

THE CULT OF RODIN: WORDS, PHOTOGRAPHS, AND
COLONIAL HISTORY IN THE SPREAD OF AUGUSTE RODIN'S
REPUTATION IN NORTHEAST ASIA

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Doctor of Philosophy

by
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The undersigned, appointed by the Dean of the Graduate School, have examined the dissertation entitled.

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NORTHEAST ASIA

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation explores the growth of Auguste Rodin's phenomenal acclaim in Northeast Asia, where he was introduced in the early 20th century, when China, Japan, and Korea were undergoing social, political, and cultural turmoil caused by colonial intrusions of the West, and became established, in large part, through pictures and textual accounts before actual works by the sculptor were exhibited. By carefully examining printed materials circulated in the three countries from the early 1900s to the first Rodin exhibition in Japan, Korea, and China held in 1966, 1985, and 1993, respectively, this study argues that wide dissemination of images and written accounts of the sculptor's works, fueled by each country's urge to emulate the culture of the West, created a powerful version of the Rodin myth in the Far East.

The first chapter examines the role of governmental patronage in the rapid expansion of Western art in Northeast Asian countries--as a crucial step for the understanding of the following chapters on Rodin's reception and reputation in the three countries, which was closely related to each country's response to the imported art. The second chapter considers how Rodin was presented in the written accounts published in the Far East, and the third chapter explores the contribution of photographic reproductions to the spread of the sculptor's reputation in the region. By focusing on the first major Rodin exhibition held in each of the three countries, the final chapter discusses how Northeast Asians responded to the Rodin myth established through printed materials.

Introduction: A Mythic Figure

“To watch crowds in Beijing, Tokyo, Shizuoka, or Seoul pressing around Rodin’s figures is to counter an intensity, a kind of amazement seldom encountered in the museums in Paris and Philadelphia.”¹ - Ruth Butler -

Auguste Rodin (1840-1917) vigorously sought official recognition and saw his dream being realized toward the end of the 19th century. Confirming the romantic notion of the artist-genius, many accounts of Rodin published in Europe and the United States after the mid-1880s depicted the sculptor as a distinct being who possessed mysterious power invigorating the soul and body of the viewer through his works, as stated in an article written by French novelist and critic Octave Mirbeau in 1885:

Each body ruthlessly obeys the passion that animates it, each muscle follows the soul’s impulse... Rodin fires us with his genius and makes us breathe the tragic vibrations of this atmosphere. Fear, anger, and despair light eyes, turn the mouths, twist the hands, and force heads forward on stretched necks... [H]e makes bronze, marble, and clay throb with great, strong life; he brings to life inert blocks, and with his hot panting breath makes movement flow in these dead objects...²

From the time of the great Monet/Rodin show of 1889, Rodin began to be discussed in reference to Michelangelo, and people soon “believed that on some near mystical level Rodin was in touch with all the sculpture that had ever

existed,” including Greek, Hindu, Persian, Assyrian, and Egyptian sculpture.³

With the success of his retrospective at the Paris Exposition Universelle of 1900, the artist-genius cult found its ready apostles across the world. In England, *St. John the Baptist* was acquired for the South Kensington Museum (now the Victoria and Albert Museum) in 1902, and the following year Rodin succeeded James McNeill Whistler as president of the International Society of Sculptors, Painters, and Gravers with his *Thinker* being installed in the central court of the society’s headquarters in London. Rodin was presented to King Edward VII in 1904, and the king visited the sculptor’s studio at Meudon in 1908.⁴

Among Europeans, German intellectuals responded to Rodin’s art most vigorously.⁵ In fall 1902, in his article published in a Berlin newspaper, noted philosopher Georg Simmel discussed Rodin in comparison with Friedrich Nietzsche, while poet Rainer Maria Rilke went to Paris to write a monograph on the master. Rilke published his first essay on Rodin the following year, and lectured on the sculptor in Prague, Weimar, Dresden, Bremen, and Hamburg between the fall of 1905 and the spring of 1906. Beginning in 1905 when Paul Clemens presented Rodin’s work as an alternative to that of the most prominent German sculptor of the time, Adolf von Hildebrand, who emphasized the single distant view from which a sculpture should be seen, the Hildebrand/Rodin

controversy became a hot topic for German art history, and Hildebrand himself joined the controversy in 1917.

Americans were eager collectors of Rodin's sculpture from the late 19th century, when George A. Lucas, Samuel P. Avery, and Arthur Jerome Eddy began collecting the sculptor's works, followed by Kate and John Simpson and Thomas Fortune Ryan in the first decades of the 20th century.⁶ In 1910 Daniel Chester French and the chairman of the Metropolitan Museum's Sculpture Committee visited Meudon to review the list of Rodin's works recommended by the museum's purchasing agent in Europe. Acquiring forty works by the sculptor, the museum opened the Rodin Gallery in 1912.⁷

By the beginning of the 20th century, Rodin had become fully recognized among his compatriots, who had previously responded rather reluctantly to the sculptor's reputation.⁸ Rodin became the recipient of the Légion d'Honneur from the French government in 1903. His *Thinker* attracted enormous attention by being exhibited in the center of the rotunda at the Salon of 1904 and by being installed in front of the Panthéon in 1906. *The Monument to Victor Hugo* was unveiled in the garden of the Palais-Royal in 1909, and in 1916 the French government voted to build a Rodin museum at the former residence of the sculptor in Paris.

It was also in the years following the 1900 Paris Exposition Universelle

that accounts of Rodin began to appear in Northeast Asia.⁹ Unlike in Europe, where his acclaim faded after the early 1920s and the sculptor not only slipped from critical discourse but also went out of fashion in the popular realm, notably among artists, by the end of the decade, Rodin's reputation increased rapidly in the Far East in the years following his introduction to the region. By the time young talents in modern art in Europe and America began to deny the importance of Rodin, *Lodanizumu* - Rodinism in Japanese - became a passion among most promising young artists in Japan. While Rodin's failure in the West as a public sculptor became evident, his art attained political significance in China, where his highly individual expressionism was adopted almost exclusively for public monuments in the country. In addition, Rodin's reputation began to rise in Korea as it started to decline in the West, and his style became a trend among young sculptors of the country by the late 1930s.

As in the West, many of the early accounts of Rodin published in Northeast Asia in the early 20th century emphasized Rodin the man and presented the sculptor as a sage, a philosopher, a model being, or even a revolutionist. Although he was introduced at different times and under different circumstances, and thus was received differently in China, Japan, and Korea, Rodin soon acquired a mythic stature in the three countries. A large number of books and articles on the sculptor were written or translated into

Northeast Asian languages, while his most renowned piece, *The Thinker*, was compared to *Seated Bodhisattva in Meditation*, a type of Buddhist sculpture treasured in the region. In 1959 the National Museum of Western Art, Tokyo, the largest Rodin collection in Japan, dedicated its forecourt to Rodin, installing *The Thinker*, *Burghers of Calais*, *The Gates of Hell*, *Adam*, and *Eve* in a manner reminiscent of the setting of the Musée Rodin in Paris. Museum exhibitions of the sculptor's works began to flourish in Japan in the mid-1960s, in Korea in the mid-1980s, and in China in the early 1990s, and these exhibitions were packed with visitors. In addition, the last decade of the 20th century saw the creation of two museums dedicated to Rodin in Korea and Japan, the only two non-Western countries that own casts of *The Gates of Hell*. Public interest in Rodin in China is a more recent phenomenon, but it is still intense. Several Rodin exhibitions have been held in the country since the first China tour of the sculptor's works in 1993, which attracted about 450,000 visitors, and at least three casts of *The Thinker*, all enlarged editions, are in public and corporate collections of the country.

Although his reputation in the West was fully revived by the early 1960s, Rodin exhibitions held at the major museums in Europe and North America in the second half of the 20th century seldom drew as much public attention as the first Rodin exhibitions in Northeast Asian countries. For example, an average number of daily visitors to the *Rodin Rediscovered* exhibition held at the National

Gallery in Washington D. C. in 1981, the most comprehensive Rodin show ever held on the globe, was less than one third of the number of people who saw the 1966 Rodin exhibition in Kyoto each day.¹⁰

Such a strong interest in Rodin as is found in Northeast Asia can hardly be detected in other non-Western cultures. Only a few sculptures by Rodin were exhibited in Singapore: *The Thinker* and *Eve* at a shopping center in 1985 as part of a fashion company's promotional campaign called "Vision de French," and *Iris* at the exhibition called "Origin of Modern Art in France, 1880-1939," held at the Singapore Art Museum in 1998. No major Rodin exhibitions have been held in Africa, India, the Middle East, and in Southeast Asian countries. Why is the sculptor's public acclaim so great in the Far East in the second half of the 20th century, even more than in Europe and America? Why not in the former Euramerican colonies, where cultural influence from the West must have been more direct than in Northeast Asia, as none of the three countries in the region were colonized by Western powers?

In Northeast Asia, other than a minor scandal about *The Kiss* in Japan and Korea, as will be discussed in chapter three, Rodin's sculptures seldom caused serious controversies, which had been a kind of prerequisite for innovative artists in the West. Furthermore, the sculptor's reputation in the region was established through images and written accounts of his works before his

sculptures themselves were exhibited in the region. On the other hand, accounts of Rodin flourished first in Japan almost two decades earlier than in the other two countries, with enthusiasm for the sculptor being most intense in that country. The earliest accounts of the sculptor in China and Korea appeared while Japan was expanding her colonial venture toward the two countries, and writers of those accounts were mostly artists and intellectuals who had studied in Japan. So, did Rodin's success in Northeast Asia have anything to do with the prolonged exposure to the sculptor's works in pictures and textual accounts? What was Japan's role in the formation of the Rodin myths in China and Korea?

Rodin's reception in Northeast Asia has received little scholarly attention either in Asia or the West. There was not much scholarly publication on the sculptor before the 1960s, and Rodin study in Europe and the United States, led by the late Albert Elsen, was greatly advanced in the latter part of the 20th century, as manifested in such exhibitions as *Rodin Inconnu* at the Louvre in 1962/1963, the Rodin show held at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1963, and the National Gallery exhibition of 1981. Attempting critical re-evaluations of the sculptor's art by emphasizing "the intrinsic merit of his sculpture," these exhibitions were successful in resuscitating Rodin's modernity.¹¹ However, the Western discourse on Rodin rarely expanded to his reception and reputation outside Europe and America.

Although books and articles on Rodin flourished in China and Korea, a majority of these publications have been either translations of European accounts or monographs focusing on Rodin's biography, written or edited by local scholars. Rodin's reception in Japan has been better documented with meticulously developed chronologies, from which this study has benefited considerably, and recent studies on the sculptor's influence on Japanese writers and artists affiliated with the *Shirakaba* magazine have enriched the understanding of his reception in the country. However, most, if not all, Rodin accounts published in Japanese emphasized the links between the sculptor and his Japanese followers or collectors, but seldom did they focus on the nature of the Rodin myth in Japan where it was established, in large part, through printed materials. Nor did they pay attention to Japan's own contribution to the formation of the myth in the neighboring countries.

On the other hand, Asian modern art has been explored in its relation to Western artistic principles in the context of social, political, and cultural turmoil caused by the colonial expansion of the West, and scholars like John Clark have aptly emphasized complexities, similarities, and differences in the development of modern art in various Asian countries.¹² Scholars of modern Asian art, however, rarely focused their attention on the influence of individual artists from the West on the development of modern art in Asian countries. Furthermore, in

the study of Asian modern art, Korea, in spite of its cultural, political, and geographical significance in the region, received far less attention than its more powerful neighbors.

With an aim to expand the discourses on Rodin and on modern art in Asia and the West, this study will investigate the growth of the sculptor's reputation in the Far East in the context of colonial history of the region. By focusing on printed materials circulated in Japan, Korea, and China from the beginning of the 20th century to the first Rodin exhibition of each country, 1966, 1985, and 1993, respectively, the present study will cast light on the role of images and textual accounts in the experience of artworks, which will suggest some clues to the understanding of the crowds-thronging international art exhibitions of the recent decades. Being a case study on the impacts of colonialism on the establishment of Western art and artists in Northeast Asia, this research will also be of use to those who study colonialism and East Asian modern history.

The first chapter examines the role of state patronage in the rapid spread and establishment of Western art in Northeast Asia from the late 19th century to the early 20th century. Providing necessary background for the following chapters on Rodin's receptions in China, Japan, and Korea, which were closely related to each country's response to Western art in the decades preceding the

sculptor's introduction, this chapter shows how government-initiated art education, official salons, and heroic monuments precipitated the acceptance of Western art in the three countries. Although this chapter focuses on the decades preceding Rodin's introduction to the region, the discussion of monument mania in the three countries stretches into the late 20th century since each country witnessed the phenomenon at different times.

The second chapter explores how Rodin was presented in the written accounts published in Northeast Asian countries. The first three sections are devoted to local accounts written by a small number of social, intellectual, and artistic elites who were at the forefront in disseminating Rodin's reputation in the three countries. The fourth section discusses how much the Rodin myth in the Far East owed to the myth established in Europe and America, focusing on three of the most widely read books on the sculptor in the region, all translated from Western European languages.

The third chapter considers the role of photographic reproductions in the growth of Rodin's reputation in Northeast Asia, examining several of the most likely sources through which the images of his works were disseminated in the region. The first section examines the pictures of Rodin's works that appeared in books, magazines, and newspapers, while the other two sections discuss the impact of art textbooks and exhibitions featuring photographs of Western art on

the development of the sculptor's reputation in the region. However, the section on the photograph exhibitions focuses primarily on Japan and Korea since it is undetermined whether such exhibitions were held in China.

The final chapter examines how Northeast Asians responded to the Rodin myths formed through pictures and textual accounts, when the first Rodin exhibitions were held in China, Japan, and Korea. This will be done by examining such materials as press reviews, visitors' interviews, audience figures, and promotional activities related to those exhibitions.

This study does not include Taiwan and North Korea. For a clearer understanding of the spread of Rodin's reputation in the Far East, research on the development of modern sculpture in North Korea is a must, since interest in Rodinian emphasis on expressive surfaces is evident in the works of North Korean sculptors who studied Western-style sculptures in Japan or in the South before the late 1940s and went to the North to become influential artists and educators there. However, due to the difficulty in gaining access to the North, discussion of Rodin's influence on North Korean modern sculpture was excluded from the present study.

Accounts of Rodin's reception in Taiwan would allow a richer understanding of the sculptor's acclaim in Northeast Asia since Taiwanese modern history has evolved closely with China, Japan, and Korea. The majority

of Taiwan's population is Chinese, while it was a Japanese colony for 50 years. Taiwan became independent from Japan in 1945, the same year that Korea became an independent state, and achieved, like Korea, dramatic economic growth during the second half of the 20th century. Taiwanese response to Rodin is not included in this study due purely to the limitation of time and resources for more in-depth research.

Quotations in Chinese, French, Japanese, and Korean are translated into English in the text. In the case of a French passage of more than a line in length, the original text is found in footnotes. All translations, unless they are quoted from the sources published in English, are my own, and Asian names follow Asian order, last name first and given name second.

¹ Ruth Butler, "A Musée Rodin for Korea," in *The Rodin Museum, Seoul*, Kevin Kennon (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2001), 28.

² Octave Mirbeau, "Chronique Parisiennes," *La France*, February 18, 1885, in *Rodin in Perspective*, ed. Ruth Butler (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1980), 48.

³ Ruth Butler, ed., *Rodin in Perspective*, 15.

⁴ For Rodin's reputation in Britain, see chapter 29 in *Rodin: The Shape of Genius*, Ruth Butler (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993), Joy Newton, "Rodin is a British Institution," *Burlington Magazine* 136 (December 1994), 822-27, and Claudine Mitchell, ed., *Rodin: The Zola of*

Sculpture (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2004).

⁵ For German responses to Rodin, see Ruth Butler, ed., *Rodin in Perspective*, 20-22, and Claude Keisch, "Rodin im Wilhelminischen Deutschland: Seine Anhänger und Gegner in Leipzig und Berlin," *Forschungen und Berichte* (1990), 251-301.

⁶ Regarding Rodin's reputation in America, see Ilene Susan Fort, "The Cult of Rodin and the Birth of Modernism in America," in *The Figure in American Sculpture: A Question of Modernity* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1995) and Ruth Butler, "Rodin and His American Collectors," in *The Documented Image: Visions in Art History*, ed. Gabriel P. Weisberg and Laurinda S. Dixon (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1987), 87-110. Also see Paul Kruty, "Arthur Jerome Eddy and His Collection: Prelude and Postscript to the Amory Show," *Art Magazine* 61 (February 1987), 40-47.

⁷ Ruth Butler, *Rodin: The Shape of Genius*, 414-16.

⁸ For Rodin's reception in France, see Ruth Butler, *Rodin: The Shape of Genius* and *Rodin in Perspective*.

⁹ China, Japan, and Korea joined world exposition culture by the late 19th century, and it is possible that Northeast Asian visitors to Chicago's World Columbian Exposition of 1893 heard about the scandals surrounding Rodin's *Kiss* and *Paolo and Francesca* which were on view at the exposition. However, no published account of the controversy has been uncovered in the region yet.

¹⁰ The Kyoto exhibition attracted 10,465 people per day, while about 3,430 people visited the National Gallery show each day. For audience figures of these two exhibitions, see the National Gallery's official website, www.nga.gov/past/data/exh467.shtm. and *Yomiuri*, 31 October 1966.

¹¹ Albert Elsen, *Rodin* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1963), 11.

¹² See John Clark, *Modernity in Asian Art* (Sydney: Wild Peony, 1993) and *Modern Asian Art* (Sydney: Craftman House, 1998).

1. Art in the Age of Colonialism: Government Patronage of Western Art

Northeast Asia had some early contacts with Western art before the late 19th century. Works of art brought by traders and missionaries stimulated interest in Western realism and perspective techniques among artists of the region as early as the 16th century. In the 18th and 19th century, Japanese artists in Nagasaki painted in the style of Dutch still-life, while Korean artists produced icon paintings and sculptures for Catholic churches.¹ The so-called “China trade painting,” Western-style portraits and landscapes intended for foreign merchants, flourished around Guangzhou, which opened to European traders in 1759.² In addition, a number of Chinese painters trained by Jesuit priests at Tushanwan Art and Craft Center in the outskirts of Shanghai produced icon paintings for churches and schools from the mid-19th century.³

The impact of Western-style art practiced at the treaty ports or taught by missionaries, however, was not even remotely close to what merely a few decades of governmental support for Western-style art since the late 19th century brought to the art world of the region; the “wholesale restructuring,” as John Clark puts it, “of an institutional art world around Euramerican systems for producing artworks, for training their producers, for distributing them, and for developing codes of critical interpretations.”⁴

The official introduction of Western art in Northeast Asian countries began in conjunction with social reforms bolstering modernization that the three countries waged in an effort to deal with colonial intrusions of the West in the decades immediately preceding Rodin's introduction to each country. The sculptor's receptions in China, Japan, and Korea owed a great deal to the state patronage of Western art and were greatly affected by each country's response to the imported art. Thus, this chapter discusses the role of each government in the establishment of Western art in Northeast Asian countries between the late 19th and early 20th century. While providing cultural, historical, and social backgrounds for Rodin's reception in the Far East, this chapter will address several questions on which discussions in the following chapters are grounded: What were the driving forces behind the massive importation of Western art in Northeast Asia? How did the "wholesale restructuring" of the art world of the region happen? What would have happened to Rodin's reception in the Far East, if Western art had not received official support in the region? If Rodin was a Korean or an Indonesian, would he have still been pursued as enthusiastically by Northeast Asians?

