

THE IMPACT OF JAPANESE *SHINPA* ON EARLY CHINESE *HUAJU*

by

Siyuan Liu

BA, Nankai University, Tianjin, China, 1986

MA, Nankai University, Tianjin, China, 1989

MA, St. Cloud State University, 1996

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of

Arts and Sciences in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

University of Pittsburgh

2006

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH
FACULTY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

This dissertation was presented

by

Siyuan Liu

It was defended on

November 6, 2006

and approved by

Dr. J. Thomas Rimer

Dr. Bruce McConachie

Dr. Kathleen George

Dr. Attilio Favorini
Dissertation Director (Committee Chairperson)

Copyright © by Siyuan Liu

2006

Dr. Attilio Favorini

THE IMPACT OF JAPANESE *SHINPA* ON EARLY CHINESE *HUAJU*

Siyuan Liu, PhD

University of Pittsburgh, 2006

This dissertation explores the intercultural forces that affected the formation of *wenmingxi* (civilized drama), China's first Western-style theatre that flourished in Shanghai in the 1910s, following the 1907 production of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* by the Chinese student group the Spring Willow Society (Chunliu She) in Tokyo. In contrast to *huaju* (spoken drama), the present form of Western theatre in China, which came into existence in the 1920s through a whole-sale importation, *wenmingxi* adopted a localized approach by mixing Western drama, *shinpa* (new school drama, the first Western-style Japanese theatre), and traditional Chinese theatre. Based on primary sources as well as recent historical and theoretical studies from China, Japan, and the West, my dissertation focuses on the ideological, dramaturgical, and theatrical transformation *wenmingxi* brought to Chinese theatre.

The study is divided into four chapters and an introduction, which lays out previous research on this topic and my theoretical framework. Chapter One presents a historical review of *wenmingxi*, from early Western theatrical productions in Shanghai by expatriates and students of missionary and other schools, through Spring Willow's productions in Tokyo, and finally to the rise and fall of *wenmingxi* in Shanghai in the 1910s. Chapter Two examines the role of nationalism in the emergence of speech-based theatre in Japan and China around the turn of the twentieth century when political instability and fear of national peril largely accounted for both the political focus of early *wenmingxi* and its continued nationalist content even during its brief

commercial success in the mid 1910s. Chapter Three focuses on *wenmingxi* dramaturgy by tracing the intercultural transformation of several representative plays. It deals with three topics: the use of scripted plays vs. scenarios, adaptation vs. translation of European and *shinpa* plays, and melodrama as the emblematic dramatic mode for a society in transition. Finally, Chapter Four examines *wenmingxi*'s localization of the theatrical institution—especially in the realm of performance—between the poles of “free acting,” Western naturalism, and native theatrical conventions such as singing and female impersonation.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	v
TABLE OF FIGURES.....	vii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.....	ix
1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1. PRIOR RESEARCH.....	2
1.2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....	6
1.2.1. Interculturalism.....	6
1.2.2. Post-colonialism.....	11
1.2.3. The National Stage.....	13
1.2.4. Literary vs. Institutional Analysis.....	16
1.2.5. Translation vs. adaptation.....	19
1.2.6. Role of Traditional Theatre.....	21
1.2.7. Film Studies.....	22
1.3. DESCRIPTION OF CHAPTERS.....	22
1.3.1. Chapter One: Historical Overview.....	22
1.3.2. Chapter Two: Aspiration for a National Theatre.....	24
1.3.3. Chapter Three: Literary Analysis—Transformation of Dramatic Literature.....	25
1.3.4. Chapter Four: Institutional Analysis— Localization of the New Theatre.....	27
2. CHAPTER ONE: HISTORICAL OVERVIEW.....	28
2.1. STATE OF THEATRE BEFORE THE CHUNLIU SHE (SPRING WILLOW SOCIETY).....	28
2.1.1. Western-Style Theatre in Shanghai before 1907.....	28
2.1.2. Reform of Traditional Theatre.....	38
2.2. THE CHUNLIU SHE (SPRING WILLOW SOCIETY) IN TOKYO.....	39
2.2.1. Chinese Students in Japan.....	39
2.2.2. Western-Style Theatre in Japan.....	41
2.2.3. The Formation of Chunliu She (The Spring Willow Society).....	44
2.2.4. <i>La Dame aux Camélias</i>	48
2.2.5. <i>Black Slave's Cry to Heaven</i>	51
2.2.6. Subsequent Productions.....	63
2.3. WENMINGXI IN SHANGHAI BETWEEN 1907 AND 1913.....	72
2.3.1. Wang Zhongsheng and The Chunyang She (Spring Sun Society).....	72
2.3.2. The Jinhua Tuan (Progressive Troupe).....	78
2.3.3. The Xinju Tongzhihui (New Drama Society).....	81
2.4. WENMINGXI IN SHANGHAI BETWEEN 1913 AND 1917.....	82
2.4.1. The Xinmin She (New People Society) and The Minming She (People's Voice Society).....	84
2.4.2. The Spring Willow Theatre.....	90
2.4.3. Liu Yizhou, The Kaiming She (Enlightened Society), and Their Japan Tour.....	94
2.4.4. The Decline and Influence of <i>Wenmingxi</i>	101
3. CHAPTER TWO: ASPIRATION FOR A NATIONAL THEATRE.....	103
3.1. CALLS FOR THEATRICAL REFORM IN LATE QING.....	104
3.2. THEATRE FOR THE EMPIRE AND REPUBLIC—WAR PLAYS IN <i>SHINPA</i> AND EARLY <i>WENMINGXI</i>	115
3.2.1. <i>Shinpa</i> War Plays.....	115

3.2.2.	<i>Wenmingxi</i> War Plays	122
3.3.	SAVING THE LOST NATION—NATIONALIST PLAYS AT THE HEIGHT OF <i>WENMINGXI</i>	127
3.3.1.	Korean Plays	127
3.3.2.	European Plays.....	132
4.	CHAPTER THREE: LITERARY ANALYSIS—TRANSFORMATION OF DRAMATIC LITERATURE.....	151
4.1.	SCRIPT OR SCENARIO	151
4.1.1.	<i>Jiating enyuan ji (Love and Hate in a Family)</i> and the Scripted Play	162
4.1.2.	<i>Konggu lan (Orchid of the Hollow Valley)</i> and Dramatization	167
4.2.	ADAPTATION VS. TRANSLATION.....	183
4.2.1.	Critical Views	183
4.2.2.	<i>Angelo</i> and Translation/Adaptation of European Plays	187
4.2.3.	<i>Kumo no hibiki</i> and Adaptation of Shinpa Plays	198
4.3.	TRAGEDY OR MELODRAMA.....	207
5.	CHAPTER FOUR: INSTITUTIONAL ANALYSIS—LOCALIZATION OF THE NEW THEATRE	215
5.1.	THE THREE TRENDS OF <i>SHINPA</i> AND THEIR IMPACT ON <i>WENMINGXI</i>	218
5.1.1.	<i>Sōshi Shibai</i> and “Free Acting”	218
5.1.2.	<i>Seigeki</i> and Naturalistic Acting.....	225
5.1.3.	Domestic <i>Shinpa</i> and Traditional Theatre	231
5.2.	WENMINGXI AND TRADITIONAL THEATRE.....	241
5.2.1.	Opera or Drama: The Role of Song-Dance Theatre	241
5.2.2.	Female Impersonation and the Emergence of Actresses	247
6.	CONCLUSION.....	266
	APPENDIX: A GLOSSARY OF TERMS	269
	WORKS CITED	279

TABLE OF FIGURES

Figure 1 <i>The Merchant of Venice</i> by students of St. John's University in Shanghai in 1896. From (St. John's University 1929).....	35
Figure 2 Poster for <i>Black Slave's Cry to Heaven</i> by Chunliu She staged in Tokyo's Hongō-za in June 1907. (Photo courtesy of Waseda University's Tsubouchi Shōyō Theatre Museum.)	51
Figure 3 Act Two of <i>Black Slave's Cry to Heaven</i> staged by the Spring Willow Society on Tokyo's Hongō-za in June 1907. From (Zhu 1914).....	57
Figure 4 Act Four of <i>Black Slave's Cry to Heaven</i> by Chunliu She staged in Tokyo's Hongō-za in June 1907. From <i>Engei Gaho</i> , July 1907.....	58
Figure 5 Act Five of <i>Black Slave's Cry to Heaven</i> by Chunliu She staged in Tokyo's Hongō-za in June 1907. From <i>Engei Gaho</i> , July 1907.....	59
Figure 6 Poster of <i>La Tosca</i> staged at Tokyo's Shintomi-za in July 1907. (Photo courtesy of Waseda University's Tsubouchi Shōyō Theatre Museum.)	69
Figure 7 A scene from the 1907 <i>shinpa</i> production of <i>Tosca</i> entitled <i>Netsu ketsu (Hot Blood)</i> with Kawai Takeo as Tosca (right) and Ii Yōhō as Cavaradossi (center). (Photo courtesy of Waseda University's Tsubouchi Shōyō Theatre Museum.)	70
Figure 8 A scene from the 1909 Chunliu She production of <i>Tosca</i> entitled <i>Relei (Hot Tears)</i> with Ouyang Yuqian as Tosca (right) and Lu Jingruo as Cavaradossi (center). Notice the similarities in set, costume, and blocking between the two productions. (Photo from <i>Xiaoshuo shibao</i> 14, 1911.)	71
Figure 9 Stage shot of <i>Xin Chahua (La Dame aux Camélias, New Version)</i> . From <i>Youxi zhazhi (The Pasttime)</i> , 8, 1914.....	79
Figure 10 Shi Haixiao and Su Jisheng in <i>Meihua lao</i> by the Enlightened Society. Shi Haixiao was the best-known female impersonator of Western roles in <i>wenmingxi</i> because of his height and naturalistic style of acting. From <i>Jubu congkan (Collection of Essays on Theatre)</i>	96
Figure 11 Poster of <i>Michel Strogoff</i> at Théâtre du Châtelet, Paris, 17 November 1880	117
Figure 12 Poster for <i>The Sino-Japanese War</i> . (Photo courtesy of Waseda University's Tsubouchi Shōyō Theatre Museum.).....	119
Figure 13 Poster for <i>The Imperial Army the Vanquishes the Russians</i> . (Photo courtesy of Waseda University's Tsubouchi Shōyō Theatre Museum.).....	122
Figure 14 Poster for Kawakami's 1903 production of <i>Othello</i> . (Photo courtesy of Waseda University's Tsubouchi Shōyō Theatre Museum.).....	134
Figure 15 A Scene from Kawakami's 1903 production of <i>Othello</i> . Kawakami, standing, plays the black-faced general. (Photo courtesy of Waseda University's Tsubouchi Shōyō Theatre Museum.)	135
Figure 16 Poster of the 1906 <i>shinpa</i> production of <i>Patrie!</i> by the Kawakami company. (Photo courtesy of Waseda University's Tsubouchi Shōyō Theatre Museum.).....	140
Figure 17 The last scene from Act Three of the French version of Leopold Kampf's <i>On the Eve</i> entitled <i>Le Grand Soir</i> as staged in Paris' Théâtre des Arts in 1907. Here, the heroine Anna hesitantly brings the candelabra to the window as a signal for her lover's suicide assassination mission as her aunt looks out of the window. (Photo printed in <i>L'Illustration Théâtrale</i> , 81, February 8, 1908, p12.)	144

Figure 18 Two radical Chinese revolutionaries Qiu Jin and Xu Xilin who were executed in 1907 for assassinating the governor of Anhui Province.	147
Figure 19 Matsui Sumako as the deranged Ophelia in the Literary Society production of <i>Hamlet</i> . (Photo courtesy of Waseda University's Tsubouchi Shōyō Theatre Museum.).....	166
Figure 20 An illustration from the serialized novel <i>Konggu lan (Orchid of the Hollow Valley)</i> translated by Bao Tianxiao. From April 3 (May 11 in solar calendar), 1910 of <i>Shi bao (Eastern Times)</i>	171
Figure 21 A 1916 Xiaowutai production of <i>Chikyōdai</i> with a Japanese mise en scene. Ouyang Yuqian is second from left and Xu Banmei is first from right. (Photo courtesy of Waseda University's Tsubouchi Shōyō Theatre Museum.).....	196
Figure 22 The final act of the <i>shinpa</i> production of <i>Ushio (The Tide, 1908)</i> by Satō Kōroku. (Photo courtesy of Waseda University's Tsubouchi Shōyō Theatre Museum.).....	200
Figure 23 The final act of the 1907 <i>shinpa</i> production of <i>Kumo no hibiki (The Echo of Cloud)</i> by Satō Kōroku with Takada Minoru as Sōta and Kitamura Rokurō as Osumi. (Photo courtesy of Waseda University's Tsubouchi Shōyō Theatre Museum.).....	202
Figure 24 A scene from <i>Hototogisu (The Cuckoo)</i> with Kitamura Rokurō (left) and Ii Yōhō (right). (Photo courtesy of Waseda University's Tsubouchi Shōyō Theatre Museum.).....	235
Figure 25 A scene from <i>Hototogisu (The Cuckoo)</i> with Kitamura Rokurō (left), Ii Yōhō (center) and Fujisawa Asajirō (right). (Photo courtesy of Waseda University's Tsubouchi Shōyō Theatre Museum.).....	236
Figure 26 A scene from <i>Tsubaki-hime (La Dame aux Camélias)</i> with Kawai Takeo (left) and Ii Yōhō (right). (Photo courtesy of Waseda University's Tsubouchi Shōyō Theatre Museum.).....	236
Figure 27 Takada Minoru (left) and Kawai Takeo (right). From <i>Engei Gaho</i> , 4 (7), 1910.	237
Figure 28 A group picture of the Spring Willow Theatre (The New Drama Society)'s tour to Suzhou. It includes Lu Jingruo, Ma Jiangshi and other members, a Japanese musician identified as Hiyakawa and Japanese set designer as Hosoya, as well as a band. From (Zhou 1922e, 94).	244
Figure 29 Ouyang Yuqian in Western dress. From <i>Youxi zazhi</i> , 8, 1914.	250
Figure 30 <i>Jingju</i> actresses of all-female companies in their dressing room in late-Qing Shanghai. From (Wu 1990, 24, 3b).	251
Figure 31 <i>Wenmingxi</i> actresses Ye Wenying and Xie Tongying. From From (Zhou 1922e, 105).	252
Figure 32 An all-male cast production of <i>Jiating enyuan ji (Love and Hate in a Family)</i> by Lu Jingruo. From <i>Youxi zashi</i> , 18.	261

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This project would not have been possible without the encouragement, guidance, support, and friendship of many people. I am deeply grateful for their help.

First, I want to express my thanks to the members of my committee: Tom Rimer for believing in me, for opening so many door, and for guiding me before and during the project; Buck Favorini for agreeing to chair the committee after Tom retired, for his wise counsel and his thorough and timely feedback throughout the process; Bruce McConachie for guidenace before the dissertation and ideas and feedback during the project; Kathleen George for her friendship, encouragement, and thorough feedback.

My research trip to Japan was funded by Japan Studies Graduate Research Development Grant from University of Pittsburgh. I want to thank Katherine Carlitz for her help in the application process. The fruitful trip was the result of generous help by many friends and colleagues from both sides of the Pacific: In North America, Coldy Foulton and Yoshiko Fukushima provided invaluable scholarly and logistic information. In Japan, Mori Mitsuya introduced me to many theare scholars. Matsumoto Shinko lent me her vast knowledge of modern Japanese theatre. Iizuka Yutori and Seto Hiroshi shared with me their outstanding research on this subject as well as some rare resource. Sekine Masaru arranged my stay at Waseda Univeristy. Katsura Makoto provided a number of useful research tips. Finally, I am grateful to Waseda University's Tsubouchi Shōyō Theatre Museum for letting me use their vase theatre collections and permitting me to reproduce some of them in these pages. Suzuki Miho, Li Mo, and Tsukada Mizuho at the Museum were most helpful.

Lastly, I want to thank the support and inspiration of my family both in China and the US. I dedicate this dissertation to my wife Guoping and my son Patrick. Thank you guys!

1. INTRODUCTION

On the 1st and 2nd of June, 1907, a group of Chinese students who called themselves Chunliu She (The Spring Willow Society) performed *The Black Slave's Cry to Heaven* (*Heinu yutian lu*), a dramatization of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, in Tokyo's Hongō-za, then epicenter of “the great age of *Shinpa* coalition... called ‘the Hongō-za Period’” (Toita 1956: 277). Theatre historians generally agree that this production marked the beginning of China's Western-style theatre *huaju* (spoken drama) since it ushered in *wenmingxi* (civilized drama), the first incarnation of this non-traditional theatre. The fact that this epoch-making event took place at the height of *shinpa* (new school drama), which holds a similar place in modern Japanese theatre, and in *shinpa*'s best-known theatre house was hardly a coincidence. As I will demonstrate in this project, the connection between *shinpa* and *wenmingxi* crystallized in this production went far beyond the symbolic.

Also known as *xinju* (new drama)—especially in contemporary writing—or “early *huaju*,” the term *wenmingxi* usually refers to the theatrical form that flourished in Shanghai after this Tokyo production which was more or less a mixture of Western-style theatre, traditional Chinese theatre, and *shinpa*. The term “early” is used in contrast with the common form of *huaju* as we know it today which originated in the 1920s under the influence of Ibsenian naturalism both directly from the west and via *shingeki* (new drama), another form of modern Japanese theatre. The *huaju* movement after the 1920s was largely propelled by Chinese students who had, in the late 1910s and early 1920s, studied in Japan, the US, and Europe. Like *shingeki*, the *huaju* of the 20s and 30s also applied a canonical and pedagogical attitude in its adoption of Western theatre. While I will inevitably touch upon certain connections between *wenmingxi* and *shingeki*, my focus in this project is to trace the overall impact of *shinpa*—both as an independent

theatrical genre and in its role as the medium of Western theatre—on the initial transformation of Chinese theatre from the traditional to the modern.

The study will span roughly a decade after the 1907 Chunliu production of *Black Slave's Cry to Heaven* when *wenmingxi* briefly received critical and commercial success in Shanghai before its decline in the late 1910s.

1.1. PRIOR RESEARCH

There is little research done on *wenmingxi* in English.¹ In China, research on *wenmingxi* became attractive to scholars only in the past two decades. This bias against *wenmingxi* can be partially attributed to its lack of dramatic achievement and its interrupted theatrical connection with *huaju* proper. This is similar to the fate *shinpa* suffered in Japan in comparison with *shingeki*, which has traditionally been credited with introducing Western drama to Japan. When staging European plays, *shinpa* and *wenmingxi* adopted the approach of localization in both script adaptation and production.

At the core of this reassessment of *shinpa* lies the post-modern and post-colonial skepticism of the canonical and pedagogical approach to Western theatre taken by both *shingeki* and later *huaju*. As Brian Powell pointed out in his *Japan's Modern Theatre*, “[s]everal years before the first *shingeki* companies appeared..., *shinpa* felt confident enough in its standards of performance to take on the challenge of foreign plays. This is one of the factors which has caused recent theatre historians, notably Ōzasa Yoshio, to cite *shinpa* as a forerunner of modern theatre in Japan rather than as a hybrid offshoot of *kabuki*” (Powell 2002, 19).

¹ Colin Mackerras briefly discussed *wenmingxi* in his general studies of modern Chinese theatre (Mackerras 1975, 117-18; 1983, 106-09). Walter and Ruth Meserve published an essay entitled “*Uncle Tom's Cabin* and Modern Chinese Drama” in 1974 in which they briefly discussed the 1907 production and its contribution to modern Chinese theatre. However, their focus was on another adaptation entitled *Heinu hen* (Hatred of Black Slaves). It was written in 1959 by Ouyang Yuqian, who had played a role in the original 1907 production.

In his essay on Shakespeare and Asia, James Brandon identifies three Shakespeares in Asia over the last century, the canonical (*shingeki* and *huaju*), the localized (*shinpa* and *wenmingxi*), and the intercultural (productions of Ninagawa and Suzuki). Of the three Asian Shakespeares, John Gillies calls “[t]he first... a capitulation, the second an appropriation and the third an agonized and fractured dialogue” (Gillies 2001, 238-39). If we agree with their assessment, then the lens through which we see the choices *shinpa/wenmingxi* and *shingeki/huaju* made in their introductions of Western plays are no longer those of authenticity or “conscientiousness”², but of different strategies, both flawed, by two native cultures struggling to deal with a foreign theatrical form. In addition, these choices were necessarily complicated by the east/west imbalance of power at the turn of the 20th century.

In China, this reassessment of the strategies of theatrical modernization also led to the reevaluation of *wenmingxi*. Prior to the 1980s, most theatre historians were content with a limited number of *wenmingxi* sources, including a contemporary survey (Zhu 1914) and the memoirs of *wenmingxi* participants Ouyang Yuqian and Xu Banmei (Ouyang 1959b, 1985a, 1985b, 1959a; Xu 1957). In the 1980s, a debate over the origin of *huaju* led to renewed interest in *wenmingxi* research. So far this effort has produced a sizeable number of journal articles in both Chinese and Japanese, two PhD dissertations in China, one history of *wenmingxi* in Japan, and a Sino-Japanese conference on *wenmingxi* in Beijing in 2004.

The debate over the origin of *huaju* in the late 1980s and early 1990s eventually led to the consensus among Chinese scholars that: First, the earliest Western-style theatre productions in China were those staged by Western compatriots among themselves. Second, the earliest Chinese

² Matsumoto Shinko notes that despite earlier productions of *Othello*, *Hamlet*, and *The Merchant of Venice* by Kawakami Otojirō in 1903, “most theatre historians refer to” Ii Yōhō’s 1904 *Romeo and Juliet*, translated by Osanai Kaoru, who would become a leader of *shingeki*, “as Japan’s first conscientious Shakespearean production” (Matsumoto 2001, 63).

actors of Western-style theatre were student actors in missionary school productions, using Western languages. Some of these students would later become major stars in *wenmingxi*. And third, the first mature and most influential production of *huaju* by a Chinese group was the 1907 Tokyo productions of *La Dame aux Camélias* (one act) and *The Black Slave's Cry to Heaven* by the Spring Willow Society (Tian 1993).

The two dissertations devoted to the study of *wenmingxi* are *Zhongguo huaju de yunyu yu shengcheng* (*The Gestation and Germination of Chinese Huaju*) by Yuan Guoxing (1993, 2000) and *Zhongguo zaoqi huaju yu Riben* (*Early Chinese Huaju and Japan*) by Huang Aihua (2001). Both devoted major sections to the impact of *shinpa* on *wenmingxi*, but they also agreed that what *wenmingxi* learned from Japan “were in fact Western dramatic forms and aesthetic principles. Japanese *shinpa* was a ‘shell’, a medium; Western drama was the ‘essence’, the target” (Huang 2001b, 307). Among them, Yuan’s work excelled in its exhaustive use of contemporary magazine articles and play scripts, but was relatively weak in institutional analysis of *wenmingxi* companies and productions. As pointed out by the Japanese scholar Seto Hiroshi, Yuan failed to make two important distinctions: first, between scripts written for reading and those for production; second, between historical significance and commercial success, thus ignoring some major *wenmingxi* companies. As a result, this study “possibly missed the target in its analysis of the highly performative *wenmingxi*” (Seto 2003c, 85). In contrast, Huang’s dissertation devoted more attention to the performance history of the various companies. The extended book version, published in 2001, has attracted critical acclaim for discovering hitherto unknown sources and utilizing research results by Japanese scholars, a rarity for Chinese researchers. Still, her analysis of *wenmingxi* as a theatrical institution was weakened by ignoring some of the most commercially successful companies of the era.

Much of the primary sources of *wenmingxi* productions and the connection between *shinpa* and *wenmingxi* come from the works of Japanese scholars, in particular Nakamura Tadayuki, Seto Hiroshi, and Iizuka Yutori. Nakamura pioneered *wenmingxi* scholarship with his 1956 study “Chunliu She issi kou” (Unknown Facts about the Spring Willow Society). It uncovered much of what we now know about the Spring Willow Society in Japan, including records and reviews of their productions and their connections with *shinpa* and *shingeki* groups. Although Ouyang Yuqian consulted it in his 1957 memoir of the Spring Willow Society, it was not available to the majority of Chinese scholars until the publication of its Chinese translation in 2004. Seto and Iizuka are among the most productive scholars in the field today. Seto is known for his invaluable collection of Shanghai production records of the Spring Willow Society and other prominent companies. He compiled these records by gleaning through advertisement pages of *Shenbao*, Shanghai’s leading daily. His doctoral dissertation and some of his research papers are collected in the voluminous *Chuḡoku wageki seiritsushi kenkyū* (*A History of the Establishment of Chinese Huaju*, 2003). Iizuka has focused on the dramatic transformation of some well-known scripts from *shinpa* to *wenmingxi*, including some European plays like *La Tosca* by Victorien Sardou, *Angelo* by Victor Hugo, and *Man of Destiny* by George Bernard Shaw.

In 2000, the “*Wenmingxi* Research Group,” which includes some of the leading scholars in the field from both Japan and China, was formed in Japan. This marked the beginning of joint efforts among theatre historians of the two countries and led to the 2004 “Sino-Japanese *Wenmingxi* Conference” in Beijing (Liu 2004; Song 2004).

The papers from this conference as well as other publications prior to it have laid a solid foundation for further research on the connection between *shinpa* and *wenmingxi*. However, as

pointed out by some of the scholars themselves, there is still much left for further research. First of all, much of the historical facts still awaits clarification, the lack of which continues to hinder in-depth analysis (Song 2004; Seto 2003c; Liu 2004). This seems particularly true in terms of the Western part of the sources due to understandable language and resource barriers. Secondly, almost all these scholars in both countries received their training in Chinese literature, which has enabled strong literary analysis but not necessarily a comprehensive study of *wenmingxi* as a theatrical form (Seto 2003c; Cao 2003). With a few exceptions, the majority of the research remains in the literary and historical sphere, largely ignoring such pertinent issues as acting style, technical theatre, theatre location and building, audience reaction, etc. Thirdly, these studies have yet to benefit from contemporary critical theories that have been applied to similar studies, like that of Shakespeare in Japan and China where the introduction of interculturalism and post-colonialism has yielded provocative results (Brandon 1997; Yoshihara 2001; Li 2003; Tatlow 2001). So far, this approach has eluded the discourse on *wenmingxi*.

1.2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In trying to establish a proper theoretical framework in understanding *wenmingxi* as a historical phenomenon, I will utilize a group of theories that will each prove invaluable in tackling certain aspects of the topic.

1.2.1. Interculturalism

Interculturalism has been widely adopted in interpreting theatrical transfer between two cultures. Two best known models of intercultural exchange in the 1990s are the seven stages model by Marvin Carlson and the hourglass model advocated by Patrice Pavis.

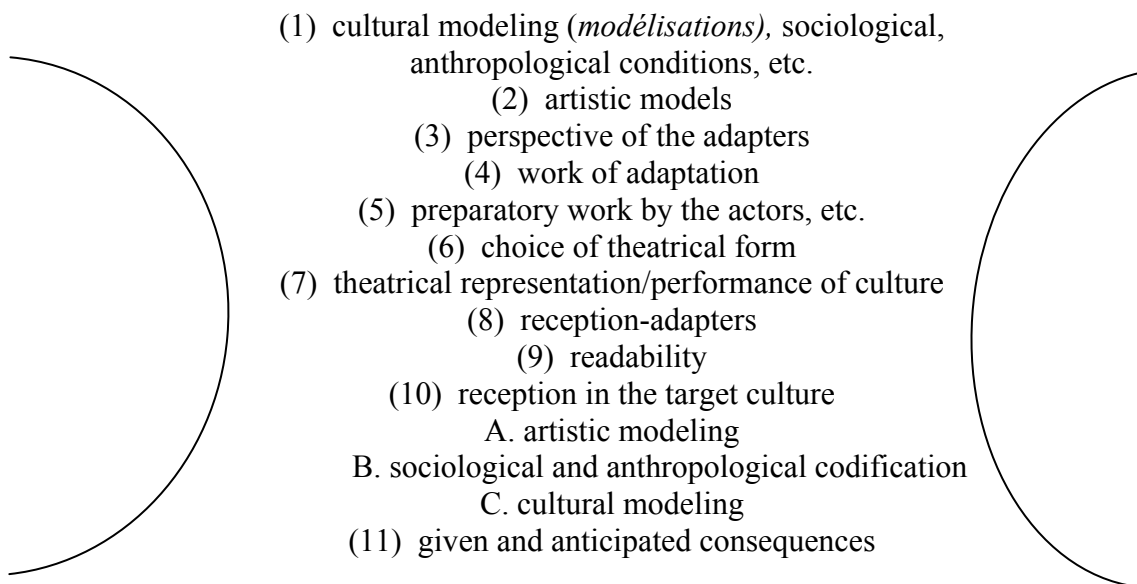
Marvin Carlson's seven step model of the possible relations between the culturally familiar and culturally foreign itemizes the gradations of interculturalism in the following steps:

1. The totally familiar tradition of regular performance, in its most regular form institutionalized, either by the profession, as in the Noh theatre or by the regulating culture, as in traditional national theatres like the Comédie Française.
2. Foreign elements assimilated into the tradition and absorbed by it. The audience can be interested, entertained, stimulated by these elements, but they are not challenged by them. Often they do not even recognize the foreign.
3. Entire foreign structures are assimilated into the tradition instead of isolated elements. Examples might be the Noh plays of Yeats or the Ninagawa *Medea* or *Macheth*.
4. The foreign and familiar create a new blend, which then is assimilated into the tradition, becoming familiar. Moliere's absorption of the Italian *commedia* into his new comic style might be an example of this.
5. The foreign itself becomes assimilated as a whole, becoming familiar. Examples would be the unchanged *commedia dell'arte* in France and Northern Europe, Italian opera in England or the American Western film in Japan.
6. Foreign elements remain foreign, used within familiar structures for *Verfremdung*, for shock value, or for exotic quotation, or perhaps simply to demonstrate their Otherness. An example would be the Oriental dance sequences in David Hwang's recent Broadway success *M. Butterfly* or the

Russian sequences in *The Uncle Vanya Show* by the New York experimental company, Irondale.

7. An entire performance from another culture is imported or re-created, with no attempt to accommodate it with the familiar. A recent example in America would be the dance performances of Butoh. (Carlson 1996, 82-83)

Carlson's model is useful for my study in judging where *wenmingxi* stood in its relationship with Western theatre, especially in comparison with *shinpa*, *shingeki*, and later *huaju*. However, while it is useful in judging an intercultural transfer from the perspective of reception, it describes only the finished product and not the process. That is the job of Patrice Pavis' hourglass model, which considers the broad process of intercultural exchange from a source culture to a target in eleven stages. It contains what Pavis calls the "superior' bowl of the source culture (1 and 2), as it is conceived and formalized before the actual work of adaptation begins" and the "inferior' bowl" of the theatrical production and its reception by audience and target culture (3 to 11): (Pavis 1992, 185)



Since the direction of this model pertains to only one of the collaborating cultures, the hourglass must be turned upside down, each of the two cultures taking a turn to being “source” and “target.” Pavis also warns that the hourglass should become neither a mill which blends the source culture and destroys its specificity nor a funnel which indiscriminately absorbs the source without any reshaping. As a popular model for intercultural theatre, the hourglass model has also seen its share of criticism and moderation. Philip Zarrilli warns that the glass needs to be turned constantly in his discussion of the Katakali *King Lear* (Zarrilli 1992). Rostum Bharucha, talking from his own experience in directing in three Indian cities the intercultural project *Request Concert*, a one-woman wordless show by the German playwright Franz Xaver Kroetz, points out that there actually are repeated negotiations between the players in each stage of hourglass model. To him, Pavis’ model is too linear to describe the complicated intercultural transactions (Bharucha 1993, 240-46). Still, as Holledge and Tompkins point out in their study of women’s intercultural performance, the hourglass model “accounts for most of the factors involved in the research, production, performance, and critical reception of intercultural theatre work” (Holledge and Tompkins 2000, 8).

Anthony Tatlow’s theory of “the intercultural sign,” as outlined in his *Shakespeare, Brecht, and The Intercultural Sign*, focuses on the aesthetics of intercultural theatre. Proceeding from the hypothesis that we respond to intercultural theatre because it gives us access to that which is culturally repressed—to the cultural and social unconscious, to the unconscious of our own episteme, he critically engages with Pavis’s interculturalism which to the latter “implies the imitation and borrowing of elements from outside its own culture in order to further affirm and stabilize it” (Pavis 1996, 2). To Tatlow, “a crucial question would be whether something within the ‘target’ culture is indeed thereby stabilized, and if so, what; or whether other things are

perhaps upset, and if that proves more productive to understanding, why does this take place and how is it accomplished?" (Tatlow 2001, 33) By drawing on the examples of Ariane Mnouchkine's Shakespearean productions, Brecht's remarks on Chinese paintings, and the Shakespeare productions mounted by the Japanese directors Ninagawa and Suzuki, he explains that intercultural hermeneutics must constantly look for models that question domestic "normality." To him, the cultural other provides an access to that which is culturally and socially repressed. He calls this process "dialectic of acculturation." It is accomplished through the intercultural sign—"an efficacious intercultural performance which is most noticeable by the distress it causes, by its ability to disrupt 'aesthetic' conventions that themselves mark ideologically protected presuppositions" (74). Both *shinpa* and *wenmingxi* were certainly disruptive forces against conventional theatrical aesthetics of their times. The more intriguing question is how they themselves handled the distress they caused on the conventional taste and what was their degree of concession in order to maintain their own artistic and commercial viability.

One problem with all these and other models of intercultural theatre—some of which I will discuss in the next section—is that they all view interculturalism as an exchange between two theatrical cultures, invariably termed as the culturally familiar vs. the culturally foreign (Carlson), the culturally domestic vs. the culturally other (Tatlow), source vs. target (Pavis), or two more or less equal parts of two cultures (Bharucha, Lo and Gilbert). Therefore, they all fail to adequately explain the triangular relationship between the West, Japan, and China in the establishment of *wenmingxi*. As I will demonstrate in the following chapters, Japan's role as a medium culture was crucial to *wenmingxi*'s understanding of Western theatre. At the same time

there was also occasional, although rather rare, direct connection between *wenmingxi* and European theatre, which was more like a traditional hourglass.

For the majority of the cases, though, an adequate model would take into account Japan's role as a medium culture and therefore consist of three chambers or, in Pavis' terminology, "bowls" with *shinpa* in the middle and Western theatre and *wenmingxi* at the ends. However, such a model would make turning the hourglass rather difficult, if not outright impossible. And we know this reversal did take place, at rare occasions, like Kawakami's US and European tours. It seems a more plausible model would be two joint hourglasses, from the source culture to the medium culture and then to the target culture. It therefore involves two connected but separate filtering processes. Like the original hourglass, this model may also allow switching of the source and target cultures in the separate halves.

1.2.2. Post-colonialism

For a historical phenomenon involving East-West theatrical transactions at the turn of the twentieth-century when both Japan and China were desperately trying to avoid colonization, it seems the perspective of post-colonialism is an absolute must. In fact, the lack of such a perspective has been considered the Achilles' heel of Pavis' hourglass model because of the colonial and orientalist potential in the unidirectional movement (Bharucha 1993, 240-46). Because of this, there have been various attempts at modifying the hourglass model to better describe intercultural exchange as a two-way street. Bharucha has put forth a pendulum model where "the cultural sources are equally respected and theatre practitioners collaborate, moving back and forth with awareness of power differentials, to achieve consensus" (Daugherty 2005, 54).

By the same token, although Jacqueline Lo and Helen Gilbert believe that the hourglass model “is an accurate model of most intercultural works,” they have criticized Pavis’ inherent assumption that “there is a ‘level-playing’ field between the partners in the exchange” (42) and his model’s inability “to account for interculturalism as a process of political negotiation” (43). For this reason, they offered their own model which retains most of the steps of the hourglass model, but represents intercultural exchange as a two-way flow. “Both partners are considered culture sources while the target culture is positioned along the continuum between them. The location of the target culture is not fixed: its position remains fluid and, depending on where and how the exchange process takes place, shifts along the continuum.” (44)

There was obviously a power differential between the West and Japan as well as Japan and China at the turn of the twentieth century. On the one hand, both Japan and China were involved in modernization through Westernization as both countries turned to the West as the model of civilization. In fact, the word *wenming*—civilized—was used not only in drama, but also a general modifier for objects or events connected to the West, like walking stick (*wenming gun*) or westernized wedding ceremonies (*wenming jiehun*). In this context, European theatre was often used as a model for theatrical reform aimed at turning the audience from leisurely spectators, as those in traditional theatre, into participants in nation-building, as those in the more “civilized” Western theatre. Nor should we ignore the imbalance in theatrical transfer between Japan and China when the source culture was well on its way to becoming a regional power and the target was so mired in internal turmoil that its territorial sovereignty was fair game between Japan and Western powers. In this context, it will be difficult not to read an anti-colonial tone

into the production of *Black Slave's Cry to Heaven*, especially considering the widespread discrimination many Chinese students encountered in Japan.³

Some studies on the first half of this equation, the intercultural transfer between the West and Japan, have effectively adopted a post-colonial approach. In her study of a Meiji adaptation of *The Merchant of Venice*, Yoshihara Yukari examined how this adaptation contributed to the Meiji theme of nationalization through westernization, a process which eventually made Japan a colonizer itself like the Western powers it was trying to emulate. Yoshihara quotes Masaki Tsuneo as saying that

Our criticism of Eurocentrism must lead us to reflect on our own past as a colonizer.... Japan's invasion of Asia was not a result of its failed modernization, not of its clinging to traditional culture, but of its exceptionally rapid and thorough modernization (when compared with other Asian countries), for modernization is the Europeanization of the world, and at the heart of Western modernity is the ethos of colonization (Yoshihara 2001, 22).

1.2.3. The National Stage

In her *The National Stage*, Loren Kruger examined the history of theatrical nationhood in Europe. To her:

The idea of representing the nation in the theatre, of summoning a representative audience that will in turn recognize itself as nation on stage, offers a compelling if ambiguous image of national unity, less as an indisputable fact than as an object of

³ One of the best-known examples comes from “Mr. Fujino” by the famous modern writer Lu Xun in which he recorded how he was suspected of cheating and was asked to “repent” because he scored high in a test as a medical student in Sendai, Japan (Lu 1976). More examples can be found in *Chūgokujin Nihon ryūgakushi* (A History of Chinese Students in Japan) by Sanetō Keishō.

speculation. The notion of staging the nation, of representing as well as reflecting the people in the theatre, of constituting or even standing in for an absent or imperfect national identity, emerges in the European Enlightenment and takes concrete shape with the Revolutionary *fêtes*. Nonetheless, the institution of what I will provisionally call theatrical nationhood manifests itself fully only in the course of the nineteenth century with the rise of mass national politics, "universal" (male) suffrage, and the demand of the people for legitimate representation as protagonist on the political stage (Kruger 1992, 3).

Since both Japan and China considered using Western theatre in the service of building a modern nation-state, the concept of the national stage provides a valuable tool for assessing the intellectual and political demand of a Western-style theatre as well how the new theatre aspired but eventually failed to fulfill that role.

For one thing, *shinpa*'s rise as a legitimate theatrical genre was linked to the Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895) when Kawakami Otojirō's *shinpa* company, considered by the authorities as educated and masculine in contrast to *kabuki* actors, was the only theatre to receive a permit to stage shows about the war. The resultant *Sōzetsu kaizetsu Nisshin sensō* (*The Sublime, the Delightful Sino-Japanese War*), with its plots freely borrowed from two imperialist French plays,⁴ was so successful that it set a formula for both *shinpa* and *kabuki* war plays in this and the subsequent Russo-Japanese War a decade later. By then, there were already thousands of Chinese students in Japan and the *wenmingxi* pioneers among them most likely took inspiration from not only this war play model but also *shinpa*'s attempt to create a national stage by channeling nationalism into Western-style theatre.

⁴ These two plays are *La Prise de Pékin* (The Capture of Beijing, 1861) by Adolphe d'Ennery about the capture of Beijing by the French and British armies in 1860 and *Michel Strogoff* (1880) by Jules Verne and d'Ennery about Russia's defeat of a Tartar rebellion. Kawakami had seen both plays in Paris in 1893, a year before he staged *Sino-Japanese War*. I will focus on this episode in Chapter Two.

To be sure, neither *shinpa* nor *wenmingxi* succeeded in becoming legitimate representatives of their country's national theatre. And this nationalism only tells half the story of either *shinpa* or *wenmingxi* as it would be unfair to disregard the genuine excitement of *shinpa* and *wenmingxi* pioneers in their pursuit for a completely new form of theatre. Plus, both theatres eventually morphed into and declined as popular theatre for the middle class. Some scholars went even further in blaming the eventual decline of *wenmingxi* on its abandoning this nationalist orientation and turning to commercialism. This seems to have over simplified the rather complicated environment of intercultural theatre and audience preparedness—or lack thereof—for the new theatre. All these factors deserve due attention and will be discussed in the following chapters.

Yet, they do not necessarily preclude us from considering the aspiration of theatre practitioners as well as politicians and intellectuals in both countries for a Western-style theatre that would make what Kruger calls “a nation out of an audience, citizens out of spectators” (4). Kruger also makes an important distinction between “*legitimacy* as the effect of law experienced as natural common sense and *legitimation* as the strategies securing or contesting that authority” [emphasis added] (9). In other words, there was “a critical tension” between the result and process, aspiration and outcome.

The emergency of national theatre in Europe corresponded to what Benedict Anderson called the creation of “official nationalism” which was “developed *after*, and *in reaction to*, the popular national movements proliferating in Europe since the 1820s” (Anderson 1991, 86). Anderson also analyzed how Japan's Meiji oligarchs borrowed this European model to create its own empire through liquidation of the samurai, freeing of peasantry from the feudal *han*-system, plus “a Prussian-style constitution and eventually universal male suffrage” (95). He pointed out

that it was “the legacy of Japan’s long isolation and the power of the official-national model” that “accounted for” the “aggressive imperialistic character” of Japan’s nationalism, whose military success was “consciously propagandized through schools and print,” all used “in creating the general impression that the conservative oligarchy was an authentic representative of the nation of which Japanese were coming to imagine themselves members” (96-97).

In citing Anderson in her analysis of Kawakami Otojirō, Ayako Kano considers this nationalist propaganda in the realm of theatre. Through *Sino-Japanese War*, Kano believes that Kawakami and his troupe “inaugurated a new mode for theater to represent and reproduce imperialism and concomitantly change the course of history of Japanese theater” (Kano 2001, 61). Kano considers Kawakami’s adaptations of *Othello*, *Hamlet*, *Around the World in 80 Days*, and *Alt Heiderlberg* by Wilhelm Meyer-Förster (called *The Korean King*) as attempts at “reproducing the Empire” (85-119).

Therefore, it seems possible to combine a post-colonial reading of the socio-political conditions of turn-of-the-century eastern Asia with an aesthetic reading of what the Chinese students learned from their *shinpa*, and to a certain extent, *shingeki*, masters in Tokyo.

1.2.4. Literary vs. Institutional Analysis

In situating the hybrid identity of theatrical nationhood “on the border between aesthetics and politics,” Loren Kruger has challenged what she calls “the functional duplicity of disciplinary autonomy, in which the historical and contemporary marginalization of theatre studies is a function of its perceived lack of autonomy vis-à-vis literary study and its apparent failure to live up to the autonomous standards of that larger and more self-evidently legitimate discipline” (Kruger 1992, 187). To her, this “brand of impure autonomy continues to mark and to mar the legitimacy of theatre studies in the shadow of the monument of the literary academy”

(187). In her study of national stages in Europe and the US, she examines “the institution of theatre” through what she called “the continued dialectic between economic and political constraints and aesthetic norms governing theatre practice, as well as the discourses that may represent one as the other” (13).

One of the reasons for the traditional dismissal of *shinpa* and *wenmingxi* is due to their predominantly melodramatic repertoire as opposed to *shingeki* and *huaju* which followed modern Western drama much more closely. Recent scholarship on melodrama has come to doubt the adequacy of this preference on literary merit, as summed up by Bruce McConachie:

The relevant issue for theatre historians is not whether these diverse melodramas were any good. Judging plays solely on the basis of such formalistic concepts as complexity, style, and naturalness merely backs the historian into what Terry Eagleton has called "the ideology of the aesthetic." Unfortunately, as theatre historian Joseph R. Roach notes, many theatre scholars unthinkingly accept this ideology and its consequent assumption, "derived from German idealist philosophy and eighteenth-century theories of art, that the aesthetic exists as an autonomous category, transcending the sublunary sphere of power relations and ideologies." Nor is it particularly helpful to rail against melodrama for encouraging its spectators to escape from reality. All successful fiction, whatever its aesthetic merit, induces its audience to temporarily leave behind the workaday world for an imagined one. As a "symbolic act," however, melodramatic performance, like all cultural behavior, was not only an imagined representation but also a social event involving the interaction of people in a specific place and time—an event as real as making love or mining coal. (McConachie 1992, x)

Of course, an institutional analysis of *wenmingxi* does not necessarily ignore literary analysis. On the contrary, studying the incarnations of various scripts from European theatre to *shinpa* to *wenmingxi* will shed significant light on this triangular intercultural transaction. However, this literary analysis should be applied in conjunction not only with the political and economic context in which it appeared but also with such institutional concerns as the locale and location of the theatre, the presentation styles of the actors, technical theatre, and audience reaction.

Raymond Williams has noted that the literal place of performance or exhibition plays a role in the cultural recognition of theatre or art (Williams 1981). In his study of the semiotics of theatre architecture, Marvin Carlson has recognized that the physical site and the material apparatus of theatre function within a social semiotic matrix (Carlson 1989, 1-13). Studying Tokyo and Shanghai as locales for *shinpa* and *wenmingxi* as well as the location of their theatres inside the cities will shed light on the societal recognition of these new theatrical forms as cultural institutions. As the political and cultural capital of the rapidly Westernizing Japan, Tokyo was the center of the theatre world for both traditional and modern theatrical forms. *Shinpa*, although originating in Osaka, was not recognized until Kawakami Otojirō brought it to Tokyo. The case of Shanghai was even more closely connected to China's modernity. Shanghai's vast area of foreign concessions, which made it at once the most colonial and cosmopolitan city in China, was a magnet for the new theatre. In terms of the literal locations of theatre, the plight of the Spring Willow Theatre gives testimony to Carlson's insight of theatre and society. Indeed, the lackluster performance of the Spring Willow Theatre in Shanghai might be equally attributed to the remote location of its theatre as its high-brow repertoire and adherence to *shinpa* style of acting.

Some scholars have already noticed the limitation of a pure literary approach in *huaju* research. Zhou Huiling (Katherine Hui-ling Chou), for example, has noted that while drama scholars have traditionally hailed new women characters in plays of the May Fourth era as “Chinese Noras,” they “have rarely considered the fact that this new trend could only be introduced to the public through theatrical practice. In other words, in studying the performance of this wave of ‘new women’, we can only clearly observe their social significance by including actor presentation and audience response” (Zhou 2000, 5). Zhou adopted a feminist approach in her analysis of the politics behind *wenmingxi*’s female impersonators and their rejection of actresses.

This issue of female impersonators and actresses in both *shinpa* and *wenmingxi* deserves close examination. One source of scholarship that will help frame the issue is recent research on the *onnagata* and male *dan* in traditional Japanese and Chinese theatre (Keene 1983; Leiter 1999-2000; Morinaga 2002; Jackson 1989; Tian 2000). Another comes from recent studies of Kawakami Sadayakko and Matsui Sumako, the two best-known actresses of *shinpa* and *shingeki*, which have also shed new light on the debate over mixed companies in late Meiji Japan (Kano 2001, 1997; Chiba 1992; Downer 2003). Still a third source is recent studies of the working conditions of actresses in other cultures, like *The First English Actresses: Women and Drama, 1660-1700* by Elizabeth Howe and *Actresses as Working Women: Their Social Identity in Victorian Culture* by Tracy Davis.

1.2.5. Translation vs. adaptation

In a sense, Pavis’ usage of source and target cultures emulates source and target languages in translation theory. (He did have a background in translation theory.) For this study, my aim is rather specific—to understand the function of adaptation, a predominant mode of

localizing foreign plays in both *shinpa* and *wenmingxi*, as opposed to literal translation. This emphasis on adaptation, or *hon'an* in Japanese, has largely contributed to *shinpa* being discredited, as opposed to the translation-based *shingeki*, as the forerunner of modern Japanese theatre (Matsumoto 2001).

In the post-modern reconsideration of literalism vs. license in translation, J. Scott Miller's *Adaptations of Western Literature in Meiji Japan* makes a deliberate effort to “dispel the notion that *hon'an* translations were necessarily seen as inferior by their contemporary readers..., in part, through an examination of several Meiji *hon'anmono* [adapted foreign tale] texts that invite us to reconsider our notions of translation and the degree to which we favor correspondence (or discredit adaptation) in judging translation” (Miller 2001, 13). Miller concludes that “unlike the static lens of *hon'yaku* [literal translation], which in its quest for correspondence sought to transmit clearly focused information across linguistic boundaries, *hon'anmono* served Meiji authors as a mutable lens whereby they could reexamine the foreign, revising, even appropriating, the texts as familiar Japanese images” (144).

Brandon's three Shakespeares in Asia may be construed to roughly correspond to the canonical and pedagogical approach of *shingeki* and *huaju*, the localization of *shinpa* and *wenmingxi*, and recent intercultural productions of Ninagawa Yukio, Suzuki Tadashi, and Ong Keng Sen. In his assessment of what he calls “the Brandon thesis,” John Gillies finds a particularly poignant post-colonial tone in Brandon's usage of “localization”:

The Brandon thesis challenges those inclined to take a more benevolent view of Shakespeare's presence in Asia/Japan to prove it wrong.... [F]or Brandon ‘localization’ is a necessarily strategic move: a mobilization of local cultural forces in the face of an alien cultural incursion. Moreover, where only one of Brandon's Asian Shakespeares is

localized, all three represent differing responses to an essentially common appreciation of the cultural tension between Shakespeare and a given Asian locality. (Gillies 2001, 238-39)

While both Brandon and Gillies were talking about Shakespeare in Asia, it seems possible to broaden the scope of this argument to the general history of intercultural exchange in theatre between the West and Asia during the past century. And the emphasis on localization has put adaptation on a separate but equal strategic landscape as literal translation.

1.2.6. Role of Traditional Theatre

Both *shinpa* and *wenmingxi* mixed Western theatre with elements of traditional theatre. This has usually been considered to be one of the more fundamental reasons that made them less “deserving” for scholarly inquiry as opposed to *shingeki* or *huaju*. In light of recent intercultural productions and critical theories I have discussed, especially Tatlow’s dialectics of acculturation and Brandon’s view of localization as a strategy, it becomes possible to reassess the significant role of traditional theatre in *wenmingxi* in a way other than dismissing it as caving in to commercialism. To what extent did the tradition of an actor’s—as opposed to a playwright’s or director’s—theatre explain the less than deferential attitude in *shinpa* and *wenmingxi* towards European scripts? How much did other conventions like ad-libbing, singing, and female impersonation affect *wenmingxi*’s choices? And how do we sort out which choices were more influenced by traditional theatre vis-à-vis *shinpa* or Western theatre?

On *wenmingxi*’s unapologetic use of *nandan* (female impersonators), for example, some Chinese scholars feel quite strongly about *shinpa*’s role but also acknowledge Chinese conventions. Huang Aihua considered this one of the “negative” influences of *shinpa*, arguing that “Chunliu’s actors viewed *shinpa* as different from *kabuki* and thus in the realm of modern

theatre. Since *shinpa* had kept *onnagata*, [to them] using male actors in female roles must have been part of modern theatre. This, coupled with the inertia of *nandan* convention in traditional Chinese theatre, made it easier for them to identify themselves with *shinpa*'s *onnagata* which they soon started emulating" (Huang 1994a, 82).

1.2.7. Film Studies

There is a small body of literature that studies the relationship between film and *shinpa* or *wenmingxi*. Among them, Keiko McDonald's *From Book to Screen: Modern Japanese Literature in Film* devotes its first chapter to films adapted from *shinpa* domestic melodrama like *The Cuckoo* and *The Golden Demon*. Iizuka Yutori has also looked at the use of *wenmingxi* in early Chinese movie industry (Iizuka 2006). Yet, not much has been written on the influence of film on *wenmingxi*, even though the so-called "1914 revival" that marked the beginning of its short-lived commercial success was started by a group of unemployed film actors.

1.3. DESCRIPTION OF CHAPTERS

1.3.1. Chapter One: Historical Overview

This chapter will focus on the initial history of Western-style theatre in China in the first two decades of the twentieth century. It will be divided into four sections: western-style theatre in Shanghai before the production of *Black Slave's Cry to Heaven* in 1907; the Spring Willow Society in Tokyo, including its productions and connections of its members to *shinpa* and *shingeki*; *wenmingxi* activities in Shanghai between 1907 and 1913; and the commercial era of *wenmingxi* from 1913 till the end of the decade.

Since my goal in this study is to trace the intercultural transfer from European theatre to *wenmingxi*, it is essential to survey theatrical productions in Shanghai by expatriate Westerners and in missionary schools that took place before *wenmingxi* became popular. Although their

impact at the time was likely limited to their own communities, they offered an opportunity for the Chinese students in the school productions and the few Chinese spectators of the expatriate shows a glimpse of Western plays and productions methods. In addition, the theatre used in these expatriate productions, the Lyceum (*Laixin*)—named after the London Lyceum Theatre—was used for the first *wenmingxi* production in Shanghai because of its stage and technical capacity. Therefore, these early productions provide a direct link to Western theatre independent of *shinpa*.

The next three sections will follow the chronological order of *wenmingxi* history. The first phase includes the activities by members of the Spring Willow Society in Tokyo, including their direct contact with *shinpa* and *shingeki* groups. In 1907, inspired by the success of *Black Slave's Cry to Heaven*, those who returned to Shanghai started their own *wenmingxi* productions. This second period was remarkable for its initial introduction of this new theatrical form to the Chinese audience and the use of this new theatre as a nation-building tool during the 1911 Revolution. The final phase came after 1913 when domestic melodrama briefly propelled *wenmingxi* to commercial success, attracting over a thousand actors at its peak. This is the matured as well as the most maligned phase for *wenmingxi* because of its perceived sacrifice of artistry to commercialization. Yet, a careful institutional analysis will yield a rather different picture of the many forces that contributed to the rise and fall of this first form of Western-style theatre in China.

Here, the site of the cosmopolitan Shanghai deserves our attention as the host city for *wenmingxi*, as does the mutually influential relationship between *wenmingxi* and China's budding film industry.

1.3.2. Chapter Two: Aspiration for a National Theatre

In his study of political thought in modern Japan, Maruyama Masao explains how the previously-discussed nationalist model was understood imperialistically in turn-of-the-century Asia: “when the premises of the national hierarchy were transferred horizontally into the international sphere, international problems were reduced to a single alternative: conquer or be conquered” (Maruyama 1969, 140). This was certainly the sentiment of opinion leaders in both Japan and China of the time. And the success of European theatre and *shinpa* in their contributing role in inducing this nationalism was often cited by Chinese intellectuals in their calls for a Western-style theatre. This chapter will first examine the formation of this belief, starting from impressions of European theatre by Qing Dynasty diplomats in late 1800s and accounts of *shinpa*'s success in turning Japanese spectators into participating citizens. I will next examine how this admiration of theatre's perceived success in Europe and Japan was turned into a call for a new national theatre in the service of nationalism and anti-Qing revolution. Many *wenmingxi* actors considered their new form of theatre as a tool for nation-building, especially around the time of the 1911 Revolution that overthrew the Manchu monarch.

Next I will focus on the transformation of several plays from Europe to *shinpa* and then *wenmingxi* as they were made to fit the particular needs of nation-building in Japan and China. Some *shinpa* plays were motivational pieces for Japan's wars with its neighbors while some others, including adaptations of Western plays, were inspired by Japan's rising ambition as a regional colonizer, as illustrated by Kawakami's adaptation of *Othello* which was set in Taiwan, conceded by China to Japan after the 1895 War. While *wenmingxi* adapted a number of these productions, the Chinese versions often served China's own agenda, adopting the war play model in motivational pieces during the 1911 revolution and converting Japan's colonization into

foreign threat. In the case of the Chinese *Othello*, Taiwan became Manchuria and Othello morphed from colonizer to protector, both in keeping with the play's original intention of using regional conflict as a plot mover. It should be noted that this intercultural transfer was as much theatrical as it was literary. Some of the conventions of battle scenes both on land and sea in both *shinpa* and *wenmingxi* can be traced directly to *Michel Strogoff*.

Finally, I will analyze the nationalist tendencies in *wenmingxi* repertoire which were either original creations or direct translations/adaptations of European or *shinpa* plays. Many *wenmingxi* pieces clearly demonstrated an anti-racist and anti-colonial inclination, as illustrated by its very first play, the 1907 Tokyo production of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Its poster included a direct plea for the plight of Chinese laborers in the US. In a time of both internal political turmoil and reshuffling of regional powers, it is intriguing to see how many *wenmingxi* plays focused on the plight of Korea as cautionary tales while avoiding direct display of China's defeat by its militant neighbor. This nationalist theme also influenced the occasional direct translations or adaptations from European theatre, like Leopold Kampf's *On the Eve* which dealt with the lives of Russian revolutionaries on the eve of the 1905 Revolution.

1.3.3. Chapter Three: Literary Analysis—Transformation of Dramatic Literature

This chapter focuses on *wenmingxi* dramaturgy by tracing the intercultural transformation of several representative plays. It deals with three topics: the use of scripted plays vs. scenarios, adaptation vs. translation of European and *shinpa* plays, and melodrama as the emblematic dramatic mode for a society in transition.

European Romantic and melodramatic playwrights like Victor Hugo and Victorien Sardou were popular sources for *shinpa* and this affected *wenmingxi* repertoire. Here, I will focus on tracing the transformation of these scripts from Europe to Japan and then China as well as the

choices made during the transformation. In considering adaptation as strategic moves (Brandon) that provide “mutable lens” (Miller), recent scholarship has made it possible to see the less than canonical attitude in *shinpa* and *wenmingxi* as appropriation tactics in the century-old theatrical negotiation between the East and West.

Even with such a degree of appropriation, European plays were not as well received as some of the best-known *shinpa* plays, like *Meng huitou* (*Ushio, The Tide*) and *Shehui zhong* (*Kumo no hibiki, The Echo of Cloud*), or *shinpa* dramatization (*kyakushoku*) of serialized domestic novels (*katei shōsetsu*) like *Burugui* (*Hototogisu, The Cuckoo*), *Jinse yecha* (*Konjiki yasha, The Gold Demon*), *Ji zhi zui* (*Onoga tsumi, My Crime*), and *Ru zimei* (*Chikyōdai, Foster Sisters*). These *shinpa* classics not only enhanced *wenmingxi* repertoire but also inspired its dramaturgy.

I will discuss the establishment of a modern dramatic structure in original *wenmingxi* plays that were far different from traditional plot construction which was closer to novels than the typical Western dramaturgy using divided acts. Of course, as the first form of Western-style theatre with a limited repertoire, *wenmingxi* was wrought in practice with solutions that marred its reputation, like its over-reliance on scenarios instead of scripts and out-of-curtain (*muwaixi*) scenes that took place in front of the proscenium curtain between set changes. As these practices are often seen as capitulating to both conventional taste of the audience steeped in traditional theatre and the demands of a commercial theatre, an institutional analysis of these practices will provide a clue to the social and artistic conditions *wenmingxi* encountered in its intercultural transfer. This is part of Step 12 of Pavis’ model, the “reception in the target culture” (185).

1.3.4. Chapter Four: Institutional Analysis— Localization of the New Theatre

As I have previously noted, an institutional analysis is sorely needed in current *wenmingxi* research. This is where we can trace the process of theatrical transfer from the various trends of *shinpa*—with their perspective sources of Western drama, early Meiji political theatre, and *kabuki*—to *wenmingxi* through different players to Shanghai, only to be localized by a strong native theatrical and cultural tradition in the face of an incoming wave of Westernization that threatened to push native culture to the sidelines. Here, the intercultural models by Carlson and Pavis prove to be efficacious tools in analyzing the transformation from the source culture to the target culture.

The focus on the localization process, however, also limits my analysis to acting styles and leaves little room for effective analysis of other aspects of *wenmingxi* institution as originally planned. I will focus on those issues, like theatrical building and technical theatre, in a separate study.

Finally, I want to end the Introduction with a brief note on style: All translations, unless otherwise noted, are mine own. Japanese and Chinese names are given in their native manner, with the family name preceding the given name.

2. CHAPTER ONE: HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

2.1. STATE OF THEATRE BEFORE THE CHUNLIU SHE (SPRING WILLOW SOCIETY)

For all its connections with Tokyo, the story of *wenmingxi* necessarily started with Shanghai, China's most cosmopolitan city where the international settlement since 1845 had seen Western-style productions by international settlers, traveling troupes, army garrisons, missionary school students, and eventually students at Chinese schools.

2.1.1. Western-Style Theatre in Shanghai before 1907

2.1.1.1. Shanghai and Concessions

Shanghai opened up for international settlement as a result of the Treaty of Nanjing in 1842 which was signed after China's defeat by Britain in the First Opium War (1840-1842). Eventually the international area was divided into two administrative entities, the French Concession and the International Settlement, where Westerners, Japanese, and Chinese lived together. By the end of the Qing Dynasty in 1910, a census counted over six hundred thousand Chinese and over fifteen thousand foreigners living in these two areas. The two biggest groups of international settlers were the British, who numbered around five thousand, and the Japanese, with over three thousand, about to double within the next five years (Pott 1928, 211). As the first of its kind among the over twenty similar entities in other Chinese cities, Shanghai's concessions were by far the largest, with an area bigger than all other concessions combined and as many as over 150,000 international settlers at its peak (Xiong 2002, 56). In addition to the two international districts, there was also a Chinese-controlled area. Each of three administrative entities was "in charge of its own Shanghai. They all believed they were the owner but did not deny the other two Shanghais" (57).

Even before the establishment of the concessions, Shanghai occupied a relatively exceptional political and cultural position among China's big cities. It offered far less resistance to international settlement than Guangzhou, Ningbo, or Fuzhou, cities originally preferred by Westerners. Since then, the lack of a hegemonic cultural force and the large immigration population—both Chinese and international—made Shanghai an ideal site for intercultural interaction.

2.1.1.2. Productions by Expatriate and Traveling Troupes

Amateur expatriate productions in Shanghai began as early as 1850, only five years after the commencement of international settlement. In 1866, two acting groups, the Shanghai Volunteer Corps and the Mounted Rangers, combined to form the Amateur Dramatic Corps (ADC) which would put on regular seasons well into the 1930s. Other local companies, like the Amateur Burlesque Company Ltd., also provided entertainment and opportunities for exhibition of local talent. In addition, Western naval warships docked outside Shanghai provided occasional entertainment in the form of theatrical productions (Haan 1989, 164-65). In general, these productions were mostly on the light side that included “farces, comediettas, burlesques, melodramas, burlettas, musical comedies or whatever name may be invented for the genre” (186).

After performing in make-shift wooden warehouses, known locally as “godown” theatres, a wooden theatre called Lanxin (Lyceum)—named after the Lyceum Theatre of London—was built in 1867. When it was burnt down in 1872, the settlers decided to build a brick theatre which opened in 1874, again named the Lyceum. This building lasted 55 years until 1929 when it was sold to a Chinese developer and was replaced two years later with a grander Lyceum in the French Concession. During the 55-year period the Lyceum maintained a busy schedule, hosting

both local and visiting dramatic productions, concerts and other forms of entertainment.⁵ The ADC group alone staged at least 187 plays in this half century (Shanghai tong she 1998, 489).

