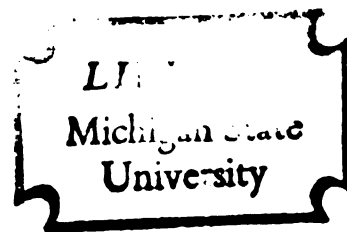


CHI-JIN YOO:
A PATRIOTIC PLAYWRIGHT OF KOREA

Thesis for the Degree of Ph. D.
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
OH KON CHO
1972



This is to certify that the
thesis entitled

CHI-JIN YOO: A PATRIOTIC PLAYWRIGHT OF KOREA

presented by

OH KON CHO

has been accepted towards fulfillment
of the requirements for

PH.D. degree in THEATRE


Major professor

Date Aug. 4, 1972

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ABSTRACT

CHI-JIN YOO; A PATRIOTIC PLAYWRIGHT OF KOREA

By

Oh Kon Cho

Chi-Jin Yoo wrote plays during the period of occupation of Korea by imperialistic Japan, during the political and economic domination of Korea by the United States of America, and during the Korean War. His plays not only reflect the socio-political conditions of Korea under the foreign domination but exalt dignity and honor of the Korean people during these turbulent periods.

The purpose of this study is to analyze seven plays of Chi-Jin Yoo which represent the best of his historical, anti-Japanese, and anti-Communist plays in order to analyze the patriotic spirit which appears in his plays in terms of character, themes and ideas, and the dramatic events and their relationship.

The main body of the study is divided into five chapters. The first chapter includes a brief description of the development of Korean drama in order to illustrate the importance of Chi-Jin Yoo in an historical context. The second chapter is devoted to the critical analyze of four historical plays, The Prince Ma Yi, The Self-Beating Drum, The Star, and Wonsul Rang. The third chapter contains the

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discussions of two anti-Japanese plays, The Earthen Hut and The Throbbing Earth, while the fourth chapter includes the analytical study of an anti-Communist play, I Will Become a Human Being, Too. The final chapter synthesizes the discussions of the plays.

Throughout his plays, which are discussed in the study, Chi-Jin Yoo advocates the rebirth of national pride, honor, sovereignty, and freedom from foreign domination, clearly supporting the idea that Korea should be ruled by the Koreans.

Most of the characters of Chi-Jin Yoo's plays are typical oriental characters standing face to face with man's moral problems. Many of them are caught between two cardinal moral obligations,--man's duty to his nation and his duty to his parents,--creating terrible conflicts in their minds. The conflict of these two duties in their minds frequently initiates a psychological dilemma within the characters when they are forced to make a decision between these two duties. Until they can come to a final decision, these characters vacillate from one side to the other, displaying their basic human weakness. Without exception, interestingly enough, whenever this conflict does exist, man's duty to his nation takes precedence over his obligation to his parents, clearly indicating that individuals can be sacrificed for the benefit of their nation.

As a result, the thematic implication of Chi-Jin Yoo's plays vividly demonstrates that the nations's well-being

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must be placed above everything else including that of the individual.

CHI-JIN YOO:
A PATRIOTIC PLAYWRIGHT OF KOREA

By

Oh Kon Cho

A THESIS

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Theatre

1972

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Oh Kon Cho

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ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I am particularly thankful to Dr. Farley P. Richmond, Chairman of my thesis committee, who gave me a great deal of incentive with his valuable suggestions and questions in writing this thesis.

I wish to acknowledge the generous support and guidance of the members of my committee. These include Professor Frank Rutledge, Dr. Clarence Bahs, Dr. Dell Hales, and Dr. Satayoshi Omoto.

My sincerest thanks also goes to Mr. and Mrs. Robert Wall and Patricia Goodlin who gave me much valuable counsel in the completion of this thesis.

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INTRODUCTION

Chi-Jin Yoo's career as a playwright began with the writing of his first play, The Earthen Hut, in 1932. Since then he has written more than fifteen full-length plays, a few one act plays, and a handful of screen plays; many of them attained a significant degree of success in Korea.

Chi-Jin Yoo wrote plays during the period of occupation of Korea by imperialistic Japan, during the political and economic domination of Korea by the United States of America, and during the Korean War. His plays not only reflect the social and political conditions of the time but exalt the pride, dignity, and honor of the Korean people during these turbulent periods.

The literary career of Chi-Jin Yoo is a long struggle for the exaltation of the spirited independence of Korean people as well as the national independence of Korea as a self-determined nation. Furthermore, his plays are closely related to the socio-political events of the time. As a result, the significance of his plays is crucial to an understanding of the general feelings of the Koreans during this critical period.

Viewing him in an historical context, Chi-Jin Yoo is one of the foremost patriotic playwrights of Korea, but in

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spite of this fact, his plays have never become a subject for lengthy study. Consequently, the purpose of the present study is to analyze seven of his representative plays in order to scrutinize their importance.

The additional value of this study is three-fold: First, it will provide a foundation for the future study of Chi-Jin Yoo's plays; second, the study will be useful in a comparative study of other Korean playwrights; third, it will open the door of Korean drama to theatre lovers throughout the English speaking world.

Since none of Chi-Jin Yoo's plays have been published in translation, the author of the present study has undertaken to translate two of his plays in order to introduce them to the English speaking reader. All partial translations appearing in the main body of the discussion are also the works of the present author. For the text, The Anthology of Korean Literature: The Selected Plays of Chi-Jin Yoo, vol. XXXII, published by Minjung Suhkwan in 1963 is used.

Throughout his plays, Chi-Jin Yoo has tried to express his ideas to the Korean audience, appealing to their emotions in order to arouse a strong sense of national independence despite many years of foreign domination. However, his technique has been markedly different from that of politicians who are primarily concerned with a direct approach to the people, while, as a dramatist, Yoo adapts a more sophisticated and subtle means in order to stir up human emotions.

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Consequently, in order to analyze the patriotic spirit which appear in his plays, the dramatic events and their relationships, characters, and themes are examined in the present study. The analysis of each play usually begins with a brief expository discussion about the work and historical background information. The plays are discussed according to the major developments in the action, the means used to develop them, and their over-all significance. The discussion of themes and ideas generally revolves around philosophical, political, and historical significance, while the characters are mainly discussed according to oriental custom, manners, and ethics.

Understandably, because of the limited scope of the present study, only seven plays of Chi-Jin Yoo which represent the best of his historical, anti-Japanese, and anti-Communist plays are chosen for discussion. The first chapter of the study includes a brief description of the development of Korean drama in order to illustrate the importance of Chi-Jin Yoo in an historical context. The second chapter is devoted to the discussion of the four historical plays while the third chapter includes discussions of the two anti-Japanese plays. The fourth chapter contains the discussion of an anti-Communist play. The final assessment of these discussions is the topic of the concluding chapter.

The study contains only a brief survey of the development of Korean drama based on secondary sources. Since the major area of the study is centered on the analytical study of the plays, the vast area of stage production in

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terms of directing, acting, scene design, costuming, and music will not be included in its discussion. The study also exclude a literal and linguistic analysis of the plays.

To assist the reader, translations of two of Chi-Jin Yoo's representative plays have been included in the appendices. The first appendix contains The Prince Ma Yi, one of Yoo's best historical plays, while the second appendix includes I Will Become a Human Being, Too, an anti-Communist play. In addition, a third appendix contains synopses of the remaining plays discussed in the study with a list of characters and character descriptions as well as the date of composition. A bibliography completes the study.

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CHAPTER I

A SHORT SKETCH OF
THE DEVELOPMENT OF KOREAN DRAMA
AND CHI-JIN YOO'S CAREER AS A PLAYWRIGHT

In order to grasp the importance of the plays of Chi-Jin Yoo(1905-) in the Korean context, it is necessary to have some understanding of the development of modern drama in Korea.

Before the style of Western drama was introduced in Korea in the early twentieth century, traditional forms of theatre, such as the mask and dance plays and the puppet plays, which were not strictly spoken drama, were the popular forms of theatrical presentation. Although the mask and dance plays and the puppet plays were two markedly different theatrical forms, they shared similar subject matter--a lively satire based on the corruption of the ruling class and the immoral monks, or the expression of humiliation of the people oppressed by the Yangban class, the aristocrats, who assumed all sorts of privileges. Thus, from the beginning, Korean drama was used as a vehicle to express social injustice and the people's oppression by various powerful groups; Chi-Jin Yoo makes use of these same situations to advocate national sovereignty, pride, and dignity.

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Modern theatre in Korea dates from the establishment of the Wongag-sa Theatre in Seoul, sponsored by the government, on July 26, 1908. With the erection of this new theatre, modern theatrical form was beginning to replace the traditional forms of theatrical presentation, including the popular mask and dance plays and the puppet plays. The earliest playwright to write dialogue drama was In-Jik Yi (1861-1916) who wrote Un Sege (The Silver World) in which he advocated progressive political reform. Both the erection of the Wongag-sa Theatre and the production of Un Sege created strong incentive for the emergence of many theatrical groups in Korea.

In 1912 Sung-Gu Yim(1887-1912) organized a theatrical group called Hyucksin-Dan(the Reform Group) which was modeled after the Japanese Shinpa groups, presenting plays which were adaptations of Japanese Shinpa plays. All plays presented by this group were adapted from the Japanese plays to suit the tastes and demands of Korean audiences. They were similar to Western melodrama in moral tone with strong emphasis on condemning vice and rewarding virtue. This form of drama adapted from the Japanese Shinpa was called Sinpa.¹ Although Sinpa was obviously popular at the time, it left no profound mark on the theatrical movement of Korea because of its over-dependence on Japanese culture. It was nothing more than the reproduction of Japanese plays on the Korean stage.

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Sung-Hi Park wrote:

Sinpa was a Japanese word... The setting were Japanese houses. The scripts were the translations of Japanese plays... The actors wore Japanese costumes with swords. They killed each other for the sake of killing on the stage. It had nothing to do with the Korean style of life.²

In 1913 Beg-Nam Yun, a novelist-playwright, was appointed as the manager of the Wongag-sa Theatre. Following the founding principle of the theatre, he organized a group called Munsusung(the Star of Literal Beauty) in 1913 in order to promote the modern orthodox theatre, and produced adaptations of foreign literature.

Hyucksin-Dan and Munsusung were representative theatrical groups of the early twentieth century in Korea. While the former group represented the popular Sinpa school, the latter carried the banner of the traditional school. Contrary to Munsusung which attempted to raise the quality of its productions, the main purpose of Hyucksin-Dan was commercial success. Needless to say, however, the repertoires of both groups consisted mainly of adaptations of foreign literature. Thus, in the beginning, the adaptation of a foreign play was the predominant item on the Korean stage; later it would be used as a vehicle for the development of new drama in Korea.

In 1922 the Korean students in Tokyo organized Gugyaesul Hyuphoe(the Dramatic Art Association) and toured

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Sung-Hi Park, "Towol-Hoe Iyagi," Sasang-ge, June 1963, p. 288.

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all over Korea during their summer vacation. Although this group existed only for a short time, it had a lasting influence on the theatrical movement in Korea: First, it forced many commercial groups to raise the quality of their productions; second, by giving free performances to the public it built up a potential audience in the future which had formerly known very little about theatrical performance.

The first dramatic organization which achieved a high standard of production was Towol-Hoe (the Earth and Moon Society) organized in 1922. This group was the first dramatic company whose organization was managed by many specialists, such as playwrights, scenic designers, actors, and musical directors. The group produced plays of Tolstoy, Shaw, Chekhov, and other European playwrights. By adapting a naturalistic style of play production the group attempted to raise the standard of their productions. The result of their effort was said to have been remarkable and the level of their productions almost reached that of the professional groups in Europe and America at the time in terms of directing, acting, and scene design. Kyung-Ok Kim wrote:

... in every field, they pursued naturalism by eliminating the free style of play production. Furthermore, their techniques of directing and scene design almost approached the standard of experts. And their ideas and techniques were to become the guideline of Korean drama in the future.³

The standard of production achieved by Towol-Hoe was epoch making in the history of Korean theatre. Through the

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Kyung-Ok Kim, "Yungug O-Sypnyun-sa," Hangug Yunyae Daegam (Seoul: Sungyung Munwha sa, 1962), p. 62.

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efforts of this group the Korean theatre was slowly overcoming the style of Sinpa acting⁴; therefore, the contribution of this organization to the development of modern Korean theatre was vital.

In 1925 Towol-Hoe was reorganized under the leadership of Sung-Hi Park, and it leased a theatre for one year, thus becoming the first theatrical group to operate in its own theatre in the history of Korean drama. The repertory of this group consisted mainly of new plays which were hastily written by Sung-Hi Park. Although some of them claimed a degree of immediate success, none of them, unlike Chi-Jin Yoo's plays, had an enduring quality, and so they were soon totally forgotten.

It was about this time that Communism began to penetrate deeper into the theatre of Korea as was happening elsewhere in the world. In 1925 the Korean Artista Proleta Federation(K.A.P.F.) was organized, which was followed by the birth of many left-wing theatres in a number of cities. The prime purpose of these left-wing theatres in Korea, like elsewhere, was to promote Communism through theatre. Thus, the theatre was used as a political tool by the Communists for their propaganda during this period, making the theatre no more than an instrument of the revolutionary vanguards in Korea.

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John Kardoss, An Outline History of Korean Drama (New York: Long Island University Press, 1966), p. 22.

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Although the few dramatic groups mentioned did achieve a standard of production equal to that of the professional groups in Europe and America, Korea did not as yet have a single playwright whose works attained both popularity as well as quality. Consequently, without any prominent playwright the Korean theatrical groups changed their bills according to the availability of new translations of Western plays or the adaptation of either Korean or foreign literature. However, this situation was soon to be changed--at last there emerged the first prolific and popular playwright of Korea, Chi-Jin Yoo.

Chi-Jin Yoo was born in the town of Tongyung (presently the city of Chungmu) in 1905. Yoo finished his primary education in his home town before he went to Tokyo, Japan.

In 1931 Chi-Jin Yoo, returning from Japan where he completed his university education, organized Gugyaesul Yungu-Hoe (the Research Association of Theatre Art) with Hong-Suck Suh, Dae-Hun Nam, and Hyun-Gu Yi. By giving lectures on plays, acting, directing, and scene design to the people who were interested in theatre, the group attempted to introduce the Western theory of play production. In November they founded the Silhyum Mudae (the Experimental Stage) on which they produced The Inspector General by Gogol, The Cherry Orchard by Chekhov, and The Merchant of Venice by Shakespeare. In 1932 Chi-Jin Yoo wrote his first play, Tomack (The Earthen Hut), which was also produced on this stage.

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The Research Association of Theatre Art played a decisive role in the promotion of nationalism in Korean drama under the Japanese occupation, encouraging the playwrights to write plays with patriotic themes. Chi-Jin Yoo was one of the few playwrights who became known through the work of the organization, thus becoming the most prominent playwright of the early 1930's in Korea.

In 1933 Chi-Jin Yoo wrote his second play Buhdunamu suhn Dongri uh Punggyung(The Scenery of the Willow Village), which was followed by Binmingul(The Slum) and So(The Cow), both in 1934.

In 1938 Chi-Jin Yoo wrote his famous and most popular play, Ma Yi Taeja(The Prince Ma Yi), which was originally titled Gaegol-san(The Gaegol Mountains). In the same year he wrote Huckyong Kang(The Armour River).

With the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War the Japanese control of Korea became stricter and harsher than ever before. The Japanese policy in Korea was aimed at the total destruction of Korean culture. Their first step was the prohibition of the official use of the Korean language which resulted in the virtual end of the theatrical movement which had just begun to take a major step forward. Playwrights were pressured by the Japanese to write plays in the Japanese Yamato spirit. As a result many patriotic playwrights virtually ceased their creative efforts. Historically, the years between World War II and the post war period were the dark ages of Korean theatre.

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When Korea was liberated from Japan in 1945 it was again left in confusion, disorder, and chaos. The Korean theatre was plagued with a bloody struggle between ideological arguments of the left-wing and the right-wing theatre people. During this period many theatrical people were sympathetic to the Communists. However, Chi-Jin Yoo, organizing Gugyaesul Hyuphoe(the Association of Theatrical Arts), held firm to his anti-Communist slogan during this period of confusion.

In 1946, a year after the liberation of Korea from Japan, and in spite of national confusion and disorder, Chi-Jin Yoo managed to write Jogug(The Fatherland) in a single act structure and Jamyung Ko(The Self-Beating Drum) which were both produced by Gugyaesul Hyuphoe. In 1947 he was elected president of the Academy of Korean Stage Arts which he helped to organize.

In 1950 when the government sponsored the creation of a national theatre in Seoul, Chi-Jin Yoo was appointed its director. In the same year he wrote three plays, Unhasu (The Milky Way), Wonsul Rang, and Byuhl(The Star). Wonsul Rang was produced as one of the opening productions of the national theatre.

The Korean War which broke out on June 25, 1950, again delivered an unexpected heavy blow to Korean theatrical activities which were beginning to rise to a new creative height. Like many actors and directors, Chi-Jin Yoo fled to the south where he kept producing plays with Sinhyup Group

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In 1952 Chi-Jin Yoo wrote Tonggock(The Lamentation). In the next year he wrote Chuhyong uh Nore(The Song of Chuh-yong), Kayagum, and Nado Ingan i doeryunda(I Will Become a Human Being, Too.) In the same year he wrote two screen plays, Jangbyuck(The Wall) and Chuljomang(The Barbed Wire).

In 1955 Chi-Jin Yoo wrote Purun Sungin(The Green Saint) which was followed by Saryucksin(The Six Loyal Dead Subjects) and Jamae(The Sisters).

By this time Chi-Jin Yoo's productivity as a playwright was virtually over. Since then he has written only one notable play, Hangang un Hurunda(The Han River Flows), which was produced in 1959. In the same year he was elected as the Chairman of the International Theatre Institute of Korea. In the next year he attended ITI World Conference which was held in Helsinki, Finland, as a representative of Korea.

In 1962 Chi-Jin Yoo established the Drama Center in order to initiate a new dramatic approach to theatrical production.

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CHAPTER II
HISTORICAL PLAYS
The Prince Ma Yi

Written in 1938, The Prince Ma Yi is representative of Chi-Jin Yoo's historical plays. The plot concerns the Prince Ma Yi of Silla, whose efforts to revive the pride, dignity, and independence of his declining kingdom threatened by Koryo, a powerful neighbouring dynasty, ends in vain. The play, emphasizing patriotism, reflects the feeling of a people who are in imminent danger of losing their sovereignty with the annexation of their country by a militant nation.¹

The Prince Ma Yi, which was produced in 1943, is one of a handful of modern plays which have enjoyed revival.² Viewed in this light of lasting popularity, the play occupies a unique position in the history of Korean drama.

A short examination of the play's dramatic incidents, characters, and theme may help to explain its popularity.

¹ Chi-Jin Yoo used Koryo as the aggressor in the play in order to avoid prosecution by the Japanese police, however, when he wrote The Prince Ma Yi in 1938 he clearly meant to denounce the imperialistic Japanese government which officially annexed Korea to its Empire in 1910.

² Only a few modern plays have been revived in Korea except those whose plots are based on well-known traditional folk-tales or novels.

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Like some of Yoo's other plays, it opens in a relative state of calm but quickly becomes a turbulent and intricate play. This initial tranquility is nothing more than a prelude to the main action which deals with the problems of human passion and the deceptiveness of human desire. The play also signifies that man's outward friendly gestures, as in the case of Wang Kun, are often full of deceit and in many instances used to mask his shrewdness.

Kim Bu, the King of Silla, is a faint-hearted old man whose incompetence leaves his kingdom vulnerable to his enemies. The frequent invasions of his kingdom by the troops of Wang Kun and other foreign soldiers bring into question his competency as a ruler.

When the play opens, the domestic unrest among the people caused mainly by Kim Bu's neglect has grown until a cataclysm seems inevitable. Thus, Kim Bu represents the typical patriarch of a decaying kingdom. Considering his mistakes, the question arises as to whether or not he deserves to be humiliated by a foreign invasion and the loss of his throne. If so, who should carry out the task of the dethronement of Kim Bu? Although he has shown his inadequacy, there is no indication in the script that he has been a wicked ruler. According to Oriental philosophy, any attempt to remove a wicked ruler by a war must be used as a last resort after all peaceful means have failed.³

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Mencius, Mencius. trans. by D.C. Lau. (Baltimore: Penguin Book Ltd, 1970), p. 43.

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However, if a war is used to dethrone a wicked king, it must be a punitive war carried out by someone who has the authority to punish him, just as the judge of a high court is the only one who has the authority to put a murderer to death. King Kim Bu is not a man of wickedness, even though evidence of his past record as a king indicates that he has never been an able ruler. Accordingly, any type of war used to dethrone him cannot be justified as a punitive war.

In the play, this war is planned in an extremely deceptive and furtive manner by Wang Kun although he has no right to make himself the heavenly judge. Moreover, Wang Kun is a traitor who usurped the throne by assassinating an elder ruler of his kingdom ten years earlier.⁴ And no intimate relationship can be established between himself and the people of Silla in terms of the ruler and the ruled. He is an outsider who has no right to interfere with the internal problem of Silla. Consequently, if there is anyone who ought to be punished in the play, it is Wang Kun who plans to conquer a neighbouring kingdom.

In the prologue, Wang Kun, the King of Koryo, pays a state visit to the Kingdom of Silla. His entourage includes

⁴Historically, Wang Kun was a native of Kaesung. When King Kyungye, the last king of Koguryo, came to the area to subdue the rebellion, Wang Kun, son of a wealthy merchant, joined him. Kyungye, who recognized his ability, appointed him as commander of a large body of troops. Soon King Kyungye appointed him as sijung, the first minister, but Wang Kun repaid his favor by overthrowing his king in 918 and founding the Koryo dynasty.

It is difficult to speculate how faithful Chi-Jin Yoo was to historical fact, but in any case this is not the main concern of the present study.

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his daughter the Princess Rang Nang, a beautiful and strong passionate woman, and Sun Piel, a former viceroy of the Kingdom of Silla and a very cunning man. Though his real intention is the conquest of Silla, he proclaims that he has come in an effort to "unite the two kingdoms in brotherhood." To achieve his ultimate aim, he has two choices; either to use his battle-trained soldiers who can be victorious over Silla in a short time or to make Rang Nang, his daughter, seduce the aged pleasure-minded king of Silla, thus uniting their kingdoms in marriage. Interestingly enough, however, Yoo deliberately lets Wang Kun chose the latter method complicating the dramatic action. By choosing the latter method Wang Kun makes his daughter, who is totally unaware of his scheme, a victim of his own ambition, and himself a two-fold villain--the conqueror of a peaceful kingdom and the exploiter of his own daughter for the satisfaction of his ambition. Thus, the playwright paints this pretentious visitor as an absolute villainous conqueror willing to use any method to achieve his ultimate aim. The chain of events in the play depends to a large extent on how Wang Kun's scheme is set in motion as well as in what way his ambition is thwarted by the efforts of the patriots who emerge in the struggle.

As prelude to his scheme, Wang Kun bribes numerous officers and officials of Silla with precious gifts. Though a few patriots refuse to accept the gifts, the desire for material goods as well as the general dissatisfaction with

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King Kim Bu cause a few of them to succumb to the temptation. The following conversation between two subjects of Silla vividly illustrates their discontent with the poverty of their nation as well as their admiration for Wang Kun.

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These are truly precious gifts. Sul Hyo! I must say that we cannot find such things in Silla even to dedicate them to His Majesty. As a matter of fact, everything was stolen by the soldiers of Hu Baekjae and Jin Won after the Battle of Posuckjung.

Sul Hyo

(Agreeing with him.) Ha, ha, ha... As we have thought, the King of Koryo is the king of kings. Our king has been doing nothing but yawning. Our king cannot be compared with the dignified king of Koryo whose forehead is so broad and whose eyes sparkle.

(Act I)

Though material good may temporarily satisfy man's desire, in the end, greed becomes master of the man as in this play, thus demonstrating what a wealthy and powerful nation can do to subvert the people of a crumbling kingdom.

In contrast to his father, the Prince has been the strong leader of the patriots of Silla. He demonstrates his patriotism by refusing to attend the welcoming banquet for Wang Kun, even though he has not been successful in stopping the visit altogether. Frustrated and dejected by his father's incompetence, the Prince now tries to consolidate his loyal friends who are willing to sacrifice their lives to maintain the sovereignty of their nation. The formation of a patriotic group by the Prince and his loyal patricians provides a ray of hope, though the group's victory over the well-trained troops of Wang Kun is doubtful. Thus, the division of the

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people of Silla results in the creation of two distinct groups of characters, the patriots and the traitors. Wang Kun's resolution not to use his military force complicates the dramatic action and helps to create the triangular love relationship that develops between King Kim Bu, the Princess Rang Nang, and the Prince.

Upon hearing a report that King Kim Bu has become infatuated with the Princess Rang Nang, the Prince is shocked and disappointed to discover that his father has sacrificed the national interest for his own personal pleasure. Thus, King Kim Bu deviates from the normal and proper course of a king responsible for the prosperity of a nation and a people who are under the threat of foreign invasion.

Noticing the imminent danger to their kingdom, the patriots plot to assassinate Wang Kun without knowing that their plan has been overheard by him. However, when the Prince questions the visiting king about the purpose of five thousand troops hidden in the forest, Wang Kun attempts to avoid his question, thus implying that there is some secret purpose underlying his visit. Momentarily, their exchange of verbal accusations is stopped by the appearance of King Kim Bu and the Princess Rang Nang. Though it is only a temporary situation, the appearance of Rang Nang offers a moment of relief from the impending crisis. Without the slightest knowledge of the conflict existing between the Prince and Wang Kun, Kim Bu, in his ecstasy over the pretty young princess, joyously initiates the acquaintance of his son and

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Rang Nang with the declaration that they become brother and sister. Although we never really know his true intention, it would seem that his hidden purpose in uniting them as brother and sister would be to eliminate the possibility of their ever becoming lovers. However, his happiness is cut short by the Prince's denunciation of Wang Kun as a traitor. A moment of superficial calm is interrupted making Wang Kun furious, and he wonders whether or not he should reassess the use of military force to subdue the hosting kingdom.

Baffled and frustrated by his father's lack of concern for national security which is under constant threat by the visiting king, the Prince now determines to assassinate Wang Kun, and secretly enters the palace in the night, slipping past the guards. However, his momentary hope turns to desperation when he discovers that he is in the quarters of the Princess Rang Nang. Without knowing the identity of the approaching assassin, Rang Nang and her maid immediately call for help whereupon her father's loyal subjects search the room forcing the Prince to hide behind a screen. His attempt to kill Wang Kun is totally thwarted by stumbling into the enemy's camp. His only significant achievement while in the chamber is the discovery of King Kim Bu's bracelet given to Rang Nang as a token of his love for her. After finding the bracelet, he realizes that his life hangs on a hair. This exciting scene is worth quoting.

Rang Nang

(She looks at the Maid with anxious eyes. She is disturbed.) Ho, ho, ho... Probably, we were mistaken about it.

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Maid

I am very sorry for my careless remarks.

Rang Nang

(She stretches.) Ah... Now I can sleep with my legs out stretched.

(The Maid looks through the window again.)

Rang Nang

It seems like someone is looking at us through the window. Block the window with the screen.

Maid

Yes.

(The Maid carries the screen to block the window. The Prince, who has been crouching down like a dead body, suddenly appears.)

Maid

(Leaping toward the Princess to hold on to her.)
Ah! Princess!

Prince

Shhhh--!

Rang Nang

Don't you dare touch us!

Prince

If you make a noise, I'll instantly... (When he waves his arm, the dagger shines.)

Rang Nang

Coward! I'll shout. I'll scream.

Prince

Shhhh--! (With his hand, he covers the mouth of the Princess Rang Nang who is ready to shout.)

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Rang Nang

(The Princess Rang Nang, who is in the arms of the Prince, stares at his face for a moment.) Well, who are you?

Prince

If you make a noise, you'll be instantly killed.

Rang Nang

Aren't you the Prince of this kingdom?

Prince

Ha! I'm impressed that you recognize me. (He takes off his mask.)

(Act II)

When Rang Nang discovers that the assassin is really the Prince in disguise she is disgusted by his lowly act and accuses him of cowardice because he has entered a woman's chamber. At this moment Sun Piel, the schemer of Wang Kun, hearing a man's voice, comes to her door to see whether or not the Princess Rang Nang is in need of help. However, promptly changing her attitude towards the Prince, she assures Sun Piel that everything is all right. By telling him that she is changing into her night dress she prevents his entering the room. At this moment she is more concerned with the safety of the Prince with whom she is falling in love. In the wake of such a discovery, she does not see the point of endangering a man for whom she has the greatest respect. Upholders of conventional ethics may accuse her of being an unfilial daughter because she protects the man who is trying to assassinate her father, but because of her respect and love for the man who is determined to restore dignity to his kingdom she

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willingly accepts the ensuing danger. Disappointed by the cowardly action of the Prince, however, she does not hold back her criticism of his pusillanimous activity of secretly entering her room:

Prince! Why are you so cowardly? I thought of you as an example for all men. Can the man for whom I have so much respect not do the better than this? Do all men of Suhrabuhl act in this way? If one wants to kill one's enemy, one must fight openly against him until he crushes himself like a jade. But why does one have to climb up the railings into a woman's chamber?... (She takes the dagger away from the Prince and throws it down.) With the intention of threatening one of the weak sex with this. How cowardly! In my wildest dream I never imagined the Prince of Silla to be such a coward! I never imagined it even in a dream.

(Act II)

Dejected that he has failed to kill Wang Kun and shamed by Rang Nang's accusation, the Prince now attempts to escape from the chamber through the window in order to avoid further humiliation. He knows that for a man to retreat in the face of the enemy is a shameful deed only carried out by the faint-hearted.

At this moment an important psychological dilemma is taking place in the Prince's mind. He is trapped by the situation; he can neither murder Rang Nang who has saved his life, nor can he escape from the scene like a timid character. Like some great tragic characters in Western drama, he is given a kind of freedom of choice which is impossible to cope with at the moment. He now shows human weakness--in his inability to decide whether or not to kill Rang Nang or escape from the scene. The indecisiveness of his character alternates between one course and other. He threatens to kill Rang

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Nang in order to force her to reveal her father's chamber and then he cannot go through with it. Now he attempts to escape shamefully from the scene, but the circumstances forbid him. He knows very well that the room is tightly guarded by the enemy and he will be instantly killed by them the moment he jumps from the window. In this case, his noble hope of saving his kingdom will be washed away with his life.

Like Hamlet and Phaedre, the Prince is caught in a situation which causes a moment of suspense. He knows that he must make a decision, and whatever he does, the result is likely to be disastrous. Under the pressure, the Prince finally decides to die a heroic death by jumping into the middle of the enemy. Though she has accused him of being "a treacherous subject," Rang Nang does not see any reason for a great man, whose purpose is to restore the sovereignty of his kingdom, to be killed for nothing. In order to save him, something must be done quickly. She asks him to take refuge in her room for the night. According to Oriental custom, for a woman to keep a man in her chamber is a highly immoral act and can easily become the subject of scandal. Knowing the consequences of her action, she nevertheless decides to save his life.

The next day when one of his friends reports that Wang Kun is alone in the palace, the Prince, humiliated by failure of the previous night, now determines to openly challenge Wang Kun. Though he is interrupted for a moment, he is able to chase him with drawn sword and valiantly strikes

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him with a fatal blow only to discover that the man whom he has killed is not Wang Kun, but a soldier disguised as Wang Kun. The Prince is again haunted by his failure. While he ponders over the soldier's body, the Prince is attacked from behind by another soldier. However, Rang Nang, who enters at this moment, once more saves the Prince by fatally wounding his attacker. Once more the use of disguise and mistaken identity serves to heighten the tension in the play leaving the Prince in a situation which jeopardizes his life.

Turning the situation to his advantage, Wang Kun now demands that King Kim Bu immediately kill his son. Upon the rejection of his demand by Kim Bu, he promptly orders his general to attack the city and the palace with his "invincible army," and leaves the scene believing that Sun Piel will pressure Kim Bu to surrender.

Cajoled by Sun Piel that he can live with the pretty princess for the rest of his life if he will only sign a document of surrender, Kim Bu momentarily dreams about his future with her. Torn between his responsibility as a king who is no longer capable of bearing the burden of office and his fancy of living with Rang Nang, he asks one of his subjects to summon the Prince for consultation. However, he suddenly decides that it is impossible to surrender his kingdom to Wang Kun, thus momentarily restoring his dignity. But Kim Bu's stateliness is soon shattered when he sees Rang Nang in the arms of the Prince, thus mistakenly assuming that his son is his rival.

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In the next scene, dejected and depressed by his failure to kill Wang Kun, the Prince enters full of sorrow. He denounces himself saying that he is "neither the prince of this kingdom nor a member of the patriotic party." However, when he is told that his father is being urged by Sun Piel to sign the document of surrender, he quickly regains his dignity as the prince of the kingdom. With the future of the nation at stake, he knows that he must act immediately.

When the Prince is again pursued by Wang Kun's general and his soldiers, Rang Nang boldly stops them vowing "you must pierce my chest with your spears and step over my corpse." However, accused by her father of being an unfilial daughter who jeopardizes her father's security, she is immediately silenced. Though she is an intrepid character who dares to denounce her father's shameful scheme, she also shows the docile side of her nature when she is directly scolded by her father. But, however, when he announces that he has decided to make her the second queen of Kim Bu, her temporary submissiveness to her father vanishes and she demands "to know with whose consent" he has made such an insipid "imperial order." She demonstrates her independence as a woman, which is reiterated at the end of the play. She now demands that her father withdraw the five thousand troops who have placed the palace under siege. If her request is rejected, she declares that she is prepared to die holding a dagger in her mouth challenging her father that he must conquer Silla with the price of his daughter's life. Realizing that Rang Nang

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means to keep her vow, Wang Kun finally orders his general to withdraw the troops agreeing that he "will not kill even a single bird in Silla." Wang Kun's goal of unifying the three kingdoms which was once in sight has again thwarted because of his daughter's determination to help the Prince. With the effort of Rang Nang to impede her father's ambition, though only momentary, a ray of peace appears on the horizon of the Kingdom of Silla.

When the Prince is greeted by Rang Nang, saying that her father has finally ordered the withdrawal of his troops from the palace, he is overcome with gratitude. For the first time, he openly expresses his indebtedness to her saying her sincere effort finally set a flame in his heart. At the moment they embrace each other King Kim Bu enters and sees his intended wife in the arms of his son. Thinking that he has a rival, Kim Bu becomes infuriated and denounces his son as being an unfilial and disloyal subject. Seeing that he has now lost the woman he loves to his son, he immediately signs the document of surrender which annexes his kingdom to Koryo.⁵ The scene thus shows that the uncertainty of the nation's fate is closely related to the inadequacy of the king to control his passion and jealousy.

5

According to the history of Korea, soon after Wang Kun's founding of Koryo, his power was growing daily while the fortune of Silla rapidly declined. Without allies (Tang, which had been an ally to Silla, was plagued with the internal conflicts and unable to assist her during that time) and powerless to defend herself, Silla made a rare and difficult decision: King Kyungsun surrendered himself and his kingdom to Wang Kun in 935 in contrast to patriotic tradition of fighting to the last.

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The failure of the Prince and patricians to avert the destiny of their nation indicates that even a well intended action cannot induce a favorable result. Man often cannot control the fate of nation. Thus, justice does not always stand on the side of virtue, but frequently functions for the benefit of evil.

For some unknown reason, Chi-Jin Yoo extends the main body of the action by adding a fifth act to the play. It is possible to speculate that he does so for both political and aesthetic reasons. Considering the time of the original production of the play, it was probably necessary to make the play as unreal as possible, i.e., by taking an allegorical ending in order to mask the major theme from the eyes of watchful Japanese imperialists. Since the theme of the play sharply denounces the foreign invasion of a weak nation by a strong militant country, it was necessary to camouflage its original intent. In order to do so, the playwright purposely shrouded the final scene in mysticism so that the play's real theme is not readily apparent. With the creation of this aesthetic distance, the audience is left with an ambiguous and unreal ending. The fifth act, which is supposed to take place approximately ten years after the end of the main action, opens in a steep mountain valley. While the chorus, comprised of the Prince's friends who are now vagabonds, sings, the Prince on the summit of a rock prays for the atonement of the sin which he believes he has committed by allowing the annexation of his kingdom to Koryo.

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His wish is to transform himself into a rock symbolizing that he will become a part of his country by returning to nature and will remain there eternally.

While the Prince's friends prevent Rang Nang from approaching the Prince, King Kim Bu, now in despair over his past mistakes and wearing the robe of a monk, arrives to seek reconciliation with his son. Baffled once more by his son's silence, he humbly begs his pardon. At this moment the thunder roars, lightning flashes, and the Prince is finally transformed into a rock ending the play in a veil of a mysticism.

Thus, the Prince and the vagabonds, who are now no more than wanderers, represent purity and devotion and symbolize the genuine side of the kingdom in contrast to the guilt and malfeasance of King Kim Bu which appear dire and pitiful and are representative of impurity and corruption. If King Kim Bu is not forgiven by the Prince, he is at least given a chance to repent for his mistakes by seeking his son's pardon in a monk's robe. However, whether or not he is forgiven is of no consequence because the idea of the play centers on the central issues faced by the oppressed people-- patriotism, pride, and dignity.

The major action of the play shows at least two important points: First, it tries to unmask and denounce the subtle and sly plot of an aggressive militant nation that uses its wealth and power to subvert a non-hostile

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nation⁶; second, it also tries to show how human passion which is caused by jealousy can overcome human reason and that the personal emotion by which man is often controlled can be catastrophic to a nation.

Seeing the play in perspective, the fifth act is essentially an extension of the major action. However, since the main action is concluded at the end of the fourth act, some critics may argue or question the necessity of including a fifth act. With or without the fifth act, however, The Prince Ma Yi is a powerful play with a strong emphasis on the need for patriotism and the independence of a nation from the foreign domination.

6

By the summer of 1910, after Japan's victory over Russia (the Russo-Japanese War), Japan became the practical ruler of Korea in all but name. During the same year, Masatake Terauchi, a Japanese general, had a series of secret meetings with Wan-Yong Yi, one of the leaders of the Korean Government, out of which came the so-called Korean-Japanese Annexation Draft. This was signed by Terauchi and Yi on August 22 in a ceremony which was heavily guarded by many Japanese troops. Superficially, the Japanese government did not use its troops directly, except on some occasions, in conquering Korea, though the Japanese military forces were empowered to control the patriotic movements among the Koreans throughout the country. As did Wang Kun in the play, the Japanese attempted to gain control by bribing the corrupt Korean officials to sign the treaty.

The Self-Beating Drum

Written in 1946, a year after Korea was liberated from Japan, The Self-Beating Drum is an extremely powerful play depicting patriotism, national independence, and the unification of a divided nation.¹ This play resembles Chi-Jin Yoo's earlier historical play, The Prince Ma Yi, dealing with similar themes--the restoration of national sovereignty, dignity, and pride. However, unlike the former play which is filled with the pathos and the hopelessness of the Kingdom of Silla, The Self-Beating Drum reflects the hope and expectation of a nation just liberated from foreign oppression.

The plot revolves around the Princess of Nang Nang and the Prince Hodong, a valiant prince of the Kingdom of Koguryo, who is determined to unify Korea by expelling the influence of Han, a powerful dynasty of China, from the Kingdom of Nang Nang. Under the reign of King Choe Li, the Kingdom of Nang Nang has become a vassal state subject to the control of Han, with an obvious lack of self-determination. The acceptance of Han as Nang Nang's suzerain is regarded as

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Although Chi-Jin Yoo used the Kingdom of Koguryo and Nang Nang as the two politically divided kingdoms of Korea, when he wrote The Self-Beating Drum in 1946 he clearly must have been referring to the division of Korea into Northern and Southern sectors after World War II.

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approved practice in the court of King Choe Li. Like King Kim Bu, King Choe Li is an example of a patriarch of a decaying kingdom. His court affairs have been almost completely in the hands of Chang Tcho, a general dispatched from Han. Furthermore, Chang Tcho has even been assured by King Choe Li that he will be given the pretty princess as his wife. Therefore, Choe Li's record proves him a truckler who has virtually forfeited all self-respect, pride, and dignity as a king.

Although there have been some border clashes with the neighbouring kingdoms of Koguryo, Baekjae, and Silla, as in The Prince Ma Yi, The Self-Beating Drum opens in a relative state of calm: King Choe Li, accompanied by the Princess and Chang Tcho, prepares to attend a ceremony of the erection of a border monument marking the borders between the kingdoms of Nang Nang and Koguryo. During the ceremony, when Chang Tcho desires that the record of Han's contribution to Nang Nang should also be inscribed on the monument, the Princess objects politely to his idea saying, "It is unnecessary since it is a known fact that Nang Nang is a dominion of Han." On the one hand she acknowledges the idea that her kingdom is a vassal state of Han, but on the other she is troubled by the fact that the Kingdom of Nang Nang may eventually become a total vassal state in the service of a powerful militaristic nation. She knows that reinforcements of the troops of Han will ultimately result in the total subjugation of her kingdom.

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Unlike her father, who depends entirely on Han, the Princess demonstrates some degree of independence which will be reiterated in the course of the play's action. When Chang Tcho says that the border wall should also be erected by the troops of Han, she firmly denounce his proposal stating "No! We must build our wall." Here she exposes the dual nature of her response to Han's influence by fluctuating between spirited independence and dependence. In sum, if King Choe Li represents the dejection, decadence, and depressed spirit of Nang Nang, similar to King Kim Bu in The Prince Ma Yi, the Princess portrays the hope of the deteriorating kingdom, thus dividing the characters in the play into two distinct groups of good and evil.

With his strong conviction that Korea should be ruled by the Koreans, Prince Hodong of Koguryo has been undertaking the task of unifying Korea. Though he is a valiant soldier, his lofty mission has been constantly frustrated by Nang Nang's possession of the self-beating drum which beats automatically whenever invading troops cross the border. Balked and frustrated by the abortive attempt at direct assault on Nang Nang, Hodong, assisted by his two able lieutenants, secretly enters the territory of King Choe Li to destroy the divine drum. In order to achieve his noble purpose of the unification of Korea, he must first destroy the drum. While entering Nang Nang, they happen upon the place where the ceremony for the erection of the monument is going on. It is at this moment that the dramatic action of

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the play begins. From this point the development of the main action of the play depends to a large extent upon how Hodong's mission for the destruction of the drum succeeds, as well as the way in which his task will be frustrated by Chang Tcho. Although it may not be as decisive as in the case of The Prince Ma Yi, the triangular love relationship between the Princess, Hodong, and Chang Tcho also plays an important role in the development of the plot.

Confronted by Hodong, who denounces the Hans as "the bloodsuckers of Korea," Chang Tcho, encouraged by the Princess, challenges him. Chang Tcho must win the fight in order to gain her love. Enraged by Chang Tcho's declaration that "Korea is no more than one of Han's one hundred and three dominions," Hodong attacks him valiantly crying out, "Korea with its several thousand years of history will never be satisfied with being a vassal state of the barbarious Hans." For a moment Hodong's victory appears to be in sight, but then his hope of winning the fight is completely shattered with the sudden capture of his lieutenants by enemy soldiers. Struggling to release his friends, Hodong's sword breaks. Helpless without a weapon with which to fight, he is captured. For the time being his goal of destroying the divine drum appears to be an impossible task, and Hodong and his friends remain in a state of impending danger.

The next morning when King Choe Li is asked by his general about the execution of Hodong, he refers the matter to Chang Tcho therefore demonstrating his lack of control

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as ruler of the kingdom. In addition, he solicits Chang Tcho to request more troops from the King of Han to defend Nang Nang from the neighbouring kingdoms. As a result he willingly invites foreign troops into his country without realizing that it will only speed the transformation of his helpless kingdom into a completely dependent tributary of Han. He is totally incapable of understanding complicated international problems, thereby again revealing his incompetence as a ruler. The following dialogue vividly exposes Han's underlying purpose of sending Chang Tcho to Nang Nang.

King

That's right. Ha, ha, ha...(Chang Tcho laughs.)
By the way, we want to destroy Koguryo, Silla, and Baekjae. Can you request the King of Han to send us more troops reinforcements?

Chang Tcho

Of course, I will. The King of Han has decided to fight to the last man to regain the four provinces of Korea. That's the reason he sent me here.