Official Introduction of Western Art

By the mid-19th century, all three countries in the Far East felt the necessity for modernization and industrialization in order to have the power to confront foreign intrusions. Japan was the first among the three countries to officially

open to the West. Witnessing her neighbors becoming ever more helpless to repel Western aggressions, especially China after the defeat in the Opium War in 1842, Japan knew resistance would be futile. Opening herself to American Commodore Matthew G. Perry's warships in 1854, Japan abolished the shogunate to be united under a strong sovereign able to resist possible invasions and hastily began industrializing the country to gain power equal to the enemy. To facilitate industrial development modeled on the West, the Meiji government waged dramatic social reforms, referring to France for military and legal systems, England for navy and engineering, Germany and America for education, and Italy for art. The old class system of the Tokugawa period was abolished, private ownership of the land legalized, and compulsory education and conscription law implemented.⁵

Trading ships from the West flocked into Japanese harbors, and residences, offices, and entertainment facilities for foreign merchants and diplomats sprouted up around the ports, while Western goods and ideas poured into Japanese life. Western culture was celebrated and promoted by Meiji leaders who fashioned themselves on the model of political leaders of the West. This can be seen in an *ukiyo-e* depicting the promulgation of the constitution on February 11 of 1889, in which the Meiji emperor and his cabinet members wore military uniforms in the Western style, while the empress and her ladies were in

Victorian-style dresses (fig. 1).

Believing that Western achievements in science and technology derived from education, the Meiji government brought in foreign advisors and educators and sent Japanese officials and students to Europe and America to learn the educational system of the West. Denouncing classical education for being prone to “impractical theories and useless discussions,” the government proclaimed a new education act in 1872, which aimed “to help citizens to attain personal success, to acquire job skills, and to gain ability managing one’s property.”⁶ According to the act, Japanese schools were required to adopt a new curriculum including subjects taught at schools in Europe and America such as science, mathematics, geography, history, and art.

Korea and China followed Japan’s lead when Japan, whose frenetic Westernization of a few decades had turned her into the most industrialized country in Asia by the end of the 19th century, became even more threatening than the colonial powers from the West added together. With the outbreak of the first Sino-Japanese War in which Chinese and Japanese armies collided in Korea over the dominion of the peninsula, voices for strengthening national power through industrialization gained support within the courts of China and Korea. Both countries soon implemented social reforms toward modernization, modeled largely on Japan. As Japan modernized herself based on Western

models after the forced opening to the West, Japan's crushing defeat of China in 1895 made her a model to emulate for China and Korea.

In 1894, King Gojong of Korea proclaimed Kabo Reform, the first official attempt at modernization in the country, when Japan's political ambition in the peninsula became more evident. As in other parts of the reform, Japanese advisors were appointed to help formulate the Education Act of 1895, which required schools in Korea to adopt a new curriculum consisting of subjects similar to those taught in Japanese schools. Japanese teachers were brought in to teach newly introduced subjects, while Japanese schoolbooks were used with approval from the Ministry of Education in Korea until the ministry published its own textbooks for the new curriculum.

Japanese influence on modern education in China was not as powerful as in Korea, yet still significant. By the last decade of the 19th century, Chinese leaders such as Li Hongzhang, Zhang Zhidong, Kang Youwei, Liang Qichao, and Huang Zunxian voiced the necessity for modernization of the country, presenting Japan as a successful model. Huang Zunxian introduced his countrymen to the success story of Japanese modernization under the Meiji emperor in his *Treaties on Japan* in 1890. In his famous book, *Exhortation of Study*, first published in 1898 and widely read in the first decades of the 20th century, Zhang Zhidong urged Chinese students to go to Japan to learn the new

technology from the West by arguing that it was easier for Chinese to learn from Japan since the country had already localized the Western culture, modifying irrelevant elements of foreign practice.⁷

The number of Chinese students in Japanese schools dramatically increased after 1896, the year following China's defeat by Japan, and a large number of Japanese books were translated into Chinese.⁸ According to a survey done by a team of Chinese and Japanese scholars, 2,602 Japanese books, including a number of books on Western art, were translated into Chinese between 1896 and 1937.⁹ Another study shows that 60 percent of 1,270 foreign books translated into Chinese between 1901 and 1904 were translations of Japanese books.¹⁰ The actual percentage should be higher, since a large proportion of the Western books were translated into Chinese from Japanese translations.

Meanwhile, the Qing court accepted Zhang Zhedong's proposals for educational reform largely modeled on the Japanese school system in 1902, and Chinese schools began to teach subjects taught at schools in Japan and in the West, including art and science. To teach these newly introduced subjects, China also brought in Japanese teachers to teach in schools across the country, with the number reaching 461 by 1909.¹¹

Japanese influence is evident in early schoolbooks on art published in

China and Korea. Before being introduced to the school curriculum in Japan in 1872, Western-style drawing had been taught in the country at the Institute for the Investigation of Western Books belonging to the astronomical observatory of the Tokugawa shogunate and later at a military school as a subject complimentary to science. In 1871, a drawing instructor of the cadet school, Kawakami Togai (1827-1881) who was educated at the Institute for the Investigation of Western Books, compiled *Seiga Shinan* (Western Drawing Instruction), the first Western-style drawing book for Japanese schools.¹²

An edited translation of Robert Scottborn's *The Illustrated Drawing Book*, published in England in 1857, and of various Dutch drawing manuals, *Seiga Shinan* reflected the contemporary trend in art education of the West, where schoolbooks on art were based on the Pestalozzian drawing method developed in Prussia at the beginning of the 19th century. Grounded in the belief that the accurate rendering of geometric forms would cultivate children's rational thinking and thus facilitate their learning, the Pestalozzian method consisted of a series of exercises which starts with drawing straight lines, curves, and angles and advances to more complex outline drawings of tools and instruments, which are made up of those geometric elements, based on perspective techniques.¹³

Aiming to develop copying skill, *Seiga Shinan* and other art textbooks published in Japan in the 1870s such as *Zuho Gaidei*, (Introduction to Drawing),

Shogaku Zugakusho (Elementary School Drawing Book), and *Shogaku Futsu Zugakusho* (Elementary School Common Drawing Book) begin with simple line drawings as in Pestalozzi's *ABC der Anschauung* first published in 1803. These books gradually advance to more complex drawings of utilitarian objects such as bottles, bowls, furniture, ships, and architecture and then to flowers and figures in the more advanced level.

The first drawing books used in Korean schools were imported from Japan until the Korean Ministry of Education published four volumes of *Dohwa Imbon* (Drawing and Painting Model Book) in 1907-8, which were the most widely used drawing books in schools of the country for next fifteen years.¹⁴ Although designed for brush drawings, *Dohwa Imbon* still put an emphasis on the neat and accurate rendering of geometric forms. Starting with simple outline drawings of basic geometric forms, each volume moves to drawing more complex tools, containers of various kinds, and then to drawings of plants, animals, and human figures in the higher levels. Japanese influence on the first Korean drawing books was evident not only in the design of the book, but also in the fact that some of the images included in *Dohwa Imbon* were taken directly from *Mohitsu Dehon* (Brush Drawing Handbook) published in Japan in 1904-5, as Park Huirak pointed out in his study on the history of art education in Korea.¹⁵

A number of drawing manuals for Chinese schools were published in the

years following the education reform of 1902. Judging from *Heiban Tuhua Jiaokeshu* (Blackboard Drawing Textbook) published in 1907 by Shangwu Inshuguan, Chinese drawing books from the first years of the 20th century were not very different from those of Japan and Korea. Although it was intended for advanced students who finished their elementary education, *Heiban Tuhua* still begins with mechanical drawings of tools and instruments based on geometric forms and consists exclusively of outline drawings that students could copy on paper or on the blackboard, as the title of the book suggests (fig. 2).

Intended to develop copying skills, art education in Northeast Asia between the late 19th and the early 20th century showed little concern for individual artistic expression. However, introduction of Western-style drawing classes to the school curriculum of the region had a powerful impact on the rapid acceptance of Western art and on the development of modern art in Northeast Asian countries, by creating a demand for art teachers, which, in turn, stimulated the blooming of higher education in art. As the number of art schools increased, art exhibitions dramatically increased in the Far East, as will be seen in the following section.

On the other hand, Northeast Asians had become familiar with the Western mode of representation based on perspective techniques because such an approach had been taught for some time, when Rodin was introduced to

Japan, China, and Korea. In fact, those who promoted Rodin and other Western artists in the three countries were mostly educated under the new school system which included Western-style drawing classes, as will be discussed in the next chapter on the sculptor's reception among a new generation of artists and intellectuals in the Far East.

State Art Schools and Official Salons

In the first decades of the 20th century, Western-style art expanded rapidly in Japan and China, while it received less attention in Korea, which was undergoing a severe political struggle against Japanese control. The Japanese and Chinese governments promoted Western-style art by founding state art schools and by sponsoring national art exhibitions. Although no college level art schools were founded in Korea during the colonial period (1910-45), a national salon sponsored by the colonial government was held annually from 1922.

Again, Japan was the first country in Northeast Asia to initiate government-supported higher education in art. Beginning with Kofu Art School in 1876, several state art schools such as Kyoto Prefecture Painting School, Kyoto Municipal Special School of Painting, and Tokyo Art School (now Tokyo

National University of Fine Arts and Music) were founded by the last decades of the 19th century.

Among those earlier art schools, Kofu Art School and Tokyo Art School, although founded for completely different purposes, had the most significant impact on the establishment of Western art in Japan. Kofu Art School, the first college level art school in the country, was founded as a sister institution of an engineering school under the auspices of the Ministry of Industry (Kofu) to support industrial technologies by fostering exact rendering skills.¹⁶ Consisting of three Italian teachers, painter Antonio Fontaneisi, sculptor Vincenzo Ragusa, and architect Vincenzo Cappelletti selected through national competitions the Italian government held on behalf of the Japanese government, the state art school was intended to teach only Western art. On the other hand, founded in 1889 when the traditional revival movement against frenetic Westernization swept the art world of the country, Tokyo Art School aimed to promote traditional art and crafts. Accordingly, the curriculum of the school was centered on mastery of traditional artistic principles by copying various styles of ancient Japanese arts and on general knowledge of Japanese history and literature.

In spite of its short life of seven years, Kofu Art School produced the first generation of Western-style artists in Japan who transmitted European academic

tradition by teaching at important art schools or by leading the hero monument boom of the late Meiji period. On the other hand, Tokyo Art School, which added Western-style painting program in 1896 and Western-style sculpture in 1899, had more lasting impact on the development of Western-style art, not only in Japan but in the neighboring countries, becoming the East Asian center for learning new artistic principles from the West during the first half of the 20th century.

The Japanese notion of art as technology required for industrial development, or as lucrative export items, began to change by the turn of the century. The Ministry of Education took charge of art-related administration, which had been under the auspice of the Ministry of Industry, and organized the first Ministry of Education Exhibition (*Bunten*) in 1907. Held at the exposition hall in Ueno Park, the most visited entertainment center of Tokyo, the juried exhibition modeled on French Salons received great public attention, and the number of visitors to the exhibition reached 120,000 in 1912 and 230,000 in 1916.¹⁷

The Japanese salon provided artists opportunities to exhibit and sell their works and to gain official recognition through prizes, while facilitating the development of art criticism on modern art by being widely reviewed by newspapers and magazines. At the same time, being well represented by Western-style paintings, which outnumbered traditional paintings by 2,487 to

2,157 in 1927, and by 3398 to 1845 in 1934, the Japanese salon also greatly contributed to the acceptance of Western art in the country.¹⁸

A count of visitors to various art exhibitions held in Ueno Park in 1925 shows that Western art was well received in Japan which, by then, had a well-developed art world in which about 50 art magazines were in print and about 70 art exhibitions a year were held in its capital.¹⁹ According to the survey, exhibitions consisting solely of Western art received more public attention than exhibitions of works by Japanese artists. The Japanese Art Academy exhibition was visited by an average of 517 people per hour and the more liberal Nikakai Exhibition by 390, while 970 people per hour visited the Modern French Art Exhibition.²⁰

In China, higher education in art began in the years following the education reform in 1902. In order to train art teachers for primary and secondary schools, a number of teachers colleges opened art departments consisting of *guohua* (National painting) and *xihua* (Western painting) by the end of the decade. In the 1910s China saw a proliferation of professional art schools independent from teachers colleges, while Western-style art being expanded rapidly in the country by being taught in these newly founded art schools.

The change in Chinese attitudes toward art education was indebted, above all, to Cai Yuanpei (1868-1940), a Confucian scholar of the late Qing court

who went to Germany in 1907 at the age of 39 to study philosophy and aesthetics until 1912. Being appointed as the first minister of education of the Republic founded after the revolution of 1911, Cai published his *Aims of Education* in 1912, proposing his plan for an education based on five principles; military, utilitarian, moral, aesthetic, and world-view.

With his belief that people could reach “a lofty universal point of view which is valid without regard to space or time” through aesthetic experience, which is “a bridge between the phenomenal world and the world of reality,” Cai proposed, in the *Aims of Education*, that Chinese educators assign 25 percent of their educational effort to aesthetic education.²¹ Although he faced opposing opinions that the plan would not solve China’s urgent problems, Cai’s rather idealistic educational policy took hold among Chinese educators and was approved at the national education congress in July 1912.

Inspired by Cai, a number of young Chinese went abroad to study art, while revolutionist leaders and intellectuals took up his view on art, actively promoting art to enlighten the Chinese population. In addition, the country founded several important art schools such as National Academy of Art, Beijing, (the former Central Academy of Fine Arts), Nanjing Academy of Fine Arts, Shanghai College of Fine Arts, and the National Academy of Art, Hangzhou, in the 1910s and 1920s.

By the time Cai's vision had a powerful appeal for Chinese educators, intellectuals, and students, China was turning to the West in search for a new model for her modernization. Although Japan had been her mentor for the development of Western-style art, the rapid establishment of Western art in China actually owed a great deal to anti-Japanese sentiment, which prevailed in Chinese society into the late 1910s. As Japan's intrusions into China became more aggressive in the 1910s, the Chinese urge for learning about the West through Japan waned. While the number of Chinese students in Japanese schools dramatically decreased, the number in schools in Europe and America soared.

As the number of art schools increased and more Chinese artists returned after their study abroad, exhibitions of Western-style art and publications of the foreign art dramatically increased. By the end of the 1920s, Western-style art had attained a significant standing in the Chinese art world. About 400 works in Western style, predominantly painting, were exhibited at the first National Art Exhibition (*Meizhan*) of 1929 along side 1,231 traditional paintings and calligraphies.²²

In contrast to its rapid expansion in China and Japan, Western art did not receive much attention in Korea in the first two decades of the 20th century. Reduced to a Japanese protectorate in 1905 and to a colony in 1910, "Korean

peninsula (was) turning into a military base, where all kinds of prohibition laws (oppressed) extremely the people's freedom," as a Japanese reporter in Korea observed in the early 1910s.²³ The native language was banned from being used in schools, while local newspapers were forced out of print. To prevent the urge for independence from being spread among local populations, public lectures, speeches, and political gatherings were prohibited. Furthermore, to communicate its terrifying authority to the natives, the colonial government required Japanese officials in the colony, including elementary school teachers, to wear military uniforms and Japanese swords.

In the 1920s, Japan's colonial policy in Korea became somewhat milder after the nation-wide uprisings against Japanese rule in 1919, which resulted in several thousand deaths and many more injuries. Under the so-called "Cultural Policy" which lasted for about a decade before Japan's colonial rule became harsh again in the 1930s, the native language was allowed in schools, while a few newspapers and magazines were published under the condition of government inspection of pre-published galleys. On the other hand, the colonial government organized the annual Chosun Art Exhibition (*Mijon*), modeled on the Japanese salon, in 1922.²⁴ About the intention of the exhibition, Mizuno Rentaro, who had served as Resident-General of Government Affairs at the colonial government since 1919, said:

...At that time, after the uprisings, Korean people's hearts were so wild that we planned *The Art Exhibition of Chosun Colonial Government* as a means to pacify them by fostering artistic thinking... Koreans are the people who are really interested in politics and justice. It seems like they have no other hobbies or leisure but political discussions. When I visited a normal high school (in Korea) a while ago, I asked a class of fourth-year students what they wanted to be when they grew up. Almost all the students in the class answered that they wanted to study law or politics... Koreans are the people who like politics that much. ²⁵

Although intended to pacify 'wild hearts' of the colonial population after the March 1st Independence Movement, *Mijon* did not seem to have attracted a large local audience. The average number of visitors to *Mijon* was significantly smaller than that of the official salon in Japan.²⁶ And a large proportion of the visitors were likely to be Japanese, given that *Mijon* was more of a venue for Japanese artists residing in Korea, who constituted about two-thirds of the exhibitors, than Korean artists, and the number of Japanese citizens residing in the colony had already reached several hundred thousand by the mid-1920s.

Two exhibitions held several months before the opening of the first *Mijon* show vividly Koreans' sentiment toward exhibitions related to the colonial government. Held at the end of 1921, the two exhibitions of Photographic Reproductions of Western Art were organized by the same person, for the same purpose, and held a week apart from each other in two different locations within the same block in the center of Seoul. But the first exhibition was reported to

have failed “due to its location,” while the other was successful for reasons unmentioned.²⁷

In fact, the organizer of both exhibitions, Yanagi Soetsu, was one of the few Japanese respected among Koreans at the time. With his passion for Korean art and craft, Yanagi organized various exhibitions, concerts, and lectures to raise funds for the Korean National Museum, while criticizing Japan’s harsh colonial policy. Reports on Yanagi appearing in Korean newspapers in the 1920s and 1930s were always favorable, and other exhibitions organized by Yanagi were well visited by Koreans. Thus, it is unlikely that Koreans refused to visit the first exhibition just because it was organized by a Japanese person, a reason that Yanagi himself seems to have assumed when urging Koreans to visit the second exhibition by saying, “Do not hesitate to go and see the exhibition, just because it is organized by a Japanese. We are your friends.”²⁸ Instead, the first exhibition was most likely to have failed to attract Koreans because of its location, an exhibition hall at the headquarters of the *Kyung-sung Daily Newspaper*, an official newspaper of the colonial government. The second exhibition, meanwhile, was held at Bosung High Normal School, a Korean school, and well visited by Koreans.

In spite of public sentiment toward exhibitions related to the colonial government, *Mijon* played a significant role in the development of modern art in

Korea. For Korean artists, especially for those of the Western style, *Mijon* was a rare venue to exhibit and sell their works and to gain recognition by winning a prize. For the interested public, however small the group may have been, *Mijon* was almost the only chance to see a large number of artworks in one place, since Korea had few art galleries and museums in the early decades of the 20th century. At the same time, *Mijon* had a great contribution to the acceptance of Western-style art in the country where it was still new to the local population. Beginning with 79 works selected for display at the first *Mijon*, Western-style paintings soon outnumbered 'Oriental paintings.'²⁹ In 1926 with 128 entries, Western-style paintings represented exactly double the number of traditional paintings and calligraphies. The gap became even wider in the 1930s. With 254 entries, Western-style paintings dominated the exhibition in 1932, while only 56 Oriental paintings were shown.³⁰ The dominance of Western-style painting is more significant in the submissions for the juried exhibition. The average number of submissions for the Western painting section was 612 at the 23 *Mijons*, while only 125 were Oriental paintings.³¹

The proportion of Western-style painting in Korean *Mijon* was significantly higher than in national salons in Japan and China. Although Western-style paintings outnumbered traditional paintings in the Japanese salons in the 1920s and 1930s, Japanese paintings continued to be more than half

of the number of Western-style paintings. On the other hand, Western-style paintings remained at less than 50 percent of traditional paintings and calligraphies at Chinese *Meizhans*. Furthermore, the Chinese *Meizhan* began with seven different categories and increased to eleven, including prints, New Year pictures, watercolors, and cartoons by 1955 and each category was represented by a substantial number of works. Thus, Western-style paintings at *Meizhan* were less significant than in Korean *Mijon*, which began with five categories and later reduced to three, or in Japanese *Bunten*, which began with three sections, while craft and photography were added later on.

Although dominated by Western-style paintings, the official exhibition in Korea was unlikely to have intended to promote more Western-style painting than Oriental painting. In fact, a greater percentage of traditional paintings was selected for display than Western-style paintings: an average of 38 percent of Oriental paintings were selected for display, while only 23 percent of Western paintings were chosen. The dominance of Western-style art at *Mijon* was more likely due to the fact that the majority of Japanese artists resident in Korea were Western-style painters. Since the market for modern art was still small and teaching positions were more competitive at home, a number of Western-style painters in Japan came to the colony to get jobs as art teachers. For these Japanese artists, other than *Mijon*, there were almost no chances to sell and

exhibit their works in Korea, which lacked an infrastructure for modern art during the colonial period.

