticism,” of Emile Jaques-Dalcroze’s book *Rhythm, Music and Education*.²⁶³ Dalcroze’s eurhythmics was influential to many artists in the West at that time, and Hong Hae-sŏng’s utilization of eurhythmics kept pace with the leading trend of Western theatre of the time. Dalcroze’s eurhythmics also influenced Stanislavsky; it appeared as the important concept of “tempo-rhythm” in the Stanislavskian system.²⁶⁴ However, Hong Hae-sŏng used eurhythmics, not only as a technique for naturalistic directing or expressing the actor’s inner state, but also as a technique for the chorus’s orchestration in non-naturalistic or presentational directing. This shows that Hong Hae-sŏng’s theatrical aesthetics were not limited to naturalistic style, as he also accommodated stylist aesthetics.

²⁶⁰ Ibid., 103.

²⁶¹ Ibid., 104.

²⁶² Ibid., 104-105.

²⁶³ See Emile Jaques-Dalcroze, *Rhythm, Music and Education*, trans. Harold F. Rubenstein (London: The Dalcroze Society, 1980), 124-131.

²⁶⁴ Constantin Stanislavski, *Building a Character*, trans. Elizabeth Reynolds Hapgood (New York: Theatre Arts Books, 1949), 177-237.

In fact, Hong Hae-sŏng had great an understanding of the leaders of modern directing and their various styles. He explained the leading styles of directing at that time in his article “A Glance of the New Theatre Movement in Other Countries in the World,” which appeared in *Tonga Ilbo* from April 12 to 14, 1935, as follows:

The ones who promoted naturalism on stage were Stanislavsky in Russia, Otto Brahm in Germany, André Antoine in France, Belasco in America, and Osanai Kaoru and Aoyama Sugisaku in Japan. The formalists (形式主義者), who emerged against the 19th century's naturalistic directing, used only limited sets and backgrounds that are only necessary for the actors' performance while they maintained innovatively simplified sets on stage. The directors belonging to this school were Adolphe Appia in Switzerland, Gordon Craig in Britain, Georg Fuchs in Germany, and Evreinov and Meyerhold in Russia. Reinhardt in Germany and Granville-Barker in Britain also belong to this group. The theory of synthesisist (綜合主義) directing against the formalists started from Kommissarzhevsky. The purpose of this style is the same as the Wagnerian theory of the past, as it argues to give the audience a total (完全한) impression by synthesizing all arts on stage. From this synthesis began new directing theories of expressionism and constructivism (構成主義). The directors in the former are Leopold Jessner and Piscator in Germany, and the directors in the latter are Tairov and Meyerhold in Russia and Hijikata Yoshi in Japan.²⁶⁵ (my translation)

Also, in his serial article “A Pilgrimage to the Great Directors,” Hong Hae-sŏng offered more-developed accounts for Stanislavsky, Reinhardt, Gordon Craig, and Meyerhold. Each of these directors had a unique style. Especially, at the end of the part about Reinhardt, Hong Hae-sŏng expressed his admiration for Reinhardt in the postscript as follows:

From this far land, this country in the East, I would like to give some words to you whom I most respect. Wherever you go, the fruit from the seeds you sow with the sweat and blood of your efforts in your great creation will be our bliss. Therefore, even if there might be various adversities and persecutions, do not feel lonely and securely keep your precious existence for a long time as your body and soul is the entire humanity's.²⁶⁶ (my translation)

²⁶⁵ Hong Hae-sŏng, “Segye Kakkuge Itsōōi Sin'gŭk Surip Undong Ilbyōl” [A Glance of the New Theatre Movement in Other Countries in the World], 127-128.

²⁶⁶ Hong Hae-sŏng, “Myōngyōnch'ulga Sullye” [A Pilgrimage to the Great Directors], in *Hong Hae-sŏng Yōn'gūnnon Chōnjip* [The Complete Works of Hong Hae-sŏng], ed. Sō Yōn-ho and Yi sang-u (Kyōngsan: Yōngnamdaehakkyo ch'ulp'anbu, 1998), 142.

With this expression of respect for Reinhardt, Hong Hae-sŏng suggests that his interest in theatrical aesthetics is rather stylistic, like that of Reinhardt.

Hong Hae-sŏng's theatrical ideas revealed through his writings in the 1930s show that he wanted to realize various aesthetics of modern theatre with his knowledge of all the acting and directing theories of the time, not that he was just a subject of a specific school. Even though Hong Hae-sŏng could go no further to overcome the existing styles and create a new form, while the most urgent matters in his activities concerned studying Western theatre as a new form and implanting it in Korea, he tried to develop a unique methodology for Koreans, in order to implant the New Theatre properly, as his speech exercises show. The circumstances in Korea could not provide conditions under which he could realize all of his ideals. However, Hong Hae-sŏng was achieving the modernization of Korean theatre by his presence itself and with his wide understanding of Western modern theatre.

4.5. Hong Hae-sŏng after His Virtual Retirement

Hong Hae-sŏng resigned from his position at the Tongyang Theatre, citing his heart disease, and ceased working in theatre from 1942 to 1951. This ten-year-long vacation virtually meant his retirement. However, his retirement became another factor that gave his career an important place in history. While almost all leaders of Korean theatre came to collaborate with Japan in order to secure their careers, Hong Hae-sŏng, in theatre, became a rare example of not collaborating by giving up his career. As previously explained, Japan expedited the mobilization for war in every aspect of Korean society from the end of the 1930s. Strengthening its control over the media, Japan closed all the newspapers and magazines published by Koreans in the beginning of the 1940s, and induced theatre to become an instrument for spreading imperialist propaganda. Japan controlled Korean theatre through the two collaborating organizations, the Chosen Theatre

Association (Chosŏn Yŏn'guk Hyŏphoe, 朝鮮演劇協會, Dec. 1940-July 1942) and the Chosen Theatre Culture Association (Chosŏn Yŏn'guk Munhwa Hyŏphoe, 朝鮮演劇文化協會, July 1942-Aug. 1945). Under these organizations, many leaders of Korean theatre served imperialist Japan, engaging in so-called “*kungmin'gŭk*” or “*kungmin yŏn'gŭk*” (“national drama”, 國民演劇), the drama that aimed to spread Japanese propaganda. While many big names stained the history of Korean theatre through their collaboration, Hong Hae-sŏng did not join such activities, which had already begun when he was still in the Tongyang Theatre. Not joining the *kungmin'gŭk* activities made him an exemplary figure again in the history of Korean theatre. The *kungmin'gŭk* activities left a large blot on the history of Korean theatre, in that the movement voluntarily begun by some Koreans who wanted to expand their power and receive considerations from the colonial authority, while almost everyone had lost the hope of independence, as the actor Kang Kye-sik confessed.²⁶⁷

According to Ko Sŏl-bong, the leaders of the provincial companies such as Sŏng Kwang-hyŏn (成光顯), who was leading Hwanggŭmjwa (Gold Theatre, 黃金座), and Kim Chosŏng (金肇盛), who was leading Yewŏnjwa (Art Theatre, 藝苑座), volunteered to form an organization that would control all the theatrical companies in Korea. Because they, as outsiders, were having trouble producing shows in Seoul, they wanted to get favors under the power of the Japanese Government-General.²⁶⁸ The colonial authority, which wanted to strengthen its control over theatre, accepted their proposal. Therefore, after several months of preparation by some Koreans, the Chosen Theatre Association, which was controlled by the Japanese police (警務局),²⁶⁹ was

²⁶⁷ Kim Mi-do, *Han'guk Kŭndaegŭgŭi Chaejomŏng* [Re-examining Modern Korean Theatre] (Seoul: Hyŏndae mihaksa, 1995), 386.

²⁶⁸ Ko Sŏl-bong, *Iyagi Kŭndae Yŏn'gŭksa*, 167.

²⁶⁹ “Chosŏn Yŏn'guk Hyŏphoe Kyŏlsŏngŭi Yurae” [The Cause of Forming the Chosen Theatre Association], *Samch'ŏlli* 13, no. 3 (March 1941): 160.

founded on December 22, 1940.²⁷⁰ The president of this new organization was Yi Sŏ-gu (李瑞求, 1899-1981), and Kim Kwang-su (金寬洙), Yu Ch'i-jin, Pak Chin, Ch'oe Sang-dŏk (Ch'oe Tok-kyŏn), Sim Yŏng (沈影), among others, acted as the executive members of the organization.²⁷¹

Although these individuals were big names in the theatre community, the situations in which they were placed at that time suggest a reason why they actively worked in this collaborating organization. Kim Kwan-su had been a member of the provincial company Hwanggŭmjwa.²⁷² Pak Chin and Ch'oe Sang-dŏk was challenging the Tongyang Theatre's domination in popular theatre after they had left the Tongyang Theatre and formed a new troupe called Arang (阿娘) with leading actors from the Tongyang Theatre, such as Hwang Ch'ŏl (黃澈), Ch'a Hong-nyŏ (車紅女), and Sŏ Il-sŏng (徐一星), among others, in August, 1939.²⁷³ As for Yu Ch'i-jin, he had not recovered his influence in theatre after the disbanding of Kŭgyŏnjwa.

Being connected to the Japanese power, the leading members of the Chosen Theatre Association became the most noticeable figures in Korean theatre. As their activities in the organization were motivated by their desires to pursue private interests under Japanese power, there were certain conflicts among these private interests even at the very beginning of the Chosen Theatre Association. An article entitled "Yewŏn Tongjŏng" (예원 동정), in the magazine *Samch'ŏlli* (Three Thousand li, 三千里), published in March, 1941, suggested that Pak Chin was being alienated in the power struggle in the organization by reporting that Pak Chin was worried that "the Theatre Association" might only be becoming an association of some entertainment

²⁷⁰ Yu Min-yŏng, *Han'guk Kŭndae Yŏn'gŭksa*, 884.

²⁷¹ Sŏ Hang-sŏk, "Han'guk Yŏn'gŭksa" (2), 2093.

²⁷² Yu Min-yŏng, *Han'guk Kŭndae Yŏn'gŭksa*, 883.

²⁷³ *Ibid.*, 403.

promoters who were pursuing their own interests.²⁷⁴ After this struggle, Pak Chin left the Chosen Theatre Association and later exiled himself to China, having become alienated from theatrical activities.²⁷⁵ The Chosen Theatre Association, on the one hand, disbanded about 100 theatrical troupes,²⁷⁶ applying their arbitrary measure. Yi Sŏ-gu said that they eliminated “the groups that did not show good achievements or the individuals whose attitudes or behaviors were considered impure or dishonest” or “some theatre people who were indiscreetly wandering not respecting their seniors and not studying.”²⁷⁷ On the other hand, it created “Patriotic Theatre Week”²⁷⁸ in October, 1941, and had its member companies such as Hwanggŭmjwa, Yewŏnjwa, Hyŏndae Kŭkchang (the Contemporary Theatre, 現代劇場), Arang, Hohwasŏn, Kungminjwa (the Nation Theatre, 國民座), P’yŏnghwajwa (the Peace Theatre, 平和座), Kohyŏp (高協) perform *kungmin ’gŭk*.²⁷⁹

While Japan promoted *kungmin ’gŭk* through the Chosen Theatre Association, the group that most actively supported the policy was Hyŏndae Kŭkchang, which was formed by the former members of Kŭgyŏnjwa under Yu Ch’i-jin and Sŏ Hang-sŏk’s leadership. According to Sŏ Hang-sŏk, “when Kŭgyŏnjwa was ordered to disband by the colonial authority,” some of the members of the group who thought “ideology can be changed in a day while technique cannot be acquired in a

²⁷⁴ “Yewŏn Tongjŏng” [What is Going on in Art Community], *Samch’ŏlli* 13, no. 3 (March 1941): 164-165.

²⁷⁵ According to Ko Sŏl-bong, later Ch’oe Sang-dŏk and Pak Chin refused to collaborate with Japan and secluded themselves for a while. Ko Sŏl-bong, *Iyagi Kŭndae Yŏn ’gŭksa*, 168.

²⁷⁶ Yu Ch’i-jin, “Yŏn ’gŭkkyeŭi Hoego” [Retrospecting Theatre Community], *Ch’unch’u* 11 (December 1941).

²⁷⁷ Yi Sŏ-gu, “Sinch’ejewa Chosŏn Yŏn ’gŭk Hyŏphoe Kyŏlsŏng” [The New Order and the Formation of the Chosen Theatre Association], *Samch’ŏlli* 13, no. 3 (March 1941): 161.

²⁷⁸ Yŏn ’gŭk Poguk Chugan, 演劇報國週間

²⁷⁹ Yu Min-yŏng, *Han ’guk Kŭndae Yŏn ’gŭksa*, 893.

day” decided to form Hyöndae Kükchang on March 16, 1941.²⁸⁰ Their argument that they gave up ideology in order to keep technique shows the general tendency found among the cultural nationalists. Although they had propelled modernization by introducing new culture based on nationalism at the beginning, their activities lost their nationalistic focus. In the end only “modernization” and the specific cultural activities remained. Hyöndae Kükchang was formed by the leading members of Kügyöñjwa such as Yu Ch’i-jin, Sö Hang-sök, Yi Hön-gu, and Ham Tae-hun, some members of the Tokyo Student Art Troupe, who were under Yu Ch’i-jin’s influence such as Yi Hae-rang, Kim Tong-hyök (金東赫)²⁸¹, Yi Wön-kyöng (李源庚), and Chu Yöng-söp (朱永涉), and some actors from popular theatre such as Yi Paek-su (李白水), Kang Hong-sik (姜洪植), and Ch’ön-ok (全玉).²⁸²

While the problematic concept of *kungmin’gük* did not have any clear definition or method to establish itself, as playwright Ham Se-dök confessed,²⁸³ the intellectuals in Hyöndae Kükchang led the drive to rationalize it and build a method to establish it. For example, Yu Ch’i-jin, in his article, “the New Theatre and *kungmin’gük*” (*sin’gükkwa kungmin’gük*, 新劇과 國民劇) in *Samch’ölli* in March, 1941 rationalized *kungmin’gük* as follows:

The current political situation does not allow an individual to only focus on his own personal life in liberal competition in every aspect of society as he did before. One should consider country first and sacrifice individuality for country.

Therefore, we must dedicate our art to the larger concept of country before we attempt to build our own different view of the New Theatre as we did before.

²⁸⁰ Sö Hang-sök, “Han’guk Yön’güksa” (1), 2032.

