“The Politicality of *Modern Japan: Korea Editions*’ Use of Korean Literature”

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The omnibus monthly magazine *Modern Japan* (*Modan Nippon*), launched by Bungei Shunju in October of 1930, featured a special extra edition on the theme of “Chōsen” (Korea)¹ in 1939 and then again in 1940. This article focuses on these two issues and how they introduced Korean writers and literature to mainland Japanese audiences. It then goes on to consider what can be learned from reading the literary works contained therein. Considering the timing of these publications, it is easy to imagine the degree to which the imperialist agenda of the wartime regime is propagandized throughout their pages; however, we can perhaps still glean from them the significance of depicting Korean writers and their works for a Japanese audience at that time.

Modern Japan has not enjoyed much attention in English-language scholarship at the point of this writing. One significant example is Chris-

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1 When citing historical sources, I follow contemporary Japanese practice and refer to Korea as “Chōsen.” This is because this paper draws upon imperial Japanese-language literature, focusing on its reception in Japanese-reading regions and the messages it sent to native speakers of Japanese.

tina Yi's writing about the 1939 *Korea Edition*'s connection to imperial Japan's policy of imperialization, or *kōminka*. *Kōminka* was an enforced re-education of colonized peoples into "children of the emperor." Yi incisively indicates how "the special edition assembled its sources from all corners of the colonial empire in order to introduce a composite picture of 'Korea,' carefully edited and censored, to the curious masses."² She goes on to address other contemporary magazines, including Shinchōsha's *New Tide* (*Shinchō*) and Eiga Nihonsha's *Film Review* (*Eiga hyōron*), which published special "Korea" issues, concluding that "*kōminka* politics did not aim to make Koreans into 'Japanese' but rather to make them into useful 'imperial subjects,' a category itself defined by war."³ This is a critical observation pertaining to how the Korean people were treated by the media of imperial Japan.

With the exception of Yi's work, *Modern Japan* has yet to be the subject of a broad, comprehensive study within either English or Japanese academia. Extant research on the topic has primarily focused on *Modern Japan*'s original editor-in-chief, Ma Haesong. Ma, who was born in Korea, remains well respected as a children's author even today. Jang You-Lee (그대로) has identified an interesting "disconnect" between Korean and Japanese academic interests in this character: when Ma is raised as an object of academic discourse in Korea it is usually related to his achievements in children's literature; on the other hand, in Japan he has been exclusively viewed in terms of his tenure as editor of *Modern Japan*.⁴

In the current paper, I will begin by establishing *Modern Japan*'s uniqueness and its overall position in contemporary Japanese culture. Specifically, I will place it in context with the "modernism" of 1920s and

2 Christina Yi, *Colonizing Language: Cultural Production and Language Politics in Modern Japan and Korea* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018), 30.

3 Yi, 30.

4 Jang You-Lee, "Ma Haesong ni okeru kokkakan keisei: Seizon wo meguru minzoku to kokka no mondai wo chūshin ni," *Juncture: Chōiki teki nihon bunka kenkyū* 6 (March 2015): 130.

'30s Japan. This is a critical first step, both addressing the meaning of the magazine's title and the lay of the Japanese cultural landscape in the pre-war Showa Period. After laying this foundation, I go on to discuss the *Korea Editions* specifically. Hong Sŏnyŏng has astutely stated that the decision of *Modern Japan*, a popular omnibus magazine, to publish issues devoted to Korean literature "was full of the conflicts and contradictions inherent to fulfilling the role of 'popular' praxis by 'imperial' media."⁵ After elucidating the publication process and concept behind the *Korea Editions*, I move on to consider the literary works contained therein.

To state my conclusions upfront, despite the magazine's popular format, the Korean literature included in these special issues falls into the category of "pure literature" (*junsui bungaku*) as opposed to "popular literature" (*taishū bungaku*). Regarding the seeming mismatch of publishing pure literature in a mass-entertainment magazine, Hong avers that "the initial motivation for publishing the Chōsen Editions in the magazine *Modern Japan* was to inform Japanese readers about 'Chōsen.'"⁶ However, this comment is not in reference to reportage—a simple account of facts from the ground—but to a modern literature matured on the Korean peninsula and written by Korean natives. This point deserves additional attention. The works printed in the pages of mass entertainment magazines were written specifically to align with the standards of mass literacy, and sometimes included sensational contents. The act of publishing works employing sophisticated and artistic literary expression in the popular medium of the Korean Editions was in itself political. This is a clear point on which the Korean Editions did not follow the *kōminka* line, diverting from the government's discourses on the "current situation."

On this point, I look to critical essays by Kim Saryang and Han Sik discussing the Korean literature in the special editions, comparing their contrasting points of view and conclusions. Finally, I take up a short story

5 Hong Sŏnyŏng, "Zasshi *Modan Nippon* to *Chōsen ban* no kumiawase, sono sogo," *Ajia yūgaku* 138 (December 2010): 64.

6 Hong, 63.

from the collection by Pak T'aewŏn entitled, "A Street Darkly" (*Michi ha kuraki wo*) and analyze its contents. Pak was a novelist active in Korea from the 1930s. He was known for consciously engaging with experimental literature through various techniques and compositional methods. "A Street Darkly" debuted in the March issue of *Genesis* (*Kaibyaku*), 1935. It was first translated to Japanese for the *Modern Japan: Korea Edition*. I focus on it here for its plainly critical stance. Through this combination of perspectives and textual analysis, I hope to illuminate the politicality of *Modern Japan* realized through a rereading of the Korea Editions.