In the years following the introduction of Western-style drawing class into the school curriculum, state-supported higher education in art expanded rapidly in Japan and China, and both governments founded a number of art departments or art schools. By the time graduates of these schools needed venues to exhibit their works, governments of the two countries had begun sponsoring national exhibitions, which greatly contributed to the spread and establishment of Western-style art in both countries. Unlike in the neighboring countries, higher education in art did not begin in Korea in the early 20th century, and Korean students went to Japanese art schools for professional training.³² Some of these artists became leading figures in Korean modern art, gaining recognition at official salons in Korea and Japan and teaching at burgeoning art departments of Korean universities from the late 1940s.

Rodin was introduced to Northeast Asian countries a few years to a decade earlier than the opening of national exhibition in each country, and his followers in the Far East gained reputations through official salons which began to be held annually in Japan, Korea, and China in 1907, 1922, and 1929, respectively. Many close progeny of Rodin's major works were exhibited in Japanese salons from the 1910s, and Rodinian expressionism became a dominant

style in the Korean national salon in the late 1930s. On the other hand, the sculptor's works were included in survey books on Western art in China and Japan, where higher education on art began earlier than in Korea. Early modern artists in Korea, mostly educated in Japan, had easy access to those published in Japan.

Western-style sculpture was not incorporated into the primary and secondary school curriculum of Northeast Asian countries and constituted a significantly smaller portion of official salons in the three countries than Western-style painting. However, Western-style sculpture received another form of powerful support from each government, commissions for heroic monuments, which had a tremendous impact on the establishment of the foreign-style sculpture in the Far East.

Monument Mania

The impact of colonial intrusions of the West in Northeast Asia was too broad and too powerful to be measured or defined with certainty, but there is little doubt that one of its most disastrous offsprings in the region was the awakening of nationalism, which reached its peaks in different forms and at different moments in China, Japan, and Korea. Like many nation states such as

the Third Republic of France and German Second Empire, each of the three countries went through a period of statuomania that constitutes, as Eric Hobsbawm argues, the “invented traditions state elites intent on controlling rapid social change and managing the influx of enfranchised citizens into the political arena.”³³

As in any culture, Northeast Asians had their own ways of expressing national pride, hopes, and anxiety in tangible forms. Their heroes were commemorated in the form of gates, plaques, shrines, or memorial stones but seldom as freestanding figures nor as equestrian monuments before the late 19th century. Japan, again, was the first country in Northeast Asia that was swept by monument mania. Begun only two years earlier than the French Third Republic, Meiji Japan (1868-1912) was somewhat similar to the Republic. While the French republicans aspired to confront Germany by military power and by equaling German achievements in science and education after military defeat in the Franco-Prussian War, Japan aspired to confront the West by equaling industrial and social achievements of the West after the forced opening of 1854. France and Japan went through dramatic industrialization in the last decades of the 19th century, and a certain amount of optimism prevailed in both societies.

It was timely that Western sculpture was introduced and taught at Kofu Art School in the early Meiji period, as the country soon needed public

monuments to express the nation's hopes and achievements and to commemorate her heroes who contributed to the restoration of the Meiji sovereignty. Beginning with the statue of Omura Masjiro, the founder of the Japanese Army, installed in front of Yaskuni shrine in 1893, the hero monument became central to a sculptor's reputation in Japan until the early 20th century, when younger sculptors denied monumental tradition of the Western-style sculpture of the country, turning to Rodin in search for individual expressions.

Although small in number, traditional carvers in Japan, Takamura Koun and his colleagues in the wood-carving department of Tokyo Art School in particular, received commissions for important monuments. Referring to monumental tradition of the West, traditional sculptors of the country carved wood models for statues to be cast in bronze and placed on high pedestals in parks and plazas. Due to a large amount of work involved in carving monumental statues in wood, Japanese carvers often worked together for a project, each carving the part that he was good at. The equestrian *Statue of Kusunoki Masashige* (fig. 3), installed at the Imperial Plaza in Tokyo in 1900, for instance, was carved by three different sculptors. Takamura Koun carved the head, Yamada Kisai the body, and Kotou Sadayuki the horse. Compared to statues created by Western-style sculptors, which were cast from clay models like *The Statue of Omura Masjiro* (fig. 4), those created by traditional carvers retain

sharper and more angular edges with detailed descriptions of smaller parts such as eyes, mouth, and fingers, as in *The Statue of Saigo Takamori* at Ueno Park (fig. 5).³⁴

Unlike in Japan, monumental sculptures in China and Korea were dominated by Western-style sculptors who were educated abroad in the early decades of the 20th century and by their pupils from local art schools. While most prolific public sculptors in Korea in the mid-decades were educated in Japan, at Tokyo Art School in particular, many of the early monument builders in China studied in Europe. *The Monument to People's Heroes* in Tiananmen Square, one of the most prominent public monuments in the country built in 1959 to mark the 10th anniversary of Communist Revolution, for instance, was created by Liu Kaiqu, Hua Tianyou, and Wang Lingyi, who had studied in Paris between the 1920s and 1940s.

In the 1920s and 1930s, Western-style sculptors in China created busts and statues of Chinese educators, thinkers, and political leaders such as Sun Yatsen and Cai Yuanpei. However, these earlier statues were small in number, modest in scale, and mostly private commissions. It was not until the 1950s that colossal monuments sponsored by government began to flourish in China, and statues of Mao Zhedung, monuments to Communist Revolution, and Anti-Japanese war memorials prevailed in the public sculpture of the country until the

late 20th century.

Portrait busts and statues of educators were also in demand in Korea from the 1920s, when social leaders of the country began to channel their energy to the enlightening of the native population through education. Accordingly, the majority of these early works created by Korean sculptors trained in Japan were installed on school campuses. Beginning in the southern cities less affected by the Korean War in the early 1950s, politically charged statues of military generals, historical figures, and political leaders dominated the public sculpture of the country until the mid-1980s, when modernist public sculptures began to flourish under the *Percent for Art Act*.

Referring to the tradition of monuments in the West, early modern public sculptors in China, Japan, and Korea created numerous bronzes of standing or horse riding figures on high pedestals, hitherto unknown in the three countries. However, these early modern sculptors in Northeast Asia approached public commissions with significantly different attitudes from those of their counterparts in Europe and America. Rather than imposing their own values or tastes on public sculptures, Northeast Asian sculptors were more receptive to public responses. Japanese sculptor Takamura Koun, for instance, re-carved the model for the statue of Saigo Takamori, a military leader who contributed to overthrow shogunate and to help Meiji restoration, when his first finished model

caused public disagreement in 1893. Responding to public claims that Saigo was not qualified to wear military uniform since he dishonored the spirit of a soldier by rebelling against the military order, Koun carved Saigo in ordinary outfit hunting out with his dog, which was carved by Kotou Sadayuki.

Early modern sculptors in Korea and their pupils, the first generation of college-educated sculptors of the country, pursued public and non-public works as if they were two different styles at which they should be good. For instance, Kim Jongyoung, a pioneer in abstract sculpture of the country, had been working on abstract works since the 1950s and preferred welding and direct carving to modeling (fig. 6). However, his *Monument to March 1st Independence Movement* (fig. 7), installed in Pagoda Park, Seoul, in 1963, followed the paradigm of monumental statues of the time, a realistic figurative bronze on a high pedestal.

Many Chinese sculptors active in the mid-decades welcomed their chance to 'serve for society,' as Zhang Yonghua, a renowned public sculptor in China, emphasized in his interview with John Young:

Then in the 1950s, after the founding of the People's Republic of China, the Communists respected art and established fine arts academies all over China... We believed in the spirit of the time, in the subject matter of peasant, soldiers, hardship, and hard work. We were told by the government what subjects to do, but we were not told how to portray them. This was not a problem, really, because the artists had the same ideas about their subjects as did the Communist officials. Everyone believed Mao was a great

figure, and I, as an artist, also believed this. And like artists everywhere in the world, in Europe and America, artists in China wanted to satisfy their sponsor. I loved what I was doing, and I wanted to do my best to express the inner thought and natures of our great leaders and thinkers...³⁵

Most state-commissioned monuments in China were collaborative works of a group of sculptors or of a team of a sculpture department of an art school, and thus an individual sculptor received less attention. The monumental sculptures built outside Mao Zhedong Memorial Hall in Tiananmen Square, for instance, were created by a group of 108 sculptors who came from all over the country and lived in a village of barracks provided by the government until the completion of the project in 1978. Wang Keqing, a respected sculptor involved in many such projects, described how nicely such collaborations worked out in an account on *Peace Girl*, a public sculpture the Chinese government commissioned in 1986 as a present for Peace Park in Nagasaki, Japan:

The government assigned four senior artists in China to work collaboratively on this gift... We picked out the best maquettes by each person and then narrowed those forty to fifty down to less than ten. Then each artist picked one of his own maquette. Each thought his own was best! Then we listened to the opinion of the whole group. We discussed all aspects of each design and picked the best two from the four maquettes, which we made into larger models. After we were done with the big maquettes, we sent them to the national leaders on the Central Committee to get their opinion. But they wanted the artists' opinion. We had discussed before which of the two proposals we favored, and the Central Committee agreed with our first choice... In this project,

the four sculptors cooperated with one another in a well-coordinated manner, respected one another, and complemented each other in terms of artistic skills. Consequently, we were able to fully integrate the artistic talent of each with the collective wisdom of all in reaching the ideal state of artistic creation... When we started the piece, we had to divide up the work. Pan He worked on the head, for example. I worked on the folds of cloth, the hands, and the feet. As we developed the final full-scale maquette, we discussed ways to improve it, commenting on each other's work...³⁶

Although realistic figurative bronzes in the Western academic tradition prevailed in Chinese public sculptures until the end of the 1970s, sculptors of the country also pursued more modern styles represented by Rodin for their public works, as will be discussed in detail in the following chapter. However, the stylistic dichotomy that Korean sculptors applied to public and non-public works is not significant among Chinese sculptors who, with faith in their art serving for society, did not perceive public and personal expressions as conflicting demands.

While sculptors in China and Korea, where Western modern sculpture was introduced at about same time as academic sculpture, often pursued both styles at one time, Japanese sculptors seldom chose both. In Japan, Western academic sculptural principles had been practiced for about three decades before modern art of the West was introduced to the country. By the end of the first decade of the 20th century, when a number of Japanese sculptors who were educated in Europe and the United States returned home and practiced what

they had learned in the West, the division between academic and more modern sculpture became significant in the country. Unlike earlier monument builders of the country, who were mostly from artisan families, trained under the strong influence of Western academic sculpture at state art schools, and perceived sculpting as a means to make a living, the new generation of Japanese sculptors, mostly from upper echelon of the society, had contacts with cutting-edge art in the West and took sculpture as a means to express individual artistic endeavors.

Introduced in the rise of nationalism in China, Japan, and Korea, Western-style sculpture was adopted as a powerful tool to propagate the nationalistic effort of each government, giving birth to a new form of hero monuments. Leading the government-inspired monument boom in Northeast Asia, Western-style sculpture, unlike Western-style painting that was established as a genre of “Western Painting” in parallel to traditional painting, became established as sculpture per se in the region. Most art schools in the three countries founded one department for sculpture, that is, Western-style sculpture, although it is not named as such.

Meanwhile, traditional sculpture in the Far East remained as a craft as it had been for centuries. Although each government made an effort to preserve and promote it at certain points, traditional sculpture of the region, which was closely related to traditional customs, religions, and architecture, declined with

lack of demand as the region became more industrialized. In addition, being excluded from the formal educational system, the training of a traditional sculptor is still based on apprenticeship under a master, while Western sculptural principles are taught at college-level art schools. Although a small number of traditional carvers in Japan were appointed as professors in the traditional wood carving department of Tokyo Art School in the late 1880s and afterward, traditional sculpture of the country has also declined as severely as in China and Korea.

The rapid expansion and establishment of Western art in Northeast Asia between the late 19th and the early 20th century was due, above all, to state patronage. Incorporated into the educational system of Japan, Korea, and China as an important part of the modernization program of each government, Western-style art continued to receive governmental support through state art schools, national salons, and politically inspired hero monuments in the three countries. However, the official support for Western art began in Japan a few decades earlier than in China and Korea, which had responded more reluctantly to the Western culture. By the time Rodin was introduced to the three countries, Western-style sculpture had become firmly established in Japan, while it was still little more than a curiosity item in the other two countries. How these differences in the reception of Western-style sculpture in the Far Eastern

countries, coupled with different social, political, and cultural milieus of each country, affected the three countries' responses to Rodin will be explored in the following chapters.

¹ See Guyul Lee, "Hanguk Katolik Misul 2baegnyun eui Guejok (200 Years of Catholic Art in Korea)," *Gaegan Misul* 29 (Spring 1984), 62-77.

² For Chinese Trade Paintings, see Carl L. Crossman, *The China Trade: Export Paintings, Furniture, Silver & Other Objects* (Princeton, New Jersey: The Pyne Press, 1972).

³ Yaochang Pan, *Zhongguo Jinxindai Meishu Jiaoyushi* (The History of Modern Art Education in China) (Hangzhou: Zhongguo Meishu Xueyuan Chubanshe, 2002), 13-14.

⁴ John Clark, *Modern Asian Art*, 51.

⁵ Regarding the opening of Japan and the Meiji Restoration, see chapters 21, 23, 24 in Inoue Kiyoshi, *Ilbon eui Yuksa II* (History of Japan II), trans. Guangsu Cha (Seoul: Daegu Seolim, 1995).

⁶ Quoted in Yukata Yamagata, *Nihon Bijutsu Kyoikushi* (History of Art Education in Japan) (Nagoya: Reimeishobo, 1967), 20.

⁷ See Zhidong Zhang, *Quanxuepian* (Exhortation to Study) (Beijing, Huaxia Chupanshe, 2002).

⁸ The number of Chinese students in Japanese schools increased from 13 in 1896 to 500 in 1902, and to 7,283 in 1906. See Chizuko Yoshida, "Tokyo Bijutsu Gakko no Gaigokujin Seito: Zenhen I (Foreign Students in Tokyo Art School, I)", *Geijutsu Daigaku Bijutsu Gakkubu Kiyo* (Tokyo National University of Fine Arts and Music Bulletin of the Faculty of Fine Arts) 33 (March 1998), 18.

⁹ Ruqian Tan, *Zhongguo yi Rebenshu zonghe mulu* (Catalog of Japanese Books Translated into Chinese) (Hong Kong: Zhongwen Dashue Chubanshe, 1980), 41.

¹⁰ Collection of Historical Documents on Modern Publication in China #2, 99-101, quoted by Geishu Saneto in *Chugokujin Nihon Ryugaku shi* (The History of Chinese Students in Japan) (Tokyo: Kurosio shutpan), 282-283.

¹¹ Michael Sullivan, *Art and Artists of Twentieth-Century China* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1996), 27.

¹² Yasuhiko Isozaki, "Artistic, Cultural, and Political Structures Determining the Educational Direction of the First Japanese Schoolbook on Art in 1871," in *Curriculum, Culture, and Art Education: Comparative Perspectives*, eds. Kerry Freedman and Fernando Hernandez (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998), 13-29.

¹³ For art education in Europe and America in the 19th century, see Arthur D. Efland, *A History of Art Education: Intellectual and Social Currents in Teaching the Visual Arts* (New York and London: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1990), 73-114.

¹⁴ Collection of Materials on Education in Japanese Colonies vol. 69, page 65, quoted by Huirak Park in *Hanguk Misul Kyoyuksa Yungu: Musul Kyoyuk 100nyun eui Heuleum 1895-1995* (The Study of Art Education in Korea: 100 Years of Art Education 1895-1995) (Seoul: Yekyung, 19997), 347-8.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 366-368.

¹⁶ For the history of Kofu Art School, see *Kindai no Bijutsu* 46 (May 1978), an issue devoted entirely to the history of the school.

¹⁷ Elise K. Tipton and John Clark, eds., *Being Modern in Japan: Culture and Society from the 1910s to the 1930s* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2000), 50.

¹⁸ Clark, *Modern Asian Art*, 180.

¹⁹ Ellen P. Conant, "Bunten: A National Forum, 1907-1918," in *Nihonga, Transcending the Past: Japanese Style Painting, 1868-1968* (New York and Tokyo: Weatherhill, 1995), 46-7.

²⁰ Tipton & Clark, 51.

²¹ Yuanpei Cai, "Aims of Education," in *China's Response to the West: A Documentary Survey 1839-1923*, eds. and trans. Ssu-yü Teng and John K. Fairbank (Harvard University Press, 1982), 237.

²² Gong Zheng, *Yanjiang yu Yundong: Zhongguo Meishu de Xiandaihua* (Movement and Evolution: the Modernization of the Chinese Fine Arts 1875-1976) (Nanning: Guangxi Meishu Chubanshe, 2001), 100-103.

²³ Kentaro Yamabe, *Iljae Gangjumha eui Hanguk Geundaesa* (History of Modern Korea under Japanese Rule), trans. Hyunhee Lee (Seoul: Samgwang Culpansa, 1998), 20.

²⁴ The national salon in Korea, the Chosun Art Exhibition, was abbreviated to *Sunjon* at the time, but in the recent years Korean historians tend to abbreviate it into *Mijon* due to the criticism that *Sunjon* is a Japanese term.

²⁵ Chizuko Yoshida, "Tokyo Bijutsu Gakko no Gaigokujin Seito II (Foreign Students in Tokyo Art School II)," *Tokyo Geijutsu Daigaku Bijutsu Gakkubu Kiyo* (Tokyo National University of Fine Arts and Music Bulletin of the Faculty of Fine Arts) 34 (1999), 55-6.

²⁶ The average number of visitors to Korean Mijon was between 20,000 to 25,000, except for the first one which was visited by about 30,000 people, while Japanese salon attracted about 250,000 by the mid-1910s.

²⁷ *Donga Ilbo* (Seoul), 3 December 1921.

²⁸ Soetsu Yanagi, "*Seogu Myunghwa Bokjae Jonramhoi Gaechoie daehaya III* (On the Opening of the Exhibition of Photographic Reproductions of Masterpieces from the West)," *Donga Ilbo* 4 December 1921.

²⁹ In Japanese salons, traditional painting was categorized as 'Japanese Painting,' while in Chinese *Meizhan* traditional paintings were shown in 'National Painting' section. However, in Korean *Mijon*, traditional painting section was named as 'Oriental Painting' to include traditional paintings by both Korean and Japanese artists. Japanese used the same term for the official exhibition in Taiwan.

³⁰ Byungwook Oh, "*Chosun Misul Jonramhoi Yungu* (The Study of Korean Art Exhibition)," *Seoyang Misulsahakhoi Nonmunjib* 5 (1993), 9.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² According to a study on foreign students at Tokyo Art School, 66 Korean students studied at the school in the early 20th century. See Chizuko Yoshida, "Foreign Students in Tokyo Art School II," 14-15.

³³ Eric Hobsbawm's argument rephrased by Anthony D. Smith in *Nationalism and Modernism* (London: Routledge, 1998), 120. For Hobsbawm's own argument, see Eric Hobsbawm, "Mass-Producing Traditions: Europe, 1870-1914," in *The Invention of Tradition*, eds. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 263-307.

³⁴ *The Statue of Omura Masjiro* (1893) by Okuma Ujihiro, a graduate of Kofu Art School, was the first monumental bronze cast from the plaster cast of a clay model in Japan.

³⁵ John T. Young, *Contemporary Public Art in China: A Photographic Tour* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1999), 19.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 121-22.

2. In Words: Rodin Among a New Generation of Artists and Intellectuals

Rodin's career coincided with a time of rapid development of printing and communication technologies. In France, the press laws of the 1880s facilitated the proliferation of newspapers, magazines, and journals of all kinds, and printers and publishers became more innovative to compete in the growing market. The photomechanical reproduction technique invented at the turn of the century improved the quality of photographic reproductions, and high-speed electrically driven presses made image reproductions faster and more affordable. On the other hand, the extension of telegraph, telephone, steamship, railroad systems, and other means of communication made it possible for news from the French art world to spread fast within and outside Europe.