King

(As though he is deeply moved.) Ah, how wonderful that is! Girls, pour more wine for the General.
(Act II)

In spite of the fact that Chang Tcho explicitly discloses the hidden purpose of his mission, King Choe Li is entirely incapable of understanding the situation. Under his reign, then, it is inconceivable that the people of his kingdom can enjoy a reasonable and steady livelihood. The incompetency of the ruler directly affects the welfare of the people of the whole kingdom. Choe Li is not only an incompetent ruler, but because of his request for Han troops in

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order to maintain his throne, a deliberate invitation to foreign dominance, he is an iniquitous king. For the sake of the kingdom and its people, the transgressor must be evicted from the throne. And the self-beating drum which protects the depraved king must be destroyed. The divine drum has been used for nothing more than the protection and prolongation of an evil force. Accordingly, Hodong's determination to unify by dethroning Choe Li and destroying the divine drum carries logical justification in the play.

The next day, a joyous banquet celebrating the capture of Hodong is disrupted when the prince, who is under arrest, appears and denounces King Choe Li as a man who is "wearing a Chinese skin." Hodong is dragged into the palace and displayed to the people who celebrate his capture. Here, the Princess also accuses Hodong of being a rebel and threatens to beat him with Chang Tcho's whip. Enraged by Hodong's accusation, Choe Li orders his soldiers to kill him declaring that a rebel must be executed. The vindictive verbal exchange between Hodong and King Choe Li is worth quoting in order to witness how the captured prince decries the corrupt monarch's servility to Han.

Chang Tcho

No doubt, you are a thief. Although we must have rebels in our great country, there is no thief as bad as you are.

Hodong

Ha, ha, ha... I have heard that a thief called an innocent man a thief. This must be the exact same case.

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King

Damn it! Instead of using your tongue for saying disloyal things, you should repent. If you do so, your spirit will escape from suffering after your death.

Hodong

That is exactly what I want to tell Your Majesty.

King

What is it?

Hodong

If you are really devoted to our nation and have the same blood as we, then you ought to take off the Chinese skin you are wearing.

King

You mean that I wear Chinese skin?

Hodong

Why do you keep that barbarian(pointing to Chang Tcho) in this sacred land? Like a fox which borrows a tiger skin to play the role of the king in the mountain, you are trying to be a king while under the influence of those barbarians. Please I beg you stop sucking the blood of our people. And please stay away from that barbarian.

King

What disloyal talk!

Chang Tcho

The only reason that Han is keeping Nang Nang as its vassal state is to protect the people of Nang Nang, nothing more.

Hodong

Your Highness, please wary of what he is saying. Have you ever seen an ugly flower containing poison? Under just such a disguise, Han is trying to swallow up our nation.

Princess

You fool! You don't know how prosperous we have been under the protection of Han...

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Hodong

If so, why have the people of Nang Nang been leaving their kingdom to establish new kingdoms such as Silla and Baekjae? If the Koreans have been helped by Han, it has been no one but the family of Choe!

Everybody

(Silence.)

Hodong

Your splendid dress! Your shining shoes! The King's necklace! The bracelet! The sculpture on the rails! The sparkling fountain in the sun! The stone lanterns! They are brilliantly dazzling! But where do you find such things in this country except in this palace? If you know the place answer me!

Princess

(As she looks at the King pointedly.) My god!

Hodong

You can say nothing, Princess. Be aware of these facts. You have received this wealth and luxury from Han as compensation for the loss of our land and people.
(Act II)

Enraged and infuriated by the accusation of Hodong who declares that "justice and right will win," Choe Li gives order to his soldiers that the captured prince shall never again be seen by the people. He knows that he has been wrong and what Hodong has said is right. In order to prevent a potential revolt by the people, he must conceal his guilt from the public. The people of Nang Nang have been exploited by King Choe Li whose government is absolutely demoralized. To preserve his power and throne, he must depend on Han, which keeps its vigilant eyes on the crumbling kingdom to draw it under its complete control. Out of desperation King Choe Li, fearing a revolt by the people, beseeches Chang Tcho

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to attend to the disposition of Hodong, again demonstrating his lack of sovereign power. When Hodong is led out to the dungeon, an important moment of dramatic recognition takes place in the Princess' mind. This recognition scene seems weak when reading the play because of it depends so heavily upon the Princess' expression of emotional and physical feelings. The stage version would necessarily be more powerful in its impact. Because of the difficulty of description quoting is necessary.

King

Thank you! (Chang Tcho exits quickly.) Damn it! An intolerable fellow! (While exiting in the opposite direction from Hodong.) Princess!

(The Princess stares in the direction in which Hodong is led out.)

King

Princess! What are you staring at? Why don't you follow me...

(Without answering the King, the Princess sits on the railing absent-mindedly.)

King

(Dubiously.) Princess, don't you hear me?

Princess

This little girl can no longer understand things.
(Act II)

Slowly the illusion in which the Princess has been living for so long slips away. The conflict between veneration for her father who has been her idol and her sudden realization of the truth, brought about by Hodong, begins to rise up in her mind. When she answers that she "can no

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longer understand things" we must understand her to mean that she is beginning to perceive a new reality; her father has been a hypocrite as well as the exploiter of his people under the protection of a foreign power. At this critical moment she stands at a crossroads, and must choose whether to live for justice, right, and her people or for her father who would pamper his personal ambition by leaving the kingdom under foreign domination. She knows that her father invited the Han troops to insure his keeping the throne. Knowing that her father has been bargaining with Han to the detriment of the people, she can no longer support him. She knows that she should follow the course of justice, but her duty to her father holds her back. She does not want to act against her father, but feels that she must speak out against injustice and corruption. Thus, the complexity of her character lies in the fact that she is now fully conscious of her father's transgression, though not yet quite strong enough to speak out against him.

Regretting her behavior to Hodong earlier in the day, the Princess, who now perceives the noble determination of the captured prince, visits him in jail. Not knowing the real purpose of her visit Hodong accuses her of being an ill-natured woman. She now begs his pardon for the words she used when she denounced him. She confesses that she has come to ask his pardon. When Hodong says that the people of Koguryo are ready to die to regain their sovereignty from Han, she is again deeply moved. Although he is in a desperate

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situation in jail, Hodong still expresses his romantic and utopian idea, saying "...all villages and provinces must be united for a single purpose in order to build a nation. The nation will neither have wars nor jails for thieves or sinners." He is still hopeful for the country which he plans to build for the people whom he thinks are oppressed by the foreigners. There will be bright days. And he believes that his efforts will be rewarded. The country will enjoy peace and prosperity after liberation from militant foreign domination. Deeply moved by Hodong's sublime pledge as well as his strong faith, the Princess now states that her brethren must unite to regain their pride. However, when she is pressed by Hodong to reveal the location of the self-beating drum, the Princess, who is still preoccupied with what she regards as her duty to her father, sternly refuses to tell him. Knowing that Hodong will be executed at the market place in the morning, however, she finally promises him that she will destroy the drum for her people and country. Satisfied with the strength of her assurances, he now responds that he is ready for death as long as the drum is to be destroyed. At this moment there develops another important change in the mind of the Princess. Surprised by his readiness for death, she now encourages Hodong, whom she had despised so much a short time ago, to live pleading that nothing will have meaning if he dies. Though it is not as obvious as in the case between the Prince Ma Yi and the Princess Rang Nang in The Prince Ma Yi, from this point the play begins to reveal

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an interesting love relationship between the Princess and Hodong. She swears to help him for the sake of her nation, but gradually her words become tinged with double meanings. Her determination to destroy the drum is not only for the benefit of her nation, but also for the man with whom she is beginning to fall in love, thus revealing to some degree the nature of an intricate and universal human problem.

Disheartened by Hodong's readiness for execution, the Princess now expresses her true feelings to Chang Tcho saying that their relationship " has been nothing more than a dream." She can no longer accept his love. She is becoming a woman who will live for her nation and her people, but not for a foreigner. King Choe Li, enraged by her coldness to Chang Tcho, urges her to accept his love, implying that he cannot afford to offend the General. In order to maintain his status quo, Choe Li has to please the Hans. To please the Hans, he believes his daughter must accept Chang Tcho's love. Annoyed by the unexpected development between the Princess and Chang Tcho, he now asks his daughter to go with him to Han. For King Choe Li, it is important to unite Han and his crumbling court by a marriage tie if he is to maintain his throne. The following scene in which Choe Li urges the Princess to become Chang Tcho's bride resembles the scene in which Wang Kun asks his daughter to become the second queen of Kim Bu in The Prince Ma Yi.

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Princess

Father!

King

You must ask his forgiveness. And you must leave for Han with him.

Princess

This little girl must go to Han?

King

Han is our kingdom's suzerain. Furthermore, Chang Tcho will become the Commanding General of Han. To make him my son-in-law will be the most celebrated event since the establishment of our kingdom.

Princess

Although it sounds like disloyal, I cannot do that.

King

You cannot? What are you talking about?

Princess

Chang Tcho should never have been in our kingdom. His pretentious friendliness have some hidden meaning.
(Act IV)

Here King Choe Li clearly reveals his lack of confidence as the ruler of the kingdom when he says that Han is the suzerain to Nang Nang. Furthermore, the fact that he would use his daughter in order to maintain his throne is more than the Princess can bear. Her character is much stronger than her father thinks. She is now able to express what she believes: that is, she has to live for her people and her nation--not for Han. She knows that it has been a shameful thing for her to have believed in Han as the protector of Nang Nang. Even though she is a dutiful daughter,

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she has to do what she thinks right, even, if necessary, to the point of denouncing her father's position.

Disappointed by his daughter's reaction to his order, King Choe Li now tries to persuade her that it is beyond his power to transgress the powerful influence of Han in his kingdom. But the Princess now firmly rejects this idea, demanding that he break off the relationship with Han, thus, suggesting that he be more independent. The following conversation between Choe Li and his daughter vividly exposes their ideological differences.

Princess

Even if it means retiring from the throne, you must not let our beautiful kingdom be taken by Han. It is an action against the will of our ancestors... Father, please break off the relationship with Han as soon as possible so that you are not accused of being a traitor to our nation.

King

What has happened to you? You are repeating the same thing said by Hodong, a rebel.

Princess

Hodong is not a rebel.

King

What?

Princess

Prince Hodong is also a Korean who has Korean blood.

King

What has happened to you?

Princess

Hodong's patriotism has lifted the thick fog which has been surrounding me until now.

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King

Princess, you must be ensnared by the rebel. That is why you are now rejecting the General's love.

Princess

Father, please forgive this undutiful daughter, but I must take the road of justice.

(Act IV)

The Princess, who sees no way of saving Hodong's life, finally tells Chang Tcho that she is willing to go to Han with him under one condition, that he stays the execution of Hodong. With the sacrifice of her personal happiness Hodong's life is saved. Like many traditional Oriental women, the Princess is ready to sacrifice herself for the man whose lofty purpose is to unite the nation for the people of Korea. She is no longer concerned about her personal well-being. Her concern for her country and the man with whom she is in love are far stronger than the desire for personal happiness. If the sacrifice of her life will bring prosperity to her nation, she is ready to do so. Her strong devotion to her nation is in high contrast to her father's willingness to sacrifice anything for the purpose of maintaining his throne.

With the hope of destroying the self-beating drum Hodong, who has escaped from jail during the night, secretly enters the Princess' quarter. Seeing that his life is in danger, she urges him to abandon his mission and escape from the palace. Disappointed by the fact that she has not yet destroyed the drum, he presses her to inform him of its location. When she refuses to answer him, he now reminds her that she had promised to destroy the drum herself. She answers

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that she can no longer destroy the drum saying that its destruction could only be regarded as a direct attack on her father.

The Princess knows that it is her duty to destroy the drum which has been the source of evil, but she is also very much aware that its destruction will lead directly to the dethronement of her father. She realizes that the preservation of the drum helps her father maintain his power while he leaves the kingdom to the dominance of Han. Her ethical duty to her father holds her back from her moral duty to her nation and people. Thus, she is caught in a difficult situation: She wants to destroy the drum for her country, but she is overcome by her duty to her father. She is now given a chance to act either for her nation or for her father. As a result, there develops a conflict between an individual's duty to his nation and his duty to parents. She knows that by observing her duty to the nation, she will violate her duty to her father and vice versa. The situation, however, presses her to take a course, and whichever course she chooses, she knows that she cannot perform both duties. She is torn between two cardinal duties which she would desire to obey both at the same time. Exhorted by her duty to the nation, however, she finally destroys the drum with her dagger. Fully conscious that she has acted against her father, she knows it must be so because of the imperative duty to her nation. Some supporters of traditional ethics may justifiably argue that she has proven to be an unfilial

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daughter, who deserves to be punished, which she is at the end of the play. However, her action can be justified according to Confucian philosophy: that is, man's duty to his nation must precede his duty to his parents.²

After the destruction of the drum, Hodong urges the Princess to flee with him to Koguryo. Remembering her promise to Chang Tcho, however, she firmly rejects his proposal. She loves Hodong, but her commitment to Chang Tcho made only to save Hodong's life holds her back. She knows that she cannot become "a woman who makes a double promise." In order to explain the situation she reminds Hodong that his duty to his nation is that of "the prince--a man who fights for his country"; he should not give up everything for a woman. Lastly she requests him to treat her father properly when he becomes ruler of Korea after the unification of the kingdoms. By this she fulfills the duty to her father she had to transgress in order to carry out the other imperative duty. She has now achieved both duties, that is, to her nation and to her father.

By the silence of the self-beating drum at the invasion of the kingdom by the troops of Koguryo, Chang Tcho finally discovers that the drum has been destroyed. Hodong is again captured while escaping from the castle and brought

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Confucius, Confucian Analects, The Great Learning and The Doctrine of the Mean. trans. by James Legge. (New York: Dover Publication Inc., 1971), pp. 382-407.

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to Choe Li. Enraged by the destruction of the drum, King Choe Li and Chang Tcho are ready to kill Hodong. At this moment the Princess rushes in claiming that it was she not Hodong, who destroyed the drum. She requests them to have her killed instead of Hodong. Having fulfilled her duties, she is ready to die for a noble cause. Exasperated by his daughter's act, Choe Li strikes her, wounding her fatally. Then he kills himself with the same sword. Now the troops of Koguryo surge into the palace, gaining victory by the silence of the drum, and save Hodong while killing Chang Tcho with the help of the patriotic soldiers of Nang Nang.

As in Hamlet, The Self-Beating Drum ends contrary to the expectation of the audience with the death of the Princess at the end of the play. Instead of letting the play end in a melodramatic way, Chi-Jin Yoo concludes his work with a strong emotional impact on the audience in the forms of the Princess' death. Some spectators may wonder why the Princess has to be killed at the end of the play. Understanding of Oriental custom may help the explanation. The Princess violates her ethical duty to her father when she performs her duty to the nation. Anyone who violates the ethical law must be punished. Consequently, it is ethically wrong to let the Princess live happily hereafter with Hodong. Also, if the Princess continued to live, the play would end in the typical melodramatic pattern in which good is rewarded and evil punished.

The Self-Beating Drum strongly suggests that one who has fulfilled one's duty in the pursuit of justice may not always be rewarded in the present world, though he may be remunerated in the next as Hodong promises the Princess, saying, "I will live with you without parting in Heaven" implying that she and her lover will be united after their death. Another significant message of the play is that anyone who violates the ethical law must be punished accordingly. So King Choe Li, who kills his daughter, must die, signifying that a father's murder of his daughter must not go unpunished.

The Self-Beating Drum reveals at least three significant points: First, it shows that a nation must maintain its independence from foreign dominance in order to maintain its sovereignty; second, the nation must be united under an able ruler; third, when there is a conflict between man's duty to his nation and to his parents, his moral obligation to his nation precedes that he owes to his parents.

Viewing The Self-Beating Drum in a historical context, it precisely reflects the political mood of the period of its original production when Korea was divided into two parts (and still is) under the military occupations of the United States of America and the Soviet Union. Under such a condition, it advocates the unification of Korea as well as its independence from the big power nations, clearly supporting the idea that Korea should be ruled by the Koreans.

Although it appears to end in a sad way with the death of the Princess, unlike The Prince Ma Yi, The Self-Beating Drum provides hope for the reunification of Korea

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by showing that the Prince Hodong will eventually unify the kingdoms expelling the Han influence and restoring the national sovereignty and pride. Thus, in spite of its bloody conclusion, the playwright affirms that a strong ray of hope appears on the horizon of Korea.

The Star

On the surface, The Star, written in 1950, is a revenge play in which a young girl seeks to avenge her parent's murder. The murder, the elements of disguise and mistaken identity, the attempt at poisoning, the love relationship that develops between the children of the two enemies, and the appearance of ghosts comprise a large part of the play. The significance of the play, however, lies beneath these elements, that is, in the struggle for political power in Korea which often resulted in murder. The play not only reflects the political feuds of the Yi dynasty¹, the play's setting, but also mirrors the secret maneuverings of Korean politicians during the post World War II period² which was

1

Historically, the Yi dynasty(1388 A.D.-1910 A.D.) was plagued with political battles. During the early period, the scholar-officials became increasingly powerful until eventually they were the actual makers and executors of policy and were able to check the power of the king himself. Soon these powerful people began to maintain private armies by means of which they vied with one another for the throne. Many yangban(aristocrat) officials were frequently involved in the rivalry for the throne, and the nature of the struggle was significant. Soon little pretense was made of their desire for reform or their disagreement on political points of view. In many cases, the political fights became power struggles resulting in bloody murders.

2

Between 1945 and 1950, Korea was again plagued with bloody political fighting between parties with diverse points of view--right-wing, left-wing, middle-right-wing, and middle-left-wing. During this period, many well-known politicians were assassinated such as Kim Ku, Song Jin-U, Yo Un-Hyung, and Chang Duck-Soo.

plagued with much bloody fighting.

Unlike Chi-Jin Yoo's earlier historical plays, The Prince Ma Yi and The Self-Beating Drum, which open in a state of relative calm, The Star opens with the plight of two women, who have vowed to avenge the murder of former Minister Kim, struggling for survival under unexpectedly adverse conditions. The two women are Madame Lee, the wife of the late Minister Kim, and Gusulagi, his daughter. Minister Kim was falsely accused of being a rebel and then murdered by Minister Chung who now controls the political power at the court. Chung, afraid of possible revenge being inflicted upon him by the family of Minister Kim, has decided to massacre every member of his rival's family, promising a bloody future. As a result, Madame Lee, since the death of her husband, has been taking refuge in a steep mountain cave with Gusulagi, vowing that she will someday avenge the murder of her husband. To protect the honor of the family of Kim either Madame Lee or Gusulagi must take vengeance on Minister Chung. In the Orient, it is usually a son's duty to seek revenge upon the murderer of his father, but since Minister Kim had no son, this moral duty falls on the shoulder of Gusulagi, his only child, making the play more interesting by placing the cardinal duty of revenge on a young girl.

There are various ways of gaining revenge. Vengeance may be taken on the injurer himself as in the case of Hamlet when he kills his father's murderer, or vengeance may be taken on the injurer's son, for instance, Medea slaughtering

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her own children to take revenge on her husband. Interestingly, the revenge motive of The Star has elements similar to those in both Hamlet and Medea. Gusulagi, who seeks direct revenge on the murderer, as does Hamlet, actually achieves an indirect revenge with the death of the son of the murderer such as Medea achieves in her vengeance on her husband. However, The Star must be regarded as markedly different from Western revenge plays. For example, the function of the ghosts in this play is clearly different from that of the ghosts in Hamlet or The Spanish Tragedy where they urge or direct the revenges. Contrary to this, the ghosts in The Star advocate peace.

The play opens on an early autumn on the steep mountain where the two women are living under extremely primitive conditions. The occasional sharp wind adds more sadness to the already woebegone and dejected hearts of the two women. The atmosphere suggests that the worst part of their grief and sadness is yet to come just as an autumn day is prelude to the approaching cold harsh day of winter. While Madame Lee and Gusulagi are cutting firewood, they are visited by O-I-Chang Park, their loyal friend, who brings a box of pastry for Gusulagi. Even before Park can finish telling them that he has heard Chung is determined to kill them, they are attacked suddenly by the assassins, thus initiating the first dramatic conflict as soon as the play opens. For a moment Madame Lee and Gusulagi wonder whether or not they should run away from the approaching assassins. It would be but a

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momentary escape if they hide because their identities would immediately be disclosed when the assassins searched the cave. At that point their capture would be almost certain. Foreseeing the difficulty of escape, Madame Lee decides to meet the assassins face to face, hoping to outwit them by pretending that they are not the two women for whom the men are searching. The confrontation between the fugitives and the henchmen indicates intriguing development in terms of dramatic action. The two women will either outwit the assassins and be safe or their identities will be disclosed, resulting in their deaths. Chi-Jin Yoo, however, does not let the dramatic action peak so quickly, instead he complicates the action by the use of disguise and mistaken identity. Madame Lee swiftly assumes the guise of a sickly, pregnant, hermit woman while her daughter pretends that she has tuberculosis. Park hides in a bush.

When the assassins interrogates Madame Lee, her answers seem typical of a hermit who has never been exposed to civilization. In addition, the two women display their rough hands which look totally different from those of the cultivated people in Seoul, nearly convincing the henchmen that they are not the two women they are searching. A moment of dramatic relief follows only to be suddenly disturbed when one of the assassins finds the pastry box, a rather unusual item to be found among hermits on a steep mountain. Madame Lee's story of being born and raised on the mountain collapses. Seeing that death is imminent, Madame Lee asks

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the assassins to allow her a moment of prayer at "the sangchung," the place where the spirit and the image of her husband supposedly dwell. A woman of decorum cannot die without saying a prayer for her deceased husband. Even at this moment of immediate danger she must act as a woman of propriety. When at last given time to do so, she secretly takes a poison that will end her life as she ends her prayer.

During this confusion, Gusulagi escapes from the scene. Madame Lee chooses to die a noble death by stoutly refusing to be killed by the hired assassins of her husband's murderer. To die at the hand of her enemy would be the most dishonorable kind of death for her. Her dignity will not allow it. Although death is her unavoidable fate, she uses it as a last refuge of faith, and to atone for her inability to revenge her husband's death by her own hand. In order to protect her honor, she must kill herself; therefore, in the eyes of the dramatist and the audience she is a noble character. By committing suicide she saves her honor and dignity, and demonstrates her courage in taking her own life while combating her misfortune, rather than succumbing to her enemy.

After the death of her mother, Gusulagi, grieving and sad, is visited by a hermit boy who wanders around the mountain to dig ginseng roots. She knows that she can no longer stay in the mountain since the assassins will search the area for her. At the same time her moral obligation urges her to avenge her parent's murder immediately. It is

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not a simple task for a young girl to journey to Seoul, therefore, she plans resolutely to disguise herself as a boy, believing that this scheme will help her gain easy access to her enemy's house. She proposes to the boy that he exchange his clothes for the food and firewood in her cave. At this moment the sorrowful mood created by the scene of Madame Lee's suicide shifts slowly into a humorous mood offering dramatic relief to the audience. This humorous scene is worth quoting.

Gusulagi

(Taking the ginseng root from the boy.) Give it to me! And listen. I have a request to make of you.

Boy

What is it? Do you mean you want to go with me for a walk to the mountain? Good! A lot of flowers are blooming on the mountain. Well, let's go! Go!

Gusulagi

No. I mean the clothes which you are wearing. Can you give them to me?

Boy

These?

Gusulagi

Yes. If you will give them to me, I will give you all my food and firewood here.

Boy

Do you mean you want to exchange everything in your house for my clothes?

Gusulagi

That's right!

Boy

You must be joking! You'll be scolded by your mama.

Gusulagi

I'm serious. You can have everything here!

Boy

You won't change your mind, will you?

Gusulagi

(She spits as a sign of swearing.) If I do, may I be struck to death by lightning!

Boy

You have spat... then. Fine. (He walks into the cave where the kitchen is located. Then he takes off his clothes and throws them out one by one.) Here they are!

Gusulagi

(She quickly starts to put on his clothes. She covers her hair with a scarf. Then she slings the Boy's net back-pack on her shoulder.) Hey! I'm borrowing this too. Don't speak ill of me! (She exits quickly.)

Boy

(Exposing the upper half of his body, he peers out from the kitchen.) She must have gone and after leaving me naked! (He shouts.) Hey! Girl! You must give me your apron. I must at least cover the front side of my body. Hey! Hey! Where are you? Where are you? (He finally begins to cry.) You devil! Devil!

(Act I)

Disguised as a boy, Gusulagi is now ready to set out on a journey to wreak vengeance on her father's murderer. Her disguise as a boy points to the future course of dramatic action in this play. For her to level a direct challenge against a man like Minister Chung is a task beyond her capability. She is merely a young girl. Consequently, she must formulate a scheme as subtle as possible in order to achieve her final aim. From this point the development of the main action of the play revolves around her scheme for revenge.

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In the next scene, infuriated and enraged by the fact that the assassins have allowed Gusulagi to escape, Minister Chung now conspires to massacre the other relative of the late Minister Kim. In order to do so, he quickly orders his son's tutor to write a petition to the king denouncing Doctor Lee, a cousin of Madame Lee who never appears on stage, at the Royal Academy as a rebel. Chung feels that he is in danger so long as any of Minister Kim's relative is living, believing that they may someday jeopardize his own life. Interestingly enough, at this point the mood changes slowly into another humorous scene with the introduction of the tutor. He is an old man; his wife left him many years ago. He has been teaching Toryung, Chung's only son, for more than ten years with the sole purpose of becoming a local magistrates by doing so. He finally understands that some local magistrates are appointed by the personal favoritism of Chung, an indication that many officials in the government are corrupt. The tutor now thinks that he has the key to Chung's secret scheme for killing innocent people and decides to take an advantage of it by writing a petition for him. All the while, the tutor persists in his demands for a magisterial appointment as payment for his contribution to the scheme, thus vividly revealing that even a petty scholar has become corrupt under the present political system. He is overjoyed with the hope of becoming a local magistrate immediately upon writing the petition, and dreaming in his excitement of becoming an official, he suddenly begins to

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strut like a local major, causing the reader to laugh. This humorous scene which is so neatly woven into the serious scene is worth quoting.

Tutor

(As soon as Minister Chung leaves through the gate.) Now, it is going to happen. It's good! As soon as I finish the petition, I will be appointed magistrate of a town. Good! (He tries to go into the Minister's room with brush and ink. Then suddenly stops.) Let's see! What kind of government service would suit me best. Of course, the best thing would be to pick up a prefecture or a county at least--a local magistrate. That's good! ...Ahem! Is there no one near? (He imitates a dignified local magistrate.)

Servant

(Thinking he has been called.) Yes, sir! (He enters.) Did you call me, Master?

Tutor

(Still pretending.) Report all his crimes!

Servant

What has happened to you?

Tutor

(Embarrassed.) Heh, heh, heh...! No! Nothing! (Then he tries to enter the room.)

Servant

Why are you trying to enter the Master's room? Don't enter that room! Stop!

Tutor

Do you think I am merely playing here? I have a plan in mind which you could never imagine even in your wildest dreams.

Servant

Damn it! I've never seen such arrogance. (He exits, mumbling to himself.)

Tutor

Heh, heh, heh... (Stroking his beard.) Now my head is worth something at last! My head is better than many magistrates' heads! (As he walks to the veranda.) A-hem! A-hem! I should smoke a pipe before I start to write the petition. (He approaches Chung's tobacco box carefully. Then he looks about him to see whether or not he is being watched.) Well. There is a plenty of tobacco in the box! (He smiles.) Heh, heh, heh... (He steals tobacco from the box and fills up his pouch. Then, as soon as he hears the sound of the gate opening, he is startled.) Eeeee--k! (He dashes into the room.)

(Act II)

At this moment the dramatic tension quickly begins to build. Gusulagi, who is now disguised as a young boy, enters through the gate. She is immediately horrified at finding her mother's head in a box under the veranda. She tries to steal it in order to bury it, but is forced to give up her plan when house servants try to chase her away. The servants are under strict orders from Chung not to allow any stranger to enter the house. Gusulagi begs them to let her remain as a servant. She knows that she must stay in the house by whatever means if she is to achieve revenge. While the servants persist in trying to chase her out of the house, Toryung enters. Extremely frustrated by the fact that social conditions have recently grown worse, he reasons that the increasing numbers of beggars on the street are caused by the inability of the politicians to find time to deal with social problems while engaged in political fights. Seeing Gusulagi, he orders the servants to keep her in the house, saying that it is natural for her to become a beggar under the present government. With the appearance of Toryung, a man of justice is placed in direct contrast to Chung, his father, whose

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character symbolizes corruption, injustice, and nepotism. Toryung explains to his servants that the beggars on the street are better than the corrupt power hungry politicians, a clear reference to his father.

The next day, determined to kill her father's murderer, Gusulagi tries to drop poison into Chung's boiling tonic. Her first attempt fails. At this moment Toryung enters and asks her whether she thinks it is just to kill people or not. Consciously troubled by what she has tried to do, she is taken aback at his unexpected question, believing that her attempt to poison the tonic has been discovered. To find out if Toryung is questioning her because he knows of her plan, she asks him if she has done something wrong to be asked such a question. Then, when Gusulagi tells him, "The murderer must be punished with death," Toryung instantly requests her help, saying he has to save a man's life. He knows that his father has instructed his tutor to prepare a petition denouncing an innocent man as a rebel. Not knowing the name of the person against whom his father is plotting, he asks her to steal the petition from his father's study. He has to act immediately to save a man's life.

Of course, Toryung realizes the danger of pursuing an action against his father. Like many of Yoo's characters, Toryung faces a moral dilemma between his duty to the nation and his duty to his father. Unlike the Princess in The Self-Beating Drum, the psychological quandry does not stifle Toryung's determination to pursue the course of justice even

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though he clearly understands that he is acting in direct opposition to his father's will. He is already determined to fight against the evil forces prevailing among the corrupt politicians at the court, including his father. Thus, he shows himself to be a man of justice who has the courage to stop injustice. He is a respectable scholar whose action is guided by wisdom, compassion, and courage in order to fight against vice, corruption, and immorality. He has wisdom to comprehend the situation. The idea of compassion is expounded by his determination to save a human life, while his courageous character enables him to act on the behalf of justice. The following conversation between Gusulagi and himself clearly reveals his strong conviction in the pursuit of justice.

Toryung

(Holding Gusulagi's hand tightly.) Thank you.
(Thinking for a moment.) But... I shouldn't... If something goes wrong, your young life will be cut short...
No...

Gusulagi

(Pleadingly.) Please, tell me. What is it?

Toryung

I mean the petition which is being prepared by my father and the tutor... Can you steal it for me? I am sure my father is trying to kill someone.

Gusulagi

The petition?

Toryung

I mean a written request to His Majesty. My father has murdered all his political enemies after accusing

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them of being rebels in order to control the political power in the court. I don't know why he keeps killing people.

Gusulagi

How can you act against your father?

Toryung

We must stop the wrongdoing. It is just as sinful to pretend not to see evil-doings.

(Act III)

Toryung is resolved to follow this higher calling-- the duty to his people and nation, even though it means a public declaration of opposition to his father. He reasons that he will also be a transgressor if he does not attempt to stop this act of injustice which he is fully aware. He knows that his father has been breeding evil in the court by plotting and murdering people. It is his moral duty to stop his father's lunatic activity and he must accomplish it courageously. While his father represents evil in an extremely demoralized society, Toryung is portrayed as the champion of justice. The characteristic differences between Toryung and his father remind the audience of similar discordances between the Prince and King Kim Bu in The Prince Ma Yi and the Princess and her father in The Self-Beating Drum. As in both of those plays, discussed earlier, the older generation in this play symbolizes corruption, impurity, and falsehood, while the younger generation represents virtue, justice, and morality; it is evident that the playwright is placing great hope, faith, and expectation in the younger generation.

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While Toryung goes to warn Doctor Lee to escape from his home and avoid the assassins, Gusulagi again attempts to murder Chung by dropping deadly poison into his boiling medicine. However, Chung carefully examines the medicine before he takes it, and the poison is discovered. In Gusulagi's second try she again fails. Enraged and infuriated by the attempted assassination, Chung accuses Gusulagi presuming that it is she who has been conspiring to kill him. With Toryung's earnest defense, however, her life is saved. With the failure of her second major attempt to poison her father's murderer, Gusulagi is deeply worried. She now believes that the prospect of avenging her parent's murder is dimming. However, her distress slowly gives way to a charming scene with Toryung when he asks her to watch the sparkling stars in the sky.

Bewitched by the exceptionally beautiful night, Gusulagi asks Toryung "why people hate, fight, and kill each other." Hearing the question which he has always been anxious to answer, Toryung expresses his genuine beliefs about the nature of a corrupt society:

Since you are young you may not realize what has been happening now. But look at all the unnecessary political fighting in our country. Because of this we are all ruined. I am ruined. You are ruined. So are all in this country... Furthermore, the end of the fighting is not in sight. At this moment I am sure there must be political battle going on in this country. They are nothing more than insanities. My father is one of them... Don't worry. The world must be changed. All men were born equal. There should not be a wall between junior and senior officials or between the young people and the old. We are surrounded by thick dark clouds. We must get ourselves out of these clouds. That's the only way we

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shall survive. I have known this for a long time. Therefore, I am determined to fight against my father even though I lose my life.

(Act IV)

Toryung is clearly aware of the fact that the nation is plagued with political intrigues which breed hatred, jealousy, and murder. To stop this persistent lunacy of personal enmity and bloodshed, he is determined to fight against his father. He has heard that his father has decided to appoint him magistrate of an eastern county, but he has resolved to refuse the appointment, realizing that this is one of the few ways in which he can protest against his father as well as the corrupt government. With this expression of repugnance for the political appointment, a stream of optimism appears on the horizon of the demoralized nation. Toryung's stout determination symbolizes that the future of the nation is still hopeful because the young people are willing to take up the cause of good government.

While Toryung and Gusulagi are delighting in the beautiful night sky, an important turning point in the drama occurs; Gusulagi has been gradually experiencing respect and admiration for her young master--the son of her father's murderer. Furthermore, her admiration for him slowly begins to change into deep affection. In turn, Toryung, without the slightest idea that his handsome and witty new servant is a girl whose sole reason for being a servant in his house is to kill his father, tells her that he has decided to make her his sworn brother. On hearing this, Gusulagi suddenly finds herself at a crossroad. She is tormented by the sudden

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development between herself and Toryung. It is impossible for her to become his sworn brother not only because she is a girl but also because he is the son of her parent's murderer. Were she to become his sworn brother, Chung, her enemy, would eventually become her step-father. Even though Toryung's idea is genuine, she cannot accept this proposition. She could disclose her identity and her love for him, but her dignity and pride do not allow her to do so. She also realizes that it would be very difficult for her to reject his proposition; in such a way, she is caught between her affection for Toryung and her duty to her parents. Realizing her predicament, she runs away to avoid facing Toryung who will soon return with his father's consent to make her his sworn brother.

She is caught and brought back by the servants who unexpectedly find a box of poison and a woman's clothes in her back-pack, thus disclosing her true identity. Seeing the complete failure of her scheme, Gusulagi tells Toryung that she has entered the house service only to exact retribution on his father. She finally confesses that she is in love with him. Caught between the failure of her aim and love for her enemy's son she attempts to poison herself. Toryung, who has marvelled at her determination to avenge her parent's murder, urges her to run away from his house before his enraged father comes. He knows that his father has been completely wrong, so he does not see why the girl, whose purpose has been to protect her family's honor, is to be killed. At

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this moment Chung enters, accusing Toryung of being an undutiful son who tries to protect his father's would-be assassin. He orders his men to confine Gusulagi in jail to be beheaded in the morning.

During the night Gusulagi is visited by the ghosts of her parents. Unlike some Elizabethan revenge plays in which ghosts appear in the early part of the play and urge or direct revenge, the ghosts in The Star appear at the end of play and advocate peace instead of revenge. The ghost of Minister Kim pleads amity and friendship to his daughter saying that "there should neither be hatred nor fighting among the people--only love." The ghost's statement about love is one of the themes of the play: People must live in peace without engaging in constant fighting, an idea which is reiterated at the end of the play by uniting the children of the enemies after death.

When the ghosts disappear, Gusulagi is visited by Toryung who urges her to escape from jail with him. For the first time, they openly exchange their feelings of love for one another. To escape with her enemy's son, however, she must first consider her honor. She is fully aware of the fact that she loves him deeply, but out of pride and dignity she cannot accept his proposition to elope. Realizing that she is caught between her love for the son of her father's murderer and her duty to her parents, she begs him to let her die. Toryung, seeing her noble determination, finally accepts her wish and gives her half of the poison from her back-pack,

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signifying that the woman he loves must not die by any other hand but his own. When he sees that Gusulagi has taken half of the poison he takes the remainder of it and they die in each other's arms. While the two young lovers are dying calling each other's names, Chung, who now realizes that his political ambition and evil-doing are sending his only son to his death bed, rushes in to save Toryung's life, but it is too late.

Unlike the death of Gusulagi, whose moral duty to her parents does not allow her to love the son of her parent's murderer, Toryung's death appears to be unnecessary. Furthermore, he is not a villain in the view of the Korean audience. He is a man who represents justice and right. However, there are at least two reasons which justify his death: First, he has given Gusulagi the poison to commit suicide, making him at least partially responsible for her death; second, his death underlies the idea that the murderer must pay with his own life as Gusulagi once explained it to him. In addition, with the death of Toryung, Gusulagi has her revenge on Minister Chung for her parent's murder.

The major action of the play reveals at least two important messages: First, it exposes and denounces the politicians who are engaging in bloody battles for control of political power often resulting in murder and revenge; second, it also advocates peace between the enemies by uniting their children, indicating that there must be an end to the political fighting. The Star is one of Chi-Jin Yoo's best balanced

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historical plays in terms of its ingenious and graceful blend of humorous and serious scenes.

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Wonsul Rang

Written in 1950, Wonsul Rang, produced for the opening of the National Theatre in Seoul, is a patriotic play with strong emphasis on man's honor. The plot revolves around Wonsul, the second son of a general of the Kingdom of Silla and a member of Hwarang-to,¹ who escapes alive from the battle against the troops of Tang, a dynasty of China. Seeing that his son has returned alive from the battle, the young soldier's father, who regards his family's honor besmirched by his son's retreat, demands that he commit suicide to redeem the family's honor. At the moment when he is prepared

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Historically, most of the great military leaders of Silla had been members of Hwarang-to. Prominent among them was Yu-Sin Kim, the military leader who was chiefly responsible for the victories that led to the unification of the peninsula under Silla. Another was Chun-Chu Kim, later King Muryol, whose political leadership both before and after he succeeded to the throne was also extremely important in the unification.

The ideology which underlay Hwarang-to was a combination of the traditional way of life of the tribal communities and the new Chinese imports of Buddhism and Confucianism. Quite often Buddhist monks were instructors of Hwarang-to. The monk Wonkwang-pobsa, in fact, was the author of the famous Sesok O-Kye, or Five Commandments, which became the basic rule of life for the Hwarang. These were: First, to serve the king with loyalty; second, to serve one's parents with filial piety; third, to be faithful to one's friends; fourth, not to retreat in battle; fifth, not to kill indiscriminately. It is obvious that Wonkwang had in mind both the Buddhist injunctions against taking life and the Confucian virtues of loyalty, filial piety, and faithfulness.

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to kill himself, however, he is pardoned by the King and banished from the city. While he is in exile, he is informed by his former lieutenant that the nation is under attack by the troops of Tang and he volunteers to join the army incognito. In the battle, he kills the Commanding General of the enemy, bringing about the victory of Silla over Tang. The play concludes at this point.

Before the main action of the play even begins, a great deal of important events have taken place which are necessary background for the understanding of Chi-Jin Yoo's play. With an assistance of Tang, Silla finally achieved its long cherished desire for the unification of Korea by subduing the kingdoms of Paekjae and Koguryo, making Korea a strong consolidated nation. Even though the war is over, Tang continues to keep its large garrison in the territory of Korea to repress the rapidly growing strength of Silla. Tang is apprehensive about Silla's rapidly growing strength anticipating an eventual confrontation of the two nations. As a result, in order to weaken Silla internally the troops of Tang have been undermining the strength of the hosting nation by secretly providing aids for the uprisings of the people of the former kingdoms of Koguryo and Paekjae. Soon the Tangs not only begin to openly support the rebels, but also begin engaging in hostile actions against Silla, thereby betraying their friendly treaty. The ultimate purpose of Tang is the eventual incorporation of Korea into its Empire. However, Silla proves herself to be unexpectedly strong against the

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rebels as well as the troops of Tang. This has been due in large part to the appearance of many able and energetic political and military leaders. Of the many politicians and generals, General Yu-Sin Kim, especially, a product of Hwarang-to, has proved himself to be one of the most capable soldiers.

Even though war clouds linger, Wonsul Rang, like other plays of Chi-Jin Yoo, opens in a state of relative calm, with a children's choir singing quietly just off stage. When the curtain goes up, Wonsul, a young son of General Yu-Sin Kim and a member of Hwarang-to, and Tamnung, his lieutenant, are repairing their bows and arrows, a clear indication of the possibility of impending conflict which will upset the calm and create dramatic tension by throwing all into sudden turbulence. They returned from the battle some time ago. On the battle ground, Wonsul has seen the soldiers of Tang among the rebels and reported this to his father. Infuriated by the betrayal of the Tangs, Wonsul has implored his father that the Kingdom of Silla should declare an all-out war against the troops of Tang in Korea. However, General Kim, discreet in avoiding any direct confrontation with Tang, has been craving a peaceful settlement in order to maintain peace with the formerly friendly nation. On the one hand he seeks concord with Tang, on the other he is determined to fight to expel the Tangs from his nation if necessary. Therefore, he has warned his son to be ready to fight against the invaders whenever his nation calls him, but this warning

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does not mean that he is provoking a war against Tang; instead, he has sent an envoy to Tang, requesting the withdrawal of their troops from the territory of Korea, thus clearly demonstrating his wish to maintain peace with his hostile neighbour.

In the next scene Jindalle, a young peasant girl whose parents have been murdered by the soldiers of Tang, is brought before the General to report the atrocity. On finding that Wonsul is a member of Hwarang-to, she openly denounces their inability to defend her village from the Tang. Infuriated and enraged by her accusation against Hwarang-to, Wonsul instantly grips his sword with the intention of striking the girl. However, a moment of truth takes place in the young soldier's mind, and he realizes that she is right. There is no justification in killing an innocent girl who not only cries for revenge against the enemy who killed her parents, but also points to the incompetency of Hwarang-to. Wonsul realizes that it is wrong to kill a human being indiscriminately under any circumstance--one of Five Commandments of Hwarang-to. Instead, he becomes immediately sympathetic to the unfortunate girl, thus demonstrating his compassion for human beings, and, as a result, he establishes himself as a soldier who is fully aware of the concept of honor and pride. He proves himself to be a man who knows when to act and when not to act; his ability to make carefully calculated decision will be further demonstrated in the course of the main action of the play when he makes a dishonorable retreat

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in the battle only to ensure himself of an even more honorable future.

After seeing that all diplomatic channels have proved futile in restoring the friendship with Tang, General Kim finally decides although reluctantly to fight against the troops of Tang. Upon hearing his father's decision, Wonsul earnestly requests to be sent to defend the nation instead of his father, reasoning that his father must command the troops at home. In spite of his youth, Wonsul clearly demonstrates his patriotism by volunteering to join the army. He is ready to fight to the death to uphold the sovereignty and independence of his nation from foreign domination. The General, who is touched by his son's patriotism, finally allows him to go to war as a captain under the commanding general of the troops. Wonsul is again reminded by his father that "the members of Hwarang-to should never retreat in battle,"--a concept which will become the main issue in the upholding of man's honor in the play.

In the next scene, a messenger from the troops at the front arrives, announcing that the army of Silla has won a great victory over the Tangs. Furthermore, the victory was largely due to the bravery of Wonsul. Upon hearing of his son's courageous achievement, the General immediately orders his men to beat the victory-drum in order to inform the citizens of the happy news. The citizens, who are overjoyed by their troops' victory, begin to dance and sing, thus changing the mood of the play into an exciting and festive one.