The Characteristics of *Modern Japan*

When discussing modern Japanese literature, it is essential to distinguish between "modernism" (*modanizumu*) and "*modan*" (the modern). Growing out of so-called "modern fashion," New Sensationists like Yokomitsu Riichi and Kawabata Yasunari, as well as younger writers including Ryūtanji Yū and Yoshiyuki Eisuke, actively incorporated the most cutting-edge cultural styles into their art, starting what is recognized as Japanese "modernism" today. In the field of poetry in particular, European artistic philosophies of surrealism and Dadaism were reinterpreted to great effect by the avant-gardists Kitasono Katsue and Anzai Fuyuhiko. On the other hand, *modan* did not incorporate such avant-garde artistic philosophies, staying more in line with the aforementioned "modern fashion." In other words, *modan* here refers to the image of the modern created by various print media focused on the latest popular trends. The magazine *New Youth* (*Shin seinen*), first published by Hakubunkan in January 1920, was a representative piece of media contributing to the construction of this image of *modan*. Just as the title implies, the periodical targeted a youth demographic; however, by importing detective fiction from abroad, it earned popularity among a broader swath of readers. This influence was so great that, over time, it would grow to strongly embrace that aspect of

its profile. *New Youth* is also famous for fostering the careers of great fiction writers like Edogawa Ranpo and Yokomizo Seishi. As a result, *New Youth* has been well studied by both media historians and scholars of literature.

On the other hand, *Modern Japan* was a completely different beast. *New Youth* was aimed at middle-class urbanites and intellectual elites and was on the leading cultural edge, introducing its readers to many western cultures and customs—especially those of the United States—and emphasizing their absorption into contemporary Japanese urban society. By contrast, *Modern Japan* was designed for a much broader audience and should be understood as a mass-entertainment magazine. Thus, it might better be compared with the Dai Nippon yūben-kai Kōdansha's *King* (*Kingu*).

The first issue of *King* was published in January 1925. Its slogan was “[A magazine] Both fun and useful!” (*omoshirokute tame ni naru*), and its pages were filled with novels, traditional storytelling, practical information, historical accounts, humorous stories, and all sorts of other miscellanea. It was the first magazine in Japanese publishing history to print more than a million copies, and with the extra edition in November 1928 it hit a record 15,000,000. It definitively established the genre of the mass-entertainment magazine. *Modern Japan* was first created by Bungei shunju in October 1930 as a rival publication to *King*.

The two publications shared a similar sales strategy. *King* pushed advertising from the beginning, flooding spaces beyond the conventional newspaper pages with their message by sending mailers directly to individuals' homes, distributing advertising banners to bookshops, hiring *chindon'ya* musical troupes to get the word out directly on the street, producing commercial songs, and so on. Jang You-Lee has shown that *Modern Japan's* strategy, developed in *King's* wake, employed several different methods to build their brand. First, they mimicked *Bungei Shunju's* promotional style, particularly by focusing on getting their product into kiosks in train stations. Second, it offered readers a recognizable “stylized image” by unflinchingly adorning the cover of every issue with a women's

bust portrait and images of Betty Boop within its pages (later to morph into a similar-looking character). It named a racehorse Modern Japan and also “partnered with other industries such as Victor Records (‘The Modern Japan Song’) and Matsuzakaya (‘Modern Japan’s preferred cotton kimono’)” to sell promote their product.⁷

There was also a *Modern Japan Club*, which offered discounted tickets to plays, movies, and travel, as well as opportunities for readers to meet the writers and celebrities. Jang indicates that this was a mechanism for the magazine to encourage readers to associate with one another and act as a group. The tactic of organizing readers had been already in active use by girls’ magazines such as *Girls’ Friend* (*Shōjo no tomo*, Jitsugyō no Nihon-sha) and *Young Ladies’ World* (*Reijokai*, Hōbunkan) since the Taishō Period (1912–1926).

As the paragraphs above illustrate, media scholarship on *Modern Japan* has been slowly expanding; however, it has suffered from a limited perspective by not discussing the literary works themselves. Many great writers contributed to *Modern Japan*, including Osaragi Jirō, Nakamura Masatsune, and Dazai Osamu; yet there is still a need to establish the relationship between such literary works and the medium they were published in.⁸

The Position of *Modern Japan*: Korea Editions

Ma Haesong joined the publisher Bungei Shunju in 1924 as an editor where he worked until 1928, when he took a leave of absence while suffering a bout of tuberculosis. Following his recovery in October of 1929,

7 Jang You-Lee. “Zasshi *Modan Nippon* ga kōchiku shita ‘modan’: Zasshi no buran-doka to dokusha senryaku.” *Bungaku/Gogaku* 211 (November, 2014): 32-46.

8 For details on Dazai Osamu’s “Filial Abandonment” (Obasute), see Yasufuku Tomoyuki, “*Modan Nippon* kara mita Dazai Osamu ‘Ubasute’ ni tuite,” *Kyōto gobun* 5 (March 2000): 226–235.

he took up the position of editor-in-chief of *Modern Japan* and became president of the magazine three years later when it became an independent company in August 1932. Although the journal split from its original publisher, they maintained an amicable relationship, keeping offices in the same buildings and advertising the other's publications within their own.

The first edition of *Modern Japan* (October 1930) featured an article "About Modern Japan" by Kikuchi Kan, the then-president of Bungei Shunju. This is a testament to the strength of the relationship between these two companies. He describes the purpose behind founding the magazine as follows:

I think anything can go into *Modern Japan*. It should just express all of the transformations of contemporary Japan, beat by beat. Our initial plan was to create a magazine about what we are truly interested in, centered on lifestyle, actual science, entertainment, and style. However, a magazine is a living creature, and so I cannot predict what form it will mature into. Regardless, I want it to continue to always represent the most up-to-date information and styles of the times.⁹

A "magazine about what we are truly interested in," focused on themes of "lifestyle, actual science, entertainment, and style" rings similar to *King's* slogan of "Both fun and useful!" whereas the interest in "the most up-to-date information and styles of the times" recalls *New Youth's* *modan* sensibility. It appears that the magazine did a good job in realizing Kikuchi's vision, as it contained much information related to politics and literature, film industry gossip, sports, and Europe and America.

It was within this established form that the 1939 November issue, *Modern Japan: Korea Edition* (hereinafter: 1939 edition) appeared. The colophon reads "*Modern Japan* volume 10, issue 12," but I shall default

9 Kikuchi Kan, "Modan Nippon ni tsuite," *Modan Nippon* 1, no. 1 (October, 1930), 1.

to the title printed on the magazine itself: the *Korea Edition*. The event was repeated in August the following year with the second *Modern Japan: Korea Edition*, although again the colophon simply reads “*Modern Japan* volume 11, issue 9.” For clarity, I refer to this latter issue as the 1940 edition.