By the time Rodin was introduced to Japan at the beginning of the 20th century, the advanced printing technologies of the country also resulted in an outpouring of printed materials. Mass production of newspapers became possible in 1890 with the introduction of the Marinoni press to the country, and a dramatic increase in the literate population, after a few decades of compulsory education, precipitated the rapid expansion of mass media in the following

decades. By 1920 the number of newspapers circulating in the country reached 1,100 with a combined circulation of 6-7 million, and the figure increased to 19 million in 1937.¹ Magazines and journals of various kinds mushroomed at the turn of the century, and by the mid-1920s about 50 art magazines and journals were being published, while about 10,000 retail bookstores were in business throughout the country.²

The development of the modern press in Korea and China was slower than in Japan. Modern newspapers began to be published in Korea in the late 1880s, but the early newspapers were forced out of print after 1910 when the country was annexed to Japan. The development of the Korean press was severely depressed during the colonial period (1910-1945), when only a few newspapers and a small number of magazines were published in Korean under the censorship of the colonial government.

Although slower than other modern nations of the time, the development of the modern press in China saw a great leap at the turn of the century. Modern newspapers and magazines began to flourish in the coastal cities, which had been economic centers for foreign exchanges since the mid-decades of the 19th century, and the adoption of a nation-wide postal system in 1896 contributed to the distribution of newspapers and magazines throughout the country. In the early 1920s, about 340 newspapers were being circulated in the country, and

by the middle of the 1930s the number had increased to 910 and about the same number of magazines were in function, although the figure is small for a nation with about 400 million people.³

In the early decades of the 20th century, with the development of the modern press and the expansion of communication technologies, news from the European art world reached Northeast Asian readers faster than ever. For instance, the Japanese translation of *Futurist Manifesto*, first published in France in *Le Figaro* on February 20th of 1909, was translated into Japanese and published in the May 1909 issue of *Subaru* magazine.⁴

Accounts of Rodin began to appear in Japan in the early 1900s, in China in the late 1910s, and in Korea in the early 1920s, and the sculptor's reputations in the three countries were, in large part, established within a decade or two after his introduction to each country through printed materials rather than exhibitions of his works. Thus, discussion of Rodin's receptions in the Far Eastern countries require careful examination of the early accounts of the sculptor published in the three countries in the early decades. The first three sections of this chapter are devoted to the Rodin accounts written by a small number of artists and intellectuals who propagated Rodin's reputation in each country. The final section discusses how the Rodin myth established in the West contributed to the formation of the myth in Northeast Asia, by examining

three of the most widely read books on the sculptor in the region, all being translations of European publications.

***Shirakaba* Rodinism in Japan**

Rodin was introduced to Japan when the country was expanding her colonial power toward China and Korea in the name of the responsibility to help civilize its neighbors. With the victory of the first Sino-Japanese War in 1895, which engendered nationalistic fervor among Japanese populations, Japan colonized Taiwan, while gaining dominion in Korea. After the Russo-Japanese War of 1905, the country made Korea her protectorate and colonized the peninsula in 1910. In 1915 Japan attempted to make China her protectorate through an aggressive treaty called 21 demands, occupied Manchuria in 1931-32, and went to all-out war with China in 1937.

In contrast to the country's political ambition and territorial expansion, more Japanese intellectuals became skeptical of the political and ideological systems of Meiji Japan after the war with Russia, as the Japanese economy was in severe recession and social problems related to rapid urbanization became more visible.⁵ Young writers and artists educated under the strong influence from the West became preoccupied with individualism, promoting the art and

literature of the West. Japanese sculptors who went to Europe and America at the turn of the century came back home and joined the liberating trend, propagating Rodinism. On the other hand, the extension of art journalism provided venues for artists and critics to express their ideas and opinions on art.

A number of Japanese artists visited the 1900 Paris Exposition Universelle, but only a few accounts on Rodin's retrospective at the exposition were published in Japan in the following years. The first traceable account of the sculptor in Japan published in 1902 was only a paragraph included in an article on French sculpture of the time written by Kume Keiichiro, a Japanese Impressionist painter. Kume had been to the exposition with several other Japanese painters from *Hakubakai* (White Horse Society), all decked out as European gentlemen of the time (fig. 8), and visited Rodin's retrospective.⁶ However, Kume's article did not include a detailed account of the exhibition, which was, according to Ruth Butler, "the single most impressive art event at the Exposition Universelle" with a room full of 165 sculptures, drawings, and photographs in a large airy hall lit by tall windows on all sides.⁷

It is unlikely that Kume was more impressed by Rodin's works than those by other French sculptors such as Paul-Albert Bartholomé, Louis-Ernest Barrias, Paul Dubois, and Emmanuel Frémiet, although the Japanese painter reiterated the laudatory tones that the European writers of the time often

adopted to describe Rodin:

The leading light of French sculpture Auguste Rodin is a great genius who changed the style of modern art.... If we see his masterpieces exhibited at the retrospective, such as the male nude called *The Age of Bronze, Saint John ...*, we can recognize his great talent and understand why he is called contemporary Michelangelo.⁸

In Kume's article *Bartholomé's Monument to the Dead* (1899) at Père-Lachaise was discussed in length, while none of Rodin's works received particular attention.

In addition, the image of *Nature Unveiling Herself before Science* (c. 1899) by Louis-Ernest Barrias was placed in the center of the article, while no images of Rodin's works were included.

Press attention to Rodin increased in Japan toward the end of the first decade of the 20th century. In 1908, *Bijutsu Shimpo* (Art News) introduced controversies on *Monument to Balzac* with a good-sized reproduction of the work, while Ogiwara Morie, a Japanese sculptor who is known to have been converted from a painter to a sculptor after seeing Rodin's *Thinker* at the Salon of 1904, published his eyewitness accounts of the sculptor and his works. Although entitled "French Sculpture World," Ogiwara's short article on contemporary French sculpture, published in the *Asahi* newspaper on April 24th, focused on Rodin, whom he met while studying in Paris. Beginning with controversies surrounding *Primitive Man (The Age of Bronze)*, Ogiwara discusses Rodin's

influence on the contemporary Parisian salons and argues that Rodin's naturalism was derived from Greek and Egyptian sculptures.

Ogiwara also discusses Rodin's works in comparison with Egyptian sculptures in an article on his sculpture tour to Italy, Greece, and Egypt published in *Waseda Bunkaku* the following June.⁹ In the museums in Greece and Italy, what caught the Japanese sculptor's eyes was not classical sculpture but Egyptian sculpture, which, he claims, sacrifices details on behalf of catching the essence of its subjects. He saw a similar attitude toward sculptural subjects in Rodin's works such as *Spring*, *Monument to Balzac*, *Primitive Man*, and *Bust of Jean-Paul Laurens* that Ogiwara regarded as the best among the master's works. In the same vein, Ogiwara claims that *The Statue of Saigo Takamori* (fig. 5) cast from Takamura Koun's wood model was successful in capturing the essence of the subject, although he thought Saigo and his dog did not go well together and thus, it would have been better if the dog had been removed from its master.

A more extensive account of Rodin was published in the February 1910 issue of *Bijutsu Shimpo*. Accompanied by images of the sculptor's works, including *The Thinker*, *The Age of Bronze*, *Burghers of Calais*, *St. John*, and *Man with Broken Nose*, the series of three articles entitled "The French Sculptor Rodin" included not only detailed biographical notes, but also the controversies surrounding *The Age of Bronze*, *The Gates of Hell*, and *Burghers of Calais*.¹⁰ The

author, who is unlikely to have seen the sculptor's works before writing these articles, crowns Rodin an ultimate champion of the battle against public ignorance, again, in the manner of contemporary writers of Rodin accounts in the West:

A great artist transcends the taste of his time. Because of his strangeness to the eyes of the commoners, he was ridiculed and persecuted as a heretic... The opposition and persecutions that Rodin received were fierce, but he held fast to his principles and caused the curiosity of the public. And then people began thinking that there must be some meanings in his works, and finally they recognized the great beauty and power of his works, regarding his work as a great contribution to the world of art. In other words, Rodin, with his great artistic power, raised the taste of the public to his standard.¹¹

As writers and poets responded vigorously to Rodin's fame in Europe, Japanese writers, especially those affiliated with the literary magazine *Shirakaba* (White Birch) were the most zealous supporters of the sculptor in Japan. Consisting of a group of friends from *Kakushuin*, the prestigious school for children from Japanese noble families, young aristocrats in *Shirakaba* group, aged between the late teens and early 20s, began their grand search for "creative individuality" at the end of the Meiji period and became preoccupied with Western geniuses.

Although founded as a literary magazine in 1910, *Shirakaba* provided articles and essays on Western art in almost every issue and became a rare source

for knowledge of the recent art from the West, especially for Post-Impressionism and Symbolism. *Shirakaba's* influence on young Japanese artists can be sensed in the following article written by a Western-style painter, Kuroda Jutaro:

... Not only the Western-style painters but also all the young artists in Kyoto waited for the latest issue of the monthly magazine. As the publication date for a new issue approached, we would go again and again to the bookstores, and finally breathing in the smell of the still damp ink, we would submerge ourselves in the critical biographies of the latest artists to be introduced such as Courbert, Manet, Cézanne, van Gogh, and Gauguin; and we would gaze at the reproductions of their works. The Post-Impressionists were especially strong at this time and ideas about their work were a fundamental inspiration to us...¹²

Rodin was one of the first Western artists that *Shirakaba* members glorified. Honoring the sculptor's seventieth birthday, *Shirakaba* published a special issue dedicated entirely to Rodin in November 1910, by far the most comprehensive account of the sculptor written in Japanese consisting of twenty-six articles and eighteen images. Evident in the Rodin issue is that *Shirakaba* members' fascination with the sculptor had more to do with his persona than his artistic achievements. They admired Rodin as an ideal human being, who was living truthful to his personality and fully realized his creative individuality, and presented the sculptor as a sage or philosopher, as in an article by Mushanokoji Saneatsu, the editor and spokesman of the magazine:

I worship Rodin because I want to fulfill my 'self'. I think there is nobody who realized his self and knows the truth of life as well as Rodin. He is really the person who speculates the value of his 'self' and the value of life.... From the point of individualism, nobody is as great a human being as Rodin. He is an ideal man.¹³

Mushanokoji worshiped Rodin as a leading light for his search for *jiko*, or "self" in Japanese, just as the German poet Rainer Maria Rilke went to the master for salvation and wrote, "You are the only person in the world who had the equilibrium and the force to rise in harmony.... It is not simply to write a book that I have come to you – it is to ask you: how should I live?"¹⁴ Although it is unknown whether Mushanokoji read Rilke's book on Rodin published in Berlin in 1903, it is very likely that the Japanese writer read some of the German reviews on the sculptor. Mushanokoji was immersed in symbolist art and literature of Germany, and by the time he edited the Rodin issue of *Shirakaba* magazine, he was subscribing to the German art magazine *Kunst für Alle* through an import bookstore in Tokyo.

Another contributor to the Rodin issue of *Shirakaba*, Takamura Kotaro, a poet, critic, and sculptor, who wrote and translated most intensively on Rodin in Japan in the first decades of the 20th century, also took Rodin in the manner of Rilke and Mushanokoji. In his introduction to *Rodin's Words*, a collection of writings on the sculptor published in Europe and America that Takamura edited and translated into Japanese in 1916, he wrote, "How much I owe to Rodin for

my life! ... I was saved and encouraged by Rodin," even though he never met the master.¹⁵

Takamura was born the son of a poor Buddhist carver. However, he was able to receive an education of which any artist could dream at the time, as his father Takamura Koun's status changed from a lowly artisan to a respected master by being appointed as a professor of Tokyo Art School during the traditional revival movement and began receiving prominent commissions. After studying sculpture and painting at Tokyo Art School, Takamura traveled to New York, London, and Paris, studying sculpture at National Academy of Design, the Art Students League, and the Academie Julian between 1906 and 1909.

During his stay in New York, Takamura saw *Bust of St. John the Baptist*, in which a fleeting moment of facial expression was well captured with careful rendering of details and refined sculptural surface, at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.¹⁶ Although it was the first Rodin sculpture that he saw, the eloquent writer did not leave a detailed account of his encounter with his hero's sculpture. Instead, Takamura left a vivid account on his experience of *Diomedes' Mare* by Gutzon Borglum also at the museum:

I did not like the sculpture of that country (America), even feeling sick when looking at the new-style works by someone like

MacMonnies. But a group of madly galloping horses caught my eyes. A powerfully built naked man had jumped out to grab the neck of a ferocious horse. The overall composition was triangular, and its extremely violent movement shook me up.¹⁷

Takamura was so impressed by Borglum's sculpture that he asked Daniel Chester French to write a letter of recommendation for his assistantship under Borglum.¹⁸ While working as the American sculptor's assistant for about four months, Takamura made *Bust of Ruskin* after his master's. Given that Borglum was one of the first American sculptors who had close contact with Rodin, wrote an article on the French sculptor as early as 1902, and his early works presented so much Rodinian flavor that Paul Manship went so far as to think Rodin imitated Borglum's style, it was natural for the Japanese Rodin enthusiast to be impressed by Borglum's sculptures.¹⁹

Although Takamura was a talented sculptor, his achievements in the early 20th century were more prominent in poetry and art criticism than in sculpture. Loosely affiliated with *Shirakaba* group, Takamura rigorously promoted Rodin after his return to Japan in 1909. Although overtly pedantic, his writings from the 1910s, which often included German and French words without Japanese translations, were most influential among young Japanese artists and writers. His article "Green Sun," published in 1910, has been regarded as one of the most influential art-critical texts in the country, being

quoted in various writings on art since then. In this article, Takamura urged Japanese artists to forget the burden of being Japanese and having local colors and to be truthful to their personalities:

I seek absolute *Freiheit* in the art world. Therefore, I want to recognize an infinite authority in the artist's *Persoenlichkeit* ... I am hoping that Japanese artists will use all the *Möglich* techniques without any reservation. I pray that they will follow their inner urges of the moment and not be necessarily afraid that they may produce something non-Japanese. No matter how non-Japanese, a work made by a Japanese can't avoid being Japanese.²⁰

For Takamura, Rodin was not only a criterion for his judgment on art, but also a standard toward which all sculptors should aim. In almost every review on Japanese sculpture that he wrote, Takamura brought up Rodin, as in the following review of the third *Bunten*:

There was one (sculpture) showing a woman lying down. When something is so patently an imitation, the repellant feeling an imitation usually arouses is dispelled. Rodin, in his *Danaid*, simply scratched lines with a small chisel into the material it was made out of, marble, to represent strands of hair. The half-transparent marble and the whitish non-transparency of the chisel scratches recreate the softness of hair in the most simple, the most effective way.... This work, too, lacked *la vie*.... The color of this bronze is dry. It's too cold. And it seems too monotonous. One would hope to have more depth. The bronze of Rodin's busts gives you a pleasant sensation, even if you look at their colors alone. The color of his material and the content of his sculpture mesh precisely....²¹

Takamura's accounts of Rodin seldom included discussions of specific

sculptures by the master, but were often charged with extravagant praise, which makes his writings more rambling, as in his entry for the Rodin issue of *Shirakaba* magazine, titled in French “Meditations sur le Maitre”:

... Rodin defies speech. Rodin is clearly a miracle of our times. Rodin is a true Frenchman. His silence is eloquent. His vigor vibrates with subtle elegance. His greatness is the greatness of perseverance. Yet he is nothing more than one beam of light in the brilliant throng of his Latin family. Whenever I happen to think that Rodin has not only committed himself to a sculpture entirely different from that of today’s avant-gardes, but that he is also a native Frenchman who has spent his whole life in France, I cannot repress a wry smile at the joke his karma has played on the laws of nature. Rodin is an old wizard. Rodin has taught me that art is to be set apart from technical skill. Art is either true or false, while technical skill, whether of a high or low quality, is irrelevant to art. If Rodin were asked to choose between the gift of eight hands or eight eyes, he would probably choose to have eight eyes...²²

In contrast to the accounts written by Takamura and Mushanokoji, accounts by Japanese sculptors included in the Rodin issue of *Shirakaba* were more down to earth. In his account of experiencing Rodin’s works through “imperfect photographic reproductions,” Asakura Fumio, then a professor at the sculpture department of Tokyo Art School, confessed that although he could see some merits in Rodin’s works, he could not feel what people called ‘the life’ in the master’s sculptures, which seemed “overly nervous, gloomy, and irksome” and had something that made his “shoulders stiff.”²³

Shinkai Taketaro, a Western-style sculptor who went to Europe in 1900 and studied in Berlin, wrote that he was not very impressed by Rodin's works:

It was at the Luxembourg where I first saw Rodin's works, *Head of a Madame, Danaid, St. John, and An Old Man*. I have heard the story about *Danaid* and *St. John*, but actual works were incomprehensible at all.... In 1900 Paris Exposition, I saw the marble *Kiss*, but I could not understand it either. I only thought it was a big marble and an interesting composition. It was a strange technique that spots made by compass were left on the marble. But I didn't think it was a masterpiece with any merit. Rather, I thought Falguière's *Cardinal Lavignerie*, Frémiet's equestrian statue of St. George, and the tombstone by Bartholomé were greater pieces.... There were a number of plaster casts such as *Monument to Victor Hugo, Burghers of Calais, War, Brother and Sister*.... I thought they were unfinished works with strange compositions, and wondered 'Are these the thing called Impressionism in sculpture?'²⁴

Toward the end of his article, Shinkai warns Japanese sculptors that imitating Rodin's style would be useless because the style was unique to the French sculptor:

The most important lessons that we need to learn from Rodin's works are the facts that he is truthful to his impression of nature, and his works are based on freedom of nature. All other qualities (of his works) are possible only by Rodin, and thus impossible for us to imitate.²⁵

In spite of Shinkai's claim, young Japanese sculptors were drawn into Rodinian expressionism by the end of the 1900s, turning away from both heroic monuments and the 'salon sculpture,' represented by Shinkai's *Bathing* (fig. 9),

the winning entry of the 1907 *Bunten* which emphasized the idealized beauty of a female nude. Rodin's influence culminated in works by Takamura Kotaro, Ogiwara Morie, and young sculptors associated with the two Japanese apostles of Rodin, including Nakahara Teichiro, Tobari Kogan, and Fujikawa Yuzo.

The new generation of sculptors in Japan became interested in more naturalized and expressive rendering of human figures. Muscular male nudes in contemplative poses became popular sculptural subjects, while female nudes became more sensual, even though less overtly sexual than Rodin's, as in Ogiwara's *Despair* (fig. 10), a direct quote of Rodin's *Danaid*, and Tobari's *Foot Trick* which depicts a naked female acrobat lying on her back with her legs up balancing a barrel on her foot.

Also evident in works by these sculptors was their interest in Rodin's bold experimentation with human figures that he so often distorted, exaggerated, and mutilated, according to Albert Elsen, to free his sculptures from traditional narratives.²⁶ While Ogiwara, Tobari, and Hori Shinji made a number of torsos, Takamura executed a series of hands and feet between 1917 and 1923. In his Paris years, Ogiwara created a male nude in which the head and arms were brutally mutilated as in Rodin's *Walking Man* (fig. 11).²⁷

On the other hand, retaining the traces of a sculptor's hands, sculptural surfaces became more varied and roughened, while Japanese sculptors adopted

accidental or quasi-accidental effects that Rodin used in such pieces as *The Head of Baudelaire*, *Meditation*, and *Walking Man* in which a big dent was left on the back (fig. 12). Takamura scarred the *Head of Okura Kihachiro* (fig. 13) by cutting chunks of clay from the proper left side of the face, while Tobaru erased the face of a seated female figure, *Glittering Jealousy*, and cut off her breasts (fig. 14). However, the most striking example is found in Ogiwara's *Woman* (fig. 15) on which the sculptor left a scraped scar by gouging out a handful of clay from the back of the female nude with refined front (fig. 16).

Japanese sculptors' interest in Rodin was not limited to stylistic or technical aspects of their master's works but in his notion of sculpture as a means for individual expression. Unlike sculptors of the previous generation who regarded sculpture as a job skill, Rodinian sculptors perceived themselves as artists, not artisans or craftsmen. Instead of pursuing careers as public sculptors or holding teaching positions at art schools, these sculptors devoted themselves to the experimentation of Rodinian expressionism.