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This spirited scene quickly changes into a scene of woe with the arrival of a second messenger who now reports that their troops have suffered an unexpected defeat by the enemy. He is followed by two carriages which bring the bodies of the Commanding General and a captain. According to this report, Wonsul is also killed in the action; therefore, the scene which until a moment ago was filled with happiness quickly changes into a depressed and dismal one with a funeral march for the burial of the dead heroes. The orchestra which was brought to celebrate the victory quietly changes its tune to funeral music.

As soon as the funeral procession leaves the stage, Wonsul, supposedly killed in battle, and Tamnung enter, thus indicating a sudden reversal in the development of the main action. Contrary to the report, they have escaped from the battle even though they were surrounded by the enemy. The return of Wonsul raises a few interesting questions in regard to the development of the main action. First, why has Wonsul, a member of Hwarang-to, chosen to escape from the battle and its humiliating defeat? Second, what can be his justification for his retreat? Third, what will he do now in order to restore his honor? According to the principles of Hwarang-to, he will be severely denounced as a coward as well as an unloyal subject to the king.

While Wonsul orders his lieutenant to regroup his scattered soldiers in order to make another assault against the enemy, the General and his wife suddenly enter, and the

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dramatic tension again builds quickly. Learning his son is alive, the General, who is extremely disappointed, immediately regards that his son's ignominious deed has not only besmirched his family's honor, but has also impaired national morale. Under no condition can retreat be considered a virtue of a soldier: The duty of a warrior is to fight to his death. Extremely baffled and infuriated by his son's cowardly action, the General demands Wonsul commit suicide with his battle sword. Shocked and stunned by his father's resolute command, Wonsul attempts in vain to explain the motivation of his escape from the battle. Regardless of his good sense, it is beyond the General's comprehension. He cannot accept Wonsul's excuse. According to the principles of the General, a soldier who does not know how to fight in a honorable way to defend his nation must commit honorable suicide. Hence, the only atonement which Wonsul can make to cleanse his sullied honor is to kill himself. It is necessary to quote the following scene in order to understand the concept of honor which the General demands of his son.

General

(Dignified.) Wonsul! (Wonsul hides himself.) Where has Wonsul gone?

Wonsul

(Hesitatingly, but gladly.) Father! Mother! I'm very sorry to make you worry. But I'm ready to defeat the troops of Tang...

General

(Angrily.) Can't you shut your mouth?

Wonsul

(Wonsul feels suddenly oppressed by his father's unexpected reaction.)...

General

What are you?

Wonsul

Sir?

General

I am asking you what you are.

Wonsul

... I'm a member of Hwarang-to in this country.

General

If so, you must know the Five Commandments of Hwarang-to.

Wonsul

... Sir.

General

Recite them!

Wonsul

... Why are you asking me to recite them?

General

If I say recite them, you must recite them!

Wonsul

We must be loyal to the king. We must be filial to our parents. We must not retreat in the battle. We must love and trust our friends. And we must not indiscriminately kill people.

General

You have said that we must not retreat in battle, haven't you?

Wonsul

... yes.

General

If so, why did you return home alive from that battle? Do you remember what I told you when you left for the battle? Even though there would be death, there should never be defeat for a member of Hwarang-to.

Wonsul

(He looks down without saying a word.)

General

In spite of that, why did you return home alive? Even if you were a private in the army, you should never have made a retreat to save your life. Furthermore, you are a captain. You should never have returned home alive!

Wonsul

The reason is...

General

Were you afraid of the enemy?

Wonsul

No, father.

General

Or were you afraid of being killed?

Wonsul

No. Father. I was not afraid of being killed.

General

Or were you attached to someone in this world?

Wonsul

No. Father.

General

Then, what is it? In order to prepare for another chance to defeat the enemy?

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Wonsul

(Gladly.) Yes. That is... I cannot die without killing the Commanding General of Tang. I have returned home alive only to prepare myself to cut his throat.

General

(Sternly.) You cowardly fellow! While your friends were being killed one by one in the battle, you ran away--shamelessly...

Wonsul

We must know that a great general is the soldier who knows when to retreat and when to advance. I believe that it is wise to live in order to plot to fight for another battle instead of being killed for nothing.

General

There is no use in your explanation. Apology is only for cowards! (As he draws the sword from Wonsul's scabbard.) I gave you this sword to fight against the enemy. You have not only dishonored our family, but also disgraced Hwarang-to and humiliated our national pride. Commit suicide with this sword at once!

(Act II)

Realizing the unrevokable command of his father, Wonsul prepares to kill himself. Wonsul's reason for his retreat is unjustifiable in the eyes of the General who believes that present honor is more important than future honor. When Wonsul finally takes his sword to kill himself, the messenger, sent by the King, arrives, announcing that he is pardoned by the imperial order. However, Wonsul must be expelled from the city. Determined to die, Wonsul now insists on committing suicide in spite of the King's order. Nevertheless, he is reminded by Jindalle that it is an imperial order which he must obey. He cannot be doubly unloyal by not obeying the King's command. Thus, Wonsul's life is saved, suggesting an intriguing development in the main action.

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What will his future plans be?

The next act takes place in a mountain valley where Wonsul has been living as a hermit with the help of Jindalle. While they are pondering what they should do in the future, an old man, who has come to the mountain in search of some medicine roots for General Yu-Sin Kim, enters. Without knowing the true identities of the young hermits, the old man tells them that the General has been gravely ill since his son left home, implying that he would recover from his illness if he could see his son. Furthermore, the nation is again under threat by the troops of Tang, an indication that the nation needs Wonsul. Upon hearing this news, Wonsul is torn between his duty to return home to see his father and his father's order that he should never appear before him again. He knows that by obeying his duty to see his father, he will disobey his father's order. While he is tormented by this dilemma, Jindalle urges him to go home to see his father, insisting that "the time has come for the restoration of his honor." His obligation is to return home not only to see his father but also to fight against the enemy to defend his nation. Encouraged by Jindalle, Wonsul finally decides to return home, hoping that his father will forgive him.

Contrary to his expectations, however, Wonsul is immediately rejected by his father and upon his arrival forbidden entry to his home. While he is waiting for his father to change his mind, the General dies without pardoning him. When he finally begs his mother to allow him to see

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the body of his father, she sternly rejects his plea, saying, "Since he has not been a son of her husband, he cannot be her son also." Dejected and disappointed by his mother's uncompromising decision, Wonsul sorrowfully returns to the mountain to continue his life as a hermit. The restoration of his honor which he had so hoped for now appears to be an impossible goal.

In the next act, Jindalle and Tamnung discover Wonsul torturing himself by hanging upside down from a tree branch. Wonsul has determined to end his life. Asked by Jindalle whether or not he is still capable of fighting against the enemy, Wonsul spiritlessly answers that he can no longer take up a weapon to fight since he is a disgraced man. However, when he is reminded that the nation is under attack by the troops of Tang, he quickly regains his dignity and pride as a valiant soldier, asserting, "We must go to fight to our death." His stout character reminds us of the Prince Ma Yi, the play of the same name, who quickly regains his stately character when he is told that his father is pressed by Sun Piel to sign the document of surrender to Wang Kun. Like the Prince Ma Yi, when Wonsul finds out that the security of his nation is under threat by foreign troops, he knows that he cannot afford to be dejected like a man with maudlin emotions. He must act immediately to defend his nation. Now, he realizes that the time for the restoration of his honor has finally arrived. In order to regain his honor, he must fight to his death. He and Tamnung set out on their journey to a nearby

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camp to volunteer to join the army.

Suspecting the identities of Wonsul and Tamnung, however, the captain of the camp immediately rejects their appeal to join the military forces. When he is requested to disclose his profession, Wonsul, seeing that his true identity may be disclosed, tells the captain that he has neither name nor occupation. Upon hearing his dubious answer, the captain orders his men to kill the strangers, assuming that they are spies from the troops of Tang. However, Wonsul and Tamnung skillfully avoid the soldiers' spears and swords. Impressed by their extraordinary skill, which is extremely uncommon among the peasants, the captain finally allows them to join the troops to work only as orderlies in the camp. At this moment, the enemy suddenly attacks the camp. Seeing the opportunity for the restoration of their honor by defending the nation against the foreign aggressors, Wonsul and Tamnung urgently ask the captain to let them take up weapons and fight. When they are allowed to fight, Wonsul makes a valiant charge on the captain's horse against the enemy to kill the Commanding General of Tang, while Tamnung throws torches against the approaching enemy.

In the next act, the city is prepared to welcome and reward the unknown hero who has killed the Commanding General of Tang and given the victory to Silla over Tang. The King, the Princess, and many officers and officials are ready to greet the hero. He is none other than Wonsul who was expelled from the city after escaping alive from the war. When the King

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is ready to hand him his reward, Wonsul politely refuses to accept it without any explanation. Not knowing his reason, the King finally asks him whether the reward is too meager for what he has achieved. Finding that he can no longer hide his identity, Wonsul finally tells the King his name and requests not only never to be rewarded but also that his name should remain that of a traitor in the history of Silla in order "to teach the young people how painful it is to violate the Five Commandments as well as to be an disloyal subject." He has finally reinstated his honor. All he has wanted has been to become a loyal subject and a filial son. Now, he has achieved both aims. There is nothing in the world which he wants to possess. The king, who sees no way of persuading Wonsul, accepts his request. Then, the King asks Wonsul to marry the Princess. However, the King's last request is also rejected by Wonsul who says that he has a humble girl who has been helping him restore his honor and he is willing to marry her. Then, Jindalle is brought forward to be united with Wonsul.

Like some of the historical plays of Chi-Jin Yoo, the main action of Wonsul Rang attempts to show the importance of man's honor,--a man must be faithful to his commitment, he must be loyal to his king, and he must be filial to his parents. When he violates his commitments to the organization to which he belongs or transgresses his moral duty to his nation or parents, he must restore it even if it results in his death.

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Unlike the rest of the historical plays of Chi-Jin Yoo, Wonsul Rang ends happily with the restoration of Wonsul's honor. In spite of the possibility of bloodshed in the attempted-suicide by Wonsul and the attacks by the troops of Tang, there is not a single death visible on the stage. As a result, the play tends to be less violent than the rest of the historical plays of Yoo although the thick cloud of war lingers over it.

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CHAPTER III
ANTI-JAPANESE PLAYS
The Earthen Hut

Written in 1932, when the exploitation of Korea by Japan was beginning to reach its height, The Earthen Hut, a two act play, is an anti-Japanese play about the misery of a declining Korean farmer. The main plot¹ concerns Myung-Suh Choe, an old sickly farmer, and his wife who are waiting for the return of their son who has supposedly been working in Japan, but their hope for their son's homecoming ends in grief with the delivery of their son's ashes.

Seven years earlier Myung-Suh Choe's son had gone to Japan to work at a mine because of the declining conditions of farming under the harsh Japanese regime.² For the past

¹
For some reason Chi-Jin Yoo has interwoven the main plot with a sub-plot which concerns another farmer whose decline is caused mainly by his excessive drinking, thus weakening the intensity of the main plot. However, the present study will exclude the discussion of the sub-plot because of its relative unimportance.

²
Taxes which were imposed on Korean farmers to support the imperialistic Japanese army ate up much of the farmers' profit and land rents accounted for the rest. The transfer of land from Korean to Japanese hands continued at an accelerated pace, and the majority of Korean farmers became tenants of Japanese landowners. However, most of them had to give up half of their crop to the landlords as rent, and in addition paid fertilizer expenses, transportation costs, and the government land-tax. As a result, large numbers of

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few years, the family's living has been solely dependent upon the income derived from their manual straw-mat machine--the family's only valuable property. Worst of all, the family has not heard from their son for almost two years. Out of desperation, Myung-Suh finally decided to write a letter to his son and to send it by a young neighbour who is leaving for Japan in the afternoon. The play begins at this point.

The action takes place at Myung-Suh's deteriorating earthen hut with cracks and holes in the walls. The ceiling and walls are stained with smoke from the kitchen. The environment of the play, thus, clearly typifies the hardship and the miserable conditions of the family. When the curtain goes up Myung-Suh is writing a letter while his daughter, thin and pale with large dark eyes, is weaving a straw-mat. Only the slow pounding sounds of the straw-mat machine signify that there are still people living in the decaying hut.

Soon Myung-Suh's wife returns from the field and asks her husband whether or not he has finished the letter which he has been writing for three days. Myung-Suh is having difficulty in writing the letter to his son. He knows that the family needs money very badly, but because of his

farmers left their farms in despair to eke out a precarious existence in the mountains, using the slash-and-burn techniques to grow crops on the dry hillsides, then moving on when the land was no longer fertile. On the other hand, many farmers migrated to Manchuria or managed to go to Japan to seek cheap labor jobs.

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dignity and pride as a father he cannot ask for financial assistance from his son. At the same time he is having difficulty in finding some encouraging words to write to his son under the present deplorable conditions of the family. Caught between his dignity and the impossibility of writing comforting words to his son, he finally gives up writing the letter.

Soon Sam-Jo, the neighbouring young man who is leaving for Japan, enters to take the letter. Amazed at the young man's financial ability to purchase both train and boat tickets to Japan, Myung-Suh's wife asks him about the source of his money. They are surprised when they hear that he has mortgaged his family's house for the tickets, thus indicating that the misfortune of Myung-Suh's family is not an isolated case under the Japanese regime. Every farmer is suffering. The following scene, which vividly reveals the declining conditions of the farmers, is worth quoting.

Myung-Suh

It has been almost seven years since he left home. Tell him to stop working for someone else there and come home.

Sam-Jo

Where are you going to put him to work? There is nothing left with which to make a living here.

Myung-Suh

Even though we must work for someone else, we must work in our home land. We must live in and die for our native soil.

Sam-Jo

Work for someone else in our native soil? Where is the person who can hire us? Where is the native soil we are to cultivate?

Wife of Myung-Suh

He must come home and get married. He is already over twenty-five years old.

Sam-Jo

What is the use of getting married if one cannot make a living. It is almost impossible to live here. There is nothing to do here.

(Act I)

This conversation reveals Myung-Suh's strong love for his native land. He believes that one must live and die for his homeland--an expression of patriotism. Unfortunately, his homeland has nothing to offer its people. Consequently, all the young men are forced to leave their homes to seek their living whether they like it or not.

In the next scene, as soon as Sam-Jo leaves for Japan, the village chief enters. He has found a piece of old newspaper from the market place, which contains a picture and a story of Myung-Suh's son. According to the paper, his son participated in a Korean independence movement, and was jailed in Osaka, Japan. The whole family finds the news shocking and hard to believe. Myung-Suh's wife, declining to believe the story, insists that there may be many different people who look alike and have the same name. It is nothing more than a self-comforting rationalization. Even Myung-Suh, a man of dignity, finds the news more than he can bear.

The next act takes place in the early evening of a night the following spring. The wall and the ceiling show more cracks and holes than they did in the first act. The straw-mat machine is no longer in the house. It has been sold. The house is lighted dimly by a kerosene lamp. Thus, the deteriorating conditions of the house suggest that Myung-Suh's son, the only man who can restore the declining family conditions, has not yet come home.

Despondent and dejected by the story of her son in the newspaper, Myung-Suh's wife has grown insane. She now insists that an important person is going to make a visit to her home, and asks her daughter to prepare for his visit. At this moment the sound of someone calling from outside of the gate is heard. Myung-Suh's wife is instantly overjoyed believing that the important man is now making his visit. However, it is only a postman delivering a package which is mailed from Japan. They immediately believe that the package is from their son. Their moment of joy, however, turns into one of misery upon finding that the package contains their son's ashes. He has been executed by the Japanese.

Even though the emotional impact of The Earthen Hut can be strong, the play appears to be weak and undramatic without the appearance of the antagonist on stage. However, the play has a few important messages for the Korean audience: First, it tries to expose the exploitation of Korean farmers by the Japanese; second, it attempts to say that even some patriotic young Koreans are struggling for the

independence of their fatherland in Japan; third, it also tries to explain how the Japanese are brutal to the patriotic Koreans.

The Earthen Hut, the first play of Chi-Jin Yoo, is far from flawless; the sub-plot of the play damages the intensity of the main plot by the introduction of another decaying family whose declining fortune is mainly caused by the house chief's excessive drinking instead of the exploitation by the Japanese. Without the sub-plot, the play could offer a stronger emotional appeal to a Korean audience with its compact structure.

The Throbbing Earth

Written in 1947, two years after the liberation of Korea from Japan, The Throbbing Earth is an anti-Japanese play written in one act with a strong emphasis on patriotism. The simple plot concerns Ul-Bong, a patriotic young man who refuses to serve in the Japanese army during the last year of World War II.¹

Unlike Chi-Jin Yoo's earlier anti-Japanese play, The Earthen Hut, which is full of pathos and hopeless struggle, The Throbbing Earth offers optimism and hope for the Korean audience. Like The Self-Beating Drum, the play reflects the hope of a long suffering nation just liberated from militant tyranny.

The action takes place on August 15, 1945, the day when Japan surrendered to the Allied Forces. The setting is at a well near a farming village. When the curtain goes up, Madame Park, Ul-Bong's mother, is praying for her son who has escaped from the house in order to avoid being drafted by the Japanese army. Lacking knowledge of both his safety and

¹In 1939 the Japanese compelled the Koreans to worship at Japanese Shinto shrines, which were built in every county, and to change their names to Japanese ones. Then in 1942 the Japanese oppression of the Koreans reached its height of absurdity when the Japanese forced Korean men to serve in the Japanese army under its so-called assimilation policy.

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his location, Madame Park's anxiety for her son is high. As soon as she leaves, Ul-Bong, his leg wounded, staggers in with an oak stick to get some water from the well. He is unexpectedly helped by Okbun, a village girl, who praises Ul-Bong as a patriot without knowing that he is the person whom she is extolling. However, she quickly realizes that the man to whom she is talking is the person whom she has just praised. While they are conversing with each other, a Japanese policeman, who has been following Ul-Bong, enters. Okbun quickly helps Ul-Bong hide in the shrubbery. Then she starts singing nonchalantly only to pretend that she knows nothing about the man for whom the policeman is searching. Disappointed at not finding the draft escapee, the policeman is about to leave the scene. But he unexpectedly finds the fresh oak stick--an unusual item to be found in the area according to him. Relying on that piece of evidence, the policeman tries to force Okbun to reveal Ul-Bong's hiding place. However, her stout character does not allow her to reveal his hiding place. Revealing to the Japanese policeman the patriot's hiding place is beyond her imagination. Instead she chooses to be tortured by the Japanese police rather than be unpatriotic woman. In spite of the villagers' opposition, Okbun is taken to the police station to be tortured and confined in jail.

At this moment Suck-I, the uncle of Ul-Bong, enters and informs the villagers that Japan has just surrendered to the Allied Forces. For a moment the villagers are confused

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as to whether or not they should believe his story. Then, they find the leaflets dropped from an airplane which support his story. Hearing the happy news, Ul-Bong emerges from the shrubbery to join the villagers who are ready to celebrate the liberation of Korea from Japan, shouting, "Long live the independence of the fatherland!" Soon Okbun, now released from the Japanese police, enters and join the villagers. The play ends in a very festive mood with the villagers all singing and dancing.

The Throbbing Earth is a very simple play. Throughout, there is neither a single character who needs reforming nor one who has psychological problem. As a result, all characters appear to be two-dimensional. However, the significance of the play lies beneath the simplicity of the plot and character, that is, in the reflection of the mood of a people overcome with joy as a result of being liberated from tyranny. The play also tries to promote the idea that the Koreans must fight not for Japan but only for Korea.

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CHAPTER IV

ANTI-COMMUNIST PLAY

I Will Become a Human Being, Too

I Will Become a Human Being, Too, written in 1953, is a strong anti-Communist play. The plot revolves around Suck-Bong Paik, a young composer from South Korea, who works at the National Art Theatre in Pyongyang, North Korea. He realizes that it is impossible for him to become a human being in North Korea where individual freedom is severely restricted, and as a result, he and his fiancée, who has just arrived from Seoul, attempt to return to South Korea; however, this venture ends in their deaths.

According to the critics of North Korea, Suck-Bong Paik had been a very promising composer whose operas not only exalted the principles of the Labor Party of North Korea but also contained revolutionary themes. For this contribution to the cultural revolution, he was awarded a medal, the highest honor given to artists, by the government of the People's Republic of Korea. While waiting for his fiancée's arrival from Seoul, he has just completed a new opera, "The Shouting Melting Furnace," for the next production at the theatre. Although he is already engaged to Bock-Hi Chung, he is also pursued by Natasha Kim a jealous

Russian-born Korean singer attached to the theatre, who is passionately in love with him. Despite the fact that she is not an intellectual, she is practically in control of political power at the theatre because of her Russian citizenship. It has been almost impossible for anyone to do anything at the theatre against her will, a clear indication of the existence of class differences between the Russian-born Koreans and the native Koreans.

When the curtain goes up, Suck-Bong, who is expecting Bock-Hi to arrive at any moment, has just finished rearranging his room to receive her. While awaiting her arrival, Natasha Kim enters with a handful of flowers. They begin to talk about his new opera and Natasha speaks highly of it to delight him. Like some other plays of Chi-Jin Yoo, I Will Become a Human Being, Too starts with casual conversation; however, the relative calm of the opening scene is quickly disturbed when Natasha sees the flowers meant for Bock-Hi sitting on the desk. Queried by Natasha, Suck-Bong tells her that he is expecting his fiancée's arrival from Seoul, thus filling her with jealousy for Bock-Hi whom she has never met. Instantly Natasha's use of language becomes vulgar and she speaks of that "girl" and that "woman,"-- words uncommonly used by a woman of decorum in Korea. From the beginning of the play, she proves herself to be a woman of jealousy and incivility. Furthermore, she will use her influence in the party to further her own personal aims. With Natasha's instant reaction to Bock-Hi, the opening scene

establishes a conflict which will provide the foundations for the main action of the play.

Soon Bock-Hi enters, led by Chul Yang, an old friend of Suck-Bong, who also works at the theatre. When Natasha is told that Bock-Hi is a member of the party, her jealousy is again inflamed, for she fears that Bock-Hi belongs to the Labor Party of North Korea. If she is a member of the same party, Bock-Hi will be a serious rival to her. Natasha knows that a member of the Labor Party of North Korea is not allowed to marry a non-member of the party. Natasha does not want to accept the reality that Suck-Bong, with whom she is in love, is loved by and will be married to another member of the party. And indeed, if he had been in love with a member of the party, Natasha's power over him would have diminished. The following conversation, which clearly exposes her jealousy of Bock-Hi, provides further insight into her character.

Natasha

(She shakes Bock-Hi's hand and speaks arrogantly.)
Glad to meet you.

Suck-Bong

Though Comrade Bock-Hi looks modest, she is an enthusiastic party member who has troubled the South Korean Police a great deal.

Natasha

(Surprised.) A party member?

Suck-Bong

Of course, the Labor Party of South Korea.

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Natasha

(Sarcastically.) Ho, ho... I thought you meant she was a member of the Labor Party of North Korea.
(Act I)

Though both the parties in South and North Korea not only operate under the same leadership but also strive for the same purpose, the members of the party of North Korea have a definite superiority complex toward the members of the same party in South Korea. Furthermore, if a party member is born in the Soviet Union, as in the case of Natasha, that superiority complex would extend to almost anyone born in Korea.

Natasha's membership in the party and her Russian citizenship distinctly establishes her in an unshakable position at the National Art Theatre. Her determination to win Suck-Bong, though he has never been in love with her, suggests the creation of a triangular love relationship between Suck-Bong, Bock-Hi, and Natasha. Consequently, like several other plays of Yoo, the development of the main action depends to some extent upon either how Natasha will intrigue to win over Suck-Bong or how she will retaliate against him and his fiancée if she loses him. Natasha's character will not allow her to be passive if she loses Suck-Bong to Bock-Hi. It is beyond her imagination to give up the man she wants to possess to another woman. Since she knows that Suck-Bong is planning to marry Bock-Hi that night, she must plan something immediately.

After Natasha and Yang depart, the tense scene created by Natasha's jealousy of Bock-Hi gradually changes into one of joy for the long-parted lovers and offers a moment of dramatic relief. Overjoyed at their reunion and excited by their future plans, they begin to put on their wedding clothes. However, their happiness is brought to an abrupt end by the unexpected visit of the Chairman of the theatre. With his entrance, their hopes and dreams for the future begin to crumble, and the dramatic tension begins to build anew.

Suck-Bong is told by the Chairman that Bock-Hi is no longer assigned to work with him at the theatre; she must work in the entertainment department of a textile mill. Worst of all, they are stunned when they are ordered by the Chairman to postpone their wedding indefinitely. The Chairman's obscure explanation is that his decision is based upon information that Bock-Hi's father has not been active for the party in Seoul recently. Her father had once visited North Korea, but since his return to Seoul had obviously been disturbed by the fact that the People's Republic of Korea severely restricted individual freedom. Disillusioned and disappointed by North Korea's policy of oppressing people, he stopped working for the left wing movements, and even once warned Bock-Hi about her idealistic view of North Korea. The Chairman has collected damaging information on her father. The following scene clearly expresses Chi-Jin Yoo's view of the Labor Party of North Korea.

Chairman

(Speaking of Bock-Hi's father.) What sort of neutrality is this? He is an ill-natured grey opportunist! Don't you know that the party warns that that type of person is even worse than the pests in the party? (He begins to talk as if he is making a public speech.) The striving course of Communism is to select either white or black. Life or death! There is nothing more than that...

Suck-Bong

However, your way of branding him a traitor only because of his silence is nothing more than a childish arbitrary decision.

Chairman

Comrade, do you oppose my idea? I have a reliable source of information for this.

Suck-Bong

I don't know where you've collected the information. But I'm sure that it's nothing more than a plot to trap Tae-Du Chung. The duty of the party is to dig out the root of this plot. The motivation of killing an innocent man is...

Chairman

(Angrily.) Comrade, don't you know that a member of the party cannot marry a non-member? Are you trying to stain the purity of our party by marrying the daughter of a traitor? If you insist on it, I must report this fact to the party in order to examine your political ideology. That's enough! (He stands up.)

(Act I)

Even though the Chairman has been deliberately plotting against Suck-Bong, what he has said about Bock-Hi's father is correct. He has collected reliable information; a spy has been working on this particular matter. Suck-Bong did not realize that almost everyone is kept under strict surveillance in a communist regime, an indication that North Korea is a police state.

As soon as the Chairman leaves, Suck-Bong, now afraid of being purged by the party, asks Bock-Hi to write a letter to her father to urge him to work actively for the party in order to save their lives. At this moment an important realization takes place in Bock-Hi's mind: She begins to remember her father's warning to her. Until this moment she has been unable to grasp the true meaning of her father's admonition. She is slowly beginning to realize that the party for which she has been fighting severely impairs human rights and individual freedoms. With the recognition of this fact, an important change in her perception and in her character takes place. The following lines are necessary to quote in order to see the ensuing action in its proper perspective.

Bock-Hi

(She continues.) Finally, I am beginning to understand things. The freedom in North Korea is nothing more than restricted freedom! What kind of freedom is it? Freedom which does not allow a man to say he is hungry even if he is starving... This was the saying of my father who had visited the People's Republic of Korea.

(Act I)

On hearing Bock-Hi's story, Suck-Bong is somewhat startled. If her father has never expressed his true feelings about North Korea in public, the question remains as to how the Chairman found about it.

Without being aware of the restricted nature of freedom in North Korea, Bock-Hi had told Yang this same story of her father when they were traveling north in the train. She had no possible idea that such a trivial story

would eventually jeopardize the security of Suck-Bong and herself, because she could easily have said the same to her friend in South Korea without inviting danger to them. Yang, who has indeed been their close friend, is also a spy. This incident clearly indicates that the betrayal of one's friend for the sake of the party is not a matter of serious concern to the more fanatic members of the Labor Party of North Korea. To these individuals the party must come first.

Even though Suck-Bong has been a promising composer as well as a prominent member of the party, his life is placed in imminent danger. His promising career may be unexpectedly brought to an end, an indication that life in a communist regime is as unpredictable as a candle light before the wind. For the first time in his life, Suck-Bong realizes that he is being watched by a spy--his closest friend. Thus, through his character Chi-Jin Yoo states that true friendship does not exist in North Korea. In order to protect the establishments,--that is, the party,--personal friendship must be sacrificed. In order for the goal of the party to be achieved, a man must become an instrument capable of total dedication to its aims.

In the next scene, the Staff Leader and Comrade Kim from the theatre enter to take Bock-Hi to the textile mill. Suck-Bong begs them to let her stay until supper time so they can have their dinner together before she goes to the factory. His sincere plea is ignored. They must force Bock-Hi to go on orders of the party. To survive, they must also

obey party orders. There is neither humanity nor tears.

In the following scene, Natasha asks Suck-Bong to come to her apartment after the rehearsal of the opera. She has definite plans to control Suck-Bong now that Bock-Hi is no longer near him. When he rejects her invitation, she goes to the Chairman and accuses him of being a rebel in love with the girl from South Korea, claiming that such action is rebellion against the party. Upon hearing her complaints, the Chairman promptly promises her that a meeting will be called for the purpose of Suck-Bong's self-criticism, and pledges that he will "make him act according to her desire." At the self-criticism meeting, Suck-Bong must admit that he has made mistakes by falling in love with the daughter of a traitor to the party. The Chairman knows that Natasha wants Suck-Bong as a lover. No matter what she wishes from Suck-Bong, he must help her. By helping her, he, in turn, can achieve his ambition for power at the theatre.

It is clear that neither the Chairman nor Natasha is faithfully working for the benefit of the party, thus indicating that the Labor Party of North Korea is corrupt and often used for the personal satisfaction of some of its members. Their scheme to accuse Suck-Bong is nothing but an attempt to satisfy Natasha's sexual desire.

The next scene takes place in a room of the National Art Theatre where the members of the party are ready for the opening of Suck-Bong's self-criticism. From the beginning, the meeting obviously reveals the depraved side of the party.

The members of the party inexorably denounce Suck-Bong's personal life as depraved. In a communist country, a personal life is not allowed. Interestingly, their wholesale incrimination of Suck-Bong portrays them as puppet manipulated by a single despot--the party.

Chi-Jin Yoo's portrayal of the members of the Labor Party as no better than puppets or machines is clearly to dehumanize them. Almost all of them criticize Suck-Bong's new opera as a production full of corruption, heavily influenced by music which they consider decadent--American jazz. Their condemnation of him does not have any credibility, and clearly expresses their own ignorance and backwardness.

Suck-Bong is accused of being a rebel who loves the daughter of a traitor to their party. The implication is clear--there is no freedom of love in North Korea, although it is a basic human right for one to love whomever he chooses. In spite of persistent denial of his love for Bock-Hi, Suck-Bong is finally forced to admit his love which is supported by Yang's testimony that he has seen Suck-Bong calling Bock-Hi's name in his sleep and sobbing. Yang's story is supported by another member. Denounced as a traitor, he knows that he might be expelled from the party and sent to a forced labor camp in Siberia. Consequently, he decides to ask their pardon in order to save his life, even though he knows that it means the loss of personal dignity and humiliation.

While under Natasha's control, however, the committee will not deprive Suck-Bong's party membership and send him to a labor camp, because in such a situation Natasha would be unable to satisfy her desire. Instead, they pass a resolution that Suck-Bong must be politically re-educated by Natasha, clearly indicating an interesting development of the main action. Everything has been carefully planned in order to satisfy Natasha's desire, therefore, from this point the development of the main action revolves around how Suck-Bong attempts to avoid Natasha's approaches and what concessions he must make to her desire.

In the next act, Natasha has invited Suck-Bong to dinner ostensibly to celebrate the progress of his study under her personal guidance. It is clear that she is definitely planning to seduce him that night. As soon as he enters she asks him to kiss her while she smiles coquettishly. Then she commands him to take her boots off. She wants to find out how far she can control him as a prelude to her main scheme. Soon her desire emerges with the use of indecorous language. The following scene clearly exposes her lascivious character.

Natasha

Since your disease is caused by your mind, it cannot be cured by lesson alone. It's like the patient who should be treated by an internal medicine specialist going to see a surgeon instead. Isn't that true?

Suck-Bong

Let's not talk about it any more.

Natasha

Since your sickness is caused by love, it must be cured by another love. The empty spot in your heart made by the absence of that bitch must be filled by another woman. Do you understand what I am saying?
(Act III)

Natasha's open expression of her carnal desire is proof that she is infatuated with Suck-Bong. Seeing her through the eyes of Korean audience, it can be generally assumed that she is a depraved woman. When she is ready to actually seduce him, however, Suck-Bong adroitly escapes from the impending danger telling her that he has to go to the washroom. She is momentarily overjoyed, and not knowing that he is planning to escape from her, she assumes that he will be ready and willing when he returns. As soon as she realizes that he has deceived her, Natasha is inflamed by the contemptibility of Suck-Bong's scheme. She realizes that she has lost him again to Bock-Hi. At this moment, the Chairman enters. Seeing him, she immediately demands that he call another meeting for Suck-Bong's self-criticism. The Chairman is fully aware of the fact that it is hardly justifiable to call another meeting to denounce Suck-Bong who has already been forgiven by the members of the party. To punish a man who has already been pardoned is beyond his power. Consequently, he plans a wily scheme to satisfy Natasha's demand proposing that he send a letter to the textile mill to bring Bock-Hi to her house. They plan to eavesdrop on the two lovers when they are alone together, so as to have conclusive evidence with which to accuse

Suck-Bong again.

Soon Suck-Bong steals in to get his hat and brief case before returning to his home; however, when he sees Natasha peering between the curtain from the kitchen, he promptly changes his mind and tells her that he had to get some fresh air for his headache. Upon hearing his story, her anxiety is relieved, and she demands that he kiss her as positive proof of his love for her. With her sudden demand Suck-Bong is perplexed as to whether or not he should kiss her. To sooth her anger he must kiss her, but his dignity and pride do not allow him to kiss the woman whom he despises in the depth of his mind. He is fully aware of the fact that he cannot afford to provoke her anger by refusing her request. The situation demands that he make a decision. Like other characters in Yoo's plays he is placed in a situation that he cannot cope with.

At this moment Yoo's dramatic technique works perfectly: Bock-Hi, sent by the head of the entertainment department of the textile mill, enters, enabling Suck-Bong to escape from one danger only to face another. Under extremely difficult circumstances, Suck-Bong is forced to confront the woman with whom he is deeply in love--a situation in which he will be unable to express his love for her. Instead he will be compelled to express love for Natasha whom he despises, while prohibited from expressing his true feelings to the woman he loves. He knows that he is being watched. In order to survive he must pretend--only

choice given him under the circumstances. Although he is fully aware of the fact that it is a terrible thing to pretend he is no longer in love with her, he tells Bock-Hi he is in love with Natasha. The thematic implication is that a man must constantly conform to the demand of circumstance in a communist regime. Disappointed and dejected by Suck-Bong's irrational coldness, Bock-Hi, without knowing his true feelings, leaves the scene, vowing that she will never again appear before him.

Natasha, who has seen what has happened between Suck-Bong and Bock-Hi, enters triumphantly believing that he really does love her. Infuriated by Natasha's reaction, however, Suck-Bong is ready to take revenge on her. Knowing that her ultimate desire is to have him make love to her, Suck-Bong plans to deliberately arouse her lust in order to insult her. This again builds the dramatic tension.

Natasha

... (She starts to dance coquettishly.) Comrade, come here! Let's dance!

Suck-Bong

(Thunderously.) Damn it! Shut up! (Natasha stops suddenly. Quietly.) Come here.

Natasha

(As she retreats from Suck-Bong.) Why do you have such a murderous expression?

Suck-Bong

I said come here. Why are you backing away from me? (Natasha runs over to the bed in her retreat and sits down on it.) Damn it! (Suddenly, he starts to strangle her like a wild animal.)

Natasha

(As she pushes him away.) Oh, mother! Look at this! Help! Help! (She finally escapes from him.)

Suck-Bong

Why? Are you afraid of me? I wouldn't kill you. Kiss me. Quickly! (Natasha barely puts her lips on his hand.) You fool! (As he pushes her hands away.) On my lips! Holding my neck hard...

Natasha

(Bravely.) Well. Good! (She starts to kiss him passionately. Then she begins to pass her hands over his hair.) Do you know how much I like you? I've followed you always even giving up my self-respect. Now you are mine. You should never think of anyone else from now on. Don't you think of that bitch again.

Suck-Bong

Oh, your body! I want to die under your body!

Natasha

Is it true?

Suck-Bong

We are both members of the party. Don't you think we are privileged to become man and wife?

Natasha

Of course. We are equipped very well in terms of political ideology. Our family origins are pure! Furthermore, I was born and educated in the Marxist-Leninist tradition in the Soviet Union. There will be nobody to stand in our way.

Suck-Bong

Your clothes!

Natasha

(As though she didn't understand.) What?

Suck-Bong

Why are you so shy?

Natasha

(Bravely.) To make a mystery of one's body is nothing more than an oriental idea. (She starts to untie the belt of her night gown. Then she suddenly stops.) Wait. Comrade! Can you do it for me?

Suck-Bong

That's fine! (He starts to take Natasha's clothes off.) First! (He takes her night dress off.) Next... (He starts to pull down her skirt.)

Natasha

No, I don't like it. (She runs away.)

Suck-Bong

Why can't you stand still? ...stand still!

Natasha

(As she gives herself up.) All right! (She stands still.)

Suck-Bong

(He starts to take her clothes off again.) Next... Next... (Now she is wearing nothing but a slip.)

Natasha

(She looks at Suck-Bong who does not dare to touch her slip.) Are you still scared?...

Suck-Bong

(Determinedly.) Damn it! (He tears a shoulder of her slip. One of her breasts suddenly appears.)

Natasha

Oh, my! ... What shall I do? (She is confused for a second. Then she tries to hold on to Suck-Bong's neck.)

Suck-Bong

You bitch! Get out! (He pushes her down.)

Natasha

(She falls down on the floor. As if she is upset.)
...oh, what are you doing?

Suck-Bong

You dirty animal! You devil! Die! Die! (Then he turns around.)

Natasha

Comrade Paik! Paik! (Suck-Bong exits quickly. She stands up.) That crazy son of a bitch. He must be thinking of that bitch again! You rotten son of a bitch! (She rushes to the telephone, and picks it up.) Hello! Hello! (She calls an operator.) Call the Comrade Chairman! I mean the Comrade Chairman at the National Art Theatre! Quickly! (She starts to cry angrily while holding the telephone.)

(Curtain)

(Act III)

In the last act Bock-Hi, believing herself insulted by the man with whom she is in love, decides to kill herself. She thinks she can neither return to Seoul nor live in Pyongyang any longer. If she can no longer live honorably, she decides to die in an honorable way by drowning herself in the Dae-Dong River. Seeing too many fishermen's lights, she returns to get a dagger to commit suicide on the mountain. When she enters her house, she is unexpectedly greeted by Suck-Bong who asks her pardon for his involuntary insult to her at Natasha's house. Without knowing his true feelings, Bock-Hi does not reserve herself in accusing him of being hypocrite. Suck-Bong, pressed by the imminent danger of being pursued by Natasha, asks her to return to South Korea immediately, saying he wants to become a human being there. He knows that he has been acting against his

conscience since he came to North Korea. He has been a puppet. He is beginning to realize that it is totally impossible for him to be a human being in North Korea. To regain his human status, he must return to South Korea. But Bock-Hi can no longer trust him. Dejected by the fact that he is no longer trusted by his fiancée, he hastily attempts to explain to her that until this time there has been no other way for him except to cling to the party. He tells her that he is now finally determined to break off his relationship with the party.

To become a human being he must first give up membership in the Labor Party. By making this decision, Suck-Bong emerges as a strong character for the first time. Until he slapped Natasha and decided to return to South Korea, he had only vacillated from one side to the other. Now he realizes that the Labor Party does not exist for the benefit of the people, but that the people exist for the benefit for the party, resulting in their exploitation. While he is urging Bock-Hi to return to Seoul with him, they hear the sound of someone coming. Realizing the approaching danger, Suck-Bong quickly hides under a grain winnow. Finally Bock-Hi begins to comprehend Suck-Bong's animosity for the communists and the Labor Party, but it is too late. The enemies are already there, and another exciting confrontation takes place, rapidly building the dramatic tension to the play's climax.

Despite being severely pressed by Natasha to disclose Suck-Bong's hiding place, Bock-Hi maintains her calm and her

dignity, her stately character, in contrast to Natasha. To divulge her fiance's hiding place to her enemy is unthinkable as well as a matter of honor. She pretends that she does not have the slightest idea what has happened between Suck-Bong and Natasha. Infuriated by Bock-Hi's non-cooperative attitude, Natasha orders Yang to take her to the police station to force her cooperation. The Chairman tells her that Bock-Hi must stay in her house to effect Suck-Bong's arrest, theorizing that he will come to her house sooner or later. Bock-Hi is to be used as bait. The Chairman's scheme suggests another exciting development.

As soon as Natasha and her friends exit, Suck-Bong emerges from the winnow to escape from the place. However, he is urged by Bock-Hi to hide again. Now Bock-Hi has a scheme. She calls Yang, assuming that he is hiding outside the house. She is right. When Yang enters, she tells him that she has found Suck-Bong's fountain pen in her yard, implying that he has already been in her house. She tells him that Suck-Bong must have gone to the river to find her since her will in which she mentioned that she would drown herself has disappeared. Yang leaves the place, saying he will call the police to arrest Suck-Bong immediately.

Now Bock-Hi and Suck-Bong are ready to escape. But they are suddenly stopped by the appearance of Natasha who has also been hiding at the corner of the street. She is followed by the Chairman. Enraged by Bock-Hi's trick, the Chairman orders Suck-Bong to strangle her, saying that he

will spare Suck-Bong's life if he kills her. Suck-Bong cannot accept that kind of debased mercy. He knows that it is a trick to make him responsible for the death of Bock-Hi. When he accuses the Chairman of the scheme, the Chairman, angered by Suck-Bong's accusation, decides to take him to the Bureau of Political Security. At this moment Suck-Bong hits the Chairman in the eye with his fist. The Chairman falls. Suck-Bong and Bock-Hi rush out through the gate. Natasha immediately starts shooting at them. Bock-Hi is hit in the back and falls down. Suck-Bong returns to cover her body. When he sees that his fiancée is dying, he kills himself with a dagger, saying that he must expose the hypocrisy of the communists to the public with his death.

I Will Become a Human Being, Too is a very powerful play with a strong anti-Communist emphasis. It is especially significant when we consider the time of its original production. It was produced three years after the outbreak of the Korean War during which time anti-Communist feeling among the Koreans in South Korea was extremely high. The play clearly reflects not only the personal anti-Communist feeling of Chi-Jin Yoo who has been an anti-Communist all his life, but it also reflects the general feeling of the people of the time. In addition, the play tries to express the anti-foreign feeling of the Koreans. Even though she has Korean blood, Natasha Kim is a foreign born woman who tries to control the Koreans in the play. The play also attempts to advocate the idea that the Koreans must become a people of

self-determination. This idea clearly expresses the general feeling of the Koreans of the time when they were dominated by the Russians and the Red Chinese in North Korea and the Americans in South.

I Will Become a Human Being, Too has several important messages for Korean audiences. It attempts to show the dehumanization of human beings by fashioning them as merely instruments for the benefit of the Labor Party of North Korea. The play tries to show that neither freedom of love nor friendship exists in North Korea. There is only the party and it must survive above everything.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Most of Chi-Jin Yoo's plays have instantly claimed popularity among Korean audiences. This public approval has become extremely important because it was with his plays that contemporary Korean drama was finally beginning to establish a strong foothold in the national drama during the post World War II period. As a result, for the first time in the history of Korean drama, a single playwright's works have reached the mass audience, resulting in Yoo's becoming a very popular and prolific author.

In The Earthen Hut, his earliest play, Chi-Jin Yoo deals explicitly with an acute contemporary problem--the exploitation of the Koreans by the Japanese whose control over Korea was beginning to reach its height during the time when the play was written. In his next play, The Prince Ma Yi, he fervently advocates the rebirth of national pride, and freedom from foreign domination while he condemns the invasion of a peace-loving nation by a militant country, thus clearly referring to the brutality of Japanese imperialism.

Chi-Jin Yoo's next two plays, written immediately after World War II, definitely reflect the happy mood of a people liberated from militant tyranny. In The Throbbing

Earth, Yoo attempts to describe the happy and joyous feeling of the Koreans who have just been liberated from imperialistic Japan, while The Self-Beating Drum offers the hopeful promise and expectation of solving the most pressing national problem --the unification of Korea.