The frontmatter of the 1939 edition is marked “10th Anniversary Special Extra Edition.” It opens with Hamamoto Hiroshi’s “September Affair” (*ryoshū*), a short story based on research conducted in Korea. It is followed by Katō Takeo’s “P’yōngyang,” which was likewise researched on the peninsula.¹⁰ Next is “A Message to the Korea Edition,” containing comments by Konoe Ayamaro, who stepped down from the prime minister’s cabinet in January of that year, and Minami Jirō, governor-general of Korea at the time and major proponent of the “Japan and Korea as one” (*naisen ittai*) policy. Both men praised the magazine, writing respectively that it was “a project for the times” and “truly a timely achievement.” This suggests that the 1939 edition could be read as a propaganda vehicle plastered with imperialistic ideology. “A Message to the Korea Edition” wraps up with a comment from Kikuchi Kan, who also describes the magazine as a “significant project for the times.” However, he goes on to express interest in the literature itself and address the existence of a “Chōsen literary community (*bundan*),” writing that “I understand that [this magazine will] introduce many Chōsen works, a prospect I look forward to in and of itself.”¹¹

Ma Haesong’s personal perspective on the motivations behind the 1939 edition do not grace the pages of the magazine itself. However, his “Miscellaneous Notes” (*zakki*) are included in the 1940 edition in which he reflects back on the previous year’s publication, writing that “We did it

10 Osaragi Jirō also participated in fact-finding mission at the same time as Hamamoto and Katō. His short story “Resemblances” (*Omokage*) was featured in the mid-point of the magazine. Osaragi was a regular contributor to *Modern Japan*.

11 Konoe Fumimaro, et. al. “Chōsen ban he no kotoba,” *Modan Nippon: Chōsen ban* (2009 [November, 1939]): 82–83 [72–73].

for the company's ten-year anniversary in the spirit of a festival celebration." These "Miscellaneous Notes" make many things apparent, the most important of which is its indication that there was a rift between the editorial system and the editorial intent. He writes the following:

I didn't work very much on the "Korea Edition" this time around. Last year, some domestic Japanese said that "Because that guy is in charge, they're pushing to show only the positive aspects of Chōsen," whereas Chōsen people were furious that "Oh, come on! If you're in charge of the company, how could you publish such a cartoon?" It's of little significance, but I thought it might be good to have a Korea Edition without my hand in it, and let my employees have free rein.¹²

He goes on to clarify that "Three men—Kanehara, Sugai, and Hayashi—were dispatched" to bear the brunt of editorial duties. In addition, he mentions that many people received instruction concerning the article selection and overall plan for the 1940 edition, including the following names: Itō Sei, Fukuda Kiyoto, Yamazaki Masaharu, Sasaki Mōsaku, Nakamura Murao, Tasutaka Tokuzō, Adachi Gen'ichirō, Sekiguchi Jirō, Itō Einosuke, Murayama Tomoyoshi, Tsuboi Shin'nosuke, Tōgō Seiji, Tamagawa Ichirō, Matsuoka Masao, Kiyosawa Kiyoshi, Hamamoto Hiroshi, Iijima Tadashi, Tatsuno Kyūshi, Ono Ken'ichirō, Ishii Baku, Nakamura Masatsune, Akita Shigeru, and Iwata Tatsuo.¹³ These 23 contributors were mainly comprised of writers, art critics, and comic artists, and no politicians or business people are among their number. Fukuda Kiyoto and Nakamura Murao had long run the art criticism pages of the journal *New Tide* (*Shinchō*) and were important figures in the prewar Showa arts world. Others were intimately familiar with literary media:

12 Ma Haesong, "Zakki," *Modan Nippon: Chōsen ban* (2009 [August, 1940]): 246 [234].

13 Ma, 234.

Sasaki Mosaku was an executive officer at *Bungei Shunju* and Tasutaka Tokuzō presided over the literary magazine *Arts Capital* (*Bungei shuto*). Kiyosawa Kiyoshi was an Americanist who had significant experience living abroad in English-speaking countries. And the inclusion of Murayama Tomoyoshi, Hamamoto Hiroshi, and Ishii Baku, all of whom contributed to the 1939 edition, establishes a solid connection between the two Korea Editions.

It is unclear specifically what kind of advice these men received. While governor-general Minami Jirō appears in an article once again, this time responding to a journalist's interview questions, a comparison between the two editions reveals that in 1940 the overall tenor of catering to the geopolitical status quo has been severely dampened. It would be too suppositional to claim that this was because it was compiled "without [Ma's] hand in it" (as he had actively tried to make the 1939 edition amenable to contemporary Japanese geopolitical interests). This is an important point, as while it is common for a magazine to significantly change character, it is rare for those changes to result from a single cause. But then again, just because the magazine stopped pandering to the status quo it does not mean that it suddenly took on a more liberal character.

Hong Sönyöng and Jan You-Lee have written about the differences between the two editions. Hong indicates that "Unlike the 1939 edition, the 1940 edition contains no fiction by Japanese writers and instead earnestly introduces readers to literature from colonial Chōsen through translation."¹⁴ Jang offers a more developed consideration of the way Korea is represented in the magazine. In the 1939 edition, Kaesōng, P'yōngyang, Mt. Kūmgang, and other regions close to Ma Haesong's birthplace are taken up across a number of articles, whereas in 1940 the number of articles "highlighting Kyōngsōng as a modern city appeared in significant numbers."¹⁵ At first glance, this would appear to tell the story of a maga-

¹⁴ Hong, 61.

¹⁵ Jang You-Lee, "1930 nendai kōhan ni okeru zasshi *Modan Nippon* no henshū Taisei: Zensen to jūgo, shokuminchi chosen wo megutte," *Nagoya daigaku kokugo*

zine escaping direct control by the imperial government. However, Hong argues that “emphasizing the Chōsen people’s modernity and self-sufficiency connected to their forceful subjectification”: the shift from “the 1939 edition, which relied entirely on a Japanese perspective, to the 1940 edition, which seems to respect the autonomy of Chōsen, actually had a more powerful effect as imperialistic propaganda,” as it intimated the Korean people’s role as naturalized imperial subjects fully integrated into the empire.¹⁶ These are all persuasive points.