The way Japanese sculptors sought individual expression through imitating Rodin's work is rather paradoxical. It is no wonder that most of them could not surpass their master to develop their own unique styles. Some of their sculptures were clear imitations of Rodin's works, while others were vaguely Rodinesque. However, for those artists who grew up in a time when

the individual voice was subordinated to a collective effort to build a 'rich nation and strong army,' Rodin's highly individual expressionism seemed a promised land that deserved their sincere devotion.

Being rigorously promoted by artists and writers, Rodin's reputation in Japan was established rapidly during the last ten years of the Meiji period (1869-1912). By the early 1910s the French sculptor had become a mythic figure in the country, and the myth was powerful enough to make "young people's hearts beat fast" at the news that Rodin's works would be exhibited for the first time in the country at the fourth *Shirakaba* Exhibition in February 1912, as reported by *Yomiuri* newspaper on the first day of the exhibition:

Works by Rodin! There will be no art lovers who are not excited by this news. But there are only a few who had seen actual works by the master, and many admire his works merely through photographs, words, or sketches. Now, they can see Rodin's works, the object of their admiration. Young people's hearts will be beating fast at the news.²⁸

Beginning with the three tiny bronzes shown at the *Shirakaba* exhibition, a number of Rodin's works were exhibited in Japan in the 1920s, as will be discussed in detail in chapter four on the reception of Rodin exhibitions in Northeast Asian countries.²⁹ However, by the mid-1920s, the Rodin fever among young Japanese artists and writers somewhat cooled down. Ogiwara Morie, the most passionate follower of Rodin in the country, died prematurely in

1910. Mushanokiji Saneatsu, one of the most ardent promoters of Rodin among Japanese writers, devoted himself to a quasi-socialistic utopian community called *atarashi mura* (new village) that he created in Hyuga, Kyushu, in 1918.

Furthermore, *Shirakaba* magazine ceased publication with the outbreak of the Great Kanto Earthquake of 1923. While publishing his second translation of *Rodin's Words* in 1920 and a monograph on the sculptor in 1927, Takamura Kotaro continued to practice Rodinian sculptural principles into the 1930s, although this aspect of his output was not as prolific as his literary activities.

Moreover, Takamura became more nationalistic in his writings from the 1930s and turned into an advocate for militaristic efforts of the Japanese government during World War II. Being a frequent target for criticism after the war, he had a rather isolated life, working more on wood carving than modeling.

Although Rodin had enthusiastic followers in Japan, the sculptor did not have a lasting influence on the following generation of artists of the country who turned to various other artists and styles from the West. However, in the first decades of the 20th century, perceived as a model being who truly fulfilled his individuality, Rodin became established as a sort of cult figure by young Japanese artists and writers who were engrossed in Western individualism.

And the Japanese version of the Rodin myth was more powerful than the myth in China, where Rodin's persona was less emphasized, or in Korea where the

fervor for Western culture was not as intense, as will be seen in the following sections.

The May 4th Intellectuals and Political Significance of Rodin in China

Rodin's reputation began to increase in China in the years when the country was drawn to the West in search of a new model for her modernization. Triggered by the news that the allied victors of World War I decided to give Qingdao, the former German concession in China, to Japan on May 4, 1919, the Chinese urge for social and cultural reforms exploded into the May 4th Movement, which included students' demonstrations against Japan, merchants' boycott of Japanese products, workers' strikes, literary revolution, and various other activities led by a new generation of intellectuals. The new intellectuals, who paved the ideological ground for the historic movement in the preceding years by propagating new cultural ideas of science and democracy, continued their quest for creating a new culture to 'save China.' They claimed that in order to modernize the country, traditional values and systems, which had brought China a century of helpless humiliation in the face of foreign aggressions, should be completely reexamined, and the utilitarian spirit of the West should be introduced.

On the other hand, the Soviet Revolution of 1917 stimulated interest in

Communism among Chinese intellectuals, especially those affiliated with *Xinqingnian* (New Youth) magazine, such as Chen Duxiu, Li Dazhao, Hu Zhai, and Lu Xun. Lu rose into prominence by publishing *The Diary of a Mad Man*, his famous satire on Chinese history, in the magazine in 1918. Chen began to promote Marxism through *New Youth* in 1919, while Professor Li Dazhao organized a Marxist study group at Beijing University in 1920. Li and Chen became founding members of the Chinese Communist Party in the following year, and from that time, Communism was rapidly disseminated through books, magazines, labor organizations, and study groups.

Voices of the new intellectuals were channeled through newly founded enlightenment periodicals intended to awaken revolutionary spirit among Chinese populations, such as *Xinqingnian* (New Youth), *Shaonian Zhongguo* (Chinese Boy), *Xinchao* (New Tide), *Xueyi* (Wissen und Wissenschaft), and *Shishi Xinbao-Xuedeng* (Current News-Study Lamp), which had a powerful impact on Chinese youths, including aspiring political leaders of the country. In his interview with Edgar Snow, recalling his student years when his father would blame him for spending too much money on these magazines, Mao Zedong mentioned that writings by Chen Duxiu and Hu Zai published in *New Youth* left a big impression upon him.³⁰ Zhou Enlai, a student leader of the May 4th Movement and the future premier of China, read the same magazine while

studying in Japan and wrote:

I've read (*New*) *Youth* carefully last few days and realized the thoughts that I had in China are all very wrong. All of my learning, thoughts, and behaviors in the past are useless. From now on... I will neither insist on the old, nor refuse the new. I will not have a lingering attachment to the old.³¹

While disseminating Western thoughts on science and democracy, politically charged magazines that mushroomed in China in the first decades of the 20th century promoted Western art as a remedy for the remoteness of traditional art that had been practiced as pastime activities for literati amateurs. Published in those magazines, Chinese accounts of Western art from the period were read widely among student activists. In a postcard with a picture of Jean-François Millet's *Gleaners* sent to his fellow student leader Shi Sun in China in 1921, Zhou Enlai, who was then in Paris on a work-study program, wrote that he read Lee Sichun's article on the French painter published in *Chinese Boy*.³² On another postcard with a picture of Rodin's *Age of Bronze* (fig. 17) sent to the same friend, Zhou assumed that his friend in China knew the sculptor by saying, "*The Age of Bronze*, this is a work by Rodin, who is so famous that I don't need to bother to introduce him. This sculpture is on display at the Luxembourg Museum."³³

In fact, the legendary writers Lu Xun and Guo Moruo mentioned Rodin

in their writings before Zhou Enlai left for France at the end of 1920, while an account of Rodin accompanied by images of *The Age of Bronze*, *The Thinker*, *Monument to Balzac*, *Burghers of Calais*, and *Three Shades* was published in China in the summer of 1919.³⁴ Like other accounts on Western art published in the country, most of the early accounts of Rodin in China were published not in art journals but in the most influential political magazines of the time, and these accounts written by revolutionary intellectuals often presented the sculptor as a sort of political figure.

In January 1920, the warrior of the May 4th Movement Guo Moruo, who then was a medical school student in Japan, published his satire on the Japanese press which dubbed Chinese students who led anti-Japanese demonstrations in 1919 'student gangsters.' In the poem entitled *Gangster Ode* published in *Study Lamp*, Guo presented Rodin along with prominent and popular Russian and American writers, as a metaphor for those who led the historic movement:

Rebelling against art of classical secret, low-down buffoon Rodin!
Rebelling against poetry of royal grandeur, thick-headed monster
Whitman!
Rebelling against literature of aristocratic holiness, short-lived
Tolstoy!

Now come from North, South, East, and West,
All gangsters of art and literature revolutions!
Long Live! Long Live! Long Live!³⁵

In the March 1921 issue of *Chinese Boy*, Zong Baihua published *After I Saw Rodin's Sculpture*, an account of his visit to the Rodin Museum in Paris in the late summer/early fall of 1920, before going to Germany to study philosophy and aesthetics. It is most likely that Zong knew Rodin's sculpture before leaving for Europe in May 1920, since he was the editor of *Study Lamp*, in which Guo Moruo published *Gangster Ode* and the two writers exchanged a number of letters at the time. Whether he saw pictures of Rodin's works before going to Paris is unknown, but Zong compares the photograph of Rodin's *Walking Man* and the sculpture:

Art can express 'movement', but photography cannot express it... You will understand this if you compare the photograph of Rodin's *Walking Man* and the sculpture. The man in the picture "stretches" forward one of his legs but frozen as if he is paralyzed, but the sculpture is "moving" as if he is walking slowly. Once you look around the Rodin Museum, you will believe that art can express movement, but photography cannot.³⁶

Being immersed in socialist ideals like many of his fellow writers of the time, Zong Baihua presented Rodin as a great 'laborer' and pointed to *Tower of Labor*, the unrealized work that remained a small-scale plaster model in the Rodin Museum in Paris, as one of the most representative works by the sculptor:

Rodin's sculptures express not only universal human feelings (happiness, anger, sadness, joy, love, hatred, and desire), but also the spirit of the times... He pointed out a few basic spirits of the

time among the sea of thoughts and of conflicting ideas. 1. Labor. The 19th and 20th century is the age of labor. Labor is at the core of all problems, and thus Rodin created *Tower of Labor* (unfinished). 2. Mental labor. With the advancement of scientific technology, the 19th and 20th century saw the proliferation of mental labor, which requires particular attention, and thus Rodin created *Balzac...* Rodin never stopped working throughout his life and produced abundantly... He was a mental and physical laborer.³⁷

In the 1920s Lu Xun, who studied medicine in Japan but turned to writing to 'cure people's mind rather than their body,' also mentioned Rodin in a few writings. In his translator's notes for *Happiness*, a novel written by the Russian writer Mikhail Artsybashev, published in *New Youth* in 1920, Lu briefly refers to Rodin's work to describe the beauty and ugliness of the fatal love between a prostitute and a lewd servant depicted in the novel.³⁸ Becoming increasingly sympathetic to Communist party, Lu wrote a more intensive account of Rodin in his editor's notes for *Benliu* (Torrent) magazine in 1928. In the review of the Chinese translation of *Revolt*, an account of Rodin written by the Japanese writer and critic Arishima Takeo and published in the Rodin issue of *Shirakaba* magazine in 1910, Lu emphasized Rodin's influence on the two East European sculptors, Ivan Mestrovic and C. T. Konenkov, whom Lu called Slovenian Rodin and Russian Rodin, respectively, and claimed that Konenkov represented 'laborers' in Eastern Europe.³⁹

Lu Xun's interest in art was stimulated by Cai Yuanpei, who made a great

contribution to the acceptance of Western art in China in the early 20th century, as mentioned in the previous chapter. In 1912 as a Minister of Education, Cai called Lu into the Ministry as the head of the newly founded Office of Social Education for Art, Literature, and Science, where the writer worked for the next fourteen years. Serving the ministry, Lu delivered a series of lectures on art in 1912, and published a summary of his lectures, *Opinion on the Propagation of Art*, in which he proposed a program to promote art through museums, exhibitions, conservation, and research.⁴⁰ Although Lu's view on art expressed in the article was more practical than Cai's, he agreed with Cai's belief in the moral function of art.

Lu Xun showed a more active interest in art in the 1920s and 1930s. In 1928 he translated one of the most widely read survey books on Western art in China, *Trends in Modern Art*, written in Japanese by Itagaki Takao. In the following year, the writer published another translation, *Marxism on Art*, a Japanese translation of Anatoly Vasilievich Lunacharsky's book, which had been published in Russia in 1926. In addition, being a mentor and patron of Chinese wood-cut print movement in the 1930s, Lu collected and promoted works by Russian, Japanese, and German artists, especially those dealing with social and political problems, including Käthe Kollwitz, one of his favorite artists.

Meanwhile, with his faith in art, Cai, who went so far as to say art should

replace religion in 1917, continued to emphasize art and culture in the midst of great social upheavals. Although he was more interested in art and education than politics, Cai had a powerful influence on revolutionary leaders of the country. For instance, Mao Zedong, who eulogized Cai as “a luminary in the academic world and a model being in the human world” in his telegraph of condolence to Cai’s funeral in Hong Kong in 1940, recalled that as a normal school student in the 1910s he was so impressed by Cai’s book on ethics that he wrote an essay entitled *Power of Mind*.⁴¹

Upon becoming the chancellor of Beijing University (*Beida*) in 1916, Cai brought another important figure in the history of modern China, Chen Duxiu, into the university as a Dean of the School of Humanities. An eloquent writer and political activist, Chen ardently spread the revolutionary spirit among his students at *Beida*, who had an important role in the May 4th Movement. Chen’s contribution to the movement was so great that Chinese historians often say that the historical movement was impossible without Chen’s *New Youth* and *Beida*. While serving *Beida*, Chen published his famous article on art, “Art Revolution,” written in response to Lu Cheng’s article published in *New Youth* in 1919. Chen argued that it was impossible to improve the traditional paintings of China without introducing the realism of Western art, and emphasized the importance of art in the social movement.⁴²

Revolutionary intellectuals' views on art, which emphasized the social function of art and the necessity for the introduction of Western art, were propagated through political magazines and taken up by their student readers. Zhou Enlai, who supported art throughout his political career, and thus properly being called the protector of Chinese artists, emphasized harmonious combination of Chinese and Western Art in his speech for the opening of the Chinese Painting Institute of Beijing in 1957. Criticizing the conservatism of traditional painting of the country, Zhou presented works by Xu Beihong, one of the most respected Western-style painters of the country, as good examples of combining Chinese tradition and "the scientific spirit of the West."⁴³

The life-long political partner of Zhou Enlai, Mao Zedong, also showed an interest in art from early on in his political career. Even in the years under political hardship in Yanan, Mao founded the *Lu Xun Art School* (the former *Lu Xun Academy of Fine Arts*) with other political leaders including Zhou and spoke on his view on art and literature. In his famous talk delivered at Yanan Forum in May 1942, Mao argued that artists and writers "should conscientiously learn the language of the masses" since the works of a higher quality are more difficult for the masses to understand.⁴⁴ Thus, artists and writers should tune their works to a level the masses can grasp, and then the masses would gradually demand higher quality, leading artists and writers to raise the standards of their

works.

By the 1930s, Chinese artists who had been rather quiet about politics in the preceding decades took up the revolutionary spirit and played their parts in the development of the socialist aesthetic of modern art in China. In an article written to celebrate the establishment of the Federation of Artists and Writers in 1936, Ai Siqi, one of its founding members, urged Chinese artists and writers to join the movement to save China:

The national crisis gives Chinese people a task, and a part of the task falls on the shoulders of artists and writers. Now all the Chinese people clearly know that only the unification will bring us our survival. Artists and writers are not holy deities staying above other human beings, and thus they must unite to join the movement for our survival.⁴⁵

While an increasing number of Chinese painters and print-makers united in groups and societies to express political activism and social criticism, sculptors' activities in the country were almost insignificant in the early 20th century. Although a handful of art schools opened sculpture departments, and several important sculptors came back home from their study abroad by the early 1930s, Western-style sculpture was still the least popular genre of art in China. As late as 1936, only 2 students at the Shanghai College of Fine Arts, one of the first art schools to offer a sculpture program, were studying sculpture, while more than 100 students were in the "Western painting" section and about

50 were in the traditional painting section.⁴⁶

In the early decades of the 20th century, accounts of Rodin written by sculptors can hardly be found in China, where the sculptor was introduced before modern sculpture of the country bloomed. In addition, most of the early Western-style sculptors in the country who studied in Europe or in Japan showed interest in academic style. Among early modern sculptors in China who began their artistic careers in the 1920s and 1930s, only Zhang Chongren can be called a Rodinian sculptor. Trained at the Brussels Royal Academy under a sculptor named A. Mutton who is known to have been a Rodin follower, Zhang showed interest in Rodinian sculptural principles from his student years in Belgium and emphasized expressive sculptural surfaces in such pieces as *Fisher's Wife* (fig. 18) and *Love and Responsibility* (fig. 19).

Although Rodin's style was not yet taken up by many Chinese sculptors, by the time Zhang returned to China in 1935, Rodin was firmly established in the country by being promoted by revolutionary writers and included in most of the survey books on Western art that flourished in the country in the 1920s and 1930s to meet the demand of students from burgeoning art schools. *On Art*, the first Chinese publication on Rodin consisting of Chinese translations of German poet Rainer Maria Rilke's essays on the sculptor and French critic Paul Gsell's *Auguste Rodin: L'Art entretiens réunis par Paul Gsell*, combined into one volume, was

published in 1930. According to Wang Zhaowen, a noted critic in China, *On Art and Trends in Modern Art*, a survey book on Western art that Lu Xun translated in 1927, were two of the most influential books on art for his generation of artists.⁴⁷

Rodin's influence among Chinese sculptors became significant in the mid-decades, when public monuments flourished in the country under government patronage. According to Wang Keqing, Rodin was the most celebrated sculptor in China by the early 1950s, when Wang went to the Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing.⁴⁸ Wang learned about the French sculptor through books and his teacher Hua Tianyou (1902-1982) trained under Charles Despiau who was Rodin's assistant for about seven years. Although Hua's works themselves were far from Rodinian expressionism, interest in Rodin was evident in the works by his pupils such as Wang Keqing and Zhang Dehua.

In contrast to Japanese sculptors' fascination with Rodin in their search for individualism, Rodinian sculptors in China gained prominence through public monuments, adopting Rodin's sculptural vocabulary to produce "works which awaken the masses, fire them with enthusiasm, and impel them to unite and struggle to transform their environment" as Mao Zedong urged.⁴⁹ Chinese sculptors interpreted Rodinian expression of intense feelings into the anger of proletarian against bourgeois, the misery of exploited farmers, or Chinese soldiers' and citizens' fervent resistance against Japanese invasion.

To emphasize their themes, creators of these monuments made their sculptural surfaces more crude and varied. For instance, in *Relief in the Memory of the May 30th Tragedy* (fig. 20), commissioned for Longhua cemetery in Shanghai, Wang Keqing left the traces of dynamic, or even violent, movement of his hands in modeling to describe the fierceness of Chinese people's resistance to Japanese army. Chinese sculptors' experimentations with sculptural surfaces became even bolder in portrait sculptures as in Wang's *Head of a Russian Elder* (figs. 21), while portrait busts and heads by Rodin tended to retain more refined surfaces with more emphasis on details.

However, in the country where collective efforts for the pursuit of socialist ideals were more emphasized than individualism and artists were expected to tune their works to a level the masses can understand, sculptors became less experimental with human forms, and partial figures were not popular subjects for Chinese sculptors before the late 20th century. Sculptors also limited their interests in Rodin's expressions of various subjects to those suitable for public monuments, and overly sensual female nudes, so abundant in Rodin's works, can hardly be found in works by Chinese sculptors.

Furthermore, sculptors in China adopted more academic styles, alongside Rodinian expressionism, for their public commissions. Pan He who has been called Rodin in China created a large number of important monuments such as

No More Patience and *March of Big Swords* in the style of Rodin. However, his *The Goddess of Zhuhai Fishers* emphasizes elegant lines with highly refined surfaces in its representation of a female deity perched high on a rock in the middle of the Zhuhai sea (fig. 22).

In the last few decades, as monuments to the revolution and to the great men decreased and public sculptures in various styles and media flourished in the booming cities of China, Rodin's influence became less direct and obvious among sculptors of the country. However, the shadow of Rodin still lingers among them. Sui Jianguo, one of the leading sculptors of the country who is rising to prominence with his *Legacy* series, said that he turned from minimal to figurative work in 1997 after reading Herbert Read's comments on Rodin's later works in *Modern Sculpture: A Concise History*.⁵⁰ Although Sui did not adopt the sculptural vocabulary of Rodin, he saw in Rodin's works the power of human figure as a sculptural subject.

Serving as the chair of the sculpture department, founded by Hua Tianyou who studied under one of Rodin's pupils, at the Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing, Professor Sui purchased a cast of *The Thinker* from the Rodin Museum in Paris in 2000 to be installed on the campus of the most prestigious art school in China (fig. 23).⁵¹ In the same year, he also acquired a plaster cast of *St. John the Baptist* with other masterpieces of Western sculpture from Classical times to

Rodin for the cast gallery of the academy (fig. 24).