From the memoir of Xu Banmei, a major *wenmingxi* actor, translator, and writer, we know that the Lyceum had “fairly spacious front and back stages and a three-story audience section. Its acoustics were especially satisfying. Even when an actor was only whispering on stage, the soft sound could still reach the third floor” (Xu 1957, 4). In 1876, only two years after the brick Lyceum opened, a Chinese spectator wrote in the *Shenbao* newspaper about their experience watching what seems like a typical light opera at “the English Theatre.” Apart from describing a production in the Lyceum, it also captured the bewilderment of the Chinese spectator who did not understand either English or the conventions of the show:

Watching a Western play: Went to see a foreign play at the English Theatre. There were three males and three females in the first half. Afterward, there was a half-hour intermission followed by the second half. Westerners told me this was a story about a lawsuit over breaking a marriage promise. At first, the male plaintiff appeared to make a speech. Then over ten people of the jury made speeches, after which they sat in the jury seats at the sides. After a long time, four women appeared with the accused. They sang and spoke, which again lasted a long time. The judge tore up the file, threw it to the ground, and also spoke and sang with the jury. Four women pulled four yellow ropes from a beam above public seats; again I did not know why.... While I could not understand their language, judging from the Westerners’ applause, foot thumping, and laughter, it must have been quite entertaining.⁶

⁵ For a list of its early productions, see the appending “A Calendar of Performances, 1850-1865” of (Haan 1989).

⁶ From February 24, 1876 issue of *Shenbao*. Quoted in (Tao 2001, 164).

The above quote appeared on the February 24, 1876 issue of *Shenbao*, the most influential newspaper in Shanghai. Judging from the description, the play in the second half was probably Gilbert and Sullivan's one-act operetta *Trial by Jury*, which had just enjoyed a successful run of 300 performances in London since its opening in March of 1875. In the play, a bride sues her fiancé for finding a new love and breaching the promise of marriage. The judge and all-male jury are much taken with the plaintiff, the women in the public gallery are enamored of the defendant, and the bridesmaids sing and dance in their gowns. Finally, the judge, "tossing his books and paper about," solves the dilemma by offering to marry the bride. The play ends with everyone dancing and singing "And a good job, too!" (Gilbert and Sullivan 1997). Not knowing English or the convention of operetta, the Chinese spectator was obviously having problems following the plot and keeping himself from being bored while the Westerners around him—the intended audience of the Lyceum—were having a jolly good time with Gilbert and Sullivan.⁷

Another description about the Lyceum and a production was published in the first Chinese tour guide of Shanghai in 1876:

Under a rotunda, there were chrysanthemum-shaped gas lamps sending lights around, illuminating the theatre like daytime. The stage was surrounded on three sides with balconies. At first, there were over ten actors sitting on stage with dark faces and cinnabar-covered eye shadows and lips. After several speeches and songs, they performed several stories. They were especially good at dancing rhythmically. It was completely different from Chinese theatre. (Ge 1968, Vol. 2, 28)

⁷ I would like to thank Dr. Tom Rimer for leading me to investigate the connection between the article and the play.

This account of what seems like a minstrel show, appeared under the title of “*waiguo xiyuan* (foreign theatre)” and was collected in the first guide to Shanghai called *Huyou zaji* (*Miscellaneous Notes on Traveling in Shanghai*) edited by Ge Yuanxu. Apart from this entry, the book also described other entertainment venues in the international community, including *waiguo maxi* (foreign circus), *waiguo xishu* (foreign magic show), *waiguo yingxi* (foreign slide show), and *dongyang xifa* (Japanese magic show). Written for general Chinese consumption, this book made quite clear the ready availability of these entertainment forms in the foreign concessions. Some avid Chinese theatre fans, like Xu Banmei, who had studied physical education and dance in Japan, did frequent the Lyceum and studied productions by ADC. For the average Chinese audience, however, the Lyceum remained foreign until October of 1907, when the theatre was rented, because of its technical capabilities in lighting and stage machinery, for the first Shanghai production of *Black Slave’s Cry to Heaven*. This production inspired a building boom of Western-style theatres in Shanghai where theatrical productions had previously been held in teahouse-style theatres.

Theatre productions were also quite frequent at the French Concession where an amateur group was established in 1872. “In March 1903, the French Dramatic Society presented a program of three boulevard comedies, including *Rosalie*, *Lolotte* and *L’Anglais tel qu’on le parle*, to rather poor reviews from critics. The same group staged four more plays in 1912 *La Petite Chocolatiere*, *Vingt Jours à L’ombre*, *Les Marionnettes*, and *Petit Café* by Tristan Bernard” (Brossollet 1999, 215).

A fairly common form of entertainment for the international settlers was the traveling companies from both the West and Japan that frequented Shanghai. Their repertoire was usually diverse and often consisted of acts of classic plays. For example, the Lewis’ Dramatic Company

from Australia toured Shanghai twice in 1864 and 1865, each time for a couple of months. Apart from “unprecedented shower of farces, burlesques,” they also presented “some quality pieces like Sheridan's *The Rivals* and the prison scene from Shakespeare's *King John* (Act IV, sc. 1)” and Act Five of *Richard III* (“A horse! A horse! My kingdom for a horse!”) “somewhat disappointingly” (Haan 1989, 168-69).

Writing at roughly the same time, the famous late Qing scholar and translator Wang Tao also wrote about touring shows in Shanghai:

In the Western theatre, dancing is performed by women with short skirts and narrow sleeves. Their chests are bare to the shoulder and their costume covered with jewelry. Under bright light, their snow-white skin and flower-like faces compete with shining candles. In the pit, over ten musicians play with great gusto, using only Western instruments. The women dance rhythmically.... During a performance, the mountains, rivers, and palaces are all painted and look real at a distance. All these performances come from overseas infrequently and the ticket price is very high.⁸

Some of these touring shows were performed in theatres frequented by a Chinese audience, as we know from a news bulletin in 1867 announcing a collision of two ships with one of them carrying “a foreign theatrical troupe who had just performed in Shanghai’s Mantingfang Theatre,” a tea-house style venue for Chinese plays.⁹ Since many of these touring shows did target the Chinese audience, they introduced to them the glamour and showmanship of the

⁸ From Wang Tao’s *Ying ruan zazhi* (Miscellany by the Sea) Vol. 6. Quoted in (Zhu 2004, 79-80). The exact date of this entry is hard to pinpoint. Judging from the dates of the three prefaces, this book was written over twenty years between the third year of Xianfeng (1853) to the thirteenth year of Tongzhi (1874).

⁹ From March 19, 1867 of *Shanghai xin bao*. Quoted in (Zhu 2004, 79).

modern theatre with its technological advances over traditional Chinese theatre. As I will discuss later, such technical elements was a considerable part of the attraction of *wenmingxi*.

In later years, some Japanese touring companies presented *shinpa* plays in a 200-seat theatre called Dongjing xi (Tokyo Theatre) (Xu 1957, 22-23). It not only became a “library” for Xu Banmei, but also provided first-hand knowledge of *shinpa* for Zheng Zhengqiu, who was often credited with single-handedly reviving the fate of *wenmingxi* in Shanghai in 1913. In 1910, when Zheng was writing reviews of *jingju* (Beijing Opera) productions, it was Xu who persuaded him to watch many *shinpa* productions at the Tokyo Theatre. Eventually, these productions succeeded in “changing the mind of Zheng Yaofeng [Zheng’s name at the time] who had stubbornly insisted that only *jingju* could exist in China” (Xu 1957, 40).

In addition to foreign theatrical productions, the emergence of Shanghai as the center of China’s print capitalism and newspaper and magazine industries also helped introduce Western drama to the Chinese reading community. The first introduction of Shakespeare to the Chinese reader appeared as early as 1867 when the *Shanghai xin bao* newspaper ran a brief biography of the bard—translated as Shejishibi’er—followed by serialized retelling of *Hamlet* under the title *Dan guowang ming Hanlide gushi* (*Story of the Danish King Named Hamlet*) (Zhu 2004, 80).

2.1.1.3. Missionary School Productions

The missionary schools and universities in Shanghai were established by both Catholic and Protestant churches, although their students were Chinese. Some of these schools staged dramatic productions during Christmas or on commencement days. At the St. John’s University (Sheng Yuehan Daxue, established by the Episcopalian Church in 1879), for example, the commencement day would be “consisted generally of the St. John’s Cadet Corps Parade, the acting of some English play, the rendering of orations by the students, the making of speeches by

eminent visitors...” (St. John's University 1929, E51).¹⁰ Scenes from Shakespeare were favorite choices for these occasions, like “the Court Scene from the *Merchant of Venice*, the murder scene of *Julius Caesar*, or the burial scene of *Hamlet*...” (E51). Some students even formed a Shakespeare club that “came together every Saturday to read a Shakespearean play” (C15). The first of these performances was the court scene of *The Merchant of Venice* in 1896 (C16).



Figure 1 *The Merchant of Venice* by students of St. John's University in Shanghai in 1896. From (St. John's University 1929).

In his 1914 *Xinju shi (History of New Drama)*, Zhu Shuangyun, one of the earliest student new drama activists, credited the productions at St. John's as the beginning of amateur productions in Shanghai, although he dated it several years later at Christmas 1899. The first entry of the chronicles of new dramas states:

¹⁰ This book is consisted of an English and a Chinese version with separate numbering systems. Thus the addition of “E” or “C” in front of the page number.

1899: Winter, December:¹¹ Shanghai's St. John's University started dramatic productions, followed by Xuhui Gongxue [College of St. Ignatius, established by French Catholic Church].

Amateur dramatics is popular in the West, but rare in China since theatre has traditionally been deemed as entertainment and actors despised as unworthy of the literati. The few exceptions have been no more than those playing decadent old plays as *Kongcheng ji* [The Unguarded City] and *Li Ling bei* [Tragedy at the Li Ling Monument] where their focus was on measures and rhythm, not reform and education. The new practice began at St. John's University at Fanwangdu. In December of 1899, students at St. John's reenacted the wise words and moral deeds of Western sages in celebration of the birth of Christ. One of their followers was College of St. Ignatius at Tushanwan. Since these performances told Western stories and used English or French, it was inaccessible to those unfamiliar with their languages. (Zhu 1914, Chunqiu [Chronicles], 1)

Writing about Parents Day productions at College of St. Ignatius, Xu Banmei echoed Zhu's sentiment that these performances made it morally possible for Chinese students from other schools:

Although the audience could not completely understand the plot or dialogue, the open endorsement at the school for student dramatics was still an astonishing and pioneering endeavor in the conservative society. It therefore inspired people to realize that acting was not frivolous or obscene. (Xu 1957, 7)

¹¹ Originally the Eleventh month of the lunar calendar.

It was also the first time for most Chinese spectators to see legitimate Western theatre and realize the possibilities of this seemingly “easier” theatrical form. The well-known *wenmingxi* actor Wang Youyou wrote about watching another play at the 1899 St. John’s Christmas celebration, a contemporary satire called *Guanchang choushi* (*Scandal of Officialdom*) and how he was inspired by “this type of new drama which required neither singing nor pantomiming.”¹² Eventually, this misconception about relaxed performance standards would prove to be one of the downfalls of *wenmingxi*. But in the first years of the century, this is far from the students’ concern. Freed from the prejudice against the acting profession and confident of their own ability to mount such seemingly easy productions, Chinese students like Zhu and Wang staged their own performances. According to Zhu, by the summer of 1904, school productions were already widely spread in Shanghai, as were many new drama clubs (Zhu 1914, *Chunqiu* (Chronicles), 2-4).

Still, not knowing much about Western theatre and with no intermediate models like *shinpa*, these student performances were not very much different from the predominant traditional theatre of the time. According to Xu:

What those students had earned was only the right to stage public performances at schools; the plays themselves still emulated the so-called *shizhuang xinxi* [new drama in modern clothes] performed in *jingju* theatres. Casual with plot selection and script composition and without directors or adequate rehearsals, these productions were staged more for the satisfaction of theatre lovers among the students. They were quite similar to the new plays performed in *jingju* theatres; the only difference was the lack of cymbal,

¹² From Wang, Zhongxian. 1934. "Wo de Paiyou Shenghua" (My Life as an Actor). *Shehui Yuebao* (The Society Monthly) 1 (1-3, 5). Quoted in (Chen and Dong 1989, 36).

drum or singing. And it was not infrequent when students who could sing some *jingju* tunes would add them in the plays, making them into strange mixtures. (8-9)

Even so, these student productions prepared quite a few future *wenmingxi* actors. And while most of them kept their dramatic ventures in Shanghai, some went on to study in Japan where these interests in theatre drew them close to *shinpa*. Of particular interest to us was Li Shutong, one of the founders of the Spring Willow Society and a student in Nanyang Gongxue (Nanyang Public School), one of the hotbeds of student dramatics.¹³ Even after leaving for Japan in 1905, Li still spent his winter vacation in 1906 organizing a performance in Shanghai which likely featured a play he had written before leaving for Tokyo.¹⁴

2.1.2. Reform of Traditional Theatre

One of the consequences of Shanghai's large international and immigrant population was its relative open-mindedness towards theatre reform, especially compared to the conservative Beijing, the capital of the Qing government and classical theatre. This tolerance of, or at times even demand for, theatrical novelty was at least part of the stimulant behind student dramatics as well as the popularity of a new form of *jingju*—*shizhuang xinxi* (new drama with modern clothes). It was different from traditional *jingju* in its staging of contemporary Chinese or foreign events, utilization of modern costumes, and use of mandarin or local dialects in vocal delivery instead of the conventional Zhongzhou dialect in classical *jingju*. In general these reformed plays used less singing and more dialogue to communicate more directly to the audience. It was both

¹³ Zhu Shuangyun recorded several entries of student dramatics at Nanyang Public School starting from 1900 in his *History of New Drama*. Zhu himself was a student from that school and active participant of these activities. Li Shutong was admitted into the school as a special student in 1901.

¹⁴ The play was called *Wenye hunyin* (*Civilized and Barbarian Marriages*) which most scholars believe was written in spring of 1905 before he left for Japan. The 1906 performance was to celebrate the establishment of the theatre section of Huxuehui (Shanghai Society), a youth education group founded in 1904. Li was one of its founding members. See (Zhu 1914, *Chunqiu* (Chronicles), 3; Huang 2001a, 57).

an effort to modernize *jingju* by bringing it closer to the daily lives of its spectators and a way to express the great anxiety among modern Chinese sandwiched between foreign powers and the decadent and hopeless Qing government.

These productions would affect *wenmingxi* in Shanghai in several ways. First was its focus on contemporary issues. Some of its most popular plays included *Heiji yuanhun* (*Wronged Ghosts*), an admonishment against the destructive power of opium, and *Bolan wangguocan* (*The Tragic Demise of Poland, 1904*), which used the plight of Poland to express the urgency of political reform. Second, some of its production formats, like the use of *liantai benxi* (plays in episodic installments), in which each performance ended at a “cliff-hanger” moment to ensure the return of the audiences, was also borrowed during the commercial era of *wenming* in the mid 1910s.

Still, these “reformed” plays were performed according to *jingju* conventions and were not anything close to speech-based Western theatre and therefore are generally not considered as the forerunner of the modern theatre in China.

2.2. THE CHUNLIU SHE (SPRING WILLOW SOCIETY) IN TOKYO

2.2.1. Chinese Students in Japan

In the second half of the 19th century, while both China and Japan suffered humiliating defeats from Western powers, Japan reacted to the threat with amazing success that began with the Meiji Reform in 1868 and ended with the colonization of much of its neighboring territory. In contrast, the Manchu government in China was apprehensive of sweeping changes and of opening up to Western influence. By the end of the century, Japan’s success in modernization had already made it possible for it to destroy the Chinese fleet in the 1894-1895 Sino-Japanese

War. As the Chinese were shocked into this new reality, many also came to see Japan's head-start in Westernization as a model for bringing the West closer to China and shortening the path to modernization. The Qing government's permission for the first Chinese students to go to Japan in 1896 opened a flood gate to tens of thousands that followed. By the time of Spring Willow's production of *Black Slave's Cry to Heaven* in 1907, there were at least 7,000 Chinese students in Japan (Sanetō 1982, 327-38).¹⁵ Although the number declined since then, there were still over 3000 Chinese students in Japan at time of the 1911 Revolution, a number higher than the sum of all Chinese students in other countries (Zhou 2001, 55).

The result was a significant role for Japan in the Westernization of China. According to the Japanese scholar Keishū Sanetō, author of the definitive *Chūgokujin Nihon ryūgakus (A History of Chinese Students in Japan)*, most textbooks in Western-style schools in late Qing and early Republic were either written by those who had studied in Japan or translated by them from Japanese books originally written by Westerners or Japanese (Sanetō 1982, 158). His analysis of 105 general titles, apart from text books, advertised in a top-rate magazine in 1904 indicates that over two thirds of them were influenced by Japanese books (158-63). Another catalog of translated book titles collected between 1901 and 1904 showed that over sixty percent of them were from Japanese books and most of the rest also came from Japanese translations of Western books (163-64).

The large quantity of *kanji* (Chinese characters) used in contemporary Japanese writing made the task of translation from Japanese relatively simple:

¹⁵ Other studies put the number to as high as 10,000. See the list of Chinese students in Japan between 1896, when the Qing court first permitted the program, and 1912, the establishment of the Republican government, on (Zhou 2001, 54-55).

When the Chinese were beginning to translate Japanese during the Meiji era, Japanese nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs were written almost exclusively in *kanji*. Only verb endings and such particles like *de*, *ni*, *wo*, *wa* were written in *kana* [Japanese characters]. This group of Japanese writings that were translated into Chinese could basically be considered as articles written mainly in Chinese characters with occasional *kana*. Therefore, once the Chinese understood the functions of those particles, they could grasp the gist of the Japanese simply by reversing or rearranging its word order (Sanetō 1982, 202).¹⁶

This relative ease in learning Japanese, combined with Japan's geographical and cultural proximity, made it possible for many Chinese students to consider Japan as their first choice to learn about the outside world. Although none of them went to Japan to study theatre, once there, many went to see *shinpa* plays as a way to learn Japanese, thus opening the initial contact of the intercultural transfer from *shinpa* to *wenmingxi*.

2.2.2. Western-Style Theatre in Japan

Unlike books, which can be enjoyed anywhere and, through translation, in any language, the performative nature of theatre predetermines the supremacy of personal experience in theatre spectatorship and participation. This is why personal connections are so important in tracing intercultural theatrical transfer. The significance of personal experience carries extra weight in this study since the lack of a broad East-West context tended to magnify the importance of each particular connection. In this case, the decade between the influx of Chinese students and the 1907 production of *Black Slave's Cry to Heaven* just happened to coincide with the height of *shinpa's* theatrical and commercial success.

¹⁶ For example, Bao Tianxiao, who translated several Japanese adaptations of Western novels, particularly looked for Japanese books written in this manner early in this translation career. See (Bao 1974, 173-74).

Shinpa's origin lies in the political unrest of the 1880s when, due to high-pressure tactics of the government against political dissidents, such activists as Sudō Sadonori (1867-1907) started using the stage for their own propaganda purposes. In 1887 in Osaka, where most of the exiled activists, the *sōshi* (literally rough young men), formed their base away from Tokyo, Sudō staged a dramatization of his autobiographical novel *Gōtan-no-Shosei (A Brave Young Man)*, an example of the popular political novels of the time which usually depicted an “individual making a success of his life in the new Japan in spite of the hurdles of low birth or misfortune” (Powell 2002, 13). It was a radical idea for a country where one’s status in society had been determined almost exclusively by birth. Sudō “presented some brief propaganda during the intermission concerning the abolition of licensed prostitution, a social reformation theme of the day” (Matsumoto 2002). Because of its potential for political agitation, this early phase of *shinpa* is generally referred to as *sōshi shibai* (theatre of rough young men). This technique was carried on by another pioneer of *shinpa* Kawakami Otojirō (1864-1911) who, in 1891, became the first actor to successfully bring *shinpa* to Tokyo, the center of Japan’s theatre world. Preceded by his Osaka fame, Kawakami was well received with a topical play *Itagaki-kun Sōnan Jikki (Disaster Strikes Itagaki—the True Account)*, which depicted the attempted assassination of popular radical politician Itagaki Taisuke, whose words after being stabbed—“Itagaki may die, but freedom never”—made him a national hero among youngsters. “What stole the show, however, was an interlude piece that Kawakami performed in front of the curtain. With the nonsense title *Oppekepe*, it was vulgar, satirical and topical and it created a merchandising boom” (Powell 2002, 13). Kawakami carried out this type of political theatre by staging other contemporary events. Once the First Sino-Japanese War broke out, he changed his politics and successfully

used his theatre for war propaganda. This type of war play was copied both by other *shinpa* groups and *kabuki* actors.

Throughout his career, Kawakami made three trips to the West, first as an observer in 1893 and then two tours, to the US and Europe in 1899-1900 and then Europe in 1901-1902. Apart from dazzling the West with his version of Japanese theatre, he also changed the course of *shinpa* with European plays and production conventions.

Meanwhile, other actors of *shinpa* like Takada Minoru (1871-1915), Fujisawa Asajirō (1866-1917), Ii Yōhō (1871-1932), and Kawai Takeo (1878-1942) pursued a less political path that was characterized by their more refined acting styles and such melodramatic classics as *Hototogisu* (*The Cuckoo*) and *Konjiki yasha* (*The Gold Demon*). This is the *shinpa* that is known today.

Apart from *shinpa*, another form of new theatre was also on the rise in Japan, one that followed more closely Western production conventions and used strict translations, not adaptations preferred by *shinpa*. This new theatre would later be known as *shingeki* (new theatre), whose first production is generally considered to be the 1909 production of Ibsen's *John Gabriel Borkman* by Osanai Kaoru's Jiyū Gekijō (Free Theatre). Parallel to Osanai's efforts, Tsubouchi Shōyō, a professor at Tokyo's Waseda University, had formed a theatre study club called Bungei Kyōkai (The Literary Society) which was staging Shakespearean productions. As we will see, both *shinpa* and *shingeki* exerted their influence on Chinese students. But as *shinpa* happened to be the more mature form in the first decade of the 20th century, it was far more powerful in affecting the direction of *wenmingxi*.

2.2.3. The Formation of Chunliu She (The Spring Willow Society)

As I have mentioned, many Chinese students watched *shinpa* as a way of learning Japanese. Several of them, however, took a step further and decided to stage their own shows and form their own group called the Chunliu She (Spring Willow Society) in 1906. Among its founding members, the most famous was Li Shutong (1880-1942).

Li Shutong was born into one of the most affluent families in Tianjin, which was in many ways Shanghai's equivalent in the northern China, especially in terms of Western influence through its eight international concessions. Located less than a hundred miles south of Beijing, Tianjin—literally “the emperor's ferry crossing”—had become a commercial and cultural center of northern China known in the *jingju* world both for its excellent actors and as a testing ground for any aspiring actors eager to establish themselves in the capital Beijing. Although historians differ as to the exact degree of Li's involvement with professional actors in Tianjin, there is no doubt he was well immersed in classical Chinese theatre in his formative years (Huang 2001a, 50-53).

After moving to Shanghai with his mother in 1899, Li kept his interest in *jingju* but also came to know new theatre as a special student at Nanyang Public School, a hotbed of student dramatics.¹⁷ After his mother's death, he left for Tokyo in 1905 where he first studied music, published a musical magazine entitled *Yinyue xiao zazhi* (*A Little Musical Magazine*) in January 1906, and befriended some Japanese poets (Nakamura 2004a, 35). In October of 1906 he was accepted as an oil painting major by Tokyo Bijutsu Gakkou (Tokyo School of Fine Arts) located at Ueno, Tokyo. There, he met two other Chinese students, his classmate Zeng Xiaogu (1873-

¹⁷ There are at least two stage shots of Li striking poses with others in *jingju* plays *Laba miao* (*Laba Temple*) and *Baishui tan* (*White Water Bay*), both times in martial roles. There are two points of contention surrounding these stage shots: whether they were shots from a performance by Li or just costumed stills; and their dates: 1901 or 1904. For further information about these debates, see (Huang 2001a).

1936) and Huang Er'nan (1883-1971), who had enrolled one year earlier as the first Chinese student in that school (Liu 1998, 47; Jin 2005, 152). Like Li, both were avid theatre fans. Zeng had “lived in Beijing for many years, could sing some *jingju* arias, and had seen quite a lot of classical plays” (Ouyang 1990, 9). Years later, Li, who had by then become a famous monk, told a friend that their love of theatre and desire to perform erupted “after watching a *sōshi shibai* play by Kawakami Otojorō and his wife.” They then “visited the actor Fujisawa Asajirō and received his help and instruction. Subsequently they ventured to form the Spring Willow Society.”¹⁸ Fujisawa Asajirō was one of the best-known *shinpa* stars whose roles included Hamlet in a production by Kawakami. As Kawakami's right-hand man, he was part of Kawakami's second tour to Europe in 1901. He also founded an actor's school where at least one Chinese student, Lu Jingruo (1885-1915), is known to have studied (Ouyang 1985a, 23).

In addition to Kawakami and Fujisawa, the formation of the Spring Willow Society was also inspired by Tsubouchi Shōyō's Bungei Kyōkai (The Literary Society). Based on a student group founded by Tsubouchi, it was expanded in February 1906 and soon drew the attention of the Tokyo theatre world with its two performances within the year. In November of 1906, it staged the court scene of *The Merchant of Venice* and then the complete *Hamlet* a year later. Li Shutong joined the Literary Society at the end of 1906, possibly after its November performance (Nakamura 1956, 54). Although Li did not participate in any productions, his knowledge of the Literary Society obviously inspired the organization of the Spring Willow Society.

There are several similarities between the two societies, beginning with their names. Although Bungei Kyōkai is usually translated as Literary Society, the word *bungei*, whose Chinese pronunciation is *wenyi*, in fact means literature and arts. So, too, the full name of Spring

¹⁸ From Li Fangyuan's “Chunliu shidai de Li Ai xianshen” (Mr. Li Ai during the Spring Willow Period). Li Ai (literally “mourning”) was the name Li Shutong used after his mother's death in 1905. Quoted in (Lin 1991, 41-42).

Willow was Chunliu She Wenyi Yanjiuhui (Spring Willow Literary and Arts Research Society). Both groups originally set up ambitious goals of modernizing their country's literature, art, and theatre (Bungei Kyokai 1906d; Chunliu She 1907), but their activities turned out to focus almost exclusively on theatre. In fact, the only by-law of the Spring Willow Society, which followed closely that of the Literary Society, was for its "theatre department" (Bungei Kyokai 1906c; Chunliu She 1960). A look at these documents leaves no doubt that Spring Willow found great inspiration in the organization principles of the Literary Society.¹⁹ The by-law of the Theatre Department of The Spring Willow Society cites the Literary Society as an example of how actors in "civilized" countries like Europe, the US, and Japan are well-educated and respected. It also emulated the Literary Society by-law in organizational details like publishing a magazine, staging semi-annual performances, dividing members into formal members, administrators, and sponsors (although the Literary Society also included President and Creator), and charging membership dues.

In 1906 and 1907 both groups were struggling to find their own paths towards theatrical modernization. The first full-length production by the Literary Society, the epoch-making *Hamlet* with Tsubouchi's own faithful translation, was not staged till November of 1907, several months after Spring Willow's *Black Slave's Cry to Heaven*. For the first two performances in 1906, the Literary Society offered mixed programs from both Japanese (though reformed) and Western theatres that included the court scene of *The Merchant of Venice*, an act of a *kabuki* play "with sets by western-style painters and with the dialogue in the manner of the Nara Era" (Toita 1956, 290), a scene from Tsubouchi's new historical *kabuki* play *Kiri Hitoba*, and an operatic play entitled *Tokoyami (Eternal Darkness)*. The productions also received technical assistance

¹⁹ Li Shutong was obviously the author of the Chinese documents. The by-law of the Theatre Department of Spring Willow Society provides Li's address as the official address of the society and quotes two line of poetry by Li in which he expresses his determination to use theatre as a tool of social enlightenment.

from *kabuki* and *shinpa* actors like Ichikawa Shinjuurou and Fujisawa Asajirō (Bungei Kyokai 1906a, 1906b).

It is conceivable that these performances became attractive and accessible to Li Shutong and his friends in a variety of ways. For one thing, these productions by Waseda University students must have reminded Li of student dramatics in Shanghai and given him confidence and aspiration for the stage. Secondly, the *Merchant of Venice* scene, most likely Li's first chance to see a Shakespearean play, introduced him to the Bard. The connection to the Literary Society also helps to explain the eclectic nature of the Spring Willow's first two productions, which did not commit exclusively to emulating *shinpa*. Indeed, as the path of new drama in Japan was still unclear and the division between *shinpa* and *shingeki* just emerging, the Chinese students in Tokyo did not seem to make much difference between the two forms and happily accepted both as new drama.

Indeed, the distinction between *shinpa* and *shingeki* was virtually nonexistent for these Chinese students, who called both of these forms *xinpai* (new school), the name reserved exclusively for *shinpa* now. In his Spring Willow by-law, Li wrote that "most Japanese *xinpai* actors are scholars. Waseda University's Literary Society has an Acting Department where both professors and students have tried their hands at acting" (Chunliu She 1960, 635). As late as 1957, Ouyang Yuqian still wrote that "*xinpai* was so called in comparison to Japanese *kabuki*, just as we, at the time, referred *huaju* as *xinxi* (new drama) and China's existing theatre as *jiuxi* (old drama)" (Ouyang 1985a, 34). Apparently he used the term *xinpai* to simply mean new Western-style theatre. Even when he mentioned the Literary Society in the same passage, he did not use the term *xinju*, the Chinese pronunciation of *shingeki*.

At any rate, inspired by both *shinpa* productions and Bungei Kyōkai, Li Shutong and his fellow theatre lovers among Chinese students in Tokyo formed the Spring Willow Society in late 1906 and proceeded to stage their first production, an act of *Chahua Nü*, Alexander Dumas *filis'* *La Dame aux Camélias*.

2.2.4. *La Dame aux Camélias*

The history of this first performance by the Chinese students was typical of their ensuing productions in terms of the storied paths of intercultural transactions from Europe to Japan and eventually to China. It therefore deserves a close analysis.

Since the introduction of its novel version to Japan in 1884, *La Dame aux Camélias* had been known to Japanese readers as *Tsubaki-hime*, through various translations and adaptations. The seed to its Japanese stage life was sowed in 1893 when Kawakami, on a visit to Paris, met Sarah Bernhardt and saw the diva in the role of Marguerite. “He was so impressed that he bought the play and brought it back to be translated into Japanese.”²⁰ Osada Shūtō (1871-1915), who had studied at Cambridge and in Paris, started translating the play, which first appeared in a magazine in 1896 (Wang 2004, 151). When Kawakami and his wife Sadayakko made their second European tour in 1901, they performed the play in Paris (Salz 1993, 63). In 1903, Nakamura Nakakichi, an actress who was part of the second Kawakami European tour, staged the play at Tokyo’s Masago-za (Matsumoto 1980, 383). It later received two more productions in 1911. In Osaka, Sadayakko played Marguerite (Shirakawa 1985, 490) while in Tokyo it was staged by the famous *shinpa* duet Ii Yōhō and Kawai Takei (Matsumoto 1980, 383; Wang 2004, 150).

²⁰ Kawakami later told this story to the French journalist Louis Fournier who published a biography of him in 1900. The quote is from (Downer 2003, 64).

Meanwhile, the novel version of *La Dame aux Camélias* had been translated into classical Chinese by the famous translator Lin Shu (1852-1924) and his collaborator Wang Shouchang (1864-1926) in 1898.²¹ Wang was one of the earliest Chinese students in Europe and had studied French and law at the University of Paris for six years. He originally told Lin of the story in order to help the latter cope with the recent loss of his wife (Song and Lin 2003, 55). For over half a year, Wang would orally translate the plot, which Lin would turn into more elegant classical Chinese. The translation, published in 1899 under the title *Bali Chahua Nü yishi* (*The Story of La Dame aux Camélias of Paris*), soon became such a bestseller that it not only propelled Lin to become one of the most prolific and influential translators of his time but also contributed significantly to elevating the stature of novels as a legitimate literary genre. Its popularity was best summarized by another famous translator Yan Fu, who wrote the couplet: “A volume of *La Dame aux Camélias*/ Has broken the hearts of Chinese youths.”²² Ouyang Yuqian wrote that he had read the translation in Beijing before watching Spring Willow’s production in 1907 (Ouyang 1990, 7).

Although the script for this Spring Willow production has not survived, judging from the popularity of Lin’s translation and the fact that the production was coached by Fujisawa Asajirō, who had been to France with Kawakami and Nakamura, it seems a logical conclusion that it was based on both Lin’s translation of the novel and Osada’s adaptation from the play.²³

It was performed on February 11, 1907 at the Tokyo YMCA in Kanda-mitoshirocho, where a new three-story building was specifically designed for Chinese students, numbering between 6,000 and 12,000 in 1906. Equipped with an auditorium on the third floor, it was

²¹ As Lin Shu did not know any foreign languages, he relied on his various collaborators for the selection and oral translation of the source text into Chinese.

²² “Kelian yijuan *Chahua Nü*/ Duanjin Zhina dangzi chang.” Quoted in (Aying 1982, 274).

²³ Here, I am in agreement with the Japanese scholar Furuta Toshiko who further surmises that the script was put together by Zeng Xiaogu, who later wrote the script of *Black Slave’s Cry to Heaven* (Furuta 1992, 121).

opened in the previous month (Nakamura 2004a, 36). From contemporary reports published in Japan and China,²⁴ the Spring Willow's act of *Camélias* was staged as part of a successful two-day benefit performance for famine victims in China. It collected two thousand yen in profit from over two thousand international spectators, and was covered by quite a few local reporters and critics. Spring Willow's contribution was a scene from Act Three of *Camélias* in which Armand's father persuades Marguerite to leave his son alone. It was coached by Fujisawa Asajirō, who had seen it in Paris as a member of Kawakami's second European tour.

Li Shutong played the role of Marguerite and Zeng Xiaogu played Armand's father. Li received special applause from the audience when the host announced that he had shaved his mustache just for the role (Ouyang 1990, 7). Judging from contemporary reports and existing production shots, the production was quite realistic in costume, set, and acting. Like many subsequent productions by Spring Willow, this first performance clearly foregrounds *shinpa*'s role in mediating the Chinese reception of Western theatre—here in such tangible terms as Osada's adaptation, Nakamura's previous production, and Fujisawa's coaching. It is certainly significant that Osada's adaptation formed part of the basis for the script and that Fujisawa had seen it staged both in France and Japan.

It is also amazing to see the publicity it garnered. Although quite modest compared to the subsequent spotlight on *Black Slave's Cry to Heaven*, this performance nevertheless showed up on the radar of Japanese and Chinese media because of its sharp contrast to traditional theatre. Writing in the Chinese newspaper *Shi bao* a month after the production, one of the participants remarked that a Japanese reporter had told them that “there were about six or seven reporters

²⁴ Contemporary Japanese reports include three short newspaper articles between February 9 and 11, and one magazine article in March, all quoted in (Furuta 1992, 121-22). The one Chinese report appeared on March 20, 1907 of *Shibao* and is quoted in (Huang 2001b, 39-40).

present that day. Among them, one or two had seen Chinese theatre in Shanghai which they felt was greatly different from what they were witnessing” (1907a).

This sense of a new mode of performance also excited many of the students in the audience. Ouyang Yuqian recalled that “as this performance was the first *huaju* production by the Chinese, I was deeply shocked.... I was amazed to see theatre could be done in such a way! ... I also felt that since they were all college and special school students and their production was so well received, why couldn't I also do it on stage?” (Ouyang 1990, 7) This obvious excitement greatly enhanced the popularity of the Spring Willow Society, drawing many Chinese, as well as some Japanese and other international, students to its next full-length production, *Heinu yutian lu* (*Black Slave's Cry to Heaven*).

2.2.5. *Black Slave's Cry to Heaven*

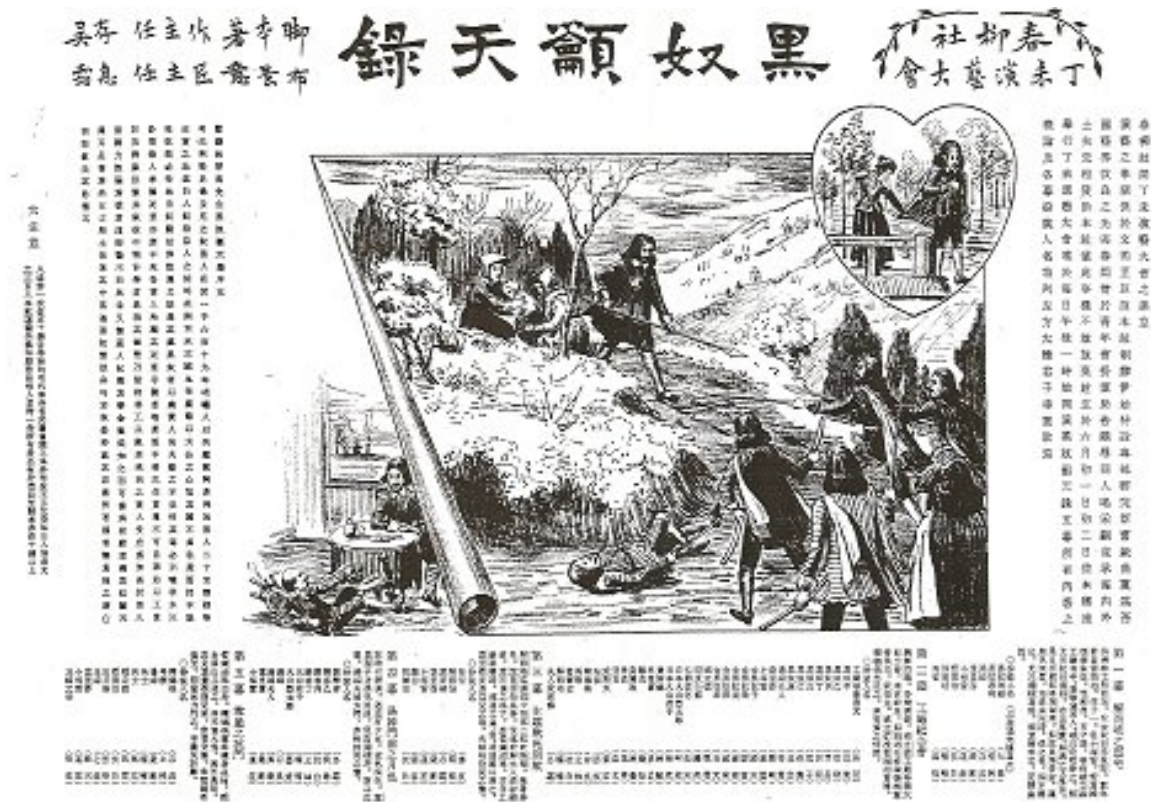


Figure 2 Poster for *Black Slave's Cry to Heaven* by Chunliu She staged in Tokyo's Hongō-za in June 1907. (Photo courtesy of Waseda University's Tsubouchi Shōyō Theatre Museum.)

Black Slave's Cry to Heaven was based on a Chinese version of Harriet Beecher Stowe's anti-slavery novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin* that was translated by Lin Shu and his collaborator Wei Yi in 1901. The production was staged in June 1907 at Tokyo's Hongō-za, a popular venue for *shinpa* productions. No script of this production has survived, but a fairly detailed poster has been found at Waseda University's Tsubouchi Shōyō Memorial Museum. At the top of the poster, from right to left, there is announcement of the performance ("The Spring Willow Society 1907 Performance Gala"), the title of the play, and top credits ("Script written by Zeng Xiaogu/Set designed by Li Shutong"). At the center of the middle row is the most prominent feature of the poster, a collage of three scenes: at bottom left, the selling of Tom by Shelby to Haley (Act One); at top right, the separation of Eliza and George Harris (surrounded by a heart shape, Act Three); and most prominently the fighting of George Harris against his pursuers (Act Five). At the right of this collage is a paragraph explaining the motive of this production and at its left an excerpt from Lin Shu's preface to his translation, which draws a parallel between black slaves and Chinese laborers in the US. The bottom row of the poster lists the acts, each with a brief synopsis and list of characters and their players. Given the significance of this production, I want to include the two paragraphs and list of acts in the following pages:

Motive for the Performance by the Spring Willow Society

Theatrical performance is of great significance to civilization. This is why our Society has devoted a special department to the study of new and classical theatre. We hope to be the pioneer of artistic reform in China. Our spring benefit production at the YMCA has received widespread acclaim and we have since benefited from general support from both our fellow countrymen and friends from other countries. With such momentum, we dare

not give up. Therefore, we have decided to host a performance at Hongō-za on June 1 and 2. The five-act play *Black Slave's Cry to Heaven* will commence at 1 pm sharp. The synopsis of the acts and actors in them are hereby listed. Distinguished guests, please come and enjoy.

Excerpt from Mr. Lin Qinnan's Preface to *Black Slave's Cry to Heaven*²⁵

In American history the enslavement of blacks in Virginia can be dated to 1619, when the Dutch transported twenty African blacks in a warship to Jamestown and sold them. This was the beginning of the enslavement of blacks by whites. That was before the United States had been established as a nation. Later, when the public-spirited Washington governed selflessly, not seeking a private fortune, he was still unable to change the laws on slavery. It was not until Lincoln's time that the slaves were fortunately emancipated. Recently the treatment of blacks in America has been carried over to yellow people. When a cobra is unable to release its poison fully it vents its anger by biting wood and grass. Afterwards, no one who touches the poisoned dead branches will escape death. We the yellow people, have we touched its dead branches? Our country is rich in natural resources, but they are undeveloped. Our people's livelihood is impoverished to the extent that they cannot make ends meet. Thus they try to support themselves by going to America to work, and every year send money back to support their families. Of the Americans, the more calculating ones are alarmed at the draining off of their silver and so treat the Chinese workers cruelly so as to stop them from coming. As a result, the yellow

²⁵ Lin Qinnan was Lin Shu's penname. This excerpt reprints the bulk of the preface, except for Lin's rationale for the change of title and two short paragraphs at the end. I have marked the two lines that explain the deletion with eclipse marks [...]. Here are the deleted lines: "originally called *The Oppression of Black Slaves*, and also appeared under the title *Tom's Family Affairs*. It was" and "I did not like the inelegance of these titles and hence changed the title to the present one." This English translation was by R. David Arkush and Leo O. Lee's and printed in their *Land without Ghosts: Chinese Impressions of America from the Mid-Nineteenth Century to the Present*, pp77-78.

people are probably treated even worse than the blacks. But our country's power is weak, and our envoys are cowardly and afraid of arguing with the Americans. Furthermore, no educated person has recorded what has happened, and I have no way to gain factual knowledge. The only precedent I can rely on is *A Black Slave's Cry to Heaven*. This book [...] was written by the American woman writer, Stowe. [...] In this book the miseries of black slaves are depicted in detail. This is not because I am especially versed in depicting sadness; I am merely transcribing what is contained in the original work. And the prospect of the imminent demise of the yellow race has made me feel even sadder.

Act One Shelby's House

American gentleman Shelby owns a female slave called Eliza, who has been married to George for several years. They have a son called Little Harry. George is enslaved to Harris. Dynamic and insightful, he has worked in Wilson's factory for years. Wilson's respects him for being exceptionally hardworking and intelligent. Shelby owns a slave called Tom and treats him particularly well because of his honesty and kindness. One day the slave trader Haley comes. Shelby is gravely indebted to Haley, which is long overdue. Haley hates his delay and presses him hard. Seeing no way out, Shelby agrees to pay him with Tom. Unsatisfied, Haley asks for more.

Actors (in order of appearance)

Black slave Sam (Qizi)	Black Slave Andy (Xiqiu)	Tom (Cunwu)
Eliza (Yangang)	Little Harry (Liansheng)	George (Kangbai)
Shelby (Nannan)	Haley (Taohen)	

Act Two Celebration at the Factory

Lively dance and vigorous music. There is a celebration at Wilson's factory. Visitors stream in, including Mr. and Mrs. Shelby and Harris. After the performance, Wilson presents George an award. Harris is angry and stops him. This shocks the visitors.

Actors

Factory Manager <i>Yanguang</i> (Fengjie) ²⁶		Black Slave A (Yadong)
Black Slave B (Xiqiu)	Black Slave C (Zunshi)	Black Slave D (Langjian)
Black Slave E (Kuanzi)	Black Slave F (Zailian)	Black Slave G (Jingzhi)
Tom's Wife (Qiyi)	Eliza (Yangang)	Harry (Liansheng)
Female Black Slave H (Tatian)		Black Female Slave I (Lanke)
Female Black Slave J (Chunyu)		Female Black Slave K (Chengnan)
Female Black Slave L (Yutian)		Wilson (Wozun)
Indian Marquis (Luoao)		Servant to the Marquis (Zhitian)
Japanese Ooyama Toyotarō (Helao)		Japanese Ooyama Kimiko (Hailao)
<i>Feiside</i> (Qiuhan)	<i>Moukuan'er</i> (Yameng)	<i>Leike</i> (Lezhi)
<i>Mi'erdun</i> (Qiutai)	<i>Wenna</i> (Yike)	<i>Maike</i> (Muwen)
<i>Aisiwen</i> (Ziyun)	Haley (Taohen)	Harris (Cunwu)
Marks (Zhilin)	George (Kangbai)	Shelby (Nannan)
Mrs. Emily Shelby (Xishuang)		

Act Three Parting for Ever

Shelby has already signed the contract to sell Tom and Little Harry to Haley as slaves.

When Eliza finds out this deal, she tearfully implores Mrs. Emily Shelby who also sheds

²⁶ Many names in this act seem to be invented and not from the novel. I will use *pinyin* for those names that sound like English but are not found in the novel. They are italicized.

tears for them. Presently, George comes to tell them that since he resigned from the factory, Harris has treated him even worse. He will escape far away. Eliza tells him about the selling of their son and the couple embraces and weeps in great sorrow.

Actors

Haley (Taohen)	Shelby (Nannan)	Emily (Xishuang)
Eliza (Yangang)	Little Harry (Liangsheng)	George Shelby (Lanke) ²⁷
George (Kangbai)		

Act Four Moon Beam in Front of Tom's Door

A drunkard sings. A girl is lost. Deep into the night, Eliza escapes with his son. On the way, she stops at Tom's house and tells them of this recent incident. Profoundly shocked, Tom and his wife also weep together with her.

Actors

A Limping Drunkard (Xishuang)		Drunkard B (Wozun)
Drunkard C (Kangbai)	Drunkard D (Zhilin)	Ooyama Kimiko (Nannan)
Ooyama Toyotarō (Yingai)	Tom (Cunwu)	Tom's Wife (Qiyi)
Eliza (Yangang)	Little Harry (Liansheng)	

Act Five Battle at the Snow Cliff

After George's escape, Harris pursues him with helpers. George goes through a deep mountain to avoid them. He suffers miserably in bitter chill and blazing snow. Suddenly Eliza arrives with their son. The family grieves and rejoices at the same time. Soon the pursuers arrive. George fights desperately against them and they eventually escape the disaster.

²⁷ The Chinese name here only indicates "Qiaozhi" (George) while the whole name of George Harris is translated throughout. Ouyang Yuqian confirms that he (under the stage name Lanke) played George Shelby in Act Three (Ouyang 1985a, 20).

Actors

Harris (Cunwu)	Marks (Zhilin)	Tom Loker (Yangang)
Constable (Nannan)	Constable (Yuwen)	Wilson (Wozun)
Phineas Fletcher (Wusi)	Jim (Qizi)	Eliza (Tatian)
Little Harry (Liansheng)	Jim's Mother (Mingtang)	



Figure 3 Act Two of Black Slave's Cry to Heaven staged by the Spring Willow Society on Tokyo's Hongō-za in June 1907. From (Zhu 1914).

(録天額奴黒) 劇演生學留那支の座郷本

色月之前門婦湯

島海小の笠雀 妻の婦湯の齋齊 養里意の吳存 婦湯の霜息



Figure 4 Act Four of *Black Slave's Cry to Heaven* by Chunliu She staged in Tokyo's Hongō-za in June 1907. From *Engei Gaho*, July 1907.



Figure 5 Act Five of *Black Slave's Cry to Heaven* by Chunliu She staged in Tokyo's Hongō-za in June 1907. From *Engei Gaho*, July 1907.

The script was written by Zeng Xiaogu. If we compare it with the original text and Lin Shu's translations, it becomes obvious that each of the first four acts was roughly based on one of the first four corresponding chapters, although these chapter headings were omitted in the Chinese version: One, "In Which the Reader Is Introduced to a Man of Humanity"; Two, "The Mother"; Three, "The Husband and Father"; and Four "An Evening in Uncle Tom's Cabin". These chapters tell the story of the sale of Tom and Harry followed by the escape of George and Eliza. The play then skips both Eliza's escape to Ohio and Tom's sale to Louisiana. The last act of Zeng's script cuts directly to Chapter Seventeen, "The Freeman's Defense."

Perhaps due to the lengthy gap between this and previous acts, the last act has posed some problems for Chinese scholars attempting to match the characters with the act. In 1957,

when this poster initially surfaced, Ouyang Yuqian, who had played George Shelby in the production, thought the “Tangmu” (Tom) in this act final was Uncle Tom and faulted the playwright for taking the liberty of putting Uncle Tom here to satisfy the audience (Ouyang 1985a, 20). Since then, theatre historians have accepted this assumption without checking with the original.²⁸ A look at the novel shows that this Tom in fact refers to Tom Loker, one of the pursuers, who appears in Chapter Seventeen in both the original novel and Lin’s translation. In fact, a close look at the Lin’s book and the poster shows that his name is not identified as “Tangmu” as in Uncle Tom but “Dangmu,” with its first part written with a slightly different character that is pronounced as “Dang,” not “Tang”. Apparently, this extra caution Lin Shu and Zeng Xiaogu took to separate the two names was not enough to overcome the confusion half a century later.

It is by now accepted wisdom that the Spring Willow’s *Black Slave’s Cry to Heaven* was the first Western-style production in China. Given the status of new drama discussed earlier in this chapter, this conclusion is obviously sound. Dramaturgically, it was the first Chinese play with a modern five act structure which was in stark contrast to the episodic nature of classical Chinese plays more akin to novel in structure. In terms of acting, even though the addition of singing and dancing in Act Two and the singing in Act Four may have bothered some purists, the speech-based production was obviously different from classical theatre where speech delivery is only one of four basic skills, together with singing, pantomime, and acrobatics. As the stage shots plainly show, the acting, although still somewhat stiff, was definitely in the realm of mimesis, not representation. And even though it was not based on any particular *shinpa*

²⁸ This confusion has persisted in all writings on this issue since then. As late as 2001, it served as the basis for Huang Aihua’s attempt to pinpoint the real actors behind the stage names (Huang 2001b, 53).

production, the three-month rehearsal by Fujisawa resulted in what several Japanese critics detected as traces of certain *shinpa* styles.

The set, designed by Li Shutong, seems like the typical *shinpa* set with painted backdrops and three-dimensional set pieces. From the stage shots from acts four and five, we can see quite clearly the broad strokes of highlights and shadows of typical stage painting techniques used in Western theatre, juxtaposed with a rather crudely constructed rock. Since both Li and Zeng were art students of oil painting, “they designed the set and chose the costumes..., made a detailed list of set, costume, and properties, explained it to the undertakers, and left their construction to the backstage workers of the Hongō-za,” which they rented for 500 *yen* with Fujisawa’s help (Ouyang 1985a, 20-21). The fact the set was constructed and painted by stage hands Hongō-za explains the professional technical quality of the production and its similarity with *shinpa* in *mise-en-scène*. In later years, Spring Willow was able to maintain its technical proficiency in Shanghai by entrusting set design and execution to the Japanese brother-in-law of its leader Lu Jingruo and a Japanese stage painter (Huang 2001b, 214).

The critical response to this production was overwhelmingly positive from all major newspapers in Tokyo (Nakamura 2004a, 41; Huang 2001b, 58-69). The journal *Waseda bungaku* (*Waseda Literature*) devoted over ten pages to reviews written by Ihara Seiseian, a leading theatre critic, and Doi Shunsho, a key member of Tsubouchi Shōyō’s Literary Society who would play the title role later that year in the Society’s production of *Hamlet*. For Ihara, the acting skill and the set design of this production were better than Japan’s amateur productions (Ihara 1907, 113). Doi went further to praise the acting as exceeding such *shinpa* stars as Takada Minoru, Fujisawa, Ii Yōhō, and Kawai Takeo (Doi 1907, 115). Other critics also heaved considerable praise on almost all the actors—Zeng Xiaogu (Eliza), Li Shutong (Emily Shelby),

Huang Nannan (Shelby), etc. all of whom doubled or even trippled some minor roles. From these reports we know the play was also extremely successful with the audience, who packed the 1,500-seating Hongō-za and reacted enthusiastically throughout the play.

Finally, an intriguing, although hard to substantiate, question is whether there was any direct Western theatrical influence on this production. Was there any theatrical justification in choosing *Uncle Tom's Cabin*? Given the fact that Spring Willow's first production *La Dame aux Camélias* followed a Japanese translation and available production models known to their director Fujisawa, who had both seen and done it in Paris and may have had some involvement with—or had at least seen—Nakamura Nakakichi's 1903 production. In contrast, there was no known *shinpa* rendition of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Rather, the obvious motivation is the political and sentimental value of the play as evidenced in the high popularity of Lin Shu's translation and his cry over the plight of the Chinese as a nation and people. This is definitely true given the inclusion of his preface in the poster which draws the connection between the suffering of black slaves and that of Chinese laborers in the US, serving as a bitter reminder of the Chinese nation to Western and Japanese powers. It is obvious that this sentiment was quite pervasive among Chinese students in Japan whose brush with discrimination was far from rare.

Still, this does not preclude, it seems to me, the possibility of some theatrical stimulus, given the world-wide popularity of not only the novel but also all forms of theatrical productions of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. In US alone, where it had become “a national institution and a theatrical industry called ‘Tomming,’ there were five hundred troupes performing on the road” in 1900 (Henderson 1994, 454-55). No evidence connects this production with any Western precedent, but given the US and European tours of the Kawakami company, where Fujisawa served as Kawakami's right hand man although he only joined him in their second tour to Europe in 1901

and 1902, some direct theatrical influence is not completely impossible. In addition, the production also provides some clues. For example, the large party scene with singing and dancing in Act Two is traditionally believed to be written in by Zeng Xiaogu as a way to add festivity and to allow a large, international cast, many of whom their friends at Tokyo School of Fine Arts, to appear on stage. All true. But was it also possibly inspired by some minstrel tradition, especially since all male, but not female, slaves were in black face? (Ouyang 1985a, 21) From the quote I included in the section about Western theatre in Shanghai, we know such black-faced minstrel shows were featured at the Lyceum Theatre and were seen by some Chinese spectators. Was it possible for people like Li Shutong, who grew up in the two most cosmopolitan cities in late Qing China, Tianjin and Shanghai, to have witnessed such productions?

2.2.6. Subsequent Productions

2.2.6.1. *Minbuping*

After the success of *Black Slave's Cry to Heaven*, the principals of the Spring Willow Society staged another show in April of 1908 called *Sheng xiang lian (Love Sick)*, a European romantic melodrama (Huang 2001b, 77). Li was discouraged from bad reviews about his stage looks in a female role and retired from stage afterwards. Another major member, Li Taohen, who had played Haley in *Black Slave's Cry to Heaven*, also left the group and put on another show a month later with Chinese medical students in Chiba. Entitled *Xin diemeng (New Butterfly Dream)*, it was based on an Italian story about the adventures of a count after his miraculous awakening from the grave. Several other productions were staged by Chinese students. They

were similar to the Spring Willow productions, but appear to be of lesser quality in both play selection and acting skills.²⁹

The most significant addition to Spring Willow at this time was Lu Jingruo (1885-1915), an aesthetics and psychology major at Tokyo Imperial University who had studied at Fujisawa Asajirō's Tokyo Haiyū Yōsei-jo (Tokyo Actor's School) and appeared as a supernumerary in a *shinpa* production that featured some of the brightest *shinpa* stars (Nakamura 2004b, 18). He would later also study *shingeki* in the Literary Society and play minor roles in its 1911 productions of *A Doll's House*, *Merchant of Venice*, and *Hamlet* (Nakamura 2004b, 24-26; Ouyang 1985a, 34). Because of such exposure, Lu and his fellow actors at Spring Willow were considered to have learned the essence of new theatre in Japan. Ouyang wrote that

Since Jingruo was enamored with *shinpa*, he never studied Japanese *kabuki*. After joining the Literary Society, he became greatly interested in classical Western plays, in particular those by Shakespeare. After watching the successful run of *Resurrection* by Shimamura Hōgetsu and Matsui Sumako and reading some Ibsen's plays, he leaned towards the practice of Literary Society.³⁰ After returning to China, he very much wanted to stage Shakespeare, Russian classic plays, and, step by step, modern European realism. Yet, although he had many ideals, he only introduced Japanese *shinpa* plays. (Ouyang 1985a, 34-35)

With Li Shutong no longer available, the group used the name Shenyou Hui (1908-1909 Society) when they put on their next production *Mingbuping* (*Cry of Injustice*), a French one-act

²⁹ For details, see the Japanese or Chinese version of Tadayuki Nakamura's article on the Spring Willow Society: (Nakamura 1956, 2004b). Also see (Huang 2001b, 81-89 and 107-120).

³⁰ According to Itō Shigeru, the Literary Society play Lu watched was in fact *A Doll's House*. At the time, he was already its member. From (Itō 2004, 77).

social satire. It was staged in January of 1909 in Kinkikan in Tokyo's Jinden district, a convention center often used by Chinese students at the time. Theatre historians in Japan and China know this was a one-act French comedy but have been stumped by its origin, believing it was perhaps translated or adapted from Moliere's *The Misanthrope*.³¹ This seems a bit strange since there is almost nothing similar between the two plays, one with five acts and the other one act. Although the script for the Spring Willow production has not survived, a synopsis is preserved in the 1919 *Xinju kaozheng baichu* (*One Hundred New Drama Plays*):

Minbuping, one act, also known as *Shehui jieji* [Social Classes], famous Western comedy. Its précis goes like this: When a bank manager disturbs a count, the count berates him. When a bank teller wants to marry the manager's eldest daughter, the manager excoriates him. The teller transfers his anger towards a chauffeur. When a maid expresses her love towards the chauffeur, he berates her and storms out. The maid releases her anger at a black slave who then whips a beggar. With nowhere to turn, the beggar beats a passing dog repeatedly with a cane (Zheng 1919, *Xiyang xinju* (New western plays), 28).

Another Chinese version of the play, entitled *Huangjin ta* (*Golden Tower*), was published in 1915 in a magazine most likely edited by Zeng Xiaogu (Ma 1990, 118). The playwright for this script is listed as Yiming (Anonymous) and translator as Du, a penname. After the translation, the editor noted that this one act "has been most popular in France in recent years. Five years ago, some Chinese students in Tokyo successfully performed this play during a New Year celebration at Kinkikan" (Yiming 1991, 834). No doubt this production was the Spring

³¹ Tadayuki Nakamura was the first to believe it was from Moliere's *Misanthrope* (Nakamura 2004b, 18) and this belief has persisted as recently as 2001 (Huang 2001b, 91). Ma Guojun did express some doubt in 1990 after comparing the two plays and thought *Cry of Injustice* could at most be called an adaptation or rewriting of *The Misanthrope* (Ma 1990, 118).

Willow's *Cry of Injustice*. It could even be the same script, since we do know Zeng edited the translation for the production (Nakamura 2004b, 19).

The script used by Spring Willow was translated by Li Shizeng (1881-1973), one of the earliest Chinese students to France, where it was published in 1908. According to his translator's preface, it was a one-act by the French playwright "Mulei" in 1901 when it premiered at the "Wenhua" (Culture) Theatre in Paris. In 1906 it again caused a sensation at the "Angduan" Theatre where Li saw the production and was greatly moved by its stinging exposure of social injustice. As best as I can tell, "Mulei" could refer to Max Maurey (1868-1947), then manager of the Grand Guignol Theatre whose one act comedy *La Recommendation* premiered on October 26, 1901 at Theatre Pigalle and then moved to Grand Guignol on December 2 (Maurey 1902). It then played at the Odéon Theatre during the 1906-1907 season (Odéon), the first of André Antoine's eight year tenure as its director where he successfully mixed "major drama from abroad and from the past" with "contemporary drama by established authors which, in an age before cinema had quite taken hold, was the commercial backbone of his program" (Chothia 1991, 161). Maurey, famous for turning the Grand Guignol into the house of theatrical horror, had several of his plays staged at the Odéon, including a dramatization of *David Copperfield*. The puzzle seems resolved. But when I was finally about to compare the content of *La Recommendation* with *The Golden Tower* and the synopsis of *Cry of Injustice*, they do not match. Yet, the play remains the only possibility listed at the online stock play archive of the Odéon. So the mystery persists, for now.

From the viewpoint of intercultural theatre, *Cry of Injustice* was mostly likely the only European play by Spring Willow Society in both Tokyo and Shanghai that came directly from Europe, not through *shinpa*. The translator Li Shizeng was the son of one of the highest ranking

Qing officials. He arrived in Paris as an embassy attaché in 1902. For a decade afterwards he studied agriculture and chemistry before turning to anti-Qing political activism. Apart from *Cry of Injustice*, he also translated *On the Eve* (*Ye weiyang, Am Vorabend*) by the Polish playwright Leopold Kampf, a three act play about the Russian nihilists and their fight against Tsarist government, a timely piece that created a sensation in China and became a rallying point for the anti-Qing movement.

When The Spring Willow Society staged *Cry of Injustice* in Tokyo, it did not receive much favorable reaction, but it eventually became a popular play for Spring Willow Theatre in Shanghai at the height of *wenmingxi* between 1914 and 1915.

2.2.6.2. *La Tosca*

So far, none of the Spring Willow productions had consciously imitated any specific *shinpa* production apart from indirect inspiration from *shinpa* actors and scripts and Fujisawa's coaching. This practice changed with Chunliu's next production in early 1909, Victorien Sardou's *La Tosca*, which followed a recent *shinpa* example that featured Ii Yōhō and Kawai Takeo, two of *shinpa*'s brightest stars.

Writing in 1957, Ouyang Yuqian explained why they chose the play and how they prepared for it:

At the time we had not read Sardou's original script and our translation was based on Taguchi Kitukei's Japanese version. It was said there were three acts in Sardou's original script but Taguchi's version contained five acts, with changes perhaps to suit *shinpa* performance. Since we altered Taguchi's script into four acts, ours also differed from Sardou's original. And we kept making changes during rehearsal. The reasons why we

chose this play were: first, we had enjoyed watching the play starring famous Japanese *shinpa* actors Ii Yōhō and Kawai Takeo; second, it had four major characters, just right for Jingruo, Wozun, Kangbai, and me; third, there was a strong revolutionary atmosphere among young Chinese students and this play was right for the situation (Ouyang 1985a, 24).

Apart from Ouyang's Tosca and Lu's Cavaradossi, Tosca's artist lover who hid a fugitive revolutionary, the other two leads were played by Wu Wozun, as police Chief Scarpia, and Xie Kangbai, who had previously played Uncle Tom, as the revolutionary Angelotti. Ouyang was mistaken, though, about Sardou's original play which has five acts, not three, as is the case of its more famous opera version by Giacomo Puccini. The *shinpa* version by Taguchi Kitukei, entitled *Netsu ketsu (Hot Blood)*, was published in the newspaper *Yorozu Choho* in February of 1907 and was staged at Tokyo's Shintomi-za in July 1907 with Kawai as Tosca and Ii as Cavaradossi (Nakamura 2004b, 19). According to the Japanese scholar Iizuka Yutori, when Taguchi was commissioned by Kawai and Ii to translate the script, he was unable to find either the play or the opera script and had to base his script on a mediocre novel adaptation of the play, plus inspiration from a *kabuki* play called *Ogi no kon (Regret of the Fan)* by Fukuchi Ochi (1841-1906), which was one of the several *kabuki* plays based on the *Tosca* story. Taguchi's version was relatively close to the original, with a couple of additional characters and plots, mostly noticeably the onstage appearance of Cavaradossi's sister (Iizuka 1994, 131-34).