The next question is: can the difference between the two editions also be observed in their literary works as well?

Differences between Korean Literary Introductions by Kim Saryang and Han Sik

Now, let us look at the overall picture of literary works by Korean writers included in the 1939 and 1940 editions:

First let’s consider the translators. Kim Jong-han went to Japan in 1937 to study at Nihon Daigaku, the same university as Ma Haesong. After graduation, he worked for *Women’s Illustrated* (*Fujin gahō-sha*) while writing poetry himself. Kim Soun went to Japan much earlier and was publishing poems about Korea written in Japanese from the 1920s. One can assume that he was well received as a translator for the *Modern Japan: Korea Editions*. Pak Wŏnjun only contributed the translation of Yi T’aejun’s “Crows” to the 1939 edition, but he continued writing in Japanese even after the war, penning an introduction to the works of novelist Ch’oe Sōhae in the 1969 publication of *Chōsen bungaku*. Kim Saryang continued to write in Japanese and Korean and is known today in Japan as a forerunner of *zainichi* Korean literature. He was already building his

kokubungaku 107 (November 2014): 22.

16 Jang You-Lee, “1930 nendai kōhan ni okeru zasshi *Modan Nippon* no henshū Taisei,” 23.

1939 Edition		
Poems		
Author	Translator	Title
Cho Yohan	Kim Chonghan	“Balsam” (<i>Hōsenka</i>)
Kim Kwangnim	Kim Soun	“Butterfly and Sea” (<i>Chō to umi</i>)
Kim Yunsuk	Kim Soun	“Roses” (<i>Bara</i>)
Kim Sowŏl	Kim Soun	“The Sound of Singing” (<i>Utagoe</i>)
Paek Sŏk	Kim Chonghan	“Bon Fire” (<i>Takibi</i>)
Chŏng Jiyong	Kim Chonghan	“Tale of the White Deer” (<i>Hakuroku tan</i>)
Fiction		
Author	Translator	Title
Yi HyosŏkYi Hyosŏk	(no translator listed)	“When the Buckwheat Flowers” (<i>Soba no hana no koro</i>)
Yi T’aejun	Pak Wŏnjun	“Crows” (<i>Karasu</i>)
Yi Kwangsu	Kim Saryang	“Ignorance” (<i>Mumyō</i>)
1940 Edition		
Poems		
Author	Translator	Title
Pak Chonghwa	(no translator listed)	“Hands as White as Icefish” (<i>Shirauo no yao na shiroi te ga</i>)
Kim Sangyong	(no translator listed)	“Fireflies” (<i>Hotaru</i>)
Kim Tonghwan	(no translator listed)	“Sins (A Folksong)” (<i>Tsumi (min’yō)</i>)
Kim ōk	(no translator listed)	“Seo Guan (A Folksong)”
Im haksu	Kim Chonghan	“In Harbin Station” (<i>Harubin eki nite</i>)
Fiction		
Author	Translator	Title
Pak T’aewŏn	Kim Chonghan	“A Street Darkly” (<i>Michi ha kuraki wo</i>)
Kim DongniTongni	Kim Sanch’ŏnSanch’ŏn	“The Street Through Town” (<i>Mura no tori michi</i>)
Choe Myŏngik	Kim Sanch’ŏnSanch’ŏn	“Ripples of Pathos” (<i>Shinmon</i>)

foundation as a novelist during the colonial period: just as the 1939 edition came out, his short story “In the Light” (*Hikari no naka ni*) was nominated for the prestigious Akutagawa Prize. There is no information available on Kim Sanch’ŏn, who first appeared in the 1940 edition.

As you can see, the translators who contributed to *Modern Japan: Korea Editions* included several literary writers from the Japanese metropole. While it is unclear as to how they were chosen, one possibility is that because Kim Saryang was a member of *Arts Capital* at the time, he may have received a reference from Tasutaka Tokuzō. It is likely that the writers listed in Ma Haesong’s “Miscellaneous Notes” received similar support.

Kim Saryang’s article “Talking about Chōsen Writers” (published in the 1939 edition) and Han Sik’s “State of the Chōsen Literary Community” (published in the 1940 edition), both speak to contemporary trends in Korean literature. Han himself was a novelist active in the Japanese proletarian literature movement. Beginning with these two articles, I will now consider how Korean literature was valued and how the writers included in the pages of the *Modern Japan: Korea Editions* were evaluated by their contemporaries.

Kim Saryang claims that Korean literature “in fact has not received all that much influence from Japanese literature.” His commentary is restricted to novelists and playwrights and does not touch upon poets at all. Although his comments therefore apply only to the field of prose writing, his intention is to comprehensively enumerate the names of all contemporary Korean writers. The fact of his thoroughness itself is a display of the lack of Japanese literary influence. First of all, Kim Saryang raises Yi Kwangsu as a “mogul of the Chōsen literary establishment,” writing that “general Chōsen readers do not respond so positively as to when [they read] his works.” Specifically, he lists “Heartless” (*Mujō*), “Love” (*Ai*), and “Ignorance” (trans. 1939), indicating their consistent characteristic of “a noble spirit of love.” Next, he describes Kim Dongin as having “turned toward modern popular literature” while claiming that his earlier works contained literary value. Other writers included the agriculturalist Yi Ki-

yŏng and Kim Namch'ŏn Kim Namch'ŏn, a writer of self-critical "accusation literature" (*kokuhatsu bungaku*). Kim had been an active as a writer of proletarian literature during his sojourn in Japan around 1930, and so it may be appropriate to see his "accusation literature" as something akin to what is conventionally called "conversion literature" (*tenkō bungaku*), a public testament to the end of his proletarian sympathies.