Rodin had more lasting impact on the development of modern sculpture in China than in its neighboring countries. Introduced during a time of great fervor for social revolution, the sculptor was propagated as a sort of revolutionist in the country in the early 20th century. In the second half of the century, Rodinian sculptural principles were adopted for public monuments, which glorified the Communist revolution, while Rodin's highly individual expressionism being translated into social expressionism. In addition, unlike in Japan and Korea where sculptors' interest in Rodin waned by the time various other styles in contemporary sculpture from the West were introduced, interest in the sculptor remained strong in China since the country was closed off to the West, and Chinese sculptors had little contact with the changing trends in contemporary art in Western Europe and America before the late 1970s.

Rodin in Colonial Korea

In the early 20th century, the development of modern art in Korea was much slower than in Japan or in China, and books on Western art, including those on Rodin, were not written or translated into Korean during the period.

Korean artists and intellectuals who studied in Japan when enthusiasm for Rodin

was still intense in the country must have known the sculptor prior to the 1920s.

However, it was not until the early 1920s that the sculptor's name began to appear in Korean newspapers, which were allowed to be published when Japan's repressive rule in the country somewhat weakened after the March 1st Independence Movement of 1919.

The earliest accounts of Rodin published in Korea in the 1920s consisted of only a few lines or paragraphs and did not say much about the sculptor. In 1921, in an article written by Yanagi Soetsu, one of the *Shirakaba* members, translated into Korean and published on a Korean newspaper, Rodin's name was mentioned as one of the artists included in an exhibition called "The Photographic Reproductions of Masterpieces from the West" held in Seoul at the end of the year.⁵² In the following year, a report on a scandal surrounding the picture of Rodin's *Kiss* appeared in *Donga Ilbo* (Donga Daily).⁵³ According to the report, when an exhibition of photographs of Western art was held at Koryo Women's Center in Gaesung, local police confiscated the photograph of *The Kiss* and exhibition catalogs with the work on the cover. After a "long interrogation" of the organizers of the exhibition, the police promised to return the photograph but the catalogs would not be returned to prevent "moral corruption." The scandal, however, does not seem to have caused a serious public controversy over Rodin's work, given that only one very short report

about the incident appeared in the newspaper that sponsored the exhibition.

Although most of them were still fragmentary, accounts of Rodin published in Korea in the 1930s presented the sculptor as a mythical figure, or as a de facto genius in modern art. When Takamura Kotaro's *Rodin's Words* was recommended in the Valuable Book Section of *Chosun Ilbo* in 1939, the sculptor was described as "almost a saint in art," while the book would provide "knowledge on the mystery between art and human being."⁵⁴ At the end of the year, in a report on the unveiling ceremony of *Monument to Balzac* held on the Boulevard Raspail, Paris, in July, the same newspaper celebrated the final endorsement of the work by the French public:

The great sculptor Rodin's masterpiece among masterpieces, the bronze statue of the great writer Balzac, which has been the subject of criticism and hidden from the eyes of the public by being stored deep in the Rodin Museum, came out to the world recently. A grand ceremony for the installation of the statue in the historic Montparnasse, a meaningful place for both Balzac and Rodin, was held while the French Minister of Education ... and Emile Zola's descendants attended.⁵⁵

In a series of nine articles appearing in *Donga Ilbo* between February 29 and March 12, 1936, the first and only intensive account on Rodin written in Korean during the colonial period, literary critic Kim Moonjib confirmed the modern genius myth by presenting Rodin as follows:⁵⁶

Through the essence of an artwork, we experience the essence of its maker.... Rodin was a man of 'vital beauty'... Rodin was seized by restless and indomitable energy and combusted himself to express his inner life in plastic forms...⁵⁷

Defining Rodin's art as an expression of "vital beauty," a phrase that John Ruskin, according to Kim, used to describe works by J. M. W. Turner, the Korean critic drew parallels between Rodin's interest in "uncommon, ungodly, and unhealthy beauty" as expressed in *Man with Broken Nose* and "the beauty of the vice and the ugly" expressed in the writings by Edgar Allan Poe, Charles Baudelaire, and Tanizaki Junichiro:

From the masterpieces of his relatively early career such as *Man with Broken Nose* and *The Age of Bronze* to the more fundamental portraits such as *Bust of Bernard Show* and *Bust of Madame L*, to the great works based on Greek philosophy such as *Meditation*, *The Thinker*, and *Three Fates*, to the works embodying his poetic imaginations such as *Blessing*, *Fallen Angel*, *Spring*... to the works expressing human passion such as *Eternal Spring* and *Kiss*, and to the great pieces depicting human tragedy such as *The Old Courtesan*, *Burghers of Calais*, and *The Gates of Hell* (E)vident in all these works are ceaseless prayers and pursuits of 'vital beauty'... It is not strange at all that our Rodin found beauty in the nose of Mr. Bibi and expressed it in plastic forms, given that it is one of the noticeable and inevitable characteristics of modern writers such as Poe, Baudelaire, and Tanizaki Junichiro who devote themselves to the expressions of the beauty of the vice and the ugly... Rodin told Paul Gsell, the compiler of *Auguste Rodin: L'Art*, "Beauty is everywhere. It is not that she has no beauty, but that our eyes fail to perceive her beauty."⁵⁸

Kim had seen only one sculpture by Rodin, *The Kiss*, in Japan before

writing his articles on the sculptor, and Kim's argument was based on written accounts and images of Rodin's works. Whether he had been to Europe or America is unknown, but Kim had access to the early accounts of Rodin published in the West, given that the critic frequently used art terms in Western European languages, mostly in German but some in French and English, and mentioned the catalog entries of Rodin's retrospective of 1900. Referring to a broad range of Rodin literature from the first decades of the 20th century, Kim included accounts of important incidents in the sculptor's career such as the Rodin/Monet exhibition at the Georges Petit Gallery in 1889, the retrospective exhibition of 1900, the sculptor's appointment as a president of the International Society of Sculptors, Painters, and Gravers in 1903, and the opening of the Rodin Gallery at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York in 1912.

Although only a handful of accounts on Rodin were published in Korea during the first half of the 20th century, he was well known within the art community of the country at the time, and a few early modern sculptors in Korea wrote that the French sculptor was influential to their careers. Kim Bokjin, the first Western-style sculptor in the country, mentioned that his winning entry for the Japanese salon in 1925, *Female Nude* (fig. 25), was inspired by Rodin's *Eve*, while another noted artist, Kim Sejoong, decided to be a sculptor in the mid-1940s after reading Takamura Kotaro's *Rodin's Words*.

Interest in Rodinian expression was evident in the works of Korean sculptors exhibited at the country's annual salon in the 1920s and 1930s. Although they preferred less bumpy sculptural surfaces than Japanese or Chinese artists, Korean sculptors also showed interest in the Rodinian emphasis on the process of making, as can be seen in Kim Bokjin's *Bust of An Old Man* (fig. 26) and works by Kim's pupils, Ku Bonwoong and Jang Kinam (fig. 27). Given that Kim Bokjin grumbled that "mannerized Rodinian style" prevailed in the sculpture section of the 1939 salon, it is possible that there were more Korean sculptors who were interested in Rodin during the colonial period.⁵⁹ Unfortunately, however, few sculptures from the period survived the time of wars in the following decades.

Unlike their counterparts in China and Japan, Korean intellectuals showed little interest in Rodin in the early decades of the 20th century, when the country was under Japanese rule. Prioritizing independence from Japan, intellectuals of the country channeled their energy through enlightenment projects to preserve ethnic, cultural, and linguistic identities endangered by the assimilation policy of the Japanese government. It was not until the postwar years that accounts of Rodin written by Korean writers and poets began to appear in the literary magazines of the country, and the first book on the sculptor was published in Korea in 1960.

Rodin did not have passionate followers in Korea, and his influence on early modern sculptors of the country was short lived. Ku Bonwoong was converted to a Fauvist painter after 1928, while Kim Bokjin devoted himself more to Buddhist sculptures in traditional style than to modeling after the mid-1930s, when he was released from four and half years' imprisonment for his activities as a member of Proletariat Artists Association. In addition, by the time Korean modern sculpture bloomed after the Korean War (1950-53), sculptors turned to other styles in contemporary sculpture from Europe and America, and Rodin went out of fashion.

Translations: Transfer of the Myth

Writers of Northeast Asian accounts of Rodin were familiar with contemporary accounts of the sculptor published in Europe and America. In Japan, Takamura Kotaro saw the image of Rodin's *Thinker* in *The Studio*, an art magazine based in London, in 1904 and purchased Camille Mauclair's book on Rodin published in New York in the following year, when he was a student at Tokyo Art School. Mushanokoji Saneatsu was subscribing to a German art magazine, which published articles on Rodin in the early 20th century.

The first Rodin account published in China in 1919 was a Chinese translation of an article published in *Current Opinion*, a New York based literary

magazine. In addition, in his review of the Chinese translation of Arishima Takeo's account of Rodin published in 1928, Lu Xun recommended his readers to refer to a book on Rodin published in English, *The Art of Rodin* by Louis Weinberg, consisting largely of images of the sculptor's works, informing that books on Rodin written in English were easy to acquire in China at the time.⁶⁰

Korean artists and intellectuals also had access to the Western accounts of the sculptor in Japanese translations. In fact, important figures in the art world of the country such as Lee Kyungsung and Kim Sejoong, former directors of the National Museum of Modern Art of the country, mentioned that they read books on Rodin published in Japanese during the first half of the 20th century.⁶¹

Books and articles on the sculptor from Europe and America began to be translated into Northeast Asian languages, when the Rodin myth was more or less firmly established in the region. The first Japanese translation of the Western books on Rodin, *Auguste Rodin: L'Art entretiens réunis par Paul Gsell* (*L'Art*) was published in the country as early as 1914, while Takamura Kotaro's *Rodin's Words*, a Japanese translation of various writings on the sculptor and Rodin's own writing, published in Europe and America before the mid-1910s, was published in 1916. However, it was not until 1960 that the first Korean translation of a Western book on the sculptor, Rilke's essays on Rodin, was published in the country. A few books on Rodin written by European writers

were translated into Chinese in the first half of the 20th century. In the 1920s, literary critic Fu Lei, who studied literature and aesthetics in France, translated and printed 100 copies of Gsell's *L'Art* for his class on Western art in a university in Shanghai, while Zeng Juezhi published his translations of Rilke's *Rodin* and Gsell's *L'Art* in 1930. Liang Zhongdai's translation of Rilke's *Rodin* was published in 1943.

Books on Rodin were published in China even in the years between the foundation of the People's Republic of China and 1979, when the country opened her doors again to the West. A collection of Rodin's work was published in 1957, while Paul Gsell's *L'Art* was republished in China in 1978. In fact, Rodin became one of the first Western artists re-introduced to the country at the end of the 1970s, and *Meishu* magazine introduced major works by the sculptor in its September issue in 1979.

In fact, three of the most widely read books on Rodin in Northeast Asian countries were all translations of Western accounts on the sculptor; Rilke's essays on Rodin, Gsell's *L'Art*, and Takamura's *Rodin's Words*. Rilke's *Rodin* was more frequently published in Japan than in any other country in the world, while the number of Gsell's account published in Northeast Asia is more than those published in all the Western countries added together. In addition, accounts of Rodin included in Takamura's translation were published no more than a few

times in the West, but in Japan the book was published in a number of editions and reprints throughout the 20th century.⁶²

Rodin scholars in the West have agreed that German poet Rainer Maria Rilke's *Rodin*, consisting of two essays published in 1903 and 1907, was one of the most important books in the formation of the Rodin myth in the West. "Rilke's experience of Rodin had the aura of the divine about it," as Ruth Butler put it, and Rodin filtered through the eyes of the imaginative poet was "a powerful version of the Rodin myth."⁶³ In addition, being "refreshingly free of the modern jargon of masses, volumes, planes, spaces, and vectors, and so forth", Rilke's essays have been accessible to large audiences.⁶⁴ In 1965, prominent Rodin scholar Albert Elsen wrote, in the preface of a book that included his own translation of Rilke's first essay on the sculptor, that "Untold numbers of Europeans still gratefully remember these essays as their earliest and most enduring contact with Rodin's sculpture."⁶⁵

It was not only Europeans, but also a number of Americans who remembered Rilke's *Rodin*. Art historian Leo Steinberg recalled, in his famous essay on Rodin written in 1963, that as a ten year old, he saw the sculptor's works "in sepia-toned photographs" included in *Rodin*, while the book was almost the only source of reference for the reviewers of the 1963 Rodin exhibition held at the Museum of Modern Art, New York.⁶⁶ In addition, when CBS-TV

made a thirty-minute program on Rodin's works shown at the MoMA in the year, narrations for the program were culled from Rilke's book.

In fact, Rilke's *Rodin* is one of the most frequently published books on Rodin in Europe and the United States. From its first publication in Germany in 1903, the book was published a couple of dozen more times in the poet's home country. In France, it was published several times since the first French translation came out in 1903, while the first English translation was published in New York in 1919, and its first UK edition came out in 1946. Although English translation of Rilke's book had been out of print for about fifteen years by the time Elsen translated one of Rilke's essays on Rodin in 1965, Rilke's *Rodin* was translated by different people and republished several more times in the last three decades of the 20th century.

Rilke's essays also had a great contribution to the formation of the Rodin myth in Northeast Asia by being one of the most widely read books on the sculptor in the region. The first Northeast Asian translation of Rilke's *Rodin* by Zeng Juezhi was published in Shanghai in 1930, as a part of *On Art*, Chinese translations of *Rodin* and Gsell's *L'Art* combined as one volume. Liang Zongdai's translation, which was translated in the 1920s when Liang was studying in Germany and published in China in the early 1940s, has been republished in the country several times since the late 1970s. Rilke's book was

translated into Korean in 1960 and become the first and only book on the sculptor published in Korean before the mid-1970s. Being retranslated a few more times and republished at least nine times in the last four decades, the book became the most widely published book on Rodin in the country.

Rilke's *Rodin* had enormous success in Japan. The book was translated into Japanese by at least three different people, and published in several different editions from the publication of its first Japanese translation in 1941. The Iwanami edition translated by Takayasu Kunyo in 1941 was reprinted nine times until 1960, and its revised edition published in the year was reprinted twenty nine times by 2002. When other Japanese editions of the book were counted, a Japanese translation of *Rodin* was reprinted at least an average of more than once every one and half years between 1941 and 2002. No other countries, Eastern or Western, can match Japan. Among Western countries, Rilke's *Rodin* was most frequently published in Germany, but it was published an average of once every four years in the country, and a new English translation appeared about once every ten years.

Few Rodin scholars pay attention to the contribution of Gsell's *L'Art* to the spread of Rodin's international reputation. However, in the first decades of the 20th century, *L'Art*, first published in France in 1911, was the most widely published book on Rodin outside France, being translated into English, German,

Italian, Czech, and Japanese before 1918. Based on Gsell's conversations with Rodin, as the title suggests, *L'Art* focused on Rodin's own statements on art, as Gsell clarified his intention on the day he 'confided' to the sculptor his wish to write the book:

I know, I said, that Art is the least concern of our epoch. But I trust that this book may be a protest against the ideas of today. I trust that your voice may awaken our contemporaries and help them to understand the crime they commit in losing the best part of our national inheritance – an intense love of Art and Beauty.⁶⁷

Consisting largely of direct quotations of what Rodin said, each chapter of Gsell's book focuses on Rodin's ideas on such topics as movement in art, the artist and nature, the beauty of women, and classical sculptures, etc. Being rich in information about Rodin's art, *L'Art* is one of the best sources from which to grasp Rodin's ideas on his art. In addition, written in colloquial language, the book is more digestible than most other contemporary publications on Rodin. However, as Rodin's reputation declined to its lowest in the 1930s and 1940s, *L'Art* went out of print in most of the Western countries which published the book in the first decades of the 20th century. Its English translation, first published in America in 1912, for instance, had been out of print for about forty years before being republished in the 1950s, and the last English publication of the book has been out of print for more than twenty years. Gsell's book has not

been republished in France since 1932, and it has been out of print in German for about sixty years.

In contrast, Gsell's book was widely published in Japan throughout the 20th century, and it is the most frequently published books on Rodin in China in the recent years. From the publication of its first Japanese translation in 1914, *L'Art* was translated by several different people and published at least a dozen times by several different publishers until the mid-1960s. The third printing of Kimura Shohachi's translation published in 1914 came out in 1920, and Hurukawa Tatsuo's translation was published in 1942, 1946, 1954, 1955, 1964, and 1966. Mikasa Shobo's edition of Hurukawa's translation was first published on November 5, 1952, and its second printing came out less than two months later.

L'Art was also published in Japan in 1916 as a part of Takamura Kotaro's *Rodin's Words*, in which three chapters from the books and excerpts of the rest of the chapters were included. Takamura translated two more chapters from *L'Art* for his second book with the same title published in 1920. The revised edition of *Rodin's Words*, which includes all the five chapters and the excerpts of the other chapters was published by Iwanami Shoten in 1960.⁶⁸

The first formal publication of Gsell's *L'Art* in Chinese came out in 1930, when Zeng Juezhi's translations of *L'Art* and Rilke's *Rodin* were published as a

single volume. The book was republished in China at least nine times since it was published as an independent volume in 1978 and became the most widely read book on Rodin in the country in the recent years, with reprinting every year between 1999 and 2002.

L'Art was published in Korea in 1975 as a part of the Korean translation of *Rodin's Words*. Choi Kiwon, a sculptor who translated the book, added the first two chapters of *L'Art* not included in Takamura's translation, while eliminating chapter nine entitled *Mystery in Art* from the Japanese translation and editing parts of Takamura's selection of phrases from the other chapters. Although only a part of *L'Art*, the first four chapters and a selection of phrases from the rest of the chapters, was published in the country, Gsell's account made an important contribution to the spread of Rodin's reputation in Korea by being included in one of the three books on the sculptor published in Korean before the mid-1970s.

The last book that had a great contribution to the establishment of Rodin's reputation in Northeast Asia was Takamura Kotaro's *Rodin's Words*. Since his return to Japan in 1909, Takamura translated accounts of Rodin published in the West for journals and magazines of the country, and published his translations into two books with same title in 1916 and in 1920. As suggested in the title, Takamura intended to present Rodin in his own words and

selected writings known to have been Rodin's own such as "Les Cathédrales de France" and "A la Venus de Milos," in addition to accounts written by those who had close acquaintance with the sculptor and had deep admiration of his genius, such as Judith Cladel, Paul Gsell, Gustave Cocquiot, and Camille Mauclair.

Accounts by these writers seldom contain critical evaluations of Rodin's art, but are full of quotations of what the sculptor said on art.

Rodin's Words was an instant success in Japan. The first book published in 1916 was reprinted in the following year, while the second book came out in 1920, with its second printing in 1921. According to Takamura Toyochika, the book appealed not only to young artists but also to a wide range of people:

At the art school in Ueno (Tokyo Art School) all the serious students had the book. It was like Bible for Christian students, and left powerful impressions on students. Indeed, as if it were Bible for them, young art students carried *Rodin's Words* with them. The influence of the book was not superficial or technical, but something deeper. The book moved people's hearts, as fundamentals for ways of seeing and living for artists pursuing not only sculpture, but also painting and architecture, and all other arts.... Through the words of the great artist Rodin, people think about their lives... And thus, the books help not only art students, but also many people who have an urge to meditate on life.⁶⁹

Takamura's translations were published in a number of editions and prints throughout the 20th century and are still in print. In 1960 Iwanami

published a pocket-sized edition of the book, combining the two *Rodin's Words* that Takamura translated. The 31st printing of the revised edition, which added a detailed chronology of Rodin's career and more images of his works not included in the earlier editions, came out in November of 2004. In other words, the Iwanami edition was reprinted an average of less than once every one and half years.