²⁸¹ Kim Tong-wön, 金東園

²⁸² Pak Yöng-ho, “Yesulsönggwa Kungmin’gük” [Artistic Value and *Kungmin’gük*], *Munjang* 25 (April, 1941).

²⁸³ Ham Se-dök, “Sin’gükkwa Kungmin yön’gük” [The New Theatre and *Kungmin yön’gük*], *Maeil Sinbo*, February 8, 1941.

In other words, the leading spirit of the New Theatre is now only one while that of the past was multiple. That spirit is the political ideology of country. We call this kind of New Theatre going in such a direction *kungmin'gŭk* today. The theatre that was formerly called the New Theatre is defunct.²⁸⁴ (my translation)

Also, by saying “the New Theatre makes progress through *kungmin'gŭk*. The New Theatre must be reborn in *kungmin'gŭk* [. . .]” at the end of his article, Yu Ch'i-jin subjected his concept of modern theatre to the Japanese imperialist ideology.

Yu Ch'i-jin's argument reveals that by the early 1940s, the intellectuals who had led the Dramatic Art Study Association were considering the power and development promised in Japanese imperialist rhetoric as their absolute goal, that is, the equivalent of “modern civilization.” They, thus, chose to be subjects of the Japanese empire in order to join the “modern”²⁸⁵ rather than to be alienated from any modernistic element (by sticking to the New Theatre that seemed defunct under overwhelming imperialism). As Yu Ch'i-jin later confesses in his autobiography that he thought *kungmin'gŭk* was better than low-quality commercial theatre even though *kungmin'gŭk* was wrong,²⁸⁶ they surrendered to the imperialism (which promised “modern civilization”), rather than to the commercialism of popular theatre (which was considered not modern), choosing between the two enemies of their activities in the New Theatre. Their rhetoric suggests either they could not tolerate “no modern” although they could tolerate “no nationalism,” or that they came to pursue modernization so blindly that they exchanged Korean nationalism for Japanese nationalism in order to realize “the modern.” In such a way of thinking, the leaders of Hyöndae Kŭkchang

²⁸⁴ Yu Ch'i-jin, “Sin'gŭkkwa Kungmin'gŭk” [The New Theatre and *Kungmin'gŭk*], *Samch'ŏlli* 13, no. 3 (March 1941): 167-168.

²⁸⁵ Yi Chun-sik, “Ilche Kangjŏmgi Ch'inil Chisiginŭi Hyönsil insik—Yi Kwang-su,” 190-191.

²⁸⁶ Yu Ch'i-jin, “Chasŏjŏn,” 162.

worked as the leaders of *kungmin 'gŭk*, only producing plays that glorified Japanese imperialism and spread its propaganda until the liberation of Korea.²⁸⁷

Most notably, Yu Ch'i-jin, the head of Hyōndae Kŭkchang, actively used his talent for *kungmin 'gŭk*. In 1941, for the first production of Hyōndae Kŭkchang, he wrote *Hŭngnyonggang* (the Amur River, 黑龍江), that supported the Japanese policy promoting Korean farmers' immigration to Manchuria.²⁸⁸ In 1942, he wrote *Pukchindae* (The Group Going toward North, 北進隊), the play praising the notorious collaborator Yi Yong-gu (李容九, 1868-1912), who worked for Japan during the Russo-Japanese War and supported Japan's annexation of Korea. Also, in the same year, he wrote *Taech'u Namu* (Jujube Tree, 대추나무), another play supporting the Japanese policy encouraging Korean farmers to immigrate to Manchuria, for the Chosen Theatre Culture Association's First Drama Contest.²⁸⁹ This contest was sponsored by the Government-General. The play, directed by Sō Hang-sōk, won the prize for the best play (作品賞). In addition to Yu Ch'i-jin's plays, Hyōndae Kŭkchang, under Yu Ch'i-jin's leadership, produced pro-collaboration plays by other playwrights that supported the war and spread Japanese propaganda. For example, Hyōndae Kŭkchang performed Ham Se-dōk's *Emille Chong* (the Bell of Emille, 에밀레鐘) in 1943, directed by Sō Hang-sōk, which attacked China by laughing at the Chinese character in the play, and Pak No-a's *Syōōmen Ho* (The Trading Ship General Sherman, 셔어멘號), a play depicting the historical event where the Koreans attacked and destroyed the American trading ship General Sherman. *Syōōmen Ho* was directed by Yu Ch'i-jin in 1944.²⁹⁰ Hyōndae Kŭkchang was so blindly devoted to *kungmin 'gŭk* that it was performing a pro-

²⁸⁷ Yu Min-yōng, *Han 'guk Kŭndae Yŏn 'gŭksa*, 875.

²⁸⁸ Ibid., 861.

²⁸⁹ Che Il Hoe Yŏn 'gŭk Kyōngyŏn Daehoe, 第1回 演劇競演大會

collaboration play called *Pidulgi* (Pigeon, 비둘기) on the very day of the Liberation of Korea on August 15, 1945.

Japan renovated the Chosen Theatre Association and transformed it to the Chosen Theatre Culture Association on July 26, 1942. The president of this organization was a Japanese, Karajima (辛島驍), and some Koreans, including Sŏ Hang-sŏk and Yu Ch'i-jin, became the executive members of the association.²⁹¹ The Chosen Theatre Culture Association issued ID cards only to actors who passed the examination given by its committee. The members of the committee included officials in the Government-General and military officers, and the examination included writing an essay about “the desirable direction toward which *kungmin 'gŭk* should go” and a test of Japanese language ability. In addition to these controls, Japanese authority forced the Korean theatrical companies to perform two thirds of their performances in Japanese per show. Korean actors were also coerced to attend the Shintō ceremony on the 8th of every month in order to celebrate the attack of Pearl Harbor, which took place on December 8.²⁹³ If anyone refused to obey these orders, that person’s registration as an actor was cancelled.²⁹⁴ With such whips, the colonial authority gave in return the carrots of providing convenience in renting theatres, reducing taxes, and discounting train fares to the companies that belonged to the Chosen Theatre Culture Association.²⁹⁵

²⁹⁰ Yu Min-yŏng, *Han 'guk Kŭndae Yŏn 'gŭksa*, 872-874.

²⁹¹ Sŏ Hang-sŏk, “Han 'guk Yŏn 'gŭksa” (2), 2098.

²⁹³ Pak Chin, 174. In fact, the attack on Pearl Harbor happened on December 7 in all American time zones.

²⁹⁴ Ibid.

²⁹⁵ Ko Sŏl-bong, *Iyagi Kŭndae Yŏn 'gŭksa*, 172-173.

The Chosen Theatre Culture Association hosted its Drama Contest in 1942, 1943, and 1944. The major theatrical companies, including Sönggun, Arang, Hyöndae Kükchang, Kohyöp, Ch'öngch'unjwa, and Taeyang (Sun, 太陽), and their actors participated in these contests. The leading playwrights such as Yu Ch'i-jin, Pak Yöng-ho, Kim Tae-jin (金兌眞), Im Sön-gyu (林仙圭), Song Yöng (宋影), Yi Kwang-nae (李光來) wrote plays for the contests, and the major directors such as Yu Ch'i-jin, Sö Hang-sök, Yi Sö-hyang (李曙鄉), An Yöng-il, Chön Ch'ang-gün (全昌根), Na Ung, Pak Chin, Sin Ko-song, An Chong-hwa, and Han No-tan (韓路檀) directed the plays.²⁹⁶ This list included most of the leading theatre artists, whether they were formerly nationalists or communists, or whether they had worked in the New Theatre or the popular theatre. Due to this kind of re-organization of Korean theatre by political influences within the concept of *kungmin 'gŭk*, more dissolution of the distinction between the New Theatre and the popular theatre took place as a side effect.

While most of the leading figures of Korean theatre were helping to spread Japanese propaganda, Hong Hae-söng stayed on a mountain in the Hwanghae Province, treating his infirmity for about ten years until the Korean War broke out in 1950. Therefore, he could maintain his conscientiousness regarding for his nation, by not using his talent to promote the interests of imperialist Japan. Sö Yön-ho (徐淵昊, 1941-), who is one of the foremost theatre historians, studied to what degree Hong Hae-söng was devoted to *kungmin 'gŭk* during the period of the Chosen Theatre Association and the Chosen Theatre Culture Association in order to examine Hong Hae-söng's artistic spirit. According to Sö Yön-ho, after his wide research, he found that Hong Hae-söng wrote only one series of articles about *kungmin 'gŭk* titled "*Kungmin yön 'gŭk* and

²⁹⁶ Sö Hang-sök, "Han'guk Yön'gŭksa" (2), 2098-2099.

Actor”²⁹⁷ in *Maeil Sinbo* from April 27 to May 1, 1941. However, Sŏ Yŏn-ho argues that Hong Hae-sŏng’s language in these articles only superficially borrowed the terms and concepts of *kungmin ’gŭk*, unlike the wholehearted collaborating articles by others at that time. Also, according to Sŏ Yŏn-ho, the arguments in “*Kungmin yŏn ’gŭk* and Actor” are the same as the arguments in Hong Hae-sŏng’s other articles, as they urged the Korean artists to increase their knowledge and technique.²⁹⁸ Hong Hae-sŏng wrote “*Kungmin yŏn ’gŭk* and Actor” while the entire Korean theatre was being driven to be reorganized toward *kungmin ’gŭk*, after the Chosen Theatre Association had been founded several months earlier. It seems that Hong Hae-sŏng soon found that his conscience did not allow him to collaborate, although he had written an article using the terms of *kungmin ’gŭk* unwillingly during the fierce drive. From that time forward, he never engaged in *kungmin ’gŭk* activities. In fact, Ko Sŏl-bong, who was one of Hong Hae-sŏng’s pupils at the Tongyang Theatre, interpreted Hong Hae-sŏng’s allegedly having heart disease as “avoiding collaboration by making the excuse of an infirmity” (稱病을 통한 日帝에의 非妥協).²⁹⁹

According to Ko Sŏl-bong, even if Hong Hae-sŏng was not in good health, he could have gotten any title in the collaborating organization or benefit from the colonial authority—for example, getting a high position in the Chosen Theatre Association, becoming a member of the committee for evaluating the actors for their ID cards, or receiving a subsidy for *kungmin ’gŭk* activities—if he had wanted, as he was a big name in Korean theatre. In fact, according to Ko Sŏl-bong, the Government-General needed Hong Hae-sŏng to do anything or to accept any position from them. In an interview with Sŏ Yŏn-ho, Ko Sŏl-bong said:

²⁹⁷ *Kungmin Yŏn ’gŭkkwa* Paeu, 國民演劇과俳優

²⁹⁸ Sŏ Yŏn-ho, *Uri sidaeŭi Yŏn ’gŭgin*, 33-34.

With his fame, he could have managed a comfortable life, even by letting the colonial authority use his name for their political propaganda. He never suggested that we perform *kungmin'gŭk*, which collaborated with Japan. Even though he never mentioned it, we could guess that the Government-General had asked him to work for the Japanese authorities several times at least. The reality at that time was such. He never joined the *kungmin'gŭk* activities forced by the Government-General. When they increased their pressure, he left theatre and secluded himself from society.³⁰⁰ (my translation)

In fact, there is no collaborating play in the list of the productions Hong Hae-sŏng directed.³⁰¹

During Hong Hae-sŏng's seclusion, nobody knew his whereabouts. Therefore, Yu Ch'i-jin described Hong Hae-sŏng as "missing."³⁰² The fact that Hong Hae-sŏng never put his hands on the management of the Tongyang Theatre, even if he was one of the highest ranking members of the theatre, (while Ch'oe Tok-kyŏn, the manager, and Pak Chin, the head of the literature department, controlled management)³⁰³ suggests that Hong Hae-sŏng either owing to personality or to philosophy, never sought to pursue power. Considering his personality, one may find Ko Sŏl-bong's interpretation that Hong Hae-sŏng secluded himself from society by making an excuse of his infirmity is convincing. He may have exiled himself, using his heart disease as an excuse, as he felt repugnance toward the madness of the other people who voluntarily collaborated with Japan.

Whether Hong Hae-sŏng's retirement was really due to his anti-Japanese ideology or not, Hong Hae-sŏng became the one an exceptional Korean stage artist who did not bear the grim title of pro-Japanese collaborator. As already discussed, his passive seclusion was the only choice

²⁹⁹ Ibid., 34.

³⁰⁰ Sŏ Yŏn-ho, *Han'guk Yŏngŭksa*, 396-397.

³⁰¹ Ibid., 397.

³⁰² Yu Ch'i-jin, "Sin'gŭgŭi Sŏn'gakcha Hong Hae-sŏng Sŏlsaeng" [Hong Hae-sŏng, the Forerunner of *Sin'gŭk*], in *Tongnang Yu Ch'i-jin Chŏnjip* [The Anthology of Yu Ch'i-jin's Works] 8 (Seoul, Sŏulyedae ch'ulp'anbu, 1993), 404.

³⁰³ Pak Chin, 136.

many Korean intellectuals had, unless they decided either to volunteer to collaborate with the Japanese or to be persecuted by the Japanese for their resistance. However, unfortunately, among artists in Korean theatre, not only resistance, but also passive avoidance or seclusion in the style of Hong Hae-sŏng, was exceptional. Yi Hae-rang, who was a member of Hyŏndae Kŭkchang later suggested that it had been difficult for the stage artists to avoid collaborating, as theatre was a form achieved through collective effort in a group, arguing:

The generation that experienced the dark period of the 1940s should acknowledge the harshness of the period, under which we were deprived of not only our language but also even our names. At that time, there was no cultural organization that did not collaborate with Japan whether that was forced or not, although the degree of collaboration could vary. If there had been an organization that did not collaborate, it would not have been able to survive. Even individuals who were literary giants such as Yuktang (六堂)³⁰⁴ and Ch'unwŏn (春園)³⁰⁵ had to give up their principles. The group had to surrender to the reality.³⁰⁶ (my translation)

If theatrical activities must be achieved by a group, and if the theatre artists' collaboration was unavoidable as they belonged to a group, Hong Hae-sŏng's behavior of leaving his group and giving up any benefit from his theatrical activities becomes even more remarkable. Although he had lost his image as an activist in the New Theatre based on Cultural Nationalism after he had converted from the Dramatic Art Study Association to the Tongyang theatre, Hong Hae-sŏng could maintain his status as a nationalist by choosing retirement. Ironically, other leading members of the Dramatic Art Study Association who had kept their pride as activists in the Cultural Movement finally chose to serve imperialist Japan, actually relinquishing their nationalism.