Kim Saryang paints Yi Hyosŏk and Yi T'aejun (from the 1939 edition) and Pak T'aewŏn (from the 1940 edition) as three men cut from a similar cloth:

Who could I give to represent Chōsen's school of pure art but Yi T'aejun, Yi Hyosŏk, and Pak T'aewŏn, for starters? They have inherited and continued developing the heritage of early [Chōsen] literature's "words." And recently, the discovery of the Chōsen language has become a major labor of writers in general. Now the language has become more and more unified, but because their vocabulary is bountiful and nuance so deep, I feel that Yi T'aejun, Yi Hyosŏk, Pak T'aewŏn, and the late Kim Yu-jongs' sensitive works are mostly untranslatable.¹⁷

Actually, Yi Hyosŏk was involved in the establishment of the "Group of Nine Writers" (*kunin-kai*) who sought to cultivate Korea's pure literature in opposition to proletarian literature. As Yi T'aejun invited Pak T'aewŏn to join the group in 1933, it is clear that they were writers for art's sake. Yi Hyosŏk's "When the Buckwheat Flowers" (1936), republished in the 1939 edition, is still considered one of his crowning achievements today.

Kim Saryang continues naming writers working in Korea while arguing that "Can we really say that flowers have begun to bloom is all of the fields of the current Chōsen literary community? It seems that writers lack

17 Kim Saryang, "Chōsen no sakka wo kataru," *Modan Nippon: Chōsen ban* (2009 [November, 1939]): 271.

guidance as they individually seek out their own paths, but more and more are also beginning either to deepen and develop their styles or to ‘shed their skins’ [reinventing themselves entirely].”¹⁸

Han Sik responds in a narrowly focused and highly-critical 1940 “State of the Chōsen Literary Community.” His interpretation differs greatly from that of Kim Saryang’s. First, he criticizes that limiting one’s purview to the works of these two or three specific novelists (without including their legal names) in Japan, “These are not the only people bursting with the local characteristics of Chōsen, nor are they responsible for forming the mainstream of the Chōsen literary community.” His view of the situation is cynical, as he charges that merely by writing in Japanese they have increased their name recognition in Japan.¹⁹ He goes on to say that “I can name ten or twenty skillful writers,” praising Pak T’aewŏn in particular highly. However, where Kim Saryang appraised Pak T’aewŏn as a member of the school of pure art, Han Sik categorizes him a “writer of novels of manners” (*setai shōsetsuka*). Such writers—including also Ch’ae Mansikg and Kim Namch’ŏn—would “pen in detail the manners and human nature of Chōsen.” While Kim Saryang saw Pak T’aewŏn and Kim Namch’ŏn as holding different stances, Han Sik treated them as moving in the same direction, with respect to “happily seeking out manners and communities to write about.” Han goes on to evaluate Pak’s writing very highly:

The contents of his works are all about describing the consumerist side of urban life using a modernist sensibility. Even in his “Riverside Landscape” (*Kawabe fūkei*), which reaches the highest levels of accomplishment of the literary community—even in such a story, he is establishing his literary brand through earnestly observing the lives of people living alongside the river. Regardless,

18 Kim, 262.

19 Han Sik, “Chōsen bundan no kinkyō,” *Modan Nippon: Chōsen ban* (2009 [August, 1940]): 264.

he guilelessly depicts scenes of Chōsen life. As he does not ineloquently force in concepts, he gains favor with readers. One might say this writer is perhaps the most loyal realist of them all.²⁰

I want to focus on three points in this critical appraisal. First, by reading him through “urban” “consumption” using a “modernist sensibility,” he sees Pak T’aewŏn’s character as that of a man equipped with a *modan* sense. Second, the words “depict,” “observe,” and “realist” were all keywords for understanding prose literature in Japan since the Meiji period. Han Sik’s bandying them about attests to his sophisticated knowledge of Japanese literary criticism, and, considering that, we can see how much he esteems Pak T’aewŏn. That said, these words may well have been keywords for criticizing modern Korean literature at the time as well, and so I do not mean to overstate this point. Third, by calling him a “realist” who “does not ineloquently force in concepts,” Han reveals his critical stance toward the introduction of ideology into literary works. Such works would include, for example, a series of works depicting the events of the Nomonhan Incident in May 1939 which lauded the Kantō Army’s victory and emphasized the “appropriateness” of the army’s actions. Examples include stories by writers like Kusaba Sakae (*Noro kōchi* 1941), who participated in the battle directly, Higuchi Kōyō (*“Nomonhan jissen ki”* 1941), and Matsumura Kōjirō (*“Gekitai: Nomonhan kūchū jissenki”* 1942).²¹ In other words, Han’s critique is clearly aimed at a blatant and

20 Han, 264–265.

21 At the time, pulp was already running scarce. Even though printing paper was already being put under rationing restrictions, Kusaba Sakae’s *Noro Kōchi* (1941) was published with an additional “obi” book jacket advertisement. The obi read “Recommended by the Ministry of Education/Ministry of the Army, News Department/Kantō Army News Division,” and “This book is a record of Captain Kusaba’s blood and tears spilled in battle. It contains not a single shred of embellishment, not a line of exaggeration; it tells the truth word for word, every sentence giving an orderly account of what actually happened,” and “A priceless masterpiece that is, for soldiers, truly a lived version of *Instructions for the Battlefield*

intransigent national-policy literature (*kokusaku bungaku*). While not all contemporary literature written in Japan was cut of the same cloth, this type of literary work was produced in great numbers at the time. Thus, Han Sik's appraisal of Pak T'aewŏn's aversion to ideological content is stimulating, as it brings perspective to the contemporary political situation in a critical manner.

In his article, Han Sik does not actually introduce writers based on their own affiliations. Rather, he evaluates each author from his own point of view based on their individual characteristics. One could say that this makes his role as critic more reliable.

He writes of Kim Dongni from the 1940 edition: "A man rippling with an energetic passion appropriate to such a fresh face," while also passing judgement that "his works at the moment do not really display the same level of freshness." On Ch'oe Myŏngik, he writes that "unlike those who observe and depict daily life, he attempts to find rich veins of humanity even in the throes of a desperate living situation."²² Such comments attest to Han Sik's interest in apprehending his writers' attitudes and authorial intention.