Rodin's Words was not translated into Chinese, and its Korean translation was not published until the mid-1970s. However, writers of the earlier accounts of Rodin in both countries, mostly studied in Japan, were familiar with Takamura's book. In 1928 when Lu Xun recommended Takamura's monograph on Rodin in his review of the Chinese translation of Arishima Takeo's account of Rodin, he wrote that Takamura's book on Rodin was easy to acquire in China. While Kim Moonjib, who wrote the first intensive account of Rodin in Korea, referred to Takamura's book, *Chosun Ilbo* recommended the Japanese book to its readers in 1939, as discussed in the previous section of this chapter. On the other hand, Kim Sejoong (1928-1986) recalled the impact of *Rodin's Words* on his career as a sculptor as follows:

Rodin's words in the book made my heart pound, and gave me the confidence that sculpture is the best art among arts. Until then I had seen a few photographs of his sculptures. I searched bookstores and purchased a number of books on the sculptor,

aspiring to be a sculptor while looking at his works in those books. In college he was my “teacher”, and object of my admiration.... (Rodin’s) Words in the book refreshed me and gave me answers to unsolved problems.⁷⁰

Translations of Western books on Rodin further flourished in Northeast Asia in the late 20th century. However, no other books could beat the popularity of Rilke’s *Rodin*, Gsell’s *L’Art*, and Takamura’s *Rodin’s Words*. All written in Rodin’s lifetime by those who had personal rapport with the sculptor, these books are far from scholarly accounts grounded on facts. However, for those who had rare chances to see the sculptor’s actual works, Rodin’s voices delivered through *Rodin’s Words* and *L’Art* could be surrogates for his works, while Rilke’s poeticized *Rodin* could provide a room for imagination for those who experienced his works in photographs.

Written accounts, often accompanied by images of Rodin’s works, whose contribution to the spread of the sculptor’s reputation in the region will be discussed in the following chapter, played a crucial role in the establishment of Rodin in Northeast Asia. The Far Eastern version of the Rodin myth owed a great deal to the myth established in the West, which was transferred to the region through writings and translations by a new generation of artists and intellectuals of the region who were educated under the strong influence from the West.

¹ Elise K. Tipton and John Clark, eds., *Being Modern in Japan: Culture and Society from the 1910s to the 1930s*, 204.

² Ibid.

³ Hazama Naoki, Iwai Shigeki, Mori Tokihiko, and Kiwai Satoru, *Deita ro Bon Joongguk Geundaesa* (Chinese History in Data), trans. Isub Shin (Seoul: Shinseowon, 1999), 57 and John King Fairbank and Merle Goldman, *China: A New History* (Cambridge and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1998), 263.

⁴ The first English translation of Futurist Manifesto was not published until 1912, when the Futurist exhibition was held in London.

⁵ According to Japanese Statistics Bureau (www.stat.go.jp), the population of Tokyo reached to 3.699 million in 1920, almost doubling its size in a little more than two decades. During the same period, Osaka jumped from 1.485 to 2.587 million, and Kyoto from 0.955 to 1.287 million. Compared to the total population growth of the country, which was about 47 percent between 1898 and 1930, the population of Tokyo increased by 188 percent, Osaka 138 percent, and Kyoto 59 percent.

⁶ Kume Keiichiro, a professor in Western painting department at Tokyo Art School, was one of the Imperial Commissioners who traveled around Europe and America conducting a survey on art education for Japanese government and had been to Rodin's retrospective exhibition at the Place de l'Alma in 1900. Kume wrote a series of nine articles introducing modern French art for *Bijustu Shinbo* from May 5 to October 20 in 1902.

⁷ Ruth Butler, *Rodin: The Shape of Genius*, 356.

⁸ *Bijustu Shimpo*, 20 September 1902.

⁹ Morie Ogiwara, "Lodan to Aikyu Chokoku (Rodin and Egyptian Sculpture)," *Waseda Bungaku* (June 1908), 53-61.

¹⁰ One of the photographs, *Overview of Rodin's Studio at Meudon*, appeared in this article published in February 1910 is misdated by Kirk Varnedoe as taken around 1912 or later. See Kirk Varnedoe, "Rodin and Photography," in *Rodin Rediscovered*, Albert E. Elsen, ed. (Washington D.C: The National Gallery of Art, 1981), 225.

¹¹ *Bijutsu Shimpo* (Tokyo), 1 February 1910.

¹² Tatsuro Inagaki, *Kindai Nihon Bungaku no Fubo* (Tokyo: Miraisha, 1957), 39, quoted in *The White Birch School of Japanese Literature*, Stephen Kohl & et als, (Eugene: University of Oregon, 1975) 18.

¹³ Saneatsu Mushanokoji, "Lodan to Jinsei (Rodin and Life)," *Shirakaba* (November 1910), 73.

¹⁴ Letter dated September 11, 1902. Rainer Maria Rilke, *Briefe*, 266, quoted by in *Rodin in Perspective*, ed. Ruth Butler, 16.

¹⁵ Kotaro Takamura, *Rodan no Gotoba* (Rodin's Words) (Tokyo: Oranda Shobo, 1916), 1.

¹⁶ According to Ruth Butler, *Head of St. John the Baptist* in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art was purchased by an American art agent George A. Lucas in March 1888 for Samuel P. Avery in New York. Avery donated the head to the museum in 1893, and the sculpture became the first Rodin to enter an American public collection. See Ruth Butler, "Rodin and His American Collectors," in *The Documented Image: Visions in Art History*, Gabriel P. Weisberg and Laurinda S. Dixon, eds. (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1987), 89.

¹⁷ Kotaro Takamura, *A Brief History of Imbecility: Poetry and Prose of Takamura Kotaro*, trans. Sato Hiroaki (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1992), 189.

¹⁸ For Takamura Kotaro's study in America, Iwamura Toru, a professor at Tokyo Art School, wrote a letter of recommendation to Daniel Chester French, and French wrote a letter of recommendation to Borglum for Kotaro's assistantship to the sculptor.

¹⁹ Ilene Susan Fort, "The Cult of Rodin and the Birth of Modernism in America," in *The Figure in American Sculpture: A Question of Modernity*, ed. Hilton Kramer (New York: National Academy of Design, 1996), 30.

²⁰ Takamura, *A Brief History of Imbecility*, 180.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 169-71.

²² Maya Mortimer, *Meeting the Sensei: The Role of the Master in Shirakaba Writers*, (Leiden/Boston/Koln: Brill, 2000), 75-6.

²³ Fumio Asakura, *Shirakaba* (February, 1910), 113-14.

²⁴ Taketaro Shinkai, "Lodan Sama (Sir Rodin)," *Shirakaba* (February 1912), 84-5.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 86-7.

²⁶ See Albert Elsen, *The Partial Figure in Modern Sculpture from Rodin to 1969* (Baltimore, Maryland: The Baltimore Museum of Art, 1969).

²⁷ While staying in Paris, Ogiwara visited Rodin's studio in Meudon and met the master. It is likely that the Japanese sculptor saw the plaster cast of *Walking Man*, which was exhibited in his retrospective at the Paris Exposition Universelle of 1900 and kept in Rodin's studio afterward. For Ogiwara's visit to Meudon, see Morie Ogiwara, "Lodan to Aikyu Chokoku (Rodin and Egyptian Sculpture)," *Waseda Bunkaku* (June 1908), 60.

²⁸ *Yomiuri* (Tokyo), 16 February 1921.

²⁹ *Shirakaba* members sent a copy of the Rodin issue of the magazine and 30 Japanese woodcut prints to Rodin in 1910. Rodin, in his turn, sent his Japanese admirers three small bronzes, *Head of a Ruffian*, *Bust of Madame Rodin*, and *Little Shadow*, and these sculptures were exhibited at the *Shirakaba* exhibition.

³⁰ Zedong Mao and Edgar Snow, *Red Star over China*, trans. Bongrok Shin (Seoul: Pyungminsa, 1985), 73.

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- ³¹ Zhou Enlai's diary of February 16, 1918, quoted by Li Ping in the *Zhou Enlai Pyungjeon (Life of Zhou Enlai)*, trans. Yuyoung Her (Seoul: Haneulmidia, 1921), 72.
- ³² Sichun Li, "Pingmin Huajia Milezhuan (People's Painter Millet)," *Shaonian Zhongguo*, no. 2-2 (February, 1920).
- ³³ This postcard is in the collection of Tianjin History Museum.
- ³⁴ "Rodin: Last of the Old and First of the New," *Current Opinion* 54, no. 1 (January, 1918), 47-49, Luo Luo, trans., "Luting zhi Yishu (Art of Rodin)," *Dongfang Zazhi* 16, no. 6 (June 1916): 89-93.
- ³⁵ Moruo Guo, "Feitusong (Gangster Ode)," *Shishi Xinbao-Xuedeung* (Shanghai), January 23, 1920.
- ³⁶ Baihua Zong, *Shaonian Zhongguo (Chinese Boy)*, vol. 2, no. 10 (April, 1921), 11-12.
- ³⁷ *Ibid.*, 13-4.
- ³⁸ Xun Lu, "Xingfu Yizhe Fuji (Translator's Notes for Happiness)," in *Lu Xun QuANJI (Lu Xun Anthology)*, vol. 10 (Beijing: Renmin Wenxue chubanshe, 1989), 173.
- ³⁹ Lu, "Benliu Bianjiao Houji (Editor's Notes of Torrent)," in *Lu Xun QuANJI*, vol. 7, 165-7.
- ⁴⁰ Wang Zhang, *Lu Xun Lun Meishu (Lu Xun on Art)* (Beijing: Renmin Meishu Chubanshe, 1956), 1-5.
- ⁴¹ Zedong Mao and Edgar Snow, *Mao Zedong Jajeon*, 63.
- ⁴² Duxiu Chen, "Meishu Geming - Da Lu Cheng (Art Revolution- Answering to Lu Cheng)," *Xinqingnian* 6, no. 6 (January 1919), quoted in Chen Shiqing, "Dajian Pangguan Jiyun Hongzhi: Chen Du Xiu yu Zhongguo Jinxiandai Meishu (Chen Duxiu and Chinese Modern Art)," *Meishu Yanjiu* 2 (2002), 22.
- ⁴³ *Wenxue Yishu Yanjiuyuan Meishu Yangiusuo (Art Research Center of Art and Literature Research Institute)*, *Zhou Zongli Guanhuai Meishu Shiye (Premier Zhou's Interest in Art)* (Beijing: Renmin Meishu Chubanshe, 1979), 20.
- ⁴⁴ Zedong Mao, "On Literature and Art," in *Marxism and Art: Writings in Aesthetics and Criticism*, Berel Lang and Forrest Williams, eds. (New York: David McKay, 1972), 281-300.
- ⁴⁵ Siqi Ai, *Wenyijia Xiehui Chengli zhiride Ganxiang, Guangming* 1 no. 2, quoted in Chiyu Chen, *Zhongguo Xiandai Meishuxueshi (History of Modern Chinese Art)*, 121.
- ⁴⁶ Michael Sullivan, *Art and Artists of the Twentieth Century China*, 46.
- ⁴⁷ For Wang Zhaowen's accounts of Rodin, see various writings included in *Diaoke Diaoke (Sculpture Sculpture)*, *Wang Zhaowenji (Wang Zhaowen Anthology)* vol. 15 and Wang's newspaper article "Rodin is Always Alive," published in *Wen Hui* on April 24, 1993.
- ⁴⁸ Keqing Wang, interview by author, 29 September 2005, Tongxian, China.

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- ⁴⁹ Zedong Mao, "On Literature and Art," 114.
- ⁵⁰ Jianguo Sui, interview by author, 21 September 2005, Beijing.
- ⁵¹ *The Thinker* Sui purchased from the Rodin Museum in Paris in 2000 was originally cast in fiberglass. However, as the cast deteriorated in the harsh weather and pollution of Beijing, it was recast in bronze.
- ⁵² A series of three articles written by Soetsu Yanagi, entitled *Seogu Myunghwa Bokjae Jeonramhoi Gaechoie daehaya I-III* ((On the Opening of the Exhibition of Photographic Reproductions of Masterpieces from the West I-III) appeared in *Donga Ilbo* from December 2~4, 1921.
- ⁵³ *Donga Ilbo*, 31 July 1922.
- ⁵⁴ *Chosun Ilbo*, 14 September 1939.
- ⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 27 December 1939.
- ⁵⁶ Moonjib Kim, "Lodang eui Yesul gwa Geundaejok Acmajueuijok Ilmyun: Jogak 'Balzac' shang gwa Kobbajin Sanayi I~IX (Rodin's Art and An Aspect of Modern Satanism: Monument to Balzac and Man with Broken Nose I~IX), *Donga Ilbo*, February 29, March 1, 3, 4~6, 8, 10, 12, 1936.
- ⁵⁷ Moonjib Kim, *Donga Ilbo*, 1 March 1936.
- ⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 4 March 1936.
- ⁵⁹ Bokjin Kim, "Mijon Review," *Maeil Shinbo*, 12 June 1939.
- ⁶⁰ Xun Lu, "Benliu Bianjiao Houji (Editor's Notes of Torrent), Lu Xun Quanji, vol. 7," 166.
- ⁶¹ Sejoong Kim, "Rodaeng gua Na (Rodin and I)," in *Chosun Ilbo*, 25 July 1985.
- ⁶² The publication data mentioned in this section have been gathered by researching library catalogues, publishers' lists, listings of second-hand bookstores, etc.
- ⁶³ Ruth Butler, *Rodin in Perspective*, 17.
- ⁶⁴ Elsen, *Auguste Rodin: Readings on His Life and Work* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1965), 8.
- ⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 9.
- ⁶⁶ Leo Steinberg, *Other Criteria* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972), 322.
- ⁶⁷ Paul Gsell, *Rodin on Art and Artists*, Romilly Fedden, trans. (New York: Dover Publications, 1983), 1-2.
- ⁶⁸ The number of reprints of *Rodin's Words* is given at the end of the book published in 2004.

⁶⁹ Quoted by Tamaki Azuma, *Kindai Chokoku Seimei no Zoukei* (Sculpting Life: The Youth of Rodinism) (Tokyo: Bijutsu Korosha, 1985), 134-5.

⁷⁰ Sejoong Kim, *Chosun Ilbo*, 25 July 1985.

3. In Pictures: Rodin in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction

From his lifetime to the present, Rodin's works have been disseminated across the world through reproductions of various kinds, and his *Thinker* became one of the most widely reproduced art works of all time. The work appeared in books, magazines, newspapers, and on mugs, badges, T-shirts, and mouse pads, while being incorporated into such three-dimensional objects as clocks, bookends, and key rings. Artists and cartoonists have often parodied *The Thinker*, while replicas of the sculpture in various sizes and qualities were distributed not only by major Rodin collections, but also by commercial enterprises and private collectors.

Small replicas of *The Thinker* were once popular decorative items for homes and schoolrooms in Europe and America. A number of reviewers of the 1963 Rodin exhibition held at the Museum of Modern Art in New York recalled their first encounters with the sculpture as a replica, while British writer William Golding, in an article published in 1961, also brought up his boyhood memory of seeing "a naked, muscular gentleman, who sat, looking down, with his chin on his fist and his elbow on his knee" and "seemed utterly miserable," in his schoolmaster's office.¹

However, by the mid-20th century, or even earlier, *The Thinker* became a cultural cliché in the West and did not receive much attention in any of the major Rodin exhibitions held in Europe and America during the second half of the century. In contrast, since the mid-decades, the sculpture has received more attention than any other work by Rodin in Northeast Asia. *The Thinker* was included in the schoolbooks on art in Japan and Korea in the 1950s and in China at the end of the century. Receiving great attention from the press and the public at the Rodin exhibitions held in the three countries, the sculpture appeared frequently on the invitation cards and on the covers of the catalogs of those exhibitions. An elementary school in Japan awards small replicas of the sculpture as trophies for children who show excellence in science each year, while Chinese collections acquired at least three casts of *The Thinker* in the last several years. In addition, tabletop-sized replicas of the sculpture are still available at the souvenir shops in the three countries.

In Northeast Asia, *The Thinker* has often been associated with a type of Buddhist sculpture, which depicts a Bodhisattva seating with his hand on his chin and his elbow on his knee, flourished in the region in the 6th and 7th century. In Japan, *The Thinker* and the seated Bodhisattva at Koruji, one of the most treasured Buddhist sculptures of the country, appeared side by side in an art book for 9th graders published in 1957 (fig. 28). In Korea, a number of articles

comparing *The Thinker* and a Korean version of the Buddhist statue were published in the later decades of the 20th century, while side views of the two sculptures were incorporated into an advertisement for annual admission of Dongguk University in 2005 (fig. 29). The two thinkers also appeared together on the shopping bags made to promote a training program for museum staff members that the Central Academy of Fine Arts, National Bureau of Cultural Property of China, and Institut National du Patrimoine de France co-organized in Beijing in 2005 (fig. 30).

By the time Rodin exhibitions began to be held in Japan, Korea, and China, *The Thinker* was the most widely recognized work by the sculptor in the three countries. However, an example of the sculpture itself was not exhibited in Korea before 1985 or in China before 1993. In Japan, although it was exhibited a few times in the early 20th century, *The Thinker* was also rarely seen for about three decades before 1959. Meanwhile, Northeast Asians experienced the sculpture and other works by Rodin through pictures appearing in books, magazines, newspapers, and exhibitions.

In the early 20th century, images of Rodin's works had powerful influences on Northeast Asian artists and intellectuals who made important contributions to the formation of the Rodin myth in the region. In 1910 before seeing any of the actual works by Rodin, Muchanokoji Saneatsu wrote the

laudatory article on the sculptor, published in the Rodin issue of *Shirakaba* magazine, quoted in the previous chapter. A few leading figures in Japanese modern sculpture left accounts on the impact of their first encounters with pictures of *The Thinker*. In 1904 Takamura Kotaro saw a small photograph of the sculpture that appeared in the February 1904 issue of *The Studio* magazine and wrote:

It was the first time that I saw a photograph of a sculpture by Rodin.... I was struck with *The Thinker*. It was nothing like the Western sculptures that I had seen before. It was simple but presented the vigor of a living creature.... I immediately wanted to know more about the sculptor.²

Takamura's urge to "know more about the sculptor" ignited by the image of *The Thinker* was strong enough to lead him to purchase Camille Mauclair's *Auguste Rodin: The Man-His Idea-His Works* soon after its English publication in 1905. The poet, critic, and sculptor is known to have read the book so many times that he memorized the whole book, and he wrote, edited, and translated a large number of accounts on Rodin in the 1910s and 20s, while he himself practiced Rodinian sculptural principles.

A picture of *The Thinker* also had a powerful influence on another Japanese sculptor, Nakahara Teiichiro, who confessed to a friend, sometime before 1908, about his encounter with the enlarged print of the sculpture that he purchased on a street market in Tokyo:

Look at this! I've never heard of this sculptor, but his work is as powerful as Michelangelo's. Look at these lines! Look at the mountain-like line! ... Last night I tried to draw after this with charcoal pencil, but no matter how hard I tried, it only got bigger and bigger. Even when I used two sheets of paper, I couldn't fit it in. I couldn't help feeling the mountain-like line was getting longer indefinitely.³

While Nakahara became one of the most passionate Rodinian sculptors in Japan soon after his encounter with the image of *The Thinker*, Wang Zhaowen made sculptures after Rodin with pictures of his works at hand, when the Chinese critic went to an art school in Hangzhou in the 1930s.⁴ In the mid-decades, leading sculptors in China and Korea such as Kim Sejoong, Pan He, Wang Keqing, and Zhang Duhua began practicing Rodinian sculptural vocabulary before seeing any works by the master.

Being more widely circulated in Japan and Korea from the 1950s and in China from the late 1970s, images of Rodin's works also played an important role in the public recognition of the sculptor in the three countries. In their interviews with local newspapers, visitors to Rodin exhibitions in the three countries expressed excitement at seeing actual works by the sculptor that they had known through pictures.

Since the Rodin myth in Northeast Asia was established, in large part, before actual works by the sculptor were shown in the region, the discussion of the growth of Rodin's reputation in China, Japan, and Korea requires careful

examination of the images of the sculptor's works that circulated in each country. Aiming to find clues to the phenomenal success of the first Rodin exhibitions in the three countries held during the second half of the 20th century, the subject of the next chapter, this chapter will review images of the sculptor's works shown in China, Japan, and Korea from the first years of the century to the three exhibitions. Focusing on several of the most likely sources through which images of the sculptor's works were disseminated in the Far East, this chapter will show that the Rodin myth in each country owed a great deal to the wide circulation of images of his sculptures.