However, the hopeful and happy mood of Chi-Jin Yoo's two previous plays is suddenly reversed by the despair and hopelessness of his next play, The Star, in which political feuds were beginning to split the Koreans into several different political camps as it has been happening during the time of the play's original production. In The Star, Yoo severely criticizes the politicians of the post World War II period who were engaging in bloody political fighting in order to gain control of political power. While Korea is plagued with these political feuds, Yoo, seeing the need for the exaltation of national morale, advocates man's duty to his nation in his next play, Wonsul Rang. When South Korea was overrun by the invading North Korean army, he wrote I Will Become a Human Being, Too, anti-Communist play, in which he attempts to expose the depraved side of the North Korean Labor Party which deprives man's basic freedom as an individual while dehumanizing the whole human race.

Although some of Chi-Jin Yoo's characters share psychological problems similar to those of the great characters of western drama such as Hamlet and Phaedra, basically they are typical oriental characters standing face to face with man's moral problems. Most of the characters of Yoo's

historical plays are caught between two cardinal moral obligations,--man's duty to his nation and his duty to his parents,--creating terrible conflicts in their minds. The conflict of these two duties in their minds frequently initiates a psychological dilemma within the characters when they are forced to make a decision between these two duties. Such is the dilemma of the Princess in The Self-Beating Drum, Toryung in The Star, and the Prince in The Prince Ma Yi, and it forms the basis of the play's dramatic tension. Until they can come to a final decision, their characters vacillate from one side to the other, displaying their basic human weakness. Without exception, interestingly enough, whenever this conflict does exist, man's duty to his nation takes precedence over his obligation to his parents, clearly indicating that individuals can be sacrificed for the benefit of their nation. Hence, the thematic implication of Yoo's plays vividly demonstrates that the nation's well-being must be placed above everything else including that of the individual.

As far as dramatic structure is concerned, Chi-Jin Yoo's plays are varied. In his historical plays, he uses a five act structure employing several different changes of scene and a relatively free flow of action from one scene to another. He also uses a two act structure with a single setting as in the case of The Earthen Hut, and a single act structure in his next anti-Japanese play, The Throbbing Earth. In his anti-Communist play, I Will Become a Human

Being, Too, there are four acts and five scenes.

Chi-Jin Yoo's major works clearly reflect the national problems and the general feelings of the Korean people of his time. Even though he uses historical sources for his plays, the subject matters with which he deals in his plays are always closely related to the issues and problems of the plays' original productions, such as regaining of national sovereignty in The Prince Ma Yi and the unification of the nation in The Self-Beating Drum. Although he criticizes and analyzes the imminent problems faced by the Koreans, interestingly enough, Yoo never suggests any kind of resolution or answer to these problems and issues. He merely presents the situation, leaving the answers and solutions to his audience. Henceforth, it is clear that none of his plays try to stir his audience to take direct action. Consequently, it is obvious that none of his plays can be categorized as agitation, or propaganda-oriented plays. Even in his strong anti-Communist play, I Will Become a Human Being, Too, there is not the slightest hint of desire to agitate his audience into taking direct action against the communists in South Korea. His aim is only to expose the depraved and inhuman side of a nation under communism.

Chi-Jin Yoo's plays are proof enough that he is one of the foremost patriotic playwrights of Korea who wrote during this tumultuous period in the history of Korea when the Korean people were definitely in need of the exaltation of patriotism in order to maintain their national sovereignty

and pride in the midst of foreign invasion and occupation-- clearly indicating this noble idea as the highest priority of the Koreans in combating their problems and solving their national issues.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I
THE PRINCE MA YI

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

It is often impossible to make a perfect translation from one language to another. It is even harder to translate an Eastern language into a Western language or vice versa. If the translation follows the strict literal meaning of the original text it often does not have much appeal to the reader; if the translation is made appealing it frequently deviates from the original. Consequently, I tried my best to make a workable compromise while maintaining a careful balance between the two distinctive cultures, Eastern and Western, in order to make this readable.

Some of the preposterous language used in The Prince Ma Yi by Chi-Jin Yoo has demanded an extremely detailed investigation in making the translation. Many words in Korean are virtually impossible to translate into meaningful English. For example, "Sun Piel noin" literally translated means Sun Piel old man but the Korean expression implies a certain degree of respect for an elderly man. In another instance a typical Korean expression closely related to the characteristic life style of Korea which caused difficulties in translating in "ijae balul puhtko jayaji." Literary this translates as "Now I will sleep with my stretched legs" signifying that a relaxed man sleep with his legs extended while a worried man sleeps with his legs bent like a shrimp.

Furthermore, some words which are used in this play are extremely difficult to translate into a single English word. For example, "saba" has a much broader connotation than the simple literal translation, "this world." It implies the world which contains sin, impurity, immorality or the world in which the human beings are presently living. Since some particular words are almost impossible to translate into English, the original Korean words have been retained and explanatory footnotes have been provided.

The Prince Ma Yi is one of the representative plays of Yoo. The greatest significance of this play, like many of his other works, lies in its theme--the national independence as well as exaltation of the pride and dignity of Korea as an independent nation under the harsh foreign regime. It was produced in 1943 when Korea was being exploited to the fullest by the imperialistic Japanese. Viewing him in a historical context, Yoo stands as one of Korea's foremost patriotic playwrights.

Although the content of the play weighs far greater than anything else, the play is far from perfect. The juxtaposition of two clearly divided groups of characters, good and evil, is overly obvious. Frequently, unmotivated entrances and exits of the characters in the fourth act give an impression of confusion. However, these facts can be overlooked when we consider the period when it was produced.

Unfortunatly, the importance of Korean drama has been almost totally ignored in East and West. Presently,

there are many English translations of Chinese and Japanese plays available in print. However, there are a few English translations of Korean plays. This does not mean that Korea never had any form of theatre. There have always been some forms of theatre since the primitive ages in Korea as the Koreans always have maintained their own distinctive culture. But it has in some ways always been neglected by the Koreans as well as the foreigners. Now it is time to open the door of Korean drama to the theatre lovers throughout the English speaking world in order to reveal its political, historical, philosophical, and cultural significance and impact.

CHARACTERS

Kim Bu, King Kyung Soon of Silla. About sixty.

The Prince

Yu Ryum, the cousin of King Kyung Soon.

Baek Wha, his daughter who is loved by the Prince.

Kim Kon, a loyal friend of the Prince.

Kim Bi, a loyal friend of the Prince.

Lee Yu, a loyal friend of the Prince.

Kyum Yong, a King Kyung Soon's subject who is now secretly communicating with Koryo.

Sul Hyo, a King Kyung Soon's subject who is now secretly communicating with Koryo.

Wang Kun, the first King of Koryo. About fifty.

The Princess Rang Nang, his eldest daughter.

Sun Piel, formerly a viceroy of Silla, now a schemer of Wang Kun.

Wang Chul. a general of Koryo.

Subjects of Kim Bu, Wang Kun's soldiers, waiting maids, and actors.

PLACES AND TIME

The Prologue

An early spring day of the fifth year of King Kyung Soon, the last king of Silla(approximately the tenth century).

In front of the entrance gate of the Suhrabuhl Castle(now called Kyungju).

Act One

The same day

The Same place.

Act Two

During the night of the same day.

The Princess Rang Nang's temporary chamber within the Palace of Silla.

Act Three

The next day.

The entrance of the Imhae Hall.

Act Four

The same day.

In front of Yung Wol(moon welcoming) Hall near Chiap(geese) Pond in a corner of the palace compound.

Act Five

Ten years later.

The Gaegol Mountains(now called the Diamond Mountains).

PROLOGUE

An early spring day of the fifth year of King Kyung Soon of Silla.

In front of the entrance gate of the Suhrabuhl Castle, the capital of Silla.

The Curtain goes up with the sounds of trumpets and drums. The King Kyung Soon, accompanied by his cousin, Yu Ryum, Kim Bi, Han Kong Tal, Lee Yu, Kim Kon, and many officials, both civil and military, enters solemnly from the right and sits on a throne. When the sounds of trumpets and drums are again heard, the King Wang Kun of Koryo, who is accompanied by Sun Piel, appears from the left. The officers of Silla step forward to welcome the visiting king. The trumpeters, drummers, flag-bearers, and guards with spears and swords enter ahead of Wang Kun. He is followed by the Princess Rang Nang, Wang Chul, and many officials.

Sun Piel walks towards the King Kyung Soon to report to him in an old and cunning voice.

Sun Piel

Reporting to Your Majesty! The Great King of Koryo, who has already submitted his credentials to Your Majesty some time ago, is now making his royal visit from the northern country to inquire after Your Majesty's health.

(Kim Bu, the King of Silla, stands up and walks down the steps to personally welcome Wang Kun.)

Wang Kun

(He walks forward and bows politely to Kim Bu with joined hands.) It has been a long time since I have heard news of the prosperity and health of Your Highness.

King

I don't know how to repay Your Highness for both your royal visit to our palace and the defeat of Hu Baekjae for me.

Wang Kun

Not at all, Your Highness.

King

Please come up, Your Highness. (The both kings walk up the steps and sit on the two thrones. The subjects of the both kingdoms are again divided into two groups.) Subjects of Silla! How do you greet the Great King?

Wang Kun

No. It has been a long time since I have worshipped the sublime virtue of Silla. Therefore, it is not a proper order to let the officials of Silla greet us first. (To the subjects of Koryo.) Bow to His Highness!

Sun Piel

(He walks forward.) I am a subject of Koryo, Sun Piel, who is accompanying the Great King of Koryo. (He bows and retreats to his former position.)

Wang Chul

An attendant of Koryo, Wang Chul. (He bows and retreats.)

King

Now, subjects of Silla, bow to the king.

Yu Ryum

(He walks forward and bows.) Yu Ryum of Silla. (He retreats.)

Kim Kon

Kim Kon of Silla. (He retreats.)

Kim Bi

(He walks forwards and bows.) The attendant of Silla, Kim Bi. (He retreats as he walking backward.)

Lee Yu

(He walks forwards and bows.) The Lord of Reception, Lee Yu. (He retreats.)

Han Kong Tal

(He walks forward and bows.) An attendant of Silla,
Han Kong Tal.

Wang Kun

(He stands up.) As I have indicated in my credentials,
the purpose of my visit to the palace of Your Highness from
a distant kingdom is to unite the two kingdoms in brother-
hood in order to maintain the prosperity.

King

(As he nods.) That is precisely my wish as well as
that of Your Highness. (At this moment the sounds of trum-
pets are heard. A moment of silence.) Please! To the palace.
The Great King.

(The two kings enter the palace arm in arm. The
subjects of two kingdoms follow them slowly.)

ACT ONE

The afternoon of the same day. In front of the Triple Gate which is facing a street. There is a tower on the top of the gate. As soon as the curtain goes up, the subjects of Silla walk out through the gate into the street. Everyone is carrying a wrapped box. They have been bribed by Wang Kun, Some of them show extreme uneasiness. Choi Whal and Sul Hyo, however, are happy.

Choi Whal

(Courteously.) Sul Hyo. What is it?

Sul Hyo

Shall we unwrap it?

Choi Whal

(He unwraps his package.) Ah! A roll of beautiful silk.

Sul Hyo

What have I received? (He unwraps his box. He is excited.) A sabre! ...decorated with jade!

Choi Whal

These are truly precious gifts. Sul Hyo! I must say that we cannot find such things in Silla even to dedicate them to His Majesty. As a matter of fact, everything was stolen by the soldiers of Hu Baekjae and Jin Won after the Battle of Posuckjung.

Sul Hyo

(Agreeing with him.) Ha, ha, ha... As we have thought, the King of Koryo is the king of kings. Our king has been doing nothing but yawning. Our king cannot be compared with the dignified king of Koryo whose forehead is so broad and his eyes sparkle.

Choi Whal

His constancy and courageous character are extremely agreeable to me.

Sul Hyo

(Hearing someone coming.) Quiet! (They draw back from each other pretending that they have not been talking.) It's Kyum Yong. He is also secretly communicating with Koryo. He's coming from the palace. (As soon as they see him, they are relieved from anxiety.)

Choi Whal

Oh. It's Kyum Yong.

Sul Hyo

What have you received?

Kyum Yong

Have you seen the Prince?

Choi Whal and Sul Hyo

Sir?

Kyum Yong

I don't think the Prince is behaving rightly. He hasn't shown himself on such an all important day as this --the day we're welcoming the King of Koryo.

Sul Hyo

Don't you think that it's his character that wouldn't allow him to attend the ceremony? He has strongly opposed the invitation of the King of Koryo to this kingdom.

Kyum Yong

Damn it! (He spits to express his dislike of the Prince.)

Choi Whal

By the way, Kyum Yong, how did the King of Koryo remember my name? He said to me as if he had been an old friend of mine "Aren't you Choi Whal?" It's not at all strange that he would remember the names of the king's cousin, the attendant, and the ministers. But how can he remember the names of the low officials...?

Kyum Yong

Because he is a man of high virtue. He is totally different from our king.

Sul Hyo

I've heard that he brought a list of one hundred names of officials of Silla with him when he left Koryo.

Choi Whal

Really?

Sul Hyo

Of course. It's true.

Choi Whal

He is a splendid man.

Kyum Yong

Didn't you have a feeling of the revitalization of everything in this age-old and withering palace as soon as such a noble king entered?

Choi Whal

(Admiringly.) Well. At the palace of Koryo, there must be many wonderful things happening.

Kyum Yong

(As he comes close to them. Quietly.) Well. How about serving him as our king?

Sul Hyo

Kyum Yong! What are these unloyal and unvirtuous words?

Choi Whal

Those words can easily invite disaster. (He watches their reactions.)

Kyum Yong

It doesn't matter how loyal you are to our king, you'll never be treated like the cousin of the king or Kim Bi. Unless you have the royal blood, you can't get a high position in this kingdom.

Choi Whal

Of course. You have to have the royal bones to be treated as a man here.

Kyum Yong

But I don't think the same is true in Koryo. Everything depends upon one's character. If someone is smart enough, he can become a high official. For example, Sun Piel acquired a high official title soon after he went to Koryo.

Sul Hyo

I certainly respect the King of Koryo. But I don't think I have the slightest idea of selling myself to him.

Kyum Yong

Fear of being loyal is an act of an unloyal man. To argue against the nature of virtue is the act of an unvirtuous man.

(Sul Hyo exits without looking back at him.)

Kyum Yong

Sul Hyo! What a simple minded fellow! Since I've explained it so often, he should understand the thing by now.

Choi Whal

What shall we do if he goes straight to the King or the Prince and reports to them that we're on the side of Koryo?

Kyum Yong

Ha, ha, ha,... Don't worry. Do you think I have exposed my weak spot to him without knowing his true character? Although he looks like a simple-minded fellow, he is a very cunning and ambitious man.

Choi Whal

By the way, Kyum Yong, have you told some good things about this old man to the King of Koryo?

Kyum Yong

How can you expect a reward without establishing merits? First, you have to render a meritorious service.

Choi Whal

I've already sworn to Heaven that I am for Koryo.
What else?

Kyum Yong

Can you stain your sword with blood for either
Koryo or Kyum Yong?

Choi Whal

... What? What did you say? (He trembles and cannot
answer.)

Kyum Yong

Well. Tell me.

Choi Whal

If ...if he will recognize my meritorious service...

Kyum Yong

Trust Kyum Yong. I am an old friend of Sun Piel. And
he is the schemer of the King of Koryo...the most trusted
friend.

Choi Whal

I can swear.

Kyum Yong

Even with blood?

Choi Whal

(He draws his sword with a trembling hand.) This...
like this.

Kyum Yong

If so. (He speaks something quietly into Choi Whal's
ear.)

Choi Whal

(Surprisingly.) You mean our Prince and the cousin
of the King?

Kyum Yong

(As he is covering Choi Whal's mouth with his hand.) Quiet! The only thing I want to know from you is whether you have guts to do such a thing or not. That's all. (As he tries to make him feel easy.) Ha, ha, ha! ... If you have such guts, even Sun Piel will be on your side, and that, of course, includes the King of Koryo. Ha, ha, ha! ... Since I have heard that a man of wisdom never talk about what he thinks, everything must be in Sun Piel's mind. So wait until night and then come to my house. (As he hears someone coming.) Shhhh!

(Kim Kon enters. He is about seventeen years old. He is the youngest friend of the Prince. He also has a gift in his hand. He, however, is deeply disturbed by something.)

Kyum Yong

My lord. What did you receive as a gift?

Kim Kon

(He breathes deeply as he walks up the steps.) Have you received one?

Kyum Yong

Why are you in such distress?

Kim Kon

What am I going to do with this?

Kyum Yong

Ha, ha, ha! ... What a weak mind.

Kim Kon

Wang Kun's intention in coming to this kingdom was not for peaceful coexistence. He is trying to conquer this kingdom. (He throws the box to the ground.)

Kyum Yong

Ah! What shall I do? If the King of Koryo sees this...

Kim Kon

(As he approaches Kyum Yong.) You are extremely afraid of the King of Koryo. But aren't you afraid that your internal organs will rot?

Kyum Yong

Do you think that you can hold back the sinking sun in the western sky? If you think you can cure the disease of this kingdom by rejecting the gifts, I should like to destroy mine as well right on this spot.

Kim Kon

But you really mean you can't do it.

Kyum Yong

...no. I don't mean that. But... but... ha, ha, ha... It is natural to expect the stream to become an ocean.

Kim Kon

Damn fool! Old man! You want to swim in the whole castle like a tiny duck which swims between the water and mud? Fool! (He takes hold of his sword.)

Kyum Yong

Ha, ha, ha... Don't try to make a hole in the wall with a little drill. Before you'd see a hole in it, the drill point would be destroyed.

Kim Kon

(As he draws his sword.) You! You! Damn you! (He strikes at Kyum Yong with his sword. Kyum Yong avoids his sword. Kim Kon again fails to strike him.)

Choi Whal

(While he is in great confusion.) What shall I do? ... Young lord! Be patient! I hope someone will come this instant...

(The Prince of Silla enters.)

Prince

(As he stops.) Well. What's happening?

Choi Whal

My lord!

Prince

(Loudly.) Kon!

Kim Kon

My lord. I'm going to slice this hungry hound. He has been pursuing only his personal prosperity. A damn quibbler!

Prince

Put down your sword. The thousand year old castle of Silla will never be destroyed by an ephemeral cat's paw. (He picks up Kyum Yong's sheath from the ground and gives it to him.) Arm yourself. Although you have performed many meritorious services for our kingdom, I don't think it only a rumor that you have joined the group of traitors by letting your own intestines be eaten by worms.

Kyum Yong

Well... I don't...

Prince

Do you mean it is not true?

Kyum Yong

Of course, it is not true.

Prince

(As he points to the thing which is held in Kyum Yong's hand.) Well. Then what is that?

Kyum Yong

... this is...

Prince

It must be the bribe that was given to you by Wang Kun, the son of Wang Ryung, the Viceroy of Kumsung. Do you mind if I ask you to give it to me? (Kyum Yong, who sees no way of avoiding his order, hands it to the Prince. The Prince looks at it.) Ha, ha, ha!... A bait for a fish. I have heard that a general of Tang caught the Sajasu dragon with the bait of a white horse when Baekjae was ruined. Now I think this must be the bait to catch a tadpole. What a senseless old fellow. It can be delicious for a short period. But don't you understand that when the sharp hook pierces through your stomach you will feel great pain? Damn! (He throws it to the ground.) Choi Whal! You should give me yours too. (He takes the package from Choi Whal and throws it to the ground.) Go!

(For a second they study the reaction of the Prince. Then they exits as if running away.)

Kim Kon

As soon as the big thief, Wang Kun, is invited to the palace, even a little thief, like Kyum Yong, has nothing which he will not say under the sky.*

Prince

Wang Kun is such a crafty fellow. He has bribed many officials in the palace to make them stand on his side...

Kim Kon

I cannot tolerate his outwardly cunning manner with the devilish inward plot. Wang Kun has been pretending to be a visiting relative or friend who has no ambition at all. However, he has been flattering our king as well as the officials only to subvert our government.

Prince

Where is His Highness?

Kim Kon

He is in the palace with Wang Kun. They are sitting side by side. There cannot be two kings in our kingdom any more than there are two suns in the sky. Oh! What an absurd idea! (He sighs.)

(Friends of the Prince, Lee Yu, Kim Bi, Han Kong Tal, and young soldiers, enter in front of the gate.)

Kim Bi

(As he enters.) I have also thrown my gift to the ground.

Prince

My friends!

Everyone

Oh. My lord! (Everyone comes close to the Prince.)

*

"Under the sky" has a broad meaning, but in this case it implies in the world.

Kim Bi

(Quietly.) My lord. What has happened to the plan?

Prince

I have a word to tell everyone.

Kim Bi

What is it?

Prince

All of you have heard that Wang Kun has brought only fifty body guards with him haven't you?

Everyone

Yes. Only fifty.

Prince

It is a lie! He has secretly brought five thousand troops and hidden them in the Baekri Forest.

Everyone

In the Baekri Forest? Five thousand troops? (Everyone looks at everyone else as though all are shocked.)

Kim Kon

An exorbitant thief! A liar!

Prince

With our few soldiers, we can't carry out our plan...

Lee Yu

True. It is impossible to attack Wang Kun with that number.

Kim Bi

But if we let the night pass by, we'll lose our chance...

Lee Yu

Since Wang Kun has been deliberately pretending to be kind to everyone, even the ladies of the palace are flattering him.

Han Kong Tal

First, we must change the direction of the people's heart which are now beginning to turn toward Koryo. They think it is a fortunate thing that Wang Kun is not using his military force unlike Jin Won of Hu Baekjae who tried to occupy this capital with his soldiers five years ago.

Prince

What a pity! With what force can we attack Wang Kun? He has five thousand soldiers as well as the hearts of people. I had already anticipated this and petitioned to His Highness that we should never let Wang Kun take a single step into this palace...

Everyone

What a pity!

Kim Bi

We shouldn't waste our time. We still have a few dozen soldiers. They're young people who share our feelings about the kingdom. There are also wandering soldiers who went to the mountains when the country was attacked by Jin Won. We must unite all our forces to fight. What is your opinion?

Han Kong Tal

That's an excellent idea. We shouldn't miss the chance. We must carry it out tonight.

Lee Yu

The people are tired of wars for the past one hundred years...

Kim Kon

Although our kingdom is old and exhausted, we still can fight against five thousand soldiers.

Prince

To worry about the defeat before we go into the war doesn't sound like the moral of the youngmen of Suhrabuhl. As Kim Bi, Kim Kon, and Han Kong Tal have suggested, let's swear to carry out our plan tonight.

Everyone

We swear!

(Yu Ryum, the cousin of the King, comes out through the Triple Gate.)

Yu Ryum

I disagree with that idea.

Everyone

My lord.

Yu Ryum

If there would be a way of taking care of Wang Kun without losing many lives, why should we select such a dangerous way...

Everyone

How?

Yu Ryum

He is like a rat in a trap. Isn't he in our palace?

Prince

Do you mean we can take advantage of him while he is our guest?...

Yu Ryum

Yes. The soldiers without a commander are like a tree without roots. There's no use of fighting against the five thousand soldiers. Everything can be accomplished by cutting only Wang Kun's throat.

Prince

Don't you think it is a cowardly action for the young people to assassinate him?

Yu Ryum

It's not necessary to argue about the means to achieve the end.

Han Kong Tal

My lord. I agree with you. But how can we kill him? He is guarded by many soldiers.

Yu Ryum

I still think it would be easier than to fight against the five thousand soldiers. Let's assume that we can defeat them. But Koryo has a quarter of a million troops who are ready to fight. Furthermore, she has Yu Kum Piel who has won a hundred battles. How can we defeat all of them? (No one answers.) Don't worry. Just follow my idea. I have been carefully checking Wang Kun. He is ready to use his troops. If we don't act right now, our kingdom may not last longer than a few days. Our king has been following the Princess Rang Nang, the daughter of Wang Kun.

Everyone

His Highness is after... (All are surprised and look from eye to eye.)

Yu Ryum

If we let Wang Kun stay in the palace, the world will come into his hands. The time has come. If we miss the chance, the rat will get his own way.

Prince

Let's not waste time. Let's follow my uncle's idea.

Kim Bi

(As he draws his sword.) Let me volunteer to be the assassin.

Lee Yu

Let me join you.

Kim Kon

Let me become a patriot!

Prince

That's enough. Our forces are united. Let's go for Wang Kun's head.

Everyone

Wang Kun's head! (As a symbol of swearing, everyone raises his sword high in the air.)

Prince

We will discuss the detailed plan in the night. (He draws their heads within his arms and whispers something to them.) Understand?

Everyone

Yes! (Everyone puts his sword back into his scabbard.)

Prince

We must be ready to die for our kingdom.

Everyone

Yes!

Prince

Everything must be kept in secret.

(They exit together. Wang Kun, who is accompanied by Kyum Yong, Sun Piel, and Wang Chul, has been watching the young patriots from the tower.)

Wang Chul

(Trembling with anger.) Are you intending to let the gangs go?

Wang Kun

(laughing unpleasantly.) Ha, ha, ha... As I expected, they're a group of troublemakers.

Sun Piel

Kyum Yong. Leave us for moment.

Kyum Yong

Yes. (He exits.)

Wang Chul

My Great King. Now it is difficult for us to speculate what they are planning. Would you please let me take care of them? I will certainly cut them into pieces.

Wang Kun

Since their kingdom is rotten, it is natural for them to be indignant.

Sun Piel

Your short temper is the cause of my anxiety. We must have order and strategy to catch even a single rat.

Wang Chul

Do we still have to plot a strategy when we see our king in imminent danger? What is the use of strategy? (As he grips his sword.)

Wang Kun

I see some merit in your idea. However, I must have a strategy since I came to the tiger's cave to catch a tiger. Therefore, we must control our tempers.

Wang Chul

Damn! (He takes his hand off of his sword as though resigned.)

Wang Kun

Sun Piel. You have heard their plot. Now what shall I do?

Sun Piel

First, we should call one hundred soldiers out of the five thousand troops into the palace in order to prepare for an emergency.

Wang Kun

And?

Sun Piel

Then with the excuse of arresting the assassins, we call in our five thousand troops and occupy the palace at once.

Wang Kun

That will be the last strategy. We have already decided not to use military force if possible. It is my idea to unify the three kingdoms without using military power. And...

Sun Piel

If you plan to control Silla without blood, we must carry out our original scheme as planned.

Wang Kun

As planned?

Sun Piel

First, we have to win the Prince. Second, we have to get rid of the King's cousin. As soon as we take care of these two people, the rest of them will become an eagle without wings. They will neither fly nor fight. The King's cousin is a tricky person. And the Prince has the full support of the young patriots and the citizens.

Wang Kun

The Prince is no simple young scholar, he is an extraordinary character with profound spirit. It will not be easy for us to approach him.

Sun Piel

It is not necessary to worry. I don't think there is anyone under the sky who will not succumb to the beauty of the Princess Rang Nang. There is an old saying that while a wise man falls in love with beauty out of his wisdom, dunces follow her out of his stupidity. Furthermore, such a young man like the Prince...

Wang Kun

My friends. You must not neglect watching the Princess Rang Nang. First, you must try to provide an opportunity for the Prince to approach the Princess. Second, you must praise him in front of her so she will begin to think of him best in her heart.

Wang Chul

(Sternly.) With his fierce spirit, it is impossible.

Wang Kun

I don't think so. As long as we make the virtuous man stand on our side, it will be easier for me to carry out our scheme based on that virtue.

Sun Piel

There is the Prince.

Wang Kun

Who is the young woman with him?

Sun Piel

Although it is hard to see, I suppose she must be Baek Wha, the daughter of the King's cousin.

Wang Kun

The daughter of Yu Ryum? (After a moment's thought.) Sun Piel. The fact that the Prince has another woman in his heart must be kept secret from the Princess.

Sun Piel

Fortunately, Baek Wha is going the other way.

Wang Kun

(Watching them.) That's right... I think we should let the Princess meet the Prince here. Go to the palace and summon her.

Sun Piel

Yes. Wang Chul. Attend the King.

Wang Kun

You will have to be clever to lure her out.

Sun Piel

Yes. Heh, heh, heh...

(Sun Piel exits. The Prince and his friends in their armor enter. They are followed by Baek Wha, the daughter of Yu Ryum. She is a beautiful woman.)

Baek Wha

Then I will turn aside my foot here and return to to my home. My lord. I beseech you to have great courage and cure the sickly spirit of Silla as soon as possible. When you have accomplished that, my wish will also be accomplished.

Prince

Baek Wha. We will fight with all our strength. We will fight to our death. I have already promised you for

one hundred years.* Whom should I fight for?

Baek Wha

What a sublime pledge.

Prince

But... Baek Wha. We never had time to express our deep feeling for each other like other people. It is a pity that we have to part in this way every time.

Baek Wha

One may say that to indulge in a sweet dream in peace time is the only life. But don't you think that others may also say that to be crushed like a jade in war time can also be another life? I do hope that your high ambition wouldn't be numbed by a girl. If you forget your high ambition, this kingdom will also lose its hope.

Prince

Ah. You are the only person who fills my heart with strength.

Baek Wha

Since I have heard that you are going to fight to the last man, I came to see you off to the battle.

Prince

Baek Wha. If I don't return from the battle, I will wait for you in the next world.

(Baek Wha weeps.)

Prince

Baek Wha! (He embraces her.)

Baek Wha

I cannot stay any longer. I must withdraw from here.
(She frees herself from the Prince.)

*

This a common expression of the marriage promise which implies that they will live together for a hundred years.

Prince

Baek Wha!

(While Baek Wha and her waiting maid exit, the Prince gazes after them.)

Kim Bi

My lord. We have to hurry. (As he pointing to the tower.) Ah! There's the King of Koryo! (The Prince looks at the tower. Wang Kun gives him a pretentious smile.)

Wang Kun

Aren't you the Prince of this kingdom?... Young gentlemen! Where are you going with the Prince?

Prince

Oh, Great King. What has brought you out here by yourself?

Wang Kun

I am taking a little walk after fine drinks and beautiful music.

Prince

Don't make yourself too comfortable believing that you are in a southern kingdom. Although the weather is generally mild, there are occasionally adverse winds and tornadoes. Please be careful not to get hurt.

Wang Kun

Prince! What do you mean?

Prince

I have heard that you have distributed precious gifts from your kingdom to hundreds of officials in Silla. But I wonder why you didn't give me one.

Wang Kun

You say spiteful things to me. First, the purpose of my visit to Silla is to unite our brotherly kingdoms instead of antagonizing each other in this difficult time. There are too many murders among the three kingdoms. Second, I came to see the thousand year old culture of this kingdom to model our own after years. Third, since I have been

exhausted by the business of politics, I want to refresh myself in the clean air and beautiful scenery of Silla.

Prince

Why are you trying to dodge the main point? If you try to pull your feet from the dirt, they'll be sucked deeper into the mud.

Wang Kun

Do you think I came here for some other purpose?

Prince

You have already destroyed our castles of Haji, Myung Ju, Jin Bo, Myung Ji, Kyung San, Ko Ul, Kun Am and Jae Am. Furthermore, you have carried out atrocities on our peasants and soldiers. Now you are advocating a brotherly union between the two kingdoms. That is utter nonsense. If it is your true intention to enjoy the beautiful scenery and clean air, what is your intention of hiding the five thousand troops in the forest?

Wang Kun

(He is surprised.) Five thousand troops?

Prince

You cannot deceive me.

Wang Kun

I am the king of a nation. I brought them in order to meet any unexpected incident.

Prince

Then why did you tell us that you brought only fifty guards?

Wang Kun

(Hesitatingly.) ... that, ... that is...

(At this moment, the Princess Rang Nang runs in. She is followed by Sun Piel and her waiting maid. They are followed by the King of Silla.)

Rang Nang

Dear father. You disappeared from me in the palace. What are you doing here?

Kim Bi

(As he points to the tower.) My lord. His Highness.

Prince

What a pity. My father!

Sun Piel

The Prince is down there.

King

Prince! (The Prince, who is trying to escape from the scene, is stopped.) What is the reason that you have presented yourself neither to the welcoming party nor to the greeting of the King of Koryo?

Prince

Is it necessary for me to dance at ill fortune?

King

Is that any way to talk to your father? Well. Why don't you come up to the tower and greet the Princess of Koryo. Since the King of Koryo and I have contracted the brotherhood, the Prince and the Princess must become step-brother and step-sister. From now on you should act in that way to each other.

Prince

Yes. My lord.

Sun Piel

Princess. I think it is proper for you to go down and greet the Prince.

Rang Nang

(Shyly.) Well... How?

Sun Piel

The Prince is now your elder brother.

Prince

Ha, ha, ha! ... elder brother?

King

Prince! Don't you hear my words? Why don't you greet the Princess?

Prince

(Hesitatingly.) Sister from Koryo, the northern kingdom. How troublesome it was for you to come such a long way?

Rang Nang

(Blushing.) Thanks heartedly.

Sun Piel

(As he intentionally laughs loudly.) Heh, heh, heh... They already look like they have been brother and sister for a hundred years.

Prince

(Seriously.) I am talking to the father-king! Why is the King of Koryo wearing the Holy Belt of the Great King Jin Pyung, which is one of the three national treasures?

King

What do you mean?

Prince

Father-king! Please listen! Wang Kun is a subject of the King Taebong. He is a traitor who usurped the throne by assassinating the king about ten years earlier...

Wang Chul

Great King!

Wang Kun

What an improper way of talking!

King

Prince!

Prince

Before you accuse me, please blame the record of history. I am saying nothing more than what is written in the annals of history.

Wang Kun

(As he trembles.) Is there nothing which you will not say? You rascal!

Prince

Ha, ha, ha... The Great King of Koryo, please control your temper. (To his friends.) Let's go our own way.

(The Prince and his friends quickly exit.)

Wang Kun

Damn! And from a prince of such a shaky kingdom.

Wang Chul

I cannot tolerate it.

Rang Nang

Indeed. It was more than he should have said.

King

My lord. Your indignation makes me feel extremely uneasy. It is the mere talk of a young boy. For the sake of this aged king, please calm yourself.

Rang Nang

Father. Please forgive the Prince.

King

Everything is my fault. Please don't be angry.

Wang Kun

(Angrily.) Princess. Go into the palace.

(The Princess Rang Nang, who is frightened by her father's anger, exits. The King follows her. The waiting maid and lady attendant follow.)

Wang Kun

I can no longer tolerate it. Kill the Prince instantly!

Wang Chul

Yes! (He draws his sword and waves it aloft in the air.)

Sun Piel

No! The day when you kill the Prince will be the day when you will lose the land under the sky.

Wang Kun

... what?

Sun Piel

The Prince has been the star of Silla... the column of this kingdom. How are you planning to control the rage of the citizens of Silla who believes that the Prince is the only person who can save their kingdom? You can't kill the Prince. It is impossible to root out the remaining wrath among the people. If you kill the Prince, your idea for the unification of the three kingdoms will face great difficulty.

Wang Kun

Does that mean that I have to swallow this shame?

Sun Piel

Since I have served in this kingdom, I understand the people's feeling very well.

Wang Kun

(Loudly.) Well. Then leave him alone! (He thinks a moment and then speaks quietly.) ... then, I will trust only you.

(Curtain)

ACT TWO

That night in the chamber of the Princess Rang Nang in the palace of Silla. The chamber is well decorated with many art works of Silla. With her maid, the Princess Rang Nang sings while she accompanies herself on the Kayakum.*

In the clear night sky
of Suhrabuhl
as though looking in his eyes
the thousand year old castle
dczes
in a night fog.

The flaring willow
by the winding stream
where the King Mun Moo⁺
tied his horse
where Kim Yu Sin[&]
a loyal subject sleeps.

When we enter
the Temple of Four Heavenly Kings
wealth and opulence
from encircling murals
touch the sky.

Maid

(As soon as The Princess Rang Nang finishes her song.) Princess. What has happened to you? You are singing much better than when you were in Songto.

Rang Nang

The beautiful night makes my songs even prettier.
(As she is going towards the window railings.) How beautiful

*This is a Korean string musical instrument which is similar to Japanese Koto.

⁺A famous king of Silla who unified the three kingdoms in the seventh century.

[&]A valiant general of Silla.

the night of Suhrabuhl is! Look at those stars! The stars are sparkling like the eyes of an ancient princess who has just awakened in a silk bed, don't you think? How splendid they are!

Maid

Everything seems extremely elegant in this kingdom, maybe it's due to the mild climate.

Rang Nang

Though the great halls in this palace are stained with dust and are decaying, the long history and magnificent style make them far superior to ours. And the manners of the officials both civil and military are also very dignified...

Maid

However, they seem to lack any spirit.

Rang Nang

What are you talking about? Didn't you see what happened on the tower today? The strong and noble character of the Prince? You couldn't find such an heroic character in Koryo.

Maid

He made me rather angry. His arrogant manner to our Great King...

Rang Nang

Of course. And shouldn't I be angry too? But I must admire his manly spirit which does not know how to bend to anything.

Maid

Our Prince Mu is as manly as he is, isn't he?

Rang Nang

Never. It is impossible to find another such noble character in all the three kingdoms. Do you remember that today the King of Silla made us step-brother and step-sister? To make him my brother is the best gift I have ever received in this kingdom.

Maid

Is he such a great man?

Rang Nang

You don't have an eye for judging a man. Needless to say my father-king and even Sun Piel old man* who never admires anyone, have praised the Prince to me. I have an eye for judging people. Wait and see. The man who will make this kingdom a great nation will be no other than the Prince... even throughout the rest of the two kingdoms...(As though she is fascinated by something, she starts to sing again.)

My songs
where are you going?
over the mountain
over the stream
where are you going?

Look at Venus
she sings to me
as she hears my songs.

When I am singing
and sending my smiles
the stars are singing
like children.

(The King, who is led by Wang Kun, enters the chamber. He is followed by the ladies of the palace and Sun Piel.)

King

(He is enchanted by the Princess Rang Nang's song.)
How beautiful her singing is! For the past five years since I was enthroned, there has been nothing but tears and cries in this palace. Now what has suddenly happened?

Rang Nang

Dear father. What has brought you here at this late hour?

Wang Kun

Oh, we are just returning from the Moon Tower where we were watching the moonrise.

*"Old man" is used to express a certain degree of respect for an elderly man.

1

King

In spite of the lateness of the hours, your beautiful singing tempted me to visit you.

Rang Nang

Your Gracious Highness.

King

What do you mean by Your Gracious Highness? I am nobody but your uncle. Well, call me uncle!

Rang Nang

Ah, how?

King

Don't be shy! Please!

Rang Nang

...un, uncle.

King

What a praiseworthy way of behaving! Ah, Princess! (Out of his affection for her, he suddenly tries to embrace her.)

Rang Nang

(As she struggles to free herself from the arms of the King.) Ah! What are they?

King

What do you mean? Ah. They are the summits of mountains.

Rang Nang

Ah! Look at the fire!

King

The monks are having a Buddhistic service at the Whang Yong Temple. Tonight eight hundred and eighty temples of this kingdom are having their services simultaneously in order to pray for your father-king's health and long life.

Rang Nang

The sounds of wooden gongs are quite loud. You can hear them, can't you?

Maid

They are certainly loud.

King

Ha, ha, ha... Your Highness. You must be very happy. How happy I would be if I had a daughter like the Princess!

Wang Kun

Of all my children I love her most. That is the reason why I brought her here in spite of the journey.

King

There is no question about it.

Wang Kun

Your Highness. Let us sit down for a moment.

King

(As if he is embarrassed, he sits down.) It seems to me I am the one who is playing the role of the guest. Ha, ha, ha... By the way, how do you like this chamber? After my coronation, I reconstructed this palace which was destroyed by the soldiers of Jin Won. I understand that everything might be uncomfortable for the Princess. (As he asks Wang Kun to sit down.) Great King. Let us rest here for a moment.

Wang Kun

Yes. (He sits down.)

King

You must be tired after the party.

Wang Kun

I enjoy the music. As long as I am listening to that music, I don't think I will ever be old for at least a hundred years.

King

Ha, ha, ha... You mean that music? I rather feel a kind of shame. Even up to a few years ago, there were many precious things in the palace. But as soon as our fortune began to decline, everything else followed suit.

Wang Kun

It is not necessary for Your Highness to worry. As long as I am in this world, the savages can never successfully attack your territories.

King

If not for your help, it would be impossible for me to stay on the throne.

Rang Nang

Ah. I am sleepy. Father-king! Why do you continue such useless talk?

King

I wonder what subject the Princess likes to talk about?

Rang Nang

Whenever I hear what has happened to Hu Baekjae, and our kingdoms are such and such... This little girl* begins to yawn.

Sun Piel

I know what the Princess means. Since the Prince of this kingdom has sent strange signs to her with his eyes, I presume the Princess now wants to hear about him.

King

(As he feels a kind of shameful jealousy.) Is it true?

Sun Piel

Princess! Why don't you answer?

*She is lowering herself when she talks to someone whom she respects.

Rang Nang

(As she turns away coyly.) What an old...

Sun Piel

Heh, heh, heh...

Rang Nang

The old man is making a mockery out of me for nothing.

King

Great King. I feel responsible for the unexpected discourtesy which was caused by the Prince. Because of his young age, the Prince has a short temper. Please, don't get too angry!

Wang Kun

There's nothing to be angry about. I admired his high spirit as well as his sense of duty to his kingdom. However, it was regrettable that he didn't understand my true intention. According to the Prince, it sounded like I came to this kingdom with an evil scheme.

Sun Piel

Great King. Allow me to speak. Everything was the Prince's fault. How could our benevolent Great King possibly plot such an evil scheme? I am sure that the Prince will some day be impressed by the Great King's heart.

King

He certainly will.

Rang Nang

You are starting it all over again.

King

Ha, ha, ha!... the Princess acts like a wild flower which dislikes complicated world affairs.

Sun Piel

Great King. The night is old.

King

When I look at the Princess, I feel like all the wrinkles of my mind have suddenly become smooth again. Although I'd like to stay here longer, we must go. Since it is already late, the Princess must go to bed.

Wang Kun

I have something to tell Rang Nang. I will be a little late.

King

Great King. Please let the Princess see the old king off.

Wang Kun

Princess. Please see your uncle off.

Rang Nang

Yes...

Sun Piel

(To the ladies of the palace.) Be careful when you accompany the king. (The King, who is accompanied by the ladies of the palace, exits. He is followed by the Princess and her maid. As soon as the King exits, Wang Kun and Sun Piel roar with laughter.)

Wang Kun

Ha, ha, ha!... What an innocent old fellow.

Sun Piel

What a truly easy-going saint! Heh, heh, heh...

Wang Kun

If the Prince is as easy to trick as he is, the whole picture will look totally different.

Sun Piel

As far as I see, the innocent old king is caught in the trap which was set for the Prince.

Wang Kun

Anyway, someone is trapped. It doesn't matter who it is. Don't you think the Princess likes the Prince?

Sun Piel

Although she gave us such an impression, it might not be the truth... Anyway, it seems to me everything will be carried out as we have planned.

Wang Kun

By the way, Sun Piel. Have you sent guards to search for the assassins?

Sun Piel

I have already called one hundred soldiers into the palace to guard against the assassins.

Wang Kun

Do you have a report from the search party which was sent out to follow the Prince?

Sun Piel

There's no report yet.

Wang Kun

I wonder what has happened to them?

Sun Piel

Well. There is some good news which will make our Great King happy. During the day, Sul Hyo and Choi Whal decided to stand on the side of our Great King. And during the night, Kim Bong Kyu, an attendant of the king, and Scholar Choi Un Yeu, a member of the Royal Academy, and many other people who are against the Prince, swore to become the loyal subjects of our Great King.

Wang Kun

What welcoming news! Everything is due to your meritorious service.

Sun Piel

Heh, heh, heh...

Wang Kun

While I am staying in this palace, you must try to win the support of every official both civil and military. Never neglect to keep your mind ready for their opening up their minds to us. While we are pretending to show them everything we will learn everything from them.

Sun Piel

Since the great officers of this kingdom were all killed in the Battle of Posuckjung, the remaining officers are all young and inexperienced. Consequently, we can easily carry out our scheme.

(The Princess Rang Nang, who is accompanied by her maid, enters laughing cheerfully.)

Rang Nang

Ho, ho, ho... The King of this kingdom is such a strange person.

Wang Kun

Princess! Why are you laughing?

Rang Nang

Dear father. Look at this. The king of this kingdom gave me this bracelet.