As the above explanation makes clear, Kim Saryang and Han Sik brought very different values and perspectives to their readings of the *Modern Japan: Korea Editions*. The reason for their different interpretations may relate to their personal points of view or roles within the *Modern Japan: Korea Editions* themselves. But we must also acknowledge where their views coincide. Kim avers that Korean literature "in fact has not received all that much influence from Japanese literature." Han expresses the unfairness and oddity of the fact that a small number of writers in Japan who have pursued writing and publishing in the Japanese language are believed to represent Korean literature in its entirety. Both men stress an absolute distinction between Korea and Japanese (*naichi*)

[code of conduct issued to soldiers], and which, for civilians, obliterates rumors and misunderstandings." Kusaba Sakae, *Noro kōchi* (Japan: Masu shobō, 1941).

22 Han, 265.

literature. It is based upon this premise that the authors working in Korea were introduced to Japan, as the works by those authors themselves were translated to Japanese for publication.

With all of this in mind, what can we learn from the literary works included in the *Modern Japan: Korea Editions* themselves? Due to space constraints, I have chosen here to focus just on analyzing Pak T'aewŏn's "A Street Darkly" from the 1940 edition.²³ The work can be praised for simultaneously depicting two contrasting visions of modernity. Furthermore, its inclusion in the magazine attests to the editors' critical stance vis-à-vis the contemporary geo-political situation.

Analysis of Pak T'aewŏn's "A Street Darkly"

Pak T'aewŏn was born in Seoul in 1909. As a child, he read classic novels in Han'gŭl, and in his early teens read Maupassant in Japanese—he had a strong propensity for literature from a very young age. He also started writing very early, publishing "Young Lady" (*Onee-sama*) in *Chōsen Bundan* while enrolled at Kyōngsōng First Normal High School in 1926. He continued to publish several works in *Tōa Nippō* until 1930, when he traveled to Japan to study at the Hōsei University Preparatory school. There, he absorbed all manner of western arts through film and art and music. He also came into contact with Shiga Naoya's and Yokomitsu Riichi's literature. When he returned to Korea the following year, he took quite seriously to becoming a professional writer. His "A Day in the Life of Novelist Kubo" (*Shōsetsuka Kubo-shi no ichinichi*) is a technical work deploying Joyce's stream of consciousness and follows a young novelist as he leaves his house and spends a few hours walking around Seoul. It is considered a masterpiece of modernist fiction to this day. In his previously mentioned review, Han Sik calls Pak a writer "embarking on his jour-

23 Pak T'aewŏn, "Michi ha kuraki wo," *Modan Nippon: Chōsen ban* (2009 [August, 1940]): 266–280 [254–268].

ney as a fresh stylist.”²⁴ Han also praised another of his representative works, “Riverside Landscape,” for “earnestly observing the lives of people living alongside the river... guilelessly depicts scenes of Chōsen life.”

But what kind of prose work was “A Street Darkly”? According to Aikawa Takuya, “[the short story] has often been discussed as one of Pak T’aewŏn’s formal experimental works from the 1930s.”²⁵ It has been thus treated as a mere steppingstone for this technical writer on his way to greatness. Addressing “A Street Darkly” alone, Aikawa goes on to write about “how one perspective on everyday life in a colonial city is reproduced in literary form.”²⁶ His analysis clarifies Pak’s rhetorical “technique,” concretely examining how he realized his method, including looking at the visual characteristics of the shape of kanji and Han’gŭl characters, as well as aural aspects of the text as read aloud. This is just one example of the extent scholarship. However, my approach differs in that I concentrate on decoding what message was communicated by translating the story into Japanese and including it in the 1940 Korea Edition. Here follows a brief summary of the plot.

Twenty-year-old Hyangi (Kōi) is working in a café in Kyōngsōng under the Japanese name “Hanako.” When she was four, her father absconded with a mistress, and then her mother died from illness when she only thirteen. Hyangi now lives with a married man (simply called “the Man,” or *wotoko*, in the text), but recently has felt he has grown cold to her. One day, just as she is coming to the realization that their relationship must end, she receives an offer from a man planning to open a new café in KunsanKunsan. Hyangi decides to pull up stakes and departs Kyōngsōng without consulting with “the Man,” but while on the train she mulls over her past with him, ultimately betraying her new employer and returning to Geyongseong.

24 Han, 264.

25 Aikawa Takuya, “Higeki wo genzen saseru tekusuto he,” *Gengo jōhō kagaku*, 12 (March, 2014): 146.

26 Aikawa, 147.

Although a rather short story, it contains several important points.

First, although it was included in a *Modern Japan: Korea Edition*, it contains no shred of opportunistic pandering to the contemporary socio-political climate. It also lacks any elements of traditionalism or local culturalism that might trigger an orientalist reading by colonialist readers. The story takes the point of view of a single young woman and paints an assiduous picture of her internal world encompassing her fraught relationship with a married man. By concentrating the narrative on depicting her mental state and her heterosexual romantic desires, one finds little indication of the story's genesis in its specific location in Korea. Rather, it is a story with universal themes that could take place just about anywhere.

That said, that does not mean that the story is devoid of any originality or specificity. To prove this, we need only look to the textual representation of Kyōngsōng's "modern" form, and the skillfully composed modernity of the text itself.

Setting Hyangi's position as an employee of a Kyōngsōng café attests to Kyōngsōng's modern culture. This symbolically represents the unambiguous "modern" atmosphere of one small corner of the city, as can be seen in the lines, "For Hyangi, the glittering chandelier had lost its glow, and she could no longer hear the raucous sound of jazz from the electric phonograph." Hyangi herself is used to represent both the light and darkness of modernity, as in the following scene:

Feeling as if her whole emotional being was about to plunge into the shadowy depths of a bottomless abyss, Hyangi held herself together and brilliantly transformed into Hanako,

"Hah!" With a facile grin, "Yah just get sick of it all!" Her meek, pretty, little eyes completely transformed with affected hostility.

"Hey, baby, what's up with you tonight? What's got you so hot 'n bothered?" A portly man who said he worked in middle management at a bank or something like that fumbled his words and gestures, attempting to put on a kind of grandstanding air.