Although the *shinpa* production inspired the Chinese actors, it fared rather poorly with the audience and critics. A review from the September 1907 issue of the *shingeki* heavyweight *Waseda bungaku (Waseda Literature)* mocked both the quality of the script and the

pretentiousness of the *shinpa* stars (Akatonbo 1907). Not much attention was paid to the revolutionary theme, which formed a sharp contrast to the reaction of the Chinese production.

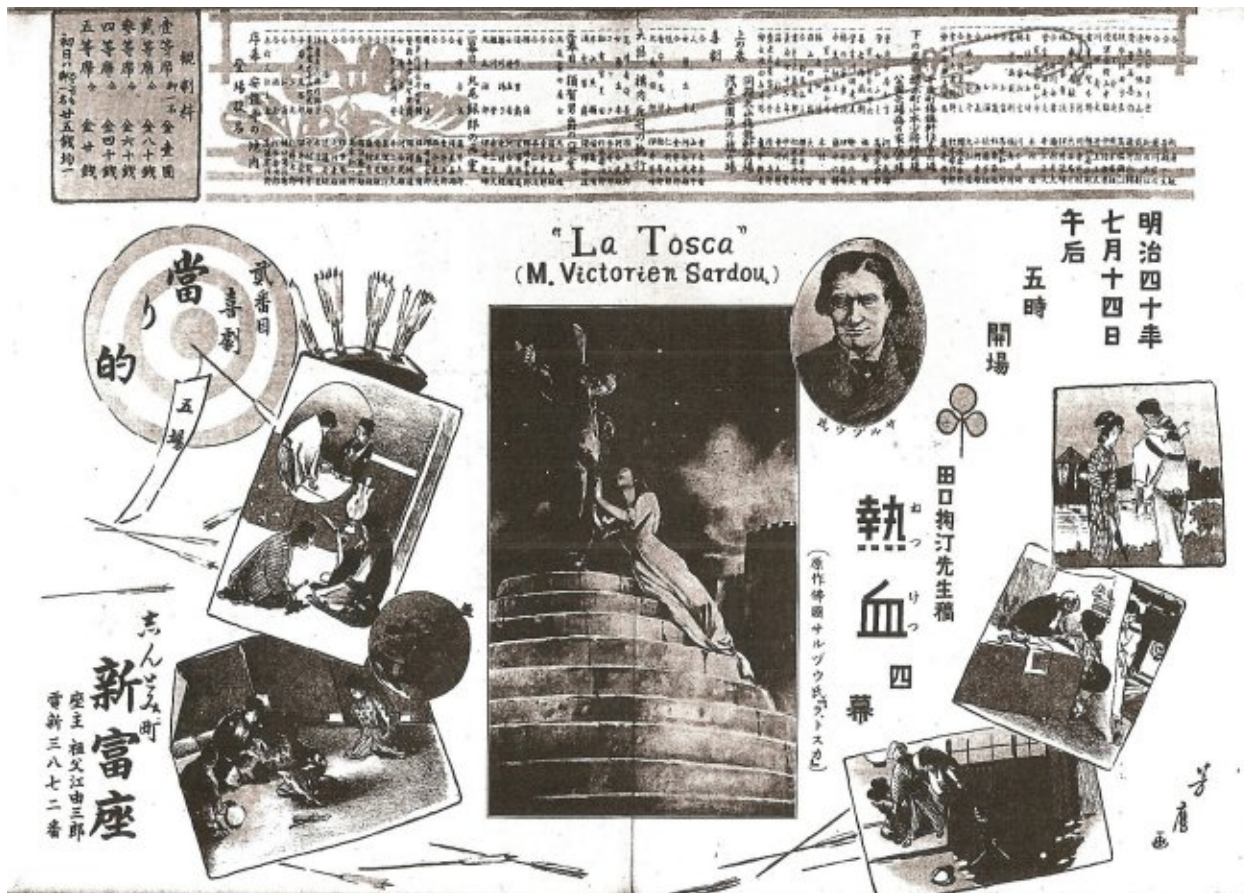


Figure 6 Poster of *La Tosca* staged at Tokyo’s Shintomi-za in July 1907. (Photo courtesy of Waseda University’s Tsubouchi Shōyō Theatre Museum.)

The Chinese version was called *Relei* (*Hot Tears*), although the title reverted to *Rexie* (*Hot Blood*) in later productions in Shanghai (Ouyang 1985a, 24). It was staged at Tokyo-za, thanks again to Fujisawa for booking the theatre and to Lu’s connection with Japanese stage hands who took care of technical details like set and costume (Ouyang 1990, 17-18). The four acts each took place at the chapel, Cavaradossi’s home, Scarpia’s room, and the castle. Following Taguchi, this version also had Cavaradossi’s sister appearing onstage. Another deviation from Sardou was that Angelotti was captured alive in Act Two so that he could talk about revolution with Cavaradossi in the last act before both of them facing the execution squad

(Ouyang 1985a, 25-26). In contrast to the lukewarm reaction to its *shinpa* predecessor, the Chinese version received enthusiastic reaction from the Chinese community, especially to its revolutionary theme. Tokyo had long served as an important hub of anti-Qing sentiment where Dr. Sun Yat-sen had, in 1905, organized Tongmenghui (United League), the revolutionary alliance largely responsible of the overthrow of the Qing Dynasty. Although Ouyang claimed the actors were in it more for fun than revolutionary promotion, “over forty people joined the United League in the several days afterward the production,” prompting some to believe “that they were affected by this play” (Ouyang 1990, 19).



Figure 7 A scene from the 1907 *shinpa* production of *Tosca* entitled *Netsu ketsu (Hot Blood)* with Kawai Takeo as Tosca (right) and Ii Yōhō as Cavaradossi (center). (Photo courtesy of Waseda University’s Tsubouchi Shōyō Theatre Museum.)



Figure 8 A scene from the 1909 Chunliu She production of *Tosca* entitled *Relei (Hot Tears)* with Ouyang Yuqian as Tosca (right) and Lu Jingruo as Cavaradossi (center). Notice the similarities in set, costume, and blocking between the two productions. (Photo from *Xiaoshuo shibao* 14, 1911.)

It was definitely the play for the time and its audience, something that was not true for either the 1907 *shinpa* production or Spring Willow's Shanghai productions in 1915, when it became just another theatrical piece from Europe struggling to compete against more popular native plays.

As the Spring Willow's second major production in Tokyo, *Hot Tears* had come a long way towards respectable legitimate theatre. Ouyang summed it up this way:

There were certain improvements in *Hot Blood* over *Black Slave's Cry to Heaven*. As a spoken drama, this play's production format was more uniform and purer than that of *Black Slave's Cry to Heaven*—the complete reliance on the script and tight transitions between acts; the tight arrangement of story organization, plot development, and

character deployment; the flow of actions with no additional and unreasonable interjections, hastily added characters, audience-pleasing tricks, exaggerated acting... Jingruo was quite good at playwriting and directing, so he paid special attention to the unity of stage image... (Ouyang 1985a, 31).

With Lu Jingruo acting as a director and insisting on the uniformity of performance standard, it seems his experience with *shinpa* acting school and the Literary Society finally paid off for the Spring Willow Society.

2.3. WENMINGXI IN SHANGHAI BETWEEN 1907 AND 1913

2.3.1. Wang Zhongsheng and The Chunyang She (Spring Sun Society)

After the production of *Black Slave to Heaven* in June of 1907, the path of *wenmingxi* diverged with significant consequences. On the one hand, most of the active members of the Spring Willow Society remained in Tokyo and led by Lu Jingruo, moved closer to domestic *shinpa* by following the styles and repertoire of *shinpa* stars like Ii Yōhō and Takeo Kawai. While Lu occasionally returned to Shanghai during vacations and staged some plays with local practitioners, the Spring Willow as a group did not return to Shanghai until after the 1911 revolution. Therefore, during the four years in between, the seed sown with *Black Slave to Heaven* germinated and grew mainly with local artists under the helm of two men who had been to Japan but were not associated with the Tokyo *Black Slave's Cry to Heaven*—Wang Zhongsheng and Ren Tianzhi, who were more familiar with the political agitation theatre of the early *sōshi shibai* phase of *shinpa*. By 1911, when Spring Willow returned, Wang and Ren had already helped formulate the production style of emergent *wenmingxi*, which was decidedly

more political and more native. Even after the return of Spring Willow, this style remained the mainstream of *wenmingxi*.

From all reports, Wang Zhongsheng (1884?-1911) had studied medicine or law in Germany for some years and most likely went to Japan between 1906 and 1907, where he had studied *shinpa* productions (Huang 1994b, 8). In the summer of 1907, Wang started a drama school in Shanghai called Tongjian Xuexiao (Tongjian School), where he held rehearsals for his actor students. In October, he staged his version of *The Black Slave's Cry to Heaven* under the name of Chunyang She (the Spring Sun Society). The five-act script was written by Xu Xiaotian and was also based on Lin's translation of the *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. The announcement of the Spring Sun Society, published on October 15 mentioned the productions of the Spring Willow Society in Tokyo, which apparently served as its inspiration (Shen, Ma, and Wang 1907). The production was staged at Shanghai's Lyceum Theatre, which had remained unknown to the majority of Chinese in the audience. Although Wang had been briefly to Japan, his production was far from the Spring Willow's practice of following *shinpa* productions. Instead, this production was more akin to *jingju* with musical accompaniment and singing and stylized acting. The actors were all in new Western suit and dress but none used black face (Xu 1957, 18-19). The significance of this production lies in its introducing a Chinese audience to modern division of acts, realistic scenery and lighting, and the Western-style Lyceum Theatre. I will further discuss the impact of divided acts in Chapter Three. Suffice it to say here that the divided acts broke the traditional mode of novel-like structure in Chinese plays, with meandering scenes telling a story from the beginning to the end.

As I have mentioned, Lyceum Theatre and its technical capabilities had seldom been seen by the average Chinese. It was Wang's prior exposure to *shinpa* productions in Japan and his

ensuing interest and capability in technical theatre that made him choose the Lyceum for his production (Ouyang 1990, 11; Huang 1994b, 9). This was the first time a Chinese audience had seen real stage set which, “combined with the well designed lighting at the Lyceum, naturally awed the audience, which included quite a few from the theatre world” (Xu 1957, 19). This is why Zhu Shuangyun claimed in his 1914 *History of New Drama* that by the fall of 1907, “although the advantage of new drama over old drama was plainly obvious, the use of stage sets originated from Wang Zhongshen and his Spring Sun Society.... His well-designed set was so refreshing that it pioneered such practice in all theatres today” (Zhu 1914, Chunqiu (Chronicles), 6-7).

This introduction of the Lyceum to the Chinese theatre community also prompted a boom in the construction of Western-style theatres, which eventually became the standard stage for *jingju* and other traditional and local genres. The first of these, Xin Wutai (New Stage) even installed a *kabuki*-style revolving stage,³² after its owner Xia Yuerun visited Japan and, with the help of the *kabuki* actor Ichikawa Sadanji, invited Japanese designers and carpenters to Shanghai to work on the new theatre (Seidanshou 1909; Xu 1957, 20; Mei 1961, 348). Other tea houses quickly followed suit and built Western-style theatres. One of New Stage’s major competitors Xinxin Wutai (New New Stage) imported from Japan a set of devices for special effect as well as a Japanese technician to run it (Wang and Hu 1986, 201). Soon there were over a dozen new-style theatres in Shanghai. Within a decade, the teahouse-style theatre was all but extinct in Shanghai (Beijing shi yishu yanjiusuo and Shanghai yishu yanjiusuo 1990, 350; Zhang 2005, 19).

³² The revolving stage (*mawari butai*) was originally used in *kabuki* theatre in early to mid eighteenth century in order to accommodate increasingly sophisticated stage techniques. The first permanent model was installed in 1793. (Ortolani 1995, 196)

In the following spring, Wang staged another new drama *Jiayin xiaozhuan* (*Joan Haste*) with the help of a former member of the Spring Willow Society Ren Tianzhi. As far as we know, Ren had remained in Japan for a long time after the First Sino-Japanese War to the point that he had been adopted into a Japanese family and acquired a Japanese name. He later used his Japanese nationality to help his troupe get out of trouble with Qing authorities when they staged political plays before the 1911 Revolution. Some of his contemporaries surmised that his acting style showed that he had watched quite a lot of *shinpa* plays (Xu 1957, 24). He had been a member of the Spring Willow Society and, after the group's success with *The Black Slave's Cry to Heaven* in Tokyo, had suggested that they bring the production back to Shanghai. When the suggestion was rejected by Li and Zeng, he returned to Shanghai alone where he and Wang Zhongsheng staged *Joan Haste*, which was adapted from a novel of the same title by the Victorian writer of adventure novels Henry Rider Haggard, who was enjoying high popularity in China, thanks in no small part to Lin Shu, who translated seven of his novels.

The script for the *Joan Haste* production was adapted by Ren from a 1901 translation of the second half of the book by Bao Tianxiao and Yang Zilin. Like Lin Shu, Bao, who actually knew Japanese and translated several Japanese novels, did not know English and relied on his cousin Yang Zilin to first translate the novel into Chinese. He then embellished it into publishable form. Yang could not find the first half of *Joan Haste* or any information about its author but nevertheless recommended it to Bao as he found it similar to *La Dame aux Camélias*. Although Lin Shu did translate the whole novel a couple of years later, the script Ren wrote, following the Spring Willow precedence of adapting novels, was based on Bao and Yang's translation (Guo 2003, 32; Bao 1974, 172). Not much detail is known about the production itself, but Xu wrote that it was much improved from Wang's *Black Slave's Cry to Heaven*, thanks to

Ren's *shinpa* experience. He called it an epoch-making event since it was the first time Chinese audience had seen a more or less typical Western-style play. One of the *jingju* actors in the audience Xiong Wentong remarked that it was interesting if only seen "not as a show, but as real event" (Xu 1957, 24). This comment captured quite nicely the difference between theatres East and West, with one emphasizing presentation and the other mimesis. Xiong's words were meant as a polite criticism of the new drama's lack of artistry, a view that must have been held by a majority of the audience, judging from the tepid reaction to the production. A major problem was the lack of training of Wang's group of actors which Wang disbanded after *Joan Haste*.

In contrast, another production in the summer of 1909 with Wang and Lu Jingruo, then back in Shanghai for summer vacation, proved to be quite a success because of Lu's wholesale transfer of two *shinpa* productions. The first one was *Nuli (The Bondman)*, a Sinocized version of Kawakami Otojirō's adaptation of Hall Caine's spectacular melodrama *The Bondman* (1906) and the second *Meng huitou (A Sudden Turn of Heart)*, adapted from the famous *shinpa* play *Ushio (The Tide)* by Satō Kōroku (1874-1949). In time, both these plays would become *wenmingxi* favorites. I will discuss *Ushio* in Chapter Three and devote exclusive attention to *The Bondman* here since it was without doubt the focal point of the three-day performance.

The path of *The Bondman*'s stage life again testifies to the importance of personal experience and its relative arbitrariness of intercultural theatre. Originally written as a novel by Hall Caine (1853–1931) in 1890, it was set in Iceland and the Isle of Man and centered on the revenge and love of two half brothers. The highlight of the novel was the eruption of a sulphur mine that bonded the brothers together. Caine then adapted the novel into a five-act play reset in Sicily in part for a spectacular on-stage eruption of Mt. Etna. It premiered at Drury Lane on September 20, 1906 (Allen 1997, 314). The Japanese playwright and translator Matsui Shōyō

(1870-1933), who was touring London at the time together with the *kabuki* star Ichikawa Sadanji II, saw the production, learned the trick of the volcano eruption, and translated the script into Japanese (Shirakawa 1985, 476; Powell 2002, 34). When it was staged in 1909 by Kawakami Otōjiro with Fujisawa Asajirō and Ii Yōhō at Tokyo's Hongō-za in 1909, Kawakami yet again relocated the play in Japan and the Philippines, which became the site for another on-stage volcanic eruption. Taking his cues from Kawakami, Lu Jingruo also emphasized its scenic spectacle, prompting a report that “during the volcano scene, bright fireworks shot up from the mountain top of the oil-painted backdrop, dazzling the Chinese.”³³ That report, published in Tokyo, made obvious the intercultural implication of the production:

Of productions in Western and Chinese costumes, this was the first that utilized Japanese-style curtain opening, wooden clapper tapping³⁴, and curtain closing. The characters on the drop curtains were written by Chinese, but the painting was done by Japanese ceramic painters working at the local Ishigawa Company. The musical instruments were Western and were played, as was the custom, in front of the stage. The backdrop was painted by the local Mitsugashira Company and was better than those seen in Japan. The set pieces like trees, falling branches, window shades, and haze curtains were all in Japanese style and the wigs were made in Japan. In other words, the bones of this production were Western, its flesh and joints Japanese, and skin Chinese.”

Another significant first for Shanghai was that all three leads, Lu Jingruo, his brother Lu Juxuan, and Wang Zhongsheng, were familiar with *shinpa* acting. Lu Juxuan, a physician by

³³ The original of the report was published in the September 1910 issue of *Kabuki* magazine (Banbutsu Hakase 1910) and was quoted in (Nakamura 1956, 42, 2004b, 27-28).

³⁴ The striking together of two wooden blocks (*hyoushigi*), which is a tradition of Japanese theatre to mark the start of a theatrical performance.

training, was studying with his brother in Japan and had appeared in the Spring Willow production of *Cry of Injustice*. He would continue to perform with the Spring Willow Theatre later in Shanghai, while maintaining his physician practice. For this production the Lu brothers played the two half brothers, while Wang Zhongsheng played the girl of their love triangle.

Wang later went up to northern China where he staged *shinpa*-style new drama with anti-Qing sentiments in Beijing and Tianjin, where he was secretly executed for instigating rebellion right before the wave of the 1911 Revolution was to sweep the conservative north.

2.3.2. The Jinhua Tuan (Progressive Troupe)

Meantime, on the eve of the Revolution, Ren Tianzhi returned to Shanghai in 1910 to form the Jinhua Tuan (The Progressive Troupe), the first professional new drama company in China. It was going to be the most influential theatrical group in China for the next couple of years and would cast long shadows over the artistic style of the *wenmingxi*. In a way, it was a rallying point for many local new drama activists like Wang Youyou and at least one of the original Spring Willow members, Huang Nannan, who had played Shelby in *Black Slave's Cry to Heaven*. After the disbanding of the group a couple of years later, its actors became the core of *wenmingxi* companies in Shanghai, prompting Ren's acting and production styles to become a major part of *wenmingxi* artistry.

During the two years of its existence, Ren's Progressive Troupe was extremely popular. However, this popularity was built on its success in other cities down the Yangtze River like Nanjing and Wuhan—rather than Shanghai, where *jingju* still controlled both the audience and the city's Western-style theatres recently built since Wang Zhongsheng's *Black Slave's Cry to Heaven*. After the establishment of the Progressive Troupe in 1910, concern over the quality of his actors forced Ren to accept an offer to debut his company in Nanjing. Sure enough, the

troupe became a major hit with such plays like *The Storms of East Asia*, *The Bloody Straw Cape*, and *La Dame aux Camélias, New Version (Xin Chahua)*, a sequel to the *Dumas fils* play reset to the more recent time of the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905). Ren's success in Nanjing and other cities prompted him to display a banner outside the theatres that said "Ren Tianzhi *xinju*" in the convention of Japanese theatre which helped to foster the wide-spread recognition of *Tianzhi pai xinju* (Tianzhi school of new drama).



Figure 9 Stage shot of *Xin Chahua (La Dame aux Camélias, New Version)*. From *Youxi zhazhi (The Pasttime)*, 8, 1914.

This fame eventually earned the group a ticket back to Shanghai where the managers of the New New Theatre planned to use the power of *xinju* (new drama) as a competitive edge against the *jingju* productions of the New Stage, the first and dominant Western-style theatre to host *jingju* performances. But the invitation was not for pure *xinju* performances; rather, the contract was for the Progressive Troupe to perform a *xinju* play for one hour at the end of an

evening of *jingju*. A strictly-observed curfew at the time mandated the close of curtain by midnight, and this law turned out to be disastrous for the Progressive Troupe during its opening night. Tipped by managers of the rival New Stage, the *jingju* actors at New New Stage dragged their performance by padding it with additional scenes and ad-libbing during every section of their program, leaving little more than half an hour to the new drama actors. It was understandable that when the curtain fell abruptly only half an hour into the play, the audience threw banana and orange peels to the stage. After a similar incident the following night, a compromise was reached that promised roles for *jingju* actors in new drama in exchange for one guaranteed hour of performance time. Even so, an hour was hardly enough for any complete *xinju* plays, which had to be played out over several nights. After a dismal month, the Progressive Troupe was pushed out of Shanghai again and had to run tours in cities along the Yangtze River (Zhu 1914, *Chunqiu* (Chronicles), 20-21; Lin 1986, 151-53).

The Progressive Troupe contributed an impressive number of topical original scripts and adaptations from Japanese sources—both novels and *shinpa* play—to the *wenmingxi* repertoire. Inspired by early *shinpa* style of *sōshi shibai*, about half of its repertoire was devoted to the political realities of China or Eastern Asia. For example, Ren's *Dongya fengyun* (*Storms of East Asia*), also known as *An Chonggan ci Yiteng* (*Ahn Chung Gun Assassinates Itō*), was about the assassination of Japan's former prime minister Itō Hirobumi, the architect of Japan's annexation of Korea, by the Korean activist Ahn Chung Gun. One of Ren's popular plays, *Xie suoyi* (*The Bloody Straw Cape*, 1911), was adapted from a Japanese novel entitled *Ryobijin* (*Two Beauties*, 1892) by Murai Hirotoki (Iizuka 2000, 119) and his *Shangwu jian* (*Caution of Militarism*, 1911) was from a *shinpa* war play written during the Russo-Japanese war entitled *Kichūsa* (*The Demonic Lieutenant Colonel*) (Iizuka 2000, 127). This link connects Ren directly with the *shinpa*

tradition of war plays that traces all the way back to European war plays of colonial ambitions.³⁵ In addition, several of his plays depicting the 1911 Revolution, like *Huanghe Lou* (*Yellow Crane Tower*) and *Gonghe wansui* (*Long Live the Republic*), included technically challenging scenes reminiscent of *shinpa* war plays.

Apart from its repertoire, the Progressive Troupe's impact on the production style of *wenmingxi* can be measured in several other ways: First, most of their plays used scenarios instead of finished and well-rehearsed scripts. Part of the reason was the audience demand for daily change of program. Second, *muwaixi* (out-of-curtain scenes) during set changes were employed as a compromise solution for the audience accustomed to the continuous flow of action in classical theatre. These were usually short, transitional outdoor scenes. Third, the extensive usage of political speeches in certain role categories became an attractive feature at the time when revolutionary zeal was high among the audience. Theatre historians generally believe Ren had learned this feature from the *sōshi shibai* plays of early *shinpa*.

2.3.3. The Xinju Tongzhihui (New Drama Society)

In 1911, the Republican Revolution toppled the Qing Dynasty and established the Republic of China, prompting many Chinese students to return from Japan, excited to serve the new Republic. In the spring of 1912, around the same time of the Progressive Troupe debacle at the New New Stage, Lu Jingruo and some of the principals of the Spring Willow Society, including Ouyang Yuqian and Ma Jiangshi, formed Xinju Tongzhihui (The New Drama Society), which would be recognized as the only group in Shanghai that was carrying maintaining *shinpa* style in terms of its repertoire, acting style, and technical theatre.

³⁵ The first *shinpa* war play, Kawakami *Sino-Japanese War* was broadly based on two French plays *Michel Strogoff* and *La Pris de Pékin* which were, respectively, about Russia's suppression of a Tartar rebellion and the capture of Beijing by the British and French armies during the Second Opium War (1860). I will make an in-depth analysis of these and other war plays in the next chapter.

Still, like the Progressive Troupe, the New Drama Society was not able to build a foothold in Shanghai and was forced to tour in southern provinces, sometimes under other names like Shehui Jiaoyu Tuan (Social Educational Troupe) and Wenshe (The Literary Society). Gradually, they were building a steady repertoire that included some of the best scripts of *wenmingxi*. These scripts generally fell into three categories: European plays from *shinpa* like *La Tosca*, adaptations of *shinpa* classics like *Burugui* (*Hototogisu*, *The Cuckoo*) and *Shehui zhong* (*Kumo no hibiki*, *The Echo of Cloud*), and their own original scripts like *Jiating enyuan ji* (*Love and Hate in a Family*) by Lu Jingruo and *Yundong li* (*The Power of Enticement*) by Ouyang Yuqian.

During the height of *wenmingxi*'s commercial success in 1914 and 1915, the New Drama Society performed in Shanghai under the name of Chunliu Juchang (Spring Willow Theatre) as one of its major companies.

2.4. WENMINGXI IN SHANGHAI BETWEEN 1913 AND 1917

For all the new drama activities in Shanghai—from expatriate productions in the late 1800s, the missionary and Chinese school dramatics, and the *xinju* productions by Wang Zhongsheng, Ren Tianzhi, and Lu Jingruo—the king of the theatre world in Shanghai and the country at large remained *jingju*, which was arguably at the height of its glory in 1913. Yet, at the same time *wenmingxi* finally attained a measure of popular acceptance that put Western-style theatre on a competitive level. Finally, Shanghai was ready to accept this new form of theatre that relied mainly on speech, rather than singing, pantomime, and acrobatics.³⁶

³⁶ To be accurate, *wenmingxi* was not completely free of these elements, as I will discuss later. But speech was undoubtedly the most important method of communication, not, as is the case of *jingju*, one of four parallel elements: *chang* (singing), *nian* (delivery of the "speech-types"), *zuo* (acting and movement), and *da* (martial and "gymnastic skills").

All of sudden, *wenmingxi* struck a gold mine, drawing over a thousand actors to its tens of companies, that included the most commercially successful Xinmin She (The New People Society) and Minming She (The People's Voice Society), the most artistic but moderately successful Chunliu Juchang (Spring Willow Theatre), the most musical Kaiming She (The Enlightened Society) which was also the only company that toured Japan, and the first mixed-sex company Minxing She (The Prosperity Society). Several indicators in 1914 marked the height of *wenmingxi*'s power: the organization of Xinju Gonghui (Council of New Drama) and a joint production by six of the best-known companies in celebration of its inauguration; the publication of a new drama history, a collection of the scenarios of six representative plays, and three magazines dedicated to it; and the number of *wenmingxi* advertisements exceeding that of *jingju* on Shanghai's most popular newspaper several months in a row (Seto 2003a, 71).³⁷

Yet, it should also be noted that this popularity came not as the result of Ren Tianzhi's Kawakami-style motivational and patriotic plays nor the Spring Willow's European romantic plays, nor *shinpa* melodramas. While they laid the foundation and provided major talents for the boom, the so-called "*Jiayin zhongxing*" (1914 revival) was ignited by a melodrama written by a former *jingju* critic desperately trying to find jobs for his movie actors from a defunct Sino-US joint-venture studio. That playwright was Zheng Zhengqiu (1888-1935); the play was called *E jiating* (*An Evil Family*); and the company he formed with his actors was called Xinmin She (The New People Society).

³⁷ The joint production was held on May 5, 1914 with members from the following groups: Xinmin She, Minming She, Qimin She (Enlightenment Society), Xinju Tongzhihui, and Wenming Xinju Tuan (Civilized New Drama Troupe). The history is *Xinju shi* (History of New Drama) by Zhu Shuangyun. The collection of play scenarios is *Xinju kao* (New Drama Scenarios) edited by Fan Shiqu. The three new drama magazines are *Xinju zazhi* (New Drama Magazine), *Youxi zazhi* (The Pastime), *Paiyou zazhi* (The Actors' Magazine). Finally, the months in which *wenmingxi* was advertised more than *jingju* on *Shenbao*, Shanghai's largest daily, were between April and July of 1914.

2.4.1. The Xinmin She (New People Society) and The Minming She (People's Voice Society)

Although most studies of this period put heavy emphasis on the Spring Willow Theatre, sometimes to the exclusion of others, the New People and the People's Voice were in fact the two most popular groups of the time and the most responsible for the "1914 Revival" that finally put *wenmingxi* on an equal footing, however short-lived, with *jingju*.

Perhaps fitting for the cosmopolitan Shanghai at the turn of the 20th century, the beginning of the New People Society started from a failed adventure of one of China's earliest film studios that was originally created by an entrepreneurial American called Benjamin Polaski, a Russian Jewish immigrant who had made his money in the circus business in New York. The company he had created in 1909 in Shanghai was called Asia Company. Apart from importing American movies, he also made four short films, including *Xi Taihou* (*The Widowed Empress*, Beijing), *Buxing er* (*The Unfilial Son*, Shanghai), *Wapen shenyuan* (*Revealed by the Pot*, Hong Kong), and *Tou shaoya* (*Stealing the Cooked Ducks*, Hong Kong). In 1912, he sold the company's name and equipment to two American insurance businessmen in Shanghai Essler and Lehrmann. The Americans asked the help of Zhang Shichuan (1890-1953), who was to become one of China's earliest and most prolific directors, and Zheng Zhengqiu, a *jingju* critic who had seen some touring *shinpa* productions in a Japanese theatre in Shanghai. For the actual production, Zhang and Zheng and a couple others formed a company called Xinmin Gongsi (New People Studio). Through open auditions, they signed a group of sixteen *wenmingxi* actors from the inland province of Hunan and called the acting company Xinming She (The New People Society) (Li and Jubin 1996, 21-25; Leyda 1972, 10-16).

After only one month and a short movie, problems in the shipment of film from Europe put the production to a halt. After supporting the jobless actors for three months, Zheng wrote a play called *E jiating (An Evil Family)* and staged it with an expanded the New People Society that included both its original movie actors and those from other groups, including Progressive Troupe. Unlike any of the previous failed attempts by Ren and Lu in Shanghai, the play was a tremendous hit, prompting Zheng's former partners at the New People Studio to form the rival group Minming She (The People's Voice Society) by luring away some of Zheng's actors. Eventually, at the end of 1914, the two companies combined under the name of the People's Voice to form the single most powerful group of *wenmingxi*.

Several reasons account for the success of *An Evil Family*, including better audience preparedness for new drama and the maturing of *wenmingxi* actors. But the deciding factor seems to be the accessibility of play's domestic material, which was a stark departure from both Ren's revolutionary theme and Lu's adaptations of European or *shinpa* plays. This winning strategy through domestic melodrama was in fact the exact path *shinpa* took. Unlike Spring Willow's Sinicized versions of those *shinpa* classics, however, Zheng's play was native Chinese both in content and structure, thus far more accessible to the average Chinese audience.

Before any further analysis, we need to look at its tortuous scenario: When Pu Jingcheng, a clothes merchant, makes a fortune and becomes a government official, he marries a prostitute Xinmei and forgets his own family. Enraged at the news, his mother goes to Pu's house with Pu's wife, his son Yinan, and their maid Apeng (daughter of Jingcheng's neighbor Grandpa Huang). Jingcheng at first wants to chase them away and relents only after his mother threatens to sue him for disobedience. When Apeng complains of Pu's mistreatment of his family, she is tortured by Pu and Xinmei until she stops breathing. Left to die in the wilderness, she is

awakened by Yinan's weeping over her body. Yinan then leaves Apeng to the care of a village elder and returns home. Believing that Apeng is dead, Pu hires a young and fair maid called Xiaomei and seduces her with the help of her own husband and parents-in-law. Once satisfied, he asks Xinmei to accuse the maid of seducing the lord, which causes the ashamed Xiaomei to consider suicide, only to be rescued by an old attorney, who then asks Apeng's father to demand his daughter from Pu. When Pu can not threaten them away, he pays to quiet down the anger of Apeng and Xiaomei.

Meanwhile, Pu's concubine Xinmei has an affair that is discovered by Pu's mother. But Xinmei goes to Pu first to accuse his mother of intentionally corrupting her name and throws tantrums that eventually drive Pu's mother, wife and son back to their own home. Xinmei then plots to send her confidant, Mother Qian's adopted daughter Ronghua, to Pu's mother house as a runaway maid and then sues Mother Pu, together with Grandpa Huang, the old lawyer, and the village elder, for kidnapping and has them arrested. When Grandpa Huang dies in jail, his daughter joins force with Apeng and Xinmei to seek revenge. With the regretful Ronghua as their witness, they successfully persuade an imperial envoy to strip Pu of his rank and put him in prison. Xinmei elopes with his lover, only to be tortured to death by robbers. When Pu is released from prison, he regrets his past deeds but is fatally sick. Meanwhile Yinan almost loses his eyesight and only recovers through the tender care of Apeng. Mother Pu decides to have the two married to each other. On the day of their engagement, Pu, gravely ill and profoundly regretful, wails in self condemnation and dies (Zheng 1919, 1-3).

There are several conclusions we can draw from this representative and highly popular play credited with the commercial success of *wenmingxi*.³⁸

³⁸ According to Seto Hiroshi, *E Jiating* was the most produced play by the New Masses, with thirty two productions (Seto 2001, 118). It was also one of the most popular plays of the People's Voice, with seventeen productions (Seto

It seems Zheng's abandonment of political or foreign subject matter and his focus on domestic issues was a key point, especially for the female audience. Nor did he bother with the modern concept of tragedy, the hallmark of many Spring Willow pieces. Even though the scenario was marked "*beiju*"—literally "tragic play"—in Zheng's collection *One Hundred New Drama Plays*, it was "tragic" only in the sense of a typical Chinese "tragedy," where the sufferings of the good are eventually awarded and the misdeeds of the bad are punished.

In addition, the subject matter bore much greater resemblance to popular novels and *jingju* plays than *shinpa* or Western plays. It is filled with such stereotypes from these genres as the disrespectful son who abandons his mother and wife, the promiscuous concubine punished with a violent death, the elderly amateur lawyer out-scheming a corrupt official, the persistent daughter avenging or saving her parent, the loyal servant or maid who is eventually awarded, and the deus-ex-machina appearance of imperial envoys. These stereotypes remind one of such classical plays as *Pipa ji* (*Lute Song*, the disrespectful son), *Famen si* (*Famen Temple*, persistent daughter) and *Si jinshi* (*The Four Officials*, old amateur attorney, persistent daughter, imperial envoy), as well as popular novels like *Jinpingmei* (*Golden Lotus*, promiscuous concubine).

At the same time, some popular plays adapted from Japanese novels, with possible links to the West, may also have provided inspiration for the play. For example, a persistent girl who avenges the death of her brother was the theme of *wenmingxi* play *Xie suoyi* (*The Bloody Straw Cape*), first performed in Tokyo and then popularized by the Progressive Troupe, was adapted from a Japanese novel *Ryobijin* (*Two Beauties*, 1892) by Murai Hirotoke, who had studied in the US between 1884-1887 (Iizuka 2000). The plot of an evil daughter-in-law punished by violent death while running away can be found in a popular novel called *Konggulan* (*Orchard in Hollow*

2003b, 3). These numbers are quite extraordinary given the constant change in day to day programming in *wenmingxi*.

Valley, 1910). It was translated from a Japanese novel entitled *Hanaayame* (*The Wild Flower*, 1900) by Kuroiwa Ruiko (1862-1920) who had originally adapted it from an English novel (Iizuka 2005, 5). In 1914, Zheng Zhengqiu's New People Society adapted *Orchard in Hollow Valley* into a popular *wenmingxi* play, which was followed in 1924 by a movie version, again produced by Zheng (6-10).

In addition to evoking popular taste in subject matter, *An Evil Family* was constructed in a way similar to traditional theatre by telling a novel-like story with rambling scenes from the beginning to the end, and nothing hidden from view. Structurally, it had more in common with a popular form of reformed *jingju*—*liantai benxi* (plays in episodic installments), which took days to perform. *An Evil Family* is listed as *liantai shiben* (in ten episodic installments) in *One Hundred New Drama Plays*. At its first performance from September 14 to 18 of 1913, which ushered in the commercial success of *wenmingxi*, the play ran for five nights with two installments each. It eventually settled on twelve episodes that ran for three nights (Seto 2001). With the success of *An Evil Family*, these plays in installments became the staple attraction of *wenmingxi* and were staged with much greater frequency at the New People and the People's Voice, the two most successful companies of this period (Seto 2001, 2003b).

In contrast, the best-known *shinpa* melodrama usually had less than ten acts; such blockbuster hits as *Hototogisu* (*The Cuckoo*), *Konjiki Yasha* (*The Gold Demon*), and *Chikyōdai* (*Foster Sisters*) all followed a seven-act structure. Judging from the plays in *One Hundred New Drama Plays*, the same was true with most of the Spring Willow Theatre repertoire.

Dramaturgically, these plays were much closer to the common practice in Western theatre while the popular plays in episodic installments remained in the realm of classical Chinese theatre. To

the average Shanghai audience, the latter was apparently much more accessible while the former became a favorite of the more educated.

One of the byproducts of these plays in installments was the use of scenarios, as was the case of most *wenmingxi* productions of this period, with the exception of some plays in the Spring Willow repertoire. The driving force for this practice was again audience demand for different plays every night. *Jingju*, which enjoyed a rich repertoire, also featured episodic installment plays using scenarios, not scripts (Xu 1957, 62). The pressure for new plays in *wenmingxi* was exacerbated by its rather limited audience base which “included almost exclusively long term patrons who would come everyday. Therefore, even when a new play could draw a full house, the box office would tank if it were played the following night” (61).

In addition to Chinese theatre, Zheng might also have been influenced by his short stint with silent film, which had no need for dialogue.³⁹ Before the shortage of film forced the New People Studio to stop production, it had finished one short film *Nanfu nanqi* (*A Difficult Couple*), or *Dongfang huazhu* (*Wedding Night*), with Zheng’s scenario. According to Zheng’s co-director Zhang Shichuan, Zheng’s job during the shooting was “to direct the facial expressions and the body movements of the actors,” while Zhang “would direct the placing and changing of the camera” (Leyda 1972, 16). The silent nature of the film had made line accuracy redundant. And this attitude may very well have contributed to the already laissez-faire attitude towards literary values inherent in the actor-centered classical Chinese theatre, where a play (or its various versions) was linked to an actor, not the anonymous playwright.

³⁹ After *wenmingxi*, Zheng would return to an illustrious career in the movie industry.

2.4.2. The Spring Willow Theatre

With the success of the New People Society, Lu Jingruo and his fellow actors at the New Drama Society, who had been touring along the Yangtze River, were finally able to make a living performing *shinpa*-like *wenmingxi* in Shanghai. Once back in Shanghai in fall of 1913, they occupied a small theatre called Moudeli, which was away from the theatre district but had seen some good runs with the New People, which had subsequently moved on to a bigger theatre inside the theatre district. From then till early 1915 when they were again forced to tour, which would soon result in Lu's death and the group's disbandment, the group staged productions under the banner of *Chunliu juchang* (Spring Willow Theatre) and was widely acknowledged as the most artistic *wenmingxi* company.

Like other *wenmingxi* companies of this time, most of Spring Willow's less than 200 plays were scenarios (Huang 2003, 121-22). Still, its repertoire included some of the best, and most complete, scripts of all companies. In his memoir written in 1957, where he only counted eighty-one Spring Willow plays, Ouyang Yuqian divided them into the following categories: three to four short plays, one complete original script, over ten well-prepared scenarios with major dialogue and detailed scene tables, three translated scripts, eight or nine Sinicized adaptations of foreign plays (and three of them with complete scripts), eight to nine adapted plays from translated foreign novels (mostly with the Chinese version by Lin Shu), twenty to thirty plays adapted from classic and contemporary Chinese novels and scholarly sketches (*biji xiaoshuo*) (Ouyang 1985a, 39-40).

The three short plays, *Mingbuping* (*Cry of Injustice*), *Zhenjia niangjiu* (*The True and Fake Uncle*), and *Laopuo re* (*Wife Crazy*), each with a run time of roughly an hour, were comedies from France, Germany, and Japan. They were quite popular among the audience and

were staged frequently. I have already discussed *Cry of Injustice* in the section about the Spring Willow's post-Uncle Tom productions. *The True and Fake Uncle*, originally a German one-act comedy, was translated by Lu Jingruo from Japanese. It was a typical comedy of errors based on the similarity of looks between an uncle and his nephew (Zheng 1919, *Xiyang xinju* (New western plays), 22). *Wife Craze* was a two-act Japanese comedy that involved love, marriage and a lunatic ward (28). These comedies were popular additions to the overwhelming tragic tone of the Spring Willow repertoire and were usually staged as an antidote following a dramatic piece. This juxtaposition of dramatic and comic elements in one night's program was (and is) a common practice of *kabuki* and *shinpa*, which was transferred by the Spring Willow to Shanghai.

Since I will focus on literary analysis of the full-length plays in Chapter Three, I want limit the discussion on them here to a brief introduction of the plays and summary of general trends. Their one complete original script was *Jiating enyuan ji* (*Love and Hate in a Family*) by Lu Jingruo. It was about the destruction, in the hands of a prostitute, of the family of an army officer who had found his fortune during the 1911 Revolution. Having studied with Fujisawa and Tsubouchi, Lu was familiar with both *shinpa* and *shingeki* and had plans of introducing Western realism to his Shanghai audience, plans halted by his abrupt death in 1915. As the most popular play by the Spring Willow (staged roughly twenty times), as well as other companies (mostly by former Spring Willow actors), this seven-act tragedy—just like *shinpa* classics—represented the highest standard of playwriting in *wenmingxi*. Judging from their scenarios, most of what Ouyang considered as “well-prepared scenarios with major dialogue and detailed scene tables” were contemporary plays like *Love and Hate in a Family*. Like other companies, Chunliu also relied on adaptations from contemporary Chinese novels and scholarly sketches for many of their scenarios.

What set the Spring Willow apart from other companies were their *shinpa*-style productions of Western and Japanese plays. Among them, three were staged with a European style mis-en-scène: *Rexie (Hot Blood—La Tosca)*, *Chahua Nü (La Dame aux Camélias)*⁴⁰, and *Mingbuping (Cry of Injustice)*. Other translated plays were reset in China, like *Meng huitou (Ushio, The Tide)*, *Shehui zhong (Kumo no hibiki, The Echo of Clouds)*, *Burugui (Hototogisu, The Cuckoo)*, *Xin burugui (Shin Hototogisu, The Cuckoo, New Version)*, *Zimei hua (Chikyōdai, Foster Sisters)*, *Zhenjia niangjiu (The True and Fake Uncle)*, *Laopuo re (Wife Crazy)*, *Yimu xiongdi (Half Brothers—The Bondman)*, *Weisailuo (Othello)*, and *Xie suoyi (The Bloody Straw Raincoat)*. Of these, the first three followed completed scripts.

Obviously, this repertoire was built over the years from their Tokyo productions (*La Dame aux Camélias*, *La Tosca*, and *Cry of Injustice*), the early Shanghai years when Lu cooperated with local practitioners during his vacations from Japan (*The Bondman*, *The Tide*, and *The Echo of Clouds*), and the later years of the New Drama Society and Spring Willow Theatre (*The Cuckoo*, *The Cuckoo, New Version*, *Foster Sisters*, *Othello*, *The True and Fake Uncle*, and *Wife Crazy*).

In terms of the locale, all three of their productions with Western mise-en-scène, *La Dame aux Camélias*, *La Tosca*, and *Cry of Injustice* were originally staged in Tokyo where their fellow students in the audience were obviously far more prepared for Western settings. It also helped that both *shinpa* productions of *La Tosca*, one by Ii Yōhō and Takeo Wakai and the other by Sadayakko, were staged in Western mise-en-scène. Back in Shanghai, though, the factors that used to be in their favor—audience preparedness, *shinpa* precedence, lack of financial pressure—were reversed, and these challenges forced the Spring Willow to transform their European and

⁴⁰ The script of *La Dame aux Camélias* used in Chunliu Theatre in this period had eight acts and was compiled by Ouyang Yuqian. Judging from the synopsis provided in *One Hundred New Drama Plays*, it was fairly close to Dumas *fil*'s play.

shinpa plays into the Chinese environment. In addition, their two new European plays, *Othello* and *The Bondman*, were following Kawakami's production models, which had relocated them to Japan and Asia. When Lu Jingruo staged them in Shanghai, their locale became China and Asia and their characters were all Chinese. Of the two, *The Bondman* was much more successful, with eight appearances, due to its spectacular stage effect, while the production record for *Othello* remained at one.

It is intriguing to see all *shinpa* plays in the Spring Willow repertoire staged with a Chinese mise-en-scène, with varied success. One of the most popular *shinpa* classics, *The Cuckoo*, for example, was the most frequently staged play at the Spring Willow theatre, with a record of thirty productions, a third more than its next popular play, *Love and Evil in a Family*. There was even a sequel to it simply entitled *The Cuckoo, New Version* that was also adapted from Japanese and was heavily promoted by accentuating its pedigree. *The Cuckoo* was about the plight of a young woman who, suffering from pneumonia, died after being forcefully returned home by her mother-in-law when her husband was away at war. The script used was adapted by Ma Jiangshi, a Spring Willow veteran from Tokyo, who also played the female lead. Apart from its melodramatic appeal, it also had a thematic affinity to a well-known Chinese story *Kongque dongnan fei* (*Peacock Flies Southeast*) which also featured the death of a young woman after being similarly mistreated by her mother-in-law. Another contributing factor towards the play's success was the best-seller status of *The Cuckoo*'s Chinese translation as a novel. Written by Tokutomi Roka in 1898, the novel was translated into Chinese by Lin Shu in 1908 from its English version entitled *Nami-Ko* by Sakae Shioya and E. F. Edgett. In his preface to the Chinese version, Lin noted that "of the nearly sixty novels I have translated, the most tragic is *Black*

Slave's Cry to Heaven, followed by *La Dame aux Camélias* and then this book” (Tokutomi 1981, 1).

It is definitely a testament to the popularity of Lin’s translated novels that all three of these figured so prominently in Spring Willow’s repertoire. They were largely responsible for the tragic reputation of the Spring Willow repertoire. At the same time, this phenomenon also testifies to the importance of audience preparedness in intercultural theatre, both in terms of thematic affinity to their own culture and prior knowledge of a particular piece in the target culture. When both conditions were right, as in the case of *The Cuckoo*, commercial success seems inevitable.

Other *shinpa* classics, like *The Tide*, *The Echo of Clouds*, and *Foster Sister* were also successful at Spring Willow Theatre, though not at the scale of *The Cuckoo*. It is also intriguing to consider the one-time stage life of two other *shinpa* classics *Jinse yecha* (*Konjiki yasha*, *The Gold Demon*) and *Ji zhi zui* (*Onoga tsumi*, *My Crime*). The former was performed by Lu Jingruo in Japanese in 1909 and the latter in 1912 in Shanghai with Lu, Xu Banmei and Huang Nannan, a member of the original Spring Willow Society, but “the box office reception was poor” (Zhu 1914, *Chunqiu* (Chronicles), 27). Was there something too inherently “Japanese” that prevented their acceptance in China? I will attempt an in-depth analysis of these *shinpa* plays in Chapter Three.

2.4.3. Liu Yizhou, The Kaiming She (Enlightened Society), and Their Japan Tour

Kaiming She (The Enlightened Society) deserves our attention for two reasons: first it was known for its extensive use of music its productions, and secondly, because it was the only *wenmingxi* group during this period that toured Japan, thus affording us a chance to observe the

turning of the intercultural hourglass, i.e., the reaction of Japanese critics to the *shinpa*-based *wenmingxi*.

According to *History of New Drama*, the Enlightened Society was established in May of 1912 by Li Junqing and Zhu Xudong. It stood out from the very beginning because of its focus on music and dance. Judging from what is available to us, they may very well be the only *wenmingxi* group with direct Western theatrical and/or musical influence. Of the two leaders, Li Junqing, who knew English, graduated from a prestigious school in Nanjing (Xu 1957, 46; Yuhui). Zhu Xudong, who had studied in Belgium and was a professional trumpet and clarinet player in a marching band, was in charge of the band of the Enlightened Society which “was well equipped with a piano and all kinds of Western wind and string instruments” (Yuhui). He would later experiment by adding piano and violin to *jingju* accompaniment, when working with Shang Xiaoyun, one of the four greatest female impersonators of *jingju* (Huang 2001b, 253).

Xu Banmei wrote that the group stood out among others in three respects: first, they had a band, second, they were good at Western-dressed plays, and their lead female impersonator Shi Haixiao was tall and extremely good at Western female roles, and finally, they had toured in Southeastern Asia (Xu 1957, 46-47). As Li Junqing’s adopted son, Shi had studied acting, music, and dancing with Westerners in Hong Kong.⁴¹ This direct connection with Western theatre was unique among *wenmingxi* actors and explains why Shi stood out not only in his ability to sing and dance but also for his naturalistic style of acting (Qiuxing 1922a, 754). In fact, the whole company was considered the only group that was in artistic affinity with the Spring Willow Theatre. Before they embarked on a tour to Japan in late 1914, the company’s major actors were routinely invited to make guest appearances at Spring Willow Theatre.

⁴¹ This appeared in *Osaka Mainichi Shinbun* (Osaka Daily News), November 7, 1914 as part of a report of the Enlightened Society’s tour of Japan. Quoted in (Furuta 1991, 18) .



Figure 10 Shi Haixiao and Su Jisheng in *Meihua lao* by the Enlightened Society. Shi Haixiao was the best-known female impersonator of Western roles in *wenmingxi* because of his height and naturalistic style of acting. From *Jubu congkan* (Collection of Essays on Theatre).

That tour was initiated and organized by Liu Yizhou (1873-1937), also known as Liu Muduo, who, as one of the earliest Chinese students to Japan, graduated from Waseda University with a degree in physics and chemistry. A fan of *jingju* and *handiao*, a local theatrical form of his native Hubei province, Liu was inspired by the Spring Willow productions of *Black Slave's Cry to Heaven* and *Hot Blood*. After returning to Beijing, he staged some *shinpa*-style plays in

together with Wang Zhongsheng, who had come up to the north after his Shanghai productions of *Black Slave's Cry to Heaven* and *Joan Haste*. During the 1911 Revolution, Liu was credited for capturing Dengzhou city in Shangdong province and was briefly rewarded its governor. In 1913, while acting in a *jingju* company in Shanghai, he fled to Japan in order to escape political persecution during the post-Revolution backlash.

While in Japan, he managed to sign a contract with the powerful agency Shōchiku, “by far the biggest single entrepreneurial force in Japanese entertainment” (Powell 2002, 21), which allowed him to perform touring shows in Osaka and Tokyo. A 47cm x 63 cm poster for his Osaka production, uncovered at the Waseda University’s Tsubouchi Shōyō Memorial Museum, advertised his production as “*Zhonghua Muduo Xinju*” (Chinese Muduo New Drama). The poster includes notes by Shōchiku and Liu about the purpose of the production, the program, the cast, the price, as well as drawings of the production. The note by Shōchiku promotes Liu as a great hero of the Chinese revolution and a pillar of its arts circle. It goes on to explain that the production was to support Liu and his followers as political refugees. In his note, Liu calls his troupe Guanguan Xinju Tongzhihui (Revive China New Drama Society) and explains that he has invited accomplished actors from China to stage plays in order to repay the generosity of friends at Shōchiku (Furuta 1991, 17).

The actors he invited turned out to be those of the Enlightened Society. The groups played at Osaka’s Naka-za and Tokyo’s Hongō-za in November and December of 1914 to enthusiastic reviews from the press. As someone who knew both Japanese and Chinese theatres, Liu arranged the program as an intentional blend of classic Chinese theatre, *wengmingxi*, *shingeki*-like realistic play, and Western musical. The program at Osaka included four plays: *Baozi tou* (*Leopard Head*), a four-act “*jidaigekii*” (period play), a traditional *jingju* piece from

the classic novel of outlaws *Shuihu zhuan* (*The Water Margin*); the prison act of Leo Tolstoy's *Resurrection* which, known as *Fukkuka* in Japan, was already a *shingeki* hit; *Xitaihou* (*Empress Dowager*), a two-act about late Qing court intrigues; and an act of a Western opera *Lubinfang* (*Rūbinhō*), most likely *Lucia di Lammermoor* by Gaetano Donizetti. The Tokyo programs eliminated the last two plays, but expanded *Resurrection* by adding an act in Siberia, plus “a Chinese opera” and *La Dame aux Camélias*.

Of these plays, *Leopard Head* was adapted from a famous *jingju* play about the eventual rebellion, after being framed and exiled, of a Song-Dynasty general, nicknamed Leopard Head. The story came from one of the four best-known classic Chinese novels, *The Water Margin*, which had long been translated into Japanese. Thanks to the musical talents of the Enlightened Society, plus some additional help,⁴² Liu, who himself had acted in a *jingju* company in Shanghai, was able to stage certain acts in *jingju* style, complete with musical accompaniment and singing. In the final scene in which the lonely general enters in snow, carrying a wine gourd and lamenting his fate at becoming a forage guard, Liu took full advantage of the *kabuki hanamichi* (flower bridge), a footbridge that leads through the audience for important entrances and exits, and delivered a monologue “in the manner of a famous Japanese *kabuki* actor” (Mei 1961, 365).

The choice of *Resurrection* was obviously due to the momentous popularity of its *shingeki* version by Shimamura Hōgetsu's Geijutsu-za (Art Theatre) featuring Matsui Sumako (1886-1919). Since its premiere in March of 1914 in Tokyo's Imperial Theatre, the production had become a pop-cultural phenomenon, thanks to Matsui's singing of Katusha's song which “ensured the commercial success of this production, both in Tokyo and later on tour throughout

⁴² According to Mei Lanfang, who learned about Liu's performances during his own tour to Japan in 1919, the drummer for the show was a Chinese professor who was then teaching at a Korean University. See (Mei 1961, 364).

Japan and abroad (to Taiwan and Manchuria)... Everyone who saw the show talked about the song and whistled or sang it” (Powell 2002, 31-32). Liu had seen it at Osaka’s Naniwa-za in April of 1914, as possibly did members of the Enlightened Society, when they were rehearsing in Kobe that fall (Huang 2001b, 279). Liu translated two acts from Shimamura’s script, and the production more or less followed the Art Theatre model. Thanks to both the Katusha boom and talents of the Enlightened actors, *Resurrection* became the most successful play of their program, receiving generous reviews in both Osaka and Tokyo from theatre critics, including Ihara Seiseien, the famous critic and theatre scholar who had given his generous support to the Spring Willow’s *Black Slave’s Cry to Heaven* several years earlier.

Inevitably, many of these reviews sought to compare the Japanese and Chinese productions, and the criterion used betrayed a typical *shingeki* bias which was based on proximity to a presumed Western ideal. In comparing Shi Haixiao and Matsui Sumako, for example, many preferred the tall (male) and Hong Kong-trained Shi to the short Matsui with a “well-endowed body” (Kano 2001, 222). One reviewer praised Shi’s Katusha as “not only having a good figure and a voice utterly similar to a Western woman, but also good at singing.”⁴³ Ihara Seiseien believed the Chinese *Resurrection* “was closer to Westerners in attitude and expression than was seen at the Art Theatre.”⁴⁴ One reviewer felt Shi’s singing was better than Matsui’s and showed “great musical accomplishment,” while another believed Shi’s Katusha was milder and more sentimental and “better at getting the audience sympathy.”⁴⁵ Apart from judging who was a better singer and more “Western,” these assessments were also based on

⁴³ Nakauchi, Choji. 1914. "Hongo-za shinageki" (Chinese Theatre at Hongo-za). *Yorozu Choho*, December 7. Quoted in (Furuta 1991, 22).

⁴⁴ Ihara, Seiseien. 1914. "Hongo-za no Shinageki" (Chinese Theatre at Hongo-za). *Miyako Shinbun*, December 8. Quoted in (Furuta 1991, 22).

⁴⁵ The first quote was from *Osaka hibi shibun*, November 7, 1914. Quoted in (Furuta 1991, 19) The second quote was from *Shin shosetsu*, 1915, Vol.1. Quoted in (Furuta 1991, 23).

comparing who was more “feminine,” a question often at the heart of discussions on female impersonators of *shinpa* and *wenmingxi*, where gender bias was definitely at play coming from the all-male critics. I will devote more analysis to this issue in Chapter Four.

The third play, *Empress Dowager*, was the subject of the most popular *wenmingxi* installment play in Shanghai, which sometimes ran as long as thirty-two episodes and lasted eight nights (Seto 2003b, 21). In comparison, Liu’s script had only two acts and four scenes and was based on the memoir of a lady-in-waiting of the Qing court. It was being serialized in *Osaka Daily News* when Liu arrived at the city. The dramaturgical contrast between Liu’s and the *wenmingxi* version was quite stark and pointed to both the *shingeki* influence in Liu and the importance of the target audience in intercultural theatre. Knowing his Japanese audience and the power of naturalist *shingeki*, Liu obviously had no intention of following the rambling scenarios of commercial *wenmingxi*.

Lubinfang (Rūbinhō) was marked as a famous Scottish opera. Our knowledge about it comes from the program and reviews in Osaka newspapers, which described a vibrant wedding scene: “As the curtain opened, there was performance by the piano, an orchestra, and a chorus, followed by dancing. It was very Western indeed” (Furuta 1991, 18). On the program, the major characters were marked as the bride (played by Shi Haixiao), the bridegroom (by Zhu Xiaoyin), and a viscount (by Su Jisheng) (17). Judging from the description, it seems what they performed was the wedding scene from Gaetano Donizetti’s opera *Lucia di Lammermoor*,⁴⁶ based on Sir Walter Scott’s historical novel *The Bride of Lammermoor*. The opera is about a feud between two Scottish families, the Ashtons and the Ravenswoods. The heroine Lucia Ashton is in love with her family’s archenemy Edgardo of Ravenswoods. For political reasons, her brother Enrico forces Lucia to marry the powerful Lord Arturo Bucklaw. After the wedding ceremony, Lucia

⁴⁶ I would like to thank Dr. Thomas Rimer for suggesting the possible connection.

goes mad, kills the groom, and dies. When Edgardo hears the news of her death, he also stabs himself.

The wedding scene appears in Act 2, Scene 2 of the opera. It opens with the chorus dancing and singing “Full of great joy for you / all gather here together / for you we see dawning anew / the day of hope” (Donizetti and Cammarano 2002, 43). As the ceremony proceeds and Lucia is tricked into signing the marriage contract, Edgardo crashes into the ceremony and denounces Lucia for abandoning their vow. In a famous sextet that starts with Edgardo’s line “*Chi mi frena in tal momento?*,” the major players react to the unexpected turn of events. In 1908, Victor Record released a four-minute single-sided recording of the sextet, featuring some of the best-known singers of the time including Enrico Caruso. The record was best-known as the “Seven-Dollar Sextet” because of its astonishing price of seven dollars, which inevitably caused renewed interest in the opera and particularly the wedding scene. Given the Enlightened Society’s connection with Western music in Shanghai and Hong Kong, it seems likely this boom led to the group’s staging of the scene in Japan.

After the Tokyo production, the Enlightened Society and Liu returned to China where the troupe continued performing *Resurrection* with a fair amount of frequency, making it the most tangible legacy of this intercultural exchange.

2.4.4. The Decline and Influence of *Wenmingxi*

After Lu Jingruo died in 1915, the New Drama Society, as a group that had been carrying the banner of the Spring Willow Society, was disbanded, and its actors were either absorbed by other groups or retired from stage. By 1917, the over-commercialized *wenmingxi* was plagued with poor quality of scripts and production as well as bad reputation of actors many of whom

were engulfed with problems of drugs and sex. To many, ‘*wenmingxi*’ had become a bad name and ‘new dramatist’ a target of ridicule” (Guo 2003, 59).

While most *wenmingxi* participants left theatre, a few continued to find ways to bring Western-style theatre to China. Ouyang Yuqian, who would enjoy a decade-long fame as a *jingju* actor, joined forces again in the late 1920s with the realism-based *huaju* movement. Wang Youyou, a major actor in both early student dramatics and commercial *wenmingxi*, would mount a failed attempt upon a genuine *Mrs. Warren’s Profession* in 1920. Chen Dabei, one of the top female impersonators of *wenmingxi*, led an amateur drama (*aimei ju*) movement in an effort to break away from the commercial *wenmingxi*.

Still, *wenmingxi* lived on as part of the popular entertainment scene in Shanghai, sometimes still called *wenmingxi* but later more often in the form of *tongsu huaju* (popular spoken drama). Another local theatrical form, *huajixi*, a type of farce, also came from *wenmingxi* both in terms of actors and repertoire. Still others turned to the budding film industry which liberally absorbed *wenmingxi* actors and repertoire. Zheng Zhengqiu returned to the same studio where he and Zhang Shichuan produced many movies based on *wenmingxi* plays.

3. CHAPTER TWO: ASPIRATION FOR A NATIONAL THEATRE

Meiji era Japan (1868-1912) and late Qing dynasty (ending in 1911) China saw some of the most tumultuous times in the history of East Asia with two major regional wars sandwiched between Japan's successful Meiji Restoration (1868) and China's overthrow of the Manchu government in the 1911 Revolution. The first war was the Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895), which resulted in China's loss of influence in Korea and ceding control of Taiwan and a large portion of eastern Manchuria to Japan. The second was Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905), which ended with Japan's capture of Port of Arthur in Manchuria. As a result, the center of regional power shifted from China to Japan.

In the theatre, this transformation corresponded with the rise of *shinpa* and *wenmingxi*. In fact, their emergence was directly related to the modernization process of the two countries and can be traced to their initial official encounters with Western theatre in the 1870s. Between 1871 and 1873, Japan sent to the US and Europe a large-scale diplomatic mission known as the Iwakura Embassy, hoping to renegotiate unfavorable treaties and discover the secret of Western power. Treated to theatre performances as official entertainment, the Japanese delegates were surprised to discover the high status theatre enjoyed in the West. This prompted the Meiji government to believe that in order to “impress the Westerners on their own terms,” “[i]n Japan too the theatre would have to become a place where the elite gathered for entertainment. Japanese theatre had to become respectable” (Powell 2002, 6). As a result, government-sanctioned theatrical reform not only modernized traditional theatre but also gave rise to Western-style theatres like *shinpa*.

In China, the path of change was much more convoluted, even though it began at the same starting point. The earliest Chinese diplomats and a few other travelers to Western countries were impressed by the grandeur of the theatre buildings, technically dazzling

productions, and the high social standing of theatre and actors. When Prime Minister Li Hongzhang was invited to a play by a theatre owner in London in 1896, his attaché Cai Erkang hastened to add that “in English custom, performers were artists [*yishi*], not the lowly actors [*youling*] in China. That was why a theatre owner could socialize with high-ranking officials” (Cai 1986, 151). Even Wang Tao, one of the most open-minded late Qing scholars and translators, was perplexed to find that “while studying acting in China is the choice of the prodigal son, in Western countries it is done by school students who are praised by everyone. Nobody has taken issue with it, which is hard to understand” (Wang 1985, 144).

Yet, internal politics and a mentality of “Chinese learning for essence, Western learning for use” (*Zhongxue wei ti, xixue wei yong*) effectively confined China’s scope of Westernization to technology. Unlike their Japanese counterpart, Chinese authorities never contemplated the possibility of making theatre the face of modernization. Nor did any observation of the nationalist potential of European theatre translate into theatrical practice. As was the case in many other areas, this recognition of theatre’s capability of nation building was only made possible through witnessing Japan’s success by Chinese political exiles and students in Japan a quarter century later in the early 1900s.