After he had returned from Japan at the beginning of the 1930s, Hong Hae-sŏng devoted himself, as the most well known director in Korea, to the New Theatre at the Dramatic Art Study

³⁰⁴ Ch'oe Nam-sŏn (崔南善, 1890-1957)

³⁰⁵ Yi Kwang-su (李光洙, 1892-?)

³⁰⁶ Chŏng Ch'ŏl, "Han'guk Kŭndae Yŏnch'ulsa Yŏn'gu," 132

Association during the first half of the 1930s and to popular theatre at the Tongyang Theatre during the second half of the 1930s and the beginning of the 1940s. With his activities in the two groups, he proved the linchpin for their success. The New Theatre and the revitalized popular theatre each owed a debt of gratitude to Hong Hae-sŏng. Each acquired the necessary conditions to combine with each other and form the identity of today's Korean theatre, using Hong Hae-sŏng's teaching as the common denominator.

In the Cultural Movement, the value of nationalism and the value of modernization began to diverge in the 1930s with the expansion of Japanese imperialism and its increasing oppression. Meanwhile, the nationalist rhetoric also decreased in Hong Hae-sŏng's activities. After he converted to popular theatre, Hong Hae-sŏng even came to losing the image of a leader of the Cultural Movement for modernization. However, while most of the other leading figures in Korean theatre voluntarily collaborated with Japan and betrayed the value of nation, through his retirement, Hong Hae-sŏng could keep his nationalism, the most fundamental and essential value in Koreans' efforts for modernization.

CHAPTER 5

THE FORMATION OF THE MAINSTREAM OF SOUTH KOREAN THEATRE AND HONG HAE-SŎNG

In 1945, Korea was liberated from the savagery of Japanese colonial rule. As soon as Korea was liberated, the conflict among the political factions, which had existed since the 1920s, reached its most extreme phase. In the end, the Korean nation would be divided into the two very different countries: the communist country in the north and the capitalist country in the south. In the wake of severe political changes after the Liberation, people in theatre were also in conflict with each other according to their political points of view, and again depended on political power in order to secure their careers.

While the “right wing” (*uik*, 右翼)¹ government based on capitalism was established in South Korea, many people in popular theatre, whose political standpoint was “left wing” (*chwaik*, 左翼), escaped to North Korea, and those primarily in the New Theatre, who had close relationships with the South Korean government and the United States of America, formed the mainstream of the South Korean theatre. Hong Hae-sŏng did not join any political faction during this time of social and political change. As a result, he did not have an active stepping-stone for revitalizing his theatrical career in the newly forming environment. In this chapter, I examine the process of building the new Korean social and political order after the country’s liberation from the

¹ “Right wing” and “left wing” are the concepts used in order to distinguish the two representative political stances among the Koreans from each other right after Korea had been liberated from Japan. These two terms are customarily used because, as Bruce Cumings explains, 1) that Koreans and Korean literature used the terms, 2) that the Americans who controlled Korea after the Liberation described the Koreans in such a manner, and 3) that it is difficult to find any better terms to describe the political spectrum right after the Liberation.

Generally, the right wing consisted of the relatively conservative propertied and educated Koreans who had collaborated with the Japanese in various degrees and were not eager for fundamental social change. The left wing consisted of the relatively progressive or radical intellectuals, peasants, and workers who were influenced by Marxism. As for the definitions of “right wing” and “left wing,” see note 6 in Bruce Cumings, *The Origin of the Korean War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 455-456; Carter J. Eckert, Ki-baik Lee, Young Ick Lew, Michael Robinson, and Edward W. Wagner, *Korea Old and New: A History* (Seoul: Ilchokak, 1990), 328-329.

Japanese and the process of forming the mainstream of South Korean theatre during this historical change. As Hong Hae-sŏng did not show remarkable achievements in the new theatrical environment in this period, I only briefly discuss him in this chapter. Also, this chapter examines how Korean scholars evaluated Hong Hae-sŏng after he died, in order to help define the identity of Korean theatre of today.

5.1. Political Confusion after the Liberation

As soon as Japan attacked Pearl Harbor and the Pacific War began in December, 1941, the Korean leaders in foreign lands began to create the conditions for Korea's independence by joining the Allies for the defeat Japan. Many nationalist groups working in the Chinese territory joined the Korean Provisional Government² in Chungking, China in order to unify and strengthen the Korean forces against Japan.³ Troops representing the Korean Provisional Government joined operations led by both the British and U.S. militaries, awaiting the chance to march into Korea.⁴ Anti-Japanese Korean efforts for independence were recognized by international society. Therefore, the Cairo Conference, attended by the United States, Great Britain, and China on December 1, 1943, recognized "the enslavement of the people of Korea" and promised that "in due course Korea shall become free and independent" for the first time.⁵ The promise of the independence of Korea in Cairo, with its reaffirmation in Potsdam in July, 1945, was definitely good news to the Koreans. However, at the same time, Koreans were concerned that foreign powers were still determining their fate. The proviso "in due course" in the declaration made in Cairo implied that Korea would

² Taehan min'guk imsi chŏngbu, 大韓民國臨時政府

³ Han Si-jun, "1940nyŏndae Chŏnban'gi Tongnip undongŭi T'ŭksŏng" [The Characteristics of the Independence Movement during the First Half of the 1940s], *Han'guk Tongnip undongsa Yŏn'gu* 8 (1994), http://www.independence.or.kr/media_data/thesis/1994/199418.html (accessed June 4, 2007).

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Cumings, 106

not get instant independence, even after Japan was defeated, and that the foreign powers could practice a trusteeship in Korea.

That was definitely not good news to the Koreans, who thought, as one exile publication put, “Koreans are of an old nation. When the ancestors of northern Europe were wandering in the forests, clad in skins and practicing rites, Koreans had government of their own and had attained a high degree of civilization.”⁶ However, there was no way for Koreans to express an opinion contrary to the victorious powers’ decision. When Japan finally surrendered, the United States and the Soviet Union divided Korea at the 38th parallel north latitude as Koreans had feared. The United States occupied the area south of the 38th parallel and the Soviet Union occupied the north. The surrender of Japan came concurrently with the division of the Korean nation under the influence of two foreign powers.

As soon as Japan surrendered unconditionally on August 15, 1945, the most urgent matter for the Koreans was to establish their own initiatives regarding the political problems in Korea. Koreans hoped to accomplish establishing these initiatives before the U.S.’s and the U.S.S.R.’s influences were established. The most important effort was the work of the Committee for the Preparation of Korean Independence (CPKI)⁷. When it was certain that Japan would surrender, the Government-General needed the Koreans’ help to protect their lives and properties in Korea until the Allied victors arrived. Therefore, the Government-General sent Endō Ruysaku (遠藤柳作), who was the Governor-General’s Secretary for Political Affairs (政務總監) at dawn on August 15, 1945 to ask Yō Un-hyōng (Lyuh Woon-hyung, 呂運亨, 1886-1947), who was a respected and popular political figure, to form a peace-keeping administration. The Japanese thought that Yō Un-

⁶ *ibid.*

⁷ Chosŏn kŏn’guk chunbi wiwŏnhoe, 朝鮮建國準備委員會

hyŏng, who was “somewhat radical,” could reduce the Korean students’ demonstrations and act as a buffer between the Russians and the Japanese.⁸ Therefore, Yŏ Un-hyŏng began to organize the CPKI on August 15, and its branches, “people’s committees” (*inmin wiwŏnhoe*, 人民委員會), were organized all over Korea to keep the peace. Differing from what the Japanese people expected, the CPKI soon began to take the initiative in the political situation in Korea, functioning as an interim government for Korea. The CPKI finally declared the establishment of the Korean People’s Republic⁹ on September 6, attempting to establish an independent country.

However, there were still conflicts among the Koreans. These conflicts arose from the differing political views among the factions that had been in existence in Korea since the 1920s. Conflict among these factions encouraged political confusion and the tragic division of the nation under the influences of foreign powers. Song Chin-u (宋鎮禹, 1889-1945), who was president of *Tonga Ilbo* from 1927 to 1936,¹⁰ and the leader of the nationalists who had complied with the Japanese colonial system, did not join the CPKI. Also, An Chae-hong (安在鴻, 1891-1968), the leader of the nationalists who had not complied with the colonial authority, soon broke with the CPKI. As a result, the CPKI came to be dominated by communists.¹¹ From that time forward, political groups opposed one another, and the political situation in general showed the sharp conflict between the two largest groups: the right wing and the left wing.¹²

⁸ Cumings, 71.

⁹ Chosŏn inmin konghwa’guk, 朝鮮人民共和國

¹⁰ Kim Hyŏn-yŏng, “Ilcheha *Tonga Ilbo*’i Minjok undongsajŏk Koch’al: Munhwa jŏngch’i kigan (1920-1928)ŭi Sasŏl Punsŏgŭl Chungsimŭro” [A Study of the Meanings of *Tonga Ilbo* in the Nationalistic Movement: through the Analysis of the editorials during the Cultural Policy (1920-1928)] (master’s thesis, Hanyangdaehakkyo, 1987), 54.

¹¹ Lee Ki-baik, *A New History of Korea*, trans. Edward W. Wagner and Edward J. Shultz (Seoul, Ilchokak, 1984), 374.

¹² Ibid., 374.

As tension between the right wing and the left wing became more pronounced, the right wing was persecuted in the area north of the 38th parallel under the influence of the U.S.S.R., and the left wing was suppressed in the south under the influence of the United States. This political conflict eventually brought about the process whereby the south established its own right wing government (the Republic of Korea) under the influence of the United States in August, 1948, and the north formed its communist government (the Democratic People's Republic of Korea) under the influence of the U.S.S.R. in September of the same year. With this split, Korea found itself divided into two countries for the first time in a thousand years.¹³ The Korean War—which resulted in about 1.3 million casualties in South Korea and about 1.5 million casualties in North Korea¹⁴—broke out in 1950, exacerbating the split. In the post-war era, the two Koreas developed exclusive systems of government with sharp tension between them. This tragic division continues to this day.

The South and the North showed very different attitudes in their cleansing of remnants of Japanese colonial rule, reflecting their very different political systems. The U.S.S.R. let the Koreans cleanse the colonial remnants as the Koreans wanted, recognizing the Korean People's Republic in the north and letting "people's committees" take care of administration.¹⁵ The United States Army Military Government in Korea (USAMGIK)—created on September 8, 1945, with the arrival of the XXIV Corps of the United States Tenth Army under General John Reed Hodge¹⁶—

¹³ Han'guksa yŏn'guhoe, ed., *Kūndae Kungmin 'gukkawa Minjok munje* [The Modern Nation-state and the Problems of the Nation] (Seoul: Chisiksanŏpsa, 1995), 113.

¹⁴ Carter J. Eckert, Ki-baik Lee, Young Ick Lew, Michael Robinson, and Edward W. Wagner, 345

¹⁵ Cumings, 382-396.

¹⁶ Cumings, 122.

mostly contributed to preserving the remnants of the Japanese colonial system.¹⁷ As soon as they arrived, the military government declared that the only legal government in the south was the American military government, and that it would take care of administration in every aspect. Thus, USAMGIK refused to recognize indigenous Korean organizations such as the Korean Provisional Government and the Korean People's Republic.¹⁸ The primary purpose of the USAMGIK's policies was to protect American interests in the Korean peninsula by building a "bulwark" against Soviet expansionism.¹⁹ In order to accomplish that purpose, the USAMGIK used those Koreans who would cooperate readily with the Americans. Meanwhile, USAMGIK maintained many parts of the Japanese colonial system for their administrative convenience, and the reformation of South Korea was not being brought about as Koreans wanted.

The Korean political bloc the USAMGIK chose as its partner was the Korean Democratic Party (*Han'guk minjudang*, 韓國民主黨), which consisted of the wealthy and conservatives. The Korean Democratic Party was formed around the time of the arrival of the American army by the leaders of the right wing, those who had failed to gain a foothold in the political situation that followed the Liberation. This party included landlords, industrialists, businessmen, and educators. Many of the leading members such as Kim Sŏng-su (金性洙, 1891-1955), Chang Tŏk-su, Paek Kwan-su (白寬洙, 1889-?), Ham Sang-hun (咸尙勳),²⁰ Yu Ŏk-kyŏm (俞億兼, 1895-1947), Paek Nak-chun (George Paik, 白樂濬, 1895-1985), Yu Chin-o (俞鎮午, 1906-1987), and Im Yŏng-sin (任永信, 1899-1977) had experienced collaboration with the Japanese in varying degrees.²¹

¹⁷ Ibid., 135-178.

¹⁸ Lee Ki-baik, 375.

¹⁹ Cumings, 136.

²⁰ Ham Tae-hun's brother.

²¹ Cumings, 94-95.

Therefore, they were not eager to cleanse the Japanese remnants, and did not want radical changes in the society. The U.S. considered the Korean Democratic Party to be “well educated business and professional men, as well as community leaders in different parts of the country” while they considered the Korean People’s Republic “the radical or communist group.”²² The USAMGIK listened to the Korean Democratic Party’s advice, appointing the members of the party for its Advisory Council, even hiring the members of the party in some major positions.²³ Therefore, many of the Korean leaders who were reputed to have collaborated with Japan continued to hold their leading positions and powers in the Korean society after the Liberation.

The USAMGIK also kept the Koreans who had served imperialist Japan in the bureaucracy, justice system, police, and military. In its early stages, the USAMGIK used the Japanese officials of the colony in its administration. When these appointments faced opposition from Koreans and their American superiors, the USAMGIK promoted Korean officials who had served the colonial system to replace the Japanese officials.²⁴ The USAMGIK re-hired all the Koreans who had been in the Japanese Bureau of Justice,²⁵ and preserved the structure of the notorious Japanese police, including its Korean elements.²⁶ The Korean officers formerly in the Japanese army became the core of the Constabulary and the subsequent ROK Army.²⁷ Therefore, the Koreans who had run away or hidden after the Liberation due to their serving imperialist Japan reappeared under the protection of the USAMGIK.

²² Ibid., 145.

²³ Ibid., 146-147.

²⁴ Ibid., 152-153.

²⁵ Ibid., 159.

²⁶ Ibid., 162.

²⁷ Ibid., 175.