Sun Piel

(As he looks at the bracelet.) The bracelet which has been worn by the King! (He is surprised. He and Wang Kun roar with laughter.)

Rang Nang

Strange! Why are you laughing?

Sun Piel

Nothing! Nothing! Nothing at all!

(At this moment, someone knocks at the door.)

Someone

My lord.

Wang Kun

Who can it be?

Sun Piel

I don't know.

(Sun Piel opens the door. Wang Chul and Kyum Yong, who are dressed in their armor, enter.)

Wang Kun

Oh. It's Wang Chul and Kyum Yong.

Sun Piel

Kyum Yong. What has happened to the search party?

Kyum Yong

I heard that they were slain in the back garden of Yu Ryum's house.

Wang Kun

In the back garden of Yu Ryum?

Wang Chul

I must report to Your Highness. It seems to me that something horrendous is going to happen in the palace tonight.

Wang Kun

What do you mean?

Wang Chul

I have heard that the Prince and his friends are going to use their alternative method since their scheme of using the assassin has been revealed.

Wang Kun

An alternative method?

Sun Piel

I wonder whether they are intending to fight against our five thousand troops hidden in the forest?

Wang Kun

Wang Chul. Run to the camp immediately and place the troops on alert. Kyum Yong. Go and order the guards to patrol the palace. Report to me everything including the movement of an ant.

(Wang Chul and Kyum Yong exit as they answer "Yes!")

Wang Kun

There is no doubt that Yu Ryum has been agitating the Prince and his friends to make trouble.

Sun Piel

Yu Ryum has been taking advantage of the Prince since he is in love with his daughter. In stirring up the Prince, he seems to have an eye to the future as father-in-law of the Prince. He would be in a position of power.

Rang Nang

Do you mean the Prince loves a woman whose name is Baek Wha?

Wang Kun

(He is surprised by the Princess. He signals Sun Piel avoiding the eyes of the Princess.)

Sun Piel

...well. Since Baek Wha is such an ugly girl, the Prince doesn't even bother to open his eyes in front of her.

Rang Nang

Is that true?

Sun Piel

Yes. That's right!

Wang Kun

You certainly do speak the truth.

Sun Piel

Since it is already after midnight, I think it will be good for Your Highness to retire to the bed chamber.

Wang Kun

(As he stands up.) I don't think I can sleep again tonight. Rang Nang, be careful while you are asleeping.

Rang Nang

Yes, I will.

Sun Piel

Please have a sweet dream during the first night in Silla.

(Wang Kun and Sun Piel exit. The maid is already busy making the bed for the Princess.)

Rang Nang

I wonder what Baek Wha looks like. I have heard that the women in Suhrabuhl have noble characters and high virtue although they are not pretty.

Maid

I think she is an ugly girl.

Rang Nang

Why do you think that way?

Maid

Isn't Baek Wha's father urging the Prince to harm our Great King? Since she is the daughter of such a man, she could not be pretty.

Rang Nang

You speak well. However, I wonder why there is always fighting wherever we go. I thought Silla was a better kingdom than ours. Like our kingdom, Silla also has many internal fights and personal jealousies. I suppose wherever people are living there is a kingdom. And where a kingdom is, there is always fighting.

Maid

I truly believe it.

Rang Nang

I am quite confused. Put the light out. Let' go to bed.

(The maid extinguishes the light. The moonlight pierces through the window. The sound of gongs are heard at a distance in the quiet night.)

Rang Nang

Those must be the sounds of gongs from the mountain temples. (As though talking to herself.)... I am praying. Please wipe away the horrible human temptation of murder among the people. (The sounds of gongs are again heard at a distance.) Ah! The moonlight is so beautiful... (A pause.) Maid! Shut the window. A strange apprehensiveness is penetrating my mind. It must be caused by the extremely bright moonlight.

Maid

(She tries to shut the window. But she is suddenly frightened. She must have seen something through the window.) Oh dear! What can that shadow be?

Rang Nang

Where?

Maid

Right down there!

Rang Nang

According to his way of climbing, perhaps...

Maid

Ah!

Rang Nang

Probably... He must be an assassin.

Maid

(She is frightened.) An assassin? Ah! (She tries to hide herself behind the Princess.)

Rang Nang

Maid. Go and call Kyum Yong! Quickly!

Maid

Please! Princess also...

(For a moment the stage is empty. At last the window is slowly opened and a man in black dress enters with a dagger in his hand. His breath is short as if he has been chased by some one. Along with the sound of many footsteps the clashing sounds of swords and spears are heard from the outside. These sounds are mixed with the voices of people shouting as if someone is being called. Suddenly, all of the sounds cease.)

Prince

Finally I made it. (He looks around the chamber.) It looks like the Princess' chamber. Which one will be Wang Kun's room? (While he is looking around the chamber, he finds a bracelet.) This? (He takes his mask off to look at it.) Ah! My father-king's bracelet? After all, my father-king is ... the Princess! (Then he glances at the space with a bitter feeling. The sound of someone approaching the door is heard. He tries to jump out the window, but suddenly stops.) Ah! There're guards! Ah! Where shall I hide myself? (When he walks to the door, loud sounds of footsteps are heard. The door is suddenly opened. The Prince quickly hides himself behind the screen. Sun Piel, who is followed by the Princess and her maid, cautiously enters with a candle.)

Sun Piel

(He looks into the corners of the chamber with his candle light.) Heh, heh, heh... There isn't anything! Princess! I thought you were very brave. Why are you so cowardly?

Rang Nang

That isn't true. The maid and I saw a shadow crawling up the rail.

Maid

That's true.

Sun Piel

It's hardly possible... (As he is beginning to inspect the surroundings, he lights all the candles. The chamber suddenly becomes bright.)

Kyum Yong

(As he suddenly enters.) Sun Piel. Have you been here long? I heard that an assassin has secretly entered the palace. Be careful!

Sun Piel

In that case, what the Princess has told me must be true.

Kyum Yong

Sir?

Sun Piel

She told me she had seen the shadow of a man crawling up the rails.

Kyum Yong

(Sun Piel and Kyum Yong briefly inspect the chamber again.) I don't think anyone is around here.

Sun Piel

Princess! Please do not worry. You can sleep now. I see neither a bird nor a rat in the chamber.

Rang Nang

It is hard for me to comprehend the situation.

Maid

It is strange.

Sun Piel

I believe you must have had a dream. Since you are in a strange place, it is natural to have an unusual dream. If you have the same dream again, please just call us instead of making a trip by yourself. I'll stay awake in the next room for the Princess... So... (As he goes out, he talks quietly to Kyum Yong.) Kyum Yong, send the guards into the palace and try to catch the assassin. Don't miss him!

Kyum Yong

Don't worry. Now he is a fish in the net. He is trapped.

(Sun Piel and Kyum Yong exit quickly.)

Rang Nang

(She looks at the maid with anxious eyes. She is disturbed.) Ho, ho, ho... Probably, we were mistaken about it.

Maid

I am very sorry for my careless remark.

Rang Nang

(She stretches.) Ah... Now I can sleep with my legs out stretched.*

(The Maid looks through the window again.)

Rang Nang

It seems like someone is looking at us through the window. Block the window with the screen.

Maid

Yes.

(The Maid carries the screen to block the window. The Prince, who has been crouching down like a dead body, suddenly appears.)

Maid

(Leaping toward the Princess to hold on to her.) Ah! Princess!

Prince

Shhh--!

Rang Nang

Don't you dare touch us!

Prince

If you make a noise, I'll instantly... (When he waves his arm, the dagger shines.)

Rang Nang

Coward! I'll scream.

Prince

Shhh! (With his hand, he covers the mouth of the Princess who is ready to shout.)

*This means that a relaxed man can sleep with his legs stretched while a worried man sleeps with his legs bent.

Rang Nang

(The Princess Rang Nang, who is in the arms of the Prince, stares at his face for a moment.) Well. Who are you?

Prince

If you make a noise, you'll be instantly killed.

Rang Nang

Aren't you the prince of this kingdom?

Prince

Ha! I'm impressed that you recognize me.(He takes off his mask.)

Rang Nang

Ah! Really!

Prince

Where's your father, the enemy of Silla? I'm not killing you because I want to know where his bed chamber is. Tell me quickly! If you'll not tell me, I'll instantly...

Rang Nang

(As if she is determined.) Please, kill me!

Prince

Aren't you going to tell me quickly? (He lifts his dagger over the Princess Rang Nang.)

(At this moment, loud sounds are heard. The Prince is frightened.)

Sun Piel

(From the outside.) Princess! Why aren't you sleeping?

Rang Nang

Ah, Sun Piel old man?

Sun Piel

Yes. It is I.

Rang Nang

Please, don't open the door. I am changing into my sleeping dress...

Sun Piel

Sleeping dress?

Rang Nang

Yes.

Sun Piel

I thought I heard a man's voice.

Rang Nang

No, I don't think so.

Sun Piel

I see. (The sound of his returning to his chamber is heard.)

Rang Nang

Prince! Why are you so cowardly? I thought of you as an example for all men. Can the man whom I have respected so much not do better than this? Do all men of Suhrabuhl act in this way? If one wants to kill one's enemy, one must openly fight against him until he crushes himself like a jade. But why does one have to climb up the railings into a woman's chamber with a dagger in the night like a treacherous subject? ... (She takes the dagger away from the Prince and throws it down.) With the intention of threatening a weaker sex with this. How cowardly! In my wildest dream I never imagined the Prince of Silla to be such a coward! I never imagined it even in a dream!

(The Princess Rang Nang begins to cry. The Prince drops his head without saying a word.)

Rang Nang

(As she wipes her tears away.) Well. If you still want to kill me, please go ahead. If you hate the King of Koryo, Wang Kun, you must kill me first.

Prince

...

Rang Nang

Why don't you kill me? Now, kill me!

Prince

(As he drops his sword.) Ah! Woe is me. (He tries to drag himself out through the door. But the Princess Rang Nang blocks him.) Why are you blocking me?

Rang Nang

Outside this door, there are...

Prince

You mean Sun Piel is outside this door. And there are five thousand troops outside this window...

Rang Nang

So the Prince will be instantly...

Prince

Let me go. If I have to die, I'd rather jump into the middle of the enemies to die instead of waiting for them to come to me.

Rang Nang

No. Don't say that. Please hide yourself here.

Prince

(He trembles as he talks.) Ah! The enemy. I am surrounded by the enemy. The Prince of Silla is totally surrounded by his enemy in the middle of his own palace.

(Curtain)

ACT THREE

The next day. The entrance of Imhae(seaside) Hall. The sign of Imhae Hall is hanging on the wall. Through the central entrance we see the imperial garden. The left entrance leads to the banquet hall, while the right leads to the room used by the actors. Some actors, who are wearing masks and interesting costumes, go in and out frequently. Since this day marks the height of the banquet, many kinds of lamplights and flags deck the ceiling and the edges of the building. The sounds of loud music are heard in the distance.

Finally Wang Kun, the King of Koryo, enters with Sun Piel, Wang Chul, and Kyum Yong.

Wang Kun

(Angrily.) Stupid! You fellows are without guts! With more than a hundred guards including the night patrols, none of you caught the assassin!

Everyone

(Silence.)

Wang Kun

(To Kyum Yong.) Furthermore, I have told you to control the outside of the castle. What did you do during the night?

Kyum Yong

Allow me to speak. Last night I saw a dark shadow emerged from the bushes. It passed the gate and began to crawl towards the Princess' chamber. And as soon as I saw it I sent a guard to chase it, but by that time it had already disappeared. Now I think that the shadow wasn't a human being at all. I believe it must have been the shadow of a ghost.

Sun Piel

I also think so. Great King! Please, don't be too angry.

Wang Kun

You are trying to shut me up by saying it was a ghost or something like that. But don't think you can deceive me so easily. As far as I can see, the behavior of the Prince and his followers is extremely suspicious. Furthermore, Yu Ryum and many officials have refused to attend the banquet saying that they have been ill. The Prince has also been talking against me to these people. According to the standard of courtesy, all of these are unusual incidents. I am extremely disturbed. By all means, you must recover from last night's failure. You must secretly bring our troops in the Baek Ri Forest into the palace and be ready for an emergency. Don't neglect to communicate frequently with the troops.

Sun Piel

Allow me to say that when the festivities reach their highest point, we must disguise someone as our Great King.

Kyum Yong

Please don't ignore his scheme.

Wang Kun

I think it is a fine idea. I hope everything will be carried out under your supervision. Since many people suspect me, I must immediately return to the banquet. Don't forget to use your brains and strategies before you use your swords.

Sun Piel

Great King, please don't be disturbed.

(Wang Kun exits to the right.)

Wang Chul

How in the world did you miss the assassin? He must have been in the palace when you were there. You missed him...

Sun Piel

It is truly unfortunate!

Wang Chul

Now we must find an excuse to bring our troops into the palace. If you had caught the assassin, that would have

been an excellent excuse.

Sun Piel

According to the old saying, even one mistake can always happen to a man of arm. There is no use being upset about it.

Wang Chul

Damn! It's still disappointing.

Sun Piel

Call Sul Hyo! You and he guard this gate. (As he points to the main gate.) Meanwhile, let Kyum Yong hide himself in the outer garden to direct the patrols.

Wang Chul

Since many people use this gate, it would be easy for an assassin to pass through it. So I think it should be guarded by Kyum Yong instead of Sul Hyo.

Sun Piel

Since everyone knows Kyum Yong has just come over to our side, he will be readily suspected by the people.

Kyum Yong

True.

Sun Piel

Kyum Yong. Call Sul Hyo immediately! Let him mix with the actors to watch what is going on outside. In an emergency send me a message through Kyum Yong. I'll then inform Wang Chul to bring the troops into the palace. Well. Kyum Yong, bring Sul Hyo to me.

Kyum Yong

Yes.

Sun Piel

Be careful! And be secret!

Kyum Yong

Don't worry!

(Kyum Yong looks around, then exits quickly.)

Sun Piel

Since the Prince and his party couldn't fulfill their purpose by means of an assassin last night, I am sure they will try to do something else today.

Wang Chul

Of course, true!

Sun Piel

Mobilize our troops near the North Gate and be ready to make an assault as soon as I signal you.

Wang Chul

Yes. I will.

Sun Piel

I will call Choi Whal and disguise him as our king.

Wang Chul

(When he notices that someone is approaching.) Shhh!
(Kim Bi, Kim Kon, Lee Yu, and Han Kong Tal enter. Sun Piel greets them with an obviously pretentious polite manner.)

Sun Piel

Where are you going? I think the good weather is perfect for music, dancing, and drinking.

Kim Bi

Sir, in addition to that, I think it's a good day to hear your flattery too.

Sun Piel

(Blushing.) What kind of talk is that? You should know how to accept a sincere greeting...

Kim Bi

Old Sun Piel, you have been a subject of Silla and served as a general of the Jaeam Castle until a few months ago. During that period, you were so busy browning your nose in this palace. You have already forgotten what you've done in this palace. Now you've gone over to Wang Kun and intrigued

to bring him here. Worst of all, you are now impudently threatening the throne of our king...

Sun Piel

Heh, heh, heh... The young cripple is unable to walk, the proud young man is unhappy. Nothing can be achieved by force. Heh, heh, heh...

Friends of the Prince

The enemy of justice!

Wang Chul

What?

Sun Piel

(As he hides behind Wang Chul.) Justice is only for those who know it. When a man takes a wider and surer road, one can say he has hold of justice.

Friends of the Prince

Damn! You are shameless! (The grip their swords as they approach Sun Piel.)

Sun Piel

Help! (He is frightened. He falls down and hits his hip on the ground.)

Wang Chul

Come! (He advances quickly to protect Sun Piel.)

Kim Bi

We'll see. I'll teach him a true lesson before too long!

Wang Chul

Teach him a lesson?

Sun Piel

(Mockingly.) Heh, heh, heh... yes... please...

Wang Chul

Let's go!

(Wang Chul and Sun Piel exit.)

Han Kong Tal

That's the fellow whom we ought to kill first.

Kim Bi

It is a terrible thing since that tricky fellow knows everything that goes on in the palace. I heard that the reason that Wang Kun brought him here as a vanguard is that he knows the inside of the palace as well as he would a bag he was looking at even though it were not turned inside out.

Kim Kon

First, we must cut his throat to show the traitors that is how they will be punished.

Lee Yu

Agreed! But I am afraid that it may give the enemies an excuse to attack us before we catch the rat. Don't you think so?

Han Kong Tal

Lee Yu, don't you think those fellows who are looking at us seem suspicious?

Lee Yu

They are suspicious.

Kim Bi

I think they believe that the Prince secretly entered the palace last night to assassinate Wang Kun. But it seems to me that they are still confused and without proof.

Lee Yu

Because they know our strong determination, I think they must be plotting an alternative scheme for an emergency.

Kim Kon

Well. Shall I follow them?

Lee Yu

Yes. Follow them secretly.

Han Kong Tal

Don't make them suspect you.

Kim Kon

Well. Then I'll see you later here...

Everybody

Yes.

(Kim Kon exits quickly.)

Kim Bi

By the way, Han Kong Tal, don't you think that the Prince has been acting a little strangely since this morning?

Han Kong Tal

Has he looked that way to you too?

Kim Bi

He told me his life was saved by staying in the Princess' chamber last night. Maybe it was because of his failure last night, that he came to my house and...

Han Kong Tal

Did he say anything?

Kim Bi

He kept his mouth tightly closed and said nothing.

Han Kong Tal

I wonder what made him do so? (A pause.) Nevertheless, I don't think there's any change in his plan. A little while ago he came here to watch Wang Kun and then left again.

Lee Yu

The Prince himself?

Kim Bi

Well, Han Kong Tal, watch Wang Kun during the height of the banquet. That will be the best chance. Lee Yu and I will go to the city to supervise the soldiers and patriots. If we fail in today's plan, we had better be ready to fight.

Han Kong Tal

I will take care of things here. Go quickly!

(Kim Bi and Lee Yu exit through the front gate. Han Kong Tal watches the surroundings and slips out left. The actors, who are wearing masks, return from the banquet to the preparation room. While walking, they dance. Kyum Yong and Sul Hyo enter quickly.)

Kyum Yong

Sul Hyo. What about that room? Through the chink in the door...

Sul Hyo

This room?

Kyum Yong

Yes. Pretend to play with the actors. I'll watch from the outside. When an emergency arrives whistle like this...

Sul Hyo

(As he is whistling like Kyum Yong.) Like this? Heh, heh, heh... (They laugh.) Don't worry.

(When Sul Hyo is entering into the preparation room, the Prince enters. They exchange their polite greetings.)

Prince

What are those sounds? ... Has someone died? Are they crying for a dead person?

Kyum Yong

Prince! What are you talking about? Someone dead? Today we are having the largest banquet in our kingdom.

Prince

Right. Someone is dead. Without question, someone is dead. Since a great one is dead, let everyone cry. Let them weep bitterly until their breasts burst open.

Kyum Yong

What a pity! He mistakes music for the sounds of crying and lamentation.

Sul Hyo

What happened to you?

Prince

Don't pity someone else. You should rather pity yourselves. If I don't pity you who mistakes the sounds of crying for music, whom shall I pity? Like the useless troops of frogs in a flooded river there are too many pitiable fellows who do not know how to pity themselves. No doubt, it's a pitiable thing.

(The lion tamer and his lion emerge from the preparation room. They are on their way to the banquet.)

Prince

Oh, a lion. (He takes up the lion's bridle and the whip from the tamer.) Well, come on! An invincible fellow! (When he swings the whip, the lion jumps as though he is dancing and chases Kyum Yong and Sul Hyo. They are frightened.) Ha, ha, ha... Come on! Lion! Stop it! Even if you are hungry, you shouldn't try to eat tadpoles. If you do, I pity you too. Why in the world couldn't you stay on the mountain? Why did you have to be dragged into the mud with a bell on your neck and be whipped by the actors...forced to go here and there... like a prince of a kingdom?

(At this moment the Princess Rang Nang enters. She is coming from the banquet.)

Prince

(As he is handing the lion's bridle and the whip to the tamer.) Take him to Wang Kun. And scare him... Let the lion get fat.

(The lion tamer and the lion exit to the left. During this time, Kyum Yong and Sul Hyo hide themselves in the preparation room.)

Rang Nang

Brother! Why don't you recognize me?

Prince

Who is the lady who calls me brother?

Rang Nang

Don't you recognize your sister?

Prince

Ha, ha, ha... Since I have heard that my father-king has a new concubine, I thought she was...

Rang Nang

Father-king's concubine? What are you talking about?

Prince

Why do you call me? If you have something to say, say it quickly.

Rang Nang

Did I do anything wrong to you last night? Why is my brother greeting me so coldly.

Prince

I am busy.

Rang Nang

Why are you trying to avoid me? If you treat me this way, it will do nothing but increase people's suspicion.

Prince

Suspicion?

Rang Nang

Ho, ho, ho... Don't you think I know your mind?

Prince

Don't talk like a child! Listen to the sounds of crying. How can one expect to be sane when one hears such sinful noises.

Rang Nang

I don't like that sound either. I can't stand being with the old officials from morning to night. (As she is pulling the Prince's hand.) Please, take this little girl to the outer garden. I was leaving the banquet to get a breath of fresh air.

Prince

If you want to go, you may. I have nothing to do with the Princess.

Rang Nang

Whenever I think of returning to Koryo, I am sad. I don't want to go anywhere. I just want to stay in this kingdom to serve my brother.

Prince

(Cynically.) Ha, ha, ha... Is that true?

Rang Nang

If they will let me stay here with my brother, I will give up everything.

Prince

You are too pretty to hook up with a worthless dragon in the dried well of the palace of Silla.

Rang Nang

Please don't regard me as a girl of Koryo... the daughter of your enemy. For my brother, I can give up my kingdom, including the title of princess.

Prince

A crafty girl! You have entwined my father-king in sex and now you are attempting to use the same scheme with me to take over the whole kingdom.

Rang Nang

What an unjustified thing to say!

Prince

I know your father's scheme. Even though this whole spiritless kingdom will be trapped by his plot, it is impossible for him to trap me.

Rang Nang

Ah. I am falsely accused! I explained it to you already last night. Why don't you believe me? (She cries.)

Prince

Go away! Don't try to numb my lofty purpose by robbing me of both my body and spirit! An ill-conceived woman!

(The King enters from the left.)

King

Prince! Why do you forget your station? ... like a insane man.

Prince

What is the use of my being a sane man in a world of insanity? I'd rather be an insane man and forget about this hateful world.

King

Has some horrendous thing happened to you?

Prince

An horrendous thing has not only happened to me but I believe that something unfortunate has happened to my father-king.

King

What are you talking about?

Prince

Your Highness! Whose bracelet is this?

King

What happened to it? I gave it to the Princess.

Prince

Please don't be frightened. When the world under the sky began declining, both heaven and earth swooned and may have produced an unexpected wily thing.

King

(Suspiciously.) Princess. How does the Prince happen to have this?

Prince

Princess! Answer!

Rang Nang

I wonder why my brother is trying to torment me. Had I the King's bracelet, would it be a fault or shameful thing?

King

(Affectionately.) ...Princess. Let's return to the banquet. If you had stayed there with me, everything would have been better. Because you left me, all this has happened.

Rang Nang

Since the Prince regards me as the most lowly girl under the sky, I want to know the reason. Prince! Why do you think I am a sinful girl?

King

Princess! Due to the strange weather, the Prince is suffering from delirium. So you shouldn't question him any more.

Prince

I don't think I am delirious. I do believe the sky is insane. The sun has also lost its place. I have since heard that the moon lost its course while it was traveling from East to West, and turned towards the North. So the sky must be insane. Because of the insanity of the sky, I think the king on the earth has forgotten his own kingdom and lost himself under the skirt of the neighbouring princess.

Rang Nang

(She stares at him.)

King

Prince! Is this the way for a subject to talk to his king? ... a son to his own father? Although you are insane, how can you forget about loyalty and filial piety?

Prince

Since you've started to talk about loyalty and filial piety, do you want me to talk about them? Today's loyalty and filial piety have been to mean that one must bend his waist to Jin Won or bow to Wang Kun whenever they have power, or that one must put an arm around the waist of the Princess Rang Nang because of her beauty... and...

Rang Nang

What an improper way of talking!

King

(As he grips his sword.) You disloyal and unfilial fellow! Shut your mouth! Or with this sword, I'll cut the veins in your tongue!

Prince

If that is what you wish, please do so. Please cut this unworthy life! I now want to say to Your Highness everything that is in my heart and bones. Father-king! Listen to me! I've heard that Wang Kun, the son of Wang Ryung, the Governing General of the State of Buck Han, is plotting to usurp the throne of Silla by using his pretty daughter. While the King of Silla is licking the hands of the Princess, his subjects are sucking the toenails of the King of Koryo. What lamentable things! ... What is the purpose of the sounds of music and dance? (He begins to cry.)

King

Ah! (He is deeply troubled.)

Prince

(As he wipes his tears, he takes his sword and hands it to the King.) ...Now please kill me! Before a thousand year old history is destroyed and the sublime capital of this kingdom becomes a wasteland, you must kill me.

King

I don't want to see you any more. Go away! Get out! Quickly!

Prince

If that's your order, I'll go. I can't but suffer anguish of heart since you haven't changed your opinion. I wish you did not have to carry this thousand year old kingdom on your back since you have such weak character. In that case all of us would be much better off than we are now. During the unfortunate time for both our kingdom and family since you have ascended the throne, you have invited the savage with one hand while trying to manipulate the traitor with the other. When we think about all this, I think the man who was born as the prince of this kingdom must have committed a great sin in his past life... like my father-king.

King

I don't want to hear you!

Prince

I appeal to you... my father. Please stay away from that young woman. (He tries to walk away.)

Rang Nang

(As she blocks the Prince.) Prince! What do you mean?

Prince

(As he pushes her away.) Don't stand in my way.

Rang Nang

You're pushing me!

(The Prince walks out.)

Rang Nang

Prince

(The Princess Rang Nang stares at the departing Prince. Then she throws her fan away as if she has suddenly become determined about something.)

King

Princess!

Rang Nang

(As she grinds her teeth.) Let's see! You have stepped on a woman's heart! Well. You hate me because I am the daughter of your enemy. Now I will show you the sharp side of the enemy.

Maid

Princess!

Rang Nang

Bring my father!

Maid

(Silence.)

King

Princess! Let's go back into the palace! You shouldn't go anywhere. You should stay with me and comfort me for the rest of my life.

Rang Nang

I don't want to listen. I hate everything!

King

(As he holds her.) Princess. You don't know the problem. Though you cannot see it outwardly, the Prince has lost his sense and doesn't know what he is doing like a reed in a fickle wind.

Rang Nang

Please leave me alone. My wish is to harm the Prince with my dagger and then to kill myself.

King

Princess.

(The Princess Rang Nang exits in the same direction as the Prince. Her hand on the dagger hidden in her bosom.)

Maid

I wonder what she intends to do?

King

Go! And stop the Princess!

Maid

Yes!

(The Maid quickly exits following the Princess.)

King

(Talking to himself.) The Princess too... If I lose her, what will become of me?

(The King, who has been looking after the Princess, exits to the left.)

Sul Hyo

(As he steals out with Kyum Yong from the preparation room.) What is happening? The King likes the Princess, but she likes the Prince. And the Prince hates both the King and the Princess...

Kyum Yong

No. I think the Prince loves the Princess.

Sul Hyo

I don't think so. How could a man in love hates her so intensively?

Kyum Yong

Well. Because he loves her, he hates her. How can a man like you not understand the situation? Don't you think that the Prince has answered the King in such a harsh way only because he loves both the King and the Kingdom?

Sul Hyo

True.

Kyum Yong

The same is true in this case, isn't it? According to this logic. I am sure that something must have happened between the Prince and the Princess last night. Let's wait and see. Although I am one-eyed, I see things correctly... Anyway, we must let Sun Piel know this. Nevertheless, it is strange.

Sul Hyo

Then go quickly!

Kyum Yong

You must hide yourself here.

(The sweating lion tamer enters with his lion. They are returning to the preparation room after a lion dance. Kim Kon and the Prince enter through the main gate. Kim Kon is breathing heavily. He is excited about something as though he has fought with someone.)

Kim Kon

Prince, a grave thing has happened. The enemies suspect us and have began to send out patrols. Because

Sun Piel has been acting in a strange way, I've followed him secretly. And such an awful... With the help of a few dozen soldiers, he and Wang Chul kidnapped Lord Sang Tae Tung and have taken him to the camp of their troops.

Prince

My uncle!

Kim Kon

They must think that he is the prime mover, and we are acting under his command.

Prince

Ah... Damn it!

Kim Kon

I was too impatient while watching the alarming situation and killed a few soldiers. But there was no contending against such heavy odds, so I had to return here.

Prince

Now they are planning to challenge us.

Kim Kon

(While wiping the blood from his hand, he looks around him.) I wonder where Lee Yu and Han Kong Tal are?

(Han Kong Tal steals out from the left.)

Kim Kon

Kong Tal!

Han Kong Tal

I am glad to see you. I passed by Wang Kun in the court, I think they have noticed our plan.

Prince

(As he grips his sword.) Where?

Kim Kon

I wonder whether he is still there or not.

Han Kong Tal

(Pointing.) Look. Wang Kun is there by himself with a fan. Indulging in some private thought...

Prince

An obstinate and heartless fellow! A fellow with snake's eyes who doesn't care what he does to satisfy his personal desire. What is he thinking?

Kim Kon

At this moment, we must!

Prince

Let me strike the thief.

Han Kong Tal

No. It isn't the right time. Not now!

Kim Kon

Let me kill him.

Prince

Leave me alone. (He draws his sword and lifts it aloft in the air.) Don't you worry about heavenly justice? (At this moment, Sul Hyo, who has been watching the Prince, staggers out from the preparation room. He is alarmed. The Prince suddenly turns around to cast his eyes at him. Then he starts to sing.)

Slow cold
the blowing northerly wind.

Boy
don't stand in the way
you may block the wind.

Sul Hyo

(He has been watching the Prince disconcertedly. When the Prince is exiting to the left.) My lord! Where are you going?

Han Kong Tal

Can't you stay away?

(While the Prince slips out through the left entrance, Han Kong Tal and Kim Kon stop Sul Hyo.)

Sul Hyo

(He whistles, facing the garden. He is signaling to someone.)

Han Kong Tal

Sul Hyo!

Sul Hyo

(As if he is not listening to him, he whistles again.)

Han Kong Tal

Damn! (He quickly strikes Sul Hyo. Sul Hyo defends himself with his sword. Then Kim Kon strikes him fatally.)

Kim Kon

(As he looks at Sul Hyo.) Damn! A stupid outrageous rash act! Never show up again in my sight!

Kyum Yong

(Entering.) I am sure the sound of whistling came from this direction. (He looks around.) Ah! It's Sul Hyo! (He looks down at Sul Hyo's body.) I must report to Sun Piel. (He runs out.)

Kim Kon

A traitor! Kyum Yong!

(Kim Kon stops him. Kyum Yong draws his sword. Han Kong Tal and Kim Kon fight against him. Kyum Yong strikes Han Kong Tal fatally. Kim Kon is chased by Kyum Yong. Kim Kon drops his sword. Suddenly a screaming sound is heard.)

Kyum Yong

(Suddenly stops.) What is that sound? (He wanders around for a second. Then he hides himself.)

(A moment of silence. Wang Kun staggers in through the left entrance and collapses. He is bleeding. The Prince follows him waving his bloodstained sword.)

Prince

A treacherous thief! Wang Kun! (He lifts his sword and strikes him. Wang Kun dies.) Damn! Dirty! (He wipes his sword and puts it into his scabbard.)

Kyum Yong

(He has been waiting for a chance to attack the Prince. He steals out and tries to attack him from behind.) Prince! Take this sword! (At this moment, the Princess Rang Nang and the Maid enter. The Princess is alarmed.)

Maid

Princess!

(The Princess Rang Nang takes out her dagger and throws it at Kyum Yong.)

Rang Nang

Kyum Yong! A rascal!

Kyum Yong

What? (He turns around quickly.)

(At this moment, the Princess' dagger is stuck in Kyum Yong's back. Kyum Yong screams. The sword which is raised to strike the Prince slowly falls from Kyum Yong's hands.)

Maid

(As she looks at Wang Kun's body.) Princess! His Highness is...

Rang Nang

(As she crouches over Wang Kun's body.) Ah! Father! Ah! Father! (She cries.)

Kyum Yong

(As he opens his eyes.) Princess! Princess. Why did you strike me? (He falls back to the ground.)

Rang Nang

(Reluctantly.) ...Prince!

Prince

(Silence.)

Rang Nang

What shall I do? What shall I do?

Prince

Princess!

Rang Nang

(Wiping her tears.) Prince. Quickly escape from this place. Danger will come to you!

Prince

Princess! Why did you kill Kyum Yong who was trying to avenge your father's death? Why didn't you kill me?

Rang Nang

I don't know. I don't know why I wanted to save the man who killed my father-king.

Prince

Oh! Princess! (He is deeply moved and buries his head in her bosom.)

(The Maid remains sobbing near the body of Wang Kun. The sounds of music are still heard from the outside.)

(Curtain)

ACT FOUR

The night of the same day. Near Chiap Pond which is located in a corner of the palace of Silla. Yung Wol (Moon Welcoming) Hall stands near the pond. There is a stone bridge over the pond. The rails on the bridge are decorated with sculptures of lotus flower. A few quiet bushes surround the pond.

When the curtain goes up, we see Wang Kun, Sun Piel, Wang Chul, and a few guards. They all criticizing Kim Bu, the King of Silla.

Wang Kun

One redeeming feature in all this tragedy is that fortunately we disguised one of my subjects as me. Otherwise, I would have been killed by his sword. But all the same, what the Prince has done to my subject can be regarded as having been done to me. Your Highness! Do you pretend to have seen nothing even though I was supposedly killed in the middle of your palace?

King

(Silence.)

Wang Kun

It's intolerable! On one hand you make us drunk with wines and music at the banquet, on the other scoundrels attempt to cut my throat. What high treason! How immoral!

King

I have apologized to you many times, haven't I?

Wang Kun

What's the use of apology? It's clear it must have been carried out by Your Highness' order.

King

By my order?

Wang Kun

It was carried out with the help of everyone, wasn't it?

King

None of this makes any difference to the Prince. He is in a mental delirium. Because...

Wang Kun

What kind of excuse is that? The Prince is in a mental delirium? I am a national guest in this kingdom. You must bear the responsibility.

King

...I, I have to bear the responsibility?

Wang Kun

Are you going to persist in avoiding the responsibility?

King

Do whatever you want to do. In what way must you be satisfied?

Wang Kun

Call the Prince. You must cut off his head yourself.

King

...with, with this hand... cut the Prince's throat?

Wang Kun

Yes.

King

(Trembling.) ... I who have never even killed an ant... have to... the Prince's throat?

Wang Kun

Do you mean you can't?

King

I can't. Of course, I can't.

Wang Kun

Good. If you won't kill him, I'll instantly mobilize my five thousand troops to attack the palace.

King

Everything stems from my unworthiness... Please be patient.

Wang Kun

I can't wait any longer. Wang Chul!

Wang Chul

(Loudly.) Yes!

Wang Kun

Immediately attack the palace and the city.

Wang Chul

(As though he has been awaiting for the order.)
Yes! (To the soldiers.) All of you!

Soldiers

(Loudly.) Yes!

Wang Chul

(As he draws his sword.) Attack!

Soldiers

(Loudly.) Yes! (The soldiers exit exultantly following Wang Chul.)

King

King! What are you trying to do? Stop it! Stop it!

Wang Kun

Now I will let you see the power of our invincible army. Sun Piel!

Sun Piel

Yes.

Wang Kun

Let's go!

Sun Piel

Yes.

(Wang Kun exits. Sun Piel follows him. Sun Piel stops as though worried about something. Then he walks back to the king.)

Sun Piel

(Politely.) The five thousand hidden troops are those that have been led to every battle by the king himself. They are elite soldiers among soldiers. How are you going to fight against them? Why are you just sitting there? Are you going to let them repeat the brutality of the Battle of Posuckjung which happened only five years ago? Please don't stay here. Please take action before innocent citizens are killed.

King

Take action?

Sun Piel

There's no other way. What is the use of just worrying in this confusion? Please hand your kingdom over to the King of Koryo.

King

Do you mean I must surrender myself to him?

Sun Piel

If you surrender yourself to him, he'll not treat you ill. The King of Koryo is an extremely virtuous man. He'll never treat you wrong. You'll occupy a high position in Koryo if you'll help him unify the three kingdoms. Furthermore, you can spend the rest of your life with the Princess Rang Nang.

King

The rest of my life with the Princess?

Sun Piel

Of course. The Princess whom you love so dearly will become your second queen.

King

But don't you think that the Princess favors me only because I am king?

Sun Piel

If you don't make the decision now, you'll lose both the Princess and your kingdom.

King

Ah! Ah! (He is troubled.) Go away. Go away!

Sun Piel

Yes.

King

No. Wait a minute! (A pause.) Go away. Go away!

Sun Piel

Well. Since I have admonished him, he should relent..

King

This kingdom which was established with the cooperation of the six prefectures of Silla... by myself. No. It's impossible.

Sun Piel

In that case, please do whatever you wish. I'll no longer share in this matter. (He exits angrily.)

King

(Sighing deeply.) Ah. What has happened? Have I really committed many sins in a former life? Or does it mean that punishment is coming to the earth? (He ponders with drooping head.)

(The sound of an alarm bell is heard in the distance.)

King

(Lifting his head.) Ah! That sound?

(The King looks in the direction where the sound of alarm bell is heard. In that direction the sky is beginning to have a crimson glow. Kim Bi runs in suddenly and tries to

enter the hall. When he sees the King, he stops abruptly and bows to him.)

Kim Bi

Your Highness! The hidden troops of Koryo have begun to march toward the city.

King

Then... then... that fire?

Kim Bi

I think the troops of Koryo set fire to the North Gate.

King

Well. Finally...

Kim Bi

I had to run to inform Your Highness. I think Your Highness must leave the palace.

King

Where did the Prince go?

Kim Bi

I've been looking for the Prince also. Ever since the Prince killed an enemy today whom he thought was Wang Kun, he has disappeared.

King

I have an important matter to discuss with him. Send the people to search for him and bring him to me at once.

(The King exits.)

Kim Bi

(Talking to himself.) ... where can I find the Prince?

(Lee Yu and Kim Kon enter.)

Lee Yu

Kim Bi!

Kim Bi

What has happened?

Kim Kon

Is it true the troops of Koryo are the strongest army under the sky? Kim Bi, don't worry. Our soldiers are as strong as the troops of Koryo. They are holding down the enemies at the North Gate.

Kim Bi

Is that true?

Kim Kon

Of course. It's true! Don't you hear the screaming sounds fading away?

Kim Bi

It's good. If we can hold them back for a while, Jin Won's reinforcements will arrive from Hu Baekjae. If we attack the enemies with the help of Jin Won, they would be able to resist us no longer.

Kim Kon

That's right.

Lee Yu

I don't think the situation is that simple. Although troops of Koryo can't enter the city, they are ready to surround us. In that case, we can't do much even if we are assisted by reinforcements. Don't you think we'll be isolated? Furthermore, since the Prince has suddenly disappeared, there are many diverse opinions. In addition to that, there is a strange rumor.

Kim Bi

There's a rumor that we have confined the Prince. Because we are jealous of his power...

Lee Yu

My goodness!

Kim Kon

It must be a trick of the crafty Sun Piel. He is

trying to creat dissension among our army and ourselves...
using those who are secretly communicating with Koryo...

Kim Bi

Fellows who are secretly communicating with Koryo?

Lee Yu

Yes. Since the rumor has been spread, even those
who are loyal to us are beginning to look at us with strange
eyes.*

Kim Bi

I wonder where the Prince is.

(The sound of someone approaching.)

Lee Yu

(He is frightened.) What is that shadow in the bush?
Isn't it some of the soldiers of Koryo?

(They all separate and hide in the bushes. At this
moment, the Prince staggers in.)

Prince

(While he is standing in the center of the stage.)
Where shall I go? Where shall I be buried?

Everyone

(As they come out from the bushes.) ... Prince!

Prince

(As he turns to them.) Forgive me!

Everyone

Prince! Where have you been?

Prince

I am a dead man. I am a disgraced man! I am neither
the Prince of this kingdom nor a member of your party.

*This implies that people are suspicious whether the
rumor is true or not.

Kim Bi

Prince. What are you doing? Now when the kingdom faces a national emergency and Wang Kun's soldiers are trying to attack our citizens, why do you persist in such a mood?

Prince

(He cries without a word.)

Lee Yu

What's going to happen if our Prince remains in such low spirits? Yesterday's kingdom may no longer be ours. Why are you so mesmerized by the Princess Rang Nang? Why did you forget your sublime purpose? What are you going to do with this kingdom?

Prince

... kill me with a single blow. Tear me apart.

Everyone

Prince!

Prince

Had I been killed by Wang Kun, I wouldn't have to be disgraced.

Kim Kon

Until now you have been accusing the King. But I think that you have been trapped by Wang Kun's trick. Why don't you realize it?

Prince

Don't you think I realize it?

Kim Bi

If you know, then what have you been doing? At the moment when the whole kingdom except the capital is under the control of Koryo...

Prince

Thousands of spider webs are binding me. There is nothing but spider webs in front of my eyes.

Everyone

What a terrible trap!

Kim Bi

Prince! What are you going to do with this kingdom and Lady Baek Wha?

Prince

Baek Wha? I can forget neither this kingdom nor Baek Wha. Since I am in this condition, Baek Wha can no longer be of assistance to me. I need more than her love.

Lee Yu

No. Baek Wha is our strength. She is the flower of this kingdom. Prince. I wish that you were not mesmerized by the strange red flower. Although it is outwardly beautiful, it hides a horrible poison.

Prince

I would rather drink of that poison. The poison which kills man can sometimes be a remedy to him. At this moment I need neither Baek Wha nor Rang Nang.

Kim Bi

Be of stout heart. We might be crushed like jade, but we should never be destroyed like earthen plates. We must be ready to fight to the death in order to achieve our lofty purpose.

Kim Kon

Let us swear to die like heroes before becoming the objects of mockery.

Prince

What silly talk? How can the man who stabbed the shadow of Wang Kun avoid being a target of mockery? I only killed his shadow.

Everyone

(Holding the Prince.) Prince!

Prince

Leave me alone! Don't bother this living corpse. Let my body walk towards an ever lasting tomb. (He walks towards

the bushes.)

Lee Yu

Where are you going? ...Prince! (He follows the Prince. They exit.)

Kim Bi

(As he is looking at the Prince.) He is trapped. He is totally trapped by Wang Kun's trick.

Kim Kon

Has he really been trapped by her and forgotten the grave national matter? Oh, what a pity! Even in my dream I never imagined that the Prince could be such a weak character.

Kim Bi

I don't think so. It seems to me that the Prince must have been planning something beyond our imagination.

Kim Kon

Could that explain the change in his action?

(Baek Wha enters from the other direction.)

Baek Wha

Lord Kim.

Kim Kon

Lady Baek Wha! What has happened to you? Why are you out alone at this hour of the night...?

Baek Wha

I had to come to see the Prince.

Kim Bi

He was here until a few moment ago. But he went in that direction.

Baek Wha

That direction?

Kim Bi

Lord Lee has followed him, they'll come back soon.
A grave thing must have happened to the Prince.

Baek Wha

I have already noticed it.

Kim Bi

I didn't know that it was so serious.

Baek Wha

Did anything else happen to him?

Kim Kon

I don't think there's a remedy.

Baek Wha

Do you mean he is totally trapped by the girl from
Koryo?

Everyone

(Barely.) ...yes.

Baek Wha

(Disappointedly.) I have been told that nothing can
be trusted in the world. I now truly believe it. I never
thought that the Prince was such a weak character. (She
begins to weep.)

Everyone

(Silence.)

Baek Wha

This situation can no longer be averted with human
power.

Everyone

What do you mean by "this situation can no longer be
averted?"

Baek Wha

Do you know who is holding the surging troops of

Koryo at the North Gate?

Everyone

Of course, our soldiers.

Baek Wha

No. I am told that the Princess Rang Nang is holding them by herself.

Everyone

(Suspiciously.) The Princess Rang Nang?