3.1. CALLS FOR THEATRICAL REFORM IN LATE QING

The Paris Opera is commonly acknowledged as the greatest theatre in the world. Its grandeur and majesty is second to none. Anyone who visits Paris will be asked if they have seen the Opera—it is proudly shown off to visitors... The state provides an annual endowment of eight hundred thousand francs, giving it a solid financial foundation. (Li 1985, 478-49) – Li Shuchang, 1878

After the Franco-Prussian War and the ensuing civil disturbance, Parisian palaces were all brought to ruins. Shortly after the chaos, the Opera House was built with a cost of fifty million francs. It still enjoys an annual national endowment of eight hundred thousand francs. Last year, a new and direct boulevard was opened to facilitate access and capacity, which was a grand feat indeed. (Guo 1984, 566) – Guo Songtao, 1878

On the way back, [we] saw a great theatre whose grandeur exceeded that of the royal palace. After their defeat by the Germans, the French started building the grand theatre as soon as the Germans retreated. It was supported through public fundraising with the help of state tax relief which was aimed at inspiring depressed morale. (Zeng 1985, 164) – Zeng Jize, 1879

This reporter has heard that when defeated by Germany, France had to negotiate peace, pay indemnities, concede land, and reduce their army. Their misery was no less than what has befallen our country at the present. When a new policy was short of financial support, the parliament devised a plan to raise fund and inspire the people. They first built a grand theatre in Paris which was devoted to staging the Franco-Prussian War by depicting the misery of the French being killed, bleeding, beheaded, having their arms broken, chest pierced, and brain smashed... This paved the way for new policies which, through national unity, easily restored the country's prestige. That is why France remains a European power. The contribution of theatre was great indeed! (Anonymous (Ou Jujia) 1960, 67-68) –Ou Jujia, 1903

When France was defeated by Germany, the French built a theatre in Paris where they staged the misery of the German invasion into the capital. As a result, France was revitalized. (Tianlusheng (Wang Zhonglin) 1960, 57) –Wang Zhonglin, 1908

These five paragraphs all alluded to the construction of the Paris Opera after France's defeat in the Franco-Prussian War (1870-1871). The first three were found in the diaries of Li Shuchang, Guo Songtao and Zeng Jize, who were the earliest Chinese diplomats to the Paris in the late 1870s; the third was written in 1903 by Ou Julia, a member of the Chinese exiles who had fled to Japan after the abortive 1898 Constitutional Reform; and the last was by Wang Zhonglin, an avid proponent of theatrical reform in Shanghai in 1908.

It is truly amazing to see this three-decade long fascination with the Paris Opera House by the Chinese diplomats and scholars and their identification of the theatre as a site of theatre's potential for nation building. One should note that, with the exception of the first quote by Li Shuchang, these observations were factually inaccurate about the occasion of Paris Opera's construction, since it was begun long before the Franco-Prussian War. Commissioned by Napoleon III in 1857 as part of a grand Parisian reconstruction project, its construction was started in 1861 but was delayed by the Franco-Prussian war a decade later, the ensuing occupation and the Paris Commune as well as the discovery of an underground lake. It was eventually completed in 1874, only a couple of years after the war, which may partially explain the connection made between the theatre and the war. Li Shuchang, a counselor in the Chinese embassy in France, was the only one who was correct regarding the actual construction and, tellingly, the only one who did not make the connection to the war.

While it is impossible to determine how the other two diplomats Guo Songtao and Zeng Jizeng, the first and second Chinese ambassadors to France, obtained their information, they

might have linked the theatre with panorama paintings of the war that were displayed in a rotunda near the Champs-Élysées. Zeng Jize, for example, discussed the rotunda right after his description of the Paris Opera:

They also raised a large sum of funding to build a rotunda and painted pictures in it that displayed humiliating and destitute scenes of the French during their defeat so as to stimulate people's heroic will for revenge. Although it seemed like a game, the implication was profound. I heard both these two projects were strategically devised by the government of the time (Zeng 1985, 164).

In 1878, Guo Songtao was the China's first ambassador to the West, in charge of embassies in both Britain and France. Known for his open-mindedness to the West, Guo recorded in detail his visit to the panorama (translated as *baluolama*) with Li Shuchang and others from the embassy the day after his theatre experience at Paris Opera:

Together with Li Danya, Li Chunzai⁴⁷, and Lian Chunqing, went to the panorama. It was a rotunda with the events of the German attack of Paris painted on all sides. The bottom showed people running away hauling their personal property at the beginning of the siege.... In the center there was a stair winding up to the ceiling of the rotunda. The paintings were on the side walls. Looking out, tens and hundreds of miles were the ruins after the siege: barely any houses left; dozens of bonfires around; and scattered soldiers in groups of several or dozens moving artillery or protecting armor. It was impossible to tell these were paintings. This is because the ceiling was made of glass, allowing light to penetrate the outer layer and shoot downward, reflecting on the paintings in accordance

⁴⁷ Li Shuchang.

with perspective. The word panorama means “painting all around”.... This painting was intended to remind the people not to forget their humiliation. (Guo 1984, 567)

Li Shuchang also recorded the same rotunda in a section right before his account of the Paris Opera. Given the fact that all three diplomats recorded Paris Opera and the rotunda at Champs-Élysées in adjoining passages, it seems understandable that two of them assigned the same nationalist intentions to both buildings. It seems also possible that this was exactly the impression their French hosts preferred to instill in them, who themselves may very well have believed the artificially-constructed connection of these two national monuments.

The panorama Guo and Li visited was most likely *The Siege of Paris* by Henri Felix Emmanuel Philippoteaux (1815-1884) which originally went on display in 1873. It was such a hit at the time that the shares of the company that owned the panorama went up 100 to 800 francs in just a few days (Eekelen 1966, 20). This success was largely responsible for “the so-called panorama ‘revival’ of the late nineteenth century” (Miller 1996, 55). As pointed out by Angela L. Miller and borne out by the descriptions of Guo and Li, this wave of interest in the panorama, also known as cyclorama, was in large part the result of technical advances in painting and display, which created an effect that can very well be considered as “a significant antecedent of the cinema.” With a stationary subject “occupying a fixed position in space with respect to the moving image” and techniques that provided “often striking illusionism,” these cycloramas often exhumed a “truth-telling authority” by “providing the mass audience with an experience that was “shaped by a substitute reality presented with the revelatory force of the real” (ibid). Politically, *The Siege of Paris* and its emulators also served, in the words of Petra Halkes, “to engender a nineteenth-century transcendental idea of unity” where “the more universal aesthetic, contemplative and nationalistic values became a consideration” (Halkes 1999, 90).

Obviously, all three diplomats were deeply impressed with nationalist potential of the art, an insight which was nevertheless decades ahead of the times. Guo Songtao's career as China's first ambassador to Europe had lasted only three years when his lieutenant Liu Xihong succeeded in persuading Beijing to bring Guo home, effectively ending his career. As Guo's successor, Zeng Jize managed to stay in Europe for eight years, but still was unable to affect much ideological change once he was back in China.⁴⁸

In contrast, Japanese officials from the Iwakura Mission and subsequent students who studied in the US and Europe were determined to learn from the West and make Japanese theatre the face of a modern Japan to be seen by the West as a "civilized society." This is the reason why in 1886, the Theatre Reformation Council (*Engeki Kayryō-kai*) was formed with the following goals:

1. To reform the evil conventions of hitherto existing theatre and cause the realization of good theatre.
2. To cause the writing of plays for the theatre to be an honorable profession.
3. To build a properly constructed auditorium which will be used for theatre performances, music concerts, song recitals, etc. (Powell 2002, 10)

In the following year, the emperor and the empress watched a *kabuki* play for the first time, thus further elevating the theatre to a status it had never enjoyed before, namely as a tool of social reform as well as a cheerleader of Japan's modernization and militarization. By 1903, when Ōtsuma Tokuji wrote yet again about the Paris Opera, Japan's first modern theatrical form *shinpa* had already ridden the wave of nationalism to a position that briefly rivaled *kabuki*.

⁴⁸ See the introductions by Zhong Shuhe to the journals of Guo and Zeng (Guo 1984, 1-58; Zeng 1985, 11-45).

Politically, what transpired in the quarter century between the diaries of Guo, Li, and Zeng in the 1870s and the Ou's article in 1903 was more Chinese military and diplomatic defeat by Western powers, Japan's rise as a power house of the East, and an aborted Meiji-like Constitutional Reform Movement in China in 1898. That defeat brought China's principal proponents of constitutional monarchy Kang Youwei (1858-1927), Liang Qichao (1873-1929), and Ou Julia (1870-1911), etc. to Japan as political exiles. For over a decade afterwards, Japan served both as their inspiration and base of operations in their advocacy for political and cultural—including theatrical—reform. Their voices were mostly carried out through the two publications edited by Liang—*Qingyi bao* (*Public Opinion*) and *Xinmin congkan* (*New People Miscellany*), which were published in Yokohama but distributed throughout China.

This long exile in Japan provided the group with a chance to study Japan's success in modernization. Liang Qichao was especially impressed with the “thousands of efficacious books translated” by Japanese intellectuals who were “widely seeking knowledge from the greater world” (Liang 1899a, 73). He noted: “Since living in Japan, I have widely collected and read Japanese books. It was like hiking on a mountain road where I was busily absorbing everything. The experience has altered my mind and made my thought and speech completely different from before” (Liang 1899b, 3).

This change will make Liang one of the most prominent proponents for Japanese-style Westernization in late Qing. It also made him the first to recognize the educational value of popular entertainment like novels and theatre. “It was Liang Qichao who transformed the traditional demand of ‘literature as a vehicle of the way [*wenyi zaidao*]' into a modern enlightenment philosophy, thus pioneering the unification of traditional art and modern democratic political ideology” (Fu 2006). In his 1902 essay “Lun xiaoshuo yu qunzhi zhi

guanxi" (Popular Literature in Relation to the Masses),⁴⁹ Liang attributed four powers to popular literature: *xun*, *jin*, *ci*, and *ti* (to permeate, to immerse, to shock, and to transcend), which could “be used to change and mold the world” (Liang 1999, 111). According to Liang:

The clergy use them to help establish religious institutions, and politicians use them to help organize political parties. If a man of letters enjoys one of the four powers, he is a master. If he possesses all four powers, he is a god. Putting the four powers to good use, the world will be a blissful place for millions of people; putting the four powers to evil use, the curse will last tens of thousands of years. Nothing possesses the four powers like popular literature does, which is to be loved and feared at the same time! (Liang 1999, 111)

Liang’s notion of the power of theatre was elaborated by Ou Jujia in the following year in an essay called “Guan juji” (Theatre Report, 1903), out of which the fourth quote on Paris Opera was selected. As a prominent member of exile constitutionalists, Ou had served as assistant editor of Liang’s *Public Opinion* and had recently been exiled to San Francisco by the group’s leader, Kang Youwei, for his attempt to form a coalition with the radical revolutionary Sun Yat-sen (Liang was banished to Honolulu for the same offence). His article on the nationalist potential of theatre was published in the constitutionalists’ newspaper in San Francisco that he was editing. Apart from the example of Paris Opera, Ou also cited Japanese theatre’s staging of Meiji Restoration as further proof of the power of theatre:

⁴⁹ Here, I agree with the essay’s English translator Faye Chunfang Fei who translated the word *xiaoshuo* (novel) in the original title into “popular literature” since it “actually refers to all popular literary and performative genres, including the vernacular novel and drama. The word’s closest equivalent today would probably be mass media” (Liang 1999, 109, n1).

This reporter has also visited Japan where the plays staged were usually those depicting events at the beginning of the Restoration.... While they were watching, the Japanese would weep, clutch their fists, put their hands to their forehead, shout, and whisper, all exclaiming: “What we have today is because of the sacrifice by martyrs of the previous generation. The only way we can repay them is by making our country the Japan of the world.” Sitting beside them, this reporter silently asked himself: “can any play be as efficient as this one in stimulating the patriotic spirit of the people? It is more powerful than tens of thousands of lecterns! It is more powerful than tens of thousands of newspapers! (Anonymous (Ou Jujia) 1960, 67-68)

While Liang and Ou were forced to advocate their call for theatrical reform from overseas, those who had returned from Japan were eager to follow them inside China. One of them was Chen Qubing (1874-1933) who, together with a well-known *jingju* actor Wang Xiaonong (1858-1918) published a magazine in 1904 called *Ershi shiji dawutai (The 20th-Century Grand Stage)*. Although it only managed to publish two issues, the magazine occupies a special place in late Qing theatrical reform because of an article Chen wrote, as well as the magazine’s opening remarks by Chen’s friend Liu Yazhi (1887-1958). The latter is often considered a manifesto of revolutionary theatre because of its radical tone and advocacy for having “actors dressed up as foreign nationals to act out their histories: The French Revolution, American Independence, the glory of the unification of Italy and independence of Greece, and the misery in occupied India and Poland. If we can impress all this on our countrymen, they are bound to be inspired” (Liu 1999, 113).

By 1908, when Wang Zhongqi (1880-1913), a well-known anti-Qing writer and essayist, again wrote about Paris Opera in his “Juchang zhi jiaoyu” (Theatre as Education), reformed

jingju was already part of Shanghai's theatrical scene and Wang Zhongsheng had already staged *Black Slave's Cry to Heaven* in the Lyceum Theatre. Wang Zhongqi came closest to advocating theatre as a nation-builder when he reiterated the power of theatre as instilling in its audience a "state mentality" (*guojia sixiang*), a notion originally put forth by Liang Qichao in his 1902 essay on modern citizenship "Xinmin shuo" (On Renewing the People) which "came to be seen as a defining moment in the reappraisal of the Chinese state and the Chinese world view under the impact of Western ideas" (Harris 2002, 185). As a frequent point of reference by other scholars in late Qing, Liang's essay advocated forging a cohesive nationalism built on a strong sense of the state or state mentality in order to salvage China from the kind of demise that had befallen states like Korea (Liang 1936, 15-21). Wang Zhongqi sees the efficacy of theatre exactly in this context:

In order to instill a state mentality, the spread of popular education should be the foremost choice. Yet, the power of a thriving educational system can only reach the middle and upper layers of the society, and will not be felt by the lower depth of the society. The only way to make everybody understand and be moved by this state mentality is theatre. Therefore, theatre is a supplement for schools (Tianlusheng (Wang Zhonglin) 1960, 57) .

For the most part, these articles on theatrical reform were aimed at traditional theatres like *jingju*, which indeed went through a period of reform as evidenced by *shizhuang xinxi* (new drama with modern clothes) in Shanghai. At the same time, they also inspired amateur actors like those of the Spring Willow Society. The by-laws of Spring Willow's Theatre Department were based on Liang Qichao's argument of the potential of popular entertainment:

A word from newspapers and magazines becomes public opinion within the same day. It is swift in affecting the mood of a society but ineffectual to the illiterate. To supplement this deficiency, speech, pictures, and slides (a type of film that is popular these days) may be used. Yet, although speech uses sound, it contains no image; although pictures use images, they are soundless. The only genre that combines both sound and image and can draw a big following is theatre. (Chunliu She 1960, 635)

Likewise, when Wang Zhongsheng formed the Spring Sun Society in October of 1907 before his production of *Black Slave's Cry to Heaven* in Shanghai, he hoped to harness the power of theatre to “wake up the sleeping lion” (Shen, Ma, and Wang 1907, 8). Echoing the Spring Willow’s theory about the efficacy of theatre but attributing it to Japanese scholars, Wang cited printing, speech, and theatre as the three tools of social enlightenment with only theatre suitable for the lower stratus of the society. In a sign of the popularity of Spencerian Darwinism, Wang also quoted Spencer’s theory of five activities—self preservation, performance of occupations, child-rearing, social and political participation, and recreation and leisure—as proof of theatre’s importance as one of the essential needs of life.

Another similar, but more radical, declaration is found in Liu Yizhou’s announcement of his Liqun She (Inspire the Masses Society). Before his revolutionary adventures in Shandong and theatrical tour to Japan, Liu started performing new theatre after his return from Japan around 1908. He formed the Inspire the Masses Society in the northeastern city of Dalian and announced in the *sōshi shibai* manner: “Until our country is strong, I will not close my mouth.... Those who know me should seek patriotic and enlightening ways in ballads and tunes. If so, then I am not alone” (Liu 1922, 386).

It was definitely a time of action for Liu and many other theatre practitioners both before and during the 1911 Revolution. Apart from Liu's role in helping capture the city of Dengzhou in Shandong province, actors of both new and traditional theatres in Shanghai were instrumental in the Republican victory in the city (Mei 1961, 345-55). A member of Ren Tianzhi's Progressive Troupe, Qian Fengxin, was killed by a stray bullet while patrolling on the Huangpu River (Zhu 1914, 17-18). Perhaps the most significant casualty to *wenmingxi* was Wang Zhongsheng's capture and subsequent execution as a revolutionary instigator in Tianjin in September of 1911. According to Mei Lanfang, "back then, there was always a portrait of Zhongsheng hanging at the backstage of theatres specialized in *wenmingxi*, a testament to his immense influence" (Mei 1961, 360).

While these acts foregrounded the revolutionary zeal of theatre practitioners of the time, it is perhaps more intriguing to trace the paths through which nationalist plays, themes, and techniques found their ways from European theatre to *wenmingxi*, oftentimes through the help of *shinpa*.

3.2. THEATRE FOR THE EMPIRE AND REPUBLIC—WAR PLAYS IN *SHINPA* AND EARLY *WENMINGXI*

3.2.1. *Shinpa* War Plays

Fittingly, the event that elevated *shinpa* to national recognition was none other than Japan's first modern war—the 1894 Sino-Japanese War. In August of that year, Kawakami Otōjirō and his *shinpa* theatre managed a coup as the only theatre permitted to stage a play about the war. This was because the censors believed that as a relatively realistic theatre with educated

actors, *shinpa* would appropriately “inspire the military with its valor and excitement”.⁵⁰ The play, *Sōzetsu kaizetsu Nisshin Sensō* (*The Sublime, the Delightful Sino-Japanese War*), became a remarkable hit among the audience who believed they were witnessing truthful reports of realistic battle scenes. The truth of the matter, however, was that the production had nothing to do with the war itself and was instead based on two French plays Kawakami had seen in Paris the previous year—*La Prise de Pékin* (*The Capture of Beijing*, 1861) by Adolphe d’Ennery and *Michel Strogoff* (1880) by Jules Verne and d’Ennery (Matsumoto 1980, 182-84).

Both were war plays. The former was about the capture of Beijing by the French and British armies during the Second Opium War (1856-1860). The latter portrays the bravery of Michel Strogoff, a Russian officer during an imaginary Tartar invasion of Siberia. *Michel Strogoff* was originally written as a novel by Verne in 1876 and adapted for stage in 1880 by the prolific playwright and frequent Verne collaborator Adolphe d’Ennery. The novel entertained its readers with “an ideal hero and a charming heroine; a detestable villain and a seductive 'vamp'; melodramatic situations; exotic scenery and costumes; a spectacular display of Oriental dancers and Tartar warriors; mother-love and the chiming of wedding-bells” (Evans 1966, 77-78). D’Ennery’s play version “added further attractions, including a performance by the Russian Ballet and a torchlight tattoo by the Czar’s crack troops”(78). Dubbed a *pièce à grand spectacle* in five acts, it was written between 1876 and 1880 with music composed by Alexandre Artus and Georges Guilhaud. It premiered on November 17, 1880 at Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris and went on to become “a sort of touchstone whereby other achievements could be judged, so that for some time the highest commendation of anything was expressed in the simple words 'It’s Strogoff!’” (78) In Paris alone, it was staged more than 2500 times between 1880 and 1939 and its poster stayed up outside Théâtre du Châtelet throughout these years.

⁵⁰ *Miyako Shimbun* August 16, 1894. Reprinted in (Shirakawa 1985, 160).

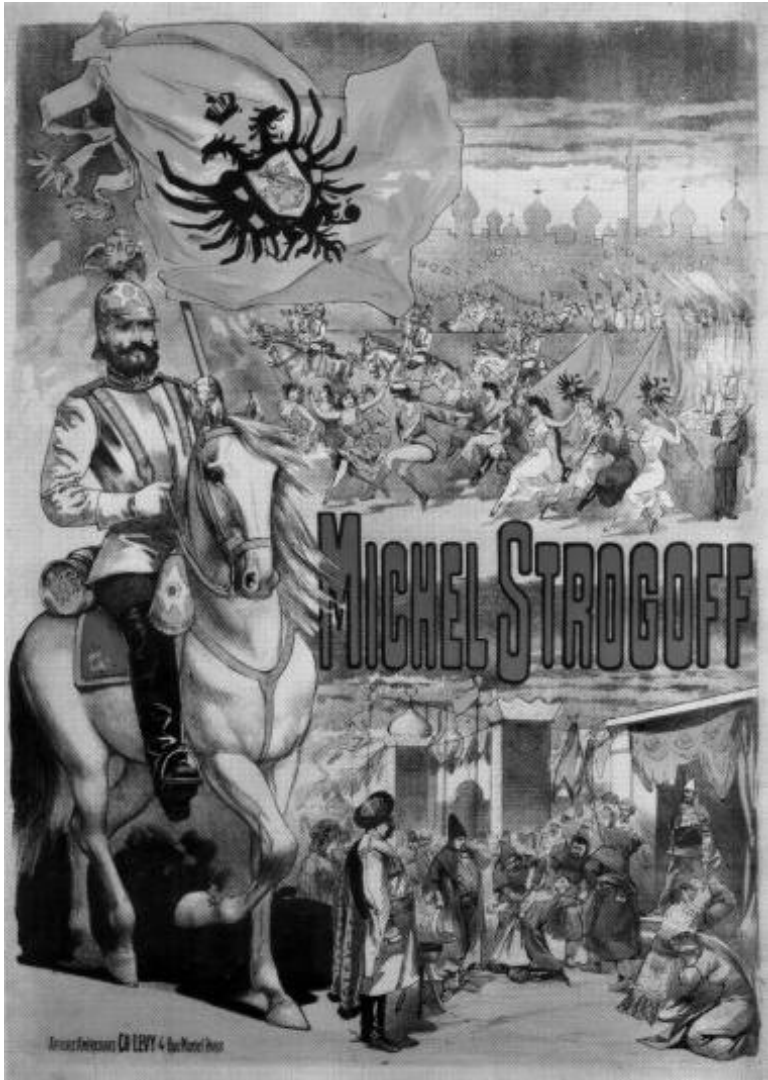


Figure 11 Poster of *Michel Strogoff* at Théâtre du Châtelet, Paris, 17 November 1880

Examining *Michel Strogoff* in the post-Said era, it is hard not to see it as a Eurocentric colonialist and imperialist venture, “a dialectical encounter between the Same and the Other, Europe and ‘darkest Asia,’ civilization and barbarism” (Bongie 1990, 243). This Orientalist notion is further enhanced by the addition, on top of tsarist heroes and Tartar barbarians, two journalists from old Europe—France and Britain. While adding comic relief with their rivalry, they behave as proud citizens worthy of their empires whose power is made clear in the flowing

dialogue in Act 3 where the British journalist Blount confronts the Tartar Emir Feofar in an effort to protect Jollivet, his French rival and colleague:

Blount: And, if I advised you, great Feofar, to render his freedom to Mr. Jollivet, it was in the interest of you and your serenity, for if a single hair falls from his head, it puts your head in danger.

Feofar: And, who would I have to worry about?

Blount: France!

Feofar: France?

Blount: Yes, France, which will not let go unpunished the murder of a child of its own! And, I warn you, that if his freedom is not returned to him, I will remain a prisoner with him, and instead of France alone, you'll have England, too. That's what I have to tell you, Emir Feofar. Now kill us if you like!

Feofar: Ivan [Russian officer in Tartar army], let the words of that man efface themselves from your memory, and spare his life.

(Verne and d'Ennery 2003, Act 3, Scene 8)



Figure 12 Poster for *The Sino-Japanese War*. (Photo courtesy of Waseda University's Tsubouchi Shōyō Theatre Museum.)

As shown in its poster, *Sino-Japanese War* reproduced this scene (in Act 8) by having two Japanese reporters confronting General Li Hongzhang of the Chinese army. This Eurocentric dichotomy of Same and Other seems to fit war-time Japan quite well. As revealed in the lithograph prints of the show, “the Chinese soldiers are visually Orientalized, while Japanese soldiers are visually Westernized: The former equipped with pig-tails and straw hats, the latter sporting Westernized uniforms and imperious Kaiser-style beards” (Kano 2001, 64). By casting both the Russian army and the French and British journalists, now played by Kawakami and Fujisawa Asajirō, as Japanese, Kawakami aligned his country with the Western Same and China as the Oriental Other. “The Japanese characters are depicted in the drama as being loyal and

courageous, from the commanders at the top to the foot-soldier at bottom. The Chinese are depicted as being inefficient fighters, easily bribed, and cruel in the treatment of prisoners” (65).

Theatrically, Kawakami was very much impressed by the melodramatic splendor of both French plays as he saw them at Théâtre du Châtelet. He described a spectacular scene from each of them to a reporter from the newspaper *Chūō shimbun* (*Central News*) in May of 1894—a battle scene from *Michel Strogoff* involving over 400 soldiers and dozens of horses plus sophisticated use of lighting, sound and fire, and a Chinese opium addict’s dream scene from *La Prise de Pékin* complete with dancing fairies, water fountains, and other fantasies (Matsumoto 1980, 182-83). Indeed, thanks to d’Ennery’s embellishment, the script of *Michel Strogoff* is filled with scenes made for such technical display:

Scene 6. The Battlefield of Kolyvan (The scene is on fire at sunset. Dead and wounded.

The cadavers of horses. Over the battlefield birds of prey hover and alight on the cadavers.)

Scene 11. The Raft (At the moment the Tartars are going to shoot Marfa, a raft, coming from the left appears on the Angara.)

Scene 12. The Shores of the Angara. (The panorama at the rear moves little by little, while the raft remains still. One sees several sites on the shores of the river.)

Scene 13. The River of Naphtha. (Night has come. The current of Naphtha inflames the surface of the river. The raft, vigorously pushed, passes through.)

Scene 14. The City in Flames (Irkutsk is in flames. The population rushes on the banks of the river. Strogoff appears and rushes through a blazing gate.)

Scene 16. The Assault on Irkutsk. (The stage represents a plain under the walls of Irkutsk. The Tartars have been crushed, dead. The whole Russian army is on stage.)

(Verne and d'Ennery 2003)

The effect of these scenes on Kawakami and, through him, *shinpa* war plays, seems quite profound as *Sino-Japanese War* is full of such scenes. Its poster shows obvious similarities between the two plays:

Act 6 “Fire in Beijing Street”: fire scene like Scenes 6 and 14 of *Michel Strogoff*.

Act 4 “Battle outside Tianjin” and Act 12 “Battle between Qing and Japanese Armies”:
land battle scenes like Scene 6 of *Michel Strogoff*.

Act 9 “Sea Battle in Bohai Bay, the Submersion of the Qing Battleship” and Act 10 “The Waves of Bohai” with a boat on stage: scenes at sea apparently inspired by Scenes 12 through 14 of *Michel Strogoff*.

Act 11 “Attack of the Japanese Army, Bravery of Akiyama Katsurakaru”: scene that seems to involve a city wall similar to Scene 16 of *Michel Strogoff*.

The success of *Sino-Japanese War* set the tone for other war plays both thematically and theatrically. Kawakami “improvised several war-dramas on the same lines, which brought good results” (Matsumoto 2001, 55). There were also many emulators both during the Sino-Japanese war and the Russo-Japanese War a decade later. As both wars were fought on land and sea, these plays would invariably involve battles, war ships, city walls, and fire. The posters of such plays as *Nippon gunjin* (*Japanese Soldiers*, 1900), *Nippon gun banzai* (*Long Live the Japanese Army*, 1904), *Teikoku banzai daishōri* (*Long Live the Empire, Great Victory*, 1904), *Ryojun kanraku* (*The Capture of Port Arthur*, 1904), *Seiro no kōgun* (*The Imperial Army the Vanquishes the Russians*, 1904) all featured some of these scenes in a prominent manner.



Figure 13 Poster for *The Imperial Army the Vanquishes the Russians*. (Photo courtesy of Waseda University's Tsubouchi Shōyō Theatre Museum.)

3.2.2. *Wenmingxi* War Plays

Although it seems unlikely any Chinese was in the audience of *Sino-Japanese War* in 1894, by the time of the Russo-Japanese War in 1904, there were already over 1000 Chinese students in Japan. Even more significantly, that number ballooned to 8000 the following year as a result of the abolition of the civil service examination (*keju*) in China (Sanetō 1982, Appendix 3). In time, as some of these students staged *shinpa*-like plays, they also assimilated the ideological and technical elements of these war plays. Apparently, China's military and diplomatic weakness prevented any self-aggrandization of militarism like *Sino-Japanese War* but

its technical merits were not lost in *wenmingxi* war plays which often depicted the overthrow of the Manchu government of the 1911 Revolution.

The most prominent *wenmingxi* plays about the 1911 Revolution are those by Ren Tianzhi and his Progressive Troupe. During the two years of its existence, about half of its repertoire was devoted to the political realities of China or Eastern Asia. Many were either adaptations of *shinpa* plays or Japanese novels or written in the Kawakami tradition of “political live drama.” According to the Japanese scholar Iisuka Yutori, one of Ren’s popular plays, *Xie suoyi* (*The Bloody Straw Rain Cape*, 1911), was adapted from the Japanese novel *Ryobijin* (*Two Beauties*, 1892) by Murai Gensai and his *Shangwu jian* (*Caution of Militarism*, 1911) was from a war play during the Russo-Japanese war entitled *Kichūsa* (*The Demonic Lieutenant Colonel*) (Iizuka 2000, 119, 127). This final link connects Ren directly to the *shinpa* tradition of war plays that can be traced back to *Sino-Japanese War* and then *Michel Strogoff* and *La Prise de Pékin*.

In addition, several of Ren’s plays depicting the 1911 Revolution, like *Huanghe Lou* (*Yellow Crane Tower*) and *Gonghe wansui* (*Long Live the Republic*), included technically challenging scenes reminiscent of *shinpa* war plays. Given the length of Ren’s stay in Japan and his pioneering status in *wenmingxi*, it seems a logical conclusion he learned these techniques from *shinpa*. For example, the whole Act 5 of *Long Live the Republic*, “Liberation of Nanjing,” is a battle scene in front of the city gate of Nanjing with no dialogue but an abundance of killing, gun and cannon shots, and army maneuvers, ending with the capture the city by the Republican army (Ren 1989a, 48):

[At curtain: The gate of Nanjing is closed. People with white flags in hand are standing on the city wall to welcome the Republican army.]

[Zhang Xun⁵¹ commands his soldiers to kill the people and throw their corpses down the city wall.

[The surrounding armies from Guangdong, Zhejiang, and Shanghai shout for the attack.

[Seeing Zhang Xun's murdering of fellow countrymen, Cheng Dequan grew visibly enraged.

[The surrounding armies want to attack with their canons, but fear accidentally wounding ordinary people. Everyone is troubled.

[Xu Guqing commands the New Army to come from north of the city to be united with the other armies.

[At this point, canon shots erupt from inside the city together with blazes of fire and the sound of wailing.

[Looking down from the wall, Zhang Xun orders to shoot.

[The united army fire back with their attack.

[Xu Guqing and Chen Dequan, commanding at the front of their army, cannot stop their soldiers even if they want to.

[The army from Zhejiang are the first to use canons to fire through the city gate.

[At this point, the United Army swarm in Nanjing.

[Zhang Renjun and Tieliang hurriedly escape.

[Zhang Xun commands the lost army to retreat around the city through a side gate.]

Such realistic depiction of the battle scene was in stark contrast to the practice of traditional Chinese theatre, where battles were highly stylized and individualized, designed to highlight the actors' physical agility. In contrast, this scene calls for a modern wall where canons,

⁵¹ A general of the imperial army.

not individual generals battling on horse, are the decisive factor for the capture of Nanjing.

Additional sound and lighting of gunshots and fire from inside the city wall serve to compliment the war atmosphere.

This advantage of *wenmingxi* over traditional theatre in recreating a more realistic scene was exactly what theatrical reformists had in mind. In a 1904 essay entitled “Zhongguo zhi yanju jie” (Theatre Circles of China), Jiang Zhiyou (1866-1929), a social anthropologist who was working closely with Liang Qichao in Japan, reflected on the contempt for Chinese theatre he had encountered in Japan:

I find Japanese newspapers often ridicule Chinese theatre as extremely naive and vulgar with no elegant appeal.... For example: “The depiction of war in Chinese theatre is still using ancient methods with one person opposing another with knives and guns. This treatment of war as child play can not cultivate people’s modern concept of war” (Note: the Boxers, who did not know the rules of war, simply emulated theatrical conventions, resulting in total defeat and casualties of a million in 1900. That clearly demonstrated the calamity of not portraying wars in any modern manner.)⁵².... They are definitely right in so judging the malady of our country’s theatre. (Jiang 1960, 50)

This perceived deficiency of Chinese theatre was further exploited by Chen Duxue, who had also been a political exile in Japan and would later become a leader of the New Cultural Movement. In his 1905 “Lun Xiqu” (On Theatre), Chen identified five areas as the focus of theatrical reform. Second among them: “adopting some Western techniques” like having “characters engage in debates or give speeches” and “implement[ing] the latest devices of lighting, sound, electricity, and many other scientific breakthroughs” (Chen 1999, 119).

⁵² This note was by Jiang himself.

An example of onstage display of theatrical machinery is Act Nine of *The Yellow Crane Tower* which takes place in a boat and a Chinese Navy ship the Chu Tung. In this act, Ruizheng, Manchu Governor of Hubei Province, where the 1911 Revolution started and where the Yellow Crane Tower was located, seeks refuge at the Chu Tung anchored at the Yangtze River. The scene is semi-comic but judging from stage descriptions, it requires realistic staging:

[At curtain: the Chu Tung battle ship. Dark night slightly decorated with stars and the moon. Ruizheng, his Concubine, Guohua [his son], his daughter, his daughter with First Concubine, his daughter with Second Concubine are all in old clothes with dirty faces. All ten of them are in a boat.

[Zhang Meisheng stands at the bow. Windy waves shake the boat.

[The Captain and the First Mate, a Westerner, of the Chu Tung look at them from their ship with telescopes and see them waving at the Captain.

[The Captain orders the canons raised to salute but Zhang hurriedly waves him off. When the boat reaches the ship, Zhang drags Ruizheng to the ship.

[The First Mate waves at the sailors to stop them.] (Ren 1989b, 93)

What happens next is a comic bargaining scene in which the First Mate, with the Chinese Captain merely serving as his interpreter, refuses to let the refugees embark on the ship, using the pretence of neutrality or until seeing Ruizheng's official seal, which is eventually produced by the Concubine from her underwear.

[The Captain shows the seal to the First Mate.

[Seeing the seal, the First Mate smiles and orders the hanging bridge released.

[Ruizheng, the Concubine, and others climb up the hanging bridge to the ship from their boat which is rocking constantly with the rough waves.] (Ren 1989b, 95)

What we see here is evidence of realistic setting and a showmanship of stage mechanism with a boat and ship on rough water, akin to similar scenes in *Michel Strogoff* and *Sino-Japanese War*. What is equally intriguing is the fact that these devices are adopted here not only to poke fun at the Manchu bureaucrat running from Revolutionary army, but also to invoke the sorry state of the Chinese navy and sovereignty when the real power of its battleship lies in the hands of a Westerner (*xiyangren*) First Mate.

Another device Ren adopted from *shinpa* was the use of festive scenes, again evident from *Michel Strogoff*. The final act of *Long Live the Republic* is a celebration scene with a papier-mâché statue of Dr. Sun Yat-sen “at center stage surrounded with small flowers. On its top hang flags of various countries and underneath it a fountain with a dragon sprouting water from its mouth.” Representatives of various races, parties, and walks of life as well as counsel-generals of “Britain, Germany, the USA, Russia, and France” all happily pay tribute to the statue and are entertained by a ten-person marching band, students with flower lanterns, local singers, a lion dance, and students that play an organ and “dance in Western costume, glowing with yellow electric lights” (Ren 1989a, 66).

3.3. SAVING THE LOST NATION—NATIONALIST PLAYS AT THE HEIGHT OF *WENMINGXI*

3.3.1. Korean Plays

The conventional view of the commercial era of *wenmingxi* after 1913 is that by seeking box-office success through domestic melodrama, *wenmingxi* abandoned its mission of social

enlightenment and theatrical reform, which, in turn, was at least partially responsible for its demise. It was a charge against *wenmingxi* voiced both at the time and in recent scholarship.⁵³

There are several problems with this argument. First, it ignores the shift of public sentiment before and after the 1911 Revolution and fails to take into account the power of audience reaction in affecting theatrical trends. As I explained in Chapter One, *wenmingxi* was never commercially viable in Shanghai until Zheng Zhengqiu's *An Evil Family* in 1913. In addition, this argument is only partially accurate in its assessment of the political content in *wenmingxi*'s commercial boom.

Thanks to the production records compiled by Seto Hiroshi of the three most important companies of this period—the New People Society (through its merger with the People's Voice in January of 1915), the People's Voice Society, and Spring Willow Theatre—it has become possible to measure more accurately the pulse of *wenmingxi* productions between 1913 and 1916. What these records show is that while it is true that in late 1913 and 1914 both the artistic Spring Willow and the commercial New People and the People's Voices avoided political content, there was a sudden reawakening of *wenmingxi*'s social conscience in and after 1915 in direct response to China's negotiation and signing of the Twenty-One Demands in Spring of 1915 which conceded more sovereignty to Japan.

During the First World War, Japan fought on the Allied side and seized German holdings in Shandong Province of China. In January of 1915 the Japanese government proposed the so-called Twenty-One Demands, which sought Japanese economic controls in railway and mining operations in Shandong, Manchuria, Fujian, and pressed to have Japanese advisors appointed in key positions in the Beijing government. Words of the Japanese proposal provoked public fear that the treaty would make China a Japanese protectorate like Korea, prompting massive

⁵³ See (Ouyang 1985b, 68-69; Chen and Dong 1989, 71-72; Guo 2003, 40-43).

demonstrations and boycott of Japanese businesses and products. While the Beijing government under President and military strongman Yuan Shikai (1859–1916) eventually rejected some of these items, it yielded to most Japanese territorial demands when the treaty was signed in May.

Twenty-One Demands served as a reminder of possible national demise that had befallen many other non-Western nations whose histories, invariably termed *wangguo shi* (lost state history) in their Chinese versions, contributed to the formation of Chinese nationalism. As argued by Rebecca Karl, Chinese nationalism, formed in late Qing, was not necessarily a result of learning directly from Western and Japanese models but by thinking through the experiences of imperialism and colonialism of such countries as Poland, South Africa, Hawaii, Turkey, Egypt, the Philippines, and many other Asian countries. She believes that Chinese retellings of their national demise

narrativized the historical “failure” of peoples and states to properly recognize the twin problems of foreign assault and internal decline into an inexorable “perishing” or “loss” (*wang*) of the state. Through these histories and the new view of the world they enabled and produced, *wangguo* too was rearticulated away from its traditional Chinese meaning of a change of dynasty to a modern meaning of colonization. In this latter form, *wangguo* was linked to imperialism into a new view of modern world dynamics, relationships, and representations—or, into a view of modernity. This new view of what was often called in the late Qing either “national imperialism” (*guojia diguo zhuyi*), just “expansionism” (*penzhang zhuyi*), or *wangguo* also lent historical relevance to revolution and nationalism, for in a most basic sense, if *wangguo*—as colonization—was to be avoided or contested, then struggle, against both ineffective internal rule and foreign occupiers, needed to be launched. (Karl 2002, 15)

This call for struggle against “ineffective internal rule and foreign occupiers” was certainly the reason behind the urgency that revived nationalist themes in *wenmingxi* productions starting from January of 1915. The title of one such production review aptly summed up the prevailing sentiment: “*The Traitor amidst Cries of National Salvation*” (*Jiawang sheng zhong zhi Maiguo nu*). It was about the play *Maiguo nu (The Traitor)*, one of the several *wenmingxi* plays that focused on the history of Japanese annexation of Korea. These plays usually featured such historical figures as Lee Wan-Yong, Korea’s Prime Minister at the time of the annexation, as the symbol of internal corruption, ineffectiveness, and national betrayal; Japan’s Prime Minister Itō Hirobumi, the architect of the annexation, as representative of imperialism and colonialism; and Korean Queen Min (also known as Empress Myeongseong), who was assassinated in 1895 for her opposition to Japanese pressure, and An Jung-geun, who assassinated Itō in Manchuria in 1909, as embodiment of native resistance and struggle against colonial occupiers.

One of the earliest and better-known versions on this subject was entitled *Dongya fengyun (Storms of East Asia)*, also known as *An Chonggan ci Yiteng (An Jung-geun Assassinate Itō)*, written by Ren Tianzhi for his Progressive Troupe around the time of the Republican Revolution in 1911. An Jung-geun (1879-1910) was a Korean resistance fighter known for cutting off his fingers and writing “Korean Independence” with his blood on a Korean flag. After assassinating Itō Hirobumi, who was at the time retired as Prime Minister, on a railway platform in Harbin, Manchuria, An was executed in March of 1910. Ren’s writing was influenced by *sōshi shibai* and *Storms of East Asia* was very much in early Kawakami style of live political drama. In fact, Kawakami’s first production in Tokyo in 1891—*Itagaki-kun Sōnan Jikki (Disaster Strikes Itagaki)*—was about a recent attack on a politician, Itagaki, who was close to young political activists, the *sōshi*. Ren also inherited the *shōshi shibai* style of making (often impromptu)

motivational speeches in his plays. Extant scripts of his plays show place-holders for these speeches, which remained an important feature of *wenmingxi* even in the commercial era. Its efficacy was demonstrated in the 1915 production of *The Traitor* when Zheng Zhengqiu, the (often maligned) symbol of *wenmingxi* domestication and commercialization, played a peddler and made a pleading speech to the audience, asking them to awake from their indifference and join resistance struggles:

As a nobody, all I used to care about was to make a living. I wanted nothing to do with our country's affairs. When I saw those patriots making speeches about the misery of a lost country, I accused them of making a fuss about nothing. I felt that even if our country was lost, we common people would still have enough to eat. The country belongs to the officials. Lost or not, it's the same for us. Now that I've suffered the bitter taste of our lost country, I finally realize the patriots' words were like gold and jade. I have wronged them. I regret giving up my duty. Before a country is lost, officials enjoy the good times; afterward a country is lost, people suffer only misery. Nowadays, Japanese soldiers are everywhere. They treat us like cows and horses. They don't pay. They beat and scold us. They restrict everything we do. We have no freedom. Oh, Korea is lost; too late to save. My hot blood is gushing. I'd rather give my life to fight against those who colonized our country. This way I can redeem my earlier sin as a by-stander. (Zhou 1922a, 440)

The Spring Willow version of the Korean history was staged in April of 1915 with the title *Chaoxian Minfei* (*Queen Min of Korea*). It was a twenty-eight act, eight installment “tragedy” that took two nights to stage. It “starts from Korean military coup that drove away Queen Min in 1882 and ends with the assassination [of Itō Hirobumi] by An Jung-geun” (Seto

1989, 339). According to its writer Zhang Mingfei, it was based on *The Bitter History of Korea* written by Park En-Seuk (1859-1926), a leader of the exile Korean resistance movement in Shanghai where he was elected the second president of the “Provisional Government of the Republic of Korea” in 1925. His history was written in Chinese and published in Shanghai in 1914 with the title *Hanguo tongshi* (*The Bitter History of Korea*) and was later translated into Korean as *Han’guk t’ongsa*. In the context of Twenty-One Demands, *The Bitter History of Korea* apparently touched a raw nerve in China. Apart from Zhang’s script, it also spawned two popular *yanyi* (romance history) versions, a form of popular history whose topics covered both imperial powers and non-Western colonies.

Of course, *wenmingxi*’s nationalist productions were not limited to the Korean theme. Indeed, the selections seemed quite diverse. Even old favorites from the Tokyo days, like *Black Slave’s Cry to Heaven* and *Hot Blood* were revived for their themes of resistance by both Spring Willow and the People’s Voices. Thematically, these productions were more or less centered on the twin issues of colonization and resistance, of both internal tyranny and foreign intrusion. The plays’ heroes ranged from anti-Qing assassins to Russian nihilists and Flemish rebels against Spanish occupiers. Even Shakespeare’s classical treatment of race and colonialism, *Othello*, was rearranged to fit the threat of national demise.

3.3.2. European Plays

3.3.2.1. *Othello* and Race and Colonialism

In April 3, 1915, at the height of anti-Twenty-One Demands rallies, Spring Willow staged *Othello* in an adaptation by Lu Jingruo that was based on a version originally produced by Kawakami’s company. After the success of *Sino-Japanese War*, Kawakami continued to adapt

European plays with reference to Japan's imperial aspirations. One of them was his 1903 production of *Othello*. Entitled *Osero*, this version moved Venice to Japan and Cyprus to Peng Hu Island, a part of Taiwan, which China conceded to Japan at the end of Sino-Japanese War in 1895. Here, Othello, renamed Muro Washiro, falls victim to internal Japanese politics as he is recalled to Japan to face allegations of brutality as the governor of Taiwan which by then had become a pawn in Japan's internal power struggle (Suzuki). As for the issue of race, Kawakami replaced it with class by casting Othello as a "new commoner" (*shin heimin*), a term for former outcasts newly incorporated into the status of commoner under the Meiji government. He is a Japanese from the lowest caste who has been struggling to gain the status of a full-fledged national subject through his military conquests" (Kano 2001, 107). In a way, this awareness of class is one of the hallmarks of early *shinpa* scripts which "were mainly adaptations of the so-called political novels that were popular at the time. The word 'political' when applied to these novels seemed to refer mainly to the idea of the individual making a success of his life in the new Japan in spite of the hurdles of low birth or misfortune" (Powell 2002, 13). Thus, nationalism and modernization, the two issues of Meiji society, are deftly married into one script through the process of localization.

劇 正

"Othello" is produced here by our Kurohama and Madam Sada Yone, in the adaptation from Shakespeare's play of which they have seen the performance in Europe where they have enjoyed with their people previous years, and learned about the art of the acting much differing from our conventional. No foreigner ever had such a good opportunity as this time to see Shakespeare's drama in its almost original form in Japan, because it is the first experience to us to play the West's work. In the play, our Kurohama appears as the Moor and Madam Sada Yone as Desdemona, and our foreign audience should like to see the costumes and the drawing-scenes in the theatre, please communicate to Mr. Kurohama or Madam Sada Yone, they will be kind enough to show them and give explanation about them.

東 洋 演 劇 本 館

明治三十六年二月十日午後一時三十分開演

明治座

第七天七十四次劇中、内

オセロ

六幕

登 場 者

オセロ 島田 大十郎
デズデモナ 島田 貞子
イザベラ 島田 貞子
ロドルフォ 島田 貞子
カスミオ 島田 貞子
ラウレンス 島田 貞子
エマ 島田 貞子
その他 島田 貞子

Figure 14 Poster for Kawakami's 1903 production of Othello. (Photo courtesy of Waseda University's Tsubouchi Shōyō Theatre Museum.)

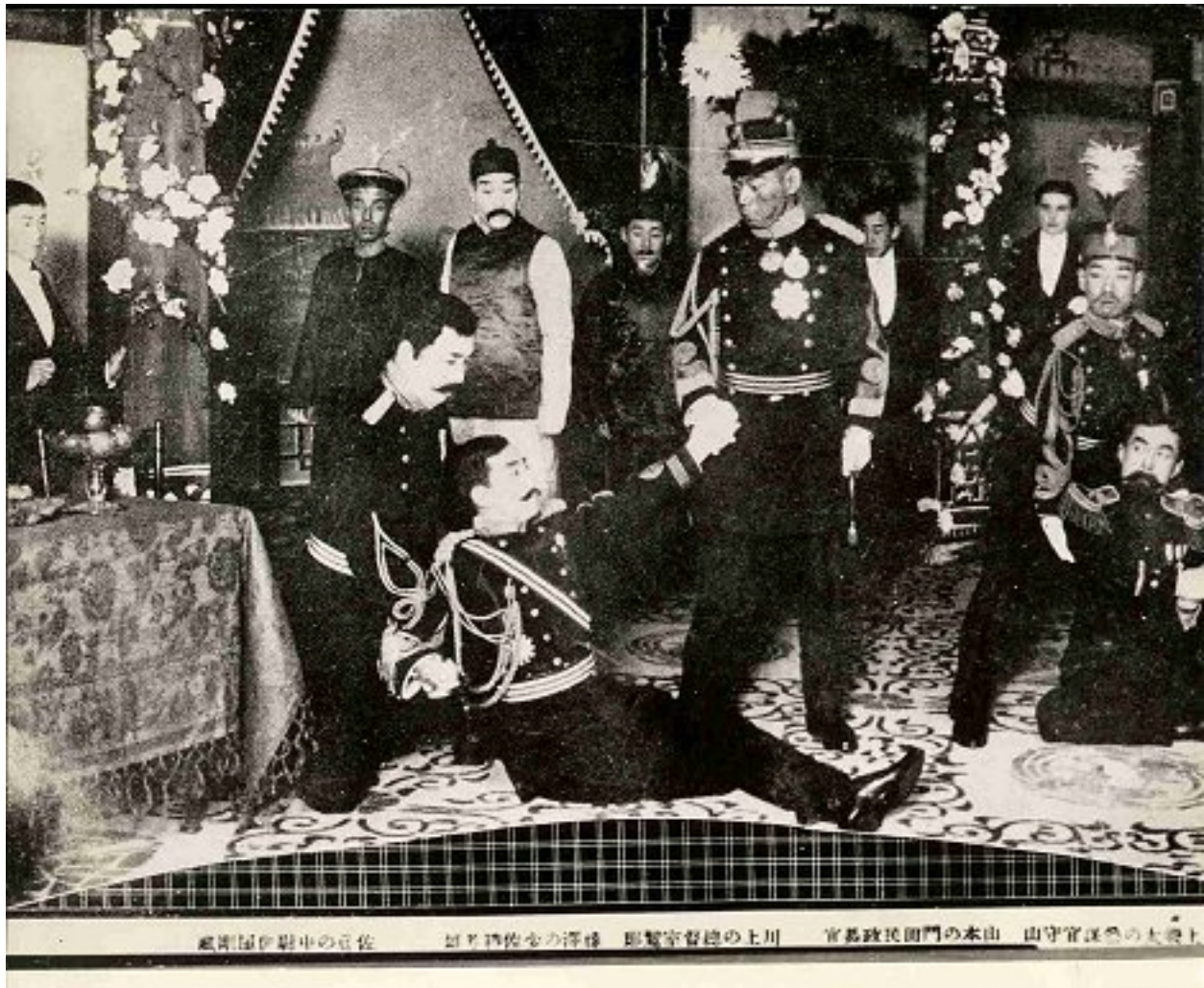


Figure 15 A Scene from Kawakami's 1903 production of *Othello*. Kawakami, standing, plays the black-faced general. (Photo courtesy of Waseda University's Tsubouchi Shōyō Theatre Museum.)

If the twin issues of rising nationalism and modern citizenship were the ways Kawakami chose to frame his *Othello*, the issues became national security and racial tension in early Republican China. Renamed *Chun meng* (*Spring Dream*), the Chinese version was adapted from Kawakami's script in 1914 by Lu Jingruo. Although this script is no longer extant, a synopsis of the play collected in *One Hundred New Drama Plays* provides a glimpse into the way Lu tackled the issues of race and geo-politics:

Major general Wu Shinan has made great contributions to the Republic of China. Young and handsome, he is betrothed to Lin Huihua, daughter of a former high ranking Qing Dynasty official. Citing the general's mixed heritage [*yizhong*] (his mother is a foreigner), the official is opposed to their union. As the nation is faced with foreign invasion at its borders, the government orders the general to command his troops in Manchuria. Before his departure, the prime minister acts as the go-between and makes it possible for him to marry Huihua and brings her to Manchuria. A wealthy businessman Luo Dakun, having already married after failing to win the hand of Huihua, grows jealous at the news of the general's wedding to Huihua and seeks to distance the couple. When a certain lieutenant violates the law for being over-indulgent, he is pardoned after eliciting the help of Huihua's maid. When the ensign Yi Yamin gets wind of it, he speaks badly of Huihua and the lieutenant in front of the general. Enraged, the general kills Huihua. Meanwhile, Yi Yamin's wife, embittered by his indulgence with prostitutes, informs the general of his receiving bribery from Luo Dakun and slander. The general gravely regrets his behavior and commits suicide in atonement. (Zheng 1919, *Xiyang xinju* (new Western plays), 24)

If we compare the Japanese and Chinese versions of *Othello*, it seems obvious that the contrast in Japanese and Chinese national identities shaped the perspectives of adaptation. While the Japanese *Othello* was tapped to pacify a newly conquered colony with an iron fist, his Chinese counterpart could only find his fame by defending a besieged nation in the one region—Manchuria—which its powerful neighbor to the east always had an eye on. In terms of *Othello*'s identity, the issue of race was replaced by the modernizing issue of class in Kawakami's play, while the Chinese version blended racial resentment against the Manchus, which had ruled China

for over 200 years, with contemporary ambivalence towards foreigners, by giving Wu Shinan a “foreign” mother although it is impossible to determine from the scenario whether she was European, Japanese, or of any other nationality. The adapter Lu Jingruo seems to suggest that the misfortune of this Chinese Othello was at least partially due to a wounded and somewhat xenophobic national psyche.

The significance of Lu’s version of *Othello* also lies in the fact that it was most likely the first staging of a full Shakespearean play in China, not an adaptation of one of the stories found in *Yin bian yan yu*, Liu Shu’s translation of *Tales from Shakespeare* by Charles Lamb. All other *wenmingxi* productions of Shakespeare were based on these tales, a practice Zheng Zhengqiu popularized in 1913 with a hit adaptation of *Merchant of Venice* which Lin had named *Rou quan* (*Contract of Flesh*). This production was followed by other popular adaptations like *Taming of the Shrew*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Hamlet*. In fact, there are twenty of these adaptations at the top of the Western plays section of Zheng’s 1919 *One Hundred New Drama Plays*. Uniformly subtitled as “Shashibiya mingju” (famous Shakespearean play), they mostly kept the title and character names of Lin’s translation, leaving no doubt about their origin. Following Lin’s version, the *wenmingxi* title of *Othello* was *Heidu* (*The Black General*) and was advertised as:

The prettiest girl refuses to marry the most handsome young man, but is determined to wed the black general with a black body and black beard. This causes many evil deeds in the world of love. This is a first rank Shakespeare play of infinite interest (Li 2003, 20).

In contrast, the synopsis of Lu’s version of *Othello*, with its title transliterated as *Weisailuo* and a subtitle as “famous play by Shakespeare in five acts, adapted by Jingruo,” was not printed together with these Shakespearean adaptations in *One Hundred New Drama Plays*. It

is collected in the second half of the “new Western plays” which is devoted almost exclusively to Spring Willow plays adapted from *shinpa*, such as *La Tosca* and *The Cuckoo*. Ultimately, though, it is the geo-political awareness in localization that provides the strongest evidence of Lu’s inheritance from Kawakami’s version.

3.3.2.1.1. Sardou and Patriotism

In the heated environment of anti-Twenty-One Command sentiment, *wenmingxi* once again found the melodramatic power of Victorien Sardou. Two plays by him were staged in the summer of 1915—*La Tosca* and *Patrie!*. Possibly inspired by this popular sentiment, the Chinese name of *La Tosca* was changed from *Hot Tears (Relei)* used in the Tokyo production to its Japanese title *Hot Blood (Rexie)* in Chinese, *Netsu ketsu* in Japanese). It was staged multiple times by both the Spring Willow and the People’s Voice. A review of a later production by Yaofeng xinjuchang (Yaofeng New Theatre), formed by Zheng Zhengqiu in 1918, emphasized its theme of resistance and patriotism over love. In particular, the reviewer was impressed by Zheng’s portrayal of Cavaradossi during the on-stage torture scene:

Faced with the police superintendent, [Zhengqiu] was stern and eloquent. Mencius said: “Those who give counsel to the great should despise them, and not look at their pomp and display.” Roland [Cavaradossi] rightly deserves it. When tortured, he painfully called out to Tosca: “Mind justice. Mind humanity. Mind our reputation.” Suffering from the torment, grinding his teeth, he would rather die for his country. Scenes like this are true castigations of today’s world. (Qiuxing 1922b, 438)

Zheng’s production used the Spring Willow adaptation of a *shinpa* script which, as aforementioned, was based on a Japanese novel version of Sardou’s script. In addition,

wenmingxi was notoriously cavalier towards script fidelity and Zheng was especially good at ad-libbing on stage. As a result, it is impossible to decide at which phase of the transfer, whether *shinpa*, Spring Willow, or Zheng that the moralist line of justice, humanity, and good name was added. In Sardou's script, Cavaradossi resorts to chauvinistic pressure against Tosca: "No, no! You have nothing to say. And I forbid you, do you understand. I forbid it!" (Sardou 1990, 105) "Be quiet or I will curse you" (106). In Puccini's opera, he is more chivalrous: "Have courage— Say nothing, nothing. I scorn the pain" (Puccini, Giacosa, and Illica 1982). In Shanghai, Cavaradossi's admonishment is infused with a Confucian tone of justice and the importance of keeping one's good name in face of suppression and tyranny. No wonder this Cavaradossi reminds the reviewer of Mencius' ideal of moral supremacy in front of authority.

This defiance of power was apparently the reason that prompted the People's Voice Society to stage another Sardou play *Patrie! (Fatherland)* in July of 1915 (Seto 2003b, 18). "Generally regarded as Sardou's masterpiece" by his contemporaries (Hart 1913, 175), *Patrie!* is a semi-historical well-made play of the boilerplate concerning a suppressed rebellion of the Flemish against Spanish occupiers in the 16th century, based in Romantic themes of patriotism, love, betrayal, and death. The play debuted in 1868 but was not staged at Théâtre-Français till 1901 (ibid). According to the American dancer Loie Fuller (1862-1928), who helped the Kawakamis with their two European tours, its *shinpa* production was the result of a meeting between Kawakami and some French writers at the Society of Authors in Paris, where Sardou, impressed by the performance of Sadayakko and their company, praised Kawakami as "his dear comrade" and "the man who first forged a literary bond between France and Japan" (Fuller 1913, 217-20). With a translation by Taguchi Kitukei, the *shinpa* version of *Patrie!* was staged in October of 1906 with Kawakami as the leader of Flemish rebels Count de Rysoor, the famous

onnagata Kawai Takeo as his treacherous wife Dolorès, whose affair with her husband's best friend Karloo leads her to betray the Flemish rebels to the Spaniards. Sadayakko played Rafaela, a tear-jerking and compassionate sick daughter of the tyrannical Spanish oppressor Duke of Alva.

An intriguing side note about this translation and production is that although the *kanji* title in the poster appears as *Sokoku* (*Zuguo* in Chinese pronunciation) which means “fatherland,” the *katakana* notation beside the *kanji* serving as notation key (*furigana*) indicates that it should be pronounced as *Patorī*, just like *Patrie* in the original French.



Figure 16 Poster of the 1906 *shinpa* production of *Patrie!* by the Kawakami company. (Photo courtesy of Waseda University's Tsubouchi Shōyō Theatre Museum.)

Although it is highly possible this production of *Patrie!* was seen by some Chinese students, its large cast was apparently prohibitive for the post-*Black Slave* Spring Willow, which had seen a drain on its membership due a ban on student dramatics in Japan by the Manchu government which threatened to withhold government scholarships to future participants. This partly explains why Lu and Ouyang preferred *La Tosca* over *Patrie!* when they staged the former in 1909. Still, the overtly nationalist theme in the latter was apparently magnetic to Chinese intellectuals looking for anti-imperialist inspiration. In 1910, its Chinese version, also entitled *Zuguo*, was translated by Chen Jinghan (1877-1965) who had been to Japan as a student. Chen was a prolific writer and translator who, although “indirectly translated French, Italian, and Russian works,” was in fact only “good at Japanese and English” (Xu 2003, 196). Therefore, it seems logical to assume that he translated *Patrie!* from Japanese, although Iizuka Yutori believes that the Japanese version Chen followed was one by Osada Shūtō (Iizuka 1996, 430), whose translation of *La Dame aux Camélias* was the basis of Spring Willow’s 1907 production.

Chen was a firm believer in revolution and Social Darwinism. He once created a fictional character who would rather kill the worthless in Chinese society in order to stimulate its evolution, rather than leaving social change to the slow process of natural selection (Lengxie (Chen Jinghan) 1904, 20). He was also one of the most famous writers and translators of the Russian nihilists, which was synonymous with anarchists and revolutionaries in the mind of the Chinese at the turn of the 20th century (Fan 2004, 4). In his preface to *Patrie!*, Chen explains why it deserves his translation:

This play by the famous French playwright Sardou is a grand historical tragedy situated in 17th or 18th century [sic]. At the time, today’s Belgium was not yet separated from Holland and was called Flanders. It was frequently invaded by Spain. The country’s

patriots bravely rebelled and planned to save the nation. Unfortunately they failed, resulting in their deaths in the guillotine. This is the synopsis of the play. Using the dispute between Catholics and Protestants as its backbone, the play depicts tyrannical enemy generals, composed and brave patriots, as well as an adulterous woman who betrayed her nation and husband for the sake of love and a beautiful girl anxious for the fate of a nation. It portrays love in grandeur and hope through tragedy. Full of twists and turns in a superb design, it is indeed a great well-made play from Western Europe. (Leng (Chen Jinghan) 1991, 693)

Chen obviously read the play in the vein of lost nation histories and resistance against tyrannical occupiers. The play was originally staged by the Progressive Troupe with Wang Youyou playing the treacherous wife Dolorès. Yet the large cast and the decorum required for the aristocratic characters made the play rather prohibitive to mount, even for the joint performance of six major companies in 1914 (Zhu 1914, Pinglun [Commentary], 3-4). As a result, although the People's Voice Society chose to stage it in July of 1915 as a nationalist response to the signing of the Twenty-One Demands, it was likely not very successful, as there was no follow-up production recorded. Still, its nationalist theme was not lost. During the Second Sino-Japanese War in early 1940s, the playwright Ma Yanxiang adapted it into a popular anti-Japanese play entitled *Gucheng de nuhou* (*Roar of an Ancient City*) that was widely performed.

Another play that can also be included in this category of staging the lost nation was Friedrich Schiller's *William Tell*, which is about Swiss struggle for national liberation from Austrian tyranny. The play was staged in Japan at least once in 1905 under the title of *Suisu gimin den* (*Romance of Swiss Patriots*), but it was a *kabuki* production, not *shinpa* (Waseda

Daigaku Tsubouchi Hakushi Kinen Engeki Hakubutsukan 1998, 231) and could not have been seen by many Chinese students. Its Chinese version was translated by Ma Junwu (1881–1940) and published in 1911. Although Ma was in Japan in 1905 as a student, he translated the play from the original as he went on to Germany to study Metallurgy in 1907. Recalling seeing Tell's statues everywhere in Switzerland and experiencing "its civilization as a place and freedom as a people," Ma recommended the play to his readers since "it can really be read as the history of Swiss independence" (Schiller 1991). Ma obviously did not intend for the play to be staged as he translated it in classical Chinese. Yet, although there is no record of its production during the *wenmingxi* era, during the Second Sino-Japanese War in 1938 it was also adapted into an anti-Japanese play entitled *Minzhu wansui* (*Long Live the Nation*) by the playwright Chen Baichen and was staged in Shanghai.