The cleansing of the “collaborators” who re-emerged under the USAMGIK’s protection was never successful in South Korea, even after the USAMGIK’s rule had ended. When the South Korean government was established in 1948, the first president Yi Sŭng-man (Syngman Rhee, 李承晩, 1875-1965) did not listen to the Korean people, who demanded that he punish the “collaborators” in order to protect those among them who were his supporters. As a result, many Koreans who were considered collaborators maintained their leadership positions in politics, the economy, education, the arts, and other aspects of the society. For example, according to Im Chong-guk, even in 1958, 11.2 per cent of the National Assembly of South Korea were those who had collaborated with the Japanese colonial system.²⁸ Also, during the Yi Sŭng-man government, which lasted 12 years, 83 per cent of the Cabinet ministers were “collaborators,” and even in the Chang Myŏn government in 1960, 60 per cent of the Cabinet ministers were those who had the experience of collaboration in varying degrees.²⁹ According to Bruce Cumings, until 1960, about 600 of the officers in the National Police were those who had served Japan, and most of them were active in key positions in the new police force.³⁰ Kim Yŏn-su, who became the president of the Seoul Textile Company³¹ after his elder brother Kim Sŏng-su, maintained his prosperity and received the “Golden Pagoda Industrial Medal” in 1971 from the Korean government as the nation’s most successful exporter.³² Pak Chŏng-hŭi (Park Chung Hee, 朴正熙, 1917-1979), who was an officer in the army of the Japanese puppet government in Manchukuo, became the president

²⁸ Im Chong-guk, *Ch'inil, Kŭ Kwagŏwa Hyŏnjae* [Collaboration: in the Past and Now] ed. Panminjok munje Yŏn'guso (Seoul: Asea munhwasa, 1994), 351.

²⁹ Ibid., 23.

³⁰ Bruce Cumings, *Korea's Place in the Sun*, updated ed. (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2005), 350.

³¹ Kyŏngsŏng Pangjik Hoesa, 京城紡織會社.

of Korea in 1961 after executing a coup. He propelled the plans to develop the Korean economy following the model of the Manchurian industrialization by Japan,³³ and held the reins of power for 18 years until he was assassinated in 1979. Many Koreans who were the leading members of the Korean society under Japanese colonial rule continued to be members of the mainstream of South Korean society after the Liberation.

The social structure of the South Korean society during the latter half of the twentieth century was formed by this process. The Liberation from Japan brought Koreans the opportunity to form and develop their own modern nation-state.³⁴ However, the tragic division of the nation interfered. Along with the mental or emotional trauma of the nation caused by the colonial experience, the Korean nation's division and problems caused by the division still remains a burden carried by the Korean people.

5.2. The Formation of the Mainstream Theatre in South Korea

The ideological conflict between the right and left wing after the Liberation was not unexpected in the theatre community.³⁵ Theatre artists formed groups according to their political views, and as a result, whether one was right wing or left wing became the more important measure for the individuals in theatre to distinguish themselves (outside of whether one's background was the New Theatre or popular theatre). The right wing and the left wing in theatre engaged in major conflicts, attacking and even terrorizing each other.³⁶

The left wing, which emerged from the "proletariat theatre" of the 1920s, dominated

³² Bruce Cumings, *Korea's Place in the Sun*, 312.

³³ Ibid., 311.

³⁴ Han'guksa yŏn'guhoe ed., 130.

³⁵ See Kŏn Hwan, "Hyŏnjŏngsewa Yesul undong" [Current Political Situation and Art Movement], *Yesul Undong* (December 1945).

³⁶ Yu Min-yŏng, *Han'guk Yŏn'gŭk undongsa* (Seoul: T'aehaksa, 2001), 305-306

Korean theatre after the Liberation. The first stage of the proletariat theatre was realized by Chonghap Yesul Hyŏphoe (Synthetic Art Association, 綜合藝術協會) in 1927,³⁷ and about ten troupes of proletariat theatre appeared in the early part of the 1930s.³⁸ However, as Japan strengthened its oppression, and KAPF³⁹ officially disbanded in 1935, Marxist playwrights such as Song Yŏng (宋影, 1903-1978), Pak Yŏng-ho (朴英鎬), and Pak No-a (朴露兒), and Marxist directors such as An Yŏng-il (安英一) and Na Ung (羅雄) converted to popular theatre by joining the Tongyang Theatre. Whether their conversion was a betrayal of their principles or the result of a temporary disguise was not clear.⁴⁰ However, as soon as Korea was liberated, they revealed their true political identities and actively promoted left wing theatre activities. The day after the Liberation, August 16, 1945, left wing artists founded the Headquarters of Building Korean Theatre.⁴¹ Another left wing organization, called the Korean Proletariat Theatre League,⁴² was formed on September 27. These two organizations were unified to form the Korean Theatre League⁴³ on December 20, 1945. Troupes that belonged to this organization dominated Korean theatre until the Summer of 1947, producing plays that portrayed Koreans who defied the imperialist or feudal oppression.

³⁷ Ibid., 249.

³⁸ Ibid., 251.

³⁹ KAPF was the main organization from the middle of the 1920s to the middle of the 1930s, and was formed by the artists who pursued a socialist revolution. Its name was originated from the title in Esperanto, Korea Artista Proleta Federatio (Chosŏn Proletaria Yesulga Tongmaeng, 조선프롤레타리아예술가 동맹).

⁴⁰ Yu Min-yŏng, *Han 'guk Yŏn 'gŭk undongsa*, 255.

⁴¹ Chosŏn Yŏn'gŭk Kŏnsŏl Bonbu, 朝鮮演劇建設本部

⁴² Chosŏn Proletariat Yŏn'gŭk Tongmaeng, 朝鮮 프롤레타리아 演劇同盟

⁴³ Chosŏn Yŏn'gŭk Tongmaeng, 朝鮮演劇同盟

During the immediate post-World War II period, there was only one right wing organization. Minjok Yesul Mudae (the National Art Stage, 民族藝術舞臺) was founded in October, 1945 by Yi Kwang-nae (李光來, 1908-1968).⁴⁴ Yu Ch'i-jin (柳致眞, 1905-1974), who had led Hyöndae Kükchang (the Contemporary Theatre, 現代劇場), took leave from theatrical activities for a while because of his conspicuous promotion of *kungmin 'gŭk*, until he rebuilt the Dramatic Art Study Association on May 23, 1946. Therefore, right wing theatrical activity was relatively weak and was revived only as a result of the enforcement of American power. Officials with the U.S. Information Service under the USAMGIK, which needed an instrument to propagandize against the left wing, contacted Yu Ch'i-jin to encourage him to stage anti-left wing theatrical productions, promising to provide funds.⁴⁵ Yu Ch'i-jin and the former members of the Dramatic Art Study Association accepted the proposal from the Americans and formed touring troupes. The touring troupes performed “patriotic” shows, and featured anti-left wing lectures with their performances.⁴⁶ At the same time, in January, 1947, the USAMGIK had the police prohibit left wing political propaganda presented under the disguise of “art.” Many left wing artists were arrested in March. As a result, the left wing’s theatrical activities declined rapidly.⁴⁷

In April, 1947, right wing artists, including Yi Hae-rang, Kim Tong-wŏn (金東園, 1916-2006),⁴⁸ Yi Hwa-sam (李化三), and Kim Sŏn-yŏng (金鮮英), formed a theatrical company called

⁴⁴ Yi Tu-hyŏn, *Han 'guk Sin 'gŭksa Yŏn 'gu* [Modern History of Korean Drama], 2nd ed. (Seoul: Sŏuldaehakkyo ch'ulp'anbu, 1990), 283.

⁴⁵ Yu Ch'i-jin, “Chasŏjŏn” [Autobiography], in *Tongnang Yu Ch'i-jin Chŏnjip* [The Anthology of Yu Ch'i-jin's Works] 9 (Seoul, Sŏulyedae ch'ulp'anbu, 1993), 173.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Yu Min-yŏng, *Han 'guk yŏn 'gŭgŭi Mihak* [The Aesthetics of Korean Theatre], rev. ed. (Seoul: Tanguktaehakkyo ch'ulp'anbu, 1987), 197.

⁴⁸ Kim Tong-hyŏk (金東赫)

Kŭkhyŏp (the Dramatic Art Association, 劇協 or 劇藝術協會).⁴⁹ Even though his name was not on the list of its members, Yu C'hi-jin actually led this company.⁵⁰ The first production of Kŭkhyŏp was Yu Ch'i-jin's *Chamyŏnggo* (Self-sounding Drum, 自鳴鼓), which Yu Ch'i-jin also directed.⁵¹ This first production was a big success, and Kŭkhyŏp emerged as the foremost company in Korea, as the left wing companies declined. As a result of the success of *Chamyŏnggo*, Yu Ch'i-jin once again became the leader of Korean theatre after two years of waiting.⁵²

On October 29, 1947, the National Theatrical Arts Association,⁵³ which would later control all theatrical activities conducted by the right wing, was formed under the support of the USAMGIK.⁵⁴ Yu Ch'i-jin became the president of this organization.⁵⁵ The National Theatrical Arts Association changed its name to the Korean Stage Art Institute,⁵⁶ and became engaged in political propaganda.⁵⁷ Yu Ch'i-jin described his activities in Han'guk Mudae Yesulwŏn as follows:

I started various activities in order to increase the people's understanding of theatre. Also, I planned to begin a nationwide enlightenment movement to educate people about democracy, as I believed that theatre needed to help establish certain social

⁴⁹ Chang Han-gi, *Han'guk Yŏn'gŭksa* [The History of Korean Theatre], 2nd ed. (Seoul: Tongguktaehakkyo ch'ulp'anbu, 1990), 295.

⁵⁰ Yu Ch'i-jin, "Chasŏjŏn," 178.

⁵¹ Ibid., 178-179.

⁵² Ibid., 181.

⁵³ Chŏn'guk Yŏn'gŭk Yesul Hyŏphoe, 全國演劇藝術協會

⁵⁴ Yu Ch'i-jin, "Chasŏjŏn," 183.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Han'guk Mudae Yesulwŏn, 韓國舞臺藝術院

⁵⁷ Chŏng Ch'ŏl, "Han'guk Kŭndae Yŏnch'ulsa Yŏn'gu" [A Study of the History of Directing in Korea] (PhD diss., Chosŏndaehakkyo, 2000), 84.

functions to help create democratic forms of government. Koreans were going to have a general election on May 10 to form their government, and it was going to be the first experience of a democratic election for the Koreans in their history. Therefore, it was necessary to teach people what democracy was, what meaning the election had, and how to vote.⁵⁸ (my translation)

With these political intentions, Yu Ch'i-jin dispatched 30 troupes throughout Korea for pro-democratic propagandizing. These activities impressed the USAMGIK.⁵⁹

Finally, in August, 1948, the South Korean government was established, and left wing theatre disappeared in South Korea as the left wingers escaped to North Korea.⁶⁰ Once left-wing theatre artists had left the South,⁶¹ there remained only a few dozen right-wing stage artists in South Korea, including Yu Ch'i-jin, Sō Hang-sōk, Yi Hae-rang, Kim Tong-wōn, and Yi Kwang-nae. From that time forward, theatre in South Korea was reorganized under the influences of Yu Ch'i-jin and Sō Hang-sōk. During this reorganization, the distinction between the New Theatre and popular theatre virtually disappeared.

As Yu Ch'i-jin managed good relationships with the politicians in the new government and American forces,⁶² he was appointed as the head of The National Theater of Korea (大韓民國國立劇場) when it was established in 1949. The National Theater of Korea presented Yu Ch'i-

⁵⁸ Yu Ch'i-jin, "Chasōjōn," 184.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 184-185.

⁶⁰ Sō Yōn-ho, *Han'guk Yōngŭksa* [A History of Korean Theatre] (Seoul: Yōn'gŭkkwa In'gan, 2003), 312.

⁶¹ The activities and destinies of left wing theatre artists in North Korea are hardly known due to inaccessibility of information. In his book *Iyagi Kūndae Yōn'gŭksa*, Ko Sōl-bong relates some rumors about the destinies of several theatre artists who went to North Korea. See Ko Sōl-bong, *Iyagi Kūndae Yōn'gŭksa* [The Stories of the History of Modern Theatre] (Seoul: Ch'angjak Maül, 2000), 226-281.

⁶² The U.S. Information Service asked Kŭkhyōp to perform American plays, and Kŭkhyōp favorably responded to such request. Therefore, with the support of the U.S. Information Service, Kŭkhyōp performed Sidney Kingsley's *The Patriots* in May 1949, Arthur Laurents' *Home of the Braves* in December 1949, and Maxwell Anderson's *High Tor* in May 1950. Kim Tong-wōn, *Misuii Curtain Call* [Curtain Call at the Age of 88] (Seoul: T'aehaksa, 2003), 159-160.

jin's *Wõnsullang* (The Young Warrior Wõnsul, 元述郎) as its first production in April 29, 1950.⁶³

While Kũkhyõp still existed, Yu Ch'i-jin formed a new troupe for the National Theater called Sinhyõp (the New Theatre Conference, 新協 or 新劇協議會), with his followers such as Yi Hae-rang, Kim Tong-wõn, and Pak Sang-ik (朴商翊), and others. He ambitiously planned to have these two troupes perform new plays alternately every other month for the National Theatre.⁶⁴ However, this National Theater dissolved after its second production—the Chinese play, *Thunderstorm* by Cao Yu (1910-1996)—due to the Korean War, which broke out on June 25, 1950.

While the war was going in North Korea's favor, the South Korean government, which had retreated to the southern area, reopened the National Theater of Korea in Taegu on February 13, 1953. This time, the government appointed Sõ Hang-sõk as the head of the national theatre.⁶⁵ Sinhyõp, under Yu Ch'i-jin's influence, was already working independently after Yi Hae-rang had revived it in 1951. Therefore, members of Sinhyõp did not re-join the National Theater of Korea, and continued to work independently. While the other companies did not show any notable activities during the war, theatre in South Korea “was monopolized by Sinhyõp” (“신협의 독무대”).⁶⁶ Meanwhile, the National Theater of Korea, which did not have its own troupe, had trouble establishing itself. After Sõ Hang-sõk became the head of the National Theater of Korea, an invisible tension between Sõ Hang-sõk and Yu Ch'i-jin over the initiative of Korean theatre began.⁶⁷

⁶³ Chang Han-gi, 302.

⁶⁴ Yu Ch'i-jin, “Chasõjõn,” 203.