Baek Wha

The Princess Rang Nang ordered the troops who are ready to attack the city to stop at once. The reason that we are avoiding the disaster is due to Rang Nang. If the Prince rejects her love, the city will be flooded with blood before dawn. In addition to that, our civilization will instantly perish. In that case why should I indulge my personal desire while letting the citizens fall in misery. If I die everything will be saved; ...our kingdom will be saved, the citizens will avoid bloodshed, my father who is kidnapped by the enemy will be saved, and the goal of Rang Nang will also be accomplished.

Kim Kon

What irrational talk!

Kim Bi

No. It is impossible. If the Prince will give up Lady Baek Wha and becomes a subject of Wang Kun, it will be no more than his surrendering to the enemy. In that case, this kingdom will soon become a colony of the savages, the innocent citizens will starve at the enemy's feet, and our radiant civilization will finally be trampled by their horses.

Baek Wha

I have been an obstacle to the Prince.

Kim Kon

I don't think the Prince is a person who dreams of sacrificing Lady Baek Wha for his own personal happiness and pleasure.

Baek Wha

He is a man who must achieve his goal.

Kim Kon

No, Lady!

Baek Wha

The wise general is the soldier who knows when he has to fight or retreat. Furthermore, it matters not whether there are one thousand girls like me in this kingdom. If I sacrifice myself for the Prince, it will also serve to achieve my goal.

Everyone

Ah. It's terrible!

Baek Wha

I heard that Wang Kun has sent old Sun Piel to the King to petition something. It seems to me they are plotting an ugly scheme while the city is in great danger.

Kim Bi

... I wonder if they are asking him to write a document of surrender?

Kim Kon

Oh, no.

Baek Wha

Please inform the Prince of this kingdom so we may avoid national ruin and resentment among the people.

Kim Bi

Let us go and see our king.

Kim Kon

I'll go and seek out the Prince.

(Kim Bi and Kim Kon exit. The sound of the troops of Koryo singing is heard in the distance.)

Baek Wha

(To herself.) ...Ah. That sound? (The sound of singing is now heard louder.) Isn't it the sound of the troops of Koryo? Ah. We are surrounded by the enemy on all sides! We are surrounded by the enemy. I heard that in the fourth year of the King Kyung Ae the pagoda in Whang Yong Temple began to slant and the fortune of this kingdom also began to decline. I wonder if the omen is correct. (She exits dejectedly while wiping her tears.)

(The King enters. He is followed by Sun Piel.)

King

Ah. Send someone to stop that singing. Stop the cries of crows!

Sun Piel

The whole world is already occupied by the troops of Koryo. Wherever you may go, you can no longer avoid those sounds. The only way of avoiding them is to make a quick decision.

King

Ah... I don't want to hear it any more! (He covers his ears with his hands.)

Sun Piel

Because the King Kyung Ae didn't make up his mind during the Battle of Posuckjung, he was captured by the soldiers of Jin Won and was slain. And the queen and every high ranking officials were also beheaded. The city was swept by a sea of fire. Our gold and treasures were carried away. Every young girl was disgraced, and the city finally became a wasteland. It has only been a few years since the kingdom was disgraced and humiliated! Are you going to invite the same humiliation even before the burnt field becomes a fertile land? Don't you know that bloodthirsty soldiers are like hungry wolves?

King

Ah. Where did everybody go? Where are the loyal officers of this kingdom?

Sun Piel

Although some of them have gone to battle, most of them are hiding among the citizens because they know that

they cannot survive in the palace...

King

Where is the Princess?

Sun Piel

She has also disappeared to avoid the disaster. Everything hangs on this moment. Please put the seal on the document of surrender.

King

Why do you persist in troubling me?

Sun Piel

It is written by none other than by Kim Bong Hyu whom you love and trust so much.

King

It is not a matter to be decided by myself. Ask the Prince.

Sun Piel

If you really loved your subjects, you wouldn't ask the young prince.

King

Call the Prince! Prince... Why did the Prince leave his father alone?

(The King, who is disturbed, exits. Wang Kun, who has been hiding in the bushes with Wang Chul, enters.)

Wang Kun

Damn! Where is he going?

Sun Piel

He is going to look for the Prince because he feels alone.

Wang Kun

What a stubborn character!

Sun Piel

I wonder whether he really wants to ask the Prince to make the decision or he just simply doesn't want to sign it. Anyway, ... I will keep pressing him.

Wang Kun

Follow him quickly.

Sun Piel

Yes. (He exits quickly.)

Wang Kun

Since the Prince has been criticizing me, the King cannot make up his mind.

Wang Chul

I certainly think so.

Wang Kun

Although I hate to see blood, I must have it to see the end of this. (After a moment's thought.) Wang Chul!

Wang Chul

Yes.

Wang Kun

What are those assassins doing who were assigned to kill the Prince? Order them to cut off the Prince's head immediately.

Wang Chul

Yes. (He exits.)

Wang Kun

(He ponders as if worried about something. Then he suddenly sees something in the bushes.) Isn't she the Princess? I think she is looking for me to ask for something.

(As soon as Wang Kun steals away, the Princess Rang Nang enters. She is looking for someone. At this moment, Kim Kon and Lee Yu enter.)

Lee Yu

Princess.

Rang Nang

Have you seen the Prince?

Kim Kon

We are also looking for him.

Lee Yu

I think you must know where he is...

Rang Nang

Last night he stayed with me to avoid the assassins. However, I don't know where he is wandering about now. The assassins are still after him.

(At this moment, the Prince enters dejectedly.)

Kim Kon and Lee Yu

Prince!

Rang Nang

Please escape from this place, and hide yourself quickly! I know a place where the assassins will never find you. Please follow me quickly.

Lee Yu

No. The Prince has to go with us to talk to the King.

Prince

Why His Highness?

Lee Yu

I am told that Sun Piel has been after His Highness to sign the document of surrender.

Prince

(He is astonished.) The document of surrender?

Lee Yu and Kim Kon

Yes.

Rang Nang

If so, please go quickly.

Prince

Follow me.

Lee Yu and Kim Kon

(Together.) Yes. (The Prince, Lee Yu, and Kim Kon exit quickly.)

(At this moment, Wang Chul and a few soldiers of Koryo suddenly enter through the entrance where Wang Kun made his exit.)

Wang Chul

Princess. Who was that man who just left?

Rang Nang

It is not necessary for you to know.

Wang Chul

Quickly follow them!

Soldiers

Yes. (They are ready to chase the Prince.)

Rang Nang

(As she stops them, she speaks sternly.) No! Don't!

Wang Chul

Don't?

Rang Nang

If you intend to send the soldiers in that direction, first you must pierce my chest with your spear and step over my corpse.

Wang Chul

(Loudly.) Princess!

Rang Nang

(Pushing herself forward.) Come!

Wang Chul

Damn! (He retreats.)

Wang Kun

(As he enters.) Princess! Why have you been hampering my effort? When our security is in jeopardy what are you trying to do?

Rang Nang

(Silence.)

Wang Kun

You must know that you are to become the second queen of King Kim Bu, the father of the Prince. Why are you trying to be close to his son?

Rang Nang

Who told you that I wanted to become the second queen of the old king? I want to know with whose consent you made the decision?

Wang Kun

By imperial order.

Rang Nang

Father-king! Before you can enforce the imperial order, you must kill me. As long as you let me live, you cannot command me.

Wang Kun

Princess!

Rang Nang

Before dawn please call back all five thousand soldiers who are at the North Gate. And call back all assassins who were sent to murder the Prince and his friends. These are my wishes.

Wang Kun

What thoughtless talk! What are you talking about? You father is in a critical situation. Aren't you going to worry about your father when he is attacked by a man with a sword?

Rang Nang

Does that mean you are not going to grant my wishes? (She pulls out the dagger from her bosom.) If you do not grant my wishes, I will hold this dagger in my mouth and fall down and kill myself. (She draws her dagger from the sheath. The dagger glitters in the moonlight.)

Everyone

(Frightened.) Ah!

Wang Kun

Princess!

Rang Nang

If you don't want to see my death, please grant my wishes!

Wang Kun

(As if he is seeking help, he turns his head to Sun Piel who is just entering.) Sun Piel!

Sun Piel

(As he notices Wang Kun's warning glance.) Princess! Please put down the dagger! Please leave the matter to me. And go back to the palace. I will ask the Great King to grant your wishes.

Rang Nang

Honestly?

Sun Piel

(He looks at Wang Kun as though he is waiting for some glance from his eye.)

Wang Kun

Damn it! (As he closes his mouth tightly.)

Sun Piel

(Realizing that Wang Kun wants him to solve the problem.) From now on your father-king will not kill a single bird in Silla.

Rang Nang

(As she is putting the dagger back in her bosom.) In that case, I have another wish. I heard that my father-king has been deliberately trying to get the King of Silla to approach me. It is an absurd idea! Please change his bed chamber so he can no longer come to my residence whenever he wishes.

Sun Piel

(He looks at Wang Kun.) Please! Don't worry. We will change his chamber and stop him.

Rang Nang

In that case, I will rely on you for everything.

Sun Piel

My gracious princess.

(The Princess Rang Nang exits to follow the Prince.)

Wang Kun

I wonder why her character is so sharp. Was there anyone in my family who was like her? At the beginning, I planned to trap the Prince with her, but now she is trapped by him. I never planned such a foolish trap for anything in my life.

Sun Piel

If we had known this, we wouldn't have brought the Princess here.

Wang Chul

All mistakes are the results of your tricks. Had we attacked Silla as soon as we arrived here, we wouldn't have to face this kind of mistake. Damn! I am annoyed. Now that we are ready to attack we are restrained by the Princess.

Sun Piel

You don't comprehend the situation. Our Great King's plan is not to use a single soldier, isn't it? If we take

this kingdom by force, the resentment will be deeply engrained in the hearts of the people. Consequently, it is clear that we would lose this kingdom sooner or later. In the past, Silla attacked Baekjae and Koguryo with her army to unify the three kingdoms. However, Silla never had a peaceful day for the next two hundred years. Didn't Jin Won finally lead the people of Baekjae to trouble Silla while Kung Yae led the people of Koguryo against Silla? Of course, it is easy for us to attack Silla with our troops. But who can assure us that there will not be a man who will lead the people of Silla against us within a hundred years?

Wang Kun

Well. Stop arguing. First, Wang Chul. In order to win over the Princess, you must immediately pull back our troops from the North Gate. Second, Sun Piel. Call back all assassins.

Wang Chul

Your Highness! I don't think it is proper to order a withdrawal when our troops are winning the battle.

Wang Kun

Though we will withdraw our troops for a while, Silla cannot grow stronger than she is now.

Wang Chul

However...

Wang Kun

Silla is important to me, but so is the Princess. Furthermore, King Kim Bu has been pressing me day and night to give the Princess to him as his second queen. If she changes her mind and becomes his second queen, everything will work out as we planned. In that case, the unification of the three kingdoms will be achieved without bloodshed. So all of you try to divert the Princess' mind from the Prince for the next few days.

Wang Chul

Because of her razor-sharp character, it seems to me it will be a difficult task.

Wang Kun

Because of her keen mind, she can be totally changed. As soon as she changes her mind, we will exile the Prince to

the Gaegol Mountains to live on grass and dress in burlap. Everything will be done! Now you have to stress the following points to the Princess. First, the Prince has selected Baek Wha to become his wife. Second, since the Prince is a man of honor, he will never forsake her. Third, the Prince's noble character will never permit him to love another woman.

Sun Piel

Yes. We will try our best...

Wang Chul

I am afraid that that kind of trick will do nothing but inflame her quick temper.

Soldiers

(As they enter.) Our Great King! We think many officials are coming this way.

Sun Piel

It appears that the Princess is following the Prince and his friends.

Wang Kun

Why is she always with them?

Everyone

Damn!

Wang Kun

All of you must watch their activities from the bush.

Sun Piel and Everyone

Yes. (They exit.)

(The Princess Rang Nang, the Prince, Kim Bi, Kim Kon, and Lee Yu enter.)

Rang Nang

Please don't worry. A few minutes ago my father assured me. (Pointing to the northern sky.) Look! The flames of fire which were engulfing the sky have already vanished. Didn't the screams of the soldiers also cease?

Kim Bi

We are truly grateful to you.

Kim Kon

Ever since I heard that the prosperity or ruin of a kingdom is related to a heavenly fate, I think heaven must still be on our side.

Rang Nang

Why is the Prince still troubled by something...

Kim Kon

Prince. The time has finally come for us to carry out our scheme as we have planned.

Kim Bi

As soon as the troops of Koryo have withdrawn, we can mobilize the soldiers of twelve districts and thousands of young people in the city. In that case, we can easily strike down the fox-like treacherous Sun Piel and the bear-like stupid Wang Chul.

Prince

Then can we achieve our aspiration for which we have sworn the heaven and earth?

Everyone

Of course. We can achieve it. Don't worry.

Kim Bi

Then let us go!

Lee Yu and Kim Kon

Yes.

(Three people exit.)

Prince

Princess. Finally you've won me over!

Rang Nang

Lord Tong Kung. Can you now trust this little girl?

Prince

You finally set my heart aflame. I can no longer reject your burning affection... Ah, it is beyond my power. Princess, please hold me.

Rang Nang

Prince.

Prince

Oh. Heaven. Please forgive this happy man! I can no longer control myself.

(King Kim Bu enters. He finds the Prince passionately embracing the Princess.)

King

Princess. Have you been here long?

Prince

(The Prince separates from the Princess.)

King

(As he tries to hide his burning jealousy.) Damn! Everything under the sky... (He throws his rosary to the ground. The beads scatter over the ground.)

Prince

Your Highness! You haven't signed the declaration of surrender, have you?

King

I am going to sign it. (Loudly.) Isn't there anyone here?

Sun Piel

(As he comes out from his hiding place.) Did you call me?

King

Bring the declaration of surrender. I will hand everything over to Wang Kun.

Sun Piel

(Confusedly.) Yes? (Happily.) Heh, heh, heh... Great King! (He shouts in the direction of Wang Kun's hiding place.)

Wang Kun

What has happened?

Prince

(Confusedly.) Father-king!

King

(Angrily.) What did you do in front of your father?

Prince

(Dubiously.) Yes?

King

Is it a son's filial piety to his father or a subject's loyalty to his king?

Sun Piel

(He hands the declaration of surrender which is written by Kim Bong Hyu to the King. A waiting lady of the palace who is instructed by Sun Piel brings the ink and brush and waits for the King.)

Prince

Your Highness. This matter not only concerns you but every citizen of this kingdom. That being so, how can you put the royal seal on it yourself?

King

Shut up! (He signs and gives the declaration of surrender to Sun Piel.)

Sun Piel and Everyone

(Altogether.) Our Gracious King!

Prince

Your Highness!

King

I don't want to see you! (He exits.)

Rang Nang

Father! (She throws herself at Wang Kun and weeps.)

Sun Piel

Heh, heh, heh... Princess. As you asked us, we haven't killed a single bird in Silla.

Prince

Kim Kon. Where is Lee Yu? Is our thousand year old kingdom ruined by this? (He weeps bitterly.) Ah! Since our kingdom is ruined, how can I look at the sky? How can I face the people? Instead of living in a dishonorable way, I'd rather... (He suddenly draws his sword and tries to kill himself.)

Wang Kun

(He is startled.) Ah! Look!

Wang Chul

Give me your sword! (He quickly holds the Prince's arm and takes his sword.)

Prince

(As he finds himself surrounded by his enemies.) Ah! Can the sky see this? Since I can no longer even kill myself... (He takes off his crown and royal robe. He also takes off his sabre. He is now dressed like a peasant in burlap. He walks out slowly.)

Rang Nang

The Prince Tong Kung!

Prince

(Falteringly.) Princess! (His eyes are filled with tears.)

Rang Nang

Where are you planning to go?

Prince

There's no destination for a citizen with no kingdom.

Rang Nang

(As she follows the Prince.) The Prince Tong Kung!
(But she stops and throws herself at Wang Kun and weeps.)

Wang Kun

Well. Princess, now let's return to our capital and
celebrate the unification of the three kingdoms.

Rang Nang

(Sternly.) No! I will not go! (As she follows the
Prince.) Prince!

Wang Kun

(Thunderously.) Princess! (He tries to hold Rang
Nang. However, she has already gone after the Prince.)

(Curtain)

ACT FIVE

About ten years later. At the foot of the Gaegol Mountains(now called the Diamond Mountains), in a valley. The curtain rises while music is playing. The stage is filled with thick fog. The sound of a gusty wind is heard. The fog gradually lifts, then sharp and beautiful peaks of the mountains are seen. The summits which appear through the fog look like the rocky peaks at the edge of the sea. From somewhere in a deep cave sounds of a chorus are heard quietly in the distance.

The night is gone and again the dawn is coming
when the darkness collapses
the mountain summits are there! *
on the beach of eight hundred ri
the waves call at every curve.

The sunlight
pushes back the fog--
and then the rainbow
bridging the sky and earth!
ah, yesterday is gone
only today!
again another day!

Come! violet cloud!
listen!
the silent mountain summits
the wind flies by my chest
runs
over the mountain
crashing then struggling.

(The fog has completely lifted. Everything on the stage is clearly visible. There are about a dozen people who are the chorus on the stage. They are crouching like rocks. With their hair which is bleached by the sun and their ragged dress, they are hard to distinguish from the colors of the mountain. Through the clouds, a strong stream of the sunlight is thrown on the rock at center stage. A man

*

One ri is equivalent to four kilometers.

is sitting on top of the rock. It is the Prince, sitting there like a stone Buddha, staring into the distant sky.)

Vagabonds

(While looking at the Prince.) Prince! How did you spend the night?

(The Prince continues to pray silently.)

Vagabond A

Prince! There is no use praying to the sky. The front mountain is still maintaining its calmness, while the clouds are flying back and forth. Since you didn't bring about a change, why don't you change your seat?

(The Prince continues his prayer.)

Vagabonds

(Altogether.) Woe is us. Look at him! Ah! Sadness is our prince who is suffering by himself to expiate the sins of our thousand year old destroyed kingdom.

(The Prince waves his arm.)

Vagabond B

(To his friends.) Look!

Vagabond A

Quiet! He is signaling us to make no noise.

(The sounds of "Ah-ho--!" are heard from the valley. The Vagabonds listen carefully turning their ears toward the sounds. The sounds are heard again.)

Vagabond C

What sound is it?

Vagabond D

Well. It is strange.

(Everyone looks in the direction from which the sounds come. A woman (The Princess Rang Nang) enters. They all hide themselves behind the rock. The Princess Rang Nang enters center stage and looks around. She sees no one.)

Rang Nang

(Disappointedly.) Ah. He is not here either! (As she is weeping quietly.) Prince! Did you fly to the sky on a cloud? Or did you go down beneath the earth? I have wandered around many valleys of the Gaegol Mountains, but there are still too many remaining! I don't even see a single animal to ask. What has happened to you?

Vagabond A

(As he comes out.) Aren't you the Princess? (Everyone looks at her carefully.)

Vagabonds

(As they surround the Princess Rang Nang.) She is the Princess!

Rang Nang

Who are you who recognize me?

Vagabond A

We are vagabonds who have lost our kingdom.

Rang Nang

(As she is looking at each of them.) Oh, Kim Kon. Kim Bi. Lee Yu! ... Are you not the people who served the Prince?

Vagabonds

We are the wind which is lost in the sky! We became the roots of grass which have no ground in which to grow.

Rang Nang

Do you know anything about the Prince? Please tell me where the Prince is staying. You must be the people who know where he is.

Vagabonds

(They look at the summit of the rock.)

Rang Nang

(She looks at the rock.) If that rock is a living human being, there shouldn't be moss on his body or icicles under him.

Vagabond A

Since he never cares for himself while he is praying for the fate of our kingdom...

Rang Nang

Silla has already become a part of Koryo...

Vagabond B

The reason for his penance is to expiate the sin of our thousand year old kingdom.

Rang Nang

(While wiping her tears away.) Prince! You are not the only person who is living in this kingdom. Why should you alone have to carry the weight of sin while drying your flesh and bones in the severe wind on the rock? Although you want to atone for the sin, you do not have to brutally torture your physical body. Please come down. And go to a temple or a house of prayer. Please pray peacefully and burn incense in a temple. Please come down! Please! Please! Please! (The sound of a strong wind is heard. The Prince is still motionless.) Ah! Why doesn't he speak to me?

Vagabonds

Because of his deep disappointment which is caused by the ruin of our kingdom, he wants his body to be transformed into a rock which will neither see nor hear nor feel.

Rang Nang

No. I think it is because he doesn't want to see me.

Vagabonds

Once he told us that the sincerity of your effort to save our kingdom was engraved in his heart.

Rang Nang

In that case I also want to transform myself into a rock like the Prince. I want to be with him under the blanket of clouds during the day time, and I will watch the sparkling stars at night. For a million years I want to live with him like a mountain without a word.

Prince

(He waves his hand as though he objects to her idea.)

Vagabonds

No. Princess. You can't do it.

Rang Nang

Sir?

Vagabonds

The Prince is motioning that you cannot do it.

Rang Nang

(As she chews her lower lip.) Ah. What a cold-hearted person! I have searched for him for ten years though it was a single day with the hope that he would greet me when I saw him again... (She weeps.)

(The Prince waves his hand more vigorously.)

Vagabonds

(In a sad voice.) Ah. Please leave, Princess! Please come this way. Princess! We are afraid that the Prince's heart may start to pump the blood to his body again. His ten year's effort will be futile. Please don't come close to the Prince!

Rang Nang

Prince! Is it true?

Vagabonds

Please. Look at him. Please! Look at him.

Rang Nang

... I see. I heard that there was a rumor that I had begun to live with the King of Silla at a corner of the eastern palace of Songdo. Does the Prince believe the rumor? That rumor was made up by the King of Koryo to calm down the uneasy feeling among the people of Silla.

Vagabonds

(Earnestly.) Please. Don't mention the father of the Prince! It gives him nothing but pain.

King

(The King who is dressed in a monk's robe enters.)
Prince!

Rang Nang

How did you happen to come here? (The Vagabonds kowtow to the King.)

King

I didn't come to trouble you. When I followed you and passed over the Tanbal Pass, I was already determined ... Kwanseum Bosal... Kwanseum Bosal*...

Rang Nang

If you wanted to become a monk with true determination, you should have stayed with a Buddha in a temple. Why did you have to come here?

King

To make it clear to the Prince that I am innocent. I must repent my past life. Prince, please forgive your father. The reason that I was confused by the Princess was that the easiness of my past life stood in front of my eyes. However, when you left the Banwal Castle, I began to comprehend my sins while I was alone in the desolate palace. Prince, accept the Princess. Accept the Princess and forgive your father. The reason that I am asking this of you is to save and purify myself from the sins which I have committed. When I see the Prince who has lost both his kingdom and his love at the same time because of his father, my heart is... please, accept the Princess.

Vagabonds

(Sadly.) Why are you trying to undermine his own wish? He regards himself as a sinner who has destroyed his own kingdom. Since you decided it once before, the Princess may be your second queen and his mother.

King

... When I go to the sea, I see the roaring waves... When I climb the mountains, I hear the whispering wind... All of these seem to me to be accusing the king who has lost his own kingdom. Now I cannot die without repenting my sins.

Rang Nang

(Pointing to the Prince who is trembling.) Ah! The way he is trembling.

*

A Buddhist chant.

King

(Confused.) Prince! Before lightning strikes my head, please accept my wish...

(Thunder and lightning. The stage is captured by the darkness for a moment. Then quiet music is heard, and a stream of light is thrown on the stage. The surrounding rocks are in shambles. The figure of the Prince has been transformed into a rock.)

Vagabonds

Ah. Our Prince!

Rang Nang

(She stares at the rock. Then she looks at the king.)

Vagabonds

(In a deep and mournful tone.)

Oh! oh!
joy and agony!
smile and tear!
love and hatred!

In the world of saba*
he became a rock
the lofty prince
became the prince of peaks
with glory and brightness.

Rang Nang

Ah! Prince! (She tries to embrace the rock.)

Vagabonds

Oh, eternal heaven and earth!
whisper forever
along with the blue sky
the prince as a rock
is a part of the kingdom
oh!
whisper forever!

*

The world of saba implies the world which is cluttered with sin, impurity, and immorality or the world in which human beings are presently living.

(The King is standing for his prayer. When the sounds of singing reaches the highest point...)

(Curtain)

APPENDIX II

I WANT TO BECOME A HUMAN BEING, TOO

CHARACTERS

Suck-Bong Paik, a young composer attached to the National Art Theatre in Pyongyang, North Korea, and a member of the Labor Party.

Bock-Hi Chung, his fiancée and a member of the Labor Party of South Korea.

Natasha Kim, a Russian-born Korean singer who is under contract with the National Art Theatre.

Chul Yang, a pianist at the National Art Theatre, a faint-hearted member of the Labor Party, and a friend of Suck-Bong Paik and Bock-Hi Chung.

Chairman, the man who is responsible for the organization of the party at the National Art Theatre.

The Secretary General of the National Art Theatre

The Staff Leader

The Lighting Crew (Comrade Kim)

Directing Crew (Comrade Park)

The Crew of the National Art Theatre

The Place and Time

Act One

Place: Suck-Bong Paik's upstairs room.

Time: In the morning of an early spring day
of 1949

Act Two

Place: A room in the basement of the National
Art Theatre.

Time: A few days later.

Act Three

Place: Natasha Kim's room, decorated in Western
style.

Time: Evening, a few days later.

Act Four

Place: The boarding house where Bock-Hi Chung
lives.

Time: The same evening.

ACT ONE

When the curtain rises, Suck-Bong, who has just finished arranging the room, sings his newly composed opera while playing the guitar. Natasha Kim, who is plump, enters full of curiosity. She has a wreath in her hand. She wears a Russian scarf in her hair, a short skirt, and Red Army Officer's combat boots.

Natasha

(She stops at the door and listens to Suck-Bong's singing. Then she claps her hands.) Yea! Comrade Paik!

Suck-Bong

(As he turns his head to her.) Well. Comrade Natasha. When did you come?

Natasha

It has to be "The Shouting Melting Furnace" which will be produced soon... The opera which praises the hundred percent achievement of the Five Year Plan!

Suck-Bong

That is right.

Natasha

Very good! I feel strong even by merely listening to it. No doubt it will be the first prize winner at this year's Art Festival. Here! (She puts the flowers in Suck-Bong's hand.)

Suck-Bong

Flowers? ...for what?

Natasha

Although I've only just bought them at the florist, I must give them to you as a prize.

Suck-Bong

It is really rare to see such full-blossomed cosmos in early spring.

Natasha

Really. Pre...tty? A few years ago when I went to Moscow for the singing contest, a poet called me "Oh, Natasha, the slender cosmos..." Ho, ho, ho...

Suck-Bong

I would rather call Comrade Natasha a virtuous peony.

Natasha

Peony? Pee!* I don't like it. That kind of flower! It looks plump like me...

Suck-Bong

Then I'd say... like a slender cosmos.

Natasha

Oh, thank you!

Suck-Bong

(As he brings a vase.) Shall I put them in this vase?

Natasha

Ta, ta! (That's good!) (She takes the vase from Suck-Bong and pours water into it from a kettle.) The Koreans have very simple taste. That's no good enough. There should always be flowers in an artist's room. Now don't you think that beautiful melodies will flow like water from a falls when you play the guitar while looking at the flowers?

Suck-Bong

Thank you.

Natasha

Where shall I put the vase? (While she looks for a place for the vase, she finds a bundle of flowers wrapped in white paper. She is surprised.) Well. What's that?

*An expression of dislike.

Suck-Bong

(Beaming.) Well. You don't need to know.

Natasha

(As she looks at the curtains in the window.) Aren't they new? (She looks around the room.) Oh. You've put up new wall paper also. (She opens the paper sliding door to the side room.)

Suck-Bong

Don't look in that room.

Natasha

Well. Why not? Is there someone in the room?

Suck-Bong

No.

Natasha

Then why?

Suck-Bong

By the way, I'm planning to have a dinner with friends either this evening or tomorrow. I wonder whether you have time...

Natasha

Aren't you planning to get married? Confess. Don't feign indifference.

(Suck-Bong smiles indifferently.)

Natasha

I see... I thought so. Otherwise no bachelor would be decorating his room in this way. Who's going to be your wife?

Suck-Bong

(As he takes out a carefully wrapped picture from his pocket.) This is...

Natasha

(As she looks at the picture with her head tilted to one side.) I've never seen this girl...

Suck-Bong

Of course, you haven't seen her. She is now crossing the Thirty-Eighth Parallel.

Natasha

(Contemptuously.) I see. She is coming from South Korea?

Suck-Bong

According to the schedule, she was supposed to arrive yesterday.

Natasha

(Beaming moody.) I am beginning to understand.

Suck-Bong

Since I've just finished work on the opera, shall we take a walk?

Natasha

You must wait for that woman.

Suck-Bong

Then will you stay here with me?

Natasha

What shall I do if people misunderstand our staying together in the newly decorated bride's room?

Suck-Bong

Don't worry. No one will misunderstand.

Natasha

(As she looks at the picture on the desk.) Isn't that girl staring straight at me like a cat?

Suck-Bong

She is not that vulgar kind of woman. Comrade Natasha, please sit down. (At this moment, the sound of someone coming up the stairs is heard.)

Natasha

Well. She's already here. (She stands up.)

Suck-Bong

I don't think so. I've been deceived many times already by the sound. (He motions her to sit down.)

(The door is opened suddenly. Chul Yang enters. He has a small brief case in his hand.)

Yang

(As soon as he enters.) Suck-Bong. I've brought her.

Suck-Bong

(As he rushes out.) Where?

Yang

(As he stops Suck-Bong.) Well. The bridegroom must control his emotion. Please sit down. Don't you think I should bring her into the room in order to complete my duty as a guide? (He strides out.)

Natasha

(As she sits down in a corner of the room.) Since I'm already here, I must have a look at the wife.

Suck-Bong

You'll be aware of her intelligence when you meet her. It is, no doubt, because of her strong party convictions that she is so. (He gestures thumbs up.)

Natasha

(Disdainfully.) Of course. I recognize your progressive outlook in selecting a woman.

(Yang and Bock-Hi Chung, who is in a simple traveling dress, enter. As soon as she enters, the room becomes brighter.)

Suck-Bong

Oh, Bock-Hi! (He rushes to embrace her, but stops suddenly.) You don't know how anxiously I've been waiting for you.

Bock-Hi

Really. It has been the same with me.

Yang

(Seeing Natasha, he becomes a little embarrassed.) Well. How about stopping the love scene, and introducing the guest.

Suck-Bong

(As though embarrassed by what he has done.) Well. Comrade Bock-Hi. Let me introduce her to you. This is Comrade Natasha Kim. She was born in the Soviet Union. She came here with the Red Army who liberated our fatherland.

Natasha

(She shakes Bock-Hi's hand and speaks arrogantly.) Glad to meet you.

Suck-Bong

Though Comrade Bock-Hi looks modest, she is an enthusiastic party member who has troubled the South Korean Police a great deal.

Natasha

(Surprised.) A party member?

Suck-Bong

Of course. The Labor Party of South Korea.

Natasha

(Sarcastically.) Ho, ho... I thought you meant she was a member of the Labor Party of North Korea.

Suck-Bong

I think she needs the special guidance of Comrade Natasha.

Bock-Hi

That's right. I am very confused in these new surroundings; I feel like a country chicken brought to the city market.

Natasha

That must be taken care of by Comrade Paik. See you again.

Bock-Hi and Suck-Bong

Good bye.

(Natasha exits with an indifferent air.)

Yang

(Taking a little package out of his brief case.)
This is Comrade Bock-Hi's belongings!

Bock-Hi

(Picking it up.) This is all my property. Isn't it of magnificent size?

Suck-Bong

Even a small package like this can be troublesome when crossing the Thirty-Eighth Parallel.

Yang

Now I must go also.

Bock-Hi

You have gone to so much trouble on account of me. Can you have lunch with us? We haven't seen each other for a long time. (To Suck-Bong.) Comrade Yang didn't even have a good breakfast.

Yang

I must go so you can continue your interrupted love scene. Don't you think so?

Bock-Hi

What talk!

Suck-Bong

(As he smiles.) Though I think that way...

Yang

Look! How happy he is!

Bock-Hi

Please stop Comrade Yang.

Yang

No. I must report to the Secretary General of the theatre that I've returned safely.

Suck-Bong

Then you must go quickly.

Yang

Don't push me out that fast.

Suck-Bong

Please take this to the Secretary General. (He hands him his newly composed opera.)

Yang

Oh, is it finished?

Suck-Bong

I've just finished it today.

Yang

Comrade Bock-Hi. This is the result of his staying at home instead of going to the Thirty-Eighth Parallel to meet you.

Bock-Hi

"The Shouting Melting Furnace."

Suck-Bong

With opening night approaching, I heard you were already at the border... I've been extremely restless. (As he pats Yang on the back.) It's a good thing to have a good friend.

Yang

Trust me. When you receive a prize or a medal for this opera, I will have half of it.

Suck-Bong

You can have all of it.

Yang

Bravo! If the negotiations between South and North had gone this smoothly there wouldn't have been any problem at all. (He is about to exit.)

Suck-Bong

Comrade Yang!

Yang

(As he stops.) What is it now?

Suck-Bong

Since you're going out, please do me a favor... (He hands him a rolled letter paper.)

Yang

(Opening it.) What is this?

Suck-Bong

This is the list of comrades' names who are invited to Hamhung Restaurant tonight.

Yang

I see. Are you planning to have the wedding reception?

Suck-Bong

(As he smiles.) ... yes.

Yang

You must be in a great hurry.

Bock-Hi

Don't you think people will laugh at us? I haven't

even shaken the dust off myself yet.

Suck-Bong

Think how long we've been anxiously waiting for this moment. Who cares whether people laugh at us or not...

Yang

Comrade Bock-Hi. There's an old saying that "The oxen horn must be pulled when it is hot." Don't say anything to him. Now let the prince of this newly decorated room go high.

Suck-Bong

What a fertile mouth!

(Yang takes his brief case and exits quickly.)

Suck-Bong

Oh. Everyone is gone now. (Affectionately.) Bock-Hi, please come here.

(Bock-Hi hesitates coyly.)

Suck-Bong

If you don't come, I will go to you and take you in my arms. (He stands up and then suddenly tries to embrace her.)

Bock-Hi

(As she stops him.) Please! Someone may be looking at us.

Suck-Bong

There isn't anyone.

Bock-Hi

But...

Suck-Bong

(As he holds her hand.) Bock-Hi. From now on we should never part from each other regardless of what happens.

Bock-Hi

You don't know how badly I felt that I could not come to North Korea with you.

Suck-Bong

Isn't it two years ago that we saw each other last, just after I escaped from jail at the Jongro Police Station? But it feels like ten years... or a hundred years.

Bock-Hi

Furthermore, I wonder why it is so difficult to come to Pyongyang. It is in the same country. Even the crossing of the Pacific Ocean can't be as difficult as to come to here from South Korea.

Suck-Bong

How difficult was it to cross the border?

Bock-Hi

Finally I had to disguise myself as old woman from the country.

Suck-Bong

As an old woman from the country?

Bock-Hi

Yes.

Suck-Bong

Ha, ha, ha... Before too long we must destroy the Thirty-Eighth Parallel. Then we'll have our breakfast in Pyongyang and lunch in Seoul. Bock-Hi, don't be shy! Since you must be very tired, please rest yourself and extend your legs.

Bock-Hi

Well. I'm fine. (She stands up.) The room is very pretty!

Suck-Bong

When you open the window, you can see the Ulmyl Pagoda. (He opens the glass window for her.)

Bock-Hi

(As she looks out.) It's very picturesque! When I was in a girls' middle school we came here for a school journey and once climbed the pagoda.

Suck-Bong

Aren't you full of emotion?

Bock-Hi

Yes. I am. By the way, are you the only person who lives in this house?

Suck-Bong

I use only the upstairs.

Bock-Hi

(As she indicates the side room.) Do you mind if I see the other room?

Suck-Bong

No.

Bock-Hi

(When she opens the paper sliding door, a beautifully decorated bridal room appears.) What is this? It looks like a children's peep-show.

(Suck-Bong smiles without saying a word.)

Bock-Hi

(She walks into the side room and takes the cover off the quilts.*) Oh, they are new quilts. (Now she opens the clothes cabinet.) Isn't this a woman's dress?

Suck-Bong

(As he takes out a box which contains a woman's dress.) I wonder if this dress will fit you or not.

*

In the Korean homes quilts are usually folded and stacked with cover on them until bed time.

Bock-Hi

(As she opens the box.) A crimson skirt with a yellow coat!

Suck-Bong

You have to wear them tonight.

Bock-Hi

These?

Suck-Bong

They have been waiting for you for a long time.

Bock-Hi

(Her eyes are filled with tears.) You have done so much for me, but I didn't do any...

Suck-Bong

(As he takes out another box.) This dress is for the bridegroom. Shall we both try them?

Bock-Hi

Let's try them.

Suck-Bong

Well. Let's go to the other room. And...

(Bock-Hi takes the box to the mirror on the dresser in the side room.)

Suck-Bong

Let's see who can dress fastest. (As soon as he closes the paper sliding door, he quickly starts to change his clothes.) Are you finished?

Bock-Hi

(From the side room.) Not yet!

Suck-Bong

(As he puts on his Korean overcoat.) Aren't you ready?

Bock-Hi

(From the side room.) It's all right to open the door.

Suck-Bong

(He opens the paper sliding door curiously as though anticipating a new secret. Bock-Hi, who is dressed in a beautiful bridal dress, appears. Suck-Bong is enraptured.) Oh, where is that fairy from?

Bock-Hi

You talk so strangely.

Suck-Bong

Really! You are beautiful! The man who is going to marry this beautiful woman must be a truly happy man.

(Bock-Hi turns around and weeps without saying a word.)

Suck-Bong

Are you crying? Has something happened to make you unhappy?

Bock-Hi

(As she wipes her tears away.) No.

Suck-Bong

Then what is it?

Bock-Hi

(As she smiles.) Well... (She tries to talk.) ... I don't know myself...

Suck-Bong

What silly talk. Your eyes are wet. Tell me quickly.

Bock-Hi

Then I will tell you. This happiness is too much for me...

Suck-Bong

Oh. Bock-Hi! How much have we gone through for today's happiness. Remember when we sat up all night to print the

propaganda leaflets in the basement of the Association of Democratic Young Men near the South Gate. And when we transferred the grenades from Mapo to Ankuck Street by the order of the party... Furthermore, I will never forget the moment when you tried so hard to take me out of the Jongro Police Station.

Bock-Hi

After all, the strong ideals which brought us together have brought about today's happiness.

Suck-Bong

Of course. Of course. To accomplish the final victory of our ideology we must work until that victory is achieved or until we are smashed to pieces.

Bock-Hi

(As she changes her clothes.) Of course. We will work. We are the people who continued to struggle even under the watchful eyes of the South Korean Police. We can work here with open wings.

Suck-Bong

Thank you! Oh, thank you!... (He strongly embraces her. At this moment, the sound of someone knocking at the door is heard.)

Bock-Hi

Who can it be?

Suck-Bong

... well... (Loudly.) Come in!

(The Chairman of the Party at the National Art Theatre enters. He has a hoarse voice.)

Suck-Bong

Oh. Comrade Chairman!

Chairman

Is this the female comrade whom you've been expecting?
... (He looks at Bock-Hi.)

Suck-Bong

Yes. That's right. Comrade Bock-Hi. Greet the Chairman. (Pointing to the Chairman.) He is the Chairman of the National Art Theatre.

Bock-Hi

I was told that you have assigned me to work with Suck-Bong at the same theatre.

Suck-Bong

That's right.

Bock-Hi

I am truly thankful to you. I will study hard and become a good worker. By doing so, I can reward the Comrade Chairman's conferment of favor on me.

Chairman

I've heard that you two comrades are planning to get married tonight.

Suck-Bong

By the way, I hope the Comrade Chairman will preside over the ceremony for us.

Chairman

Comrade Paik. That's the reason I had to rush over here. But... (He looks at Bock-Hi uneasily.)

Bock-Hi

Well. Then I will retire.

Suck-Bong

Can you take the tea pot to the kitchen and make some tea?

Bock-Hi

I will try.

Suck-Bong

Then you must wear this... (He takes a new apron out from the closet and hands it to her.)

Chairman

Comrade! (Bock-Hi stops.) Don't go out. Sit down there for a moment. I must give this news to both of you.

(Bock-Hi puts down the tea pot quietly and waits for the Chairman's news.)

Chairman

I'm sorry to say that Comrade Chung must work at another place.

Suck-Bong

(He looks at both of them. Then he speaks doubtfully.)
Yes?

Chairman

Unfortunately, there is no position available at our theatre... Although this kind of business affair should be told to you by the Secretary General, I am telling you myself.

Suck-Bong

It must be a mistake. The Secretary General has clearly told me that there was a position.

Chairman

There was one when he told you, but there isn't anymore.

Suck-Bong

That is really strange...

Bock-Hi

In that case, where shall I work?

Chairman

In the Entertainment Department of a textile mill...

Bock-Hi

(Surprised.) A textile mill?

Chairman

It is located within the city limit of Pyungyang.

Bock-Hi

(As if she is relieved slightly.) In the same city?
(To Suck-Bong.) Don't you think it is all right as long as we work in the same city? We can still live in the same house. (As if worried about Suck-Bong's gloomy expression.) Don't you think so?

Suck-Bong

(As he tries to smile.) We can live together, Comrade Bock-Hi. Don't look downcast because it is a factory. We are not working only as artists...

Chairman

And your wedding must be postponed also.

Bock-Hi

(She is shocked.) Why?

Suck-Bong

What is the reason?

Chairman

Because of Comrade Chung's father.

Suck-Bong

What is wrong with him? He studied his way through school in a foreign country. Don't you remember as a writer he was jailed many times by the Japanese police while fighting against the imperialistic Japanese when he returned home? Furthermore, since he refuses to support the South Korean Government, now he has to worry about his meals everyday?

Chairman

We all know that. Because of that reason our party did not object to your plan of marrying Comrade Chung though she was not a member of the Labor Party of North Korea. However, the trouble does not lie in the past of Tae-Du Chung, but in his present activities.

Suck-Bong

What's wrong with his present activities? Don't you remember that he was exceptionally cooperative among the South Korean politicians when he came here with Kim Ku and Kim Kyu-sick for the South-North negotiations? He has truly been trying his best for ten years to save our fatherland from darkness and misery as if all that time were only a single day.

Chairman

Wait. I have a question to ask Comrade Chung. You must answer my question frankly.

Bock-Hi

Yes. Anything.

Chairman

Comrade, where is your father?

Bock-Hi

He is in Seoul.

Chairman

Well. What has he been doing everyday?

Bock-Hi

He doesn't do much of anything at all...

Chairman

Doesn't he do anything? He neither writes articles nor makes speeches?

Bock-Hi

No. He maintains silence.

Chairman

Maintains silence?

Bock-Hi

Yes.

Chairman

(Triumphantly.) Comrade Paik. Look. That is the problem! Why in the world does he have to maintain silence? Don't you think he should advertise the marvelous progress of the People's Republic of Korea in South Korea since we had shown him every factory when he came here for the South-North Negotiation? Because he maintains silence, we regard him as secretly trying to erase our meritorious deeds. Isn't that true? Furthermore, prior to his coming here he had always severely criticized the puppet government of South Korea in his articles. But she says he doesn't do that sort of thing any more. This is nothing more than an open resistance against the course of our party.

Suck-Bong

No. I think he is thinking about a great idea for the benefit of our party beneath his silence. We must remember the fact that he has been under constant surveillance by the police.

Chairman

He is under surveillance only because of his neutrality but not for his left-wing activities. Isn't that true?

Suck-Bong

That's right.

Chairman

What sort of neutrality is this? He is an ill-natured grey opportunist! Don't you know that the party warns that that type of person is even worse than the pests in the party? (He begins to talk as if he is making a public speech.) The striving course of Communism is to select either white or black. Life or death! There is nothing more than that...

Suck-Bong

However, your way of branding him a traitor only because of his silence is nothing more than childish arbitrary decision.

Chairman

Comrade, do you oppose my idea? I have a reliable source of information for this.

Suck-Bong

I don't know where you've collected the information. But I'm sure that it's nothing more than a plot to trap Tae-Du Chung. The duty of the party is to dig out the root of this plot. The motivation for killing an innocent man is...