“Hah! I’d like to be with a good person, but there’s no one. That’s why I’m upset!” She spoke unthinkingly, “O-ho-ho, isn’t today payday? How ‘bout buying us a drink?” Without giving the fumbling man a chance to reply, she turned to the back room, crying “Hey, Hidé-chan. Bring some whiskey, you!” When the bottle arrived, she poured three, four glasses for herself before the customer, and then promptly collapsed onto him.²⁷

Hyangi expertly deploys her alter-ego “Hanako” to save her—temporarily—from the “shadowy depths of a bottomless abyss.” As Hanako, Hyangi becomes bold and loveable. As a female living in the entertainment district of the *modan* city of Kyōngsōng, Hanako fills the symbolic role of being *modan*. Yet, the use of the word “affected” and phrase “spoke unthinkingly” suggest that this is the result of an intentional performance based on dispassionate calculation. On the contrary, when Hyangi is not playing the role of Hanako, she is pressed upon by the misfortune of her upbringing and trying relationship with “the Man.” The gulf between Hyangi and Hanako speaks to the contrast between the light and shadows of the modern city. “A Street Darkly” makes that contrast plain.

If we only look at the basic outline and single interaction with the customer reproduced above, it may seem to be a commonplace popular novel merely depicting contemporary urban scenes. However, as mentioned above, Hyangi’s internal monologue occupies the better half of the text, vividly expressing her worries and evolving mental state. For this reason, it can be considered a narrative supported by psychologically-modern tendencies toward positivism or egoism—one which, in hindsight, has accurately captured the contemporary state of affairs.

In terms of style and perspective, while the bulk of the text is built around the elaboration of Hyangi’s mental state, the narrative is written in third-person perspective. Thus, the reader is not forced to follow her per-

27 Park, 275.

spective uncritically but can view her story from a critical distance. For example, the scene where “the Man” tells Hyangi that he has a wife and child contains the line, “However, the moment he heard her sobs, he naturally became flustered, as if it was a completely unexpected reaction.”²⁸ By using the pronouns “her” and “he” (words more distinct in the Japanese text than in English translation) for Hyangi and “the Man,” it is as if the characters become objects set on an empty stage for the objective observation of the reader. By occasionally deploying this type of simple and objective language, the author manipulates the reader’s distance to Hyangi’s perspective and creates a more complexly-textured narrative style overall.

Compositional innovations in various scenes throughout “A Street Darkly” contribute to its form as modern fiction. One of its compositional characteristics is repetition within the lives and actions of the characters. The skillful application of repeated motifs is a hallmark of much modern fiction. In “A Street Darkly,” two such motifs recur.

First, the relationship between Hyangi and “the Man” functions as a recurring motif. Hyangi recalls at one point when “the Man’s” wife tracked down the house where she was living with “the Man,” and how they quarreled over it:

She thought that with such a dull and homely woman, it was no wonder that she was not loved by her husband. But the woman said,

“...This godforsaken world is swamped with men—so why the hell do you go out of your way to go after a guy with a wife and child for fun?”

Recalling these words, Hyangi felt her chest growing tight.

These words... these were the same words that her mother had spit at her cheating father and the woman he had a relationship

28 Park, 271.

with.²⁹

This is the point in the story where Hyangi realizes that she now stands in the exact same position as the woman who robbed her of her father long ago. This is the repetition of the figure of an adulterous relationship between a man and a woman, and another woman hurt by the situation. At first, Hyangi thought that “the Man’s” wife was “uneducated” and calls her “dull” in the above quotation, and furthermore, she belittles her appearance and condescends to her elsewhere. By becoming aware of her own actions through their effects on such a woman, Hyangi’s revelation is even more powerful. As with the earlier discussion of contrasting aspects of the modern, the contrasts between these two characters are used effectively.

The second motif concerns the repeated description of Hyangi’s dream. The short story is comprised of fifteen sections, but the first and last are nearly identically written:

The street without lamps in the depths of night was dark, and the unending rain from the day left the alleyway an unavoidable mire of mud.

Her tattered shoes were filling with mud. Her head and shoulders were unprotected by an umbrella, and the rain, turned at some point to sleet, beat upon her and she began to shiver. Somewhere an amateurish organist was performing a hymn.

With hesitant footsteps, Hyangi pressed on into the darkness, even now a lump rising in her throat, on the verge of breaking into tears.

Biting back the lump in her throat, forcing back the tears...as if resigned to the fact that this is the only street for her to walk, or, as if thinking that even if there was another it wouldn’t make a difference, Hyangi continued to press on into the darkness, into the

29 Park, 274.

darkness...³⁰

At the beginning of the story, this is immediately followed by the next section. As Hyangi walks along the street at night she is overtaken by a funeral procession. As she watches it go on, a flame alights on the field right before her eyes and the blaze approaches her. She is frozen, and the procession from before emerges from the flames and moves in her direction. At this point, it is revealed that everything from the beginning of the story has been a dream, and the narrator goes on to describe “the Man” sleeping in the same bed with his back to her.

On the other hand, at the end of the story, section 14 describes as far as Hyangi boarding the train at Yeongdeungpo station to return to Kyōngsōng. The last line reads “The train which left Yeongdeungpo station at 11:40 arrived at Kyōngsōng station fifteen minutes later,” describing Hyangi’s movement in concrete and unadorned terms.³¹ It continues with section 15, repeating the “street without lamps in the depths of night was dark” dream, likely catching the reader off guard. Is this a description of Hyangi after disembarking at Kyōngsōng station, or is she destined to continue having this nightmare in perpetuity? The encounter with the funeral procession from the second section is not repeated, so there is a significant lacuna in the text.

Thus, we can conclude both that “A Street Darkly” represents Kyōngsōng’s “modern” appearance while being skillfully composed as a modern text. Its modern composition is particularly comparable to the author’s previous “A Day in the Life of Novelist Kubo” in its technical style and tricky composition. In addition, it also contains the lauded real-

30 Park, 266–267. This is the citation for the first section. The differences with section 15 are minor and grammatical: “*Nakidasan bakari no kokoro wo, jitto kuchi de kamishime nagara, soredemo Kōi ha jibun ni ha sono michi shika nai to kannen shite demo wiru ka no yao ni*” (section 1); “*Nakidasan bakari no kokoro wo jitto kuchi de kamishime nagara, Kōi ha soredemo, jibun ni ha sono michi shika nai to kannen shite demo wiru ka no yao ni*” (section 15).