⁶⁵ Sõ Hang-sõk, “Nawa Kungnip kũkchang” [I and the National Theatre of Korea], in *Kyõngan Sõ Hang-sõk Chõnjip* 5 (Seoul: Hasan ch'ulp'ansa, 1987), 1975.

⁶⁶ Yu Ch'i-jin, “Chasõjõn,” 220.

⁶⁷ Chõng Ch'õl, “Han'guk Kũndae Yõnch'ulsa Yõn'gu,” 146.

On June 1, 1957, the National Theater of Korea returned to Seoul.⁶⁸ Attempting to rebuild the National Theatre, Sŏ Hang-sŏk absorbed the members of Sinhyŏp (who were experiencing financial difficulties) into the National Theatre while Yu Ch'i-jin traveled abroad. Yi Hae-rang, who was most faithful to Yu Ch'i-jin, did not join the National Theater of Korea. After its return to Seoul, the first production of the National Theater of Korea was *Faith and Fireside* by Karl Schönherr (1867-1943). Sŏ Hang-sŏk translated this play, and invited Hong Hae-sŏng to direct the production.⁶⁹ This became Hong Hae-sŏng's first and last professional production since resigning from the Tongyang Theatre in the 1940s.

While Sŏ Hang-sŏk controlled the National Theater of Korea, Yu Ch'i-jin was invited to travel to America and other countries in 1956 by the Rockefeller Foundation. According to Yu Ch'i-jin, the foundation had "an ulterior purpose, that they would invite one of the leaders of Korean theatre to show him the United States, and lead Korean theatre according to the U.S.'s ways [. . .]"⁷⁰ After he returned to Korea the next year, Yu Ch'i-jin began to build a theatre named the Drama Center which would have the most updated facilities of that time. The Rockefeller Foundation contributed significantly to building the Drama Center, and the United States Eighth Army in Korea also greatly contributed to its construction.

When the Drama Center opened in April 1962, the focus of Korean theatre came to Yu Ch'i-jin once again, as the Drama Center was more active than the National Theatre.⁷¹ The Drama Center actively imported American theatre culture by hosting performances by American students and American professional companies, lectures by American artists, and performances of

⁶⁸ Sŏ Hang-sŏk, 1983.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 1984.

⁷⁰ Yu Ch'i-jin, "Chasŏjŏn," 238.

⁷¹ Chŏng Ch'ŏl, "Han'guk Kŭndae Yŏnch'ulsa Yŏn'gu," 146.

American musicals.⁷² Yu Ch'i-jin founded a drama school named the Yŏn'gŭk Academy (the Drama Academy, 연극아카데미). The academy has since developed into the Seoul Institute of the Arts (Seoul Yesul Daehak) of today. Many first-generation alumni of the school—including playwright Yun Tae-sŏng (尹大星) and Pak Cho-yŏl (朴祚烈), actor Sin Ku (신구), Chŏn Mu-song (全茂松), and Yi Ho-chae (李豪宰), and director An Min-su (安民洙)⁷³—became the leading figures of Korean theatre of the next generation, and subsequent generations also yielded numerous stars in theatre, film, TV, pop music, and other entertainment forms in contemporary South Korea.

After Yu Ch'i-jin retired, Yi Hae-rang, who spent almost 40 years under his influence, succeeded him as the most influential person in South Korean theatre. After a brief stay at the Drama Center, Yi Hae-rang rebuilt Sinhyŏp in 1963.⁷⁴ Yi Hae-rang had already become a member of the National Academy of Arts (Taehanmin'guk Yesulwŏn, 大韓民國藝術院), the government-based organization that supported chosen distinguished senior artists,⁷⁵ in 1954, when he was 38 years old. After Pak Chŏng-hŭi (Park Chung Hee, 朴正熙, 1917-1979) had come to power, Yi Hae-rang became close to Kim Chŏng-p'il (김종필), Pak's right-hand man, and joined the Democratic Republican Party (공화당), which would later become the ruling party, as one of its founding members.⁷⁶ His connection to these political powers helped him to become the 6th

⁷² Paek Lora, "1960nyŏndae Yŏn'gŭk undongnon" [A Study of the Drama Movement in the 1960s], *Han'guk Kŭgyesul Yŏn'gu* 12 (October 2000): 238-239.

⁷³ Yu Ch'i-jin, "Chasŏjŏn," 285.

⁷⁴ Yu Min-yŏng, *Han'guk yŏn'gŭgŭi Mihak*, 209.

⁷⁵ Yi Hae-rang, *Hŏsangŭi Chinsil* [The Truth of Illusion] (Seoul: Saemunsa, 1991), 313.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 462

president of the Federation of Artistic & Cultural Organizations of Korea⁷⁷ in 1967, and he was elected to five successive two-year-term as the organization's president.⁷⁸ He even became a member of the National Assembly of Korea in the early part of 1970s.⁷⁹ Meanwhile, he worked as one of South Korea's leading directors.

Through this process, the mainstream power-structure of theatre in South Korea comprised those in the New Theatre around Yu Ch'i-jin, Sŏ Hang-sŏk, and Yi Hae-rang. Although, the artistic successes of these individuals were primarily attributable to their talents, their canny political sense to associate themselves with particular political powers during social changes in South Korea also contributed their careers. Meanwhile, the popular theatre activities either died out or were absorbed into the New Theatre activities. Ultimately, the distinction between the New Theatre and popular theatre (called "*sinp'a*") disappeared.

While South Korean society was being reorganized, Hong Hae-sŏng did not join any political or theatrical factions. As a result, he did not have any organization or power to help his career. Such a circumstance was probably due to not only his weak personality, but also his political resolution. Although he had such a weak personality that "made him gloomy if he couldn't drink coffee, while he never drank a drop of alcohol, and shed tears when he heard *Solveig's Song* at a café or wherever [. . .],"⁸⁰ Hong Hae-sŏng cherished his nationalism so strongly and stubbornly that "he expressed his grief on the division of the nation more than anyone. If someone revealed regional emotion or factional interest, even in a joke, he very strongly scolded

⁷⁷ 韓國藝術文化團體總聯合會

⁷⁸ Yu Min-yŏng, *Chŏnt'onggŭkkwa Hyŏndaegŭk* [Traditional Theatre and Modern Theatre], 2nd ed. (Seoul, Tanguktaehakkyo ch'ulp'anbu, 1992), 230.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Pak Chin, *Seseyŏnnyŏn* [Many Years] (Seoul: Kyŏnghwa ch'ulp'ansa, 1966), 84.

such an attitude.”⁸¹ Hong Hae-sŏng’s failure to pursue secular power and decision not to join any faction may have been based on his artistic resolution that theatre should not belong to any political faction, as Kim U-jin, who had been Hong Hae-sŏng’s closest comrade in theatre before he committed suicide, argued in the 1920s.⁸² Hong Hae-sŏng’s attitude was either exceptionally noble or incompetent within the reality of Korea, in which it was necessary to join a faction or have a connection to a political power. Taking a side in order to protect one’s private interest or security, was necessary to survive in Korean society.

Meanwhile, Hong Hae-sŏng only engaged in a few mentionable activities during the last years of his life. He directed the two amateur productions of the Buddhist religious plays, *Palsangnok* (八相錄) and *Kōryōn* (Great Lotus, 巨蓮). These productions were sponsored by Taegu Buddhist Women’s Association⁸³ and Taegu Buddhist Young Men’s Association⁸⁴ at Taegu Theatre (Taegu Kūkchang) on May 5 and 6, 1951. These productions led to the organization of the Korean Buddhist Religious Play Touring Troupe⁸⁵ in June, and the troupe toured the southern area in Korea for several months.⁸⁶ Hong Hae-sŏng returned to Seoul after the truce of the Korean War in 1953.⁸⁷ However, his activities were limited to teaching at a college and being a juror for a theatrical contest for college students. In 1955, the Min’gŭk (民劇) theatrical company produced

⁸¹ Yi Hŏn-gu, *Chinsirŭl Pŏssama* [With Turth as My Comrade] (Seoul: Pagyŏngsa, 1975), 161.

⁸² See Kim U-jin, “Sowi kŭndaegŭge taehaya” [About So-called Modern Theatre], in *Kim U-jin Chŏnjip* [The Complete Works of Kim U-jin] 2, ed. Sŏ Yŏn-ho and Hong Ch’ang-su (Seoul: Yŏn’gŭkkwa In’gan, 2000), 35.

⁸³ Taegu Pulgyo Puinhoe, 大邱 佛教婦人會

⁸⁴ Taegu Pulgyo Ch’ŏngnyŏnhoe, 大邱 佛教青年會

⁸⁵ Chosŏn Pulgyo Sŏnggŭk Sullyedan, 朝鮮佛教聖劇巡禮團

⁸⁶ Chŏng Ch’ŏl, “Han’guk Kŭndae Yŏnch’ulsa Yŏn’gu,” 70.

Ton (Money) to celebrate the 60th birthday of Hong Hae-sŏng and Pyŏn Ki-jong (卞基鍾, 1895-1977). Pyŏn Ki-jong acted in the production, and Hong Hae-sŏng, with the title of “production advisor” (*chŏnch’e chido*, 全體指導), advised the entire process.⁸⁸ In 1957, when the National Theater of Korea returned to Seoul, Hong Hae-sŏng directed Karl Schönherr’s *Faith and Fireside*. *Faith and Fireside* ran from July 12 to 20 to celebrate the return of the National Theatre of Korea to the capital. The fact that there was a theatrical production to celebrate his 60th birthday—the beginning of a new cycle in the traditional calendar—and that he was invited to direct the first production in rebuilding the National Theatre after the war showed the Korean theatre community’s respect for Hong Hae-sŏng. On December 6, 1957, several months after he directed *Faith and Fireside* at the National Theater of Korea, Hong Hae-sŏng died of a heart attack. He was eventually forgotten.⁸⁹

5.3. Evaluating Hong Hae-sŏng

Korean scholars rediscovered Hong Hae-sŏng in the 1980s, and have produced many works about him since the mid 1990s.⁹⁰ In the early 1990s, scholars became more broadly interested in the history of Korean theatre, and the Tongyang Theatre and popular theatre in the 1930s piqued scholars’ interest. During this period, scholars began to take notice of Hong Hae-sŏng and his great contribution to the development of popular Korean theatre.⁹¹ Such rising interest in the popular theatre in the colonial period and Hong Hae Hae-sŏng is probably due to the

⁸⁷ Sŏ Yŏn-ho, *Uri sidaeŭi Yŏn’gŭgin* [Theatre Artists in Our Time] (Seoul: Yŏn’gŭkkwa In’gan, 2001), 34.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 35.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Yi Sang-u, “Hong Hae-sŏngŭi Yŏn’gŭngnone dachan Yŏn’gu” [A Study of Hong Hae-sŏng’s Theatrical Theory], *Han’guk Kŭgyesul Yŏn’gu* 8 (June 1998): 204.

⁹¹ Ibid.; Song Sŏn-ho, “Hong Hae-sŏngŭi Yŏn’gŭkkwan Chaego (1)” [Re-examining Hong Hae-sŏng’s View of Theatre] (1), *Kongyŏn yesul jŏnŏl Ch’anggan chunbiho* (2001): 104.

influence of post-modernism on academia in which scholars came to be aware of more varied topics for their research. At the same time and in all probability, the influence of the leaders of the New Theatre (*sin'gŭk*), such as Yu Ch'i-jin, Sŏ Hang-sŏk, and Yi Hae-rang, who had attacked the popular theatre, calling it *sinp'a*, and had formed the hegemonic structure centering the New Theatre, subsided in theatrical practice and discourse in Korea. In this changed environment, many studies of Hong Hae-sŏng emerged.

However, although many efforts were made in giving Hong Hae-sŏng appropriate perspective and status in the history of Korean theatre, most studies tended to focus on the aesthetic aspects of his work. In particular, these studies tended to treat him only within a limited scope: as a “realist” and a student of Stanislavsky.

In his book published in 1966, Yi Tu-hyŏn referred to the possible relationship between Stanislavsky and Hong Hae-sŏng in only one line: “[We could . . .] assume the indirect influence of the early Stanislavsky System [upon Hong] through Osanai.”⁹² In similar manner, most studies of Hong Hae-sŏng have tried to trace Stanislavsky’s influence on Hong Hae-sŏng. The main works among them are 1) An Kwang-hŭi (Kwang-Hee An)’s *A Study of Hong Hae-sŏng* (1985)⁹³, 2) Sŏ Yŏn-ho’s “Our Theatre, Rediscovery—Rethinking Hong Hae-sŏng” (1994)⁹⁴ and “A Study of the Director Hong Hae-sŏng” (1996)⁹⁵, 3) Yu Min-yŏng’s “A Study of Hae-sŏng Hong Chu-sik”

⁹² Yi Tu-hyŏn, *Han'guk Sin'gŭksa Yŏn'gu* [Modern History of Korean Drama], 2nd ed. (Seoul: Sŏuldaehakkyo ch'ulp'anbu, 1990), 184.

⁹³ An Kwang-hŭi, “Hong Hae-sŏng Yŏn'gu” [A Study of Hong Hae-sŏng] (master’s thesis, Tanguktaehakkyo, 1985).

⁹⁴ Sŏ Yŏn-ho, “Uriŭi Yŏn'gŭk, Chaebalgŭk—Hong Hae-sŏng Sŏnsaeng'ŭl Tasi Saenggakhanda” [Our Theatre, Rediscovery—Rethinking Hong Hae-sŏng], *Han'guk Yŏn'gŭk* 19 no. 10 (October 1994): 10-12.

⁹⁵ Sŏ Yŏn-ho, “Yŏnch'ulga Hong Hae-sŏngnon” [A Study of the Director Hong Hae-sŏn], *Hallim Ilbonhak yŏn'gu* [Hallim Japanese Study] 1 (November 1996): 205-228.