Chairman

(Angrily.) Comrade, don't you know that a member of the party cannot marry a non-member? Are you trying to stain the purity of our party by marrying the daughter of a traitor? If you insist on it, I must report this fact to the party in order to examine your political ideology. That's enough! (He stands up.)

Suck-Bong

(Confusedly.) ... ch... Chairman Comrade. Wait a minute. Not knowing the truth about Comrade Bock-Hi's father's sudden change, I thought that he was still criticizing the political power of Syngman Rhee. I am cancelling everything I've said and... our... our marriage also will be post... postponed...

Bock-Hi

(Extremely disappointed.) That means you are going to brand my father as a traitor also? Do you think my father should be buried in this world? Don't you regret the fact that he will be dismissed in such a way?

Suck-Bong

(As he examines the Chairman's expression.) That... that kind of personal problem cannot be discussed here...

Chairman

(Triumphantly.) Right! Comrade Paik! (He takes hold of Suck-Bong's hand, who is in agony, and shakes it.)

Bock-Hi

(Fervently.) Comrade Chairman, in that case, I will work a hundred times... even a thousand times... harder than I did for the party in South Korea... I will pledge my loyalty to the Labor Party of North Korea until my death. Then I can clean my father's sin, can't I?

Chairman

No. You can't. You can't do that...

Bock-Hi

(Her eyes are filled with tears.) Does that mean that there is no way of saving my father? (She weeps.)

Suck-Bong

(As he tries to hide his tears.) Comrade Bock-Hi, the tears which you are shedding are not motivated by the idea of revolutionary Communism. They are nothing more than the product of sentimentalism only because he is your father. Bock-Hi, don't cry. If you cry, you will disgrace your record of struggle also.

Chairman

(As though to comfort her.) Comrade, I am sorry to treat the comrade who has just arrived here in this way. But I can't help it since it is the basic principle of the party. Well. This is the letter to Comrade Huh at the textile mill. If you will take it to him, everything will be all right. (He gives Bock-Hi the letter.)

Bock-Hi

(She is ready to leave the place, but she stops.) Comrade Chairman. I have something to tell you before I leave here.

Chairman

Go ahead.

Bock-Hi

(Hesitatingly.) ...well. At this moment, I am cutting off all relationship with my father.

Chairman

Do you think you can expiate your father's sin to the party by merely cutting your relationship with him? Have you ever seen green leaves grow from rotten wood?

Bock-Hi

(Angrily.) What kind of relationship do I have with my father? Why are you pressing me so hard?

Chairman

Damn it... Comrade. Where did you learn such terrible things? Cancel what you've said! Right now!

Bock-Hi

Are you saying that I'm talking about something terrible? Don't you know that the imposition of a father's sin on his child can only exist in a feudal society?

Chairman

Comrade, aren't you a spy? You must be sent by the South Korean Government...

Bock-Hi

... what?

Chairman

Unless you are an ill-natured spy, you cannot oppose what I've said! You must be a spy...

(Bock-Hi turns pale and says nothing. The Chairman exits angrily.)

Suck-Bong

Bock-Hi, let's write a letter to your father asking him to work for the party. There is no other way of saving ourselves.

Bock-Hi

It wouldn't do any good. My father thinks... (She stops talking.)

Suck-Bong

What?

Bock-Hi

He has changed.

Suck-Bong

Then what Comrade Chairman said was...

Bock-Hi

(She continues.) Finally, I am beginning to understand things. The freedom in North Korea is nothing more than restricted freedom! What kind of freedom is it? Freedom which does not allow man to say he is hungry even if he is starving... This was the saying of my father who had visited the People's Republic of Korea.

Suck-Bong

(Frightened.) Is that true?

Bock-Hi

I have heard it.

Suck-Bong

Did he express his feeling in public in an article?
Or...

Bock-Hi

He hasn't yet expressed it in public. But he did
give me this warning...

Suck-Bong

Then how did the party find out? I mean your father's
recent change of feeling...

Bock-Hi

Do you think that we can trust Comrade Yang?

Suck-Bong

Why?

Bock-Hi

Since he asked me about my father in the train, I
told him honestly...

Suck-Bong

(He suddenly stands up.) I see. That fellow must...
to the party...

Bock-Hi

Have you done anything which causes him to feel
vindictive towards you?

Suck-Bong

You must be cautious with what you say here...even
to your friends.

Bock-Hi

Is that to mean there is no friend in this country at all?

Suck-Bong

(Angrily.) You fool! How stupid can you be in this world?

Bock-Hi

Forgive me. Since I could easily have said that kind of thing in South Korea, I suddenly started to talk...

(The Staff Leader and Comrade Kim enter.)

Leader

Female comrade. Come out! (To Comrade Kim.) Comrade Kim will take you to the textile mill.

Comrade Kim

Let's go!

Suck-Bong

Comrade Staff Leader. Let her stay here until she recovers from her journey. If you cannot let her stay here for a few days, please let us have supper together before she leaves. I think you can do that.

Leader

No. I cannot.

Suck-Bong

It doesn't mean that she is not willing to go to the textile mill. All we want is for you to give us a few hours.

Leader

This is an order from the party.

Suck-Bong

Don't you have human kindness?... Comrade. Don't you have tears and blood? In that case, I must... this society...

Leader

What are you going to do with this society? Comrade! Conclude what you've started to say. Conclude it quickly! Well. Comrade Paik. Shall I tell you that I must take you to the police station?

Bock-Hi

(As she notices that the Staff Leader raises his voice.) I'm going now. Let's go. (She takes her belongings and walks out.)

Comrade Kim

Well. Female comrade. I must go with you. Comrade Leader. That woman is running away. Come Quickly! (Both of them exit following Bock-Hi.)

(Yang enters quickly.)

Yang

(As soon as he notices that Suck-Bong is in distress, he starts to leave but stops when his eyes meet with those of Suck-Bong.) As you've requested, I've asked everyone to come to Hamhung Restaurant at six o'clock tonight... (He give Suck-Bong the rolled letter paper.)

Suck-Bong

Comrade Yang... You've been a friend of mine since we were children, haven't you?...

Yang

(Disconcertedly.) What do you mean by suddenly asking that?

Suck-Bong

Haven't you done something wrong to me as a friend?

Yang

What sort of talk is that to your friend who has done all kinds of errands for you?

Suck-Bong

Damn! Dirty! (He slaps Yang.)

Yang

What?

Suck-Bong

You've been a spy! You've reported to the party about Bock-Hi's father...

Yang

Yes. I was a spy. But what's wrong with that? (He examines the surroundings to check whether someone is listening to him or not. His eyes are filled with tears.) Par... party has ordered me. What shall I do? Do you think that you wouldn't have to obey the orders of the party if you were me?

Suck-Bong

Does that mean that you were already instructed by the party when you left for the border?...

Yang

Damn! You fool! (He starts to speak loudly as if he wants to be heard.) You son of a bitch! Am I a spy because of my loyalty, I've reported to the party exactly what I've heard? Are you, who has received a Medal of Culture, still a member of the party? You fool! The Medal of Culture is too good for you! (As he grabs Suck-Bong's collar.) You are a rotten son of a bitch!

Suck-Bong

(Silence.)

Yang

(As he grabs him again.) Let's go to the office of the Secretary General! For the rehearsal of "The Shouting Melting Furnace."

(Yang leads Suck-Bong away.)

(Curtain)

ACT TWO

A hall in the basement of the National Art Theatre.

1

A few days later. Afternoon. When the curtain rises, Natasha Kim and a few singers rehearse the new opera, "The Shouting Melting Furnace," while accompanied on the piano by Suck-Bong.

While she sings, Natasha stares occasionally at Suck-Bong with lustful eyes.

Suck-Bong

(As he plays the piano with a melancholy expression.)
No, it is wrong.

(Natasha stops singing.)

Suck-Bong

Ralralra ralra ra-ralra...

Natasha

Ho, ho, ho... Comrade Paik! Your voice is sweet. Let me hear it once more. Ralrara Ralra... (She comes close to Suck-Bong.)

(Without answering her, Suck-Bong keeps playing the piano. The other singers sing. Now Natasha follows them. The first part is just finished.)

Secretary General

(The Secretary General who has been watching the rehearsal looks at his watch.) Today's rehearsal is finished. Comrades. Be on time for tomorrow's rehearsal. We will have the dress rehearsal soon.

Everyone

Yes.

(The singers bow to the Secretary General and Suck-Bong and leave in all direction.)

Secretary General

Comrade Natasha, let's go.

Natasha

I want to go with Comrade Paik. You go ahead.

Secretary General

Is that right?

(The Secretary General exits. Only Suck-Bong and Natasha are left in the hall. She picks up the books and belongings of Suck-Bong. Then she tries to help him on with his coat.)

Suck-Bong

Never mind. (He puts on his coat by himself.)

Natasha

Comrade, let's go to my apartment and have supper. I'll cook delicious food for you.

Suck-Bong

I don't have such time.

Natasha

Comrade Paik. Why don't you obey my words? Is it because I'm taking the role which is supposed to be played by the girl from South Korea? I know everything... You're in a bad mood because you can't marry her. A flame touches deep in your heart?

Suck-Bong

What useless talk!

Natasha

If it isn't the truth, why don't you want to go to my place? Comrade, are you sick? If so, go to a physician with me...

Suck-Bong

I'm fine. I'll see you tomorrow. (He exits as if he is escaping from her.)

Natasha

(She looks at Suck-Bong who is just leaving. Then she throws down her music.) You son of a bitch!* Where is the Comrade Chairman? Where is he?

(The Chairman, who passes by the door, stops.)

Chairman

(As he enters.) Comrade Natasha, what's wrong?

Natasha

That bastard is no good. He hates me because I'm from the Soviet Union. He likes the woman from South Korea. Isn't that an anti-party action? They must have been trying to destroy our fatherland as well as the unity of our party.

Chairman

Do you mean that Comrade Paik still loves Bock-Hi?

Natasha

If you're the Chairman, you ought to control the ideology of the party members!

Chairman

Good! I will call a meeting for self-criticism soon and we must examine his political ideas. I will make him act according to your desires.

Natasha

(Smiling broadly.) I don't mean that I want to monopolize Comrade Paik. I'm not a selfish person.

Chairman

Of course not. Wait and see how my scheme works. By

*

This is a typical exclamatory expression used by the people of the northwestern part of Korea. However, because of the excessive frequent use of the same word, the translator will frequently substitute other words for them or eliminate them altogether.

fair and legal means, I will straighten him out.

Natasha

Then I'll trust only you.

(They shake hands.)

(Black Out)

2

A few days later. Afternoon.

The stage is bright again. The Secretary General, the Staff Leader, Yang, Natasha, Comrade Kim, and other staff members are ready for the meeting of Suck-Bong's self-criticism.

The Chairman presides over the meeting, while Comrade Park gets things ready for the recording.

Chairman

(He stands up.) Dear staff members of the National Art Theatre! Now we are opening the meeting for self-criticism. First, there will be a report on Comrade Paik's recent activities.

Natasha

(She stands up and begins to read the report.) Comrade Suck-Bong Paik, who is attached to our National Art Theatre, has composed many operas which display the strong elements of our party line and glorify the existence of our theatre. Furthermore, he has been a pioneer of culture. In spite of these past records, he has suddenly composed a new opera, "The Shouting Melting Furnace," which is full of empty formalism. Consequently, he has destroyed the political art of our party and lowered the quality of our theatre. Requesting all of the staff members of our theatre to investigate his faults thoroughly at this meeting, I am concluding this report.

Leader

Comrade Chairman! (He raises his hand.)

Chairman

Comrade Staff Leader.

Leader

While I support the report by Comrade Natasha, I intend to criticize Comrade Paik. Since I am not an artist, I don't have any knowledge of music. But I can remember what Comrade Sung, who is a member of the Central Headquarters of our party, told me yesterday after the rehearsal of "The Shouting Melting Furnace." He said "This work is a failure! This isn't "The Shouting Melting Furnace." It is a "Yawning Melting Furnace!" If so, we must find out why he said that. It must be of extremely inferior quality. Truly, it brings us great shame. Therefore, the party should not let this mistake pass by without a thorough investigation. I propose to impose a certain type of punishment on Comrade Paik.

Secretary General

Comrade Chairman. Let me have the right to speak! (He raises his hand.)

Chairman

Comrade Secretary General.

Secretary General

While I totally support Comrade Natasha's report and Comrade Leader's discussion, I have to say a few words also. "The Shouting Melting Furnace," which we saw yesterday was actually revised by me many times. In spite of this fact, we still cannot find the essence of the noble characteristics of our party which Comrade Paik always demonstrated in his previous works. Furthermore, the end of the first act definitely displays decadent and neurotic elements influenced by American Jazz. Consequently, I conclude that this work should be regarded as a plot to sell our people to the capitalistic nations.

Members

Right!

Chairman

Comrad Paik. Why do you remain silent? Can you offer

anything for your self-criticism?

Suck-Bong

As you remember after the dress rehearsal a few comrades raised the same question. However, as the composer of the opera I cannot totally agree with them. I think "The Shouting Melting Furnace" contains the strong characteristics of our party line like my previous works. Consequently, it is a success.

Natasha

That is a subjective view!

Suck-Bong

Although the Secretary General pointed out the weakness of the first act, the same kind of rhythm has already been experimented by a contemporary Russian composer, Prokofiev. Don't you know that he has enthusiastically supported by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union?

Comrade Park

(He stops the recording of the discussion and raises his hand.) Comrade Chairman, give me the right to speak.

Chairman

Go ahead.

Comrade Park

While I support and agree with the report of Comrade Natasha and the discussion by the comrades, I still must speak. Comrade Paik's act of covering up his faults with the shield of Prokofiev is an extremely cowardly action. The art work is not a production of the objective circumstances of the composer. In spite of this fact, Comrade Paik is trying to defend the content of his opera with superficial rhythms while he is engaging in unhealthy living.

Secretary General

Right. That kind of theory of creation is the closest road to formalism.

Chairman

If so, before we discuss his work we must examine Comrade Paik's circumstantial living conditions which have caused him to become a formalist.

Members

Yes. First, we must examine his life style.

Comrade Kim

Comrade Paik, try to examine yourself. You have never been so insincere with your work as you are now. Isn't it true?

Everyone

True! Comrade Paik has been extremely negligent in his work.

Suck-Bong

Are you saying this because the composition of "The Shouting Melting Furnace" has been delayed a few days?

Comrade Kim

That isn't all. You were even late for the rehearsal, weren't you? What was the reason? Wasn't it a conscious inattention?

Suck-Bong

I am willing to accept your merciless criticism for that. However, I have something to confess to all of you before I will accept your criticism. My health has been drastically declined recently.

Comrade Kim

That's an excuse!

Leader

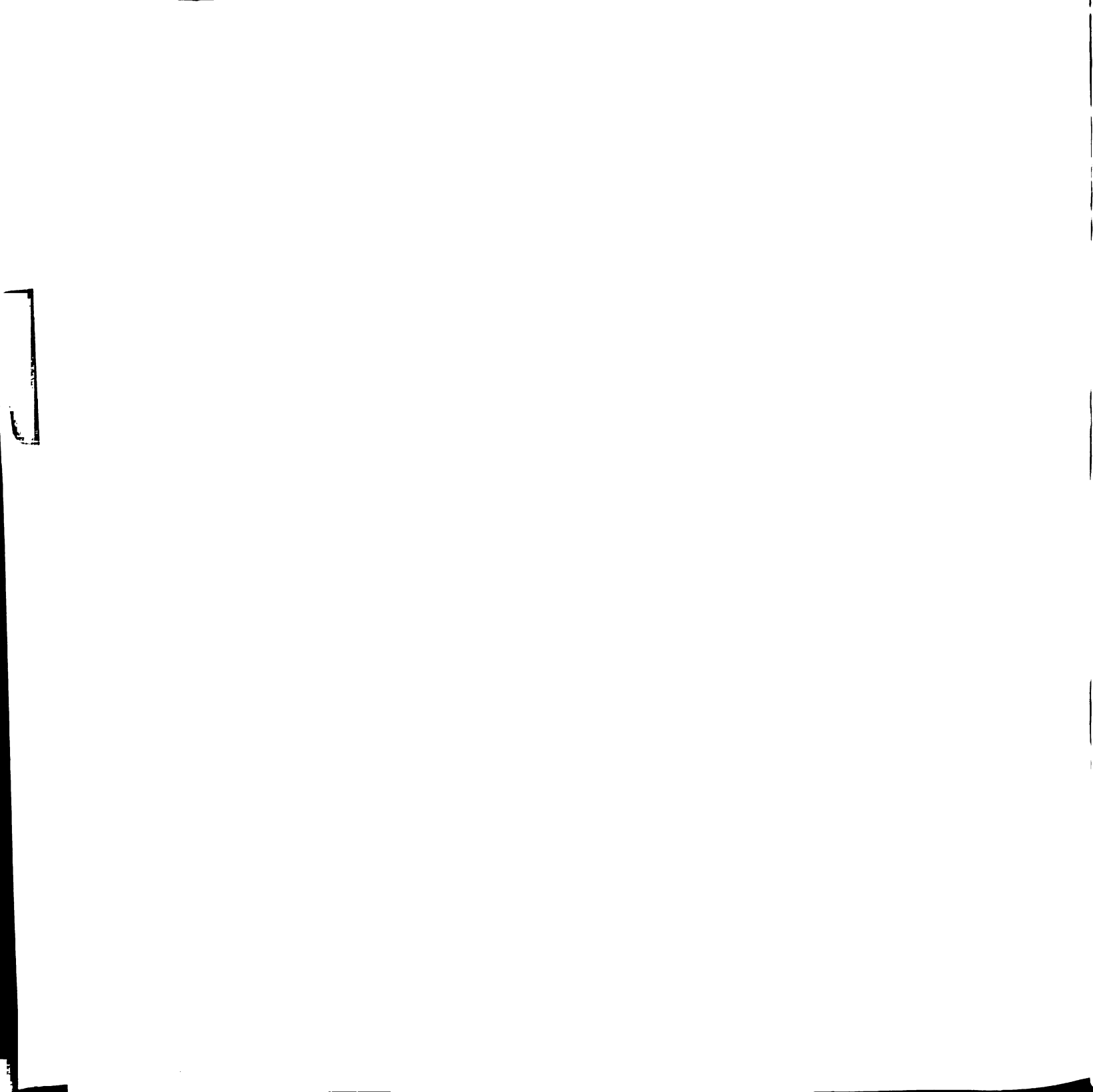
Comrade Chairman! Let me speak!

Chairman

Comrade Staff Leader.

Leader

It is impossible to believe that his negligence is caused by his health problem. The reason is that he has not seen a doctor recently. Is there anyone who knows that he has taken medicine? If there is anyone, please let him raise his hand. (No one answers.) There is no one. This is scientific proof that he has not been sick at all. Isn't that true?



Comrade Kim

True! His sickness is a lie!

Leader

If it is a lie, then why has he been so inattentive? Previously he had been a good example of a party member. There must be a reason. I dare say that I know the reason. However, because of my respect for his personality, I do not want to point it out. But I am willing to wait for his conscientious and frank confession.

Everyone

Comrade Paik! Start your self-criticism!

Suck-Bong

I am really sick. I can't sleep at night. In the morning when I wake up my head is heavy, and I feel a little fever in the afternoon. Furthermore, I've lost my appetite.

Members

This is precisely a psychological sickness! Namely, love-sickness.

Suck-Bong

You must think I am sick because I'm in love with...

Members

Love-sickness! Now his story is on the right track!

Suck-Bong

I think it is logical for you to think that way because the woman who came from South Korea is a person who has been helping me for many years. However, ever since I was advised by the Comrade Chairman, I have been regarding her as a person with whom I have no relationship at all.

Leader

The fact that he thinks of her as a woman who has no bearing on him does not mean that he is not thinking of her.

Everyone

True!

Suck-Bong

I am conscientiously confessing. I do not think of her any more.

Comrade Kim

(As he raises his hand.) Comrade Chairman. While I support the report of Comrade Natasha and the other comrades' discussion, I want to add a few words.

Chairman

Comrade Kim.

Comrade Kim

Just now, Comrade Paik has said that he never thinks about her. But it is plainly a lie.

Suck-Bong

Lie? That is an insult to my personality. Comrade! Take back what you have said!

Comrade Kim

I am going to prove that everything he is saying is nothing more than an excuse. Comrade Yang, why are you maintaining silent? You and I have witnessed the truth that proves what he says is false. In that case, why are you not saying a word? Speak up!

Members

(Altogether.) Comrade Yang, participate in the discussion.

Yang

While I support Comrade Natasha's report and the discussion by the comrades, I am going to say a few words. It was exactly yesterday. (As he points to Comrade Kim.) Comrade Kim and I went to help the production of the Farmers' Theatre by the order of Comrade Paik. Since we had participated in the evening production, we had to stay there during the night. It must have been about two or three o'clock in the morning. When I woke up to go to the bathroom. I heard the sound of someone sobbing. I didn't know what that sound was. So I woke up Comrade Kim who was sleeping next to me. We turned our ears toward the sound. Then we found that Comrade Paik was crying, and saying "Oh, Comrade Bock-Hi. Comrade Bock-Hi."

Everyone

Stupid!

Suck-Bong

Do you mean those words came out of my mouth?

Comrade Kim

Of course.

Suck-Bong

No. I think it is absolutely impossible.

Natasha

Comrade Yang. Why don't you say more?

Yang

(He stands up hesitantly.) Of course, he was unconscious since he was saying it in his sleep. But Comrade Kim and I heard it clearly with these ears.

Comrade Kim

All of you have heard it, haven't you? Isn't this proof that Comrade Paik has not given up the daughter of the traitor yet? Since I think Comrade Yang is the closest friend of Comrade Paik, I don't think there is anything false in his testimony.

Everyone

Right! That is true!

Suck-Bong

That is a lie and a scheme!

Chairman

Comrade Paik. If you are so confident about what you are saying, please come up here.

Suck-Bong

Yes. (He takes the floor forcibly.) Dear comrades. First, let me make a concession, and let you assume that I have called her name in sleep. In that case can you say that it was a proof that I was in love with that woman? Don't

you think even a man who hates a woman can call her name in his dream? In the past, I have seen many people who called their enemies' names in their dreams. I can name some people who are right here at this moment. As a matter of fact, I am trying hard to forget her. That is the truth. Furthermore, my father's last words have never left me. As all of you know very well, my father was captured by the Japanese soldiers while he was fighting for the independence of our fatherland and was executed by them in Sinuiju Jail. When I went to see him for the last time with my mother, he said "Suck-Bong please follow what your father has tried to do and save our fatherland." These were his last words. His words were still lingering in my ears. If so, why should I do such a foolish thing which negates my dignity and power as a member of the party? I cannot do that. I swear I cannot. If I called her name in my dream, I must have done so because of my hatred for her.

Natasha

Comrade Chairman, let me have the right to speak.

Chairman

Comrade Natasha.

Natasha

If we would accept that Comrade Paik called her name only because of his hatred for her--as his enemy--he would have called her name while he was grinding his teeth bitterly. But Comrade Yang testified that he called her name while he was crying. Chairman, verify this point quickly.

Chairman

Comrade Yang. I ask you. Answer me clearly. Did Comrade Paik call Bock-Hi's name while he was bitterly grinding his teeth? Or...

Comrade Kim

Comrade Yang, give a just and proper answer.

Yang

He called Bock-Hi's name while he was sobbing.

Suck-Bong

Sobbing?

Yang

Yes.

Natasha

Now! Comrades! You have heard it clearly, haven't you? Comrade Paik called that bitch's name while he was crying. Don't you think this is a proof that he is still in love with her?

Suck-Bong

Well. What has happened to me? (He sits down feebly.)

Natasha

That isn't all. Comrade Paik has been wearing a melancholy face all day long recently. He doesn't smile. He is always looking in the other direction--exactly that woman's side of the sky--and sighs deeply. He did it yesterday. He also did the same thing a little while ago. This was also witnessed by other comrades.

Members

(Sporadically.) I've heard it! I saw him.

Natasha

(Rapturously.) Look! Can he still say that he hates her? All comrades, listen! The reason that his composition has lost the previous high characteristics of the party and contains the elements of American Jazz is on account of that woman! I mean that ever since that bitch crossed the Thirty-Eighth Parallel, he has been different. If you have an answer to what I am saying, defend it quickly.

Everyone

(Loudly.) Answer it quickly! Quickly!

Suck-Bong

That is, well... (He can no longer continue his speech and begins to mumble.)

Natasha

Look! He cannot answer!

Everyone

(Excitedly.) Why are you mumbling? Confess it quickly. We want your frank confession!

Suck-Bong

(Dejectedly.) ...comrades forgive me. I no longer possess any pretext to defend myself since you are saying that I did not grind my teeth while I was calling her name. Here, I confess to you that I have been trying hard to forget the woman whose name is Bock-Hi Chung for the past few days. However, if I try harder to forget her, the memory of her devoted effort to help me while I was being chased by the South Korean Police envelops my heart more strongly in a thick fog. And it is also true that these memories are clinging in my head as though they are entangled with some sort of spider webs.

Natasha

(As she laughs triumphantly.) Ho, ho, ho... Now he is vomiting the muddy water!

Everyone

Ha, ha, ha... A liar! A hypocrite!

Suck-Bong

But you must recognize the fact that I have tried hard to forget her.

Leader

Since your effort has produced an adverse effect, we cannot recognize it.

Suck-Bong

If so, I will continue my effort. I will even try for the complete elimination of the fog and the spider webs from myself.

Leader

Comrade! We must remember as our General of the Army, Stalin, who is the Sun of the People, said "The Members of the party must be exact and cruel!" I am asking you what is your reaction to this grave fact that Comrade Paik, a medal winner and the son of a patriot, has cried for the daughter of a traitor to our party.

Natasha

The fact that he is still in love with our enemy is nothing more than a plot, and he is trying to sell out our party and destroy it. Isn't that true?

Everyone

True!

Leader

Suck-Bong Paik is a traitor and at the same time he is a rebel to the party! Let's investigate him thoroughly at the general meeting of the party.

Everyone

True! He must be punished.

Leader

A punishment is not enough. Deprive him of party membership!

Everyone

(At the same time.) Chase him out!

Chairman

(As he knocks the desk.) Quiet! Comrades! Calm down! Control your emotion! Calm down! (Finally everyone calms down.) Comrade Paik. You have heard the frank anger of the comrades, haven't you? Because their expectations of and confidence in you have been so great, the voice of their criticism is naturally so much the stronger.

Suck-Bong

Comrades. I swear on this spot that I will follow the intention of my father and glorious course of the party. I again swear by the name of our fatherland and the whole people. From this moment, I will equip myself with strong confidence in the party and will never think about that woman. Therefore, please open the road of regeneration for me once more. This is my wish.

Chairman

Comrades. Have you heard Comrade Paik's crying voice?

(Everyone is whispering to everyone else.)

Chairman

Comrade Paik, return to your seat.

(Suck-Bong returns to his seat weak with despair.)

(Everyone shrinks away from Suck-Bong as if he has a contagious disease. Suck-Bong is sitting alone quietly at the center of the stage like a lonely island in the middle of an ocean.)

Secretary General

Comrade Chairman. While I totally support Comrade Natasha's report and the other comrades' discussions, I shall speak. As you have mentioned briefly, Comrade Paik's father was killed on a scaffold by the Japanese while he was fighting for the liberation of our fatherland. His mother was also killed unfortunately by an explosion while she was working at the stone mine in order to support her family. Comrade Paik has grown up under such circumstances. Furthermore, he has also participated in many movements for the liberation of our fatherland, and the history of his struggle is extremely brilliant, such as his participation in the Reading Society at Seoul University under the imperialistic Japanese and the October Revolution in Taegu during the post World War II. And he also worked as a cultural attaché to the partisans in the Chili Mountains. He has been a brilliant, fighting, cultural vanguard. Due to his conspicuous fighting history, his creative works have always been totally supported by the people and the party. Consequently, I am willing to regard his present mistake as a temporary one rather than a fundamental fault. I am asking you. Do you think we can afford to lose our treasure because of his single mistake? Since Comrade Paik also fully understands his mistake, I am proposing to you that we give him another chance by merely giving him a warning this time. (They all begin whispering to each other.) I understand that my loyal comrades may not be satisfied with my proposal. However, because of his venerable family origin and history, I dare once more propose this resolution.

Chairman

In that case, I intend to decide whether Comrade Paik should be punished at the General Meeting of the party or should he be given another chance. This must be decided by raising your hands.

Everyone

Good.

Leader

There must be a condition. If we are going to give Comrade Paik another chance, we must send him to Comrade Natasha, who is from an advanced country, the Soviet Union, to be educated under her personal instruction in order to control his political thought, and to avoid a second mistake.

Members

That is a good idea.

Chairman

Comrade Natasha. Can you trouble yourself in this matter?

Natasha

If that is the decision of the meeting...

Chairman

Now I am asking your opinion. If you agree to give Comrade Paik another chance under the condition that he will be instructed by Comrade Natasha who exhibited a high degree of loyalty to the party than we have, please raise your hands.

Leader

I support it absolutely. (He raises his hand.)

Comrade Kim

Good! (He raises his hand.) Right!

Members

Good! (Everyone raises his hand.)

Chairman

It is decided by everyone to give him another chance. (He claps his hands.) Next, we are going to pass the resolution. Comrade Clerk, please read the statement of resolution.

Comrade Park

(He stands up and starts to read the ready-made resolution.)

The Statement of Resolution

According to the report by Comrade Natasha and the discussion by all of the comrades, we conclude the following:

1. In order to equip the creative works of Comrade Suck-Bong Paik with the high degree of the party principles, we decide that he is to be personally educated by Comrade Natasha Kim.
2. In case Comrade Suck-Bong Paik refuses the earnest education offered by Comrade Natasha Kim and approaches Bock-Hi Chung, the daughter of a traitor, he must accept the severest punishment of the party.

February 28, 1949

The Committee of the National Art Theatre
The Eastern District of the City of Pyongyang
The Labor Party of Korea

Chairman

Is there anyone who has a question or who disagree with the Statement of Resolution? If so, please raise your hand.

Everyone

No. We absolutely support it.

Suck-Bong

(As he stands up.) Thank you, comrades. I swear to become a loyal composer as a member of the party under the guidance of Comrade Natasha.

(Everyone claps his hands.)

Chairman

Comrade Natasha, we are leaving Comrade Paik under your supervision.

Natasha

(As she beams broadly.) Ta, ta! (I know it.)

(Everyone claps his hands.)

Natasha

Comrade Paik. Come here! (She holds Suck-Bong's hand and shakes it, while the members of the party are clapping their hands thunderously.)

(Curtain)

ACT THREE

A few days later. Evening.

Natasha Kim's apartment, furnished in the Russian style. There is a piano, a bed, and a cabinet for the tea set.

When the curtain rises, a stream of moonlight from the window floods center stage. The sound of a door knocking is heard and Natasha enters.

Natasha

Oh, my arms are aching. (She puts an armful of groceries on the table. When she turns on the wall switch the room becomes bright. Then she looks at her watch.) It is time for Comrade Paik to come... Since the door was locked, I wonder whether he has already come and returned to his home. (She takes off her overcoat while she starts to sing. Then she walks to the mirror on the chest.)

This night is fading also
the night with you!
the sparkling night of St. Petersburg
don't be nostalgic for your past magnificence
this night is fading also
the night with you!

(At this moment the sound of someone knocking on the door is heard.)

Natasha

(Cheerfully.) Come in.

(The door is opened slowly and Suck-Bong enters. He looks pale.)

Natasha

Oh, Comrade Paik! Finally, you are here! First of all, a member of the party must be punctual. (She reaches out her arms to him as though she wants him to come and kiss her.)

Suck-Bong

(He ignores her arms and puts his brief case down on the desk.) Am I late?

Natasha

(Disappointedly.) Don't you know how to embrace and kiss?

Suck-Bong

Well. (He kisses her hand.) How do you do, Natasha?

Natasha

Oh, what a commendable deed!

(Suck-Bong wipes his forehead with his handkerchief. Then he sighs.)

Natasha

Is it that difficult for you to kiss me?

Suck-Bong

Oh, no!

Natasha

Then why are you sweating so?

Suck-Bong

(As he takes his coat off.) I thought you were waiting for me. So I ran.

Natasha

Oh, I thought you were sweating because you didn't like me.

Suck-Bong

Don't say such a thing! You will be struck by lightning. If I were to say that I didn't like you, it would mean that I was negating the resolution of the party. Don't you think so?

Natasha

That's true. Did you do today's lesson?

Suck-Bong

I have read it. (He takes a book out of his brief case.)

Natasha

Wait a minute! (She interrupts him.) The reason I invited you today was to have a party for you since you've studied so hard for the past few days.

Suck-Bong

I've had my supper already.

Natasha

What are you saying? I told you that you shouldn't eat before you come...

Suck-Bong

But I thought it was much too troublesome for you...

Natasha

(As she points to the groceries on the table.) Anyway, you must eat with me.

Suck-Bong

What shall I do?

Natasha

(She takes a bottle of whisky.) Would you like a drink?

Suck-Bong

No, I don't drink.

Natasha

Oh, bushigangi! (Liar.) (She pinches his cheek. Then she sits down on her bed extending her feet to him as if she wants him to take her boots off.) Well, you must help me. (Suck-Bong crouches on the floor and pulls off her boots. She changes into her slippers.) Next, the apron! (She extends her arms to him, and he puts the apron on her.) Wait a moment. Read the magazines! I must cook a side dish for the drinks... (She tosses a magazine to him.)

Suck-Bong

If you don't have any special plans for me, I must go. I am a little busy with the next production.

Natasha

You must know that being with me is an extension of the lessons.

Suck-Bong

What thoughtless words!

Natasha

The principles of Communism should not only be studied in the books, but they also must be learned from housekeeping. The Koreans know the theory of Marxism, but they don't know the practical things which should be known even by children. Your failure with that bitch is a good example. Why don't you say something? It's no longer a thoughtless word, is it?

Suck-Bong

From now on don't talk about "that bitch." It really makes me sweat.

Natasha

Therefore, you must obey me. (She takes his hat and puts it in the dress cabinet. Then she takes the groceries to the kitchen.)

Suck-Bong

Damn it! I don't care what happens to me! (He lies down on the couch. But he stands up suddenly as though he can no longer endure the situation. He starts to walk up and down, whistling. Then he pulls back the curtain at the window and looks at the sky.) I wonder what Bock-Hi is doing in the factory... (As he suddenly realizes that he is mumbling to himself, he puts his hand on his mouth.) What reckless talk! (He looks around to see whether or not Natasha is there. The sound of Natasha's singing is heard from the kitchen.) Fortunately, she didn't hear me! (He skims through the pages of a magazine. Then he starts to play the piano.)

Natasha

(She stops her singing and begins to sing the music being played on the piano by Suck-Bong.)

Every morning
when you wake up
to whom do you bow?
first, to Stalin
the sun of the sky!
next, to Kim Il-Sung
our general!

Suck-Bong

(He stops playing the piano.) Oh! (He starts to play
the people's song.)

Natasha

(She starts to sing.)

Our duty is completion of the goal of production!
all workers
let's go to work
our road is full of hopes
a wide open field
unite our forces!
let's unite our forces
in production
for our fatherland.

Suck-Bong

(He stops playing the piano. Natasha also stops
singing.) Damn it! It's annoying! (Then he strikes a note
on the piano. Natasha enters the room from the kitchen
singing. Suck-Bong looks at her nonchalantly.)

Natasha

(When she finishes singing, she embraces him passion-
ately.) Comrade Paik! I wonder how much the hero and heroine
loved each other in this opera? They must have loved each
other deeply since they die calling each other's name at
the end.

Suck-Bong

Comrade Natasha, do you want to love someone as much
as they did in the opera?

Natasha

Of course. If I can find a man for whom I would
sacrifice my life...

Suck-Bong

Comrade, I think you must hold a self-criticism also.

Natasha

Why?

Suck-Bong

Can a Communist afford to indulge in love?

Natasha

Well. Do you think I would repeat the same mistake you made? Don't worry. Since you and I are members of the party, there wouldn't be any problem at all.

Suck-Bong

(As he grimaces.) I think the food is burning...

Natasha

(Suddenly remembering it.) That's right! What shall I do? (She runs to the kitchen.)

Suck-Bong

(As he talks to himself.) I should have run away from here long ago. (He takes his coat.)

Natasha

(As she enters with a plateful of food in her hand.) Comrade Paik, what are you doing? (She is angry. She practically throws the plate down on the table.) I see! You are thinking of that girl again! (She breathes heavily.)

Suck-Bong

(He is startled.) What are you talking about?

Natasha

Then why are you taking your coat?

Suck-Bong

... co... cold, I'm cold...

Natasha

(She beams.) I see. I thought you were running away from me because you don't like me. (As she pours whiskey in a glass for him.) Well, have a drink. Then the cold will leave you.

Suck-Bong

Please leave "that bitch" out of your talk. That is my wish.

Natasha

Why? Because it makes you to think of her again?

Suck-Bong

Not because of that... but...

Natasha

Fool! Your face still shows a sign which reads "I still love that bitch."

Suck-Bong

(As he sips the drink.) Are you saying this because you want me to be sent to Siberia? (He stands up abruptly.)

Natasha

Please, don't be angry. Sit down here. (She pulls him down onto the chair.) I will not try to harm you. What I am trying to do is to save a comrade's life. In short, I am a kind of physician, am I not? Would doctors want to kill their patients? I am saying this because I worry about your future.

Suck-Bong

If you really think of me in that way...please help me. I am willing to do anything which will make me a loyal member of the party.

Natasha

Since your disease is caused by your mind, it cannot be cured by lessons alone. It's like the patient who should be treated by an internal medicine specialist going to see a surgeon instead. Isn't that true?

Suck-Bong

Let's not talk about it any more.

Natasha

Since your sickness is caused by love, it must be cured by another love. The empty spot in your heart made by the absence of that bitch must be filled by another woman. Do you understand what I am saying?

Suck-Bong

What useless talk.

Natasha

Really. It's true! Have another drink.

Suck-Bong

No, thanks.

Natasha

Then shall we dance?

Suck-Bong

I can't dance.

Natasha

Why?

Suck-Bong

(Silence.)

Natasha

I see! Because you are always uneasy with me? Although the Koreans regard the people from the Soviet Union as the privileged class, it is totally wrong. If Comrade Stalin found out there could be a grave problem. Come on! Don't hesitate... (She pulls his hand.)

Suck-Bong

Let's sit down and have a talk.

Natasha

What kind of talk?

Suck-Bong

Oh... Something about our heroic soldiers who defended Leningrad or a working class hero who accomplished one hundred percent achievement of the Five Year Plan or something like that...

Natasha

Didn't I tell you many such stories during the lessons? Give me your hand. (She holds his hand tightly and stares at him with lustful eyes.) You look exactly like Nikita Choi whom I liked when I was in middle school. Comrade Paik, do you know the reason why the Committee has asked me in particular to give you lessons even though there are many other qualified people?

Suck-Bong

Because you have strong political convictions in the party, because you are also a member of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

Natasha

That isn't all.

Suck-Bong

Then?

Natasha

(As though she is fascinated by herself.) Well. I met you first at the welcoming party given in honor of your coming to North Korea two years ago. I was very enraptured by the songs which you composed. Because I never found any remnant of culture in my father, who came to the Soviet Union, I wondered how this country could produce a genius like you. Since then I have begun to look at the mountains and streams of this country with different eyes. As a matter of fact, I felt awful when I had to cross the border to come to our fatherland. (She puts her arms around his neck.)

Suck-Bong

Although I appreciate your praise of my music, I am disappointed at your estimate of our people as barbarians.

Natasha

But my attitude to the Koreans has been totally changed. Comrade Paik, please look at me. (He does so. As if

she is disappointed.) Why are you so insensitive? (She waits for his lips.)

Suck-Bong

(As if trying to escape, he speaks loudly.) What is that sound? (He walks towards the window and turns his head to the direction where the sound is heard.)

Natasha

Oh, that sound? That is the sound of artillery.

Suck-Bong

No, I don't mean that sound.

Natasha

Well. That is the sound of artillery from the night combat exercise.

Suck-Bong

I see.

Natasha

(She leads him to the bed and sits down.)

Suck-Bong

(As though he doesn't hear her.) Where is the rest room?

Natasha

(As she points in the direction of the kitchen.) In that direction.

Suck-Bong

I'll be back in a minute.

Natasha

(Cheerfully.) Go ahead.

(Suck-Bong steals away.)

Natasha

(She watches Suck-Bong walking out. Then she smiles.) I must change my dress. (She starts to change into her night

gown.) I wonder why he hasn't come back yet? (Looking in the direction in which Suck-Bong made his exit.) Comrade Paik! Comrade Paik!

(Nobody answers. Natasha walks out to look for Suck-Bong. At this moment someone knocks the door. The Chairman enters.)

Chairman

(Toward the kitchen.) Comrade Natasha! (Nobody answers. Then he sees Suck-Bong's brief case and overcoat.) I see. She must have gone out with Comrade Paik. (He starts to walk out.)

Natasha

(As she returns.) What an untrustworthy son of a bitch!

Chairman

Comrade Natasha, what has happened to you?

Natasha

Oh, Comrade Chairman. When did you come in?

Chairman

Just now..

Natasha

Damn it! I've never seen such impudent bastard! Damn it!

Chairman

What has happened to you?

Natasha

(As she grinds her teeth.) As soon as that dog appears again, he will not return alive.

Chairman

(Soothing her.) Calm down, Comrade Natasha.

Natasha

We must call another meeting for his self-criticism. He is an insane fellow. He is an insane son of a bitch!

Chairman

Whom are you talking about?

Natasha

You are the Chairman. How can you be so insensitive?

Chairman

Oh, do you mean Comrade Paik?

Natasha

You fool!

Chairman

Was he here?

Natasha

He was here. But he has run away from me, saying he was going to the rest room. I've never seen such a sneaky dog in all my life.

Chairman

Why did he do that?

Natasha

(Pointing to herself.) Because he doesn't like his teacher.

Chairman

Has he not forgotten Bock-Hi Chung yet,... that bitch?

Natasha

(As she raises her fist.) I must break that bastard's leg bones!

Chairman

Calm down. And tell me the story in detail.

Natasha

Damn it! I can no longer tolerate it! (As she tries to prevent her tears.) Don't you think he would treat me

in a different way if he had forgotten the girl completely?

Chairman

He should have changed completely.

Natasha

He has not. He has been totally inattentive to me recently. Furthermore, he treats me in an extremely cold manner. In addition to that, he doesn't know what he is doing. He is like an insane man! Don't you think that is proof that his heart is still captured by her?

Chairman

I came all the way to you hoping I'd get good news...

Natasha

I've never experienced this kind of humiliation in my life.

Chairman

Comrade Natasha, have you heard him calling her name again?

Natasha

He has to sleep first before he can say something in his dreams.

Chairman

Does that mean he doesn't sleep at all?

Natasha

He sits up all night saying he is composing. He is afraid of closing his eyes for fear he may accidentally talk in his sleep.

Chairman

(As he bites his lips.) Comrade Natasha, do you think he will return here again tonight?

Natasha

I don't know.

Chairman

He has left his brief case and coat. I'm sure he'll be back. Let's do this. I'll quickly send a message to the textile mill asking them to send that bitch here. I must use a trick... As soon as she comes here, you should leave this place. Then we can find out what they do in this room, don't you think?

Natasha

Right!

Chairman

We must have conclusive proof. We can't be hasty in punishing him since he has once been forgiven by the party.

Natasha

What shall I do if he does not come back tonight?

Chairman

I think he will, though. He can't run away from you without saying he is leaving, can he?

Natasha

Then send the message quickly! We must bring that girl here before he comes back. (She pushes him away.)

Chairman

Don't tell him anything. Don't let him know anything.

Natasha

Don't worry about it.

(The Chairman exits quickly.)

Natasha

Wait and see! I don't think he will be able to accomplish anything he wants to so long as he shows that he doesn't like me. It will be impossible for him in a Communist country at least! (She throws down Suck-Bong's brief case and coat. Then she walks to the kitchen with the plate of left-over food.)

(Suck-Bong opens the door and steals into the room quickly.)

Suck-Bong

(He walks quietly and picks up his belongings to go out again. But then he sees Natasha's eyes looking out between the kitchen curtain.) Comrade Natasha. Well... I have a head... headache.

Natasha

(As she enters.) Oh, you've come back! Where have you been?