3.3.2.2. *On the Eve and Violent Revolt*

In terms of popular resistance against tyranny, of either foreign occupiers or internal oppressors, the play that adopted the most radical approach in this era was *On the Eve*, a three-act play written by the Polish playwright Leopold Kampf (1881-?) about Russian nihilists in 1905. *Hundred New Drama Plays* includes a synopsis of it:

Russian Socialist Party members publish the newspaper *The Light* to advocate for the principle of people's livelihood, but their printer is captured by the police. Party member Vasili is in love with female Party member Anna. Ordered by Party head Gregor to assassinate a public enemy through bombing, he bids farewell to Anna and goes on to his mission. (Zheng 1919, 54)

The climax of the play takes place in the living room of Anna's aunt's house which is located right in front of the assassination scene. The aunt monitors the governor's actions in front of the window and motions Anna to bring candelabra to the window as a signal for Vasili's suicide bombing. After some hesitation, Anna does what she is supposed to do. We hear an explosion and watch Anna slowly coming out of shock. Wiping out her tears, Anna ends the play with the following lines:

Anna: (Slowly) Yes, aunt, you are right. (Wipes out her tears) Tears are stupid! (Bitterly) Tears are stupid! (Firmly) Tears are stupid! (Cries) The bell tolls! Tolls! Tolls! Onward, brothers! (Grieved) The bell of blood! (As if in a trance) Onward.... Onward.... (Curtain quick falls, yet one can still hear her voice) Onward! Onward!⁵⁴

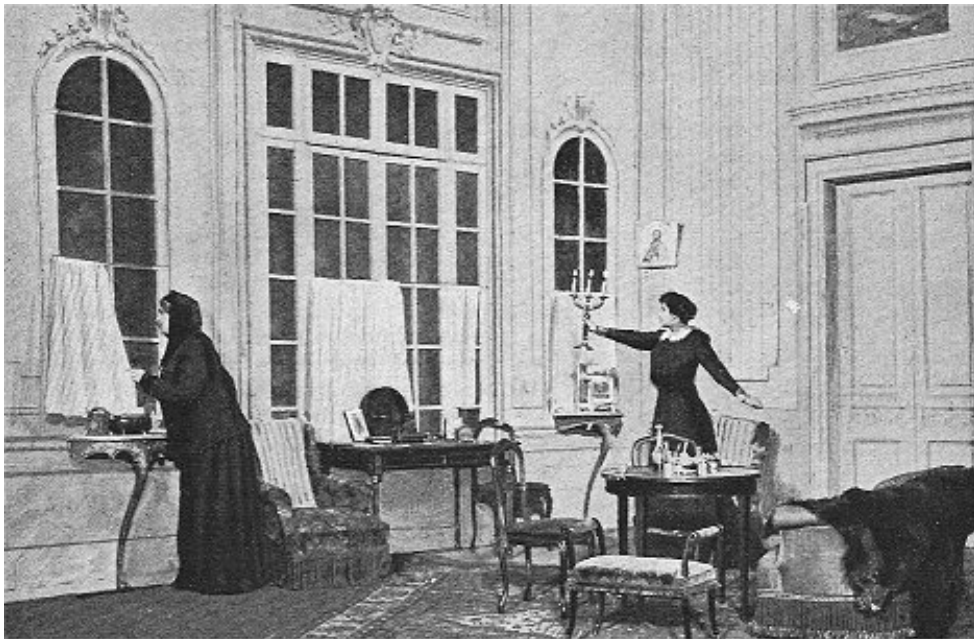


Figure 17 The last scene from Act Three of the French version of Leopold Kampf's *On the Eve* entitled *Le Grand Soir* as staged in Paris' Théâtre des Arts in 1907. Here, the heroine Anna hesitantly brings the candelabra to the window as a signal for her lover's suicide assassination mission as her aunt looks out of the window. (Photo printed in *L'Illustration Théâtrale*, 81, February 8, 1908, p12.)

⁵⁴ English based on both the French translation by Robert d'Humières and Chinese version by Ba Jin, which was from the French version (Kampf 1908, 24, 1944, 100-01).

Originally written in German in 1906 as *Am Vorabend*, its anarchist message proved too inflammatory for German authorities, who banned its productions in Berlin and Hamburg. Kampf then took it to New York where it was produced in both English and German theatres in 1907 and even had a short-lived twenty-four performance run at Hudson Theatre in Broadway in October of 1909. Paradoxically, a 1907 review of the play in the anarchist magazine *Mother Earth*, published by the radical Russian immigrant and anarchist Emma Goldman, found the play “disconnected, incoherent, and, worse than all, bombastic,” even though the critic wished “that we could speak only in praise of this work, because of its purpose.” The reviewer finds the ending particularly unbearable with an “intrusive pertinacity... that spoils even the last really heart-rending scene where the maddened girl repeats in her raving” (1907b).

What changed the fate of play was its coincidental viewing by the director of Paris’ Théâtre des Arts who happened to be passing through New York. Impressed by its “classic and powerful beauty,” she then staged it in her theatre on December 23, 1907 with a translation by Robert d’Humières and direction by Armand Bour. Entitled *Le Grand Soir*, the production received rave reviews, prompting over a hundred performances in the next two years. Critics hailed it as an inspired tragedy that blended classical narrative with the message of sacrificing happiness for the sake of duty (Sorbet 1908, inside front cover). In contrast to the review in *Mother Earth*, some critics found the final scene of Anna’s crying of “Onward brothers. . . . The bell of blood” as a specific example of “superb drama which, with artistic beauty and noble dialogue, justifies evil for the sake of the good and crime for the benefit of the public” (Sorbet 1908, inside back cover).

The French version of the script, together with an introduction by Gaston Sorbet detailing its production history and the enthusiastic reviews it had received in Paris, was printed in

February 1908 in the magazine *L'Illustration Théâtrale*. The production's "very grand, very noisy, very enthusiastic success" (ibid) and the accolade by the critics could very well have persuaded Li Shizeng, who also translated *Cry of Injustice* and who had just turned into an anti-Qing revolutionary after meeting Sun Yat-sen and joining his United League, not only to translate the script into Chinese but also to secure a preface from Kampf himself. Published in 1908, Kampf begged his Chinese readers to learn from the Russian revolutionaries and shed their blood for the sake of freedom (Kampf 1960).

On the Eve and *Cry of Injustice* are generally considered the two earliest Western plays directly translated into Chinese. While *Cry of Injustice*, a comedy with relatively simple technical demands as a one-act, received fairly frequent staging since its debut in Tokyo in 1909, *On the Eve*'s appeal was more literary in the *wenmingxi* era, when it struck a deep chord with Chinese youngsters eager for revolution who generally equated nihilism "with anarchism, revolution, and popular terrorism" (Harrell 1992, 257). In fact, the difference was virtually non-existent as all these doctrines became part of the anti-Qing sentiment. The play's synopsis in *One Hundred New Drama Plays* even describes its protagonists as from the "Russian Socialist Party."

The pre-1911 China was in a sense similar to Russia in 1905 where radical anarchism was part of the anti-Qing movement. The best-known anarchists were Xu Xilin (1873-1907) and the female poet Qiu Jin (1875-1907) who were executed by the Qing government for assassinating the governor of Anhui province En Ming in July of 1907, the same year of *On the Eve*'s spectacular success in Paris. Xu and Qiu, who had both been to Japan where they had befriended other anti-Qing activists, became instant folk heroes for not only their rebellious actions but also their legendary bravery in the face of death. According to legend, Xu laughed at the threat of having his heart cut out—which was presumably carried—and insisted on retaking

a photograph before his execution so as to leave a smiling image “to posterity.” As for Qiu Jin, with a sobriquet as the Female-Knight of Mirror Lake (*Jianhu nǚxia*) and a famous picture of her as a beauty holding a dagger, her legendary fame was enhanced with a line she composed before execution: “The autumn wind and autumn rain agonize one to death” (*Qiufeng qiuyu chou sha ren*).

Indeed, revolution was inevitably connected to romanticism in the popular psyche in both China and France where Sardou’s braiding of romance and patriotism was still popular. In China, the stories of Qiu Jin and Xu Xilin were staged in *wenmingxi* first by Wang Zhongsheng before the 1911 Revolution and later by Zheng Zhengqiu during the height of anti-Twenty-One Demands in 1915.

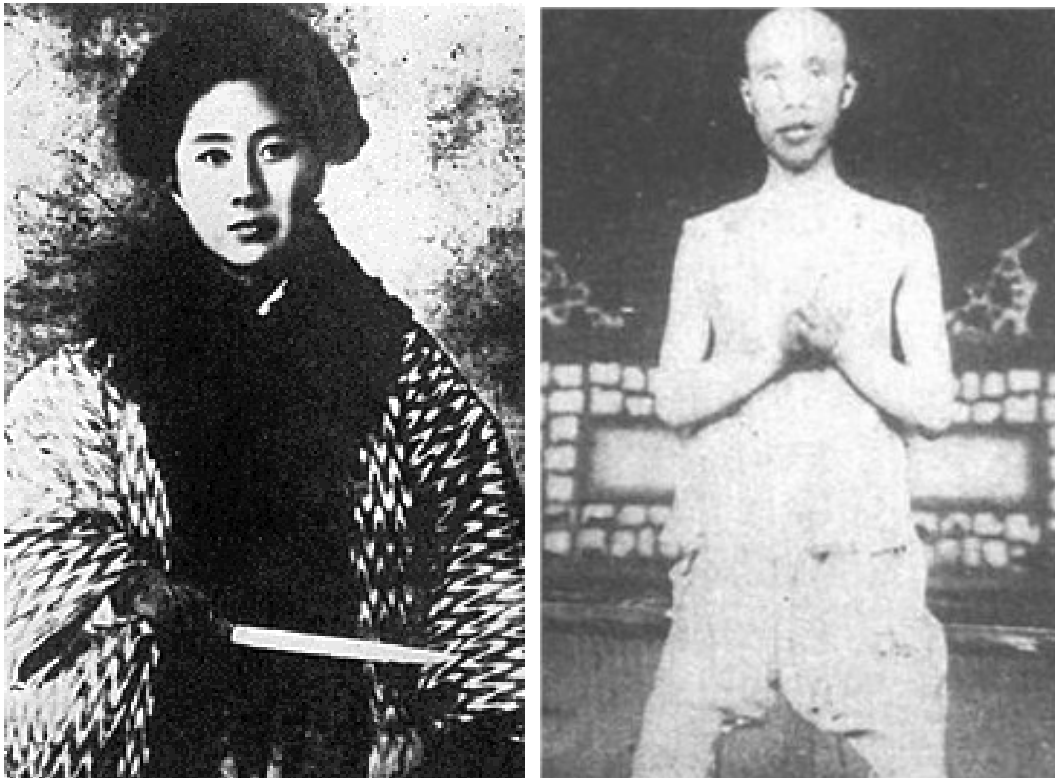


Figure 18 Two radical Chinese revolutionaries Qiu Jin and Xu Xilin who were executed in 1907 for assassinating the governor of Anhui Province.

In 1930, when Ba Jin (1904–2005), one of the best-known modern Chinese writers, retranslated *On the Eve*, again based on Robert d'Humières' French script published in *L'Illustration Théâtrale*, he noted the effect of Li Shizeng's translation on him as a teenager a decade earlier: "It opened up a new world for him, letting him see a grand tragedy about the fight for people's freedom and happiness by a generation of youths in another country" (Ba 1944, 1). This identification of the play with freedom fighters was even more apparent when in 1938, right after the start of the Second Sino-Japanese War, it was transformed into an anti-Japanese play set in Beijing in 1937 with a title *Ziyou hun (Soul of Freedom)*. Again, it ends with a similar plea of continuing struggle by the heroine who had just lost her lover:

Shi: (Widely opens her eye as if just awakened from a dream. She takes a look around and frees herself from Liu's arms) No, I can't cry! Can't cry! (Wipes her tears) I can't cry over this. (Bitterly) Tears, tears can't compensate for his life. (Shouts) I want to step on his blood and march forward! Chinese citizens, arise, arise! (Shouts as if in a trance) Drive out our enemies! Long Live Republic of China! (Curtain quick falls, yet she keeps shouting). (Zhao 1938, 96)

As a naturalist parlor drama, *On the Eve* did not receive massive production until the 1920s by *huaju* groups. Its production record during the *wenmingxi* era was scant. Still, there is indication that the play was indeed staged, probably by Zheng Zhengqiu. In August 1915, shortly after the signing of Twenty-One demands, the People's Voice Society staged a play entitled *Xuwu dang (The Nihilists)* (Seto 2003b, 20) that may have been at least based on *On the Eve*. A more positive clue of its production lies in the fact that it was included in Zheng Zhengqiu's 1919 *One Hundred New Drama Plays*. Curiously, it was not included in the section of "new

Western plays” reserved for either plays adapted from *Stories from Shakespeare* or those adaptations of Western and *shinpa* plays staged at the Spring Willow Theatre. Instead it appears in the main section with a group of plays that are credited as “script of Yaofeng Society, compiled by Zhengqiu.” Yaofeng was the penname of Zheng Zhengqiu who started staging productions under the name Yaofeng Society in 1918, although almost all the plays of this section had received productions earlier by both the New People and the People’s Voice. Since Zheng only wrote for the theatre and not for leisure reading, this inclusion of *On the Eve* seems to confirm its production on *wenmingxi* stage.

As for the reason why the Spring Willow chose *Cry of Injustice* but not *On the Eve* (since they were published at the same time), the answer seems to come down to manageability and aesthetic choice. *Cry of Injustice* was only a one-act comedy with a small cast, while *On the Eve* has three acts and requires a cast of twenty—about half female. What seems more significant, though, is the fact that while *Cry of Injustice* was a comedy, *On the Eve* was a typical naturalist parlor play composed entirely of dialogue with all excitement in offstage scenes, including the climax of the bombing where the emphasis was on Anna’s hesitation over assisting her lover’s suicidal attack and her grief and determination afterwards. By contrast, even the hearing of torture in Sardou’s original setting was not enough in the interrogation scene of *La Tosca*, and so had to be moved onstage. In this sense, the more naturalist depictions of *On the Eve* might easily have failed to attract the attention of The Spring Willow and *wenmingxi* in general, where the influence of *shinpa* necessarily limited its aesthetic scope to romantic and well-made plays. In other words, *wenmingxi* was not for realism or naturalism.

It was definitely a long and tortuous path between the admiring comments of Paris Opera in the 1870s and the anti-colonial productions of *wenmingxi*. And although *wenmingxi* was not as political as *huaju* later turned out to be, it is certainly not a fair judgment to ignore its nationalist intentions in the productions from the Spring Willow in Tokyo, through the Progressive Troupe during the 1911 Revolution, to the People's Voice and the Spring Willow Theatre during the anti-Twenty-One Demands protests in 1915. No doubt the pressure of commercial survival in Shanghai resulted in compromises in both its artistic forms and political content, yet the tumultuous decade of political instability and national peril in which *wenmingxi* found itself almost mandated a nationalist response that any competent theatrical practitioner would be wise to heed, as evinced by the success of Li Shutong, Ren Tianzhi, and Zheng Zhengqiu in staging politically charged productions in the various junctures of this decade.

4. CHAPTER THREE: LITERARY ANALYSIS—TRANSFORMATION OF DRAMATIC LITERATURE

Heinu yutian lu (Black Slave's Cry to Heaven), the first full-length play by the Spring Willow Society in Tokyo in 1907, was a dramatization based on an adaptation of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. *Mingbuping* (*Cry of Injustice*), a one-act play they staged in early 1909, was a correspondence translation of a French comedy. *Relei* (*Hot Tears*), staged later that year as their second full-length production, was based on a *shinpa* adaptation of Victorien Sardou's *La Tosca*. Thus, in its quest for plays at the very beginning of *wenmingxi*, the Spring Willow experimented with three of the four major sources of *shinpa* dramaturgy—apart from writing original plays: *kyakushoku*, dramatization of novels; *hon'yaku*, correspondence translation; and *hon'an*, adaptation of Western plays.

At the same time, Lu Jingruo, apart from appearing in *shinpa* productions and joining Tsubouchi Shōyō's Literary Society, was studying modern European-style playwriting with Osanai Kauro at Fujisawa Asajirō's Tokyo Haiyū Yōseijo (Tokyo Actor's School) (Itō 2004, 70, 74). What he learned from Osanai and Shōyō would not only make him a playwright and translator, but, perhaps more significantly, provide a *shingeki*-based theoretical framework that valued the written script as opposed to the predominant *wenmingxi* practice of using scenarios. As a result, this dynamic of script vs. scenario between the Spring Willow and the other groups like the New People and the People's Voice was reflected not only in their respective repertoire but also in a debate between the two camps.

4.1. SCRIPT OR SCENARIO

The use of scenarios began with the first professional *wenmingxi* group—the Progressive Troupe—where Ren Tianzhi's inspiration was early *shinpa* where “playwrights were the actors

themselves, who freely altered their lines from one performance to another... and many of the plays were written in a kabuki fashion, by a stable house of playwrights and dramatists. Like kabuki, a *shinpa* play was written above all with the actor in mind, with the latter free to follow, or not, the playwright's lines" (Poulton 2001, 23). Although Ren reportedly complained that it was in fact the members of his troupe who preferred ad-libbing rather than following his scripts (Ma 1915, 20) and some of these scripts have survived, they do tend to be sketchy and often leave place holders for improvisation. In fact, Ren was credited for introducing the free rolling and crowd-rousing speech-making roles in the mode of Kawakami Otojirō's *Oppekepe bushi*. For example, one of his earliest plays *Huangjin chixie* (Yellow Gold and Red Blood), which promotes donating funds to the Revolution, concludes with a play within the play and placeholders for two speeches by the protagonist Tiaomei (Ren 1989b, 31):

Theatre Troupe Owner: Today I want to first invite Mr. Tiaomei to make a speech. Then we'll follow with our performance. Do you like it?

[The audience applauds.

[Tiaomei's wife and Tiaomei Junior attentively watch the stage.

[Tiaomei goes on stage and makes a speech.

[The play starts with Ai Er performing a sad scene. The spectators cry and throw money on stage.

[Watching an especially sad moment, Tiaomei's wife and Tiaomei Junior throw flower baskets and newspaper on stage, and wail together.

[Tiaomei goes on stage and makes a speech.

[The End.

Here, Ren Tianzhi created the roll of Tiaomei for himself using his first name in Japanese. The role was of the category *yanlun laosheng* (speech-making older male), which had license to improvise, just as Zheng Zhengqiu did during the Twenty-One Demands crisis in 1915. This role category system would become the norm of most *wenmingxi* troupes except the Spring Willow. A list in the 1914 *Xinju shi* (A History of New Drama) records eight categories for male roles and six for female ones (Zhu 1914, paibie [role categories]). In this system, those specializing in making rousing speeches are called *jilie pai*, where *pai* means role. An obvious homage to traditional theatre, this system facilitated the use of scenarios by enabling the actors to focus on stock speeches and stage business which would turn them into what was known as *huokou*—literally “live mouth,” i.e., adroit ad-libbers, as opposed to *sikou*—“dead mouth.” Ouyang Yuqian recalled an anecdote involving a famous *jilie pai* actor Gu Wuwei when he joined the People’s Voice after the disbandment of the Spring Willow:

At the Spring Willow there were no names for any roles, which the other groups had role divisions.... Since I had quite some experience with scenarios at the latter half of the Spring Willow, I was fairly good at ad-libbing. Still I was flabbergasted by Wuwei’s *jilie pai*. Once I played his lover. At our tryst in the garden, he made a long speech to the audience who gave him thunderous applause. When he finished, he turned to me and said: “I’ve done. Your turn now.” I really froze, was unable to utter a word, and had to make a hasty exit. (Ouyang 1990, 71)

This tale perfectly captures the difference between the two acting styles at the Spring Willow and other *wenmingxi* groups. According to Xu Banmei, a playwright and translator as

well as an excellent comic and farcical actor in this system, the practice was in fact copied from the installment *jingju* plays popular in Shanghai at the time:

This simple method was not the invention of *wenmingxi* actors; rather it was a tradition of *jingju* troupes. Whenever they rehearsed a new play, there was always a table. After some explanation and individual discussions, the show could immediately start. This was because everyone was a “*huokou*” who could most certainly improvise well. They called this table “*tigang*” [outline] and we called it “*mubiao*” [scenario]. (Over the past sixty years, all new plays in episodic installments by the *jingju* troupes were using outlines; not one of them had a script.) This scenario system is very popular in Italian theatre since they have a great number of actors of genius who can utilize the scenario system without a script. (Xu 1957, 62)

Since Xu started writing his memoir in the late 1940s, it unclear if he or anyone knew about *commedia dell'arte* at the time or whether they were comparing themselves to the Italian actors. At any rate, Ouyang Yuqian did, in 1929, second Xu’s opinion that “although nobody used the script, frankly the plays were not bad” (Ouyang 1990, 71). Both of them considered it a necessary evil because of the lack of suitable scripts for the new genre.

If we look at contemporary writings, there was an active debate about the pros and cons of prepared scripts for *wenmingxi* actors. In his article, the actor Xizhui was against using scripts, but he started by listing five points supporting scripts: “the plot and character relations will be clear so that mistakes will not be as porous”; “the actor can prepare for speeches and study expressions so that he can be poised and meticulous once on stage”; “the actor will understand the proper identity of his character so as to speak accordingly”; “a play’s locale and time will be

clear so that the dialogues will be based properly”; and “the order of the dialogue will be set so that major characters will have no reason to rush to their cues and extras will have their turns” (Xizui 1922, 174).

Yet these reasons for using a script was offset by its drawbacks: First, since there were already several times more *wenmingxi* plays than the hundreds of *jingju* scripts, an actor was bound to mix them up and look mechanical on stage if he tried to learn them all. By contrast, “ad-libbing will make the dialogues look natural.” Second, since one person’s talent was limited, scripts would be a constraint to actors good at speech-making. Third, most of those who wrote the scenarios were not true writers and those who write for a living might not want to be bothered with detailed scripts. Here, the volume’s editor Zhou Jianyun commented that in reality, scripts by the average writer were usually either too complicated or too high-minded for the stage while those by theatre people were literarily inadequate. Fourth, what would happen when a script had a good plot but offensive speech? In that case, following the script verbatim would not be tolerated by the audience. Last, most of the scripts borrowed plots, but not actions and dialogues, from novels and *tanci*—a form of story-telling with musical accompaniment popular in and around Shanghai. If an actor was forced to read a script, did it mean he had to follow the novel or the new script with his lines? If the answer was the latter, then the existing novel would make the script look like a presumptuous guest intruding on a host. If the answer was the former, then the original language was usually illogical and unfit for stage. (175)

Some of these arguments reflect the reality of *wenmingxi*’s sudden success when too many low-quality plays and actors occupied the stage. What is more interesting about his reasoning, though, is that it reflected an actor’s deeply-rooted distrust of writers and the traditional chasm between the two professions. Because of the low social status of actors (*you*),

who were often relegated to the lowest social strata with prostitutes (*chang*), *yamen*⁵⁵ runners (*li*), and soldiers (*yi*)—as expressed in the phrase *chang you li yi*—the educated often sought to avoid connection with the theatre. And when they did write plays as literature, their writing did not need to be fit for theatrical performance. In fact, many even made sure to keep their plays’ literary bent through overtly erudite content and language. In Qing Dynasty, this division was manifest in the labeling of *kunqu*, a literati theatrical form, as *yabu* (elegant drama) and all local operas as *huabu* (flower drama).

In a sense, it was similar to the division between *nō* and *kabuki* in Japan where in late Meiji, an antidote to the chasm was found in *shingeki*. Both Shōyō and Osanai were part of the intellectual elite who entered professional theatre by introducing European plays and playwrights. Through Lu Jingruo’s direct contact with both of them, the Spring Willow Theatre attempted, but ultimately failed, to be their Chinese equivalent. Their opening poster in April 1914 listed five distinguishing features: noble scripts, beautiful scenery, appropriate costume, mature art, and hygienic theatre. For them, quality scripts were their most treasured property:

Playwriting is a comprehensive art that encompasses literature, fine art, music, as well as human action and language. An actor needs to follow all these arts and will destroy a play if they are improperly balanced. Therefore a play must be based on a script. Our repertoire includes adaptations of well-known literary novels, translations of famous European and Japanese plays, and original plays scrupulously written by our members. We never borrow from worthless *pingtan*⁵⁶ and popular novels in order to please the

55 “In China, the official headquarters or residence of a mandarin, including court rooms, offices, gardens, prisons, etc.”—*Webster’s Dictionary*

56 A collective term that includes *pinghua*—story-telling without music and *tanci*—story-telling with music. Both forms were popular in Shanghai and surrounding cities like Suzhou.

lower elements of the society. Therefore, our plays are somewhat high-minded and rarely illogical. (Chunliu Juchang 1990)

These were obviously pointed challenges aimed at the New People, the People's Voice, and almost all other theatres that relied on scenarios. They also exuded a confidence about the purity of the Spring Willow's purpose and the maturity of their art. In time, this maturity did become a critical consensus, although as they soon found out, their repertoire was not enough to sustain audience demand for constant new plays:

The high standard of the Society was well-known at the time. That was why many in literary circles enjoyed socializing with us. As for our repertoire, it included both translations and those written by ourselves. That the Spring Willow's plays were based on scripts was known by everyone. The scripts ensured the lines from wandering and provided guidance to actions.... As first, the Spring Willow enjoyed a good reputation and a dedicated group of audience. Later, the pressure for daily new plays forced us to compromise. Since there was no time for script reading and rehearsal, we had to give up scripts. (Ouyang 1990, 56)

At the same time, the Spring Willow had their most vocal advocate in Feng Shuluan who, with the penname Ma Er Xiansheng (Mr. Ma Er), was an active playwright and prolific *wenmingxi* critic and theorist. He also appeared occasionally on the Spring Willow stage. Although he had never been to Japan, it seems most likely that his writings on dramaturgy reflected the views of Lu Jingruo and other members of the theatre:

The script is the primary element of a play, with the second being scenery and third costume. To understand the reason behind this, one has to know that the characters are in fact marionettes whose lines and actions are passive instead of active, mechanical instead of natural. If the actors are passive marionettes, then who is their controller? The script, since it controls when to make an entrance, when to finish an act, when to sit, when to lie down, when to laugh, and when to cry. Everything is dictated by the script which the actor should carefully follow. Therefore, the actor is the marionette and the script is the wires that control it. The person who can manipulate the wires to make the marionette talk and move is none other than the playwright. (Ma 1914c, 2-3)

This description of the actor as the marionette naturally reminds one of Gordon Craig's influential yet often misunderstood 1907 essay "The Actor and the Ueber-Marionette" which, as John Rudlin points out in his study of *commedia dell'arte*, was written when Craig was in voluntary exile in Florence and was

made notorious through misinterpretation. In it he did not advocate, as was generally supposed, the abolition of actors and their replacement with giant puppets, but a symbolical style of acting, based on the creative imagination: "Today [actors] *impersonate* and interpret; tomorrow they must *represent* and interpret; and the third day they must create. By this means style may return." (Rudlin 1994, 164)

At least part of the misunderstanding can be attributed to the vagueness of his original writing which he later clarified. For example, in his 1930 book on Henry Irving, Craig, through the mouth of an imaginary great actor, declares that

when passive, as a good actor should be, I lose all touch—I am no one. That’s why I look for a part which is *active*—a part which, like a vivid personality in real life, seems to have the stage to itself—is only sketched in by the playwright—leaves me much to do, to imagine, to invent. It is my only chance—do you wish to rob me of that? Do so, and you rob yourself. (Craig 1930, 218)

He continues to declare that for a great actor, the best part is “that kind of part which leaves me free—which leaves me plenty of room in which to display my genius... leaves half undone till I do it” (219). By this standard, the best plays are not *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *Othello* or *Lear*, since “these do offer me plenty of room, but do not leave me free” (ibid). In a way, there are certainly similarities between this desire and the views of Xu Banmei and Xizui since both of them are harkening to the traditional Asian theatre that valued the freedom of the actor more than the script. It is in this sense that Craig declares that for his marionette, “in Asia lay his first Kingdom. On the banks of the Ganges they built him his home” (Craig 1970, 384).

What is intriguing from the intercultural point of view is that Feng Shuluan’s use of the marionette metaphor may, via Osanai and Lu, indeed be inspired by a misinterpretation of Craig. After a brief encounter with *shinpa* where he translated and directed an abridged version of *Romeo and Juliet* for Ii Yōhō in 1904, Osanai Kaoru was disillusioned with this hybrid form and devoted the next two years writing about “the latest developments on the European literary scene. He was attracted strongly by the ideas of Edward Gordon Craig, in superficial ways the very antithesis of the *kabuki* theatrical tradition” (Powell 2002, 33). When he founded the Jiyū Gekijō (Free Theatre) in 1909 with the *kabuki* actor Ichikawa Sandanji II and his fellow professional actors, Osanai’s famous dictum to them was—in the misconstrued Craig fashion—“Become amateurs!” (36) In the same year, Osanai was teaching dramaturgy at the Tokyo

Actor's School where Lu Jingruo was a student. Some of the test questions he posed for his "Introduction to Drama" course included "Discuss the relationship between the script and the actor" and "Discuss your thoughts on modern Western plays" (Itō 2004, 74). It seems entirely possible that Osanai's interpretation of Craig's famed metaphor made a deep impression on Lu Jingruo, who subsequently disseminated it to his fellow the Spring Willow actors, like Feng Shuluan, either in rehearsal or through conversation.

The use of script, then, became the preeminent criterion in Feng's division of *wenmingxi* troupes into two categories—the Spring Willow and everyone else, which he called the Progressive Troupe style. In terms of dramaturgy, the former "stress the use of the script which adheres to logic and uses fewer acts. For each act, the plot is usually very complicated. Most of their scripts are translated from foreign plays." In contrast, actors of the Progressive Troupe style "do not use scripts and prefer ad-libbing. Their plays have many acts and each of them contain very simple plots. They focus on dramatizing *tanci* and novels" (Ma 1914c, 2).

Feng goes on to outline the principles of a proper script: First, a play should have a theme, like "tragic fallout between father and son" in Lu Jingruo's *Jiating enyuan ji* (*Love and Hate in a Family*), "hidden tension between mother and daughter in-laws" in *Burugui* (*The Cuckoo*), or "cause of evil in the world" in *Shehui zhong* (*The Bell of Society*). In contrast, many popular plays "seem quite eventful but their themes are unclear." Second, a script should be properly structured like a good essay. Again he utilizes *Love and Hate in a Family* which was performed in seven acts at the Spring Willow with a tight and coherent structure, whereas groups in the Progressive Troupe style staged the same play in ten to twenty tortuous and muddled acts. Third, the actions in a play should have a proper focus instead of blindly copying life. Fourth, the materials in the play should be literary and artistic, not dull and messy.

All these points seem to be observations from the Spring Willow plays. Indeed, apart from translated and adapted plays, Feng only deemed seven original plays worthy of his criteria, six from the Spring Willow Theatre and the seventh by Wang Youyou of the New People Society. Apart from the aforementioned connection between Lu and Osanai, some of the ideas in Feng's article appear to be particularly Japanese. As I mentioned in Chapter One, importing Japanese-coined Chinese words was frequently used at the time to introduce Western concepts. In his description of the third criterion, the need for abstraction, Feng used a curious word combination *shaodian* (literally “burning point”) to mean focal point: “The spatial and temporal dimensions of theatre can not be real. Battle fields and oceans are replaced by scenery; the growth from youth to adulthood is portrayed in minutes or hours. Consequently, the stories in a play are simply taking the *shaodian* of reality and partially describe it” (Ma 1914c, 3). Although this phrase was uncommon and is no longer in use, it is also found in another article on the same issue—the dramaturgical need to focus on the specific points of one's life rather than novel-like meandering. That article's author was Huang Yuansheng (1885-1915), who had studied law at Tokyo's Chuo University and was one of the best-known journalists of the time. Huang plainly states his article was in fact a synthesis of foreign writings on playmaking and quoted theorists like Brander Matthews, which makes it almost certain the foreign origin of the word *shaodian* (Huang 1914). As a similarly outdated word in Japanese, *shaodian* was indeed found in Meiji writings where it is pronounced as *shōten* and means focus. Nowadays, it is replaced by a more common word for “focal point” in both languages: *jiaodian/shōten*. The fact that two articles advocating *wenmingxi* scripts used the same word that originated from Japan is probably a good indication of the theory's origin, with Japan serving yet again as a stop of the theory's eastward movement.

4.1.1. *Jiating enyuan ji (Love and Hate in a Family) and the Scripted Play*

On the top of Feng's list of best *wenmingxi* plays is Lu Jingruo's *Love and Hate in a Family*. According to Ouyang, it was the only complete original script of the the Spring Willow Theatre (Ouyang 1985a, 40). Although the original script is lost, the play was retold in the 1950s by the Spring Willow actor Hu Hensheng. It is generally believed to be fairly close to the original.

Like a typical *shinpa* domestic play, the play is divided into seven acts. It tells the story of Wang Boliang, an officer of the imperial army who comes to riches during the 1911 Revolution by holding on to official supplies. He meets a prostitute Xiao Taohong (Little Cherry Rouge) in Shanghai whom he marries and brings home to Suzhou, followed secretly by her lover Li Jianzhai. When their affair is discovered by Wang's son Chongshen, they scheme against Chongsheng and have him expelled by Wang. Wronged by his father, Chongshen shoots himself with Wang's pistol, driving his fiancée and Wang's stepdaughter Meixian to insanity. When Wang finally finds out Little Cherry Rouge's affair, he kills her, donates his properties to an orphanage, and returns to the army in order to be useful again to the nation.

Love and Hate in a Family was one of the most popular plays of *wenmingxi*, a staple at the Spring Willow, the New People, and the People's Voice (Seto 2004, 51-52). One reason for the play's popularity could be traced to its theatricality. Ouyang recalls that two scenes were especially popular:

The first is when Little Cherry Rouge frames Chongshen for poisoning his father on his birthday. Enraged, Wang threatens to expel his son and then drinks until falling on a couch in his study. Chongshen approaches to explain to his father but is unable to awaken him, his tearful pleas only met with mumbled slurs. Finally Chongshen shoots himself in

despair. With the gunshot, Wang makes a turn but wakes up only after chaotic rambling in the house. The other scene is after Chongshen's death when the deranged Meixian comes to the garden every evening to look for her fiancé, calling for brother. When Wang wants to avoid her in the garden, she approaches him and asks when her brother has gone. He replies: "your brother won't be back!" In performance, this scene was quite frightening. At the time, the actors usually tried to be as realistic as possible: I once saw Jiangshi collapsing on a chair full of tearing after this scene. (Ouyang 1985a, 36)

Ma Jiangshi, who played Meixian, was one of the original members of the Spring Willow Society. He was known for his tragic female roles, include the heroine Namiko in *The Cuckoo*, which he adapted from the Japanese. The Spring Willow was well-known for their gut-wrenching scenes like these two. It was exactly the ability of their scripts to sustain such dramatic tension during drawn-out acts that won them the admiration of critics. Feng Shuluan remarked that:

The first advantage of the scripts of the Spring Willow lies in their division of acts. New drama at other theatres usually last at least five hours with twenty to thirty acts (varying between four to five acts for comedy and seventeen/eighteen to twenty-three/twenty-four acts for drama). Taking twenty-four acts for example, there are four acts in an hour with each averaging fifteen minutes. With three to four minutes occupied by scene change, each act takes no more than eleven to twelve minutes. This kind of new drama is like a trotting horse lamp [*zoumadeng*] where each act is perfunctory. On the other hand, plays at the Spring Willow Theatre last four hours every night with ten acts at the maximum, five or six at the minimum, and seven to eight in average. With every act lasting more

than thirty minutes, the actors are able to fully display their artistry, the narration is allowed to expand, and the audience can enjoy the concentrated tension as opposed to glimpsing through the acts like looking at flowers while riding on horseback. (Ma 1914a, 7-8)

With Lu's background in *shinpa* and European theatre, it is easy to see where Lu obtained his inspiration. One of his sources seems to be Shakespeare, with whom he was familiar through his involvement in the Literary Society production of *Hamlet* in 1911 (Nakamura 2004b, 26) and adaptation of Kawakami's version of *Othello*. The black general was at least a partial model for Wang Boliang who, in the words of Ouyang, was believed by Lu to be "simple-minded and superficial but also straightforward and naive" (Ouyang 1985a, 35). The play's climax, when Wang kills Little Cherry Rouge and comes close to taking his own life, clearly emulates *Othello*. In both cases an enraged husband kills his wife/concubine for what they believe as adultery before (attempting) taking his own life. There are certain differences of course in the two cases as Desdemona is innocent of the accused crime, while Little Cherry Rouge openly questions adultery as sinful for a prostitute. Still, the dramatic highlight in both plays remains the back and forth between the hero and the heroine before one kills the other. As for Lu's decision to spare Wang's life, it appears to be a concession to the traditional Chinese aversion to total carnage on stage, a topic I will further discuss in the last section of this chapter in conjunction with Lu's adaptation of the *shinpa* plays.

Meixian's insanity, on the other hand, apparently came from Ophelia's mad scene from *Hamlet*. More specifically, the stage effect Lu sought to establish was most likely inspired by Literary Society's 1911 production. Here is an excerpt from Act Six of the play (Lu 1989, 238-39):

[Enter Meixia, gaunt, in disheveled mourning clothes, distracted]

Meixian: Brother, brother! ... Why did you abandon me? Why did you leave me alone?

...*(Looking up at the sky where a full moon is suddenly covered by rising dark cloud)* Moon, moon, did you hide away because you don't want to see me? Come out fast! Oh, abominable dark cloud. Why did you cover the moon? I hate you!
(Crosses to the flowers, picks up one and sings) Flowers bloom and fade year after year. No one returns once they're dead! *(Suddenly staring forward)* Ah! Aren't you my brother? I've got a flower for you here. Brother, brother, you can't leave anymore! *(Springs forward for an embrace, in vain)* Brother, why do you evade me! Oh, I know, you don't like me. *(Collapses on the floor, weeps, desperately tears up the flower in hand and throws the petals up, which falls down like rain. Then stands up and seems Boliang. Leaps forward to embrace Boliang's knees, crying)* Brother, brother, you are here....



Figure 19 Matsui Sumako as the deranged Ophelia in the Literary Society production of *Hamlet*. (Photo courtesy of Waseda University's Tsubouchi Shōyō Theatre Museum.)

Lu Jingruo was part of the Literary Society's 1911 production of *Hamlet* in which he most likely played one of the guards (Nakamura 2004b, 25). This explains his familiarity with the text and production of *Hamlet*, notably Ophelia's mad scene in Act 4, Scene 5 in which she enters "distracted" and sings: "He is dead and gone, lady;/ He is dead and gone;/ At his head a grass-green turf;/ At his heels a stone.... Larded all with sweet flowers;/ Which bewept to the grave did not go/ With true-love showers." As shown in Figure 1 and Lu's stage directions, he was obviously envisioning this scene in the mode of the Literary Society production, from looking up to the moon, to the use of flowers, to falling down petals.

Some scholars also hint that the other scene mentioned by Ouyang, the one in which the son Chongshen shoots himself for being misunderstood by his father, could be inspired by Hamlet since “such depiction of the misery [of being wronged by the father] had probably never been seen in traditional Chinese theatre” (Seto 2004, 57). This scene takes place in Act Five when Chongshen, after being ordered by his father to leave the house, appears disheveled, covers up his drunk and sleeping father with his own jacket, weeps in front of his dead mother’s portrait, and readies to shoot himself with Wang’s pistol when Meixian comes on stage. Although his suffering may have been inspired by Hamlet and the conversation between him and Meixian motivated by the Hamlet and Ophelia’s “Get thee to a nunnery” dialogue in Act 3 Scene 1, Lu’s act is much more melodramatic than tragic since the tension of the dialogue is premised on the hidden gun with which Chongshen was about to shoot himself before Meixian comes on stage and which he does use on himself as soon as he succeeds in getting Meixian to exit.

I will further pursue the issue of tragedy vs. melodrama and the role of the latter in *shinpa* and *wenmingxi* in the third section in of this chapter, using *Love and Death in a Family* as a prime example. For now, I would like to continue the discussion about scripted plays vs. scenarios by looking at the dramatization process of *Konggu lan (Orchid of the Hollow Valley)* from a European novel to the best example of *wenmingxi* scenarios.

4.1.2. *Konggu lan (Orchid of the Hollow Valley)* and Dramatization

Having examined *Love and Death in a Family* as an example of the Spring Willow-oriented original plays, I would like to shift attention to a popular play of the New People and the People’s Voice—*Konggu lan (Orchid of the Hollow Valley)*—in order to examine the process of how a popular scenario might be turned into a script through a good cast and repeated staging. In addition, *Orchid of the Hollow Valley*, as with most plays of these two and most other *wenmingxi*

groups, was based on a novel, thus giving us a chance to examine the process of *wenmingxi* dramatization (*Kyakushoku*). Finally, the novel was translated from Japanese and was originally based on an English dime novel, therefore, affording us the first opportunity to examine the intercultural transfer of popular literature from Europe through Japan to China.

Kyakushoku is the Japanese term used, among others, to describe the common *shinpa* practice of dramatizing domestic novels that created many best-known hits for stage. It was such a popular practice that it almost dominated the *shinpa* stage with such dramatized pieces like *Hototogisu* (*The Cuckoo*) originally by Tokutomi Roka, *Konjiki yasha* (*The Gold Demon*) by Ozaki Kōyō, as well as *Onoga tsumi* (*My Crime*) and *Chikyōdai* (*Foster Sisters*) by Kikuchi Yūho. The Spring Willow Society followed the same model right from the start when they dramatized Liu Shu's version of *Black Slave's Cry to Heaven*. Back in Shanghai, on top of adapting many *shinpa* plays for *wenmingxi*, they and other *wenmingxi* groups also dramatized a number of novels.

The novel form of *Orchid of the Hollow Valley* was translated by Bao Tianxiao from *Nonohana* (*The Wild Flower*) by Kuroiwa Ruikō that was originally serialized in Tokyo's *Yorozu Chōhō* newspaper in 1900 and then published in book form in 1909 (Itō 1988, 431). Bao's translation was serialized in the following year in Shanghai's *Shi Bao* (Eastern Times). Bao Tianxiao (1876-1973) was a well-known novelist, translator, and newspaper and magazine editor of late Qing and early Republic. Although he knew little English, his translation of *Joan Haste* with his cousin was so popular it was adopted by Wang Zhongsheng and Ren Tianzhi in 1908. Bao had briefly studied Japanese in his hometown Suzhou with a Japanese monk and continued to read Japanese books. He translated quite a few Japanese novels, some of which were adapted for the *wenmingxi* stage. In his memoir, he recalled:

My Japanese was adequate, although not enough to understand those passages with too much *wabun* [Japanese text] or idioms. As a result, I did not like novels written by the Japanese themselves and instead chose those translated from the West. My favorite was their elderly writer Morita Shiken because of his excellent Chinese and fluent translations, which were all from French. Another writer who had also translated many Western novels was Kuroiwa Ruikō. (Bao 1974, 1, 174).

Of the two Japanese translators he mentioned, Morita Shiken (1861-1897) was an important Meiji translator whose Japanese versions of Alexandre Dumas, Jules Verne, and Victor Hugo exerted great influence on a generation of writers, including Izumi Kyōka, a novelist who was one of the most important sources for *shinpa* (Poulton 2001, 25, 27). Bao translated a number of Morita's versions to Chinese, including Verne's *Two Years' Vacation* (*Deux Ans de vacances*) and *The Begum's Millions* (*Les Cinq cents millions de la Begum*), and helped to stoke a science fiction frenzy in late Qing (Chen 7). He also translated Verne's *Michel Strogoff* from Morita. Kuroiwa Ruikō (1862-1920), the author of the Japanese *The Wild Flower*, was known as the father of detective stories in Japan through his translations and is mostly remembered today for his adaptation of Hugo's *Les Miserables* and Dumas's *Count of Monte Cristo*. He had studied English in Osaka and Tokyo where he founded the newspaper *Yorozu Chōhō* (*Ten Thousand Years Intelligence*) in 1892. In a way, there were many similarities between Kuroiwa and Bao, both domestically-educated intellectuals feasting on world literature and then feeding them to their eager readers who were indiscriminately receptive to Western literature.

Although there is no doubt of *The Wild Flower*'s English origin, scholars have so far been unable to identify its source, although some suspect it as one of the hundreds of dime

novels published by Bertha B. Clay (originally a penname for Charlotte Mary Brame (1836-1884)) that were highly popular in Meiji Japan (Iizuka 1998, 94). One of the novels written by Brame, *Dora Thorne*, formed the base of Kikuchi Yūho's novel *Chikyōdai*, which was later turned into a *shinpa* classic. As an indication of the cavalier attitude towards authorship and authenticity, neither Kuroiwa nor Bao provided any information about the source of their translation for *The Wild Flower* or *Orchid of the Hollow Valley*. The Chinese serialization did not indicate that it was a translated piece. It was simply published as *xiaoshuo* (novel) with *Konggu lan* as its title and *Xiao* (Bao Tianxiao's penname) as its author.

Still, apart from an added diatribe in the first episode about the social functions of novels, Bao's translation appears to be quite faithful to the Japanese (Iizuka 1998, 100). Both versions localized the name of the characters but kept the English background intact. In fact, the illustrations that accompanied each installment of the Chinese version made clear its Western setting.



Figure 20 An illustration from the serialized novel *Konggu lan (Orchid of the Hollow Valley)* translated by Bao Tianxiao. From April 3 (May 11 in solar calendar), 1910 of *Shi bao (Eastern Times)*.

The novel is set in England between London and the countryside. The synopsis of the Chinese version is as follows:

When Taocun Shijie dies fighting for the British army in India, he asks his friend baron Lansun to notify his father Zhengyi and sister Renzhu, who are living in the countryside. When Lansun breaks the news to them, he is struck by Renzhu's unpretentious manners and eventually proposes to her. Back in London, Lansun's engagement is met with indignation by his mother because she wants Lansun to marry his cousin Rouyun who has been living with them. Undeterred, Lansun marries Renzhu and, after three months of honeymoon, brings her to London to live with his mother and cousin. However,

Rouyun's jealousy finds Renzhu easy prey, as she is unaccustomed to London's social etiquette at such occasions as a Christmas party or meeting the Queen. Even several years after the birth of their son Liangyan, Renzhu is still not at ease with her surroundings. One day, she overhears Rouyun maligning her in front of Lansun and decides to return home with her maid Cui'er, who wears Renzhu's clothes for the trip. During an accident at the railway station, Cui'er is crushed under a train and is mistaken for Renzhu. After a period of grief, Lansun marries Rouyun. Several years later, Renzhu returns incognito as Mrs. Youlan to teach at the family's school. She is loved by Liangyan who longs for his lost mother and is mistreated by Rouyun, who now has her own son and worries about primogeniture. One night, when Liangyan is sick, Rouyun attempts to switch his medicine with poison but is discovered by Renzhu. The two women struggle for the medicine until Renzhu reveals her identity. The irritated Rouyun runs out in a carriage driven by two untamed ponies and is crushed to death when the carriage overturns. Eventually, Renzhu reveals her identity to her inquiring mother-in-law, reconciles with her husband, the family lives happily ever after.

Unlike the present practice of using the phonetic with *katakana* script for foreign names, Meiji translations/adaptations of Western novels customarily gave their characters Japanese names that were written in *kanji* (Chinese characters) but sounded close to the original when read in the Japanese way known as *kunyomi* ("meaning" reading). For Chinese translators/adaptors of these Japanese works, if a name looked and sounded—when read in the Chinese way known as *onyomi* ("sound" reading)—Chinese enough, it was usually kept intact or with slight changes. But if a name sounded overtly Japanese, it was usually Sinicized. In the case of *Orchid of the*

Hollow Valley,⁵⁷ Baron Semizu Kiyoshi, written as 瀨水冽 and pronounced as Laishui Lie in Chinese, is slightly changed to Lansun (蘭蓀, Fragrant Orchid). The heroine's family name Suemura (陶村, Taocun) is kept in Bao's version, but her given name Sumiko (澄子, Chengzi) is purely Japanese and thus changed to Renzhu (紉珠). In Japanese *sumi* means clarity and *ko* is a typical suffix for a girl. In Chinese *ren* means endurance and *zhu* means pearl. Similarly, her antagonist Aoyagi Shinako (青柳品子, Qingliu Pinzi) becomes Qingliu Rouyun (青柳柔雲). While the *shina* in Shinako means dignity, her Chinese name Rouyun means pliable cloud. Perhaps the most significant change of the names is when Renzhu returns to teach as Mrs. Youlan (幽蘭, serene orchid), which is changed from a typical Japanese surname Kawata (河田, river land). This change gives rise to the title of the Chinese novel *Konggu lan (Orchid of the Hollow Valley)*.

In Chinese literature, the orchid, with its straight leaves, simple white flowers, and light but enduring fragrance, has traditionally been linked to decency and purity. Here, this simple purity of the orchid is further enhanced by its location in the hollow valley, far from the maddening crowd. In fact, the title is most likely inspired by a well-known Qing Dynasty poem by Liu Hao with its first stanza as: “*Lan sheng yougu wuren shi/ Ke zhong dongxuan yi wo xiang/ Zhi you qingfen neng jiehui/ Geng lian xiye qiao lingshuang.*”⁵⁸ (The orchid growing in deep valley is unknown/ Planted in East room its fragrance touches me/ I see the light scent can dispel filth/ And marvel at its tender leaves that nimbly defy frost). Bao obviously found the orchid from afar a befitting image for Renzhu's countryside purity and tenacity. In addition, he also played a word game by linking the names of the hero (Lansun) and heroine (Youlan) in the

⁵⁷ The names of the Japanese version is from (Iizuka 1998, 100-01).

⁵⁸ 兰生幽谷无人识，客种东轩遗我香。知有清芬能解秽，更怜细叶巧凌霜。

character *lan* (orchid), just like the quintessential tragic pair in Chinese literature Baoyu and Daiyu of *Honglou meng* (*Dream of the Red Chamber*) where the word *yu* (jade) is inlaid in their names.

In 1914, the novel was dramatized into a *wenmingxi* play with great success. In time, it became the third most staged play of the New People Society and sixth at the People's Voice, the two most popular companies of the era (Seto 2001, 119; Seto 2003c, 3). Ouyang Yuqian noted that after the merger of the New People into the People's Voice, "*Orchid of the Hollow Valley* continued to be a box-office hit. Because of its numerous stagings, it appeared especially polished after its move to the People's Voice where its dialogue was settled. As a result, it appeared especially sound compared to other plays" (Ouyang 1985b, 76). Writing in the politically charged 1957 when a play's political function was of the utmost value, he ascribed its success to "the many coincidences and artificial twists and turns in the plot. Neither enlightening nor artistic, its box-office success relied on moving depictions of love between husband and wife, mother and son, which suited the taste of the stereotypical *xiaoshimin* (little urbanites)" (77). Still, he could not help but praise the actors who were in fact the ones who created and perfected the lines:

The principal actors in this play, like Ling Lianying's Renzhu, Wang Youyou's Rouyun, and Wang Wukong's Lansun were all exceptional in creating compelling characters.

Wang Youyou was particularly brilliant in portraying an upper-class, well-educated, glib, smart, and sharp-tongued girl. Many in the audience would watch it time and again.

Some even memorized the catchy sayings in the lines. (77)

Wang Youyou (1888-1937), originally trained at Nanjing Naval College, was one of the first student new drama activists in Shanghai. Apart from acting, he was also good at writing poetry, stories, and plays. Before his untimely death, he had planned to write a novel of the underworld since “he was really observant of that universe and knew all its slang, jargons, and codes” (Xu 1957, 114). As Ouyang testifies, *Orchid of the Hollow Valley* represented the most ideal outcome of the scenario system, based on a moving novel and perfected by a talented and stable cast. Xu Banmei jokingly called this format “futurist collective playwriting” (*weilapai jiti bianju*):

By using the scenario, if this play was staged two or three times (as long as the cast remained intact) even with no script, everyone would know their lines well and the dialogue would be tight. So this live script would become a fixed one which would not change over tens or hundreds of times. By then, the lack of a script has turned into one, only this shapeless script was stored in everyone’s mind, not written on paper. (Xu 1957, 63)

In the 1950s, *Orchid of the Hollow Valley* in the format of seven acts and fourteen scenes was retold by Fang Yiye and was collected in a series of *tongsu huaju* (popular *huaju*, as what was left of *wenmingxi* came to be known) scripts (Fang 1959). The play also exists in a scenario of thirty acts in the 1914 *Xinju kao* (*New Drama Scenarios*) edited by Fan Shiqu. Since the play premiered in early 1914 (Yihua 1922, 214), Fan’s scenario is presumably close to the original form, while the 1959 retelling should probably be considered as the stabilized form. Therefore, a comparison between these two versions will shed light on the role of actors in the process of *wenmingxi* playmaking.

True to *wenmingxi* and *shinpa* fashion, the 1914 version is already localized by moving London to Shanghai and India to Mongolia. The Outer Mongolia had been under Qing rule as part of China but after the 1911 Revolution, it declared independence with the backing of Russia. This independence was not recognized by the Republican government and remained a focus of heated nationalism throughout the Republican era. Therefore, the play's adapters apparently considered Mongolia an appropriate substitute for India. Apart from locale, the play also eliminated or Sinicized distinctly English or Western customs, like playing the piano, meeting the Queen, and hosting the Christmas party, all occasions to underscore Renzhu's countryside upbringing and awkward social skills. To make up for this, the 1914 scenario utilizes a wedding banquet and the 1959 script adds a *majiang* party, although by then Renzhu has grown to be well-liked. The play also eliminates the honeymoon and any discussion of primogeniture, a popular device of Victorian novels for evil stepparents that found no equivalence in China.

The following is the outline of the 1914 scenario (Fan 1914):

- Act 1 A room in Tao's house. Shijie decides to join the army.
- Act 2 Army camp in Mongolia. Shijie volunteers as messenger for the besieged Chinese army.
- Act 3 Forest in Mongolia. Shijie being wounded by Mongolian army.
- Act 4 Army camp. Shijie's dying wishes to Baron Lansun.
- Act 5 Same as Act 1. Lansun informs Tao and Renzhu of Shijie's death.
- Act 6 Same. Lansun's awkward proposal to Renzhu. Comic scene.
- Act 7 Lansun's home. He informs his mother and Rouyun about his engagement.
- Act 8 Wedding scene near Tao's home. Comical remarks by an old scholar.
- Act 9 Same as Act 1. Father and daughter's tearful farewell.

- Act 10 A room in Lan's house. Arrival of the new couple. Lansun's mother likes the bride but Rouyun is sarcastic.
- Act 11 Living room in Lansun's house. Renzhu's clumsiness at a banquet.
- Act 12 Bedroom. Birth of their son Liangyan.
- Act 13 Garden. Liangyan is hurt by another boy but Renzhu is too shy to stand up for him.
- Act 14 Living room. Lansun declines the invitation of a friend to go out and play.
- Act 15 Garden. Rouyun disparages Renzhu to Lansun and the latter is unable to defend herself.
- Act 16 Renzhu's room. She leaves a note and decides to flee with maid Cui'er.
- Act 17 Train station. Renzhu and Cui'er exchange clothes and bid farewell.
- Act 18 Same. Cui'er's death in train accident and misidentification for Renzhu.
- Act 19 Lansun's living room. He receives a telegram about Renzhu's death but does not believe it.
- Act 20 Renzhu's room. All shocked to find her note. Liangyan's innocent cry for mom.
- Act 21 Hospital. Lansun weeps at a Cui'er's mistaken body.
- Act 22 Renzhu's tomb. Lansun and father-in-law face off. Renzhu mourns Cui'er.
- Act 23 Lansun's living room. Renzhu comes in disguise to interview as the new governess.
- Act 24 Study. Liangyan tells Renzhu how he misses his mother.
- Act 25 Same. Liang recognizes Renzhu as his mother from a portrait. Lansun also suspects so.
- Act 26 Liangyan's room. Rouyun, already having own son, mistreats Liangyan.

Act 27 Living room. More mistreatment of Liangyan by Rouyun.

Act 28 Study. Liangyan sick in bed. Rouyun and Renzhu's fight for medicine. Rouyun runs away in a carriage.

Act 29 Living room. Rouyun's dead body brought on stage.

Act 30 Garden. Renzhu reveals her identity to her mother-in-law. All reconciled.

In contrast, the 1959 version is condensed to seven acts with each of the first six divided into two scenes (three for Act Five). The first scene of each act has proper set pieces and the second (and third in Act Five) is performed in front of an inner curtain as a *muwai* (out of curtain) scene to facilitate set change. This was *wenmingxi*'s answer to the non-stop actions of *jingju* where set pieces were limited and changed by the supposedly invisible stagehands.

Ironically, this use of an inner curtain for set change was later adopted by *jingju* reformists who dismissed the stagehand as unnatural. At the same time, the use of stagehand (*kuroko*) is maintained in *kabuki* and is often hailed as an example of pure theatricality of Asian theatre.

In this fully-developed script, the dialogues are fully developed and Baron Lansun acquires a family name Ji while Renzhu's family name Taocun, unusual for a Chinese surname, simply becomes Tao (Fang 1959):

Act 1

Scene 1 Tao's house. Lansun informs Tao and Renzhu of Shi's death. (Lights off).

Lansun's proposal to Renzhu.

Scene 2 *Muwai* (out of inner curtain). Ji's house. Mrs. Ji and Rouyun discuss marriage between her and the baron, only to be crushed by the latter's arrival and announcement of his engagement.

Act 2

Scene 1 Wedding. Encouraged by Rouyun, guests make fun of Renzhu.

Scene 2 *Muwai*: Garden. Getting Cui'er as maid. Naming the baby Liangyan. Renzhu grows sharper in retorting Rouyun.

Act 3

Scene 1 Another house. A *majiang* party. Guests at the wedding have come to like Renzhu and despise Rouyun who plans revenge for being snubbed.

Scene 2 *Muwai*. Rouyun disparages Renzhu to Lansun. Renzhu overhears it.

Act 4

Scene 1 Renzhu and Cui'er plan leaving.

Scene 2 *Muwai*. Train station. Renzhu leaves Cui'er to get a photograph of Liangyan from a studio. Train crash. Lansun chases Renzhu to the station and witnesses the accident.

Act 5

Scene 1 Mrs. Ji forces Lansun to marry Rouyun.

Scene 2 *Muwai*. Interview of three governesses with the first two in comic jest. The third is Renzhu disguised as Mrs. Youlan.

Scene 3 *Muwai*. Liangyan likes Renzhu and is mistreated by Rouyun.

Act 6

Scene 1 Liangyan is sick. Renzhu discovers Rouyun changing medicine bottles.

Scene 2 *Muwai*. Fight between the two women until Renzhu reveals her identity. Rouyun runs away in carriage. Renzhu comforts mother-in-law. Rouyun's body brought on stage.

Act 7

Renzhu reveals her identity to mother-in-law and husband. Liangyan runs to embrace mother.

The two versions provide good examples of how a *wenmingxi* play matures through repeated staging. The 1914 version is much closer to the novel with linear progression and many transitional scenes. It spends the first four acts on Shijie's volunteering for the army and death in the war. This section is eliminated in the later version which begins with the old Mr. Tao and Renzhu eagerly waiting for the newspaper so as to learn about the latest news of an unspecified war, with no mention of Mongolia. The facts of Shijie's death are naturally revealed by Lansun.

The later version also eliminates such purely transitional scenes as Acts 8 and 9 (wedding and farewell), 12 (birth of Liangyan), 14 (Lansun unable to enjoy himself with friends). It also condenses several acts. For example, while it takes six acts in the earlier version (Acts 17 through 22) to stage the facts of and reaction to the train crash, it is accomplished later by having Lansun follow Renzhu to the train station and discover the (mistaken) tragedy on the spot. Similarly, the time lapse required to show Lansun's growing affection for Renzhu (Acts 5 and 6 in 1914) is solved theatrically through a simple blackout in Act 1, Scene 1. Finally, Liangyan's misery with his stepmother and his longing for his mother, which runs four acts in the early version (24 to 27), is covered in only one scene (5-3) in the mature script.

As I have discussed, Feng Shuluan was well aware of the advantages of limited number of acts. So was the journalist Huang Yuansheng, who wrote that while the pace of a novel should be to be "leisurely and tortuous," a play script "should carefully differentiate the happenings of present and past" and "find the closest and most direct path" since Western plays usually only focus on one critical event, the "burning point" (*shaodian*), in one's life. Economy is the first

principle of playwriting. His other principles, all pertinent for the *wenmingxi* stage, include creation of characters suited for performance not reading, employment of stage dynamics and crises to avoid “quiet” plays, and utilization of everyday natural language (Huang 1914, 3-4).

In the 1959 version of *Orchid of the Hollow Valley*, the influence of Feng and Huang’s articles are obvious. After condensing acts and trimming transitions, additional scenes and characters are added and each scene is allowed ample time to develop. For example, four aristocratic women guests are inserted in two scenes to highlight Renzhu’s winning character. They first appear in the wedding scene (2-1) where, manipulated by Rouyun to interpret Renzhu’s shyness as arrogance, they trick her into babysitting tea cups so that these “city cups” will not run away. By their appearance in a *majiang* party in the next act (3-1), though, the women have come to know Renzhu’s kindness, so they apologize to her and turned their cold shoulders to Rouyun. This scene also serves to naturally bring out Rouyun’s ire, triggering her to smear Renzhu and drive the latter to the train station.

Apart from structural fluidity, the 1959 script stands out mostly for its theatricality, character development, and dialogue. Jocular sayings, double-entendre, farcical jests, comedy of errors, monologues, and asides are abundant. By and large, they do tend to bear out Ouyang Yuqian’s praise for the actors like Wang Youyou, who plays Rouyun, in creating memorable lines.

The following is an excerpt from Act 2, Scene 1 when Lansun’s mother and Rouyun (Yun) meet Renzhu for the first time:

Mother:.... (To Rouyun) Come take a look. How beautiful she is!

Yun: Aunt! There’s a saying: “A person is dressed up; Buddha is gilded.”

Mother: You're right. There's another proverb: she who is born beautiful is a real beauty.

Those who are not can try and look like goose heads and duck necks. She is from the country, but her skin is fair and delicate. Even some people from the city are no match for her.

Yu: Oh, aunt. Today she is the bride. Of course she needs to put on lots of makeup. To me, her fair and delicate skin only comes from make-up. It's like....

Mother: Like what?

Yun: Like remodeling. It all relies on the decoration. Once the paint fades, her true color will come out.

Mother: (Doubting) You might be right, but I don't think so. (Spitting on her finger and rubbing Renzhu's arm) Let me rub it. (Examines the rubbed arm. Then looks at Rouyun's shoulder.) She didn't use much powder. (Unwittingly) Rouyun, you put on more powder than she. And her skin is fairer than yours.

Yun: (Ashamed. Protesting) That's because I need to entertain the guests. Otherwise I don't need any makeup.

Mother: Of course. You're right.

Yun: It's also like....

Mother: Like what now?

Yun: Like a copper-nickel lock on a gilded trunk—attractive outside and empty inside.

She's also like an embroidered pillow—shining bright outside but a bag of hay inside. (Fang 1959, 74-75)

The dialogue reminds one of some of Shakespeare's and Moliere's lines, reveling in pure enjoyment of word barbs with frequent usage of proverbs. It may not be great literature, but the lines certainly made effective theatre.

4.2. ADAPTATION VS. TRANSLATION

4.2.1. Critical Views

For *wenmingxi*, the predominant mode of dealing with foreign scripts was adaptation and localization. In reality, the degree of change varied greatly from the rather faithful to complete Sinicization depending on access to the original script, the view point of the translator/adaptor, and their vision of the purpose of the script—whether it was intended for reading or production.