(1994)⁹⁶, 4) Na Sang-man's *How Should We See Stanislavsky?* (1996)⁹⁷, 5) Yi Sang-u (Lee Sang-woo)'s "A Study of Hong Hae-sŏng's Theatrical Theory" (1998)⁹⁸. These studies only focused on defining Hong Hae-sŏng as a realist, associating Hong Hae-sŏng's artistic ideas with Stanislavsky's system.⁹⁹

A significant academic work of this sort, whose main topic was Hong Hae-sŏng's connection to Stanislavsky, was An Kwang-hŭi's "A Study on Theatre of Hong Hae Sung." An Kwang Hŭi devoted most of his study to summarizing Hong Hae-sŏng's "Stage Art and Actor" (Mudae Yesulgwa Paeu, 舞臺藝術과俳優), and argued, as the result of this summary, that Hong Hae-sŏng's theory of acting was based on Stanislavsky.¹⁰⁰ However, he did not offer convincing arguments in his study, as he did not provide any evidence to prove what elements in Hong Hae-

⁹⁶ Yu Min-yŏng, "Hae-sŏng Hong Chu-sik Yŏn'gu" [A Study of Hae-sŏng Hong Chu-sik], *Korean Theatre* 19, no. 11 (November, 1994): 53-62.

⁹⁷ Na Sang-man, *Stanislavsky, Öttöke Pol Kösin'ga?* [How should we approach Stanislavsky?] (Seoul: Yeni, 1996).

⁹⁸ Yi Sang-u, "Hong Hae-sŏngŭi Yŏn'gŭngnone daehan Yŏn'gu" [A Study of Hong Hae-sŏng's Theatrical Theory]. Yi Sang-u also published "Kŭgyesul Yŏn'guhoewa Yŏnch'ulga Hong Hae-sŏng" in *Chakka Yŏn'gu* in 1997. Yi sang-u, "Kŭgyesul Yŏn'guhoewa Yŏnch'ulga Hong Hae-sŏng" [The Dramatic Art Study Association and Its Director Hong Hae-sŏng], *Chakka Yŏn'gu* 4 (1997): 227-245.

⁹⁹ In addition to these studies, there are other studies in which the authors emphasize Stanislavsky's influence on Hong Hae-sŏng such as An Kwang-hŭi, "Hong Hae-sŏngŭi Mudae yesulgwa Paeuron" [Hong Hae-sŏng's Stage art and View of Acting], *Kangnam ōmun* (December 1992): 73-86; An Suk-hyŏn, "Han'guk Kŭndaegŭge michin Russia Munhakkwa Yŏn'gŭgŭi Yŏnghyange kwanhan Yŏn'gu" [The influences of Russian Literature and Theatre on Korean Modern Theatre] (master's thesis, Tan'guktaehakkyo, 1994); Nam Sŭng-yŏn, "Stanislavsky Yŏn'gŭgironi Han'guk Kŭndaegŭk Hyŏngsŏnge Mich'in Yŏnghyang Yŏn'gu" [The Influences of Stanislavsky's Theoretical Theory on the Formation of Korean Modern Theatre] (master's thesis, Sukmyŏng yŏja daehakkyo, 1995); Chŏng Ch'ŏl, "Hong Hae-sŏng Yŏnch'ul Yŏn'gu" [A Study of Hong Hae-sŏng's Directing], *Inmunhak yŏn'gu* 18 (December 1996): 43-65; Chŏng Ch'ŏl, "Han'guk Kŭndae Yŏnch'ulsa Yŏn'gu" [A Study of the History of Directing in Korea] (PhD diss., Chosŏndaehakkyo, 2000); Yang Sŭng-guk, "1920-30nyŏndae Yŏn'gŭk pip'yŏng Yŏn'gu" [A Study of the Theatrical Criticism during the 1920s-30s], *Han'guk Kŭgyesul Yŏn'gŭk* 5 (June 1995): 9-63. These studies do not show significant differences from Sŏ Yŏn-ho's and Yu Min-yŏng's studies in their arguments about a Stanislavsky-Hong Hae-sŏng relationship.

¹⁰⁰ An Kwang-hŭi, "Hong Hae-sŏng Yŏn'gu," 39.

sŏng's acting theory were Stanislavskian. Also, An Kwang-hŭi argued that Hong Hae-sŏng was "inclined to the realist dramatic view"¹⁰¹ (리얼리즘 劇的 관점에 치우쳐 있다는), as the director said theatre was "a mirror or kaleidoscope of the life of the period" and attacked *sinp'a* as not realistic in "The Theatrical Art Movement and the Cultural Mission" (극예술운동과 문화적 사명) published in *Tonga Ilbo* from 15 October, 1929 to 27 October, 1929.¹⁰²

Sŏ Yŏn-ho, in his "Our Theatre, Rediscovery—Rethinking Hong Hae-sŏng," wrote that Hong Hae-sŏng contributed to the creation of modern theatre in Korea, a resulting from his style of directing based on his abundant experience.¹⁰³ Sŏ Yŏn-ho argued that Hong Hae-sŏng's view of theatre was "in short, the same as with the principles of Western modern theatre, especially the principles of realism and naturalism."¹⁰⁴ This argument appeared in his "A Study of Director Hong Hae-sŏng"¹⁰⁵ again. Also, he argued that Hong Hae-sŏng's theories of acting and directing paralleled Stanislavsky's method almost exactly.¹⁰⁶ However, he did not provide any specific evidence for these arguments in his articles. Although he mentioned that Hong Hae-sŏng was influenced not only by Osanai Kaoru, but also Hijikata Yoshi, who directed many non-realistic productions,¹⁰⁷ Sŏ Yŏn-ho only defined Hong Hae-sŏng as "the forerunner of modern Korean theatre, which is represented by realism in drama."¹⁰⁸

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 6.

¹⁰² Ibid., 6-10.

¹⁰³ Sŏ Yŏn-ho, "Uriŭi Yŏn'gŭk, Chaebalgŭk—Hong Hae-sŏng Sŏnsaeng'ŭl Tasi Saenggakhanda," 11.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Sŏ Yŏn-ho, "Yŏnch'ulga Hong Hae-sŏngnon," 213.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 214.

Yu Min-yŏng also argued, “Hong Hae-sŏng was thoroughly based in Stanislavsky’s theatrical philosophy in his acting, directing, and life”¹⁰⁹ in his article, “A Study of Hae-sŏng Hong Chu-sik.” Yu Min-young argued that Hong Hae-sŏng believed that an actor should utilize the body as the material of art, and that such an explanation revealed that Hong was a “thorough realist” who “shared the same vein with Stanislavsky’s view of theatre.”¹¹⁰ Also, according to him, Hong Hae-sŏng’s argument that theatre aims to form “belief” (*sinnyŏm*, 信念) in the audience suggests that the influence of Stanislavsky, who also emphasized “belief.”¹¹¹ In his article, Yu Min-young does not provide any other evidence, other than these two points, to prove Stanislavsky’s influence on Hong. However, even these two pieces of evidence are not very convincing. Hong Hae-sŏng’s explanation that an actor uses himself as raw artistic material is based on Coquelin’s argument in *The Actor and His Art*.¹¹² As Stanislavsky defined Coquelin as a member of another school that was considerably different from his,¹¹³ an actor’s using the body as raw artistic material cannot be considered distinctively Stanislavskian. Also, Hong Hae-sŏng explains “belief” as what occurs in an audience by saying “the members of the audience come to believe the ‘illusion’ on the stage as

¹⁰⁸ “사실주의 연극으로 대표되는 Han’guk *Kŭndaegŭk* 의 선구자 [. . .]” Sŏ Yŏn-ho, “Yŏnch’ulga Hong Hae-sŏngnon,” 225.

¹⁰⁹ “홍해성은 철두철미 스타니슬랍스키의 연극 철학에 입각해서 연기나 연출 또는 생활을 육화시킨 인물이었다.” Yu Min-yŏng, “Hae-sŏng Hong Chu-sik Yŏn’gu” [A Study of Hae-sŏng Hong Chu-sik], 56.

¹¹⁰ “철저한 리얼리스트로서 스타니슬랍스키의 연극관과 맥을 같이 하는” Ibid..

¹¹¹ Ibid., 59.

¹¹² Constant Coquelin, *The Actor and His Art*, trans. Abby Langdon Alger (Boston, Roberts Brothers; 1881), 6.

¹¹³ Constantin Stanislavski, *An Actor Prepares*, trans. Elizabeth Reynolds Hapgood (New York: Routledge/Theatre Arts Books, 1989), 18-23.

if there was ‘something’ real while what is expressed in the stage-set made them fancy about nature and reality.”¹¹⁴ However, Stanislavsky’s “belief” is rather what occurs in the actor.

In *How Should We See Stanislavsky?*, Na Sang-man enumerated more elements that were reminiscent of Stanislavsky in Hong Hae-sŏng’s theory. His argument, that there were Stanislavskian elements such as inner monologue, pause, the given circumstances, and ensemble in Hong Hae-sŏng, is valid, as previously explained. However, Na Sang-man’s work, going further, tended to excessively associate Hong Hae-sŏng with Stanislavsky, considering any positive contributions of Hong Hae-sŏng to be Stanislavskian. For example, Na Sang-man argued that Hong Hae-sŏng in “Stage Art and Actor” noted that the purpose of the article is to be of practical help, and such a purpose is a Stanislavskian way of thinking.¹¹⁵ Also, he argued that Hong Hae-sŏng’s discourse on language is Stanislavskian because Stanislavsky emphasized the importance of language as an actor’s medium for expression.¹¹⁶ Furthermore, he argued that Hong Hae-sŏng’s belief that an actor should learn how to control emotions and that an actor should not be moved internally in order to move the others, thus controlling the senses,¹¹⁷ is reminiscent of Stanislavsky’s “unconscious creativeness through conscious technique” and his concept of “emotional memory.” However, offering practical help to the actor and emphasizing the importance of language should be considered the common goal of every acting teacher, rather than simply “Stanislavskian.” Besides, Hong Hae-sŏng’s discussion of the importance of controlling

¹¹⁴ “관객은 무대 장치에 표현된 것으로써 자연과 현실에 대하여 공상을 하는 가운데서 정말 ‘그 무엇이’ 있는 것처럼 ‘환상 (幻想)’을 사념 (思念) 하게 되는 것을 의미한다.” Hong Hae-sŏng, “Yŏnch’ulbŏbe taehaya” [How to Direct], in *Hong Hae-sŏng Yŏn’gŭngnon Chŏnjip* [The Complete Works of Hong Hae-sŏng], ed. Sŏ Yŏn-ho and Yi sang-u (Kyŏngsan: Yŏngnamdaehakkyo ch’ulp’anbu, 1998), 120.

¹¹⁵ Na Sang-man, *Stanislavsky, Öttöke Pol Kŏsin ’ga?* [How should we approach Stanislavsky?], 82.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Hong Hae-sŏng, “Mudae Yesulgwa Paeu” [Stage art and Actor], in *Hong Hae-sŏng Yŏn’gŭngnon Chŏnjip* [The Complete Works of Hong Hae-sŏng], ed. Sŏ Yŏn-ho and Yi sang-u (Kyŏngsan: Yŏngnamdaehakkyo ch’ulp’anbu, 1998), 99.

emotion was based on Coquelin's argument that an actor does not have to be actually moved, as a pianist playing Chopin's or Beethoven's funeral march does not have to be in despair.¹¹⁸ Therefore, it is not quite valid to argue that Hong Hae-sŏng's view of acting, based on these ways of thinking, only pays homage to Stanislavsky. Na Sang-man's effort to associate every aspect of Hong Hae-sŏng with Stanislavsky ran into obstacles. Therefore, he had to admit that Hong did not use Stanislavsky's terms,¹¹⁹ and that the exercises for actor-training presented in "Stage Art and Actor" show "no relation" (무관함) to Stanislavsky.¹²⁰

Yi Sang-u explained the influence and relationship between Hong Hae-sŏng and Stanislavsky in his "A Study of Hong Hae-sŏng's Theatrical Theory." Analyzing Hong Hae-sŏng's "Stage Art and Actor," Yi Sang-u argued "as [I] can read the influences of Stanislavsky, who was the greatest director in the world and did systemize a method of acting for the first time in the world, in some parts [in "Stage Art and Actor"], [I] see the advancement of the method [of Hong Hae-sŏng]."¹²¹ Based on Sonia Moore's *The Stanislavski System*, Yi Sang-u argued that Hong Hae-sŏng's theory shows Stanislavskian concepts of 'ensemble,' 'communion,' and 'pause.'¹²² However, he did not provide any newer information of the influence-relationship between Stanislavsky and Hong Hae-sŏng.

Relatively recently, other studies have appeared that showed different points of view concerning the relationship between Hong Hae-sŏng and Stanislavsky: Chŏng Sang-sun's *A Study*

¹¹⁸ Constant Coquelin, *The Actor and His Art*, trans. Abby Langdon Alger (Boston, Roberts Brothers; 1881) 31

¹¹⁹ Na Sang-man, 91.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 85.

¹²¹ Yi Sang-u, "Hong Hae-sŏngŭi Yŏn'gŭngnone daehan Yŏn'gu," 219.

¹²² Ibid., 219-224.

of the Forms of the Stanislavsky System's Influx into Korea (1997),¹²³ Song Sŏn-ho's "Re-examining Hong Hae-sŏng's View of Theatre (1)" (2001),¹²⁴ and Kim Pang-ok (Kim, Bangkok)'s "A Study on the Theory of Realistic Acting in the Korean Theatre" (2004).¹²⁵ Unlike most of the studies of Hong Hae-sŏng that tried to prove Stanislavsky's influence on Hong Hae-sŏng, these works did not consider Stanislavsky's influence on Hong Hae-sŏng notable. They argued that Hong Hae-sŏng was not much influenced by Stanislavsky because 1) Hong Hae-sŏng, who returned to Korea in 1930, could not have read any of Stanislavsky's work, as the first Japanese translation of Stanislavsky appeared in 1937, 2) that even Osanai Kaoru, who could have transmitted Stanislavsky to Hong Hae-sŏng, had only a limited understanding of Stanislavsky's system, as he had only sat in on some of the Moscow Art Theatre's rehearsals, 3) that Hong Hae-sŏng did not get systematic actor-training at the Tsukiji Little Theatre as the Tsukiji Little Theatre, in fact, did not provide its members with well-designed actor training except for its productions, and 4) that Hong Hae-sŏng's theory of acting does not show consistent Stanislavskian qualities. Therefore, according to Chŏng Sang-sun, Song Sŏn-ho, and Kim Pang-ok, it is difficult to say that Hong Hae-sŏng introduced Stanislavsky's system to Korea.

Hong Chae-bŏm thought the works by Chŏng Sang-sun, Song Sŏn-ho, and Kim Pang-ok downplayed Hong Hae-sŏng's accomplishments. In his article, "An Examination of Hong Hae-sŏng's Theories of Stage Art" (2005)¹²⁶, he re-emphasized that Stanislavskian elements were found

¹²³ Chŏng Sang-sun, "Stanislavsky Systemŭi Han'guk Yuip Yangtaee kwanhan Yŏn'gu" [The Characteristics of the Importation of the Stanislavsky System in Korea] (master's thesis, Tongguktaehakkyo, 1997).