Suck-Bong

I went out to breathe some fresh air...

Natasha

Where to?

Suck-Bong

To the tram tracks.

Natasha

Was a tram running?

Suck-Bong

Yes.

Natasha

Why did you come back?

Suck-Bong

I feel much better. I think I had too much to drink.

Natasha

(As she raises her fist.) You bastard! Why do you keep lying?

Suck-Bong

What's that?

Natasha

Don't pretend! If you are a man, act like a man!

Suck-Bong

What did I do?

Natasha

She is still sitting in your heart, isn't she?

Suck-Bong

I am a man who is trying hard to become a loyal member of the party by obeying its order.

Natasha

(Indignantly.) If so, you must give me proof that you no longer love that girl.

Suck-Bong

Do you think a man's mind is like a sock? How can I show you the inside of my mind?

Natasha

(Earnestly.) Why do you hate me?

Suck-Bong

What are you talking about?...

Natasha

Does that mean you don't hate me?

Suck-Bong

Of course not.

Natasha

If so, come and kiss me. Come! (Suck-Bong is confused.) Look! You can't do it! You liar! (She throws his brief case and hat onto the ground.) Go! Take them! Go away quickly! (She sinks into a chair and begins to cry.)

Suck-Bong

(He is confused and doesn't know what to do.) Damn it! (He walks back and forth in the room. At this moment, someone knocks on the door gently. As if he is reprieved from imminent danger.) Finally, someone is here! (The sound of knocking is heard again.)

Natasha

(As she looks at the door.) Who is that son of a bitch?

(Bock-Hi opens the door slowly and enters into the room.)

Suck-Bong

(He is surprised. Then he starts to mumble as though he thinks he cannot trust his eyes.) Well. Who is she?

Bock-Hi

(She stands by the door.) ... well. I have been sent on an errand.

Natasha

(As she stares at her.) An errand?

Bock-Hi

Yes. Comrade Huh, who is responsible for the Entertainment Department of the textile mill has sent me here.

Natasha

To whom are you talking? To me? or...?

Bock-Hi

I am talking to Comrade Paik.

Suck-Bong

How did you know I was here?

Natasha

I told Comrade Huh that you would be here tonight when I saw him in the theatre.

Suck-Bong

(As if he is angry.) Wasn't there anyone else to come on the errand but you?

Bock-Hi

(Silence. She is shocked.)

Suck-Bong

(Sternly.) Go back. And send someone else.

Bock-Hi

(Dejectedly.) ...yes.

Natasha

(As she looks at Bock-Hi who is ready to exit.)
Wait! (Sharply. To Suck-Bong.) Why are you trying to avoid
this woman? Isn't it because you have an impure thought in
your mind?

Suck-Bong

(Mumblingly.) Never...

Natasha

If that is so, you should talk to her here. I'll
go out. (She stands up.)

Suck-Bong

(Confusedly.) Comrade Na... Natasha, why are you
leaving? Please stay here with us... Please!

Natasha

Leave me alone. I need some fresh air also. (She
looks at her watch.) I won't be back until ten o'clock.
(She exits.)

Suck-Bong

(Coldly.) What on earth is meant by this business?

Bock-Hi

(As she hands him something wrapped carefully in
cloth wrappings.) I was sent to bring this to you.

Suck-Bong

(He unwraps the wrappings and finds at a sheet of
music.) What is this?

Bock-Hi

What is that?

Suck-Bong

(He reads an enclosed letter.) "Please practice this."

Bock-Hi

(Dubiously.) Isn't it "The Songs of the Mountain Bird," your composition?

Suck-Bong

Where are they going to use this old music?

Bock-Hi

They didn't tell me anything about it.

Suck-Bong

Who gave it to you?

Bock-Hi

Comrade Huh.

Suck-Bong

It is strange...

Bock-Hi

Why? (She is surprised.)

Suck-Bong

(He sits on the chair facing the piano.) Well. Let's practice it!

Bock-Hi

(She starts to sing while Suck-Bong plays the piano.) When the bird returns...

Suck-Bong

(Angrily.) No, you are not supposed to sing in that way!

Bock-Hi

Since it's old, I almost forgot it.

Suck-Bong

Once more!

Bock-Hi

(She starts to sing again while Suck-Bong plays the piano.)

The mountain bird is singing
 the mountain bird is singing
 in the old tree
 in our rear garden
 the mountain bird is singing
 the bird which we had seen last year
 the spring has come
 and the bird is singing
 the tall limbs of the tree
 in the blue sky
 the mountain bird is singing

(She finishes her song.) You composed it while you were in the Chunju Jail under the imperialistic Japanese regime. You sent it to me, didn't you? (Suck-Bong sighs deeply and closes his eyes.) This song reminds me of the time when we were living with a stream of hope under the Japanese regime.

Suck-Bong

(As he stands up abruptly.) What do you mean by that? Never say such a useless thing. You must learn the song quickly. (He sits down again.) Once more... (He starts to play piano.)

Bock-Hi

The mountain bird is singing. (She starts to sing again. Suck-Bong stops and looks at Bock-Hi.) Why did you stop? (Suck-Bong stands up and walks away from the piano. Then his tears fall.) Suck-Bong! (She is ready to throw herself into his arms.)

Suck-Bong

(As he turns around to face her.) Why are you crying?

Bock-Hi

When I see you crying, I can't...

Suck-Bong

(As he examines the surroundings to see whether anyone

is listening to them or not.) What tactless talk!

Bock-Hi

I can never forget you. You cannot know how happy I was when Comrade Huh told me to go to you and practice this song. It was the happiest moment... You've become very pale since I saw you last.

Suck-Bong

(Angrily.) What useless talk!

Bock-Hi

Although you express your anger to me, I know what you are thinking in the depth of your heart. Aren't you acting in this way only because you want to be loyal to the party?

Suck-Bong

Don't you know that you are the descendant of an enemy and rebel?

Bock-Hi

Why shouldn't I know it?

Suck-Bong

If you know it, why are you acting in this shameless way... (He shouts.) I don't want to see you! Really, I don't want to see you any more!

Bock-Hi

I thought you were in love with me in the depths of your heart...

Suck-Bong

Does that mean you think I am a double-faced member of the party? You must think of me a rotten fictitious character!

Bock-Hi

After all, you... Natasha?

Suck-Bong

(Firmly.) That's right! I truly love Natasha. Therefore, you should never show yourself in front of me again--

either officially or privately! Do you understand? If you understand it, please go away... Get out!

Bock-Hi

Even when the Comrade Chairman told me that I should never love you, I told myself "Do whatever you want to do. But you will never change us and our time will come some day." I always kept strong faith and hope in you, but...

Suck-Bong

We call it an illusion created by a simpleton.

Bock-Hi

(Indignantly.) Is that right? If so, you don't have to worry about it. Since I know you've changed, I will never appear before you again, as you wish. And because I'm not sure how long I'll be in this world... I wish you happiness with Natasha.

(Bock-Hi dashes out. Suck-Bong stands as still as a fossil.)

Natasha

(As she enters into the room from the kitchen.) Well. What a splendid scene it was! It was heroic! If you had loved that bitch even a little, you would have been sent to Siberia. My judgement was totally wrong. After all, my lecture have produced good results. Oh, thank you! Thank you!

Suck-Bong

Drink! Drink!

Natasha

(As she pours whiskey into a glass.) Here. A real Russian drink which inflames our hearts. (As she holds a glass in her hand.) Hurrah!

Suck-Bong

(As he raises his glass.) Hurrah!

Natasha

One more! (She pours more drink into Suck-Bong's glass.)

Suck-Bong

(As he drinks.) let the world be upside down. Let's drink! (She pours more drink into Suck-Bong's glass.)

Natasha

(Natasha and Suck-Bong sing.)

Since the girl has disappeared
let's play openly
let's open the bitter smile
and the clams
let's drink more
neurasthenia insomnia,
and the low pressure of yesterday!
today's sky is clear
the stars are sparkling
since the girl has disappeared
let's play openly.

(She starts to dance coquettishly.) Comrade, come here! Let's dance!

Suck-Bong

(Thunderously.) Damn it! Shut up! (Natasha stops suddenly. Quietly.) Come here.

Natasha

(As she retreats from Suck-Bong.) Why do you have such a murderous expression?

Suck-Bong

I said come here. Why are you backing away from me? (Natasha runs over to the bed in her retreat and sits down on it.) Damn it! (He starts to strangle her like a wild animal suddenly.)

Natasha

(As she pushes him away.) Oh, mother! Look at this! Help! Help! (She finally escapes from him.)

Suck-Bong

Why? Are you afraid of me? I wouldn't kill you. Kiss me. Quickly! (Natasha barely puts her lips on his hand.) You fool! (As he pushes her hand away.) On my lips! Holding my neck hard...

Natasha

(Bravely.) Well. Good! (She starts to kiss him passionately. Then she begins to pass her hands over his hair.) Do you know how much I like you? I've followed you always even giving up my self-respect. Now you are mine. You should never think of anyone else from now on. Don't you think of that bitch again.

Suck-Bong

Oh, your body! I want to die under your body.

Natasha

Is that true?

Suck-Bong

We are both members of the party. Don't you think we are privileged to become man and wife?

Natasha

Of course. We are equipped very well in terms of political ideology. Our family origins are pure! Furthermore, I was born and educated in the Marxist and Leninist tradition in the Soviet Union. There will be nobody to stand in our way.

Suck-Bong

Your clothes!

Natasha

(As though she didn't understand.) What?

Suck-Bong

Why are you so shy?

Natasha

(Bravely.) To make a mystery of one's body is nothing more than an oriental idea. (She starts to untie the belt of her night gown. Then she suddenly stops.) Wait. Comrade! Can you do it for me?

Suck-Bong

That's fine! (He starts to take Natasha's clothes off.) First! (He takes her night dress off.) Next... (He

starts to pull down her skirt.)

Natasha

No, I don't like it. (She runs away.)

Suck-Bong

Why can't you stand still? ...stand still!

Natasha

(As she gives herself up.) All right! (She stands still.)

Suck-Bong

(He starts to take her clothes off again.) Next... next... (Now she is wearing nothing but a slip.)

Natasha

(She looks at Suck-Bong who dares not to touch her slip.) You are still scared?...

Suck-Bong

(Determinedly.) Damn it! (He suddenly tears a shoulder of her slip. One of her breast suddenly appears.)

Natasha

Oh, my!... What shall I do? (She is confused for a second. Then she tries to hold on to Suck-Bong's neck.)

Suck-Bong

You bitch! Get out! (He pushes her down.)

Natasha

(She falls down on the floor. As if she is upset.) ... oh, what are you doing?

Suck-Bong

You dirty animal! You devil! Die! Die! (Then he turns around.)

Natasha

Comrade Paik! Paik! (Suck-Bong exits quickly. She stands up.) That crazy son of a bitch. He must be thinking

of that bitch again! You rotten son of a bitch! (She rushes to the telephone, and picks it up.) Hello! Hello! (She calls an operator.) Call the Comrade Chairman! I mean the Comrade Chairman at the National Art Theatre! Quickly! (She starts to cry angrily while holding the telephone.)

(Curtain)

7

ACT FOUR

The small house where Bock-Hi stays. There is a room, a door to the kitchen, and a gate. The same night.

When the curtain rises, Bock-Hi, who's face is down on the desk, is crying. The sound of a sharp wind is heard.

Bock-Hi

(She raises her head and wipes away her tears.) Though I could return to Seoul, I would become nothing but a target of mockery... (She smiles sadly and begins to untie her hair. Then suddenly.) No. If I would die here, who would take care of my corpse? Furthermore, numerous men would touch my body... (She stands up suddenly as though she can no longer endure her sad feelings.) Ah, I must find a place where I can disappear without being noticed by anyone. (She returns to the desk. Then she writes a letter. She puts the letter in an envelope and leaves it in a corner of the desk.)

(Bock-Hi steals out. A dog barks in the distance. Suck-Bong steals in. His hair and clothes are in disorder like those of an insane man.)

Suck-Bong

(At the gate.) I was told this was Bock-Hi's boarding house... (He breathes deeply.) Bock-Hi! Comrade Bock-Hi! (He examines the inside of the gate. Seeing no one, he enters the house.) I'm sure Bock-Hi lives in this house... (He looks into the kitchen.) It's strange. I don't even see the landlady. (Then he looks into the room. He finds a dagger under the desk.) What is this for? (He is overcome by uneasiness. Then he sees the letter on the desk. He takes it.) "To the Landlady." (He opens the letter and reads it quickly.) "I have made a sudden decision and am leaving for a long journey. From Bock-Hi." (To himself.) "For a long journey?" (He now feels as if he is facing an immense darkness.) I knew it was going to happen. So I ran. I wonder where I can find Bock-Hi? I wonder whether she has killed herself already or not?

(At this moment Bock-Hi enters and looks about her.)

Bock-Hi

(As soon as she enters, she begins to search for something under the desk.) I am sure I put the dagger under the desk... Ah, the letter is also gone...

Suck-Bong

Bock-Hi!

Bock-Hi

(She is startled.) Ah, my...

Suck-Bong

Thanks for your safe return and for your not having killed yourself...

Bock-Hi

(When she sees the dagger in Suck-Bong's hand.) Give it to me.

Suck-Bong

Bock-Hi. Forgive me for my severe criticism of you at Natasha's home. I was a fool. Forgive me. Please forgive me for my use of selfish violent language. But it wasn't my true intention. In order to survive... I had to cheat my conscience by clinging to the party.

Bock-Hi

Well, are you writing a drama?

Suck-Bong

I am through with everything. I cut off the chains which pulled at my neck... I mean I have bravely given up the party.

Bock-Hi

You gave up the party? Such a splendid weapon? Why did you give up the magic cudgel? You could achieve anything or solve any problem by clinging to the party. Don't you lie to me.

Suck-Bong

I know you don't believe me. But I did it. I slapped Natasha. I did it finally.

Bock-Hi

Ho, ho, ho. Please, don't say any more. She is such a powerful Russian-born Korean in North Korea. She is as powerful as a goddess come to earth in North Korea. She is a magic cudgel under the sky, isn't she? You slapped the goddess and gave up the magic golden cudgel?

Suck-Bong

You should not think that I even accepted her willingly. From the beginning, I never thought of that woman.

Bock-Hi

Please, don't say that. I am not a fool. You began to like the goddess and the magic cudgel before I came here. Unfortunately, because you had a promise to me, you couldn't make up your mind. But as soon as the party ordered you to, you jilted me as though it was the best chance for you.

Suck-Bong

That must be the conjecture of a silly woman.

Bock-Hi

If so, why couldn't you give up the party when the Chairman postponed our wedding? Do you think this tragedy had to happen just because you were a party member? Didn't I ask you to give up the party at that time? But you wouldn't listen to me.

Suck-Bong

You must clearly know what the party means. Why are you trying to draw such forced conclusion?

Bock-Hi

Well, I am not a member of the Labor Party of North Korea.

Suck-Bong

It is impossible for anyone to survive in a Communist country after leaving the party. Don't you know that if one leaves the party, he will be treated worse than a dog?

Bock-Hi

Does that mean that you joined the party to become a member of the privileged class? To make a class-less society

]

so that people may live equally is our goal, isn't it? But now you are saying that you cannot give up the party membership because you are afraid of being degraded like a dog. You want to become a man of the privileged class. Isn't it true? Where is your strong sense of justice?

Suck-Bong

...because I had been overly intoxicated by Communism, I never had time to criticize it. It was like a poison which gets into a human body and becomes a chronic disease...

Bock-Hi

(Indignantly.) Although you were intoxicated by Communism, how could you say nothing when I was being accused of being the daughter of a rebel? The reason that you did not say a word must be that you were motivated by an impure ambition. I must tell you plainly; you were not intoxicated by Communism; you were inebriated by Natasha.

Suck-Bong

Bock-Hi, what an unjust thing to say! I've never been so misunderstood.

Bock-Hi

(Calmly.) ... I know very well that jealousy is one of the lowest emotions. Why am I trying to compete with Natasha? If I could do it again, I would become as common a person as she is... (As she bites her lips.)

Suck-Bong

Bock-Hi, I neither have the ability nor the time to defend myself. Please forgive me and let's cross the Thirty-Eighth Parallel to return to the Republic of Korea. I can demonstrate my true conscience through actions there.

Bock-Hi

(Surprised.) What? What are you saying?

Suck-Bong

The party never belonged to the people, but the people belonged to the party. Therefore, I became a puppet. Consequently, this unfortunate thing happened. I will become a human being too. I must cut the chains of Communism which drag human beings down.

Bock-Hi

(Coldly.) Is that the reason that you are asking me to cross the Thirty-Eighth Parallel?

Suck-Bong

Let's go now.

Bock-Hi

Aren't there Political Security Police who have been sent by Natasha to wait for me at the Thirty-Eighth Parallel?

Suck-Bong

What?

Bock-Hi

(Laughing loudly.) Ho, ho, ho... Natasha must be an awful woman. She passed the resolution at the party meeting to keep you in her hands. Now she must be trying to extinguish my existence by proving something else.

Suck-Bong

What are you talking about?

Bock-Hi

Natasha has sent you to me, hasn't she? You are reciting the lines which she instructed you to say, aren't you? Aren't you? Again, I am beginning to talk about Natasha... Don't worry. Before you trouble yourself, I have already decided to kill myself. I went to the Dae-Dong River. But there were too many fishermen's lamps in the boats. So I have decided to take another method. Give me the dagger. I am going to climb the Moran Peak to dig a hole and fall down into it holding the dagger between my teeth.

Suck-Bong

Don't say such words! Let's return to Seoul to work with your father. The only way left for us is revenge against the Communists.

Bock-Hi

I don't want to become a fool who will fall into the death trap by someone's trick. Get out. (At this moment, the sound of someone approaching is heard.) Ah, someone is coming.

Suck-Bong

(He becomes pale suddenly.) Ah, it must be Natasha!

Bock-Hi

I think she is coming to check on you because it has been so long since she sent you here.

Suck-Bong

Oh, my...

(Suck-Bong quickly hides himself behind the grain winnow which is near the kitchen. Soon Natasha appears. She is followed by the Chairman and Yang. Bock-Hi stands erectly and stares at Natasha.)

Natasha

(Threateningly.) You bitch! Where did you hide Suck-Bong Paik?

Bock-Hi

What?

Natasha

Bring out the fellow.

Bock-Hi

(Sternly.) Don't you command me! The house is as small as a palm. He can't hide anywhere, can he? You can search him out if you want to.

Natasha

Then hasn't he come here?

Bock-Hi

Fool! You don't need to ask me!

Natasha

Why is this bitch acting in this way?

Yang

I don't think he is here.

Chairman

Where is the landlady?

Bock-Hi

She is gone to work at the labor mobilization.

Natasha

I see. Because the landlady is not at home, you hid him in a deep place. So you have plenty of confidence. Let's search everywhere, including the closet and chimney.

Yang

Yes. (All of them starts to search for Suck-Bong.)

(Bock-Hi sits down indifferently.)

Chairman

Since the house is enclosed by the hedge, it is impossible for him to escape...

Yang

Because the house is so small, there isn't a place to hide.

Chairman

Comrade Natasha, he is not here. Let's go somewhere else. (He starts to leave.)

Natasha

No. I am sure he is here. He has nowhere else to go. We must catch him quickly to send him to the people's court. We must tear him to pieces!

Chairman

We can't find him.

Natasha

Let's force this bitch. She must know everything. Where is that bastard?

Bock-Hi

(As she looks at Natasha who is extremely angry.)
Anyway, what has happened?

Natasha

(Rashly.) Well, look at this bitch. She pretends to know nothing.

Bock-Hi

I really don't know what is going on.

Natasha

Don't you really know it? I'll tell you. Listen carefully. Your lover slapped me and ran away. What do you think of that? Do you feel good?

Bock-Hi

(As if she begins to understand the situation.) I see.
(She begins to meditate for a second.)

Natasha

You bitch! What kind of promise did you make with him when you came to my house to practice the song? Say!

Bock-Hi

A promise? I was insulted and chased away by him. That was all...

Natasha

No. Since you came to my house, he has changed totally. You must have told him to kill me, didn't you?

Bock-Hi

I know how to kill myself, but I don't know how to kill anyone else.

Natasha

I don't know whether you ordered him or not, but he slapped me after you left my house. He must have been ordered to do so by you. It's an open rebellion against the party. Comrade Chairman, look! Since her father has been a rebel, she has finally become a rebel to the party also. We should never let this kind of bitch live for even a single moment. Let's take her to the educational and cultural institution.*

*The jail is called the educational and cultural institution in North Korea.

Chairman

Comrade Yang, take her with you.

Yang

Yes. (As he shoves Bock-Hi out.) Go! (He leads her away through the gate.)

Chairman

(He stops suddenly.) Comrade Natasha. We must leave her in the house.

Natasha

(She stares at him.) Do you mean you're going to forgive her?

Chairman

I don't think she knows anything. And I am positive that Paik hasn't come here yet. We must leave her here so we can trap him with her...

Natasha

Do you mean that you're going to trap him by using that bitch as bait?

Chairman

That's right. So we can catch both of them. If we kill only the girl, we could never catch him.

Natasha

I understand.

Chairman

Comrade Yang!

Yang

Yes. (As he returns with Bock-Hi.)

Chairman

Since we know that you are innocent we've decided not to take you to the educational and cultural institution. Therefore, you must stay in the house. You must not take a single step outside of the gate until you are ordered to do so by the party...

Natasha

If you reject our kindness and communicate with outsiders, you will be... instantly! Do you understand? (She threatens Bock-Hi. Bock-Hi drops her head without saying a word.)

Chairman

(To Natasha.) Let's go.

(Natasha exits. She is followed by Yang and the Chairman. Suck-Bong appears suddenly. He walks to the gate to make sure whether they are gone or not. Then he tries to steal out to the street.)

Bock-Hi

Wait! (Suck-Bong hesitates.) They must be waiting for you at the corner of the street.

Suck-Bong

If I am caught, there could be nothing more than death...

Bock-Hi

(When a rustling sound is heard.) Shhh! Comrade Yang! (She calls Yang.)

Yang

(From the outside.) Oh, Comrade Bock-Hi?

Bock-Hi

(As she motions to Suck-Bong to hide.) Will you come here please?

Yang

(As he enters through the gate.) What has happened?

Bock-Hi

Well... (She examines Yang's expression.)

Yang

I see. You know where Comrade Paik has been hiding? Isn't that right?

Bock-Hi

(Firmly.) I must tell you.

Yang

(Surprised.) Well. You knew where Comrade Paik has been hiding?

Bock-Hi

Yes. (Then she hesitates.) No, I can't tell you. (She tries to avoid looking at him.)

Yang

Why?

Bock-Hi

(Contemptuously.) It's very unpleasant.

Yang

Me?

Bock-Hi

Comrade Yang, you have been a good friend of Paik since your childhood, haven't you? Furthermore, you were my comrade who fought against Capitalism with me in Seoul. But ... Comrade Yang has been...

Yang

(Quietly.) As a matter of fact, it's very painful to me also. But the party insists on using me for everything assuming that our friendship is nothing more than a mere friendship. In addition to that, a few spies are following me all the time. Consequently, I am caught between the party and friendship...

Bock-Hi

Is that your conscientious confession?

Yang

Don't you think this is proof that I am earnestly in agony when I express my complaints about the party I am stuck with?

Bock-Hi

Don't you say any more. Since I came to North Korea, I can't distinguish between truth and falsehood.

Yang

Since the person whom Comrade Paik slapped is not only a member of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union but a Russian-born Korean, it is impossible for Comrade Paik to hide himself while the police are searching for him. Please tell him to give himself up in order not to bring troubles to an innocent man like me.

Bock-Hi

The reason that I'm going to disclose Comrade Paik's hiding place is not for you, but it is for my own sake.

Yang

For yourself?

Bock-Hi

I'm telling you this since you know very well the relationship between Comrade Paik and me. I wonder how he could ask me to come here and put me in this kind of trouble.

Yang

Don't worry. I think that the relationship between Comrade Natasha and him is also totally wrecked.

Bock-Hi

Although I'm told that Paik slapped Natasha, I don't want to know the reason. All I have in my heart is the desire for revenge! I must be avenged on Suck-Bong Paik! The man who betrayed me and stepped on my self-respect...

Yang

That's right. You must...

Bock-Hi

Look at this! (She shows him a fountain pen.) Do you know whose this is?

Yang

(Surprised.) Oh, Suck-Bong's fountain pen! Then was he here?

Bock-Hi

I found it in front of the door.

Yang

Does that mean he was here?

Bock-Hi

My will was gone also.

Yang

Your will?

Bock-Hi

Because I was indignant at his deception of me, I intended to drown myself in the Dae-Dong River.

Yang

... I see. Is that the reason that you are wearing a white dress?

Bock-Hi

In short, I'm sure he came here after he slapped Natasha and found my will. He must have gone to the river to find me there.

Yang

Then why didn't you tell this story to everybody?

Bock-Hi

Because I hate Natasha. I dislike the girl.

Yang

I understand it. Then we'll send the people to the river. We must arrest him instantly! (He starts to walk out. But he stops suddenly.) ...Comrade, you are not chasing me out in order to plot something else, are you?

Bock-Hi

What are you talking about?

Yang

Aren't you planning to send me away because I've been troublesome to you since you know that I was standing outside the gate?...

Bock-Hi

Well. If you think of me that way, you don't need to do anything.

Yang

Can you swear that you will not run away from here until I come back?

Bock-Hi

I don't think there is any reason that I should be a captive as soon as Paik is arrested. Why should I run away? Am I a criminal?

Yang

That's true. Then I'll be back.

(Yang exits quickly.)

Suck-Bong

(As he appears.) Thank you, Bock-Hi.

Bock-Hi

Wait a second. (Then she runs into the room.)

Suck-Bong

Why?

Bock-Hi

(As she returns in a black dress.) Because a white dress will easily be noticed in the darkness.

Suck-Bong

What do you mean?

Bock-Hi

I will return to South Korea with you.

Suck-Bong

(Surprised.) Why?

Bock-Hi

I'm sorry that I didn't understand your true intention and feeling. I gave you trouble.

Suck-Bong

(Emotionally.) Oh, Bock-Hi! (He embraces her.)

Bock-Hi

When both the party and you had discarded me, there could be nothing left but death for me. But I can be brave now. Now I will be able to see my parents.

Suck-Bong

Oh, I'm saved! I neither could live nor die before I had made you understand me...

Bock-Hi

Please forget everything in the past and look forward to seeking freedom. Although we had so much trouble by being chased by the police in South Korea, we were still happier than now.

Suck-Bong

That's true. That's true. I've been foolish. I found the way I should take... Only after I had gone through all the troubles...

Bock-Hi

Let's go quickly. Before they come back...

(Natasha enters through the gate.)

Natasha

Ho, ho, ho... You've having a good time!

Bock-Hi

Oh, my... (She holds Suck-Bong.)

Natasha

A shameless bitch!

Suck-Bong

(Calmly.) You must come to see us off. I am very sorry to give you so much troubles... all the comrades and Natasha... for the past few days. Now I think it was nothing more than a struggle of contradictions from forcing myself to become a Communist. But I finally found the way which I ought to take. Comrade, you also must get yourself out of the mud. There shouldn't be a Communist nation at all. Well, goodbye.

Natasha

(She stands in their way.) No.

Suck-Bong

If you won't let me go, I must force you. Because I don't want to be rude to a woman, I am telling you...

Natasha

Don't speak useless words!

Suck-Bong

(Sternly.) Bock-Hi, let's go!

Bock-Hi

Yes. (Suck-Bong pushes Natasha away and tries to walk out with Bock-Hi.)

Natasha

Damn it! You bastard! (She pulls out a pistol.)

Suck-Bong

(As he covers up Bock-Hi.) I see. You have a pistol. So you can talk in that way.

Natasha

I knew what was going to happen. So I was outside the gate. I overheard everything. You want to go to South Korea? Before you do it, you must take a trip to hell.

Suck-Bong

I've given up my life already. If you want to shoot, go ahead!

Natasha

Don't you be in a hurry. I'll bring the Comrade Chairman soon. I sent Comrade Yang to the theatre.

Suck-Bong

You fox-like bitch! (He jumps on Natahsa and twists the arm which is holding the pistol.)

Bock-Hi

Good! (She quickly tries to pick it up, but Natasha reaches it first.)

Natasha

(As she picks up the pistol again.) Stand still! Or I'll shoot you! (Suck-Bong stands still.)

(The Chairman and Yang enter.)

Chairman

Oh, Comrade Natasha, thanks for your trouble.

Natasha

Comrade Chairman, look at the bitch and Paik who are standing side by side. Didn't I tell you that Paik was hiding in this house?

Chairman

True.

Natasha

I can no longer tolerate this situation. (She give her pistol to the Chairman.) Shoot them! Comrade Yang, tie them!

Yang

Yes. (He does so.)

Chairman

(As he returns the pistol to Natasha.) Comrade, don't you be in hurry.

Natasha

Aren't you going to kill them?

Chairman

(Quietly.) We can't kill them.

Natasha

(Angrily.) What! What spiritless talk! Paik's crime is not only limited to his slapping me, but he also plotted against the People's Republic...

Chairman

I've heard everything from Comrade Yang.

Natasha

Then why are you hesitating? I see. Since this happened among the members of the committee which is under your responsibility, you are trying to cover up things, aren't you?

Chairman

Don't you worry. I'll take care of them. (To Suck-Bong.) Comrade Paik, smoke a cigarette. (He gives him a cigarette.)

Natasha

(Angrily.) I don't know what you're trying to do. Comrade Chairman, do you have an order from the party?

Chairman

Well, wait a moment. (To Suck-Bong.) The reason that I'm going to forgive you is not based on your capability as an artist at our theatre, but it is based on the principle of our party which loves human life and peace. Don't you think this is a very progressive as well as humanistic way? But there must be a condition for saving your life. That is ... listen carefully... you must strangle that bitch in front of us.

Suck-Bong

I have to strangle Bock-Hi?

Chairman

If you'll do it, your life will be saved.

Natasha

(As she begins to relax.) I thought you had something.

else... It's a great idea! You dog! Kill her quickly!

Chairman

Well, kill her! Quickly! And you must continue your artistic profession.

Bock-Hi

I'd be much happier to be killed by you than by them. Please kill me.

Suck-Bong

You masked demons! I know your double plot beneath your progressive and humanistic idea. If I strangle her, you could take a picture of us to print in the press, saying "Suck-Bong Paik bravely revenges his enemy!" So you can make me responsible for everything. You must have brought a camera with you, didn't you?

Chairman

(As he puts his hand in his pocket.) What?

Suck-Bong

(Triumphantly.) Ha, ha, ha... Look at his hand in his pocket. He must have camera in his pocket!

Chairman

(Angrily.) You bastard! (He tries to knock him down by colliding their heads together.)

Bock-Hi

(As she protects Suck-Bong.) Suck-Bong, I'm going to die anyway. Please kill me so you can remain alive. Whatever their promise, you must survive. Don't you think?

Suck-Bong

Bock-Hi, he came with an order from the party. The reason that they cannot kill me is that they will be accused by the people when they ask why a Communist like me had to rebel against the party. The people could begin to think that the Communist Party can no longer save human lives. Then the falsehood of the party would be exposed to the people. Therefore, they have to cover themselves up by distorting the truth. Bock-Hi, we should never become the victims of their plot. Since I have been a member of the party, I know everything that they are plotting. If I continue

to survive, I would become nothing but a party worm.

Bock-Hi

But we made a promise to each other. Our task must be carried out...

Suck-Bong

They wouldn't let me live that long. First, they will let me kill you. Then they will kill me.

Natasha

Comrade Chairman! Why are you letting them talk to each other?

Chairman

You son of a bitch! I was going to keep you alive since I pitied you. It's no good any more! Let's go! To the Bureau of the Political Security... (He pushes Suck-Bong's shoulder.)

Suck-Bong

Yes. I'll go. (He turns around suddenly and hits the Chairman's eye with his fist. The Chairman falls down to the ground. Natasha falls down, pushed by the Chairman.) Bock-Hi! Follow me! Quickly! (He runs through the gate.)

Bock-Hi

Yes. (She follows Suck-Bong.)

Natasha

You bitch! (She shoots Bock-Hi.)

Bock-Hi

Ah! (She is hit in the back. She falters and falls down.)

Natasha

You dog!

Chairman

(As he covers his eye with his hand.) Paik! You bastard! Where are you? (Suck-Bong appears at the gate.)

Natasha

(As she talks to herself.) Oh, finally. There...

Suck-Bong

Bock-Hi! (He crouches down to cover Bock-Hi.)

Bock-Hi

... why don't you run away?

Suck-Bong

My feet were glued to the ground when I heard your groaning cries...

Natasha

Heh, heh, heh... I don't think your feet are glued to the ground. You couldn't get through our police cordon.

(The faces of the Secretary General, the Staff Leader, Comrade Kim, and Comrade Park appear over the hedge. They show extremely tense expressions.)

Bock-Hi

You are extremely cruel people! (She dies.)

Suck-Bong

(As he holds her.) Bock-Hi!

Chairman

(He stands up finally. To Suck-Bong.) Don't you play any more! Let's go! You son of a bitch! (He takes out a policeman's rope.)

Suck-Bong

Don't you be in hurry. I will not run away... (He puts his hand under his overcoat. He stabs himself with the dagger.) Ah! (He tries to hold down his pain.)

Chairman

What is that bastard doing?

Natasha

You dog! (She and the Chairman open Suck-Bong's overcoat.) Ah, a dagger!

Chairman

Oh, my! What shall I do with this? The party ordered that we not let him be killed... (He tries to take the dagger away from Suck-Bong.)

Suck-Bong

(Struggling.) Never! Instead of being used by you, I'd rather take my own life to expose your falsehood. (He stabs himself again.)

Natasha

Ah, the blood!

Suck-Bong

Bock-Hi! (He falls down over Bock-Hi's body.)

Chairman

(He takes the dagger from Suck-Bong's hand. He is very pale.) Comrade Natasha! Bolt the gate! And bring me a straw mat!

Natasha

Here! (She throws a mat to the Chairman. Then she bolts the gate.)

Chairman

(As he examines the surroundings.) Damn it! This will be exposed to the public at least. (He trembles.)

(Curtain)

APPENDIX III
Synopses of Five Plays

The Self-Beating Drum

(1946)

Five Acts

Characters

Choe Li, the King of the Kingdom of Nang Nang.

The Princess, his daughter.

Setbyuhl, her maid.

Chang Tcho, a young general dispatched from Han, a dynasty
of China.

Yae Kwan, an old official of Nang Nang.

Lieutenant

The Prince Hodong, the son of King Tae-Mu-Sin of the King-
dom of Koguryo.

Chu-Bo, his lieutenant.

Wu-Dae, his lieutenant.

Hyun, an old man.

Hyun's disciple.

There are soldiers of Nang Nang and Koguryo, ladies of the
palace, and stone-cutters.

The Self-Beating Drum is a favorite with Korean audiences because of its unique theme: Korea must be independent from the foreign dominance. It is difficult to say that this play inspired the Koreans to move for independence after World War II, but it may have had some influence on the intellectuals of the time. The play has another thesis, the

clash between man's duty to his nation and his duty to his parents. According to the teachings of Confucius, as they have always been portrayed, man's duty to his country must precede his duty to his parents. The plot of the play is as follows.

Nang Nang, one of the three kingdoms of Korea, has been a puppet state to powerful Han, a dynasty of China. The courtly affairs of Nang Nang are controlled by a general who is dispatched from Han. The King of Nang Nang has even promised the general that he will be given his pretty daughter as his wife.

However, the Kingdom of Koguryo has the Prince Hodong who is valiant and eager to unify the three kingdoms by expelling the Han influence from Nang Nang. This task has been impossible for him to achieve as long as Nang Nang has the self-beating drum which beats itself whenever the invading troops cross the border.

One day the Prince Hodong secretly enters the territory of Nang Nang with the intention of destroying the drum but he is captured and brought before the King, his daughter, and Chang Tcho, the general of Han. At this point an argument develops between the King and the captured prince who shouts for the independence of Korea from Han. Impressed by the Prince Hodong's patriotism, the Princess visits him in his cell and promises that she will destroy the drum for the sake of the country. During the night the prince escapes from the jail and happens to enter the Princess' chamber while

searching for the drum. When he demands that she help him she sternly refuses saying that she cannot act against her father.

Hodong is again captured by the soldiers. He is scheduled to be beheaded on the orders of Chang Tcho. When the Princess sees no way of saving his life, she promises Chang Tcho that she will go to Han with him if he will free Hodong. The prince is now free and again enters the palace demanding that the Princess help him to destroy the drum. When she sees that the prince will be captured again by Chang Tcho, she finally destroys the drum with her own dagger.

The Prince Hodong is arrested again. When the King orders his man to kill him immediately, the Princess tells him that it is she who has destroyed the drum not the prince. The King falls into a rage and fatally strikes her. At this moment the troops of Koguryo rush into the palace and save the Prince Hodong.

The Star

(1951)

Five Acts

Characters

Minister Kim's ghost, about fifty.

Gusulagi, his beautiful young daughter.

Madame Lee, her mother.

O-I-Chang Park, their loyal friend who is about forty.

Toryung, the son of Minister Chung.

Minster Chung, about fifty.

Tutor, about sixty.

Chum-Juhng Kang, an old worker at the home of Minister Chung.
He is about seventy.

Servant A, a young man in his mid twenties.

Servant B, a cunning middle-aged man.

Servant C, about forty.

Boy

Executor, about fifty.

Assassin A

Assassin B

Executioner

There are servants and a jailor.

The Star is a play about how fights among politicians with personal ambition bring calamity to their respective families and the country. The play contains social satire on the political fights in the court of Korea.

Like other plays of Yoo, this play uses the elements of disguise and mistaken identity which make the play more intriguing and interesting.

Gusulagi, the daughter of the late minster, determines to avenge her father's death by the hand of the present minster. According to the traditional oriental custom, it is a son's duty to avenge the murder of his father, but in this play the daughter of the dead man carries out her duty in order to restore the family honor since there is no son in the family.

When the play opens, Gusulagi is forced to escape from the cave where she and her mother have been hiding. They are assaulted by the assassins who have been sent by her father's murderer. Her mother is killed and beheaded.

Gusulagi, who has escaped from the gory scene, disguises herself as a boy and enters the house service at the home of the present minister, the murderer of her father. First, she tries to poison him but her plan fails.

A few days later the minster's son who has no idea that his new handsome servant is a girl decides to make her as his step-brother and asks her to sleep in his room. Seeing that her disguise will be revealed, Gusulagi runs away. She is caught and brought back by the servants, and they accidentally

find a package of poison in her back-pack.

When Gusulagi sees no more hope of carrying out her plan she reveals her identity and purpose for posing as a house servant to the son of the minister. When she is condemned to death by the minister, the young boy's affection for her changes into a strong love, and he proposes to help her to escape from the jail. When she refuses to accept his proposal, he decides to take her life himself instead of letting her be killed by someone else. He gives her one half of the poison which was found in her back-pack. Seeing that she has taken the posion, he swallows the rest of it. They die in an embrace, calling each other's names.

Wonsul Rang

(1951)

Five Acts

Characters

Yu-Sin Kim, a general of the Kingdom of Silla. About seventy.

Madame Chi-So, wife of Yu-Sin Kim. An aunt of King Mun-Mu
of the Kingdom of Silla.

Wonsul, their second son. A member of Hwarang-to.

Tamnung, his lieutenant. A few years older than Wonsul.

Jindalle, a peasant girl whose parents are killed by the
soldiers of Tang. She is in love with Wonsul.

Hyo-Chun, a general of the Kingdom of Silla.

Uhy-Mun, a general of the Kingdom of Silla.

King Mun-Mu of the Kingdom of Silla.

Guard

Wanderer

Envoy

There are maids, servants, waiting soldiers, ladies of the
palace, children, farmers, monks, an old man, and ghosts.

Wonsul Rang is a romantic drama in five acts. Like
many plays of Yoo, the theme deals with man's duty to his
nation and the honor of one's family.

Wonsul, a young soldier of Silla, escapes from battle
when he is sent to defend his kingdom from the invading
troops of Tang, China. When he returns home, his father who

thinks the family honor is smirched refuses to see him and demands that he commit suicide. This punishment is withdrawn by his uncle-king, and Wonsul goes to a mountain to live as a hermit with the help of a girl. Hearing that his father is gravely ill, he returns to the castle to see him. He is refused entry and his father dies without pardoning him.

A few days later Wonsul is visited by his former lieutenant who informs him that the kingdom is again being attacked by the soldiers of Tang. Seeing this as the only moment to serve their kingdom, they both rush to a nearby military camp to volunteer to fight. In spite of their patriotic fervor, they are promptly rejected by the commanding officer of the camp since their status is no higher than that of vagabonds. When Wonsul is finally allowed to fight, he single-handedly kills the commanding general of the enemy and brings victory to his kingdom.

When the war is over, Wonsul is brought to the King as a hero to be rewarded. However, he politely rejects any type of reward, insisting that his name should remain as that of traitor in the history of the kingdom. Finally, the King recognizes the young soldier as his nephew and the son of the late general.

The Earthen Hut

(1932)

Two Acts

Characters

Myung-Suh Choe, a sickly old farmer.

The Wife of Myung-Suh Choe

Kum-Nyuh, their daughter.

Kyung-Sun Kang

The Wife of Kyung-Sun Kang

Soon-Dol, their eldest son.

Sam-Jo

The Village Chief

A neighbourhood woman

A postman

This two act naturalistic play is the earliest play by Chi-Jin Yoo. It describes the misery of a farmer who has been waiting for his son's return from Japan. The main plot of the play is to show the suffering of the Koreans under the Japanese regime.

When the play opens, Myung-Suh, an old sickly farmer who is sitting in a shabby earthen hut, is trying to write a letter to his son who has supposedly been working in Japan. He has been writing it for three days in order to send it by

a young man of neighbourhood who is leaving for Japan in the afternoon. Finally, he gives up since he cannot find a single word of encouragement to write to his son.

Since their son has left home, Myung-Suh's family has been farming under the harsh Japanese regime. In order to help the declining family fortune, his wife operates an open market on market days.

In the afternoon the village chief unexpectedly brings Myung-Suh a story and a picture of his son contained in a piece of old newspaper which was used as wrapping in the market. According to the paper, his son had participated in a Korean independence movement, and had been jailed in Osaka, Japan. The whole family finds the news shocking and hard to believe. At this moment, a verbal argument develops between the village chief and Myung-Suh's wife who does not want to believe the story.

One day in the next spring a mailman delivers a package to the family which is from Japan. For a moment, everyone thinks it is from their son. However, their happiness turns to grief when they find that the package contains the ashes of their son who is executed by the Japanese.

The Throbbing Earth

(1947)

One Act

Characters

Chum-Ji Kim, a farmer. About fifty-five.

Okbun, his daughter who was raised in Seoul.

Ul-Bong Kang, a draft escapee.

Madame Park, his mother.

Ul-I Kang, his uncle.

Dae-Bock, a boy who is in love with Okbun.

A Japanese Policeman

There are a few farmers.

The Throbbing Earth is an one act play about a patriotic young man who has been hiding to escape from being drafted into the Japanese Army during the Second World War. The two principal characters are Ul-Bong, a young draft register, and Okbun, a village girl.

When the play opens, Ul-Bong comes to a village to get some water. While he is looking for a pail, he is helped by Okbun to whom he eventually admits that he is a draft dodger. Without knowing his identity, she praises him for his patriotism. While they are conversing, a Japanese policeman appears. Ul-Bong quickly hides behind a bush. The

policeman who has been following Ul-Bong attempts to force Okbun to disclose the place where he is hiding. When she refuses to help him, the policeman takes her to the police station to torture her.

While the indignant villagers are discussing what steps they should take to get Okbun back, a villager, who has just returned from the city, informs them that the country has been liberated from Japan. While they are pondering whether to believe the sudden news or not, an airplane drops the leaflets proclaiming the good news.

The play ends happily with the villagers joined by Ul-Bong and Okbun singing and dancing joyously.

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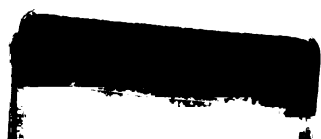
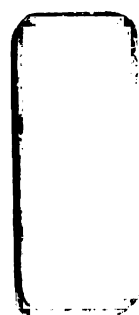
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