Because of *shinpa* and *wenmingxi*'s preference for localization, scholars have for a long time disparaged their literary and theatrical values and ignored them as forerunners of modern theatres in Japan and China, an honor often reserved for *shingeki* and *huaju*. As James Brandon points out in his analysis of the three Shakespeares in Asia:

From the beginning Asian critics and scholars have derided localized Shakespeare. In part this is because critics hold very different interests and values than the practitioners and audiences of popular theatre. Critics and scholars are necessarily members of a small, highly educated elite, the same class that supports and produces canonical Shakespeare in Asia, while popular performers are from the lower, or at least less-educated, classes in society. When university professor and scholar of English literature Tsubouchi Shōyō wrote that Kawakami had "extinguished the greatness" of *Othello* by turning a "historical play into ordinary domestic drama," he was expressing a typical canonical abhorrence of bastardizing Shakespeare's authentic text. (Brandon 1997, 16)

While many *wenmingxi* actors were fairly well-educated, it is an accurate assessment in the sense that both *shinpa* and *wenmingxi* were aimed at the commercial audience while *shingeki* and *huaju* were geared towards the more educated. As Brandon sees it, “popular performers sought validation in local audience approval, and this is a source of validation that few canonical critics or scholars can accept” (17):

Even though some current critical postures allow greater value to localized Shakespeare, still localization remains an easy mark for ridicule. The superior attitude of the canonical critic shows in such recent comments that it is "outrageous" for Kawakami to ride a bicycle on stage in Hamlet, that a *kabuki* version of Shakespeare is "garbled," that localized Shakespeare in China loses "Shakespeare's original spirit" and is "pandering to popular taste," and that "pseudo-Shakespeare" in India is a "travesty". These remarks are found within otherwise even-handed descriptions of popular Shakespeare, but they surely miss the point. Kawakami was not trying to play an Anglo-Danish Hamlet; he was playing a young Japanese man of the early twentieth century for whom riding a bicycle was perfectly normal. Adaptors are creating new versions of stories, they are not "garbling" some canonical text. (16-17)

As Scott Miller shows in his *Adaptations of Western Literature in Meiji Japan*, this practice of localization was in fact not unique to *shinpa*, but part of the evolving strategies in Japan's introduction of Western literature and culture. Like Brandon, Miller casts doubt on the merit of preferring correspondence translation over adaptation:

Although from many perspectives the lack of correspondence between the original text and the Japanese translation is cause for comment, the denigration underlying most of the

critics' judgments reflects a naïveté about what Japanese translators were after, and unfairly imposes preferences for literal translation upon a culture that did not share those preferences. In Meiji Japan literal and adaptive translations were not necessarily seen as superior and inferior, respectively, but rather as two different modes of translation representing two very different agendas: expediency and art. (Miller 2001, 11)

He explains that while “nonliterary works, such as diplomatic and technical documents, as well as medical and scientific texts..., retained their propensity to be translated literally throughout the Meiji period” (12),

[f]or the first half of the Meiji period adaptation served as the primary translation standard for literary, dramatic, and lyric texts. The widespread appropriation of Western goods in Meiji Japan gave adaptive translation, which sought to bring the foreign text into line with domestic sensibilities, a distinct advantage over literal translation, which often came through the metamorphosis retaining a great deal of its strangeness, especially in the realm of literature. Over time adaptation was eclipsed by literal translation as Japanese readers became more comfortable with foreign literary styles, but for several decades literature, in keeping with traditional Japanese artistic sensibilities for variation and elaboration, found its Japanese incarnation as noncorrespondent, often broadly transformed, adaptations. (11-12)

Miller dissects three examples of *hon'anmono* (adapted tales of foreign origin), including Tsubouchi Shōyō's adaptation of an American melodramatic novel entitled *The False Friend*. He concludes:

More often than not these curious adaptations, blending Japanese settings with dramatic Western images and sensibilities, catered to readers whose Japanese version of Orientalism—or Occidentalism—sought reinforcement for their exoticized views of the West in imported cultural artifacts.... [I]n effect, *correspondence* has been compromised in favor of smooth reception. Many early Meiji *hon'an* tamed the strangeness of the original by resetting the tales in Japan and giving the characters Japanese names. Only the bare bones of the plot remained from the original stories. In later decades, however, as foreign geography became a commonplace in Japanese printed media, translators added more and more foreign settings. (Miller 2001, 114)

Faced with exactly the situation and with the added benefit of *shinpa* precedence, *wenmingxi* adapters of European and *shinpa* plays chose basically the same route, though the role of Japan as a medium did complicate the situation. For example, the Spring Willow was performing to different audiences in Tokyo and Shanghai, with the former more educated and informed about the West than the average spectator in Shanghai. In addition, there was also a difference between the adaptations from Japanese, which were more geared toward stage production, and the majority of correspondence translations directly from Europe, which were mostly published as literature. In fact, when there were two versions available, one correspondence translation and the other adaptation, the latter was usually preferred for stage while the former usually ended up in literary magazines. And finally, as the years progressed, there did seem to be a trend towards literal translation. Miller is certainly correct to state that

it is important to remember that, though the contrasts are most striking at the poles, both aesthetically and commercially successful translations often fall somewhere in between,

since translation taken to one extreme or the other yields either painful literalness or wild license. The former is nearly unintelligible in the target language, while the latter preserves next to nothing from the source text. Even the most "faithful" and literal translation must of necessity make certain concessions in favor of the target language, especially when source and target languages are far removed temporally or culturally. Likewise, the most free-ranging adaptation must still preserve some trace of the original.

(16)

4.2.2. *Angelo* and Translation/Adaptation of European Plays

Victor Hugo and Victorien Sardou were the two favorite European playwrights of *wenmingxi*. While Sardou's *Tosca* was one of the biggest hits, his *Patrie!* was also staged in this period. For Hugo, although his *Hernani* was a big hit in *shinpa* (Matsumoto 1980, 378-81), what was translated in the *wenmingxi* era were *Angelo*, *Tyrant of Padua* and *Lucrece Borgia*. What is intriguing is that although direct translations of both plays were available during the *wenmingxi* era, they were not staged. Instead, it was an indirectly adapted version of *Angelo* from Japanese that saw production in 1916.

The translator of both these plays from French was Zeng Pu (1872-1935), better known for his novel *Niehai hua* (*A Flower in an Ocean of Sin*) which depicted the corruption of elite society in late Qing. Zeng had studied French in the first Chinese foreign languages school Tongwen Guan (Interpreters' College) in Beijing where among his teachers was Chen Jitong (Tcheng-Ki-Tong, 1852-1905), who had been to France for sixteen years, first as a student and then diplomat, and had published in French books about Chinese life, art, and theatre, including *Les Chinois Peints Par Eux-Mêmes* (*The Chinese Painted by Themselves*, 1884), *Le Théâtre Des Chinois* (*Theatre Of the Chinese*, 1886), *Contes Chinois* (*Chinese Tales*, 1889), and *Mon Pays -*

La Chine D'aujourd'hui (*My Country - China of Today*, 1892). In 1914, Zeng translated *Angelo* as *Yinping yuan* (Regret of the Silver Phial), which alludes to a phial of narcotic that is a central property to the plot. It was serialized in the first four months of 1914 in one of the best-known literary magazines of early Republic *Xiaoshuo yuebao* (*The Short Story Monthly*). Zeng's version of *Lecréce Borgia*, entitled *Xiao yu* (*The Eagle*), was published in book form in 1915. Neither of Zeng's versions of *Angelo* and *Lecréce Borgia* received any production during the *wenmingxi* era, although *Yinping yuan* was later reissued as *Di Siniang* (*La Tisbe*) and became a staple of *huaju* repertoire. The transgressive reversal of the title from the tyrannical *Angelo* to the sacrificial actress *La Tisbe* was indicative of the anti-feudal sentiment post the 1919 May Fourth Movement which stressed individual freedom and women's liberation. Its stage popularity in *huaju* was also a sign of the genre's canonical approach that valued authenticity in a translation.

These concerns, however, came after the *wenmingxi* era when it was a localized version of *Angelo*, retranslated from Japanese, which became one of the more popular European plays of the era. It was adapted by Bao Tianxiao and Xu Banmei from a version by Satō Kōroku, one of the most popular playwrights in *shinpa*. Entitled *Gisei* (*Sacrifice*), Satō's version was published in 1909 in the magazine *Bungai kurabu* (*Literary Club*), but there is no record of its production in Japan (Iizuka 1995, 131). The Chinese version by Bao and Xu was published in 1910, in a lull period between the 1907 *Black Slave's Cry to Heaven* and *Joan Haste* the following year and the creation of Ren Tianzhi's Progressive Troupe at the end of 1910. Xu later recalled the occasion of its translation:

At the time, I was miserable in Shanghai as a lonely proponent of new theatre. This was both because of the lack of true comrades and the fact that my frequent newspaper articles advocating new theatre were rather empty and could offer nothing specific. Plus,

the failure of those like Wang Zhongsheng had left a bad taste in Shanghai. Therefore, all I could do at the time was to study hard by myself. Every month, I would buy several Japanese dramatic magazines.... As for literary magazines, as long as they included play scripts, I would definitely purchase them. My collection also included many individually published plays. I read quite a few world famous plays (At the time Tianxiao and I translated one of the three great tragedies of the world—*Xisheng (Sacrifice)* by Xiao'e—known today as *Yuguo* [Hugo]). (Xu 1957, 22)

The story of *Angelo* centers on two love triangles. Angelo, the tyrant of Padua, hates his wife Catarina but loves the actress Tisbe. Catarina has been for seven years "devoured by an ardent passion" for Rodolfo, who loves her in turn, and is passionately beloved by Tisbe. All this love and hatred is fully stirred by the spy and villain Homodei who, before being stabbed to death by Rodolfo, succeeds in revealing the affair to Angelo who promptly orders the death of Catarina. Tisbe, who has recognized Catarina as her mother's savior many years ago, offers the latter a sleeping potion disguised as poison. The play ends with Tisbe being stabbed by Rodolfo, who has mistaken her as murderer, only to find Catarina reviving from the trance and telling him the truth. Tisbe, who has provoked the stabbing out of a broken heart, wishes the couple happiness and tells them to escape Padua with the horses she has prepared for them.

A comparison between the two Chinese versions of the play provides a window into the translation practices of the era and clues to one's stage popularity over the other. In general, Zeng's version is much more literary although both seemed to follow their source fairly closely. Both were also involved some degree of localization, especially with the characters' names.⁵⁹ Neither version used today's conventional of transliteration—which will, for example, convert

⁵⁹ For comparison between Satō and Bao and Xu's versions, I rely on (Iizuka 1995, 135).

Angelo into Anjieluo (安節羅), the closest sound possible for Chinese pronunciation with written characters chosen to form an intentionally meaningless combination in order to convey its foreignness as a proper name.

Zeng’s direct translation from French came close to sound transliteration. Still, he tried to find both a family name in sound equivalence for the characters and meaning for their given names. As a result, Angelo becomes Xiang Le, where Xiang is a family name and Le means pleasure. Following this convention, Catarina is now Bai Dali, white beauty, with the Da alluding to Daji, an infamous imperial concubine blamed in popular legend for the demise of the ancient Shang Dynasty (ca. 1600 BC-ca. 1046 BC). Tisbe is translated as Di Siniang with the given name as Fourth Sister, a convention for courtesans. Rodolfo becomes Luo Daofo (Tao and Buddha) while the two villains are demonized: Homodei (with the silent H) is Wu Datou (black big head) and his sidekick Ordelafo, is transformed into Hei Laofu (black old bat). Orfeo and Gaboardo, the two farcical minions of Angelo are now Xia Fu and Jia Bao, conventional low-class names. Reginella and Dafne, the two maids of Catarina, become Lanxue and Dai Fu’er, common names for girls. Therefore, although Zeng Pu did consider sound proximity in choosing names for his characters, he also gave them meanings appropriate for the characters’ moral and social status.

French	Japanese	Ban and Xu	Zeng
Angelo Malipieri	Manabe Anjiyora (真鍋安城, Zhenguo Ancheng)	Mai Anren (麥安仁)	Xiang Le (項樂)
Catarina Bragadini	Teruna (照那, Zhaona)	Zhaorong (昭容)	Bai Dali (白妲麗)
La Tisbe	Kumeji (彖次, Mici)	Kemei (可眉)	Di Siniang (狄四孃)
Rodolfo	Yamajino Takurō (山路卓朗, Shanlu Zhuolang)	Zhuolang (卓朗)	Luo Daofo (羅道佛)
Homodei	Ono Takunisuke (小野田国助, Xiaoye Tianguozhu)	Tian Guozhu (田国助)	Wu Datou (烏大頭)

Anafesto Galeofa	Arita Gakuichi (栗山丙太郎, Lishan Bingtailang)	Lian Bingsan (廉丙三)	Jia Lu (賈魯)
Ordelafo	Kuriyama Akitarou (有田学一, Youtian Yueyi)	You Xuwen (尤学文)	Hei Laofu (黑老蝠)
Orfeo	Orihei (折平, Zheping)	Zhao Da (趙大)	Xia Fu (夏福)
Gaboardo	Gamaroku (藁六, Maliu)	Ma Er (馬二)	Jia Bao (賈保)
Reginella	Miura (御浦, Yupu)	Qiuwen (秋紋)	Lanxue (蘭雪)
Dafne	Mifune (御舟, Yuzhou)	Chunhen (春痕)	Dai Fu'er (戴福兒)

Table 1. Character names in Victor Hugo's *Angelo* as appeared in the original French, Satō Kōroku's Japanese version entitled *Gisei* (Sacrifice), its Chinese adaptation by Xu Banmei and Bao Tianxiao named *Xisheng* (Sacrifice), and Zeng Pu's direct translation from French entitled *Yinping yuan* (Regret of the Silver Phial). The Japanese names are written in *rōmaji*, *kanji* and *pinyin* and the Chinese are in *pinyin* and Chinese characters.⁶⁰

Like Bao's translation of *Orchid of the Hollow Valley*, the starting point for Bao and Xu was Satō's localized Japanese names which also sounded similar to their French originals. For example, Angelo Malipieri is adapted as Manabe Anjiyora, Catarina as Teruna, Tisbe as Kumeji, Rodolfo as Yamajino Takurō, Homodei as Ono Takunisuke, etc. In turn, Bao and Xu created their own versions based on both *kunyomi* ("meaning" reading) and *onyomi* ("sound" reading) of these names. Since many Japanese names are written in four or five Chinese characters while most Chinese names contain two or three, one obvious strategy was to abbreviate them. Thus, the Japanese for Rodolfo Yamajino Takurō, pronounced as Shanlu Zhuolang in Chinese, simply becomes Zhuolang. Similarly, Homodei, with his Japanese name Ono Takunisuke read as Xiaoye Tianguozhu, is now Tian Guozhu. On the other hand, Angelo's last name Malipieri, Manabe in Japanese reading, makes no sense in Chinese as Anguo. Therefore, Bao and Xu resorted to the Japanese reading and called him Mai. Tisbe's name is resolved in a similar fashion. Pronounced as Kumeji, its characters Mici are purely Japanese. Thus, her Chinese

⁶⁰ The French version is from (Hugo). Names from the Japanese as well as Xu and Bao's versions are based on (Iizuka 1995, 136). Those from Zeng's version is found in (Hugo 1915).

name—following Japanese reading—becomes Kemei, pleasing eyebrows. Finally, the *kanji* for Teruna (Catarina), pronounced as Zhaona in Chinese, look Japanese, but sounds close to Chinese. Consequently, the first character Zhao is substituted with a homonym and she becomes Zhaorong—innocent countenance.

As for the supporting cast, the two sidekicks and two maids are simply rendered into typical names for these roles in traditional theatre. Thus, Orfeo (Orihei in Japanese) becomes Zhao Da (Zhao One), Gaboardo (Gamaroku) becomes Ma Er (Ma Two). Reginella, Miura in Japanese, is Qiuwen (Fall Ripple) and Dafne, Mifune, is Chunhen (Spring Stain).

What this analysis of the names reveals is an obvious desire in the *wenmingxi* era to bring certain familiarity to both the reader and audience of foreign plays. In this sense, both Chinese versions adopted the same approach. As for the reason why the indirect translation was chosen over the direct one, Bao and Xu's direct involvement in the playmaking and acting (Xu) of various companies was certainly an important factor. In fact, Xu Banmei, who was known for his comic roles, played the farcical Gaboardo in one of the productions (Zhou 1922b, 434).

However, this choice also reflected the aforementioned split between playmaking for theatre and playwriting as a literary endeavor. Zeng Pu, who was educated in the Imperial Translator's College in Beijing, seems to have attempted to elevate his translated scripts whenever possible. For example, he translated the title of *Lucrece Borgia*, based on name of the heroine who is both a loving mother and murderous demon, into an archaic two-letter phrase *Xiao yu* (梟歎). The first character is an erudite word for eagle and, by extension, an ambitious and ruthless person and the second an archaic auxiliary that denotes a question. Put together, the phrase elegantly portrays the contradictory combination of Borgia's character, whom Peter Brooks calls "the monster/mother" with "hideous moral deformity joined to physical beauty and

inhabited by the redeeming sentiment of maternal love” (Brooks 1976, 93). Therefore, Zeng’s title should delight the educated reader with its cleverness, although it was certainly not intended for the commercial audience of *wenmingxi*.

Another attempt to link Hugo’s plays to high literature was Zeng’s choice to name the acts. The play is originally divided into three days (*journée* in French), with the last subdivided into three parts (*partie*). Each day or part also contains multiple French scenes (*scène*). Satō flattened the structure into five acts with multiple scenes. Bao and Xu followed this practice as well as the *shinpa* convention of naming the acts as *mu* (*tobari* in Japanese, literally curtain) and scene as *chang* (*ba* in Japanese, literally place).⁶¹ Zeng took the same approach of treating the play as five acts but without the benefit of Japanese precedence, his inspiration was closet drama from which he borrowed *ben* (volume) for act and *mu* (curtain) for scene. In *Lucrece Borgia*, he followed another literati play term for act—*zhe* which literally means a fold or page.

Still, Zeng’s translation was in vernacular Chinese and quite approachable on the whole, unlike some other direct translations from Europe, such as Ma Junwu’s rendering of Schieller’s *William Tell*, which was in classic Chinese and clearly intended as a chamber piece, not for theatre. Occasionally, though, Zeng found it necessary to instill elegance in the passages. For example, in Act 2, Scene 4 when Rodolfo sings to Catarina, Zeng translates the song into the style of *chuci* (Songs of the South), a poetic form that is over two thousand years old and is best represented by the Warring States Period poet Qu Yuan (c.340 BC-278 BC). Although extremely elegant to read and even tried in *huaju* stages decades later,⁶² it was definitely not the form of choice for the commercial *wenmingxi* stage. The following are the first four lines of the song in

⁶¹ For a brief discussion of *shinpa*’s use of *tobari* and *ba*, see (Huang 2001b, 174-75).

⁶² It appeared in a historical play *Qu Yuan* by the historian and playwright Guo Moruo (1892-1978) in 1942.

the order of French, an 1896 English translation by I. G. Burnham, and Zeng's Chinese version in *pinyin* and character:

Mon âme à ton coeur s'est donnée
Je n'existe qu'à ton côté
Car une même destine
Nous joint d'un lien enchanté (Hugo 290)

My heart to thine is freely given,
I cannot live apart from thee;
That bond divine was forged in heaven,
That joins us for eternity. (Hugo 1896, 272)

Wo you linghun xi

Ju ru zhi xin

Wo buneng li ru er sheng xi

Nai bingming zhi yuanqin

(我有靈魂兮

據汝之心

我不能離汝而生兮

乃並命之冤禽) (Hugo 1915, 2, 26)

In true *chuci* fashion, this song is full of such classic auxiliaries as *xi*, *zhi*, *er*, *nai*, pronouns as *ru* (thee), and such concocted phrases as *bingming* (joined in life, bond) and *yuanqin* (love birds). Zeng was obviously trying to find the Chinese equivalent of what he perceived as

European romantic love song. The fact that this solution was literary rather than theatrical made it the darling of the canonical and pedagogical *huaju* but shunned by the populist and commercial *wenmingxi*.

In contrast, although Xu called *Angelo* “one of the three great tragedies of the world” (Xu 1957, 22), he and his fellow *wenmingxi* actors nevertheless treated the play as live theatre, not a monument of European high culture. During one of the productions in Shanghai’s Xiaowutai Theatre, Xu played the comic and clueless minion Ma Er (Gaboardo) who is entreated by the dying spy Tian Guozhu (Homodei) to show Angelo Rodolfo’s love letter to Catarina. A review of the production by Zhou Jianyun, another *wenmingxi* actor, records an insider’s joke on the real-life Mr. Ma Er, penname for the critic and the Spring Willow member Feng Shuluan: “Lisheng’s Zhao Da [Orfeo] and Banmei’s Ma Er wonderfully portrayed a pair of villainous and servile stooges. When the dying Tian Guozhu yelled ‘Mr. Ma Er, please, please’, the real Mr. Ma Er happened to be in the audience at the time. That was a practical joke” (Zhou 1922b, 434). Since this line is not in the original script, it was apparently improvised by the actor playing Homodei just for stage effect, a common practice of *wenmingxi*. It was in fact not entirely inappropriate for the occasion given the farcical nature of the original scene which ends with the two stooges arguing over Rodolfo’s name which Homodei has just told them before his death: “Orfeo: He said Rogerigo./ Gaboardo: No; he said Pandolfo” (Hugo 1896, 317).

Xiaowutai (Laughing Stage) was a name both for a small theatre and a small co-op formed by some of the best actors from the People’s Voice after its disbandment in 1916, plus Ouyang Yuqian. Both Xu and Ouyang remembered their experience with the group fondly:

Since our group did not have a name, it was externally known as Xiaowutai. With good box-office receipts and limited expenditure, we made it just fine. Finding no need to

resort to [artistic and commercial] dualism, we focused on the plays themselves. As a result, the Xiaowutai era staged quite a few good productions. Our reputation was good and we were all happy. (Xu 1957, 88)

When I was at Xiaowutai, there was no problem with performance and the quality of our new drama productions was occasionally quite outstanding. Plays like *Hamlet* and *Tosca* were staged in Western costume with appropriate set and well-controlled acting. We also staged *Hototogisu* [The Cuckoo], *Chikyōdai* [Foster Sisters], and *Konjiki yasha* [Gold Demon] in complete Japanese set and costume. Another group of plays included *Konggulan*, *Hongjiao huajiang* [Red Reef, Flowery Oar], and *Joan Haste*. (Ouyang 1990, 78)



Figure 21 A 1916 Xiaowutai production of *Chikyōdai* with a Japanese mise en scene. Ouyang Yuqian is second from left and Xu Banmei is first from right. (Photo courtesy of Waseda University's Tsubouchi Shōyō Theatre Museum.)

What both Xu and Ouyang described can be seen as the natural progression of *wenmingxi* when the best actors produced the best and proven scripts in a fairly artistic environment leaning toward authenticity, at least in terms of production, while maintaining the *wenmingxi* tradition that prioritized the role of the actor and theatricality.⁶³

Finally, there is another piece of evidence that supports *wenmingxi*'s attitude towards authenticity. *Angelo* was not the only case where a correspondence translation was ignored over an adaptation. Xu Banmei himself had published a faithful translation of Puccini's opera version of *Tosca* in 1916, possibly from a 1913 Japanese translation by Matsui Shōyō (Iizuka 1994, 138). The Italian text for the opera was written by Giuseppe Giacosa and Luigi Illica. A popular version with both their Italian and English version by W. Beatty-Kingston printed on opposite sides was published by Ricordi in 1900 and 1905. A comparison between Xu's script and the Ricordi version makes it apparent that its source was without doubt the opera. In fact, it easily qualifies as one of the most faithful translations of *wenmingxi* with character names, lyrics, and stage directions.

Ironically, though, this faithful translation by Xu was never staged during the *wenmingxi* era, as the Spring Willow version from Tokyo was much more popular. Published in 1916 in the literary magazine *Xiaoshuo daguan* (*Grand View of Short Stories*), Xu's translation remained a literary play aimed at reading. Even Xu himself played a comic role in a production that used the Spring Willow script (Qiuxing 1922b, 438), thus confirming the three notions discussed in this section: that there was indeed a division between literary and theatrical scripts, that both

⁶³ Both Xu and Ouyang mentioned *Hamlet* although in all likelihood it was adapted from Lin Shu's translation of Charles Lamb's story since the first published translation of *Hamlet*—by one of the pioneers of *huaju* Tian Han—was not published until 1922.

translation and adaptation existed during this period, and finally that authenticity was not a concern for the choice of translated scripts for *wenmingxi*.

4.2.3. *Kumo no hibiki* and Adaptation of Shinpa Plays

So far, I have examined several examples of *wenmingxi*'s practice in playwriting, dramatization, and translation/adaptation of European plays. In this section, I want to explore one of the most important sources of *wenmingxi* repertoire—adapted *shinpa* plays. While my focus will be on Lu Jingruo's adaptation of *Kumo no hibiki* (*The Echo of Cloud*) and, to a lesser degree, *Ushio* (*The Tide*), this group also include such *shinpa* hits as *Hototogisu* (*The Cuckoo*), *Konjiki yasha* (*The Gold Demon*), and *Chikyōdai* (*Foster Sisters*). They were among the best-known plays in the Spring Willow Theatre and were also performed by other groups like the People's Voice and Xiaowutai after the disbandment of the Spring Willow in 1915. While these plays were generally Sinicized in production with place and character names, their dramaturgy was otherwise maintained rather intact through the relatively faithful staging of the Spring Willow. As a result, these *shinpa* plays have been generally regarded as the most literary group of *wenmingxi* repertoire that posed the most promising challenges to the social, aesthetic, and dramaturgical principles of traditional Chinese theatre.

While the Spring Willow Society mostly staged Western plays—oftentimes through *shinpa* models—in Tokyo, Lu Jingruo and a few others did venture directly onto the *shinpa* stage where in 1908 he appeared as a supernumerary in an all-star Tokyo-za production of *Tsuki shiro* (*Soul of the Moon*), one of the several *shinpa* adaptations from Kikuchi Yūho's novels (Nakamura 2004b, 18). He and several other Chinese students also performed (possibly scenes from) *The Gold Demon* and *The Cuckoo* in Japanese (Ouyang 1990, 22; Huang 2001b, 149-50). Well versed in *shinpa* dramaturgy and theatricality, he introduced *shinpa* plays to Shanghai in

the summers of 1910 and 1911, when he adapted two plays by Satō Kōroku (1874-1949)—*The Tide* (1908) and *The Echo of Cloud* (1907).⁶⁴ Unlike many other *shinpa* classics which were adapted from domestic novels, usually with various stage versions, these two plays were written by Satō specifically for *shinpa*. Since Lu was already a member of Literary Society and had studied playwriting with Osanai Kaoru, he undoubtedly had adopted the *shingeki* canonical attitude that would prefer an original script over dramatization.

In the summer of 1910, Lu Jingruo staged *The Tide* as *Meng huitou* (*A Sudden Turn of Heart*) with Wang Zhongsheng and Xu Banmei in Shanghai. The play tells the story of two families, one rich and the other poor. In the rich family, the father is a usurer but his son Qian Xisheng (Kawada Shin'ichi) tries to redeem his sin by teaching in a poor family where the father is blind and the elder son Jingang (Sakamaki Tougo) is a bandit. Having robbed and killed the usurer, Jingang has turned into a monk to evade punishment when he meets his blind father by a river one day. Unable to reveal his identity to the blind old man, he has a sudden change of heart and vows to return the money to Qian Xisheng, the son of the usurer. However, when he finally tracks down Qian, his sister Xueying (Omyō), who has been saved by Qian from humiliation by another usurer, is so ashamed of her bandit brother that she stabs him. Jingang returns the money to Qian and “laughingly kills himself with a sword” (Zheng 1919, *Xiyang xinju* (New Western Plays), 25; Iizuka 1995, 124-25).

⁶⁴ Huang Aihua believes the *The Echo of Cloud* production in Shanghai actually took place in 1912, not 1911 as Ouyang Yuqian recalls. See (Huang 2001b, 137-38).

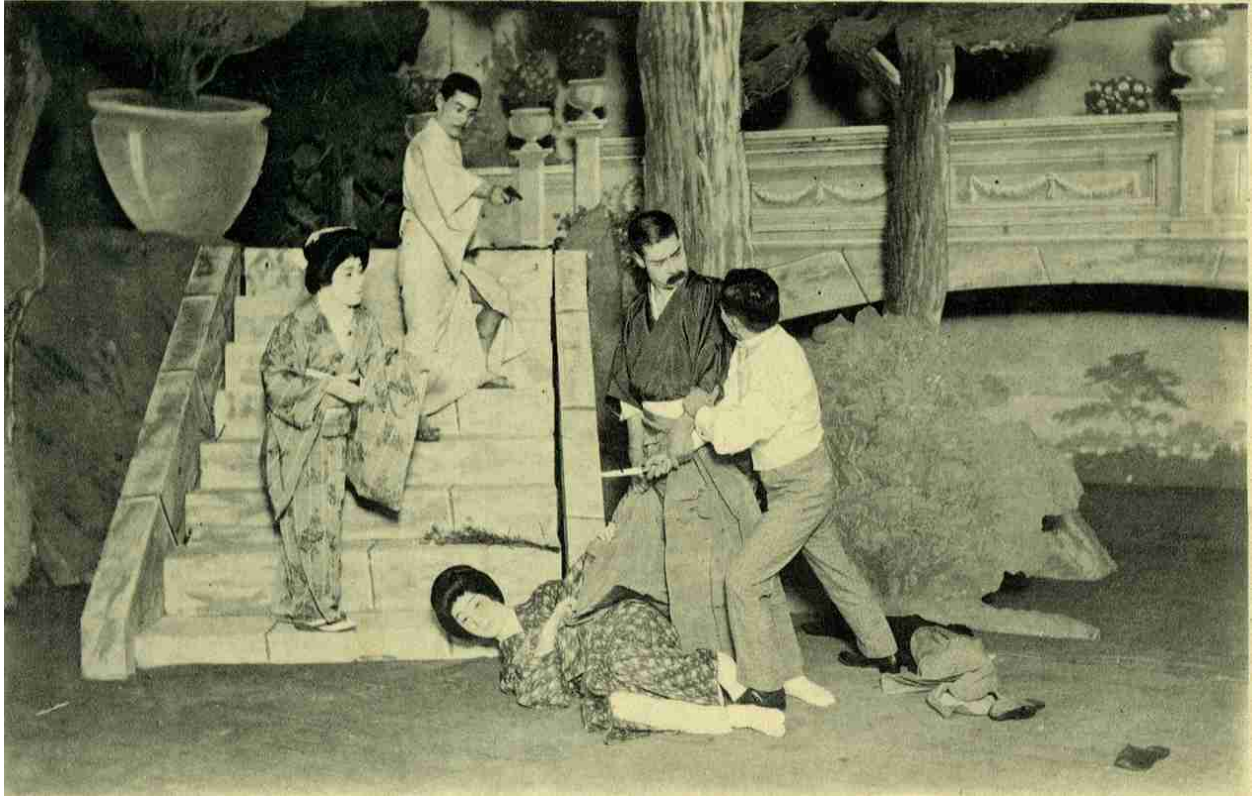


Figure 22 The final act of the *shinpa* production of *Ushio* (*The Tide*, 1908) by Satō Kōroku. (Photo courtesy of Waseda University's Tsubouchi Shōyō Theatre Museum.)

The other Satō play Lu adapted was *The Echo of Cloud* which was written in 1907 as *seigeki* (straight theatre), a term Kawakami Otojirō used for his productions after his European tours to distinguish *shinpa* as legitimate theatre in the European mode as opposed to the “impure” *kabuki* as a mixture of song, dance, and stylization. The play premiered in Tokyo’s Hongo-za in March of 1907 and was published the following month in the theatre magazine *Engei gaho* (*Theatre Illustrated*). Satō wrote the script as a protest against what he perceived as a societal fixation on family lineage that refused to consider individual virtues (Akiba 1969, 398).

The play is set around two groups of such victims. The first is the Ishiyama family who has become social pariah simply because the father has stolen a bottle of milk for his

starving second son Otoji, whose mother had died right after giving birth. Moving to the countryside where their infamy has followed them, the elder son Sōta is driven to stealing for his sick father and mentally-ill brother. When the father dies, Sōta has to steal the money-offering box from the neighboring Chōanji monastery to bury his father. Meanwhile, their sister Osumi serves as a maid in Baron Sahara's family where his concubine Hisayo and her son Tokio are also discriminated against by the baron's daughter Tomone who forces her father to drive Hisayo away and Tokio to become a monk at Chōanji. When the mentally-challenged Otoji goes to the baron's house to see his sister, Osumi's connection to the ill-famed Sōta is discovered, leading to her firing. While the monk Tokunen at Chōanji allows Osumi to set up a shop at the monastery property, she is soon banished when her elder brother comes to see her and Otoji. Meanwhile, Tokio is welcomed back home as family heir after his elder brother has died in the US. Left with no choice, Osumi and Otoji become beggars when they meet Sōta being chased by villagers. They tell him that his face has been molded into the church bell so that he will be forever smacked by the villagers. A passing-by friend of Baron Sahara, the retired Vice Admiral Toriyama Norindo persuades Sōta to give himself up so that he will have a chance to serve his country after paying his debt to society. Moved by his words, Sōta allowed himself to be taken away by the villagers, only to break loose later when he witnesses his bother and sister being mistreated. While running away, he meets Tomone in the midst of a rendezvous with her musical tutor Emori Yuzuru in the woods. He upbraids them of their hypocrisy, robs them, and ties them to a tree. In the last act, Sōta brings his starving sister and brother to the bell at the Chōanji where he stabs them and crashes his head to the bell. (Satō 1969, 1989)



Figure 23 The final act of the 1907 *shinpa* production of *Kumo no hibiki* (*The Echo of Cloud*) by Satō Kōroku with Takada Minoru as Sōta and Kitamura Rokurō as Osumi. (Photo courtesy of Waseda University's Tsubouchi Shōyō Theatre Museum.)

The original production featured such *shinpa* stars as the strongman Takada Minoru as Sōta, the famous *onnagata* Kitamura Rokurō as Osumi, and the versatile Fujisawa Asajirō doubling as the feeble-minded Otoji and the concubine Hisayo (Iizuka 1995, 114-15). The social message obviously found an echo in the modernizing Meiji society where individual freedom was gaining momentum over feudal heredity. Theatrically, the play apparently drew inspiration from traditional theatrical devices, especially the suicidal ending which is highly reminiscent of the double suicide *kabuki* plays. In fact, the scene proved to be a particular winner and received enthusiastic applause on opening night (Akiba 1969, 399).

Lu Jingruo adapted the play in Shanghai for Huang Nannan, one of the earliest members of the Spring Willow Society. It became one of the most popular plays of the Spring Willow

Theatre because of its social and theatrical appeal. The script was published in the first two issues of the magazine *Juchang xinyue* (*Theatre Crescent*) in 1913. Unfortunately, the magazine only survived long enough to publish the first four and half acts of the original six acts and seven scenes (two scenes in Act Five), ending with Sōta being taken away by the villagers. Lu changed the title of the play from *Kumo no hibiki* (*The Echo of Cloud*) to *Shehui zhong* (*The Bell of Society*) which was also known as *Shi zhi zui* (*Whose Crime*) in some productions. Both titles apparently intended to accentuate the play's social critical message. Lu also Sinicized the character names, locales, and some references.

Still, the play, like *The Tide*, is essentially Japanese in its portrayal of moral absolutism, depiction of social customs, and reference to native theatrical traditions that were not necessarily Chinese. Ouyang Yuqian believed that Lu Jingruo should have made more changes:

As an adaptation, it should have strived harder to suit Chinese customs. For example, it was impossible in China for Zuo Qiaoguan [Tomone] to force her father to drive away his concubine. As for Shi Da [Sōta] killing his brother and sister before committing suicide because of the family's desperate situation, this violent scene was also not customary to the Chinese audience. They were both Japanese customs. Still, at all the places the play was staged, no one complained. (Ouyang 1985a, 38)

Indeed, double—or triple in this case—suicide endings had never been the case for Chinese theatre while they remained popular in *kabuki* and *bunraku*, the puppet theatre. At the social and aesthetic level, the rationale behind the deaths in both Satō plays was what Cody Poulton, in his study of the Izumi Kyōka, calls “the same kind of moral schematization seen in Edo drama, one predicated either on the vindication of good over evil—*kanzen chōaku*, or ‘the

encouragement of virtue and the castigation of vice’—or the dilemma between *giri* (reason defined as social obligation) and *ninjō* (personal passion)” (Poulton 2001, 27). Here, the bandits in both plays are castigated through death and it is exactly a sense of *giri* over *ninjō* that leads to Omyō’s stabbing of her brother in *The Tide*. At the same time, though, Meiji writers like Satō and Kyōka also introduced “a different and unsettling new order of values” where

the heroes and villains had changed somewhat, and voices had been given, however provisional, to the repressed. What was new about Kyōka’s treatment of this theme was that, whereas kabuki and the puppet theater essentialized social order as an inevitable human condition equivalent to fate or karma, Kyōka problematized this notion and challenged his readers to question the justice of a society that took such rules for granted (Poulton 2001, 27).

This is exactly what Kyōka’s contemporary Satō did in *The Tide* and *The Echo of Cloud* by borrowing the double suicide conventions of Chikamatsu plays and at the same time doubting its justice. To make sure his voice is heard, he instills his mouthpiece in Vice Admiral Toriyama Norindo in *The Echo of Cloud* who tells Sōta that the society should bear blame for its rigid treatment of his family. Here is an excerpt from Lu’s fairly faithful rendition of the dialogue between Toriyama (General Wang) and Sōta (Shi Da) in Act 5 (Satō 1969, 226-27, 1989, 301):

General Wang: You still don't want to quit? Keep on then. Were you such a demon at birth?

Shi Da: My dad was also a thief. Because he stole a bottle of milk, he was called a thief till he died and left three fatherless kids. All right, I'll say no more. After all, I was born to be a thief

General Wang: Really, so you're suffering persecution because of your dad's crime!

Shi Da: I'm also a robber, murderer, and arsonist.

General Wang: What a pity! Your father's crime has tied down and distorted you. The society didn't give you a chance and has driven you to rebel. That's why you're a demon like this. What a real pity!

[Shi Da is silent.]

General Wang: Although a demon, you should still have some conscience. I believe you have thought about becoming a good man. It's because no one wanted to believe you and kept treating you as a criminal that you have been like this and missed the chance to redeem yourself. So, this is really not your fault since it is an evil social custom to be so obsessive about one's crime. Treating someone as a criminal for life because of one misstep is intolerant. It's clearly not your fault, but the society's fault. Now I permit you to escape quickly. Run away. You didn't commit any crime. It was the crime of society.

In the end, though, the general's words were not enough to save Sōta and prevent an ending that Sōta must have considered both socially shocking and theatrically appealing. Lu's Chinese audience could certainly appreciate the good-over-evil part of the moral as it had always been the fundamentally Confucian function prescribed to Chinese theatre. What Ouyang found objectionable was that the depiction of personal responsibility was never a clear cut issue in Chinese theatre, at least not as expressed in the dilemma between *giri* and *ninjō*. Chinese dramatic literature had oftentimes displayed both a more forgiving attitude, as exemplified in the saying *langzi huitou jinbuhuan* (a prodigal son who returns is more precious than gold), and a theatrical convention that almost always ended in a brighter color no matter how much suffering

had occurred throughout the play. Abundant in traditional theatre, a modern version of this formula can be found in Zheng Zhengqiu's *E jiating (An Evil Family)*, the first play of *wenmingxi*'s commercial boom in 1913. At the end of the play, the prodigal son, Pu Jingcheng, having served his prison terms and deeply regretting his past misdeeds, oversees the engagement of his son and his maid, whom he has both treated badly, wails in self condemnation and dies of a fatal illness. Here, although justice is served, the emphasis is on personal redemption, family reunion, and regeneration.

Apart from formal differentiation, the theatrical taste of Chinese and Japanese audiences also affected the dramaturgical choices of *wenmingxi*. If we compare the endings of *A Sudden Turn of Heart* and *The Bell of Society*, which Lu Jingruo's adapted before his official return to Shanghai, with *Love and Death in a Family*, which he wrote afterwards, he seems to be making a conscious choice in the latter case to concede to the Chinese aversion to total sadness. Here, after killing Little Cherry Rouge, Wang Boliang asks his servant to bring a letter to his friend He Sanshan, writes his suicide note, and is ready to commit suicide when his friend arrives just in time to dissuade him (Lu 1989, 249). This ending was definitely more to the liking of the Chinese audience and perhaps partially explains why this play, not those from *shinpa* in the Spring Willow repertoire, was also staged by other *wenmingxi* groups.⁶⁵

What this and other cases in this chapter suggest is that as the first attempt at transforming Western dramaturgy to China, *wenmingxi* was ultimately defined not only by the knowledge and experience of its participants, but also its audience, whose open-minded attitude

65 In his comparison between *The Cuckoo* and *Love and Death in a Family*, Seto Hiroshi suggests another reason: that *The Cuckoo* builds its dramatic tension through dialogue, a task that was too demanding for other scenario-based *wenmingxi* troupes. In contrast, *Love and Death in a Family* was more dynamic in stage actions and did not depend on quiet and subtle dialogue. (Seto 2004, 58)

and limited preparedness for this new format ultimately determined *wenmingxi*'s localization approach to dramatic literature.

4.3. TRAGEDY OR MELODRAMA

Along with the introduction of European dramaturgy, Chinese literary scholars of the *wenmingxi* era started to adopt European dramatic genre theories to study the seeming lack of interest in tragedy in Chinese dramatic literature. The pioneer of this work was Wang Guowei (1877-1927) who, in his 1904 study of the novel *Honglou meng* (*Dream of the Red Chamber*), traces this tendency to a national character:

The Chinese spirit is worldly and carefree. As the representative of this spirit, our plays and novels are all shaded in such cheery colors. Those that begin with tragedy will end in comedy; those that begin in separation will end in reunion; those that begin in poverty will end in prosperity. Violators of this rule can hardly satisfy their readers. The best-known examples of this tendency include the return of the soul in *Mudan ting* [The Peony Pavilion] and the reunion of *Changsheng dian* [The Palace of Eternal Youth]. (Wang, Ch 3)

Both *The Peony Pavilion* (1598) and *The Palace of Eternal Youth* (1688) are literary plays of love stories in which the heroines are revived after death to enjoy eternal union with their lovers. For Wang, these happy endings are no more than *xuanhuo*—delirious bewitchment—that lures the audience to an illusion of happy life. What tragedy offers, on the other hand, is what he terms as a feeling of sublime (*zhuangmei*), an intense state of mind that can only be achieved when a grand aesthetic object has destroyed all our mundane desires. Wang

reaches this conclusion based on his reading of Schopenhauer's notion of deliverance. As Zong-qi Cai points out:

For Wang, as for Schopenhauer, the sublime represents the finest aesthetic experience because it most effectively cleanses the audience of the desires of life and renders them impervious to any "delirious bewitchment." Paraphrasing Schopenhauer's comments on tragedy, Wang rates tragedy as the finest form of literature on the ground of its sublimity: "Schopenhauer places poetry at the apex of art, and tragedy at the apex of poetry." (Cai 2004, 178)

Wang interprets Schopenhauer as describing three types of tragedies: those that result from an evil force, from fate, and from daily interaction among characters. For Wang, the third kind "is far more overpowering than the first two forms" since "its depiction of life's gravest horrors are not the results of rare exceptions, but what is inherent in life itself" (Wang, ch 3). In another study a decade later he found this kind of tragedy in Yuan Dynasty (1279–1368) dramas that

never resort to such plots as separation to reunion or poverty to prosperity. In the most tragic among them, like *Dou E yuan* [The Injustice Suffered by Dou E] and *Zhaoshi gu'er* [The Orphan of Zhao], even though evil characters exist in the plot, those who remain calm in the face of death do so because of their own will. These plays can stand proudly among the great tragedies of the world. (Wang 1974, 121)

On the idea of the will, Wang is apparently following the image of the Nietzschean superman (*Übermensch*), who "realizes the meaninglessness of things and who rebels against

that frightful vision, who refuses to resign himself and sets his will against the blind will that lies at the heart of all phenomena” (Copleston 1980, 224).

For Wang, though, tragedy in Chinese theatre ended with Yuan drama as “plays since Ming Dynasty [1368-1644] are all comedies” (Wang 1974, 121). Since melodrama in the sense defined by Peter Brooks was not yet in the Western dramatic discourse, Wang and his fellow critics who adopted European dramaturgical perspectives were customarily dividing Chinese drama only into comedy that “includes all farce and those with happy endings” and tragedy that “includes all plays with tragic endings” (Ma 1914b, 5-6). This emphasis on the ending as the sole criterion of genre may be related to the Chinese translation of the terms. *Beiju*—tragedy— is composed of two characters, *bei* as sad or tragic and *ju* as play. Similarly, comedy is translated as *xiju*, happy play. Like many new concepts of the era, the two words might very well come from their Japanese versions *higeki* and *kigeki*, which are written with the same Chinese characters. For Feng and many other scholars in later years, the broad generic division between tragedy and comedy serves to cover all manners of plays in the new drama. As a result, the plays staged at the Spring Willow have been generally labeled as tragedies even by today’s scholars (Huang 2001b, 158-62). Ouyang made the same distinction in 1957 by stating that “there were more of tragedies than comedies in the Spring Willow repertoire” and attributed the Spring Willow’s eventual commercial failure to the unwillingness of the audience to “leave the theatre every time with a heavy heart” (Ouyang 1985a, 43).

Still, it seems more accurate to consider them melodramas. Ouyang Yuqian, who used the word “tragedy” quite often in his description of the Spring Willow, made an objective assessment of the melodramatic tendency of *wenmingxi* in his 1929 memoir:

The Spring Willow directly emulated Japanese *shinpa* drama in its repertoire, but was changed to the style of Dr. Tsubouchi's Literary Society after Lu Jingruo's return. Still, ninety percent of the plays staged by the New Drama Society in Shanghai and Hunan were in the mode of *shinpa*, which adopted the dramaturgy of well-made plays, not modern drama. Therefore, the Spring Willow's repertoire was fairly uniform melodrama, not the modern plays we stage today. (Ouyang 1990, 73)

Both *shinpa* and European romantic tragedy, the two predominant foreign dramatic forms of *wenmingxi*, were basically melodramas. As a result, their influence on *wenmingxi* dramaturgy was unavoidable. Yet, the melodramatic connection between these genres and *wenmingxi* was more strategic than a mere relationship of influence. What melodrama allowed in all three cases—European romantic tragedy, *shinpa*, and *wenmingxi*—was in fact the perfect dramaturgical choice to impose a moral order in the face of post-tyrannical disorder. As suggested by Peter Brooks, the birth of European melodrama corresponded with the chaotic years following the French Revolution:

We suggest that melodrama may be born of the very anxiety created by the guilt experienced when the allegiance and ordering that pertained to a sacred system of things no longer obtain. In the radical freedom produced by this situation (in its most intense version, by revolution), all is potentially permitted.... For all not to be permitted, a new demonstration of the possibility of a moral order is required. At the moment of what Maurice Blanchot calls the “prodigious suspension” figured by the Revolution, when the law—social, moral, natural, rhetorical—falls silent, a new form of enactment and demonstration, a new creative rhetoric of moral law arises to demonstrate that it is still

possible to find and to show the operation of basic ethical imperatives, to define, in conflictual opposition, the space of their play. That they can be staged “proves” that they exist; the melodramatic mode not only uses these imperatives but consciously assumes the role of bringing them into dramatized and textual—provisional—existence. (Brooks 1976, 200-201)

In his study of the Meiji writer and one of *shinpa*'s major inspirations Izumi Kyōka, Cody Poulton believes that

The parallels between melodrama's rise in Europe as an expressive form and the situation in Japanese arts and letters during the Meiji era are significant, for reasons to do not only with the direct influence of European culture on Japan during this period. Japan underwent similar social, political, and technological change during its own modernization; melodrama undoubtedly reflects a natural human tendency to structure representations of the imagination in certain common, archetypal ways, especially when faced with similar circumstances in the world at large. (Poulton 2001, 19)

Similarly, the “social, political, and technological changes” during the heyday of *wenmingxi* was sandwiched between the collapse of multi-millennium old feudal dynasties and the impending New Cultural Movement that was to storm through the country calling for total Westernization. As such, in dramaturgical, theatrical, and ideological terms, *wenmingxi* melodrama can be construed as an attempt to impose a moral order defined by feudal ideology of filial piety, male chauvinism, and misogyny onto the unhindered pursuit of individual freedom in China immediately after the 1911 Revolution.

For example, Lu's depiction of Little Red Rouge, a prostitute who remains in contact with her lover after marrying Wang, is basically the traditional treatment of a bad infidel woman who plots against her husband and stepson. In fact, the son's name Chongshen is a compound of two historical princes of Spring and Fall Period (722 BC-481 BC), Shensheng and Chong'er, who were framed by their stepmother, resulting in the death of the elder brother and exile of the younger. In the play, Chongshen tells Meixian the story of the princes to warn her against Little Cherry Rouge and to show that even though he is aware of the same danger, he still will not leave his father, just like the good and filial Shensheng, to protect the family's good name.

At the same time, however, Lu Jingruo was not unaware of the rise of the new woman, having most likely witnessed first-hand the stormy love between Matsui Sumako, the Nora of Literary Society, and her director Shimamura Hōgetsu, an affair which eventually led to the breakup of the Society. At times, he writes Little Cherry Rouge's speeches in such a way that they border on the subversive. Witness her calm and sarcastic retort in the last act when Wang shows her the admission of guilt by her lover:

Little Cherry Rouge: (*Calmly picking up the admission note, reads it, and sneers*) Very well! I thought it was some huge event, and it's nothing more than Little Li. To be frank, what's the problem for concubines like us to have a lover? After all, chastity arches are not for the likes of us. You look petty. Why make a fuss out of nothing!

Wang Boliang: All right! You sure are something. Having done this treacherous deed, you turn around and make it into a nothing. According to you, it still wouldn't mean anything even if you murdered me, right?

Little Cherry Rouge: I don't have to murder you. I didn't come here myself. You married me. So if you want to keep me here, fine. Otherwise, let's separate on good terms and let me leave.

Wang Boliang: Let you leave! What complete nonsense. Not so easy.

Little Cherry Rouge: Oh yes? Won't let me leave? Why? I have my freedom! I wasn't sold to you for life.

Wang Boliang: You, you are what I bought. Whatever I want to do with you, you have to listen to me, understood?

Little Cherry Rouge: Understood? I understand much more than you. You said you bought me, all right, show me the indenture contract. Hurry up, show me!

Wang Boliang: Ah....

Little Cherry Rouge: Come on, show me the contract!

Wang Boliang: (*Enraged, madly weaves the sword over Little Cherry Rouge's forehead*)
I'll cut you up, shameless bitch. That will make me happy.

Little Cherry Rouge: (*Holding it off with a pillow*) Come on, my master.... (Lu 1989, 247-48)

She keeps teasing and then pleading with Wang until eventually slain by him. This bold and independent woman is in fact not too far removed from the heroine of a play by Ouyang Yuqian a decade later called *Pan Jinlian*. In that play, Ouyang transforms the protagonist from a notorious woman of lust, who kills her husband out of love for his brother, into an individualist and a modern woman:

In the final scene when the heroine was to be killed by her lover, she... knelt in front of him, torn open her shirt, and declared: "Brother, there is a burning heart inside my snow white chest. My heart has long been waiting for you. I had to temporarily store it here since you didn't want it. I've been miserable waiting for you. You want to cut it out? Cut it slowly so I can stay close to you a bit longer" (Liu 2006, 112).

Although the play caused a sensation and general approval when Ouyang performed it in Shanghai in 1927, Little Cherry Rouge of the pre-May Fourth *wenmingxi* era, notwithstanding sympathetic treatment from Lu, has to die begging for forgiveness:

Little Cherry Rouge: (*holding the pillow with one hand, shaking*) Ah...oh! Master...

forgive me, let me make a fresh start, from now on I... will change... for sure.

Wang Boliang: No! Someone like you can no longer live in the world. If I let you go, who knows how many more you will destroy! (*With that, pierces through Little Cherry Rouge's heart with his sword, killing her in bed. Then takes a breath, pulls down the canopy, opens the door, and calls*) Here! (Lu 1989, 248)

5. CHAPTER FOUR: INSTITUTIONAL ANALYSIS—LOCALIZATION OF THE NEW THEATRE

This was the first time of a *huaju* performance by the Chinese.... I was indeed deeply shocked [to find that] theatre could be done in such a way!

— Ouyang Yuqian upon watching an act of *La Dame aux Camélias* by the Spring Willow Society in Tokyo in 1907. (Ouyang 1990, 7)

It shouldn't be seen as a play; it's more interesting to see it as a real event.

— Reaction by a *jingju* actor upon watching *Joan Haste* in Shanghai in 1908. (Xu 1957, 24)

These reactions accurately captured the excitement and discomfort *wenmingxi* solicited in its original encounter with the Chinese audience, who considered it as a new genre parallel to traditional theatre. Indeed, the break these two productions threatened to make with traditional theatre—by staging European plays (original or adapted) and adopting realistic (as opposed to codified) acting that characterized spoken drama—was quite remarkable. It appeared to be the harbinger of what Ayako Kano calls the straightening of traditional theatre, “a process in which one dominant mode of theatrical representation, originating in Europe, comes to hold center stage as the universal mode, pushing other, local modes into the wings” (Kano 2001, 58). Yet, as *wenmingxi* continued to take shape in Shanghai in the decade following these productions, it became increasingly clear that *wenmingxi*'s approach to modernizing Chinese theatre was one of localization, not the “capitulation” that John Gillies calls some later new drama forms like *shingeki* and *huaju*. Instead the process was more like one of “localization” (Gillies 2001, 238-39).

To look at it another way, if we are to adopt Marvin Carlson's model of seven stages of intercultural transfer, *wenmingxi*, on paper at least, seems close to his definition of the middle spectrum (stage 4), an ideal situation of intercultural theatre: "The foreign and the familiar create a new blend, which is then assimilated into the tradition, becoming familiar" (Carlson 1996, 83). While it is arguable whether *wenmingxi* ever had enough time to become assimilated into the tradition, it was nevertheless a truly localized genre, as we will see in this chapter. In comparison, *huaju*, the long-held golden standard of theatrical modernization in China, is in effect more akin to the "culturally foreign" extreme of Carlson's model (stage 7): "An entire performance from another culture is imported or re-created, with no attempt to accommodate it with the familiar" (ibid). Its assimilation into the tradition only serves as a reminder of the hegemony of Western theatre. Indeed, *huaju*, which emerged in the 1920s after the demise of *wenmingxi*, basically became a parallel genre along side traditional theatre, constantly threatening to push the latter to the side wings.

Several factors contributed to the contrast between *wenmingxi* and *huaju*. To use Pavis' metaphor, they were like two different hourglasses, set apart over a decade from each other, with drastically different conditions in both source and target cultures. For *wenmingxi*, the source culture was *shinpa* and its rendition of the Western spoken drama. In the decade after *Black Slave's Cry to Heaven*, *wenmingxi*'s knowledge of this new drama came almost exclusively through the prism of *shinpa*. It was not until the late 1910s and early 1920s that Chinese students who had studied theatre in the US, Europe, and Japan returned home to practice the canonical *huaju*.

In addition, "the sociological and anthropological codification" as well as the cultural and "artistic modeling" of China as the "target culture" during the *wenmingxi* era was in favor of

localization. The decade after 1907 ended—with the rise and fall of *wenmingxi*—before the 1919 May Fourth Movement which would advocate modernization via Westernization and denunciation of traditional Confusionist cultural institutions, including the song-dance theatre represented by *jingju*. In contrast, *jingju* during the *wenmingxi* era was trying desperately to stay relevant by staging current events in *shizhuang xinxi* (new drama with modern clothes). As a result, there was rampant *mélange* between *wenmingxi* and *jingju* in terms of repertoire, theatrical idioms, and actors.

Finally, *wenmingxi* and *huaju* served different audiences. While the former competed with *jingju* for the commercial spectators, the latter largely remained an elite form aimed at the educated. As a result, *huaju* struggled to stay true to the Western ideals with a small but influential and dedicated audience while *wenmingxi* had to eek out a living through compromise between the foreign and native theatrical cultures.

In fact, the conversion from high-minded enlightenment and faithful transportation of original culture (European through Japanese) to localized entertainment was laid out in a rather dramatic fashion with the success of Zheng Zhengqiu's *An Evil Family* in 1913. Prior to this point, neither Ren Tianzhin's *sōshi shibai*-inspired political theatre nor Spring Willow's adaptation and imitation of domestic *shinpa* was able to sustain commercial success in Shanghai. After it, *wenmingxi* enjoyed a brief renaissance with a transformed form that took more cues from native theatrical and other cultural forms like domestic novels and *pingtan* (story-telling with or without musical accompaniment). In other words, this brief honeymoon in the relationship between this imported theatre and the Shanghai audience was only possible after it was forced to go through a localization process through the neck of the hour glass. In a way, this is what domestic *shinpa* went through to finally reach its broad appeal—by adapting popular

domestic novels and refining the acting skills from the rough *sōshi shibai* to a more nuanced style inspired by *kabuki*.

Therefore, *wenmingxi*'s relationship with Western and traditional theatre was impacted by varying camps of *shinpa* during the course of its own growth—the early political theatre of *sōshi shibai*, Kawakami's *seigeki* (straight theatre) as a result of his exposure to Western theatre, and *kabuki*-inspired domestic *shinpa*. In the following pages, I will attempt to trace how each of these trends affected *wenmingxi*. I will then discuss the role of specific idioms of traditional theatre like singing and female impersonation in *wenmingxi* localization.

5.1. THE THREE TRENDS OF *SHINPA* AND THEIR IMPACT ON *WENMINGXI*

5.1.1. *Sōshi Shibai* and “Free Acting”

Sōshi shibai originated from the Freedom and People's Rights Movement (*jiyu minken undo*) of the 1870s and 1880s, when post-Meiji Restoration civil resentment eventually prompted the establishment of a constitution in 1889 and national diet in 1890. Its influence on *wenmingxi* lies exactly in its perceived goal as a political theatre. The best-known representatives of *sōshi shibai* were Sudō Sadonori and Kawakami Otōjiro who both joined Japan's first political party Liberty Party (Jiyūtō) created by Itagaki Taisuke (1837-1919). The word *sōshi* was associated with the young activists exiled from Tokyo to Osaka in the late 1880s following another popular proponent of democratic rights Nakae Chōmin (1847-1901). It was in Osaka that some *sōshi* started propagating their political message in popular entertainments like the comic monologue *rakugo* and the traditional storytelling form *kodan*. Yet, as Sudō observed, there were certain limits to this approach: “Political speech was hard for children and old people to understand. In addition, there was severe restriction from the police who would forbid any speech that was slightly transgressive” (Ihara 1933, 649). As a result, Sudō initiated the leap from third-person

narration to first-person representation by dramatizing his novel *Gōtan-no-Shosei (A Brave Young Man)*, which depicted a struggling young man in the new Meiji society, and performing it at Osaka's Takashima-za Theatre in 1888. In addition to the play's topical theme, he also made a speech during intermission on the abolition of licensed prostitution, a popular social reform subject of the time.

Kawakami started his career as a political propagandist (*enzetsu-tsukai*), calling himself Liberty Child (*jiyū dōji*). He sharpened his oratorical skills by becoming a disciple of a popular Osaka *rakugo* comic story teller. Borrowing melodies from popular songs of Osaka, he added “lyrics sharply satirical of the times. This was his ‘*Oppekepe-bushi*’ named for the syllables in imitation of a trumpet with which its refrain opens.” (Toita 1956, 266). A review of one of his productions at Osaka's Kaisei-za in 1890 observed that “it really should not be considered ‘acting,’ only wearing wigs and costume.... Between the first and second skits, Kawakami appeared on stage wearing a scarlet battle surcoat, holding an ancient commander's fan, and gave a speech... satirizing corrupt officials and bawdy women” (Ihara 1933, 654). As Matsumoto Shinko points out:

Although his voice was not particularly good, the spectators clapped for his “*Oppekepe-bushi*” song as they felt that at least he had something to say about social phenomena and the political situation: his comments were such as the common people agreed with, but did not know how to express themselves under the severe control of speech of the time. (Matsumoto 2002, 5)

Kawakami gradually integrated speech into his plays, often having his actors ad-libbing them to avoid attention from the censors, even as occasional scuffles with police inside the

theatre also added to the drawing power of his company. When he appeared in Tokyo in 1891 with a topical play *Itagaki-kun Sōnan Jikki* (*Disaster Strikes Itagaki—the True Account*)—itself a play about an attempted assassination of Itagaki Taisuke during a speech—Kawakami emerged between acts, “dressed like a true swash-buckler, with a golden screen behind him and a rising-sun flag in his hand, to sing his *Oppekepe-bushi*” (Toita 1956, 267). This entr’acte became the main attraction of the show and won him and *sōshi shibai* a foothold in Tokyo, exciting “*sōshi* all over the country” (ibid).

Apart from political speech, though, “early *shinpa* plays were rather like reviews, featuring an entertaining mix of dance, music, and dramatic skits of a topical nature, either satirical—like Kawakami’s *Oppekepe bush*—or patriotic, depending on the drift of contemporary taste” (Poulton 2001, 23). By 1907, the political content of Kawakami’s plays had changed from anti-establishment to nationalistic and he had been on a mission to make Japanese theatre a speech-based theatre unrestricted by the citationality of *kabuki*.

The original members of the Spring Willow Society, like Li Shutong, Zeng Xiaogu, and Ren Tianzhi, were quite familiar with early *shinpa*’s political speech-making tradition and its mixture of song and dance with spoken drama. According to Ouyang Yuqian, *Black Slave’s Cry to Heaven* was “inspired by the popular *shinpa* plays in Japan with a shade of *sōshi shibai*.... At the time, it was natural for us to imitate this type of theatre; the *wenmingxi* that was popular in Shanghai was indeed derived from it” (Ouyang 1990, 10-11). After the *Black Slave* production in June of 1907, Ren Tianzhi tried unsuccessfully to persuade Li and Zeng to bring the play to China. So he, Wang Zhongsheng, and, soon afterward, Liu Yizhou returned to China with the *sōshi shibai* style of political theatre that emphasized speech-making.

Both Ren and Liu had been to Japan for quite a long time and Wang was there for at least half a year. According to Xu Benmei, Ren's acting style showed that he had watched quite a few *shinpa* plays (Xu 1957, 24). A contemporary review found Liu Yizhou, a graduate of Waseda University, an outstanding orator "good at enunciation. His breathing is deep and powerful. Although he talks more than acts, the audience still can not get enough of him, especially since his advice is well-founded, warm-hearted, and right on target. That is why people like to listen to him" (Liu 1983, 210). In October of 1907, Wang staged a different version of *Black Slave's Cry to Heaven* in Shanghai, only months after its Tokyo production. Liu returned around 1908 to northern China where he started Liqun She (The Inspire the Masses Society), proclaiming in the *sōshi shibai* manner in his manifesto: "Until our country is strong, I will not close my mouth" (Liu 1922, 386). He was soon joined by Wang in spreading this type of political theatre in northern cities like Beijing and Tianjin.