¹²⁴ Song Sŏn-ho, 93-105. According to my interview with Song Sŏn-ho on the phone on Apr. 16, 2007, the next part of this article has not been written yet.

¹²⁵ Kim Pang-ok, "Han'guk Yŏn'gŭgŭi Sasiljuŭijŏk Yŏn'giron Yŏn'gu" [A Study on the Theory of Realistic Acting in the Korean Theatre], *Han'guk Yŏn'gŭkhak* 22 (2004): 147-214.

¹²⁶ Hong Chae-bŏm, "Hong Hae-sŏngŭi Mudae Yesullon Koch'al" [An Examination of Hong Hae-sŏng's Theories of Stage art], *Ŏmunhak* 87 (March 2005): 689-712.

in Hong Hae-sŏng. However, he argued that scholars should not try to belittle Hong Hae-sŏng's achievements in the frame of "Stanislavsky's influence through Osanai Kaoru," as it is impossible to prove that Osanai Kaoru really knew much of Stanislavsky. Hong Chae-bŏm maintained that Hong Hae-sŏng showed elements that are similar to the concepts in Stanislavsky's method while he developed his own realist theory of stage art in his practices. According to him, that made Hong Hae-sŏng's accomplishment more remarkable.¹²⁷

As examined above, almost every early study of Hong Hae-sŏng tried to evaluate Hong Hae-sŏng only according to his relationship to Stanislavsky. Whether these studies attempted to associate Hong Hae-sŏng with Stanislavsky or to criticize such an effort, all of them considered Stanislavsky the measure by which they evaluated Hong Hae-sŏng's accomplishments. Meanwhile, when the authors of these studies came upon elements foreign to Stanislavskian theory in Hong Hae-sŏng, they either overlooked—consciously or unconsciously—them, not knowing how to interpret the meaning of such elements, or devalued them as if they had been not modern or had even been wrong.

These attempts to understand the significance of Hong Hae-sŏng, by only considering whether he is a Stanislavskian realist or not, reflect the point of view generally found in the work of Korean scholars, that views the essence of modern theatre as realism and tries to make the identity of Korean theatre exclusively exhibit that essence. Korean scholars have tended to consider realism the essence of modern Western theatre, and have thus tried to legitimize Korean modern theatre—keeping pace with Western modern theatre—by only emphasizing the qualities of realism in Korean theatre. In their efforts, realism has been seen by these scholars as a kind of ideal or value, the achievement of which guarantees "the modern," rather than as merely a style, because

¹²⁷ Ibid., 709.

realizing or joining the modern has been imperative to Korean theatre professionals. In this situation, finding the elements of Stanislavsky, who can be considered “the representative of realism theatre”¹²⁸ (리얼리즘 연극의 실체), can be seen as the critical factor in strengthening the case for modernity of Korean theatre. Studies that tended to view Hong Hae-sŏng as a Stanislavskian realist are based on such a way of thinking. Since the modern became a supreme value, the concept of modern theatre and its qualities such as realism and Stanislavsky, have also become the values that should be stressed and proven for Korean theatre in these studies.

However, even if dramas that showed realistic representation had been dominant in the activities in Korean theatre, over-idealizing or over-emphasizing the concept of “realism” and Stanislavsky, as shown in the studies about Hong Hae-sŏng, tend to cause confusion in the use of critical terms and tend to devalue other styles or aesthetics. This tendency risks either reducing or limiting the capacity of Korean theatre and the modern qualities of Korean theatre.

It is true that the socio-political realities of Korea, which demand that the artist desires to make a direct comment on issues, have made the efforts to portray reality directly more dominant than the efforts to express reality abstractly (and has not encouraged new forms or styles in Korean theatre). Western theatre in Korea claimed meaning as an instrument for enlightenment in its early stage of importation, and colonial rule demanded that theatre depict reality directly, even as theatre came to emphasize its autonomy as an art. Ironically, even Imperialist Japan attempted to spread its propaganda through a type of drama in the realistic style called *kungmin'gŭk*.¹²⁹ As soon as Korea was liberated from Japan, socialist-realistic drama, which was championed as an instrument of revolution by the left wing artists, dominated theatre in Korea.¹³⁰ After the establishment of

¹²⁸ Chŏng Ch'ŏl, “Han'guk Kŭndae Yŏnch'ulsa Yŏn'gu,” 145.

¹²⁹ Yi Mi-wŏn, *Han'guk Kŭndaegŭk Yŏn'gu* [A Study of Modern Korean Theatre] (Seoul: Hyŏndae mihaksa, 1994), 298.

South Korea and the Korean war, the importance of realism was emphasized again by right wing artists. Yi Hae-rang, who was invited to visit Broadway by the U.S. government in 1954,¹³¹ became a disciple of “realism” and confessed his re-discovery of the aesthetic of realism as follows:

When I saw the productions directed by Elia Kazan, I was surprised by the fact that all of his productions were faithful to realism. Having seen that his teaching actors and his interpretations were so faithful to realism, I regretted many things.

As I have said before [. . .], the group of people who had been engaged in *sinp'a* in the old days joined the communists and promoted realism after the Liberation. They cried “only realism drama is true theatre.” Finding their realism mechanical, childish, agitative, and revolutionary, we felt antipathy and put forward anti-realism. We studied and fought in order to do true theatre that avoided realism.

When I saw Elia Kazan’s wholeheartedly (철저한) realistic directing, I could not help but painfully regret my theatrical activities in Korea.¹³² (my translation)

Also, Yu Ch’i-jin, who wrote most of his plays in a realistic style, explained that Koreans still needed realism—although Yu Ch’i-jin himself at that time was finding that realism had limitations. In 1956, when he visited America and saw the Broadway production of *The Diary of Anne Frank*, in which Lee Strasberg’s daughter Susan Strasberg played the title role, Yu Ch’i-jin commented to Luz Alba, the director of the production, as follows:

Our traditional form of theatre, as it is stylized, has a great deal of trouble and specifically limits portraying the social agonies or human problems of reality. (And this is also true in the Peking Opera in China and *kabuki* in Japan.) Because the form is restricted, unlike dialogue (화술), it is difficult to express certain themes.¹³³ (my translation)

¹³⁰ Yi Hae-rang, *Hōsangŭi Chinsil*, 174.

¹³¹ Yu Min-yōng, *Chōnt’onggŭkkwa Hyōndaegŭk*, 225.

¹³² Yi Hae-rang, 385.

¹³³ Yu Ch’i-jin, “Segye Yōn’gŭk Ilchu” [Observation on World Theatre], in *Tongnang Yu Ch’i-jin Chōnjip* [The Anthology of Yu Ch’i-jin’s Works] 7 (Seoul, Sōulyedae ch’ulp’anbu, 1993), 220.

Meanwhile, an environment that would encourage performers to challenge the realistic illusion was not nurtured. For example, as Yu Yong-hwan recollected, even though the Koreans became interested in the theatre of Bertolt Brecht in the early part of the 1960s, the government prohibited the production of Brecht's plays, as Brecht was East German and Koreans were still involved in the Cold War.¹³⁴ Also, the activities of the avant-garde theatre were not welcome, as Sŏ Yŏn-ho's following criticism written in the 1970s showed.

In short, the theatre of the absurd of the 50s contributed to making today's theatre in the 70s incurably crippled. Anyone who has carefully observed the absurdist dramas that have been produced by the "young theatre artists" of our time can understand what I mean. They are so deceptive that they could cut and steal your noses even if you were alert. Having nothing to do with the lives of today's people, their activities show madness in naked bodies, animal-like sex, or groans in their incomprehensible seriousness, nervousness, and agony.¹³⁵ (my translation)

Even during the late part of the 1980's, while some in Korean theatre dealt with the concept of post-modernism, the debate over the meaning of "realism," which could reflect the severe realities of Korean society, was a heated one under the regime of military government.

This stream of realistic representation that has been dominant in Korean theatre included efforts that were spread in a very wide range, and were relatively different from each other. However, these efforts have been called "realism," without proper qualifying words in front of them. For example, as Yi Hae-rang said that his group maintained "anti-realism," the "realism" pursued by the left wing and the "realism" pursued by the right wing were different in terms of their philosophical background and absolute goals. Also, even in the left wing, there were controversies about the true meaning of realism. Min Pyŏng-hwi (閔丙徽) argued in article in

¹³⁴ Yu Yong-hwan, *Mudae dwie Namŭn Iyagidŭl* [The Stories Left Behind Stage] (Seoul: Chisŏngŭi Saem, 2005), 133.

¹³⁵ Sŏ Yŏn-ho, *Han'guk Yŏn'gŭngnon* [Discourses about Korean Theatre], 2nd ed. (Seoul: Taegwangmunhwasa, 1996), 29.

Chosŏn Chungang Ilbo on August 9, 1935 entitled “Several Thoughts in This Time (3)”¹³⁶ that if a drama was limited to portraying a “romantic” epic at best, even if it portrayed the lives of workers and peasants, such drama could not be called “realism.” However, many different Korean theatrical efforts have been called “realism” by Korean theatre scholars, causing confusion. Korean theatre scholars never clearly defined if they called plays that pursue naturalistic depiction “realism,” or if they called plays that pursue scientific observation of life or truth of life “realism,” or if they called plays that satisfy both conditions at the same time “realism.” Nevertheless, many scholars qualified Korean theatre using the term “realism.” Therefore, these scholars even tended to label the artists who showed an understanding of various experimental styles of modern theatre as “realist,” overlooking the artists’ understanding and practice of the styles that were different from realism. For example, Yu Min-yŏng characterized Korean theatre as follows:

Korean modern theatre has had two main streams. The one is *sinp’a*, and the other is orthodox *sin’gŭk* (the New Theatre), which accepted Western “realism.” The so-called “realism” movement (in our case, this includes expressionism too), the orthodox *sin’gŭk*, started from Kim U-jin’s activities and the student-theatre movement, including the activities of Tonguhoe and Hyŏngsŏlhoe in the 20s, and it was inherited by the Dramatic Art Study Association in the 30s and the post-Liberation theatre [sic.], Sinhyŏp.¹³⁷ (my translation)

Yu Min-yŏng defined modern Korean theatre as “realism” in this quotation. Yet as Koreans learned and pursued other styles even in the very early stages of their modern theatre, his “realism” became too vague and oversimplified. As previously explained, the intellectuals who introduced theories of modern Western theatre for the first time in Korea in the 1920s such as Yun Paek-nam,

¹³⁶ Sigamsuje, 時感數題 (三)

¹³⁷ Yu Min-yŏng, *Chŏngt’onggŭkkwa Hyŏndaegŭk*, 276.

한국 근대극은 두 줄기의 큰 흐름으로 내려왔는데, 그 하나가 신파극이고, 다른 하나는 서구 “리얼리즘”을 수용한 정통적 新劇이라는 것이었다. 정통적 新劇이라는 소위 “리얼리즘” (우리의 경우는 표현주의도 포함) 운동은 20년대 초의 金祐鎮의 활동과 同友會, 螢雪會 등의 학생극 운동으로부터 출발하여 30년대의 극예술연구회, 그리고 해방 후의 劇場, 新協으로 이어진다.

Hyŏn Ch'ŏl, and Kim U-jin, did not consider realism to be everything in theatre. Especially, Kim U-jin, who was a playwright and the closest comrade of Hong Hae-sŏng in theatre, showed his wide aesthetics through his expressionistic plays such as *Wild Boar* (Sandoeji, 산돼지) and *Shipwreck* (Nanp'a, 난파). Among the three production of the Tonguhoe Theatrical Troupe of the Theatrical Arts Society, *The Glittering Gate* by Lord Dunsany (1868-1924) was a poetic play that can be considered as symbolist. As for the Dramatic Art Study Association in the 1930s, as it performed the expressionism drama *Seabattle* in its early stage, it did not only pursue “realism.”¹³⁸ While Yu Min-yŏng idealizes realism and offers a confusing explanation that realism in Korea includes expressionism—in order to characterize the individuals and groups who understood various modernist styles under the one principle of “realism”¹³⁹—the scientific terms of criticism become meaningless, and styles other than realism become invisible. Unfortunately, this tendency also appear in the works of other scholars in varying degrees.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁸ Hong Hae-sŏng was not the only one who knew various styles of modern theatre. Articles written by other members of the Dramatic Art Study Association suggest that they also understood styles other than realism. For example, Sŏ Hang-sŏk and Kim Chin-sŏp published the articles about Expressionism. Kim Ho-yŏn, *Han'guk Yŏn'gŭgŭi Saeroun Insik* [New Understanding of Korean Theatre] (Seoul: Yŏn'gŭkkwa In'gan, 2004) 75-76.

¹³⁹ An Suk-hyŏn, a student of Yu Min-yŏng, even oversimplifies the history of Korean modern theatre by the subjective and emotional description of “the great tradition of realism” (위대한 사실주의 전통). See An Suk-hyŏn, *Han'guk Yŏn'gŭkkwa Anton Chekhov* [Korean Theatre and Anton Chekhov] (Seoul: T'aehaksa, 2003), 11.

¹⁴⁰ Yi T'ae-ju also reveals that his concept of “realism” is vague as follows:

The drama of realism has not developed by a proper process in our theatre. Therefore, our distorted drama of realism has not appropriately reacted to the darkness and agonies in this period and has not functioned as a good ‘mirror’ to reflect our time. As a result, theatre has not become rooted in our life. We have come to regret that nobody would welcome and support theatre without pleasure and emotional impact, as we do not understand the humanity and the world of our time through theatre. After all, theatre has neither been the metaphor [sic.] of our reality (우리 현실의 메타포) nor a resource of the power to reform our reality. (my translation)

Yi T'ae-ju, *Ch'unggyŏkkwa Panghwangŭi Han'guk Yŏn'gŭk* [Korean Theatre Shocked and Lost] (Seoul: Hyŏndae mihaksa, 1999) 16.