31 Park, 280.

ism of “Riverside Landscape.” Pak T’aewŏn’s successful short story here thus can be seen as a unique amalgamation of these two aspects of his writing style.

Conclusion

The *Modern Japan: Korea Editions* published in 1939 and 1940 differed in their editorial processes and goals, but both operated as media within the Japanese empire and as conveyances of images of the modern to both the metropole and occupied Korea. The pure literature from and about Korea included therein—fiction in particular—appears at first blush a mismatch with the mass entertainment format of the magazine. It was described as free from any influence from Japanese literature and purported to offer a glimpse into a reality of the Japanese empire invisible to Japanese living in the metropole or native Japanese speakers. On this point, the inclusion of Korean literature in the two special editions stood to directly communicate the here-and-now of Korea at the time. This was in stark contrast to the articles responding to government calls for unification of Korea and Japan (*naisen ittai*), and articles on the classical Korean art and literature included in the 1940 edition, which set their objects at a great distance from the contemporary situation.

In analyzing the translated works in the two editions, I focused in this article on Pak T’aewŏn’s “A Street Darkly.” This short story’s symbolic elements and compositional techniques operate in tandem to create a rich text. Further investigation into literary works translated and included in the *Modern Japan: Korea Editions* will prove necessary for a more comprehensive evaluation of the magazine.

As I mentioned at the beginning of this paper, Hong Sŏnyŏng states that the purpose of publishing pure literature in this mass entertainment forum “was to inform Japanese readers about ‘Chōsen.’”³² However,

32 Hong, 63.

while this may have been the professed motivation for creating the *Korea Editions*, I argue that it served the deeper purpose of critique by making visible to readers a hidden side of imperial Japan. And furthermore, that the choice of texts and execution of the special editions was not done by the authors themselves, but by members of the literary community born in Korea and residing in the metropole at the time. In other words, the special editions reveal more about the compilers' attitudes toward people living in the Japanese homeland than to those in Korea itself.

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<Abstract>

The Politicality of *Modern Japan: Korea Editions' Use of Korean Literature*

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Translated by Joshua Lee Solomon

It is well known that the editor of *Modern Japan* (Modan Nippon), published by Bungei Shunju, was Ma Haesong, a native of the Korean peninsula. Although *Modern Japan* fell short of attaining the same level of popularity as Kōdansha's *King* (Kingu), it reached a broader range of readers than the rival modern magazine *New Youth* (Shin seinen), associated with the important writers Edogawa Ranpo and Yokomizo Seishi. Indeed, *Modern Japan* cultivated a profile somewhere between that of *King* and *New Youth*. However, perhaps due to its middling status, the magazine has yet to be the subject of a comprehensive study in any of the fields of literary, cultural, or publishing studies.

This paper looks specifically at two special extra editions of *Modern Japan*, called the *Korea Editions*, published in 1939 and 1940 respectively. These special editions contained a hybrid of both state propagandistic elements and editor Ma Haesong's perspective on his homeland. Although there is some extant research on the *Korea Editions* from several points of view, there is still room for a detailed analysis of how exactly Korean writers and literary works were introduced in their pages, and what type of literature was included. Specifically, this paper examines the literary criticism of Kim Saryang and Han Sik, clarifying their differing appraisals of the contemporary literary situation. Then, it analyzes the style and content of Pak T'aewŏn's short story, "A Street Darkly" (Michi ha kuraki wo). Through highlighting this combination of perspectives, I hope to illuminate the politicality of *Modern Japan* realized through a

rereading of the *Korea Editions*.

Keywords: *Modern Japan (Modan Nippon)*, “*modan*” (the modern), mass-entertainment magazine, modern fiction, Pak T’aewŏn, women in occupied Korea

〈국문초록〉

‘모던 닛폰’ 조선판에서 조선문학 이용의 정치성

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분게이 주사가 발행한 ‘모던 닛폰’의 편집자가 한반도 출신의 마해송이라는 사실은 잘 알려져 있다. 모던 닛폰은 코단샤의 ‘킹’과 동일한 인기를 누리진 못하였지만, 라이벌 근대잡지로서 에도가와 란포, 요코미조 세이시와 같은 주요 작가들과 협업하던 ‘신 세이넨’보다 더 넓은 독자층을 끌어모았다. 사실 ‘모던 닛폰’은 ‘킹’과 ‘신세이넨’ 사이의 인지도를 얻고 있었다. 하지만, 아마도 이 어중간한 위치 때문에, 이 잡지는 문학, 문화, 출판 분야의 어떤 연구에서도 포괄적인 연구의 대상이 되지 못하였다.

이 논고에서는 1939년과 1940년 출판되었던 ‘모단 닛폰’의 두 특별 호외, 곧 ‘조선판’에 주목하였다. 이 특별호들에는 국가의 프로파간다적 요소와 편집자 마해송의 고국에 대한 관점이 섞여 있다. 비록 다른 관점에서 ‘조선판’에 대한 연구가 진행된 바 있으나, 여전히 조선 작가와 문학 작품이 얼마나 정확하게 소개되었고, 어떤 종류의 문학이 포함되었는지 심도 있게 분석할 여지가 남아있다. 특히, 이 논고에서는 김사량과 한식의 문학 비평을 검토하여, 현대문학계에 대한 서로 다른 평가를 밝히고자 한다. 그런 다음, 박태원의 단편 ‘길은 어둡고’에 대한 형식과 내용을 분석하였다. 이러한 관점들을 조합함으로써, 필자는 ‘조선판’을 재독함으로써 구현된 ‘모던 닛폰’의 정치성을 조명하고자 한다.

주제어: ‘모던 닛폰’, “모단”, 대중문화 잡지, 근대 픽션, 박태원, 식민지 조선의 여성