Ren originally joined Wang in his production of *Joan Haste* in 1908. He returned to Shanghai at the eve of the 1911 Revolution to form the Progressive Troupe. Like Kawakami's group, his company battled with local authorities who viewed them as anti-Qing propagandists as they toured along the Yangtze River. Taking a page of publicity technique from Japanese theatre, Ren hung a banner that said "*Tianzhi pai xinju*" (Tianzhi school of new drama) in front of the theatre in Nanjing where his troupe premiered in January 1911.⁶⁶ "Since then, the words 'Tianzhi School' were widely known throughout the country" (Zhu 1914, Chunqiu [Chronicles], 15). Just like Wawakami's first entrance to Tokyo, their fame in the provinces had preceded them in Shanghai where right after the Republican victory, the Progressive Troupe performed for three

⁶⁶ Although the Progressive Troupe was formed in Shanghai in October, 1910, Ren was not confident about the skills of his actors to attract Shanghai audience. This prompted him to accept an invitation to premiere in the nearby Nanjing.

days to full houses. “This is because Tianzhi had been known for a long time. When given a chance to see him in person, hardly anyone could resist the temptation” (18).

Therefore, Ren Tianzhi, Wang Zhongsheng, and Liu Yizhou had an advantage in timing over Spring Willow whose members stayed in Tokyo to study domestic *shinpa* and *shingeki*. When the Spring Willow Society returned to China after the Revolution, eager to exhibit their mastery of Japan’s new theatre, this rougher *sōshi shibai* style had already become the *de facto* standard of *wenmingxi*, much to the regret of Ouyang Yuqian:

Initiated by the Spring Willow, *wenming xinxi* [civilized new drama] emerged in Shanghai. *Wenming xinxi* combined imitation of Japanese *sōshi shibai* with elements of traditional Chinese theatre. It prospered for several years since Republican 1-2 [1911-1912]. When we returned to China and started performing, *wenming xinxi* was distinctively in opposition to the Spring Willow style. There was no chance for Jingruo to share what he had transported back from Bungei Kyōkai, like Shakespeare, Tolstoy, and Ibsen. (Ouyang 1990, 23)

Contemporary critics generally referred to this mainstream of *wenmingxi* as the Progressive Troupe style (*Jinhua Tuan pai*), after Ren Tianzhi’s Progressive Troupe. As Feng Shuluan explains:

The Progressive Troupe was created by Ren Tianzhi who called his style Tianzhi school *xinju* [new drama]. The rest of the *xinju* companies arose after the Progressive Troupe and their acting styles mostly mimicked the Progressive Troupe, which makes it logical to categorize them into this style. This is why I call it the Progressive Troupe style. (Ma 1914c, 2)

Although the Progressive Troupe disbanded after only two years, many of its stars, like Ren Tianzhi and Wang Youyou became the pillars of other companies like the New People and the People's Voice, ensuring the dissemination of Ren Tianzhi's dramaturgy and early *shinpa* acting style that made Ren *wenmingxi*'s first star attraction.

Discussions of a *wenmingxi* actor's arsenal usually covered three aspects: *yanlun* (speech), *biaoqing* (expression), and *huazhuang* (make-up). While the latter two skills were emphasized by actors of both the Spring Willow and other *wenmingxi* companies, it was the latter groups' emphasis on speech that set them apart from the Spring Willow. This stress on an actor's ability to make catchy, often impromptu, speeches and dialogues underscores this style's reliance on scenarios and on the *sōshi shibai* practice of delivering propaganda speech in make-up. The speech-making role became one of the most prominent types in *wenmingxi*. It was called *yanshuo pai* (speech-making role) or *jilie pai* (spirited role), and Ren Tianzhi and Liu Yizhou were considered its representatives. In a way, this emphasis on speech reinforced the definition of new drama as speech-based in direct contrast to the traditional song and dance theatre, a distinction that eventually led to the genre being named *huaaju*—spoken drama—in the late 1920s.

In the previous chapter, I have discussed impromptu speeches and ad-libbing in relation to scripts. The focus here is the place of speech in *wenmingxi* stage dynamics and its role in shaping the perception of new drama performance as “free acting” (*ziyou yanju*). This phrase originally meant not using scripts, but eventually came to represent the unrestricted and ultimately unpolished style of acting. To be fair to *sōshi shibai* and Ren Tianzhi, however, Ren did use scripts in the early productions of Progressive Troupe, even though these scripts were filled with place-holders for impromptu speeches. Ren later insisted that it was his actors who

did not want to go through the trouble memorizing the scripts by claiming the advantages of “free acting.” Ultimately, freedom from scripts merged with freedom from the conventions of traditional theatre. This convergence was best expressed by Wang Youyou:

New dramatists are like Chinese students studying Chinese literature where there is no set grammar. It is up to the student to grope in the dark for the order of semantics and the usage of function words⁶⁷ as there are no rules for them to follow. The same is true for acting in *xinju*. How can one decide when certain expression is perfect and what words are suitable? The case is different in old theatre where there are rules in singing, declamation, steps, and posture and the slightest chaos is not tolerated. It is like studying a foreign language where names and grammar are laid out. As long as a student follows the rule and works hard, it is not difficult to gradually reach the depth of the art. An actor in traditional theatre can hope to make a reputation with concerted practice while a new drama actor relies on his born cleverness. That is why stars have been born under a master’s spanking paddle but I have not heard of a new dramatist who is steeled through practice. (Wang 1914, 31-32)

Of course, being free from the conventions of traditional theatre was not the same as naturalistic acting, which was what Kawakami in mind for *seigeki*, as I will explain in the next two sections.

⁶⁷ *Xuzi* (function words). In Chinese grammar, it denotes parts of speech that serve only grammatical functions as opposed to *shizi* (content words).

5.1.2. *Seigeki* and Naturalistic Acting

There is no such thing as convention-free in any art form, even in the supposedly anti-traditional new drama. In fact, what *shingeki* and *huaju* transported directly from Western theatre was exactly the conventions of modern realist and naturalist theatre. The closest *shinpa* ever got to naturalist acting was Kawakami's version of "straight theatre"—*seigeki*.

As *shinpa*'s only direct link to Western theatre, the Kawakamis toured the US and Europe at the dawn of the twentieth century and upon their return, were committed to reforming Japanese theatre in the image of legitimate Western theatre. To this purpose, they called their brand of theatre *seigeki*, a direct translation of "straight theatre," as opposed to the convention-driven song and dance theatre. In 1903, Kawakami Otojirō wrote an article entitled "Actors Don't Need to Dance" in which he argued:

If you go abroad, you'll find that in every country there is a clear distinction between dance [*butū/dansu*] and drama [*engeki/dorama*]. Dance is performed in revues [*yose*], and is not something that drama actors perform. Actors [*haiyū*] only need perform that which is their vocation. There is no need for actors to learn how to dance—they should rather devote all their energies to drama.⁶⁸

Kawakami argued "that the kinds of song and dance currently used in theater are unnatural and unsatisfactory, and that the unembellished 'intonation of words' (*genko no yokuyo*) and 'pacing of movement' (*dosa no kankyu*) should be sufficient to create beauty" (Kano 2001, 67-68).

In her study of the Kawakamis' efforts to straighten Japanese theatre, Ayako Kano examines the nature of "song" and "dance" by differentiating "direct" and "indirect" speech and action on stage. To her, direct action is "a bodily action that is in unity with the performative

⁶⁸ (Shirakawa 1985, 375). English translation by Ayako Kano in (Kano 2001, 67).

situation” which is—in the words of Naoki Sakai—“characterized by the absence of musicality and other formalizing agents” (68). In contrast, the *bu* (dance) in *kabuki* should be construed as indirect action since it is “restored behavior that can be repeated by another person or at another moment” (ibid). Likewise, certain aspects of the *ka* (song) in *kabuki*, as when an actor is “narrating, intoning, and chanting about battles with sticks of dried fish,” are clearly indirect speech (ibid). “The difference between direct and indirect, then, has to do with the difference between the real and the imitated, the original and the citation, the spontaneous and the rehearsed” (72). Thus, the latter is ritualized and formalized into codified skill sets and taught from master to apprentices as patterns—what is known as *kata* in *kabuki* and *chengshi* in *jingju*.

In *wenmingxi*, the person closest to Kawakami’s view and his attempt to introduce Western theatrical convention was Lu Jingruo, as he transferred at least two Kawakami’s post-tour productions to Shanghai—*The Bondman* (1909) and *Othello* (1914). As I have previously argued, these two productions were most likely whole-sale emulations of Kawakami’s examples. Of course, as the only *wenmingxi* practitioners familiar with the naturalistic *shingeki* theatre, it was easy for Lu to find an affinity with “straight theatre.” In this sense, Lu stood out even among his fellow Spring Willow members in his vision of a naturalistic new drama, as we will soon see. Of course, as Ouyang pointed out, history did not give Lu enough time to realize his vision or, for that matter even put that vision down in writing. As I have previously argued, the closest possible understanding of that theoretical vision was what Feng Shuluan, as a member of the Spring Willow, summarized in his writings.

In terms of straight theatre, Feng Shuluan was closest to Kawakami’s vision in his 1914 definition for new drama:

There are two major types of theatre today: *jiuxi* (old theatre) and *xinxi* (new theatre). *Jiuxi* includes the existing theatrical forms in China, like *kunqu*, *huidiao*, *handiao*, *banziqiang*, *yuediao*, *shaodiao*, *jingdiao*, etc.⁶⁹ Among them, *jingdiao* (Beijing Opera) is the most popular. That is why it has become the representative of *jiuxi* today. *Xinxi* refers to the genre that emulates Western theatre. Since this kind of theatre has not been popular for long, it is called *xinxi*. Note that Western theatre is divided into drama and opera. There is no singing in drama while in opera singing is the focus. The *xinxi* in our country as a matter of fact originated from Western drama while our traditional theatre is similar to opera. (Ma 1914b, 4)

In discussing acting in *wenmingxi*, which he terms *biaoqing shu* (expression techniques), Feng contrasts it to *zuo gong* (usually translated as pantomime or movement skills) in *jingju*, one of the four basic skills for a *jingju* actor—along with singing (*chang*), speaking (*nian*), and fighting (*da*). He lists five different areas that contrast acting in new and traditional theatres:

1. There are no rules for *biaoqing shu* while *zuo gong* follows rules.
2. *Biaoqing shu* needs to be figured out (*wuchu*) by the actor while *zuo gong* is taught by the master.
3. *Biaoqing shu* is different from person to person while *zuo gong* is basically the same for everyone.
4. Everything in *biaoqing shu* should be reasonable (*heli*) while all movements in *zuo gong* should conform to established practice.

⁶⁹ Of these traditional theatrical forms, *kunqu* was the elite national form, China's equivalent of *nō*, and the last one *jingdiao* was another name for *jingju* (Beijing Opera), with *diao* meaning "tune". The rest were local forms of various provinces. All these forms belong to the traditional musical theatre.

5. Although *biaoqing shu* should be aesthetic, it should follow a play's content and not stray from it while *zuo gong* sometimes purely seeks to please the audience and ignores the play's content. (Ma 1914c, 4)

It seems Feng agrees with Wang Youyou on the point that new drama does not follow conventions, yet Feng's understanding of naturalistic acting was far more sophisticated than simply leaving the actor to grope in the dark. For example, Feng points out that as part of the actor's preparation for his role, he should understand the relationship between his character's expression and the play's historical period, the character's social stature, their costume, the meaning of their lines, the progression of the play, as well as its relationship with movement and gestures. He then seeks to address what he believes to be the remnants of traditional theatre too often seen on the stages of the new drama (5-6):

1. "The actor should not talk to the audience."
2. "The entrances and exits should fit the play's content."
3. "The actors' costume should be changed from act to act" unless the actors appear in two temporally consecutive acts or when they are wearing official or military uniforms.
4. "Actors should not talk simultaneous."
5. "The actor should not seek laughter with unreasonable costume, accessories, or action" except in a farce.

Feng calls these rules "theorems" (*dingli*) and believes they are necessary because "today's new dramatists usually feed the audience with conventions of old theatre while ignoring their suitability for the play's content" (5). Of these conventions, he finds asides and monologues

the most intolerable: “The stage is a small world. Since the actor is in this small world, how can he talk to someone from another world?” In addition, there are also historical and geographical considerations that make talking directly to the audience unreasonable. The next “theorem,” the one that specifies entrances and exits is meant to combat the *jingju* convention of always entering from stage right and exiting from stage left. That practice posed no problem for *jingju* due to its lack of scenery but became incompatible with realistic sets of *wenmingxi*.

If we examine what Feng was trying to achieve here, it is clear that he, like fellow Spring Willow practitioners as well as other conscientious new dramatists, were advocating adherence to the ideals of *wenmingxi* as an enlightenment tool that could reach the average audience, because of its ability to portray reality as closely as possible. They might not be aware, of course, that what they were seeing as the more “modern” and “reasonable” way of acting was just another convention of the Western naturalistic theatre. Such a convention, in turn, had its roots in the unities of Neoclassicism, which attempted to straighten the “unreasonable” conventions of preceding dramatic idiom.

What is intriguing here is that these “theorems” were directed not as much against traditional theatre as the “free acting” believers in *wenmingxi* who were unable to see the difference between abolition of convention and the need for verisimilitude. As a member of the Spring Willow which professed an antipathy to “free acting,” Feng Shuluan asked: “Since theatre is a special genre of art, is there any art form that does not require proper research, practice, methodology, and a foundation?” (Ma 1915, 20). This disregard for verisimilitude proved to be an especially serious problem after the 1914 revival of *wenmingxi*, when its considerable commercial success and low expectation of discipline and training attracted over a thousand actors to the stage. It was inevitable that many of the new comers were not up to the task of ad-

libbing and keeping the performance at a decent level. This caused Zheng Zhengqiu, the founder of the New People Society, to ridicule the exaggerated speech makers who “diabolically gnash their teeth, gawk, stamp their feet, and howl while using the same facial expression, posture, approach, and speech pattern regardless whether it is a domestic or society play” (Zheng 1922a, 161). As a former critic of traditional theatre known for his attention to details (Xu 1957, 37), Zheng was in fact keenly aware of the difference between naturalistic acting and undisciplined “free acting”:

When we perform in new drama, we wear ordinary clothes, walk in a natural gait, speak in daily language and use ordinary gestures. There is no need to hold up the robe (*liaopao*), adjust the belt (*duandai*), let alone to dance in long sleeves.⁷⁰ There are no such terms as old walk (*laobu*), or dwarf walk (*aibu*), let alone wild walk (*langbu*) or square walk (*sifangbu*). There is no such convention as calling the orchestra (*jiantou*), entrance couplet (*shangchangshi*), or exit couplet (*xiachangshi*), let alone tunes with three weak (*yan*) and one strong (*ban*) beats in a measure.⁷¹ There is no necessity for blowing the beard (*chui xuzi*) or gawking (*deng yanjing*), let alone complying with the pitch (*yingxian*), following the beat (*hepai*), or posing a stance (*da jiazi*). In short, there is no convention that constricts us. Since there are no set conventions, is it then quite easy? The answer is no. In fact, it is hundreds and thousands of times more difficult than traditional theatre. (Zheng 1922a, 159)

⁷⁰ In this and following sentences, Zheng talks about many of the conventions of traditional theatre like hold up the robe (*liaopao*).

⁷¹ In traditional Chinese music theory, meter was described in terms of *ban* and *yan*. A strong beat was a *ban* (literally “board” because it was marked by the sound of a board being struck) and a weak one is called *yan* (literally “eye”). A four-beat meter was called *yi ban san yan* (one board and three eyes) and a two-beat meter was *yi ban yi yan* (one board and one eye).

For Zheng, the hard part lies in finding the right balance, the propriety in speech and acting:

While it is not hard to say the words of normal people, it is hard to say what they dare not say. While it is not hard to act like normal people, it is hard to do what they can not do.... What is difficult to achieve is to say what ordinary people dare not say without defying common sense, to do what ordinary people can not do without violating accepted norm. (162)

Therefore, the solution in realistic acting becomes: “Although drama is fiction, acting should be real. New drama especially values verisimilitude (*qiuzhen*) and follows naturalness (*ziran*) in every way” (163).

5.1.3. Domestic *Shinpa* and Traditional Theatre

In contrast to *sōshi shibai* that Ren Tianzhi, Wang Zhongsheng, and Liu Yizhou popularized in China, members of The Spring Willow Society brought back a more mature style of *shinpa* that grew out of a desire to modernize *kabuki*.

As the Westernization fervor swept Meiji Japan, some of the best *kabuki* actors sought to instill a certain degree of realism in their acting. One of *kabuki*'s top two stars, Ichikawa Danjūrō IX (1839-1903) created a new genre called live history plays (*katsureki-geki*) in a move towards theatrical realism. Starting from the late 1870s, he called his acting style *haragei*—acting from the guts, i.e., identifying with the characters he is playing. He proclaims:

Once you are on stage, if you don't forget you are playing, if you don't become that character, you cannot possibly reach his true nature.... It is not only a matter of

appearance, but a matter of what you have inside of you, in your guts. True feelings are those which are passing from the actor's heart to the audience's heart, anything else will fail.... Of course, formal aspects remain important in certain cases, but they should never become more than the necessity of digging down in one's heart of hearts to show the character's feelings. That is what I mean by *haragei*.⁷²

Kabuki is known for its beautiful external appearance where everything is an artistic expression of life and actors perform set skills and patterns (*kata*) taught to them by their masters. Such strict conventions effectively kept *kabuki* from the concern of naturalistic portrayal of events. Before the Meiji era, real names were not allowed in historical plays and Danjūrō's father, the seventh Ichikawa, was banned from Edo stage for using real armor on stage. When the Meiji government encouraged realism on the *kabuki* stage as part of the Westernization theatrical reform, Danjūrō began to use historically accurate costume, real historical documents, realistic gestures and movement, and more natural delivery:

He even would take into account the historical likelihood of the characters' behavior, refusing, for instance, to perform the traditionally expected stylized fighting (*tachimawari*) and histrionic poses before the capture of the hero, on the grounds that no one would have really dared to behave in such ways in front of the shōgun's suite.... Concerning the lines the actors were to speak, Danjūrō was, on one hand, exercised by their historical linguistic accuracy, going as far as to use passages straight from the *Heike monogatari* (Tale of the Heike), the great medieval war chronicle, notwithstanding the difficulty audiences had in understanding them. But, on the other hand, he tried to promote a more natural, conversation-like delivery of the lines, and fought hard to break

⁷² From (Ihara 1933, 265). English by Jean-Jacques Tschudin in (Tschudin 1999, 87).

away from the traditional *sichi-go chō* pattern with its alternate verses in the seven- and five-syllable meter. He freely used naturalistic devices such as mumbling, grunting, or talking with his back to the audience. (Tschudin 1999, 86)

Of course, the *kata* of *kabuki* would only allow Danjūrō to go so far and even with that, his acts were often met with ridicule from his audience.

The new genre was, in fact, never really accepted: tradition-loving fans made fun of it, lampooning Danjūrō mercilessly, and even reform-minded intellectuals such as Tsubouchi Shōyō or Mori Ōgai harshly criticized it. By the mid-1890s, Danjūrō himself had to concede its failure ... and, giving up new historical plays, devoted all his talents to classical repertory.... *Katsureki's* ultimate failure demonstrated that *kabuki* had an inner logic that had to be respected, and that, once its limits were reached, efforts to reform or modernize theatre would have to take place in totally new fields, well outside the traditional genres (91-92).

This is exactly where *kabuki* stopped and *shinpa* started, and the transition between the two genres was made possible in part by intellectuals and government officials behind the theatre reform movement like Yoda Gakkai (1833-1909), “an extraordinary figure who capped nearly twenty years of high government service with practical involvement in the reform of theatre” (Powell 2002, 15). Originally a fan of Danjūrō’s reform efforts, Yoda was nonetheless unsatisfied with the limits of *kabuki* in conveying realism, especially its mannerism and female impersonation. As a result, he sponsored the Saibikan group whose first and only production in November of 1891 was best known as the first mixed-sex production in modern Japanese theatre. Sandwiched between two plays, the geisha-turned-actress Chitose Beiha danced a scene from the

kabuki play *Seki no to* (The Barrier Gate). The male actors were all amateurs and mostly well-educated. It was in this production that Ii Yōhō made his theatrical debut, along with several other actors who would eventually turn out to be *shinpa* stars. After the disbandment of the Saibikan following this production, many of the actors, including Ii, joined Kawakami's company, only to move on to set up their own groups after "finding themselves unsuited for the 'coarse' manner of those politically conscious young men" (Matsumoto 2002, 10).

At least one of the first generation of *shinpa* actors, Yamaguchi Sadao, was trained as a *kabuki* actor of female roles (*onnagata*), "a pupil of Kataoka Gadō with the *Kabuki* stage name of Kataoka Gajaku" (Toita 1956, 268). Other best-known actors of this group include Ii Yōhō (1871-1932), Kawai Takeo (1878-1942), Takada Minoru (1871-1915), and Kitamura Rokurō (1871-1961). Of them, Ii specialized in handsome young man roles while Kawai Takeo, as the son of an *kabuki* actor, excelled in female roles with a "brilliant and florid" style reminiscent "no doubt of his *Kabuki* origins" (Toita 1956, 272). The two of them are often credited with enhancing the elegance of *shinpa* acting by borrowing *kabuki* techniques. In 1902, Ii and Kawai staged a series of eight plays called *Chikamatsu kenkyū-geki* (*In Research on Chikamatsu*) that paid homage to the canonical classical playwright Chikamatsu Monzaemon (1653-1725). The series was much credited in both familiarizing their company with classical theatre and elevating the stature of *shinpa*. "The minutely detailed joint-critique (*gappyō*) which *Kabuki*, most respected of the theatre periodicals, gave the June performance in the Chikamatsu series suggested how important it was considered" (ibid). Both of them also starred in a number of domestic *shinpa* plays, as well as European plays, including *Romeo and Juliet* (1904), *La Tosca* (1907), and *La Dame aux Camélias* (1911). Takada was best-known for rough heroes like Arai Josūke in one of the best-known *shinpa* plays *Konjiki yasha* (*Gold Demon*) and the tragic bandit

heroes in the two plays by Satō Kōroku that I have previously discussed—Sakamaki Tougo in *Ushio (The Tide)* and Sōta in *Kumo no hibiki (The Echo of Cloud)*. Kitamura excelled in tragic female roles, particularly Namiko, the misunderstood and long-suffering heroine of *Hototogisu (The Cuckoo)*.



Figure 24 A scene from *Hototogisu (The Cuckoo)* with Kitamura Rokurō (left) and Ii Yōhō (right). (Photo courtesy of Waseda University's Tsubouchi Shōyō Theatre Museum.)



Figure 25 A scene from *Hototogisu (The Cuckoo)* with Kitamura Rokurō (left), Ii Yōhō (center) and Fujisawa Asajirō (right). (Photo courtesy of Waseda University's Tsubouchi Shōyō Theatre Museum.)



Figure 26 A scene from *Tsubaki-hime (La Dame aux Camélias)* with Kawai Takeo (left) and Ii Yōhō (right). (Photo courtesy of Waseda University's Tsubouchi Shōyō Theatre Museum.)



Figure 27 Takada Minoru (left) and Kawai Takeo (right). From *Engei Gaho*, 4 (7), 1910.

If one examines the stage shots of these and other *shinpa* stars, it is clear that the *shinpa* acting style, although closer to daily life than *kabuki*, was nevertheless considerably influenced by classical theatre, judging from the actors' posture, facial expression, the positions of their hands and feet, and shape of their body. In fact, these stages shots clearly remind one of the laws of theatrical anthropology that Eugenio Barba derived based on his observations of traditional

Asian actors. Of particular pertinence in this case is what he calls “the alteration of balance” and “the law of opposition.” He explains the former this way:

When we walk using daily body techniques, the hips follow the movement of walking. In the *kabuki*, *nō*, and *kyōgen* performers’ extra-daily techniques, the hips, on the contrary, must remain fixed. To block the hips while walking, it is necessary to bend the knees slightly and, using the trunk as a single unit, to engage the vertebral column, which presses downwards. In this way, two different tensions are created in the upper and lower parts of the body, respectively, and dictate a new point of balance. (Barba 1995, 17)

To Barba,

All codified performance forms contain this constant principle: a deformation of the daily technique of walking, of moving in space, and of keeping the body immobile. This extra-daily technique is based on an alteration of balance. The aim is a permanently unstable balance. Rejecting “natural” balance, the performer intervenes in space with a “luxury” balance: complex, seemingly superfluous and costing excessive energy. (19)

Here, the operative words are “extra-daily” and “luxury,” the rejection of “natural” balance of everyday life. Manifestly, this is not naturalist theatre. Barba calls his second “law” the “principle of opposition,” in which “the performer’s body reveals its life to the spectator by means of a myriad of tensions between opposing forces” (24):

Certain traditions constructed elaborate composition systems on the basis of this recurring principle, which all performers use, consciously or unconsciously. The codified

movement system of the Peking Opera performer is built on this principle: every action must begin from the direction opposite to that in which it will be carried out.

In short, “in Oriental theatre, the straight line doesn’t exist” (Barba 1986, 118).

Indeed, one can hardly find a straight line when we examine the stage shots of *shinpa*’s brightest stars even though their postures were not as exaggerated as in *kabuki*. From their locked hips, to the round and carefully-balanced shape of their posture, to the strategic placement of their hands for the sake of balance, to the way they cock their heads and place their feet, all these “extra-daily” placements of their body suggest the tremendous degree of inspiration they took from *kabuki* and the “luxury” energy they instilled in their posture not for the sake of realism but in pursuit of extra aesthetics—exactly the opposite of what Feng Shuluan determined *biaoqing shu* in new drama to be vis-à-vis *zuo gong* in traditional theatre.

When Lu Jingruo studied acting in Fujisawa Asajirō’s Tokyo Actor’s School, he witnessed Fujisawa’s philosophy of teaching both *kabuki* and *shinpa* techniques and letting his students perform in history plays coached by *kabuki* actors, *shinpa* domestic drama directed by Fujisawa, and European plays like Lady Gregory’s *The Poor House* and Yeats’ *The Hour Glass* directed by Osanai Kaoru and Masumoto Kiyoshi from Waseda (Itō 2004, 72; Toita 1956, 306). In fact, in a speech given before the school’s first performance, Fujisawa even expressed the wish that after three years of study, his “students would have the basic skills to enter the expert’s hall in new and traditional theatres alike” (Itō 2004, 72).

Many of the *shinpa* stars were personal favorites of the Spring Willow actors, a tendency that was obvious from the earliest Spring Willow productions. In their enthusiastic reviews of the Spring Willow’s *Black Slave’s Cry to Heaven*, many Japanese critics commented on the similarities in acting styles between the young Chinese students and various *shinpa* stars, e.g.,

how Zeng Xiaogu's style was close to that of Fujisawa (Nakamura 2004a, 43-44). The Chinese students themselves also openly acknowledged their indebtedness to the *shinpa* stars, even though there are very few records of formal master-student relationship. Ouyang Yuqian specifically claims Kawai and Ii as the models for him and Lu Jingruo:

Jingruo's expression somewhat emulates Ii Yōhō and since I'd seen quite a few Kawai Takeo's plays, I was greatly influenced by him. Kawai was quite tall and strong but his movement and expression were exquisite. According to the Japanese, there was nothing in Kawai's action that was slightly different from that of a woman. Moreover, even some women could not reach his dignity and smoothness. I enjoyed his plays the most. His roles were mostly active and vibrant women, with occasional older women. Since I liked the type of characters he played, I paid special attention to him. (Ouyang 1990, 20)

The other best-known *shinpa onnagata*, Kitamura, became a role model for Ma Jiangshi when the latter adapted *The Cuckoo* and played the role of Namiko, the heroine who died of tuberculosis after being sent back home by her mother-in-law when her husband was away in a war. Ouyang recalled that Ma "was influenced by him [Kitamura] and emulated him in many places" (Ouyang 1985a, 37). Although the adaptation was Sinicized, "its structure and certain skills followed the style of Kitamura Rokurō" (ibid).

Apart from these and other examples of how Spring Willow actors followed their personal favorites (Huang 2001b, 183-88), the domestic *shinpa*'s assimilation of *kabuki* was probably more broadly influential in *wenmingxi*'s—not just the Spring Willow's—tolerance of certain aspects of traditional theatre that remained as part of new drama. These aspects include the role of conventions, the function of music and songs, female impersonation, the emergence

of actresses, and gender-mixed companies. In many occasions, there were serious debate on these issues and alignment of the differing sides was not always clear cut.

5.2. WENMINGXI AND TRADITIONAL THEATRE

5.2.1. Opera or Drama: The Role of Song-Dance Theatre

In Feng Shuluan's definition of *xinju*, it was born out of Western drama while traditional theatre was akin to opera. Yet singing in *wenmingxi* was a rather common practice. Even Ouyang Yuqian would often add a song from *jingju* as early as 1913 when he sang an aria from the *jingju* play *Yubei ting* (Pavilion of the Imperial Stele) in a scene in *Love and Hate in a Family*. In his post-*wenmingxi* memoir written in 1929, when he was firmly in the camp of the straight *huaju*, Ouyang hastened to add that it was “really senseless although I was very proud at the time” (Ouyang 1990, 35). In fact, he gradually performed more female roles in *jingju* than *wenmingxi*, often his own adaptation from stories of the classic Romantic novel *Honglou meng* (*Dream of the Red Chamber*). As *wenmingxi* quickly lost its popularity in the late 1910s, he performed as a professional *jingju nandan* (male in female role) for a decade, during which time his fame briefly rivaled that of Mei Lanfang, as underscored by the saying “Mei of the north and Ou of the south.”

Although *shinpa* may have been inspired by *kabuki* posture, movement, and speech delivery, or even dance, as in the cases of Chitose Beiha and Kawakami Sadayakko (Toita 1956, 268; Kano 2001, 76), singing in *kabuki* is in fact not done by the actors. Rather, it is relegated to singers sitting together with musicians as part of the musical ensemble. In contrast, singing is considered the first of four basic skills for the *jingju* actor. For fans of *jingju*, singing has always been the first and most accessible of the four skills. Therefore, it is understandable that most of

the original members of the Spring Willow Society were *jingju* fans, often quite good at singing (Ouyang 1990, 4-6; Huang 2001a, 50-55). In fact, such was the talent in the ranks of the Spring Willow Society that *Black Slave's Cry to Heaven* made special accommodations for singing and dancing. The whole Act Two was virtually a large party scene with singing, including *jingju*, and dancing. Act Four started with a drunkard sings under the moonlight in front of Uncle Tom's cabin. This is why Ouyang Yuqian was somewhat circumspect in admitting that "*Black Slave's Cry to Heaven* included some extraneous elements by a few actors eager to show off" (Ouyang 1990, 10-11).

Obviously, the *shinpa* of 1907 had evolved from the reviews of its early days, yet enough of the musical and dancing elements were retained for the Chinese students to feel comfortable in adding these scenes to an otherwise straight play and for their director Fujisawa Asajirō to allow them. The license provided by *shinpa* to mix the old and new allowed at least one of the actors, Xie Kangbai, to sing two *jingju* arias, first in the party scene and then as the drunkard in Act Four (Ouyang 1985a, 20).

Almost all of the original members of the Spring Willow Society were *jingju* lovers. Li Shutong, who played Mrs. Shelby apart from designing the set and poster, was actively involved in *jingju* both in Tianjin and Shanghai where he even posed in costume for photos, although there is still dispute about his degree of involvement" (Huang 2001a). Zeng Xiaogu, who played Eliza and wrote the script, "had long lived in Beijing, could sing some *jingju*, and had of course seen quite a lot of traditional theatre (Ouyang 1990, 7). The same was true of several other members, including Ouyang himself (8). The notable exception was Lu Jingruo, not only because there is no record of him involved in traditional theatre, but also since he was the one most ingrained in Western theatre. Still, even Lu was not completely against the mix of the new

and traditional and raised no objections to Ouyang's occasional singing in the Spring Willow production in Shanghai.

Still, these were admittedly rare occasions for the Spring Willow. As an acknowledged adherent of *shinpa* standards, the Spring Willow generally refused to add singing, insisting it as one of the yardsticks that separated new (*xin*) and old (*jiu*) theatres (*xi*). And many would use *shinpa* as an example that new drama should not include singing. That did not stop many from using songs in their plays, however. Zheng Zhengqiu, as a former *jingju* critic and the initiator of domestic *wenmingxi*, even used new song in some of his melodramas. Recounting his success with songs, he concluded that

although many oppose singing in *xinju*, I believe we do not have to follow Japanese precedents. It is true that there is a division between drama and opera in Japan, but in terms of popularity, opera still holds the upper hand. I have tried using really simple and sad songs in various plays.... Each song proved to be extremely touching and some even won applause for each line. This proves that the audience love songs. (Zheng 1922b, 198)

The popularity of song-dance theatre was certainly an issue a commercial theatre like *wenmingxi* could not afford to ignore. As was the case with Kawakami and Sadayakko, the power of music could not be underestimated. In fact, there was certain musical expertise—with both Chinese and Western musical instruments for *jingju* and popular songs (*xiaoqu*)—in most companies (Ma 1914c, 10-11). As I mentioned in Chapter One, one of the companies, Kaiming She (The Enlightened Society), specialized in musical theatre. After their 1914 tour in Japan with Liu Yizhou, they brought *Resurrection*—inspired by the Geijutsu-za (Art Theatre) production featuring the popular song of Katusha by Matsui Sumako—back to China. Although not as

wildly popular as its Japanese precursor, the play and Katusha's songs were well received.

(Huang 2001b, 292) And they may very well have affected Zheng Zhengqiu's decision to add

“sad” songs in his melodramas.



Figure 28 A group picture of the Spring Willow Theatre (The New Drama Society)'s tour to Suzhou. It includes Lu Jingruo, Ma Jiangshi and other members, a Japanese musician identified as Hiyakawa and Japanese set designer as Hosoya, as well as a band. From (Zhou 1922e, 94).

Still, as Zheng mentioned, the majority of songs used in *wenmingxi* came from *jingju*. Apart from their popular appeal, some scholars saw an advantage in using the songs of traditional theatre to broaden the emotional range of new drama, as explained by Jiang Meisheng, a well-known professor of Chinese literature and writer whose works included plays that mixed new and old drama:

The advantage of *xinju* lies in its verisimilitude, which is absent in *jiuju*. The advantage of *jiuju* lies in its use of songs to portray sorrow and joy and speech to carry the narrative, which is lacking in *xinju*. To take the benefits of the two genres and abandon their limitation, isn't it an enduring path to reform? (Zhou 1922c, 176)

It is true that songs have been one of the most effective means for emotional highlights in traditional theatre. As I have discussed in the previous chapter, such emotional depth was generally difficult for *wenmingxi* to portray, apart from a few exceptions like *Love and Death in a Family*, in which emotional highlights were portrayed with Shakespearean and melodramatic flourish. Yet, there was only one Lu Jingruo in *wenmingxi* and he only wrote one complete play besides adaptations. Therefore, for other playwrights, the range of techniques were understandably limited, which in turn made Jiang's proposal rather popular with "considerable support" (Zhou 1922c, 176). For the *wenmingxi* practitioners, though, the hurdle lies again not necessarily in the idea of singing itself, but the conventions of traditional theatre, which would inevitably impede the verisimilitude of new drama. In other words, their objection was not necessarily out of dramaturgical concerns as it was theatrical:

It is not hard to add singing; what become problematic are the various details that come with singing. For example, singing is accompanied by *huqin*⁷³ and measured by the beat of drum and board. In traditional theatre, singing has to be preceded with calling the board (*jiaoban*)⁷⁴, accompanied by *ban* (board) and *yan* (eye) while the tempo and dynamics of *taibu* (steps), *shenduan* (gait), and *daobai* (delivery) are decided by the cymbal and drum. . . . I agree with Mr. Jiang's proposal of adding singing, but should it also be accompanied by cymbal, drum, and *huqin*? If only *huqin* is used without cymbal and drum, then *ban* and *yan* is ignored and there is still no fusion of new and old theatre. According to Mr. Jiang, the advantage of new drama is in its verisimilitude. In that case, using cymbal and drum would defy reality. (Zhou 1922c, 177)

Still, judging from Ouyang's testimony and Feng's advice for *wenmingxi* companies to be equipped with the "common skill" of *jingju* (*pihuang*) and popular songs (*xiaoqu*) (Ma 1914c, 10-11), it seems the practice of mixing old and new was widely spread. And if Zheng Zhengqiu is to be believed, he was the only one using new songs while all the other companies—with the possible exception of The Enlightened Society—were simply appropriating "*laodiao*," old tunes from *jingju*. The fact that such a practice was widely accepted suggests that both the audience and *wenmingxi* practitioners were not yet indoctrinated by the constructed illusions of reality that modern theatre was trying so hard to maintain. This temporal malleability, where a song temporarily freezes the flow of plot, was indeed helpful in broadening the emotional range of the new drama as well as making it more entertaining. The fact that even *Love and Death in a Family* could use a song or two only reinforces the notion.

⁷³ A bowed Chinese string instrument used to accompany singing in *jingju*.

⁷⁴ A vocal signal from the actor to the orchestra to start the music.

In a sense, the issue of singing crystallizes one of the fundamental contradictions of *wenmingxi* at the crossroads between “new” and “old” theatre. Apart from mixing drama and opera, the practice also violates another tenet of new drama, which is the belief that everything serves to advance the plot while traditional theatre sometimes simply seeks to entertain the audience. As Feng says: “Although *biaoqing shu* [expression in new drama] should be aesthetic, it should follow a play’s content and not stray from it while *zuo gong* [movement in traditional theatre] sometimes purely seeks to please the audience and ignore the play’s content” (Ma 1914c, 4). Yet, although it is true that *wenmingxi* was for the most part speech-based, singing was never eliminated from its stage. In fact, the practice was with *wenmingxi* from its inception, as evinced by the singing—and dancing—in the 1907 Tokyo *Black Slave’s Cry to Heaven* (Ouyang 1990, 10). Eventually, theatrical Westernization would lead *huaju* practitioners to frown upon such practice, as Ouyang did in 1929 when he called the non-speaking scenes in the 1907 production “extraneous elements” and his singing in *Love and Death in a Family* “really senseless” (Ouyang 1990, 11, 35). For *wenmingxi*, though, singing, like script adaptation, was ultimately a strategy in theatrical localization based on its practitioners’ familiarity with native theatre, their relatively limited knowledge of Western theatre, the precedent of *shinpa*, and, finally, the preparedness and preference of their audience.

5.2.2. Female Impersonation and the Emergence of Actresses

In a similar fashion, these concerns also affected *wenmingxi*’s continued practice of using of male actors in female roles (*nandan*) as well as contemporary attitude towards the emergence of actresses and mixed-sex performance on the *wenmingxi* stage.

According to Kano, straightening the performance of gender was one of the targets of Kawakami's theatrical reform since it goes hand in hand with the indirectness, citationality, and performativity of traditional theatre: "In straightened theater, gender is no longer a pattern to be cited but becomes an identity to be expressed. It becomes a theater of 'direct gender.' Just as the indirectness and citationality of speech and action is carefully concealed in modern theater, so is the indirectness and citationality of gender" (Kano 2001, 50).

In Chinese theatre, the performance of gender can be traced as far back as Tang Dynasty (618-906), when both *qiandan* (man in a female role) and *kunsheng* (woman in a male role) became an integral part of the theatre. This practice lasted almost a millennium, until in 1772 Emperor Qianlong of Qing Dynasty banned the appearance of actresses in Beijing, effectively ending the practice of *kunsheng* yet leaving *qiandan* intact. This long tradition suggests a tolerance about the performance of gender, as Zhou Huiling (Katherine Hui-Ling Chou) points out in relation to the prominence of *kunsheng* in the golden era of Chinese theatre:

The activities of *kunsheng* of Yuan Dynasty seems to imply a certain recognition in ancient Chinese society about "gender performance," which is that the physical difference between male and female actors were not necessarily the major basis of their gender roles on stage. On the contrary, the gender of the characters was revealed through costume and posture. In other words, the gender crossing on stage indicated that the society at the time viewed "gender" as a type of artistic activity. Since the actors relied on costume and posture in their representation of the characters, it seems to indicate that only such "external conditions" as "costume" and "posture" were the criteria for the cultural determination of social status and the recognition of gender difference. Since "gender" is the signifier composed of a series of elements external to the body, it was not

necessarily considered as the essential presentation of an individual's born nature. And because these criteria and elements were external and could be freely donned on and off, taken in or discarded, "gender" became possible for the actor to manipulate, as a kind of performance. This attitude that regarded gender as performance and the performance culture that based its aesthetic criteria on the actor's physical performance seemed to indicate a kind of transcendence that allowed the actors to be elevated from their gender roles in daily life. (Zhou 2000, 7)

A well-known example of such "external conditions" as a signifier of gender is a pair of short stilts called *caiqiao* that was tied under the actor's shoes to imitate bound feet. They were first used by the actor Wei Changsheng (1774-1820) and were soon imitated by all *dan* actors in *jingju*, eventually becoming one of the basic skills for the role.

Such an attitude in the performance of gender made it rather easy for new dramatists to assume female roles and their audience to accept the practice. An additional factor was the existence of *onnagata* in *shinpa* and their dominance in the profession, in spite of the brilliance of Sadayakko and the later entrance of actresses from her school. The fact that Ouyang and Ma followed Kawai and Kitamura as their models certainly made their path to success much shorter than if they were forced to start from scratch. What is more significant than individual acting models, however, was that fact that *shinpa*'s *onnagata* system provided a seal of legitimacy, in the eyes of *wenmingxi* practitioners, for the existence of this legacy custom in the new "civilized" drama aimed at social enlightenment. Granted, there were not many female Chinese students in Tokyo and it would be hard in any case for any of them to act on the same stage with men. Still, when Ouyang Yuqian, Ma Jiangshi, and others witnessed the success of *shinpa onnagatas*, they were eager to follow their golden standard. In fact, they came to believe so

much of this standard that they would simply dismiss the emerging actresses in Shanghai as “stunts”, as we shall soon see.



Figure 29 Ouyang Yuqian in Western dress. From *Youxi zazhi*, 8, 1914.

Indeed, while *nandan* (male in female roles) was a common practice in *wenmingxi*, the entrance of actresses was nonetheless far from smooth. As aforementioned, the ban on actresses on stage started in early Qing Dynasty with an edict from Emperor Qianlong. In Shanghai, the

earliest all-female *jingju* troupes commonly referred to as *mao'erxi*⁷⁵ appeared as early as the 1870 inside the concessions. A decade later in 1890, some of these companies became so popular that the Qing government again sought to ban the practice, to no avail. In 1894, the first permanent theatre for all-female troupes, Meixian Chayuan (Beautiful Fairies Teahouse) opened in Shanghai and was soon followed by other theatres, creating a whole group of female *jingju* stars.



Figure 30 *Jingju* actresses of all-female companies in their dressing room in late-Qing Shanghai. From (Wu 1990, 24, 3b).

⁷⁵ Depending on different characters used, the phrase refers to various theories of the group's origin, ranging from actress's headwear to their stage beard to the name of the first owner of this all-female troupe.

With the success of *wenmingxi* in Shanghai, new drama performance by all-female troupes started in 1912, initially provoking considerable public interest. One of these performances was given by the Nüzi Xinjutuan (Women's New Drama Troupe) at the Lyceum Theatre. For three nights in a row, it played to a full house eager to see women performing in contemporary clothes (Zhengong 1915). Although the education department of Jiangsu Province petitioned the Magistrate of Shanghai to “swiftly ban” the performance on the ground of morality, all-female performances thrived in Shanghai.



Figure 31 *Wenmingxi* actresses Ye Wenying and Xie Tongying. From From (Zhou 1922e, 105).

The first mixed-sex *wenmingxi* company was called Minking She (The Prosperity Society) established by the actor Su Shichi in 1914. Su was originally an actor and backstage

manager of the New People Society. During a performance of *Konggu lan* (*Orchid of the Hollow Valley*) he missed a cue for his entrance, upsetting two of the group's top stars Wang Youyou and Wang Wukong who were waiting on stage. This incident led to the weakening of his position in the company and prompted him to establish his own company in June of 1914 with a well-funded capital of 15,000 *yuan*. He found some good actors like Ren Tianzhi and lured others from existing companies, like Wu Wozun from the Spring Willow, who was one of the original members from Tokyo where he played Cavaradessi in *Hot Tears* (Ouyang 1990, 57). However, Su failed to find any top *dan* actors and his effort to lure Ling Lianying, the top *dan* star at the New People, was thwarted by the threat of lawsuit by Zheng Zhengqiu, the company's founder. This basically forced Su to form the mixed-sex company of the Prosperity Society in the French Concession, which was known for its mixed-sex *jingju* companies, unlike the International Settlement that banned such a practice.

As the premiere date of August 4th approached, Su still had no choice for the female lead and was forced to hire the actress Shen Nongying. When the company opened with a play by the well-known journalist Wang Dungen, Shen was not yet ready and had to be prompted from behind the scenery or under a table. In a week, though, she was on her own and was soon joined by other actresses. Soon other companies followed suit and offered mixed-sex performances. While the Prosperity had its ups and downs, it outlasted most other *wenmingxi* companies and was eventually folded into another company in 1917.

Still, mixed-sex performance did not extend to the major *wenmingxi* companies like the Spring Willow, the New People, or the People's Voice. On the contrary, the fallout with these companies during the existence of the Prosperity, coupled with traditional bias towards actresses and mixed-sex performance, caused some of the most influential voices to see the company as no

more than a commercial adventure, an assessment that was also extended to other mixed-sex performance in *wenmingxi* as well.

For example, in two occasions—once in his 1929 memoir and then in a long review of *wenmingxi* in 1957 Ouyang Yuqian labeled both Su Shichi and the Prosperity Society as mercenary, calling it “attracting the audience with mixed-sex performance plus snake tricks” (Ouyang 1990, 57):

In establishing the Prosperity Society, he [Su Shichi] was no more than trying to beat the New People, and the mixed-sex performance was no more than a gimmick. He was a philistine and later became a detective in the French Concession’s police station, which made it impossible for him to achieve anything with the company. Some actors later left the company: Liang Yixiao became a prostitute and Su Shichi was too happy with his life of an imperialist flunky (*yangnu*) to stay with new drama. (Ouyang 1985b, 84)

Other prominent new dramatists also revealed aversion toward the Prosperity. Xu Banmei called the financier of the company Zhang Tiyun “opportunistic” in pursuit of commercial success: “At the time, ‘mixed-sex performance’ was indeed immensely attractive. Since it was a rare occasion in Shanghai, it was quite popular for a while. Still, since good actresses were hard to find at the time, their artistic quality was not yet satisfactory” (Xu 1957, 60). Zhou Jianyun was more direct:

The Prosperity is located at the French Concession which is not as prosperous as the International Settlement, and the audience is mostly from the lower depths of the society. They are used to mischievousness and are not there for the play. Any slightly serious theatre would be ignored. Therefore, the theatres there have to resort to all types of tricks.

Knowing the audience preference for eroticism, they have to resort to the old gimmick of mixed-sex performance (all theatres in the French Concession, regardless of new or old, adopt mixed-sex performance). As a result, the audience got what they wanted. The actions on stages are just muddled through, and off-stage the company is indeed really mixed together. As a result, in mixed-sex new drama companies the actors mostly become temporary couples without go-betweens. (Zhou 1922d, 749)

Commercialism was definitely one of the core reasons behind the demise of *wenmingxi*, and the charge against the Prosperity's owners' intentions might very well be true. On the other hand, the focus on its owners' motives apparently eclipsed the achievements of the actresses in this and other such companies and revealed, at the minimum, a professional prejudice against actresses. In her depiction of the first English actresses during the Restoration era when the acting profession was considered no place for "respectable" women, Elizabeth Howe called this attitude "misogynist resentment." At the time, "society assumed that a woman who displayed herself on the public stage was probably a whore" (Howe 1992, 30, 32). One of the best actresses of the time, Elizabeth Barry, for example, was "pictured as a mercenary prostitute, unbounded in her lust for money, prepared to do anything for profit" even though there was "scant evidence that she actually *was* a prostitute" (30):

Whether or not she exploited it off stage, the actress's sexuality—her potential availability to men—became the central feature of her professional identity as a player. It has been observed that contemporary critics and satirists discuss the actress's private life and lovers as "an extension of her histrionic function" (34).

Howe concludes that “[t]his constant, even obsessive, emphasis on the actress’s sexuality effectively diffused the threat to male society of having women speaking, acting and creating characters on the public stage” (36).

In her study of the working conditions of actresses in Victorian England, Tracy C. Davis continues to chronicle the hostility towards women on stage:

No matter how consummate the artist, pre-eminent the favorite, and modest the woman, the actress could not supersede the fact that she lived a public life and consented to be “hired” for the amusement by all who could command the price. For a large section of society, the similarities between the actress’s life and the prostitute’s or *demi-mondaine*’s were unforgettable and overruled all other evidence about respectability. She was “no better than she should be.” (Davis 1991, 69)

Moreover, “the Victorian public had a voracious appetite for biological information about actresses” (71) with a common assumption of an “equation of women’s extramarital sex with promiscuity, rampant desire, and prostitution” (78), even as “documented cases of Victorian women who simultaneously pursued careers in the theatre and prostitution are lacking” (80).

There is remarkable similarity in the accounts of emergence of actresses and mixed-sex companies in *wenmingxi*, especially the intrusion in the actresses’ private lives and the assumption of their moral corruption and corruptive power. In the few, usually short biographies of *wenmingxi* actresses, their origin and current lives—especially their affairs with fellow actors or wealthy benefactors—occupy just as much space as comments of their talent. For example, a short biography of Lin Ruxin, a *beidan* (tragic female) star of the Prosperity, explains that her sister owned a brothel, although she herself was callously depicted as being spared from the

profession for being “unattractive and thin with that face of a widow” (Juyuan 1922, 662).

Despite her excellence in her roles, she was disparagingly depicted as having an affair with the actor Gu Wuwei, an original member of Progressive Troupe. The author concluded: “Since coupling with Lin, Gu has been in dire financial situation, so it is uncertain whether this couple of wild chicken can end up like mandarin ducks” (ibid).

On the other hand, critics like Feng Shuluan came to the defense of actresses and found such moralist scrutiny much ado about nothing:

There is already mixed-sex performance in traditional theatre in Tianjin where there is no more promiscuity than in Shanghai. Even in Shanghai, where there is mixed-sex performance in theatres in the French Concession, the average audience does not find them much different from single-gender performances. Therefore, the talk about moral corruption should be based on theatre’s direct influence on society. Even if there is entanglement among actors and actresses inside the theatre circle, that is still no reason to discuss them since they have nothing to do with the society. Therefore, mixed-sex performance has great artistic advantage and no adverse influence on morality. It is not an impossible undertaking. As for how to make actors and actresses on the same stage focus on their art undistracted by emotion, that is a question the theatre circle has not found an answer for and irrelevant to societal morality. Why should we be worried by it? (Ma 1914d, 7-8)

While it was true that mixed-sex performance had existed both in Tianjin and the French Concession in Shanghai, it was the suggestion of realism in new drama that made moralists cringe at the prospect of direct and uncoded depiction of love on stage:

New drama is realistic, pursuing verisimilitude in every way. It is not like old drama which is restricted by rhyming and conventions. While old theatre refrains from frankness in its portrayal of romantic or erotic scenes, [in new drama] this is usually the most disgusting moment when the two parties flirt and act as if it were for real, revealing all forms of nauseating behavior in front of the audience. (Zhou 1922d, 749)

It certainly seems ironic that in the new drama's claim of realism, critics would find its divorce from the citationality in acting as exactly the reason to oppose the existence of mixed-sex performance. Apart from "misogynist resentment," the theatrical context for such a reaction seems to be that by the time mixed-sex performance emerged in 1914, *wenmingxi* had firmly established the convention of *nandan*, whose performance style was inevitably used as the yardstick with which to measure the talent and artistry of the actresses in female roles. A comparable example exists even today in *jingju* where the established styles for female roles were all created by male actors like Mei Lanfang. Even though these roles are performed nowadays exclusively by actresses, their achievements are still measured by their proximity to these masters in terms of speech, singing, and movement. Similarly, by 1914 *wenmingxi* had already established its own conventions where the acting style of stars like Ouyang Yuqian and Ma Jiangshi were the settled norm with which to judge the achievement of female roles.

Another historical context was the rise of actresses in *shinpa* and *shingeki*. In 1914, two productions of Oscar Wilde's *Salomé* appeared in Japan, one featuring Kawakami Sadayakko, and the other Matsui Sumako. In a way, these productions can be construed as the culmination of similar debates in Japan about the role of actresses in new theatre:

The years leading up to this competition of *Salomé* had seen various debates for and against actresses. What these debates revealed was an emerging understanding of gender as defined by the physical body. Eventually the arguments in favor of actresses won over those against actresses, yet the victory was an ambivalent one: It confirmed the definition of womanhood as an essence naturally grounded in a woman's body, a definition that would also justify the reduction of woman to nothing but her body. *Salomé* marks a moment in Japanese history when the alignment between gender, sex, sexuality, and performance thus registered a recognizable shift: from gender defined as theatrical achievement, to gender defined as grounded in the visible body and as basis for theatrical expression. There is a shift from gender as the endpoint of acting to gender as the beginning of acting. The title role of *Salomé* epitomized the new definition of womanhood as rooted in the physical body and of woman's body as the basis for acting. The "competition" between Kawakami Sadayakko and Matsui Sumako in 1914 and the latter's victory over the former signaled the final triumph of the newer alignment. (Kano 2001, 219)

Although this was happening in Japan just at the same time as the emergence of actresses in Shanghai's stages, for *wenmingxi*, the debate over gender "defined as theatrical achievement" or "as grounded in the visible body and as basis for theatrical expression" was only beginning. While it took *shinpa* a few decades from its inception in the 1880s to reach this point, one has to remember that 1914 was just three years after the fall of the two-millennium long feudal system and for that matter only seven years after the Tokyo production *Black Slave's Cry to Heaven*. As 1907 marked the grand coalition of *shinpa* and its zenith of glory, that year in Japanese calendar was already the fortieth of Meiji. Thus, in terms of both socio-historical and theatrical context,

wenmingxi was far from being ready to “shift from gender as the endpoint of acting to gender as the beginning of acting.” At a time when a well-known new dramatist like Zhou Jianyun found it repulsive to see love scenes between actors and actresses, it is hard to imagine a Salomé moment when, as Kano argues, the gradual revelation of the female body in the "Dance of the Seven Veils" made it “inconceivable for a male performer of female roles” (Kano 2001, 220). As if to fortify her point and contextualize the situation in *wenmingxi*, Ouyang Yuqian revealed in his memoir that, as part of his love for modern theatre, he actually tried to learn the same dance from a Russian woman hoping to eventually mount a production of the play and only gave up as he was unable to pay for the tutoring (Ouyang 1990, 73).

As can be seen from the following illustration of all-male production of Lu Jingruo’s *Love and Hate in a Family*, *wenmingxi*’s view of gender on stage was still very much defined by the citationality of the roles as defined by their costume, make-up, hand properties, posture, and gestures. In fact, if we compare the posture of the *nandan* in this picture with those of actresses in the previous illustration, it is obviously that the actor here was over compensating with stereotypical feminine gesture like holding the handkerchief to the face, cocking the head sideways, and holding the feet in a classic T-shape while the actresses exhibited a much more natural and straightforward, if somewhat stiff, posture.

新劇家映燕士台演家庭恩怨記



Figure 32 An all-male cast production of *Jiating enyuan ji* (*Love and Hate in a Family*) by Lu Jingruo. From *Youxi zashi*, 18.

Of course, for *wenmingxi*, citationality did not necessarily preclude learning from live models. Ouyang recalled how he once modeled his portrayal of an old female after three elderly women in his family in both gesture and tone. Still, even the examples he provided in this regard

veered towards codification of stereotypical behavior reminiscent of the citationality in traditional theatre:

Talking about acting old women, I can think of two more accounts of determined efforts:⁷⁶ One was Wang Youyou. He could speak while wrapping his lips around his teeth—please try it and you will find out that although it is easy to speak a couple of sentences, it much harder to keep talking in this way—by practicing in front of the mirror until he could do it at will. Another example concerns Akita Keitarou of Japan. Because he wanted to perform old women roles and was bothered by his good teeth, he pulled out the upper and lower front teeth and put in fake ones. This was actually nothing compared to the *onnagata* who shaved their eyebrows. It is indeed hard to succeed in art without hard work. (Ouyang 1990, 50)

Ouyang also detailed how he practiced crying and laughing for long hours by himself as well as how other *dan* actors of the Spring Willow Theatre went to the extent of following the *onnagata* tradition of living a woman's life, although he himself was leading a bohemian life of drinking and beating up anti-Republican reactionaries:

Wu Hui ren never participated anything like that. He would stay the whole day in his room measuring clothes, arranging jewelry, and memorizing the script, while ignoring everything else. Later on, [Ma] Jiangshi became quite like him. Only I kept riding horses, drinking, and playing with handguns. (38)

⁷⁶ Here, Ouyang uses the Japanese phrase *kushidan* (*ku xin tan* in pinyin), which means account of the hardships one has encountered, apparently alluding to such usages in Japanese theatrical circles.

As well as defending citationality and performability of gender, detractors of actresses in *wenmingxi* also sought to defend the preference for actors on the basis of their superior education and family background:

There are many outstanding actors in female roles, which leave no need for actresses. In addition, some *dan* actors are well educated and eloquent so that when acting in high-minded plays, they often use their wisdom in speech to elevate the stature of the characters and add value to the script. This is not something an uneducated and naive woman is capable of. (Zhou 1922d, 749)

This issue was further complicated by the fast commercialization and corruption of *wenmingxi* and its actors during the bubble years of the mid 1910s. Many of the new comers were gold-diggers and many male and female patrons enjoyed liaisons with their favorite stars. Yet, while it is true that societal bias had made it impossible for most women to receive comparable education as men, the background of *wenmingxi* actresses was in fact quite diverse and reflective of Shanghai's immigrant population at the beginning of the Republic. As can be expected, a few of them did come from prostitution or similar background, since it was one of the rare professions that allowed independence for women. At the same time, quite a few of them were quite well-educated and came from what was considered "respectable" middle class or official's families. Some were even known for their excellence in the literati virtues of poetry and painting (Juyuan 1922). Furthermore, if onstage eloquence was the eventual yardstick of their ability as actors in the ad-libbing world of *wenmingxi*, still linked to its political theatre origin, there were certainly examples of actresses excelling in speech-making roles.

For example, Lin Ruxin, who excelled in *beidan* (tragic female) roles, was famous for the long speeches she made before the required tragic endings of these women. “*Beidan* usually portray strong-willed women who always end up in death. Before the death, Ruxin makes an emotional and chilling speech that touches the heart and evokes one’s empathy. Because of this, she is unrivaled in her fame” (Juyuan 1922, 662). Since female *wenmingxi* performances flourished after the 1913 commercial boom, the majority of the plays were understandably about domestic affairs. As a result, Ruxin’s talent in speech-making was revealed mostly in these tragic female roles.

In fact, quite a few of the actresses achieved stardom on the merit of their acting. Liang Yixiao, the pillar of the Prosperity, was reportedly “equally good at role types as diverse as *guimen* (unmarried), *beiai* (tragic), *fengsao* (licentious), and *pohan* (shrewish). In her hands, even an uneventful play will be turned into a wonder. Her charming Suzhou accent and quick tongue have made her a first-rate actress and her year at the Prosperity Society extremely successful” (Juyuan 1922, 663). Commenting on her young women roles, Feng Shuluan wrote that she “is capable of drawing huge crowds with unaffected and completely natural portrayal of all situations of the affection, which is indeed a rare talent” (Ma 1914d, 4).

In the end, even those who were resolutely against actresses on moral grounds had to concede the talent of the actresses and their natural advantage over men in portraying their own gender:

It is not as natural for men to play *dan* roles as women. In old theatre, *dan* characters are covered with glittering headdress, heavy costume, and short stilts, which are vulgar and conceal natural beauty. The radiance of the looks is minimized. Plus, a girl’s heart is so exquisite and tender it is hard for a man to measure, and even harder for him to portray.

Therefore, it is certainly more natural for a woman to portray herself. I have been saying that while women are not as good as men in *sheng* (male) and *chou* (clown) roles, they are certainly better than men in *dan* roles. (Juyuan 1922, 662)

What we have witnessed in this chapter is *wenmingxi* as an emerging theatrical institution struggling to discover its own convention between the poles of traditional theatre, *shinpa*, and Western theatre. If its compromises produced short-lived commercial success, they eventually propelled the genre's demise, thus proving the impracticality of this type of "localization" in the face of a global process that eventually pushed traditional theatre, along with any attempt of mixing that traditional theatre with its Western counterpart, to the wings in favor of the complete Westernization model of *huaju*.

6. CONCLUSION

Starting from the late 1910s, *wenmingxi*'s fortune declined rapidly. In 1917, the last of its companies, the People's Voice Society, was disbanded. Some *wenmingxi* actors continued to stage plays in rented theatres, which became their de facto name, like the Xiaowutai Theatre with Xu Banmei and Ouyang Yuqian. When that theatre closed in 1924, it marked the end of the last dedicated *wenmingxi* theatre. From then on, many *wenmingxi* actors either performed in *jingju* companies or in amusement parks as a part of variety shows, where they influenced a number of local entertainment forms. Still others, like Zheng Zhengqiu, turned their attention to the burgeoning movie industry, turning quite a few *wenmingxi* plays to the silver screen. Finally, some of the best actors, like Ouyang Yuqian, Wang Youyou, and Chen Dabei, joined force with *huaju* practitioners recently returned from Japan, the US, and Europe to turn spoken drama into a more "authentic" version of Western straight theatre.

As an imported theatrical genre, *huaju* will celebrate its centennial birthday in 2007, in recognition of the historical significance of *Black Slave's Cry to Heaven*. Yet, throughout the twentieth century, *wenmingxi* has been dismissed as a commercial theatre with little to contribute to the growth of *huaju*, when in fact the issues that *wenmingxi* faced, like the role of theatre as a proponent of nationalist agendas as well as the dramaturgical and theatrical choices between foreign and native theatrical cultures, would keep haunting *huaju* in every step of its development.

On the political and ideological front, the power of speech-based theatre to directly reflect and influence contemporary events only intensified as the decades progressed, with leftist dramatic movement in the late 1920s and early 1930s, war-time motivational and street theatre during the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945), and Communist ideological indoctrination of

the theatrical production process since 1949. Unfortunately, such emphasis on the political potential of *huaju* only encouraged the conventional criticism of the commercial era of *wenmingxi* for abandoning its nationalist *sōshi shibai* roots, even though, as I have shown in Chapter Two, these charges are groundless. In fact, political oration was so deeply ingrained in *wenmingxi* that it was readily available whenever the occasion arose, for example, during the Twenty-One Demands crisis. Apart from speech-making, the nationalist plays staged during the height of *wenmingxi* were quite diverse in both topic and origin, with nationalist dramas from Europe and Japan as well as “lost state history” plays serving as warning tales.

Therefore, in terms of nationalist and democratic aspiration, there was a close affinity between *wenmingxi* and *huaju* in living up to the ideals of late-Qing intellectuals who had envisioned a theatre close to reality in its dramaturgical and production systems to both reflect and affect current events. The difference was that *wenmingxi*'s approach was localization while *huaju* chose authenticity to source. What history of the past century has shown is that both approaches are problematic.

When it came to introducing Western and Japanese plays to the local audience uninitiated to this foreign genre, *wenmingxi* took its cue from *shinpa* and favored adaptation over translation. At the same time, the commercial pressure to constantly mount new plays resulted in the scenario system used in the majority of *wenmingxi* companies. In terms of its production system, *wenmingxi* mixed up “free acting,” naturalism and traditional theatrical techniques from both *kabuki* and *jingju*. Finally, *wenmingxi* served a different clientele from that of *huaju*. While the former competed with *jingju* for commercial spectators, the latter largely remained an elite form aimed at the educated. As a result, *huaju* more or less struggled to stay true to the Western

ideals with a small but influential and dedicated audience, while *wenmingxi*'s philosophy was to compromise between the foreign—both Western and Japanese—and native theatrical cultures.