Meanwhile, “Stanislavsky” becomes another factor that measures the modern in Korean theatre. Stanislavsky, whose name and basic elements of his system had been known to the leaders of Korean theatre in the colonial period, began to be re-emphasized by the leaders of Korean theatre. For example, Yi Hae-rang came to realize and emphasize the necessity of implanting Stanislavskian method in Korea after he visited the Actors Studio during his travel in America.¹⁴¹ Yi Hae-rang in his article “Living in Art (39)”¹⁴² in *Ilgan Sports* (Sports Daily, 日刊 스포츠) on June 29, 1973 recollected:

My visiting the Actors Studio gave me new eyes to see the stream of the top level of world theatre. Especially then, I realized the true image of “the Stanislavsky System” which can be considered the essence of modern realism theatre, and that definitely became the theoretical base of my directing. Stanislavsky’s system that is the foundation of the discourses of the art of modern acting (현대 배우예술론) can be explained as representation of inner psychology, naturalistic acting style, and subconscious acting (잠재의식적인 연기) etc. However, in short, it is the theory that argues that the acting recreated by the actor who becomes the character he is playing (연기자 자신이 극중 인물과 일치된 상태에서의 재창조된 연기) realizes realism on stage. While only some of the leaders of our theatre knew this theory of modern acting, the American actors at the Actors Studio practiced it in their acting. Facing such a fact, I realized the backwardness of our theatre.¹⁴³ (my translation)

In Yi T’ae-ju’s description, the meaning of “realism” or “the drama of realism” is not clear. It seems that when Korean scholars refer to “realism,” it is not clear whether the term refers to a style of visual expression, an attitude toward art, or both. Meanwhile, “realism” tends to exist only in the imagination of these scholars as an artistic ideal that must be accomplished. Then, it becomes something like a “good production” or “artistic production” that cannot be assessed by certain measure or standard. Kim Mun-hwan criticizes the people who use the concept of “realism” in such a vague way, as follows:

[. . .] There are controversies that define the drama of realism. Some understand it as a style in the history of theatre, the history of Western theatre, and some others argue it as an attitude. [. . .] Those who argue a “spirit of realism” (리얼리즘 정신) [. . .] ask if theatre reflects reality in right ways (제대로) and suggests, by this reflection, how to overcome the reality. In this case, although the term “realism” is used, it really means theatre itself. Or, it means art itself. (my translation)

Kim Mun-hwan, *Han’guk Yŏn’gŭgŭi Wisang* [The Position of Korean Theatre] (Seoul: Sŏul daehakkyo ch’ulp’anbu, 2000), 6-7.

¹⁴¹ Pak Myŏng-jin, *Han’guk Hŭigogŭgŭi Kŭndaesŏnggwa T’alsingminsŏng* [The Modernity and Postcolonialism in Korean Drama] (Seoul: Yŏn’gŭkkwa In’gan, 2001), 110.

¹⁴² Yesure Salda (39), 예술에 살다

¹⁴³ Chŏng Ch’ŏl, “Han’guk Kŭndae Yŏnch’ulsa Yŏn’gu,” 145.

Impressed by his experience at the Actors Studio, Yi Hae-rang came to decide to “[. . .] re-study Stanislavsky and establish true realism in Korea [. . .]”¹⁴⁴ After he came back to Korea, he spent busy days sharing his American theatre experiences; there was no Korean who had observed American theatre until then.¹⁴⁵ When he began working as one of the leading directors in 1960s Korea, Yi Hae-rang influenced Korean actors greatly, pronouncing, “Stanislavsky’s theory of acting is true and absolute,”¹⁴⁶ and raised the level of interest in Stanislavsky.¹⁴⁷ Also, Yu Ch’i-jin, in his recommendation of the book by Han Chae-su, entitled *New Acting Technique*¹⁴⁸ published in 1967, wrote, “when I traveled over the world several years ago, [. . .] whatever countries I visited, most of the actors were being trained by Stanislavsky’s system” and “his theory [. . .] most profoundly [. . .] systemized the art of acting.”¹⁴⁹ Such a description suggested that Stanislavsky’s system was the method that Korean actors should learn in order to keep pace with world theatre. The fact that Yi Tu-hyŏn pointedly suggested Stanislavsky’s influence on Hong Hae-sŏng in his book *The Study of New Theatre in Korea* probably reflects such a pro-Stanislavsky atmosphere in the theatre community in Korea at that time.

In such an atmosphere, many Korean theatre professionals have pursued the concept of “realism” and “Stanislavsky.” Although their efforts and achievements are remarkable in defining

¹⁴⁴ “스타니슬라프스키를 다시 음미하고 한국에 돌아가서 진정한 리얼리즘 연극을 수립해야겠다는 [. . .]” Yi Hae-rang, 388.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 390.

¹⁴⁶ Kim Pang-ok, 175.

¹⁴⁷ See Chŏng Sang-sun’s endnote 122.

¹⁴⁸ Sin Paeusul, 신배우술

¹⁴⁹ Yu Ch’i-jin, “*Sin Paeusul Sŏ*” [Recommendation of *Sin Paeusul*], in *Tongnang Yu Ch’i-jin Chŏnjip* [The Anthology of Yu Ch’i-jin’s Works] 8 (Seoul, Sŏulyedae ch’ulp’anbu, 1993), 245.

the identity of modern Korean theatre, this attitude that identifies *sin 'gũk* (the New Theatre) with realism now should be reconsidered. We should not define an artist as a realist, overlooking other aspects of an artist's capacity, only because this artist talks about reality. Also, we should not label an artist as a realist, ignoring the other aspects of the potentials or dynamics in this artist's work, only because this artist criticizes what is not realistic. Overemphasizing a specific element in an individual or oversimplifying an individual's vision belittles the individual. Likewise, even though we admit that realistic style has been dominant in theatrical practice in Korea, we should not overlook the efforts involving non-realistic styles in the legacy of Korean modern theatre, forcing the identity of Korean theatre fit into the frame of a specific style. That belittles the capacity and the dynamics of Korean theatre. Hong Hae-sŏng may have contributed to the rooting of the spirit and the production style of realistic representation and the precise observance of reality. Yet to define him only as a follower of Stanislavsky and to give him a positive legacy only for this similarities to Stanislavsky is not appropriate. At the same time, interpreting him as though his significance would be lessened if he did not show strong Stanislavskian qualities is not valid. As previously explained, he was an eclectic, who well knew the traditions of Western theatre and the various experiments in modern theatre, and he intended to incorporate these traditions in his aesthetics. Probably, ignorance or misunderstanding of other aspects or potentials in Hong Hae-sŏng's legacy was partly due to the fact that he did not actively join the power structure of South Korean society. If he had actively attached himself to political change in Korea and attained enough opportunities to express his ideals, talent, and knowledge of theatre, he could have displayed his understandings of non-realistic or experimental styles of theatre, and as a result, his activities could have formed a major discourse in Korean theatre. However, Hong Hae-sŏng was excluded from the power structure of Korean theatre (although that was considerably based on his own decision). As a result, some aspects of the capacity of Korean theatre which he would have

uniquely represented became invisible. When scholars rediscovered Hong Hae-sŏng and attempted to include him in the existing structure of Korean theatre, they inevitably applied to him an existing frame of theatrical discourse—that is Stanislavskian “realism.” That caused a misunderstanding of Hong Hae-sŏng’s legacy. By pointing out other potentials of Hong Hae-sŏng, which are non-realistic, this study discovers new characteristics that represent compelling additions to the identity of modern Korean theatre.

Overlooking influences on Hong Hae-sŏng other than the influence of Stanislavsky risks discoloring the merits of Hong Hae-sŏng, whose career displayed a well-rounded knowledge and an artistic practice of wider scope. Scholars should acknowledge Hong Hae-sŏng and his proper position as a well-rounded artist. Such a correction in judgment would make the legacy of Korean modern theatre to which he contributed remarkably richer.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

Hong Hae-sŏng greatly contributed to the formation of modern Korean theatre. He was one of the representative intellectuals in the implantation of Western theatre in Korea, a movement in which intellectuals took the initiative. He showed an exemplary attitude for Korean artists in terms of nationalism—the most important factor in the modernization of Korea—by his refusing to serve the propaganda under the Japanese colonial rule (or any political faction which caused the division of the Korean nation after Korea was liberated from Japan). Also, he himself inaugurated the modernity of Korea's 20th-century theatre, with his abundant knowledge of Western forms and his committed approach to a high artistic level of stage production.

When the Koreans came to face the threats of Imperialism in the late 19th century, they, under the influence of Social Darwinism, understood the world as the place of international struggle for existence. Koreans believed the nation's survival in the struggle was dependent upon the embrace of Western "civilization" and "culture." Overwhelmed by the military power and the civilization of imperialist countries, the Koreans actively tried to learn not only Western science and technology but also other aspects of Western culture. Many Koreans believed that such knowledge would help them keep up with the West in terms of modernity. Therefore, many elements of Western culture were introduced in the effort towards modernization, one of which was theatre. While the implantation of Western theatre advanced as an effort to establish the new "civilization" or "culture," the participation of Korean intellectuals in the process was of great importance. Hong Hae-sŏng proved a strong leader in the effort with his knowledge of and training in Western theatre.

The attempt to modernize Korean theatre was based in the ideology of Cultural Nationalism which held that the restoration of Korea's independence was dependent upon the

nation's modernization. However, as Japan strengthened its colonial oppression, the intellectuals in Korean theatre found it increasingly difficult to express their political aims and finally relinquished their nationalistic activities. The political life and career of Hong Hae-sŏng also reflected such a tendency. Hong Hae-sŏng began his advocacy of Cultural Nationalism in the Theatrical Arts Society (Kŭgyesul Hyŏphoe, 劇藝術協會) in the early 1920s. Although his activities in the Dramatic Art Study Association (Kŭgyesul Yŏn'guhoe, 劇藝術研究會) in the 1930s also demonstrated his regard for Cultural Nationalism, he began to reduce the nationalistic rhetoric in his work with this organization. Finally, by joining the Tongyang Theatre (Tongyang Kŭkchang, 東洋劇場) in 1935, Hong Hae-sŏng came to leave the New Theatre (*sin'gŭk*, 新劇) that had espoused Cultural Nationalism. Also at this time, many other intellectuals in Korean theatre turned from a nationalistic outlook, focusing on theatre for theatre's sake, and even collaborated with Japan. However, although he lost his status as an activist, Hong Hae-sŏng maintained his conscientiousness as a nationalist by avoiding collaboration with Japan. Hong Hae-sŏng remained faithful to his nationalism even after Korea was liberated from Japan. While many of the artists who had actively collaborated with Japan again flattered specific political factions, such as the right wing and left wing parties, Hong Hae-sŏng deplored the nation's division and did not join any political organization.

Hong Hae-sŏng represented the modernity of Korean theatre with his knowledge and experience of Western modern theatre. He acquired an abundant background in Western practice while he was a member of the Tsukiji Little Theatre (Tsukiji Shōgekijō, 築地小劇場) during the second half of the 1920s. Here, he participated not only in the productions of realistic dramas but also of other experimental styles as well. He furthermore studied acting, directing, and other aspects of theatrical practice. Hong Hae-sŏng came back to Korea at the beginning of the 1930s and led the independent theatre movement, initiated by the Dramatic Art Study Association where

he worked as the first director in Korea. After he joined the Tongyang Theatre, as he had become the most famous expert in modern theatre, his presence with the company legitimized and heightened the status of popular theatre. Even though he could not reform all aspects of the Tongyang Theatre as an employee, Hong Hae-sŏng improved the popular theatre's artistic level by sharing his exemplary attitude toward art with the actors, and by training the young actors in a more sophisticated style and approach. As Koreans were still learning the new form of Western theatre, Hong Hae-sŏng's ideas reflected the most advanced trends of Western theatre, though at that time they could be too visionary for Korea. Therefore, not all of his aesthetic ideals could be realized in his theatrical activities. However, Hong Hae-sŏng stands as the figure who most advocated, represented, and advanced the modernity of 20th-century Korean theatre. With his knowledge, experience, and work ethic, Hong Hae-sŏng drew Korean theatre into line with the stream of modern Western theatre.

Since Hong Hae-sŏng died, scholars have considered him a realist. Considering the essence of modern Western theatre as "realism," and trying to make Korean theatre history fit accordingly, they have tried to define Hong Hae-sŏng as a "realist," as a student of Stanislavsky, who was considered the chief proponent of a realistic aesthetic in theatre. Hong Hae-sŏng never identified himself as a realist, nor he did particularly pursue realism as his goal. Rather, through his writing and practice, he showed that he was an eclectic, well-rounded in both realistic and non-realistic aesthetics. The efforts to align the identity of Korean modern theatre with the particular concept of "realism" and to categorize Hong Hae-sŏng as a "realist" should be corrected. Such efforts limit the imagination and artistic capacity of Korean theatre and minimize the accomplishment of Hong Hae-sŏng. The legacies of modern Korean theatre, which Hong Hae-sŏng profoundly influenced, are appropriately expanded by refusing to limit his work to the scope

of realism. Such an outlook, moreover, opens up potentials and possibilities of Korean theatre, as one looks both to the past and to the future.

My study can serve as a new attempt to reshape the way to read not only the individual life of Hong Hae-sŏng but also the history of modern Korea. My study, examining the process of implanting Western theatre in Korea through Hong Hae-sŏng, finds that the influence of nationalism was considerable in Korean theatre, a form of art which can be regarded as one of the most representative, non-political, gray areas. Accounting for the attitude that can be called “Cultural Nationalism” in theatre, my study is an attempt to understand the identity of modern Korean theatre. Through such an attempt, I re-shape and re-construct nationalism in the gray area. My study can serve as one of the first steps to appreciate nationalism as the ideology penetrating not only the personal activities of Hong Hae-sŏng but also the modern Korean theatre. With more efforts of this kind, modern Korean theatre can acquire its true identity as a national theatre, and can be included in the national history of Korea as a legitimate and an important participant.

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VITA

Saejoon Oh was born in Seoul, Korea, in 1968. Since he joined the Kōndae Theatre, an amateur troupe at Konkuk (Kōn'guk) University where he received a bachelor's degree in history, he has devoted himself for twenty years to his training as an artist and scholar in theatre. After he graduated from Konkuk University in 1993, he joined a professional theatre company, Theatre Rothem, and worked as a stage manager and assistant director pursuing a master's degree in philosophy-education at the same university. After he received that degree in 1997, he came to America and entered the master's program in theatre at the University of Missouri at Kansas City. After he received his master's degree at the University of Missouri at Kansas City in 2000, Saejoon Oh came to Baton Rouge, Louisiana to enter the doctoral program in theatre at Louisiana State University.