In the end, this localization approach was not successful for two reasons: (1) lack of expertise, especially when compared with benefit *huaju* received from the returning theatre students from US universities in the early 1920s, and (2) the changing social and culture milieu, after the 1919 May Fourth Movement, which was beginning to prefer direct, “authentic,” canonical, even pedagogical approaches to Western culture, as evinced by such slogans as “total Westernization” (*quanpan xihua*) and “down with Confucianism” (*dadao Kongjiadian*).

Yet, throughout the history of *huaju*, localization continued to be an issue that haunted its practitioners, who continued to seek inspiration from traditional theatre in an effort to expand *huaju*'s dramaturgical and performative repertoire and to broaden the appeal of this foreign genre. This effort started as early as 1926, when the US-educated Yu Shangyuan and his colleagues advocated a “national drama movement” (*guoju yundong*). Since then, efforts to Sinicize *huaju* can be found in almost every decade. In recent years, localization seems to have come full circle, having merged with the current trend of interculturalism, inducing playwrights like the Nobel Prize laureate Gao Xingjian to openly adopt *jingju* technique in his *huaju* plays and directors like Li Liuyi to employ predominantly *jingju* actors in some of his productions.

Indeed, the struggles in the past century by Chinese theatrical workers with the ideological, dramaturgical, and theatrical aspects of *huaju* can only lead to our full appreciation of the initial choices and compromises made by *wenmingxi* practitioners to bring Western theatre to China through the prism of *shinpa*.

APPENDIX: A GLOSSARY OF TERMS

<i>aimei ju</i>	amateur drama
<i>ban</i>	a strong beat in <i>jingju</i> measure
<i>beidan</i>	tragic female role
<i>beiju</i>	“sad play,” tragedy
<i>ben</i>	volume or act of a play
<i>biaoqing</i>	expression
<i>biaoqing shu</i>	expression skills in new drama
Bungei Kyōkai	Literary Society
<i>bunraku</i>	Japanese puppet theatre
<i>Burugui</i>	<i>Hototogisu</i> <i>The Cuckoo</i>
<i>caiqiao</i>	short stilts worn by <i>jingju</i> actors to imitate bound feet
<i>Chahua Nü</i>	<i>La Dame aux Camélias</i>
<i>chang</i>	prostitute
<i>chuci</i>	“songs of the south,” a two-thousand-year old Chinese poetic form
Chunliu Juchang	Spring Willow Theatre
Chunliu She	Spring Willow Society
Chunyang She	Spring Sun Society
<i>dadao Kongjiadian</i>	down with Confucianism
<i>dan</i>	female role
<i>Di Siniang</i>	<i>La Tisbe</i>
<i>Dongfang huazhu</i>	<i>Wedding Night</i>
<i>Dongya fengyun</i>	<i>Storms of Eastern Asia</i>

<i>E jiating</i>	<i>An Evil Family</i>
Engeki Kayryō-kai	Theatre Reformation Council
<i>enzetsu-tsukai</i>	propagandist
Feng Shuluan	A <i>wenmingxi</i> critic
Fujisawa Asajirō	A <i>shinpa</i> actor
<i>furigana</i>	<i>kana</i> over or beside <i>kanji</i> to indicate pronunciation
<i>giri</i>	reason defined as social obligation and
<i>gisei</i>	sacrifice
<i>Gonghe wansui</i>	<i>Long Live the Republic</i>
Gōtan-no-Shosei	<i>A Brave Young Man</i>
<i>guojia diguo zhuyi</i>	national imperialism
<i>guojia sixiang</i>	state mentality
<i>guoju yundong</i>	national drama movement
<i>Han'guk t'ongsa</i>	<i>The Bitter History of Korea</i> (Korean)
<i>Hanaayame</i>	<i>The Wild Flower</i>
<i>hanamichi</i>	flower bridge used in <i>kabuki</i>
<i>handiao</i>	a local theatrical form of his native Hubei province
<i>Hanguo tongshi</i>	<i>The Bitter History of Korea</i> (Chinese)
<i>haragei</i>	acting from the guts
<i>Heidu</i>	<i>The Black General</i>
<i>Heiji yuanhun</i>	<i>Wronged Ghosts</i>
<i>Heinu yutianlu</i>	<i>Black Slaves Cry to Heaven</i> (<i>Uncle Toms Cabin</i>)
<i>hon'an</i>	adaptation (of Western plays)

<i>hon'anmono</i>	adapted foreign tale
<i>Honglou meng</i>	<i>Dream of the Red Chamber</i>
Hongō-za	A theatre in Tokyo
<i>honyaku</i>	correspondence translation
<i>huaju</i>	spoken drama
<i>Huangjin ta</i>	<i>Golden Tower</i>
<i>huokou</i>	“live mouth,” a <i>wenmingxi</i> actor good at ad-libbing
<i>huqin</i>	A bowed string instrument used to accompany singing in <i>jingju</i> .
Ii Yōhō	A <i>shinpa</i> actor
<i>Itagaki-kun Sōnan Jikki</i>	<i>Disaster Strikes Itagaki—the True Account</i>
<i>Ji zhi zui</i>	<i>Onoga tsumi</i> <i>My Crime</i>
<i>jaoban</i>	“calling the board,” vocal signal from the actor to the orchestra to start the music in <i>jingju</i>
<i>Jiating enyuan ji</i>	<i>Love and Hate in a Family</i>
<i>Jiayin xiaozhuan</i>	<i>Joan Haste</i>
<i>Jiayin zhongxing</i>	1914 revival
<i>jilie pai</i>	spirited role specializing in making rousing speeches
<i>jingju</i>	Beijing Opera
Jinhua Tuan	Progressive Troupe
<i>Jinse yecha</i>	<i>Konjiki yasha</i> <i>The Gold Demon</i>
<i>jiuxi</i>	old theatre
<i>jiyū dōji</i>	Liberty Child
<i>jiyu minken undo</i>	Peoples Rights Movement

<i>kabuki</i>	traditional Japanese song-dance theatre
<i>kana</i>	Japanese syllabary
<i>kanji</i>	Chinese characters used in Japanese
<i>kanzen chōaku</i>	encouragement of virtue and the castigation of vice
<i>katakana</i>	one of the two writing systems of Japanese syllabary
<i>katei shōsetsu</i>	domestic novel of Japanese
<i>katsureki-geki</i>	live history plays
Kawai Takeo	A <i>shinpa</i> actor
Kawakami Otojirō	A <i>shinpa</i> actor
Kawakami Sadayakko	A <i>shinpa</i> actress
Kitamura Rokurō	A <i>shinpa</i> actor
<i>kodan</i>	traditional Japanese storytelling form.
<i>Konggulan</i>	<i>Orchard in Hollow Valley</i>
<i>Kongque dongnan fei</i>	<i>Peacock Flies Southeast</i>
<i>kunsheng</i>	woman in a male role
<i>kunyomi</i>	“meaning” reading in Japanese
<i>kuroko</i>	stagehand in <i>kabuki</i>
<i>kyakushoku</i>	dramatization of novels;
<i>kyōgen</i>	traditional Japanese comic theatre
Lanxin Juchang	Lyceum Theatre
<i>laodiao</i>	old tunes from <i>jingju</i> .
<i>Laopuo re</i>	<i>Wife Crazy</i>
<i>li</i>	<i>yamen</i> runners

<i>liantai benxi</i>	plays in episodic installments
Lu Jingruo	A <i>wenmingxi</i> actor
<i>Lubinfang Rūbinhō</i>	<i>Lucia di Lammermoor</i>
Ma Jiangshi	A <i>wenmingxi</i> actor
<i>Maiguo nu</i>	<i>The Traitor</i>
<i>majiang</i>	mahjong
<i>mao'erxi</i>	all-female <i>jingju</i> performance
<i>Meng huitou</i>	<i>Ushio</i> <i>The Tide</i>
<i>Mingbuping</i>	<i>Cry of Injustice</i>
Minming She	People's Voice Society
Minxing She	Prosperity Society
<i>Minzhu wansui</i>	<i>Long Live the Nation</i>
<i>mu</i>	curtain/an act
<i>mubiao</i>	scenario
<i>Mudan ting</i>	<i>The Peony Pavilion</i>
<i>muwai</i>	out of curtain
<i>muwaixi</i>	out-of-curtain scenes
<i>nandan</i>	male in female roles in Chinese theatre
<i>Nanfu nanqi</i>	<i>A Difficult Couple</i>
<i>Netsu ketsu</i>	<i>Hot Blood</i>
<i>Niehai hua</i>	<i>A Flower in an Ocean of Sin</i>
<i>ninjō</i>	personal passion
<i>nō</i>	a traditional Japanese theatrical form

<i>Nuli</i>	<i>The Bondman</i>	
<i>Ogi no kon</i>	<i>Regret of the Fan</i>	
<i>Ye weiyang</i>	<i>On the Eve</i>	<i>Am Vorabend</i>
<i>onnagata</i>	male in female roles in Japanese theatre	
<i>onyomi</i>	“sound” reading	
Osada Shūtō	A Japanese translator and playwright	
Ouyang Yuqian	A <i>wenmingxi</i> actor	
Ozaki Kōyō	A Japanese translator and playwright	
<i>pai</i>	role category in <i>wenmingxi</i> , like line of business in Western theatre	
<i>penzhang zhuyi</i>	expansionism	
<i>pingtan</i>	A collective term that includes <i>pinghua</i> and <i>tanci</i>	
<i>pinyin</i>	sound notational system used for Chinese	
<i>qiandan</i>	man in a female role in Chinese theatre	
<i>Qingyi bao</i>	<i>Public Opinion</i>	
<i>quanpan xihua</i>	total Westernization	
<i>rakugo</i>	Japanese comic monologue	
<i>Relei</i>	<i>Hot Tears</i>	<i>La Tosca</i>
Ren Tianzhi	A <i>wenmingxi</i> actor	
<i>Rexie</i>	<i>Hot Blood</i>	<i>La Tosca</i>
<i>Rou quan</i>	<i>Contract of Flesh</i>	
<i>Ru zimei</i>	<i>Chikyōdai</i>	<i>Foster Sisters</i>
<i>Ryobijin</i>	<i>Two Beauties</i>	
<i>Satō Kōroku</i>	A <i>shinpa</i> playwright	

<i>seigeki</i>	“straight theatre,” Kawakami Otojirō’s term for his style of <i>shinpa</i>
<i>shaodian</i>	“burning point” in Chinese, meaning focus
<i>Shehui jieji</i>	<i>Social Classes</i>
<i>Shehui zhong</i>	<i>Kumo no hibiki</i> <i>The Echo of Cloud</i>
<i>Shenbao</i>	Shanghai’s leading daily
<i>shenduan</i>	gait, posture in traditional Chinese theatre
<i>Sheng xiang lian</i>	<i>Love Sick</i>
Shenyou Hui	“1908-1909 Society,” name of the group responsible for Spring Willow productions in Tokyo after 1908.
<i>shin heimin</i>	new commoner
<i>shingeki</i>	“new drama,” the Western-style theatre form in Japan after <i>shinpa</i>
<i>shinpa</i>	“new school drama,” first Western-style theatre in Japan
<i>shizhuang xinxi</i>	“new drama in modern clothes,” reformed <i>jingju</i> about current events
<i>shosei shibai</i>	“student theatre,” Kawakami’s term for his style of <i>sōshi shibai</i>
<i>shōten</i>	“burning point” in Japanese, meaning focus
<i>sikou</i>	“dead mouth,” a <i>wenmingxi</i> actor poor at ad-libbing
<i>sōshi shibai</i>	theatre of rough young men, earliest form of <i>shinpa</i>
<i>Sōzetsu kaizetsu Nisshin sensō</i>	<i>The Sublime the Delightful Sino-Japanese War</i>
<i>Dou E yuan</i>	<i>The Injustice Suffered by Dou E</i>
Sudō Sadanori	the first <i>shinpa</i> actor
<i>Suisu gimin den</i>	<i>Romance of Swiss Patriots (William Tell)</i>
<i>tachimawari</i>	stylized fighting in traditional Japanese theatre

<i>taibu</i>	steps in traditional Chinese theatre
Takada Minoru	A <i>shinpa</i> actor
<i>tanci</i>	story-telling with musical accompaniment popular in and around Shanghai
Tokutomi Roka	A <i>shinpa</i> playwright
Tokyo Haiyū Yōseijo	Tokyo Actor's School
<i>tongsu huaju</i>	popular <i>huaju</i>
<i>Tsubaki-hime</i>	<i>La Dame aux Camélias</i>
<i>wabun</i>	Japanese text
Wang Youyou	A <i>wenmingxi</i> actor
Wang Zhongsheng	A <i>wenmingxi</i> actor
<i>wangguo</i>	lost state
<i>wangguo shi</i>	lost state history
<i>Waseda bungaku</i>	<i>Waseda Literary</i>
<i>Weisailuo</i>	<i>Othello</i>
<i>wenmingxi</i>	civilized drama, first form of Western-style theatre in China
<i>Xi Taihou</i>	<i>The Widowed Empress</i>
<i>Buxing er</i>	<i>The Unfilial Son</i>
<i>Wapen shenyuan</i>	<i>Revealed by the Pot</i>
<i>Tou shaoya</i>	<i>Stealing the Cooked Ducks</i>
<i>Xiao yu</i>	<i>The Eagle</i>
<i>xiaoqu</i>	popular songs
<i>xiaoshimin</i>	little urbanites
<i>Xiaoshuo daguan</i>	<i>Grand View of Short Stories</i>

<i>xiaoshuo</i>	novel	
<i>Xiaoshuo yuebao</i>	<i>The Short Story Monthly</i>	
<i>Xie suoyi</i>	<i>The Bloody Straw Cape</i>	
<i>xiju</i>	“happy play,” comedy	
<i>Xinmin congkan</i>	<i>New People Miscellany</i>	
<i>Xin burugui</i>	<i>Shin Hototogisu</i>	<i>The Cuckoo, New Version</i>
<i>Xin diemeng</i>	<i>New Butterfly Dream</i>	
<i>Xin wenhua yundong</i>	New Cultural Movement	
<i>xinju</i>	“new drama,” another name for <i>wenmingxi</i>	
<i>Xinju kao</i>	<i>New Drama Scenarios</i>	
<i>Xinju kaozheng baichu</i>	<i>One Hundred New Drama Plays</i>	
<i>Xinju shi</i>	<i>A History of New Drama</i>	
Xinju Tongzhihui	New Drama Society	
Xinmin She	New People’s Society	
Xinwutai	New Stage	
<i>xinxi</i>	new theatre	
<i>xisheng</i>	sacrifice	
<i>Xitaihou</i>	<i>Empress Dowager</i>	
Xu Banmei	A <i>wenmingxi</i> actor	
<i>xuanhuo</i>	delirious bewitchment	
<i>Xuwu dang</i>	<i>The Nihilists</i>	
<i>yamen</i>	In China the official headquarters or residence of a mandarin including court rooms offices gardens prisons etc	

<i>yan</i>	a weak beat
<i>yanlun</i>	speech
<i>yanlun laosheng</i>	speech-making older male
<i>yanshuo pai</i>	speech-making role
<i>yanyi</i>	romance history
<i>yi</i>	soldiers
<i>Yimu xiongdi</i>	<i>Half Brothers (The Bondman)</i>
<i>you</i>	actors
<i>Yubei ting</i>	<i>Pavilion of the Imperial Stele</i>
<i>Zhaoshi gu'er</i>	<i>The Orphan of Zhao</i>
Zheng Zhengqiu	A <i>wenmingxi</i> actor
<i>Zhenjia niangjiu</i>	<i>The True and Fake Uncle</i>
<i>Zhongxue wei ti xixue wei yong</i>	Chinese learning for essence Western learning for use
<i>Zimei hua</i>	<i>Chikyōdai</i> <i>Foster Sisters</i>
<i>Ziyou hun</i>	<i>Soul of Freedom.</i>
<i>ziyou yanju</i>	free acting
<i>zuo gong</i>	movement in traditional Chinese theatre

WORKS CITED

- 1907a. "Ji Dongjing liuxuejie yanju zhuzhen shi" (Benefit Performance by Chinese Students in Tokyo). *Shi bao*, March 20.
- 1907b. "On The Eve (Review)". *Mother Earth* 2 (3): 168-69.
- Akatonbo. 1907. "Shintomi-za no 'Netsu ketsu'" ('Hot Blood' at the Shintomi-za Theatre). *Waseda bungaku* (Waseda Literature) (9): 62-70.
- Akiba, Taro. 1969. "Kaidai" (Annotation of Plays). In *Meiji kindai geki shu* (Meiji Modern Drama Volume). Vol. 86, *Meiji bungaku zenshū* (Collection of Meiji Literature). Tokyo: Chikuma shobo. 394-403.
- Allen, Vivien. 1997. *Hall Caine: Portrait of a Victorian Romancer*. Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press.
- Anderson, Benedict. 1991. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso.
- Anonymous (Ou Jujia). 1960 (1903). "Guanju ji" (Theatre Report). In *Wan Qing wenxue congchao* (Anthology of Late Qing Literature), edited by A Ying. Vol. Xiaoshuo xiqu yanjiu juan (Fiction and Drama Studies). Beijing: Zhonghua shuju. 67-72.
- Aying. 1982. "Guanyu Bali Chanhua Nü yishi" (On *La Dame aux Camélias*). In *Lin Shu yanjiu ziliao* (Materials for Research on Lin Shu), edited by Xue Suizhi and Zhang Jucai. Fuzhou: Fujian renmin chubanshe. 274-79.
- Ba, Jin. 1944. "Ye wei yang xu" (Preface to *On the Eve*). In *Ye wei yang* (*On the Eve*). Shanghai: Wenhua shenghuo chubanshe. 1-2.
- Banbutsu Hakase. 1910. "Shina no Shiengeki" (New Theatre in China). *Kabuki* (123).
- Bao, Tianxiao. 1974. *Chuanyinglou huiyilu* (*Reminiscence*). 2 vols. Taipei: Wenhai chubanshe.
- Barba, Eugenio. 1986. *Beyond the Floating Islands*. New York: Performing Arts Journal Publications.
- . 1995. *The Paper Canoe*. London: Routledge.
- Beijing shi yishu yanjiusuo and Shanghai yishu yanjiusuo, ed. 1990. *Zhongguo jingju shi* (History of Chinese Jingju). Vol. 1. Beijing: Zhongguo xiju chubanshe.
- Bharucha, Rustom. 1993. *Theatre and the World: Performance and the Politics of Culture*. New York: Routledge.
- Bongie, Chris. 1990. "Into Darkest Asia: Colonialism and the Imperial Fiction of Jules Verne's *Michel Strogoff*". *CLIO: A Journal of Literature, History, and the Philosophy of History* 19 (3): 237-249.
- Brandon, James. 1997. "Some Shakespeare(s) in Some Asia(s)". *Asian Studies Review* 20 (3): 1-26.
- Brooks, Peter. 1976. *The Melodramatic Imagination: Balzac, Henry James, Melodrama, and the Mode of Excess*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Brossollet, Guy. 1999. *Les Français de Shanghai, 1849-1949*. Paris: Belin.
- Bungei Kyokai. 1906a. "Bungei Kyōkai enguibu daiichiji taikai kiji" (Report of the First Conference of the Theatre Section of the Literary Society). *Waseda Bungaku* (Waseda Literature) (12): 80-83.
- . 1906b. "Bungei Kyōkai kiji" (The Literary Society Report). *Waseda Bungaku* (Waseda Literature) (3): Supplement 7-30.
- . 1906c. "Bungei Kyōkai kisoku" (By-law of The Literary Society). *Waseda Bungaku* (Waseda Literature) (1): 12-15.

- . 1906d. "Bungei Kyōkai Seiritsu no shui" (Motive of the Establishment of The Literary Society). *Waseda Bungaku* (Waseda Literature) (1).
- Cai, Erkang, et al. 1986. *Li Hongzhang lipin ou mei ji* (*Li Hongzhang's Diplomat Missions to Europe and the USA*). Edited by Shuhe Zhong, *Zouxiang shijie congshu*. Changsha: Yuelu shushe.
- Cai, Zong-qi. 2004. "The influence of Nietzsche in Wang Guowei's essay 'On the Dream of the Red Chamber'". *Philosophy East & West* 54 (2): 171-93.
- Cao, Shujun. 2003. "Yibu Yanjiu Zhongguo Zaoqi Huaju de Lizuo—Du Huang Aihua *Zhongguo Zaoqi Huaju yu Riben*" (A Seminal Work in the Study of Early Chinese *Huaju*—Reading Huang Aihua's *Early Chinese Huaju and Japan*). *Xiwen* (Dramatic Literature) (2).
- Carlson, Marvin. 1989. *Places of performance: the semiotics of theatre architecture*. Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press.
- . 1996. "Brook and Mnouchkine: Passage to India?" In *The Intercultural Performance Reader*, edited by Patrice Pavis. New York: Routledge. 79-92.
- Chen, Baichen, and Jian Dong, eds. 1989. *Zhongguo Xiandai Xiju Shigao* (A History of Modern Chinese Drama). Beijing: Zhongguo Xiju Chubanshe.
- Chen, Duxiu. 1999. "On Theater". Translated by Faye Chunfang Fei. In *Chinese Theories of Theater and Performance from Confucius to the Present*, edited by Faye Chunfang Fei. Ann Arbor, Mich: University of Michigan Press. 117-20.
- Chen, Mingzhe. *Wanqing kehuan xiaoshuo* (*Science Fictions in Late Qing*). Available from [http://163.23.171.1/%A4%BD%A7i/%B1%D0%B0%C8%B3B/%B1%D0%BE%C7%AC%E3%A8s%B7/932/%AC%E3%A8s%B3%F8%A7i\(%AD^%A4%E5%AC%EC\).doc](http://163.23.171.1/%A4%BD%A7i/%B1%D0%B0%C8%B3B/%B1%D0%BE%C7%AC%E3%A8s%B7/932/%AC%E3%A8s%B3%F8%A7i(%AD^%A4%E5%AC%EC).doc).
- Chiba, Yoko. 1992. "Sada Yacco and Kawakami: Performers of *Japonisme*". *Modern Drama* (35): 35-53.
- Chothia, Jean. 1991. *André Antoine*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Chunliu Juchang. 1990 (1914). "Chunliu Juchang kaimu chuandan" (Spring Willow Theatre Opening Poster). In *Zhongguo xiandai huaju wenxue shilue*, edited by Huang Huilin. Hefei: Anhui jiaoyu chubanshe. Illustration.
- Chunliu She. 1907. "Chunliu She Wenyi Yanjiu Hui Jianzhang" (General Regulations of the Spring Willow Literary and Arts Society). *Da Gong Bao*, May 10.
- . 1960 (1907). "Chunliu She yanyi bu zhuanzhang" (By-law of Drama Division of Spring Willow Society). In *Wang Qing wenxue congchao* (Anthology of Late Qing Literature), edited by A Ying. Vol. *Xiaoshuo xiqu yanjiu juan* (Fiction and Drama Studies). Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju. 635-38.
- Copleston, Frederick. 1980. "Schopenhauer and Nietzsche". In *Schopenhauer: His Philosophical Achievement*, edited by Michael Fox. Sussex, England: Harvester.
- Craig, Edward Gordon. 1930. *Henry Irving*. New York: Longmans, Green and Co.
- . 1970. "The Actor and the Ueber-Marionette". In *Actors on Acting: The Theories, Techniques, and Practices of the Great Actors of All Times as Told in Their Own Words*, edited by Toby Cole and Helen Krich Chonoy. New York: Crown. 376-85.
- Daugherty, Diane. 2005. "The Pendulum of Intercultural Performance: Kathakali King Lear at Shakespeare's Globe". *Asian Theatre Journal* 22 (1): 52-77.
- Davis, Tracy C. 1991. *Actresses as Working Women: Their Social Identity in Victorian Culture*. New York: Routledge.
- Doi, Shunsho. 1907. "Seikokujin no Gakuseigeki" (Drama by Chinese Students). *Waseda bungaku* (Waseda Literature) (7): 114-18.

- Donizetti, Gaetano, and Salvatore Cammarano. 2002. *Lucia di Lammermoor* [sound recording]. Westminster.
- Downer, Lesley. 2003. *Madama Sadayakko: The Geisha who Bewitched the West*. New York: Gotham Books.
- Eekelen, Yvonne van. 1966. *The Magical Panorama: The Mesdag Panorama, and Experience in Space and Time*. Translated by A. and E. Pomerans. Zwolle and The Hague.
- Evans, Idrisyn Oliver. 1966. *Jules Verne and His Work*. New York: Twayne Publishers.
- Fan, Boqun. 2004. "'Cuimianshu": 1909 nian fabiao de "Kuangren riji"—jiantan "ming baoren" Chen Jinghan zai zaoqi qimeng shiduan de wenxue chengjiu" ("Hypnotism": "Diary of a Madman" Published in 1909—Also Reviewing Chen Jinghan's Literary Achievement). *Jiangsu Daxue xuebao (shehui kexue ban)* (5).
- Fan, Shiqu. 1914. *Xinju Kao (New Drama Scenarios)*: Zhonghua tushuguan.
- Fang, Yiyie, retold by. 1959. "Konggu lan" (Orchid of the Hollow Valley). In *Chuantong jumu huibian*, edited by Shanghaishi chuantong jumu bianji weiyuanhui. Vol. Tongsu huaju 6. Shanghai: Shanghai wenyi chubanshe. 62-107.
- Fu, Jin. 2006. *Yingxiang dangdai Zhongguo xiju bianju de linian (Ideas that Influenced Contemporary Chinese Dramaturgy)*. www.studa.net. Available from <http://www.studa.net/Movie/060119/08450772.html>.
- Fuller, Loie. 1913. *Fifteen Years of a Dancer's Life: With Some Account of Her Distinguished Friends*. New York: Dance Horizons.
- Furuta, Toshiko. 1991. "'Chuka Muduo Shingeki no Rainichi Koen nitsuite'—Kindai niokeru Nichu Engeki Koryu no Ichidanmen" (On 'the Japanese Tour of Muduo New Drama'—a Slice of History of Modern Sino-Japanese Theatrical Exchange). *Nihon Engeki Gakkai Kiyō* (Bulletin of Japanese Theatre Society) (29): 13-29.
- . 1992. "Lun Chunliu She gongyan de Chahua Nü" (The Spring Willow Society's Production of *Camille*). Translated by Li Yi. *Zhongguo huaju yanjiu* (Studies in Chinese Spoken Drama) 5: 119-27.
- Ge, Yuanxu. 1968 (1876). *Huyou zaji (Miscellaneous Notes on Traveling in Shanghai)*. 4 vols. Taipei: Guangwen shuju.
- Gilbert, William S., and Arthur Sullivan. 1997. *Trial by Jury*. The Gutenberg Project. Available from <http://www.gutenberg.org/etext/808>.
- Gillies, John. 2001. "Afterward: Shakespeare Removed: Some Reflections on the Localization of Shakespeare in Japan". In *Performing Shakespeare in Japan*, edited by Ryuta Minami, Ian Carruthers and John Gillies. New York: Cambridge University Press. 236-248.
- Guo, Fumin. 2003. *Chatu Zhongguo huaju shi (Illustrated History of Chinese Huaju)*. Jinan: Jinan Chubanshe.
- Guo, Songtao. 1984. *Lundun yu Bali ri ji (Diaries from London and Paris)*. Changsha: Yuelu Sushe.
- Haan, J. H. 1989. "Thalia and Terpsichore on The Yangtze, A Survey of Foreign Theatre and Music in Shanghai 1850-1865". *Journal of the Hong Kong Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 29: 158-251.
- Halkes, Petra. 1999. "The Mesdag Panorama: Sheltering the All-Embracing View". *Art History* 22 (1): 83-98.
- Harrell, Paula. 1992. *Sowing the Seeds of Change: Chinese Students, Japanese Teachers, 1895-1905*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press.

- Harris, Peter. 2002. "The Origins of Modern Citizenship in China". *Asia Pacific Viewpoint* 43 (2): 181-203.
- Hart, Jerome A. 1913. *Sardou and the Sardou Plays*. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company.
- Henderson, Mary C. 1994. "Tom-Shows". In *Uncle Tom's Cabin: Authoritative Text, Backgrounds and Contexts, Criticism*, edited by Elizabeth Ammons. New York: W.W. Norton. 454-55.
- Holledge, Julie, and Joanne Tompkins. 2000. *Women's Intercultural Performance*. London: Routledge.
- Howe, Elizabeth. 1992. *The First English Actresses: Women and Drama, 1660-1700*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Huang, Aihua. 1994a. "Jindai Riben xiju dui Zhongguo zaoqi huaju yanju fengge de yingxiang" (The Influence of Modern Japanese Theatre on the Acting Styles of Early Chinese Huaju). *Xiju yishu* (Dramatic Art) (3): 77- 83.
- . 1994b. "Wang Zhongsheng Chunyang She yu Riben xinpai ju" (Wang Zhongsheng's Chunyang Society and Japanese Shinpa Theatre). *Hangzhou Shifan Xueyuan xuebao (shehui kexue ban)* (Journal of Hangzhou Teachers' College (Social Sciences Edition)) (2): 7-10.
- . 2001a. "Li Shutong Zaoqi Xiju Huodong Kaolun" (An Investigation of Li Shutong's Early Dramatic Activities). *Xiju yishu* (Dramatic Art) (3): 50-58.
- . 2001b. *Zhongguo zaoqi huaju yu Riben* (Early Chinese Huaju and Japan). Changsha: Yuelu Shushe.
- . 2003. "Chunliu She Yanchu Riben Xinju Jumu Kao" (Shinpa Plays Performed by Chunliu She). *Zhejiang Yishu Zheyue Xueyuan xuebao* (Journal of Zhejiang Arts Vocational College) (2).
- Huang, Yuansheng. 1914. "Xinju zalun" (On New Drama). *Xiaoshuo yuebao* (The Short Story Monthly) 5 (1-2): 1-2, 3-6.
- Hugo, Victor. "Angelo". In *Marie Tudor. La Esmeralda. Angelo*. Paris: Nelson. 237-381.
- . 1896. "Angelo, Tyrant of Padua". Translated by I. G. Burnham. In *Lucrezia Borgia; Mary Tudor; Angelo, Tyrant of Padua; The Twins*. Philadelphia: The Rittenhouse Press. 203-393.
- . 1915. "Angelo" (Yinping Yuan). Translated by Dongya Bingfu (Zheng Pu). *Xiaoshuo Yuebao* (The Short Story Magazine) 5 (1-4).
- Ihara, Seiseien. 1907. "Seikokujin no Gakuseigeki" (Drama by Chinese Students). *Waseda bungaku* (Waseda Literature) (7): 108-14.
- Ihara, Toshirō. 1933. *Meiji engekishi* (History of Meiji Drama). Tokyo: Waseda Daigaku Shuppanbu.
- Iizuka, Yutori. 1994. "Ra Tosuka, Neketsu, Atsui Namida —Nichu Ryokoku niokeru Tosuka Jyuyou" (*La Tosca, Hot Blood, Hot Tears* —The Reception *Tosca* in Japan and China). *Chuo Daigaku Bungakubu kiyō* (Journal of the Faculty of Literature of Chuo University) (152): 127-147.
- . 1995. "Satō Kōroku no Kyakuhon to Chugoku no Shingeki — [Kumo no Hibiki], [Ushio], [Gisei]" (Satō Kōroku's Scripts and Chinese *Xinju* —*The Sound of Cloud, The Tide, and The Sacrifice*). *CHUO DAIGAKU BUNGA KUBU KIYO* (Journal of the Faculty of Literature of Chuo University) (157): 111-141.
- . 1996. "Chugoku Kindaigeki no Houga —'Bunmeigi' Kyakuhon no Syoso" (The Germination of Modern Chinese Drama —Various Aspects of *Wenming Xi* Scripts). In

- Engeki no 'Kindai'—Kindaigeki no seiritsu to tenkai* (Theatre of Modern Times —The Establishment and Expansion of Modern Drama), edited by CHUO DAIGAKU Jinbun Kagaku Kenkyujyo. Vol. 14. 415-451.
- . 1998. "Kong Gu Lan O Megutte —Kuroiwa Reika *Yano Hana* no Henyou" (*Kong Gu Lan* —the Reception of Kuroiwa Reika's *Yano Hana* in China). *CHUO DAIGAKU BUNGAJIBU KIYO* (Journal of the Faculty of Literature of Chuo University) (170): 93-115.
- . 2000. "Xie Suoyi O Megutte —Murai Gensai *Ryo bijin* no Henyou" (The Origin of *Xie Suoyi*: Adaptation of Murai Gensai's *Two Beauties*). *Chuo Daigaku Bungakubu kiyō* (Journal of the Faculty of Literature of Chuo University) (180): 113-129.
- . 2005. "Bei banshang yinmu de wenmingxi" (Wenmingxi plays on the Screen). Paper read at Zhongguo xiju: cong chuantong dao xianzai (Chinese Drama: from Tradition to the Present), at Nanjing.
- . 2006. "Bei banshang yinmu de wenmingxi" (Wenmingxi plays on the Screen). Translated by Zhao Hui. *Xiju yishu* (Dramatic Art) (1): 44-56.
- Itō, Hideo. 1988. *Kuroiwa Ruikō: tantei shōsetsu no ganso* (*Kuroiwa Ruikō: Founder of Detective Stories*). Tokyo: San'ichi Shobō.
- Itō, Shigeru. 2004. "Tengze Qian'erlang yu Zhongguo liuxuesheng Chunliu She jiaoliu de dingwei" (Fujisawa Asajirō and the Chinese Student Spring Willow Society). *Zhongguo huaaju yanjiu* (Studies in Chinese Spoken Drama) 10: 59-78.
- Jackson, Earl, Jr. 1989. "Kabuki Narratives of Male Homoerotic Desire in Saikaku and Mishima". *Theatre Journal* 41 (4): 459-77.
- Jiang, Guanyun. 1960 (1904). "Zhongguo zhi yanju jie" (Theatre Circle of China). In *Wan Qing wenxue congchao* (Anthology of Late Qing Literature), edited by A Ying. Vol. Xiaoshuo xiqu yanjiu juan (Fiction and Drama Studies). Beijing: Zhonghua shuju. 50-52.
- Jin, Mei. 2005. *Li Shutong yingshi* (*Illustrated Tales of Li Shutong*). Tianjin: Baihua wenyi chubanshe.
- Juyuan. 1922 (1918). "Nü xinjujia zhi" (Actresses of New Drama). In *Jubu congkan* (Collection of Essays on Theatre), edited by Zhou Jianyun. Vol. 2. Shanghai: Jiaotong tushuguan. 661-64.
- Kampf, Leopold. 1908. *Le Grand Soir* (*On the Eve*). Translated by Robert d'Humières. Vol. 81. Paris: L'illustration T.
- . 1944. *Ye wei yang* (*On the Eve*). Translated by Ba Jin. Shanghai: Wenhua shenghuo chubanshe.
- . 1960 (1908). "Ye wei yang xuyan" (Preface to *On the Eve*). Translated by Li Shizeng. In *Wan Qing wenxue congchao* (Anthology of Late Qing Literature), edited by A Ying. Vol. Xiaoshuo xiqu yanjiu juan (Fiction and Drama Studies). Beijing: Zhonghua shuju. 306.
- Kano, Ayako. 1997. "The Role of the Actress in Modern Japan". In *New Directions in the Study of Meiji Japan*, edited by Helen Hardacre and Adam Kern. Leiden; New York: Brill.
- . 2001. *Acting like a Woman in Modern Japan: Theater, Gender, and Nationalism*. New York: Palgrave.
- Karl, Rebecca E. 2002. *Staging the World: Chinese Nationalism at the Turn of the Twentieth Century*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Keene, Donald. 1983. "The Onnagata and Kabuki ". *Japan Quarterly* 30 (3): 293-96.

- Kruger, Loren. 1992. *The National Stage: Theatre and Cultural Legitimation in England, France, and America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Leiter, Samuel L. 1999-2000. "From Gay to Gei: The Onnagata and the Creation of Kabuki's Female Characters". *Comparative Drama* 33 (4): 495-514.
- Leng (Chen Jinghan). 1991 (1910). "Zuguo xuyan" (Translator's Preface to *Patrie!*). In *Zhongguo jindai wenxue daxi* (A Treasury of Modern Chinese Literature). Vol. 28. Shanghai: Shanghai shudian. 693.
- Lengxie (Chen Jinghan). 1904. "Xiake tan" (Talk of a Chivalrous Hero). *Xinxin xiaoshue* (New New Fiction) 1 (1).
- Leyda, Jay. 1972. *Dianying: an Account of Films and the Film Audience in China*. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press.
- Li, Ruru. 2003. *Shashibiya: Staging Shakespeare in China*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.
- Li, Shuchang. 1985. *Xiyang zazhi* (*Miscellany of the West*). Edited by Shuhe Zhong, *Zouxiang shijie congshu*. Changsha: Yuelu shushe.
- Li, Suyuan, and Hu Jubin. 1996. *Zhongguo wusheng dianying shi* (*A History of Chinese Silent Film*). Beijing: Zhongguo dianying chubanshe.
- Liang, Qichao. 1899a. "Lun xue Ribenwen zhi yi" (On the Benefits of Studying Japanese). In *Qing yi bao quanbian* (*Complete Archive of Public Opinion*). Vol. 4. Yokohama: Xinminshe. 73-74.
- . 1899b. "Manhan lu" (Random Thoughts). In *Qing yi bao quanbian* (*Complete Archive of Public Opinion*). Vol. 7. Yokohama: Xinminshe. no. 9 (1-20).
- . 1936. "Xinmin shuo" (On Renewing the People). In *Yinbingshi quanji* (*Collected Writings from the Ice-Drinker's Studio*). Vol. 1. Shanghai: Shanghai dadao shuju. 1-117.
- . 1999. "Popular Literature in Relation to the Masses". Translated by Faye Chunfang Fei. In *Chinese Theories of Theater and Performance from Confucius to the Present*, edited by Faye Chunfang Fei. Ann Arbor, Mich: University of Michigan Press. 109-11.
- Lin, Daoyuan. 1986. "Shanghai zhiye huaju de qi yuan" (The Beginning of Professional *Huaju* in Shanghai). In *Shanghai difangshi ziliao* (*Resources of Shanghai History*), edited by Shanghai shi renmin zhengfu canshi shi wenshi ziliao gongzuo weiyuanhui Shanghai shi wenshi guan. Vol. 5. Shanghai: Shanghai shehui kexueyuan chubanshe. 148-56.
- Lin, Ziqing. 1991 (1944). *Hongyi dashi nianpu* (*A Chronology of Li Shutong's Life*). Hong Kong: Shanghai zonghui.
- Liu, Jun. 2004. "'Zhong Ri Wenming xi Xueshu Yantaohui' Zongshu" (Summary of 'Sino-Japanese Wenming xi Conference'). *Zhongguo Shehui Kenxueyuan Yuanbao* (*Journal of Chinese Academy of Social Sciences*).
- Liu, Muduo. 1983. "Huiyi wo de fuqin—Liu Yizhou" (Remembering My Father—Liu Yizhou). *Xiqu yanjiu* (*Studies in Traditional Theatre*) 8: 207-19.
- Liu, Siyuan. 2006. "Tian Han, Western Theatre, and Japan—The Problem with Source-based and Target-based Models of Interculturalism". In *Text & Presentation, 2005*, edited by Stratos E. Constantinidis. London: McFarland. 106-18.
- Liu, Xiaolu. 1998. "Li Shutong zai Dongjing Meishu Xuexiao —jiantan Liu Shutong yanjiu zhong de jige wuqu" (Li Shutong in Tokyo Fine Arts School —and Several Misconceptions in Liu Shutong Research). *Hangzhou shifan xueyuan xuebao* (*Fine Arts Observation*) (1): 46-50.

- Liu, Yazhi. 1999. "Foreword to *The 20th-Century Grand Stage*". Translated by Faye Chunfang Fei. In *Chinese Theories of Theater and Performance from Confucius to the Present*, edited by Faye Chunfang Fei. Ann Arbor, Mich: University of Michigan Press. 112-13.
- Liu, Yizhou. 1922 (1918). "Zuzhi Liqun She xiaoqi" (Announcement of the Formation of Inspire Masses Society). In *Jubu congkan* (Collection of Essays on Theatre), edited by Zhou Jianyun. Vol. 1. Shanghai: Jiaotong tushuguan. 385-86.
- Lu, Jingruo (retold by Hu Hengsheng). 1989 (1912). "Jiating enyuan ju" (Love and Hate of a Family). In *Zhongguo zaoqi huaju xuan* (Selected Plays of Early Chinese Spoken Drama), edited by Weimin Wang. Beijing: Zhongguo xiju chubanshe. 181-250.
- Lu, Xun. 1976. "Mr. Fujino". Translated by Yang Xianyi and Gladys Yang. In *Dawn Blossoms Plucked at Dusk*. Beijing: Foreign Languages Press.
- Ma, Er Xiansheng. 1914a. "Chunliu Juchang pingtan" (On Chunliu Theatre). *Youxi zazhi* (The Pastime) (9): Jutan (On Theatre) 6-9.
- . 1914b. "Xixue jiangyi (1)" (Lectures in Theatre). *Youxi zazhi* (The Pastime) (9): Xixue jiangyi (Lectures on Theatre) 1-6.
- . 1914c. "Xixue jiangyi (4)" (Lectures in Theatre). *Youxi zazhi* (The Pastime) (12): Xixue jiangyi (Lectures on Theatre) 1-11.
- . 1914d. "Xixue jiangyi (5)" (Lectures in Theatre). *Youxi zazhi* (The Pastime) (13): Xixue jiangyi (Lectures on Theatre) 1-8.
- . 1915. "Xiaohong Xuan juhua (1)" (Remarks on Theatre from Xiaohong Study). *Youxi zazhi* (The Pastime) (18): *Juhua* (On Theatre) 1-20.
- Ma, Guojun. 1990. "'Heinu Yutian Lu' zai Dongjing Yanchu shi de Muqian Zhici" (Remarks before the Opening of *The Black Slaves' Cry to Heaven* in Tokyo). *Xiju-Zhongyang Xiju Xueyuan xuebao* (Drama) (1).
- Mackerras, Colin. 1975. *The Chinese Theatre in Modern Times: From 1840 to the Present Day*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press.
- . 1983. "The Drama of the Qing Dynasty". In *Chinese Theater: From Its Origins to the Present Day*, edited by Colin Mackerras. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press. 92-117.
- Maruyama, Masao. 1969. *Thought and Behavior in Modern Japanese Politics*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Matsumoto, Shinko. 1980. *Meiji engekironshi (History of Meiji Theatrical Theory)*. Tokyo: Engeki Shuppansha.
- . 2001. "Osana Kaoru's Version of *Romeo and Juliet*, 1904". In *Performing Shakespeare in Japan*, edited by Minami Ryuta, Ian Carruthers and John Gillies. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 54-66.
- . 2002. "The Saga of Early Shinpa Theatre". Paper read at AAS Annual Meeting, at Washington, D. C.
- Maurey, Max. 1902. *La Recommandation*. Paris: Librairie Théâtrale.
- McConachie, Bruce A. 1992. *Melodramatic Formations: American Theatre and Society, 1820-1870*. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press.
- Mei, Lanfang. 1961. "Xijujie canjia Xinhai Geming de jijian shi" (Several Stories concerning the Participation of the 1911 Revolution by the Theatrical Circle). In *Xinhai Geming huiyilu* (Recollections of the 1911 Revolution), edited by Zhongguo renmin zhengzhi xieshang huiyi quanguo weiyuanhui wenshi ziliao yanjiu weiyuanhui. Vol. 1. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju. 342-73.

- Miller, Angela. 1996. "The Panorama, the Cinema, and the Emergence of the Spectacular". *Wide Angle* 18 (2): 34-69.
- Miller, John Scott. 2001. *Adaptations of Western Literature in Meiji Japan*. New York: Palgrave.
- Morinaga, Maki. 2002. "The Gender of Onnagata as the Imitating Imitated: Its Historicity, Performativity, and Involvement in the Circulation of Femininity". *Positions: East Asia Cultures Critique* 10 (2): 245-84.
- Nakamura, Tadayuki. 1956. "Ch'unliu-She Issi Kou (II)" (Unknown Facts about the Ch'unliu-She Group). *Tenri Daigaku gakuho* (Bulletin of Tenri University) 8 (3).
- . 2004a. "Chunliu She Yishi Gao (I) —Xian gei Ouyang Yuqian xiansheng" (Unknown Facts about the Spring Willow Society (I) —To Mr. Ouyang Yuqian). Translated by Chen Linghong. *Xiju-Zhongyang Xiju Xueyuan xuebao* (Drama) (3): 32-45.
- . 2004b. "Chunliu She Yishi Gao (II) —Xian gei Ouyang Yuqian xiansheng" (Unknown Facts about the Spring Willow Society (II) —To Mr. Ouyang Yuqian). *Xiju-Zhongyang Xiju Xueyuan xuebao* (Drama) (4): 14-30.
- Odéon, Theatre de L'Europe. *The Stock Play*. Available from http://www.theatre-odeon.fr/english/histor/ft_hi_00.htm.
- Ortolani, Benito. 1995. *The Japanese Theatre: from Shamanistic Ritual to Contemporary Pluralism*. Revised ed. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.
- Ouyang, Yuqian. 1959a. "Tan mubiaoqi". In *Yide Yuchao* (Collected Essays), edited by Yuqian Ouyang. Beijing: Zuoqia Chubanshe. 107-115.
- . 1959b. *Ziwo Yanxi Yilai (Since I Started Acting)*. Beijing: Zhongguo Xiju Chubanshe.
- . 1985a (1958). "Huiyi Chunliu" (Recollections of Chunliu). In *Zhongguo huaju yundong wushi nian shiliao ji* (A Collection of Resources on the Fifty Years of Chinese Spoken Drama Movement), edited by Tian Han et al. Vol. 1. Beijing: Zhongguo xiju chubanshe. 13-46.
- . 1985b (1958). "Tan wenmingqi" (On Civilized Drama). In *Zhongguo huaju yundong wushi nian shiliao ji* (A Collection of Resources on the Fifty Years of Chinese Spoken Drama Movement), edited by Tian Han et al. Vol. 1. Beijing: Zhongguo xiju chubanshe. 47-106.
- . 1990 (1939). *Ziwo yanxi yilai (Since I Started Acting)*. Taipei: Longwen chubanshe.
- Pavis, Patrice. 1992. *Theatre at the Crossroads of Culture*. Translated by Loren Kruger. New York: Routledge.
- . 1996. *The Intercultural Performance Reader*. New York: Routledge.
- Pott, F. L. Hawks. 1928. *A Short History of Shanghai, Being an Account of the Growth and Development of the International Settlement*. Shanghai: Kelly & Walsh, Limited.
- Poulton, M. Cody. 2001. *Spirits of Another Sort: The Plays of Izumi Kyōka*. Ann Arbor, MI: Center for Japanese Studies, The University of Michigan.
- Powell, Brian. 2002. *Japan's Modern Theatre: A Century of Change and Continuity*. London: Japan Library.
- Puccini, Giacomo, Giuseppe Giacosa, and Luigi Illica. 1982. *Tosca*. Translated by Edmund Tracey. New York: Riverrun Press.
- Qiuxing. 1922a (1918). "Xinju zahua" (Miscellany on New Drama). In *Jubu congkan* (Collection of Essays on Theatre), edited by Zhou Jianyun. Vol. 2. Shanghai: Jiaotong tushuguan. 751-55.

- . 1922b (1918). "Yaofeng Xinjuchang zhi Re xie" (Tosca in Yaofeng New Theatre). In *Jubu congkan* (Collection of Essays on Theatre), edited by Zhou Jianyun. Vol. 2. Shanghai: Jiaotong tushuguan. 438-39.
- Ren, Tianzhi. 1989a (1911). "Gonghe wansui" (Long Live the Republic). In *Zhongguo zaoqi huaju xuan* (Selected Plays of Early Chinese Spoken Drama), edited by Weimin Wang. Beijing: Zhongguo xiju chubanshe. 34-66.
- . 1989b (1911). "Huangjin chixie" (Gold and Blood). In *Zhongguo zaoqi huaju xuan* (Selected Plays of Early Chinese Spoken Drama), edited by Weimin Wang. Beijing: Zhongguo xiju chubanshe. 1-31.
- Rudlin, John. 1994. *Commedia Dell'arte: an Actor's Handbook*. New York: Routledge.
- Salz, Jonah. 1993. "Intercultural Pioneers: Otojirō Kawakami and Sada Yakko". *The Journal of Intercultural Studies* 20: 25-74.
- Sanetō, Keishū. 1982. *Zhongguoren liuxue Riben shi* (A History of Chinese Students in Japan). Translated by Tan Ruqian and Lin Qiyan. Hong Kong: Zhongwen Daxue chubanshe.
- Sardou, Victorien. 1990. *La Tosca: the drama behind the opera*. Translated by W. Laird Klein-Ahlbra. Lewiston: E. Mellen Press.
- Satō, Kōroku. 1969. "Kumo no hibiki" (The Echo of Cloud). In *Meiji kindai geki shu* (Meiji Modern Drama Volume). Vol. 86, *Meiji bungaku zenshū* (Collection of Meiji Literature). Tokyo: Chikuma shobo. 205-33.
- . 1989. "Shehui zhong" (The Bell of Society). Translated by Lu Jingruo. In *Zhongguo zaoqi huaju xuan* (Selected Plays of Early Chinese Spoken Drama), edited by Weimin Wang. Beijing: Zhongguo xiju chubanshe. 251-305.
- Schiller, Friedrich. 1991 (1915). "Weilian Tui'er" (William Tell). Translated by Ma Junwu. In *Zhongguo jindai wenxue daxi* (A Treasury of Modern Chinese Literature). Vol. 28. Shanghai: Shanghai shudian. 439-511.
- Seidanshou. 1909. "Shinkoku yaiyuu Ka Getsujiyun to kataru (I)" (Chinese Actor Xia Yuerun (II)). *Bungei gaho*, 121-23.
- Seto, Hiroshi. 1989. "Shinhou Shosai Ch'unliu-She Jyouen Koukoku (III-A)" (Advertisement by the Spring Willow Society on the Shun Pao (III-A)). *Nagasaki Sogo Kagaku daigaku kiyō* (Bulletin of Nagasaki Institute of Applied Science) 30 (2): 333-340.
- . 2001. "*Shinminsha joēn enmoku ichiran*" (A Catalog of Productions by the Xinmin Society). *Setsunan daigaku jinbunkagaku* (9): 117-34.
- . 2003a. *Chugoku wageki seiritsushi kenkyū* (A History of the Establishment of Chinese Huaju): Tohoshoten.
- . 2004. "*Burugui he Jiating enyuan ji bijiao*" (Comparison between *Hototogisu* and *Love and Hate in a Family*). *Zhongguo huaju yanjiu* (Studies in Chinese Spoken Drama) 10: 48-58.
- , ed. 2003b. *Minmeisha joēn enmoku ichiran* (A Catalog of Productions by the Minming Society). Nagoya: Suishobō.
- Seto, Hiroshi. 2003c. "Wenming xi (Zhongguo Zaoqi Huaju) Yanjushi de Jige Wentī—Yi Yuan Guoxin he Huang Aihua Jinzhu Wei Zhongxin" (Considerations in the Historical Studies of Modern Chinese Drama—A Review of Yuan Guoxing and Wang Aihua's monographs). *Hongzhou Shifan Xueyuan xuebao* (Journal of Hangzhou Teachers' College (Social Sciences Edition)) (02).
- Shanghai tong she, ed. 1998 (1936?). *Jiu Shanghai shi liao hui bian* (Resources of Old Shanghai). Vol. 1. Beijing: Beijing tushuguan chubanshe.

- Shen, Zhongli, Xiangbo Ma, and Xipu Wang. 1907. "Chunyang She yijian shu" (Opinion of the Spring Sun Society). *Dagong bao*, October 15, 6-7.
- Shirakawa, Nobuo, ed. 1985. *Kawakami Otojirō Sadayakko: shinbun ni miru jinbutsu zō* (Kawakami Otojirō, Sadayakko: Their Personalities as Seen in Newspapers). Tokyo: Yūshōdō Shuppan.
- Song, Baozhen. 2004. "Zhuigen Suyuan Qiuzheng Lishi —Zhong Ri *Wenminxi* Yantaohui zai Jing Juxing" (Search for the Origin —Sino-Japanese Conference on *Wenming xi* was Held in Beijing). *Zhongguo Xiju* (Chinese Drama) (5).
- Song, Minghua, and Benchun Lin. 2003. "Kouyi yibu Chahua Nü, Zaojiu yige fanyijia—ji bei yiwang the fanyijia Wang Shouchang" (Wang Shouchang, a Forgotten Translator). *Zhongguo fanyi* (Chinese Translator's Journal) 24 (4): 55-57.
- Sorbet, Gaston. 1908. "*Le Grand Soir* au Théâtre des Arts" (*On the Eve* with Théâtre des Arts). In *L'Illustration Théâtrale*. Vol. 81. Paris: L'Illustration Théâtrale. Inside front and back covers.
- St. John's University. 1929. *St. John's University, 1879-1929*. Shanghai: Kelly and Walsh, Limited.
- Suzuki, Masae. *Who are the Japanese Othellos? Reception and productions of Shakespeare in mainland Japan and Okinawa*. Available from <http://momi.jwu.ac.jp/~shirazu5/index.html>.
- Tao, Yabing. 2001. *Ming Qing jian de Zhongxi yinyue jiaoliu* (*Musical Exchange between China and the West in Ming and Qing Dynasties*). Beijing: Dongfang chubanshe.
- Tatlow, Antony. 2001. *Shakespeare, Brecht, and the Intercultural Sign*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.
- Tian, Benxiang, ed. 1993. *Zhongguo xiandai bijiao xiju shi* (A History of Modern Comparative Chinese Theatre). Beijing: Wenhua yishu chubanshe.
- Tian, Min. 2000. "Male Dan: The Paradox of Sex, Acting, and Perception of Female Impersonation in Traditional Chinese Theatre". *Asian Theatre Journal* 17 (1): 78-97.
- Tianlusheng (Wang Zhonglin). 1960 (1908). "Juchang zhi jiaoyu" (Theatre as Education). In *Wan Qing wen xue cong chao* (Anthology of Late Qing Literature), edited by A Ying. Vol. Xiaoshuo xiqu yanjiu juan (Fiction and Drama Studies). Beijing: Zhonghua shuju. 55-57.
- Toita, Yasuji. 1956. "The Kabuki, the Shimpa, the Shingeki". Translated by Edward G Seidensticker and Donald Keene. In *Japanese Music and Drama in the Meiji Era*, edited by Komiya Toyotaka. Vol. 9, *Japanese Culture in the Meiji Era*. Tokyo: Ōbunsha. 175-325.
- Tokutomi, Kenjiro. 1981 (1908). *Burugui* (*Hototogisu* (*The Cuckoo*)). Translated by Liu Shu and Wei Yi. Beijing: Shangwu yinshuguan.
- Tschudin, Jean-Jacques. 1999. "Find More Like This: Danjuro's *katsureki-geki* (Realistic Theatre) and the Meiji 'Theatre Reform' Movement". *Japan Forum* 11 (1): 83-94.
- Verne, Jules, and Adolphe d'Ennery. 2003. *Michael Strogoff*. Translated by Frank J. Morlock. Available from <http://jv.gilead.org.il/morlock/strogoff/>.
- Wang, Guowei. *Honglou meng yanjiu* (*On Dream of the Red Chamber*). Available from <http://fanjin.bokee.com/378140.html>.
- . 1974. *Song Yuan xiqu kao* (*Textual Research of Song and Yuan Drama*). Taipei: Yiwen yinshuguan.

- Wang, Hong. 2004. "Chuugoku to Nihon niokeru Marugurito zou—geki Tsubaki-hime no hon'yaku to jouen omegutte" (Marguerite's Image in China and Japan—Centering on the Translation and Production of *Camille*). *Tagenbunka* (Multicultural Studies) (4): 143-57.
- Wang, Tao. 1985. *Manyou suilu* (*Random Records of My Wanderings*). Edited by Shuhe Zhong, *Zouxiang shijie congshu*. Changsha: Yuelu shushe.
- Wang, Zhongjun, and Zhongling Hu. 1986. "Shanghai xiyuan suohua" (Tales of Theatres in Shanghai). In *Shanghai difangshi ziliao* (Resources of Shanghai History), edited by Shanghai shi renmin zhengfu canshi shi wenshi ziliao gongzuo weiyuanhui Shanghai shi wenshi guan. Vol. 5. Shanghai: Shanghai shehui kexueyuan chubanshe. 195-204.
- Wang, Zhongxian. 1914. "Xinjiu xi zhi yidian" (A Biography of Benmei). In *Xinju Shi* (A History of *Xinju*): Xinju Xiaoshuo She. zaju (miscellaneous) 31-32.
- Waseda Daigaku Tsubouchi Hakushi Kinen Engeki Hakubutsukan. 1998. *Nihon engekishi nenpyō* (*A Chronology of Japanese Theatre*). Tokyo: Yagi shoten.
- Williams, Raymond. 1981. *Culture*. Cambridge: Fontana Paperbacks.
- Wu, Youru, ed. 1990. *Dianshizhai huabao* (The Dianshizhai Illustrated Journal). Yangzhou: Jiangsu Guangling guji keyinshe.
- Xiong, Yuezhi. 2002. "Shanghai zujie yu wenhua ronghe" (Shanghai Concessions and Cultural Assimilation). *Xueshu yuekan* (5): 56-62, 70.
- Xizui. 1922 (1918). "Xinjujia du jiaoben zhi taolun" (My View on Script Reading by New Drama Actors). In *Jubu congkan* (Collection of Essays on Theatre), edited by Zhou Jianyun. Vol. 1. Shanghai: Jiaotong tushuguan. 173-76.
- Xu, Banmei. 1957. *Huaju chuangshiqi huiyilu* (*Memoir of the Founding Era of the Spoken Drama*). Beijing: Zhongguo xiju chubanshe.
- Xu, Jianzhong. 2003. "Retranslation: Necessary or Unnecessary". *Babel* 49 (3): 193-202.
- Yihua. 1922 (1918). "Liunian lai haishang xinju dashiji (I)" (Major Events of Six Years of New Drama in Shanghai (I)). In *Jubu congkan* (Collection of Essays on Theatre), edited by Zhou Jianyun. Vol. 1. Shanghai: Jiaotong tushuguan. 212-28.
- Yiming. 1991 (1915). "Huangjin ta" (Goldern Tower). Translated by Leng. In *Zhongguo jindai wenxue daxi* (A Treasury of Modern Chinese Literature). Vol. 28. Shanghai: Shanghai shudian. 820-34.
- Yoshihara, Yukari. 2001. "Japan as 'Half-Civilized': an Early Japanese Adaptation of Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* and Japan's Construction of its National Image in the Late Nineteenth Century". In *Performing Shakespeare in Japan*, edited by Ryuta Minami, Ian Carruthers and John Gillies. New York: Cambridge University Press. 21-33.
- Yuhui. *Shezhu huaju chulu fengmang de Lishi xiongd* (*The Liu Brothers Experience in Spoken Drama*). Available from <http://www.unity.cn/2639/cc3.htm>.
- Zarrilli, Phillip B. 1992. "For Whom is the King a King? Issues of Intercultural Production, Perception, and Reception in a Kathakali King Lear". In *Critical Theory and Performance*, edited by Janelle G. Reinelt and Joseph R. Roach. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press. 16-40.
- Zeng, Jize. 1985. *Chushi Ying Fa Eguo riji* (*Travel Diary from England, France, and Russia*). Changsha: Yuelu Sushe.
- Zhang, Lianhong. 2005. "'Haipai jingju' yu jindai Zhongguo chengshi wenhua yule kongjian de jiangou" ('Shanghai-Style *Jingju*' and Urban Entertainment Space in Modern China). *Zhongguo Xiqu Xueyuan xuebao* (Journal of College of Chinese Traditional Opera) (3): 14-23.

- Zhao, Huishen. 1938. *Ziyou hun (Soul of Freedom)*. Guangzhou: Shanghai za zhi gong si.
- Zheng, Zhengqiu. 1922a (1918). "Xinju jingyan tan (I)" (Experiences in New Drama (I)). In *Jubu congkan* (Collection of Essays on Theatre), edited by Zhou Jianyun. Vol. 1. Shanghai: Jiaotong tushuguan. 159-63.
- . 1922b (1918). "Xinju jingyan tan (II)" (Experiences in New Drama (II)). In *Jubu congkan* (Collection of Essays on Theatre), edited by Zhou Jianyun. Vol. 1. Shanghai: Jiaotong tushuguan. 198-200.
- , ed. 1919. *Xinju kaozheng baichu* (One Hundred New Drama Plays). Shanghai: Zhonghua tushu jicheng gongsi.
- Zhengong. 1915. "Nüzi xinjutuan zhi guoqu lishi" (History of the Women's New Drama Troupe). *Xiju congkao* (Drama Journal) (1).
- Zhou, Huiling. 2000. "Nüyanyuan, xieshi zhuyi, 'xin nüxing' lunshu —wanqing zhi wusi shidai Zhongguo xiandai juchang zhong de xingbie biaoyan" (Actress, Realism, and "New Woman" —the Performance of Gender in Modern Chinese Theatre between Late Qing and the May Fourth Movement). *Xiju yishu* (Dramatic Art) (1): 4-26.
- Zhou, Jianyun. 1922a (1918). "Jiuwang Sheng Zhong zhi Maiguo Nu" (The Traitor amidst the Voice of National Salvation). In *Jubu congkan* (Collection of Essays on Theatre), edited by Zhou Jianyun. Vol. 2. Shanghai: Jiaotong tushuguan. 439-40.
- . 1922b (1918). "Xiaowutai zhi Xisheng" (Angelo at Xiaowutai). In *Jubu congkan* (Collection of Essays on Theatre), edited by Zhou Jianyun. Vol. 2. Shanghai: Jiaotong tushuguan. 433-34.
- . 1922c (1918). "Xinju jiachang yu muwai wenti zhi shangque" (On the Questions of Singing and Out-of-Curtain Scenes in New Drama). In *Jubu congkan* (Collection of Essays on Theatre), edited by Zhou Jianyun. Vol. 1. Shanghai: Jiaotong tushuguan. 176-77.
- . 1922d (1918). "Xinju zahua (I)" (Topics on New Drama (I)). In *Jubu congkan* (Collection of Essays on Theatre), edited by Zhou Jianyun. Vol. 2. Shanghai: Jiaotong tushuguan. 748-51.
- , ed. 1922e (1918). *Jubu Congkan* (Collection of Essays on Theatre). 2 ed. 2 vols. Shanghai: Jiaotong tushuguan.
- Zhou, Xiaoming. 2001. *Duoyuan yu duoyuan: cong Zhongguo liuxuezu dao xinyuepai (Multi-Source and Pluralism: from Chinese Overseas Students to the New Moon School)*. Wuhan: Huazhong Shifan Daxue chubanshe.
- Zhu, Hengfu. 2004. "'Chunliu She' zhiqian de Shanghai xinju" (New Drama in Shanghai before 'The Spring Willow Society'). *Xiju-Zhongyang Xiju Xueyuan xuebao Yishu* (Dramatic Art) (6): 79-83.
- Zhu, Shuangyun. 1914. *Xinju shi (History of New Drama)*. Shanghai: Xinju xiaoshuo she.