Books, Magazines, and Newspapers

Accounts on Western art including those of Rodin dramatically increased in Northeast Asia in the first decades of the 20th century as a number of art schools teaching Western-style art were founded and official salons began to be held in the region. As Yanagi Soetsu wrote in 1921, a large number of images of works by Western artists were being circulated in Japan where publications on Western art flourished first and most thoroughly in the region:

Ten years ago nobody paid attention to these works. But all of a sudden, *Shirakaba* magazine, with great affection, began to introduce art from the West every month. By now all of the prestigious magazines on art and literature have followed our lead, dealers specialized in photographic reproductions of these works began to appear, and an extraordinary amount of these

reproductions appeared in the street markets. And a large number of books on recent art have been imported...⁵

Although less prominent than in Japan, accounts of Western art also increased in China and Korea in the early 20th century. While newspapers, women's magazines, and religious magazines in Korea introduced Western art in the 1920s, political magazines in China promoted Western art as an important part of enlightenment projects, as mentioned in the previous chapter. In addition, books on Western art published in Japan were accessible in both countries, while those from Europe and America became more available in China as the country's contact with the West increased in the 1920s and 1930s.

Images of Rodin's works began to appear in art and literary magazines in Japan in the late 1900s. *Monument to Balzac, The Thinker, The Age of Bronze, Man with Broken Nose, Spring*, and a few other works by the sculptor were illustrated in *Bijutsu Shimpo*, one of the quality art journals of the time, before early 1910, while the Rodin issue of *Shirakaba* magazine published in the following November presented a number of images of the sculptor's works including *Eve, Burghers of Calais, Walking Man*, and *Old Courtisan*.

Beginning in the mid 1910s, a number of books on Rodin were published in Japan during the first half of the 20th century, including Japanese translations of Gsell's *L'Art*, Rilke's *Rodin* and Takamura's *Rodin's Words*, as discussed in the

previous chapter. However, emphasizing what Rodin said, books on the sculptor published in Japan in the early decades often included no more than a handful of images. In addition, most of these pictures were small, while their quality was lower than those appearing in art magazines at the time.

Other than a few exceptions, Rodin's works seldom appeared in the newspapers and popular magazines in Japan until the late 1950s, when the sculptor received great attention from the press of the country by being the most representative artist of the famous Matsukata collection that returned from France. Japanese businessman Matsukata Kojiro (1865-1950) began to purchase Rodin's works soon after the sculptor's death in 1917. According to the list included in an insurance policy that the Japanese collector purchased for his collection in 1937, 54 sculptures and 17 drawings and watercolors by Rodin were in his collection.⁶ Most of Rodin's works acquired by Matsukata were stored at the Musée Rodin along with some 300 works by other European artists that he also collected, while four of Matsukata's Rodins, *The Thinker*, *The Gates of Hell*, *Burghers of Calais*, and *Torso* were kept at Eugène Rudier's foundry at Malakoff near Paris.

According to Japanese scholars, Matsukata accumulated over a thousand works by European artists and left parts of his collection in London and Paris because of Japan's custom tax law of 1924 that charged 100 percent tax for art

works.⁷ About 300 pieces stored in a warehouse in London were destroyed in a fire in 1939, while those stored at the Rodin Museum became French property at the end of World War II. In March 1958, after protracted negotiations between the French and Japanese governments, the National Education Committee of the French National Assembly “unanimously” approved to return the collection to Japan, although some works “chosen for the interest they present to complete France’s national collections” remained in France.⁸

In April 1959, fifty-three sculptures by Rodin returned to the collector’s home with some 300 works by other prominent artists in European modern art, Claude Monet, Edouard Manet, Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Paul Gauguin, Paul Cézanne, and Pablo Picasso, just to name a few.⁹ Returned to Japan when the country had recovered from the postwar devastation and was emerging as the world’s third-largest economy, the Matsukata collection, which was once confiscated by one of the Allies as enemy property, could take on more symbolic meaning for the Japanese people.

Representing the collection, Rodin once again struck a nerve in Japan. Reports on the return of the Matsukata collection and on the opening of the National Museum of Western Art in Tokyo, which was built to house the collection, were often accompanied by photographs of Rodin’s works or pictures including his works.¹⁰ In addition, the sculptor’s works appeared in all kinds of

magazines of the country from fashion magazines to hairdressers', teenagers', housewives', and business magazines in the years following the opening of the museum.

In many ways, Rodin's popularity in Japan in the mid-decades resonates *Lodanizumu* of the late Meiji period. In fact, it was as if the Meiji period reoccurred in the country under the Allied Occupation (1945-52). Japan once again underwent dramatic social, political, and cultural reforms under the strong influence from the West, especially from America, to implant Western-style democracy in the island. While Rodin's work lured Japanese artists and intellectuals in the first decades of the 20th century, when the country was emerging as a colonial empire, enthusiasm for the sculptor, this time far broader in scope, was being revived in Japan, when the country was reemerging as a world's power.

Images of Rodin's works were seldom published in Korea in the early 20th century, and the most likely sources for Koreans to see the sculptor's works during the period were books and magazines from Japan. Given that a number of Japanese books on Rodin published in the early decades remain in the collections of the university libraries in the country, and in 1946, a year after the country's independence from Japan, Seoul National University used the image of *The Thinker* as a part of the design for the official buckle for its School of Humanities

(fig. 31), Rodin was known among the learned population of the country during the colonial period. However, Japanese books on Rodin were unlikely to have reached many Korean readers during the period, when less than one percent of its population received middle school or higher education.¹¹

Several articles on Rodin were published in Korea in the 1950s, but few of them included images of the sculptor's works. *St. John the Baptist Preaching* and *Bust of Madame Morla Vincuña*, illustrated in the first survey book on Western art of the country published in 1959 were among the few traceable examples of Rodin's works published in Korea before 1960. The quality of the two images included in the Korean translation of Salomon Reinach's *Apollo: Histoire générale des arts plastiques* was much lower than those published in the West.

Beginning in 1960, a few books on Rodin from Europe and Japan were translated into Korean before the first exhibition devoted to the sculptor was held in the country in 1985. Other than the enlarged, hard-covered volume consisting of a large number of color pictures of works by Rodin and Antoine Bourdelle translated from Japanese in 1973, books on Rodin published in Korea before the mid-1980s were small paperbacks including a handful of black-and-white images which were often too dark.

The earliest accounts of Rodin published in China seldom included images of the sculptor's works other than a few exceptions such as the first Rodin account

published in the country in the summer of 1919, which included several extremely blurry images of the sculptor's works.¹² In addition, only a few books devoted to the sculptor were published in the country in the early 20th century. The most likely sources through which Rodin's works were transmitted in China during the period were survey books on Western art which flourished in the 1920s and 1930s, when a number of professional art schools which taught Western-style art were founded in the country.

Most of the survey books published in China in the early 20th century were small paperbacks, about 5 by 7.5 inches, and images of Rodin's works included in these books were mostly small and dim as can be seen in the picture of *The Thinker* appeared in a survey book on Western art published in Shanghai in 1925 (fig. 32). Since accounts on Western art, including those of Rodin, stopped being published in the country during the mid-decades when the country underwent severe social and political turmoil, images of the sculptor's works available in China during the period were those published in the early decades.

Accounts of the sculptor began to reappear in the books and magazines in China at the end of the 1970s. However, the printing technology of the country in the 1970s and 1980s was not significantly improved from that of the early decades, and most of Rodin's works published in China from the late 1970s to the early 1990s, when the economic spurt of the country began, were about the same

quality as those circulated in the early decades. A small number of color pictures of the sculptor's works, such as *The Thinker* included in *Meishu* magazine in 1979, which was a reprint of a picture from a Japanese book published in 1971, appeared in the Chinese art magazines. But the black and white pictures dominated the images of the sculptor's works transmitted in China before her first Rodin exhibition.

Rodin's works shown in Northeast Asia through books, magazines, and newspapers before the first Rodin exhibition of each country were mostly in mediocre or low quality black-and-white photographs, often being reproduced from those published in the West or in Japan, in the case of China and Korea. Some were too dark, while others were too blurry. Many were cropped or enlarged to the extent that magnified printing dots disturb the vivid description of the work. Images published in Japan were, in general, of better quality than those circulated in China and Korea, but even in Japan prints of Rodin's works varied and were never good enough to present the quality of the originals.

Exhibitions of Photographic Reproductions of Western Art

Before exhibitions of original works of art from the West began to flourish in Japan in the late 1950s, in Korea in the early 1970s, and in China in the early 1980s, most people in the three countries experienced works by Western

artists through various forms of reproductions such as copies, casts, lithographs, and photographs. Casts and copies of Western artworks were used in Japanese art schools from the late 19th century. As can be seen in a drawing by Vincenzo Ragusa which depicts a drawing class at Kofu Art School (fig. 33), casts of Western sculptures from the Classical period were used at the school as early as 1878, while Tokyo Art School had a large collection of casts of Western sculptures, mostly from the Classical period to the Renaissance, by the first decade of the 20th century. On the other hand, Japanese artists copied a large number of Western paintings in the museums across Europe from the late 19th century. About a hundred of these copies were exhibited in Tokyo in 1958, while those painted by Kuroda Seiiki and Kume Keichiro still remain in the collection of the Tokyo National University of Fine Arts and Music (formerly Tokyo Art School) where these masters in modern Japanese art began to teach at the end of the 19th century.

With increasing interest in Western art among Chinese artists and intellectuals in the early 20th century, China also had great demands for reproductions of Western art. Plaster casts of Western sculptures were imported or made for exhibitions or for use at the newly founded art schools of the country (fig. 34). According to Chinese art historian Kao Meiching, it was an important mission for Chinese artists in Europe in the 1920s and 1930s to copy

European paintings to be brought home, as Liu Haisu, a Western style painter in China who studied in Paris in the 1920s, wrote in 1929:

I have arranged with a dozen of comrades studying art here (Paris) to visit the Louvre every afternoon and to copy the masterpieces from the Renaissance on... There are some artists who go to other museums to copy more recent works. After two or more years, we may be able to gather one hundred or more paintings to contribute to the (Chinese) Ministry of Education for the purpose of establishing a national museum.¹³

Korea did not have much direct contact with Western art during the colonial period, and no record of the copies of Western paintings being exhibited in the country has been found yet. But plaster casts of Western sculptures were used for drawing classes in Korean schools during the period. In fact, drawing plaster casts of Classical sculptures constituted an important part of the entrance exam for art schools of the country from the mid-decades, and some art schools still require plaster drawing for entering students.

While copies and casts of Western artworks were more or less circulated within the small artistic circles of China, Japan, and Korea, photographs, which were cheaper and easier to reproduce, were transmitted more widely in the three countries. In addition to the images appearing in books, magazines, and newspapers, enlarged prints of the photographs of Western art works, including those of Rodin, were exhibited across Japan in the early 20th century, as Yanagi

Soetsu wrote in 1921:

Various organizations in Tokyo, Kyoto, and Osaka organized countless exhibitions of this kind. These exhibitions were held, not only in big cities, but also in the far north to Hokkaido, in the middle to Honshu, and in the south to Kyushu, and always attracted several hundred people. We witnessed that the exhibitions were successful even in the very remote countryside.¹⁴

Although not as extensive as in Japan, beginning in 1921 with the two exhibitions organized by Yanagi, a number of the exhibitions of photographs of Western art were held in Korea in the following decades. It is possible that photographs of Western artworks were exhibited in China, given that demands for reproductions of Western artworks were strong in the country, and Chinese intellectuals had close contacts with *Shirakaba* members who organized the photograph exhibitions in Japan and Korea.¹⁵ However, any records related to the photograph exhibitions have not been found in China, whose history of modern art is yet to be much analyzed.

The photograph exhibitions received more press attention in Korea than in Japan in the early 20th century, probably because Western art was still a rarity in the country, while it was not new in Japan, having been taught and practiced for a few decades before those exhibitions flourished in the country. Other than a number of catalogs, documents related to the photograph exhibitions can hardly be found in Japan, while accounts of those held in Korea were published

in the newspapers of the country.

Yanagi Soetsu organized the first two exhibitions of the kind in Korea at the end of 1921. As other *Shirakaba* members, Yanagi was interested in Rodin. In fact, he was the one who went to Yokohama to pick up the three sculptures that Rodin sent to the group in 1911 and had *Head of Madame Rodin* in his house in the 1910s, as can be seen in a picture of Yanagi in his study taken in 1913 (fig. 35). The photographs of Western artworks shown at the exhibitions in Seoul were brought by Yanagi from Japan and included a large number of works by Rodin.

Being held at the headquarters of the official newspaper of the Japanese colonial government, the first exhibition that Yanagi organized in Seoul did not attract many Korean visitors, as mentioned in the previous chapter. However, the second exhibition received great public attention from the first day as Yanagi expected when he wrote the article appeared in a Korean newspaper a few days before opening of the exhibit:

In Kyungsung (now Seoul) we organized an exhibition of reproductions of works by Western artists, which had been tested in Japan for last ten years. There are people who think this exhibition is too ahead of time in Korea but I do not think so... I am confident that the exhibition will leave deep impression on young Koreans...¹⁶

Since Korea had few art galleries in the early 20th century, art exhibitions

were often held in schools over the weekends or in churches during the week. The exhibition opened at Bosung High Normal School where a number of art exhibitions were held in the 1920s. Displayed in five different classrooms of the school were about 230 photographs of “masterpieces selected from the most famous artworks from the West” from ancient Greek to modern times, including works by Giotto, Michelangelo, da Vinci, Rembrandt, Cézanne, van Gogh, and Rodin.¹⁷ According to *Donga Ilbo*, pictures shown at the exhibition were of the best possible quality at the time, and the newspaper went so far as to write that they were “good enough to present the quality of the originals.”¹⁸

Although a large number of quality pictures of Rodin’s works were shown at the exhibition in Seoul, the sculptor did not receive much attention from the Korean press in 1921. However, in the following year, the first Korean account of Rodin appeared in a newspaper, when a photograph of his *Kiss* caused controversy at an exhibition of photographs of Western Art held in Gaesung. It is very likely that the same set of pictures that Yanagi brought from Japan for the exhibitions in Seoul was shown in the northern city, given that a newspaper reported that the two hundred some photographs shown at the exhibition were borrowed from the Korean National Museum that Yanagi proposed.¹⁹

While no record that Rodin’s works caused any controversy in Seoul has

been found, in Gaesung the police confiscated the photograph of Rodin's *Kiss* and the exhibition catalogs, as mentioned in the previous chapter. Reporting the incidence, *Donga Ilbo* criticized the police for being "senseless," but the newspaper did not publish the image of *The Kiss*, like other newspapers of the time that were not allowed to publish images of artworks depicting nudes, so as "not to instigate irrelevant excitement among naïve people."²⁰

The photographs of Western artworks continued to be exhibited in Korea until the late 20th century, although they did not receive attention from the press after the 1920s. According to Lee Kyungsung who began his career as an art critic in the Korean art world in the late colonial period, a number of exhibitions featuring photographs of Western art were held in the country in the mid-decades, and there was a commercial gallery specialized in exhibiting photographs of Western artworks near his house in Yoido, Seoul, in the early 1980s.²¹

Although records on the gallery have not been found, in an interview with *Chosun Ilbo* the day before the opening of the first Rodin exhibition in Korea, a citizen confirmed that there was a gallery in Yoido in the early 1980s, which exhibited photographs of Western art.²² According to the interview, the gallery had an exhibition of the photographs of Rodin's works about a year before the Rodin exhibition per se was held in Seoul in 1985.

The catalogs of the photographs of Western art exhibitions held in Japan, which seldom include images but have lists of works exhibited, confirm Yanagi's claim that a large number of works by Rodin were included in many of those exhibitions, especially those organized by *Atarashi Mura* led by Muchanokiji Saneatsu.²³ Some of these exhibitions focused on modern art, but many consisted of a few hundred pictures of famous pieces in the history of Western art from the Classical period to modern times. As in Korea, these exhibitions were often held in such places as public schools, libraries, and local cultural centers rather than galleries and exhibition halls in Japan.

Often being exhibited with a couple of hundred other masterpieces from the history of Western art, as can be seen in a photograph taken at an exhibition of this kind held in Nagoya in 1926 in which unframed pictures of Western artworks were rather crowdedly displayed (fig. 36), Rodin's works might not have received particular attention at the photograph exhibitions. However, being held in the places more accessible to people outside art world in Japan and Korea, when Rodin's reputation remained more or less within artistic and intellectual communities of the two countries, the photograph exhibitions provided rare opportunities for people in both countries to see quality pictures of the sculptor's works. However, these exhibitions, which had an important contribution not only to the spread of Rodin's reputation, but also to the

expansion of Western art in Japan and Korea, and possibly in China, have not received any scholarly attention in the three countries.

Secondary School Art Books

Schoolbooks on art published in Northeast Asia between the late 19th and early 20th century focused on developing Western-style drawing skills and seldom introduced individual artists from the West. However, in the second half of the 20th century, art textbooks of the region began to introduce a brief history of Western art. Taking comparative approaches, art textbooks in Northeast Asian countries included a small number of artworks from non-Western culture, but they focused primarily on comparing Korean, Chinese, or Japanese art with that of the West. Chinese schoolbooks introduced more Russian and Eastern European artworks, but their foreign art sections still consisted largely of Western art, more significantly in the pages for modern art.

On one hand, these schoolbooks reveal that Northeast Asian countries still defined their own culture in terms of the West, the powerful other. On the other hand, comparing Northeast Asian art with that of the West, these textbooks displayed the three countries' pride in their own culture. An example of this can be seen in a middle school textbook from Japan, which presented Rodin's *Thinker*, alongside the Bodhisattva at Koruji (fig. 28), mentioned at the beginning

of this chapter. Taking comparative approach, the textbook asks students to compare the two thinkers and to “think about the differences between art of the East and the West.”²⁴ However, the author implied that Japanese art was more advanced than that of the West by creating parallels between *The Thinker* and the Buddhist sculpture, which was created a dozen centuries earlier than Rodin’s.

Similar rhetoric can also be found in an advertisement appeared in a Korean newspaper, in which an image of *Seated Bodhisattva in Meditation* is placed as if he is looking down at the Western thinker (fig. 29). Articles comparing *The Thinker* and the Buddhist statue published in Korean newspapers and magazines in the 1980s and 1990s tended to emphasize the superiority of the Korean version of the thinker. The Western *Thinker* was thought to look as if he is suffering rather than contemplating, while the Korean sculpture was admired for meditating peacefully in a graceful posture.

Rodin’s works began to appear either in the sculpture section, or in the history of Western art section of textbooks in Korea and Japan in the mid-1950s and in China in 1990. Art class has been required up until the 9th grade in China and Japan and the 10th grade in Korea. In high school, Japanese students have still been required to choose one class from music, crafts, art, or calligraphy, while art has been an elective in China and Korea. Thus, those who received a secondary education in each country after the inclusion of Rodin’s works in its

textbooks could hardly miss the images of his works.

Art books for junior high and high school students in Japan published in the 1950s and 1960s included almost exclusively *The Thinker*, while Rodin's other works, such as *The Age of Bronze*, *Burghers of Calais*, and *Monument to Balzac* appeared more frequently from the 1970s. It comes to no surprise that the authors of the Japanese textbooks chose *The Thinker* to represent Rodin's works, as the sculptor himself had been esteemed as a grand thinker in the country since the first decade of the 20th century. In addition, the posture of *The Thinker* easily reminded the Japanese people of the Bodhisattva statue at Koruji.

In the 1950s Japanese textbooks presented *The Thinker* mostly from side views (fig. 37), and its images were often trimmed to focus on the face or on the upper body of the statue (figs. 38). Given that artworks depicting nudes were controversial in Japan since the late 19th century, and Rodin's *Kiss* had been removed from public display when exhibited at the Modern French Art Exhibition held in Tokyo in 1924, it was likely that the lower part of *The Thinker* was trimmed because of its nudity.

The Thinker was seldom reproduced in the Korean textbooks from the mid-decades and those of China in the early 1990s. Images of fully clad final version of *Burghers of Calais* were used instead. The work, depicting a group of citizens who sacrificed themselves to save the seized city of Calais and to relieve

its people from suffering, was more suitable for the textbooks of the two countries. Korea had become an independent state only a decade earlier, after being occupied for 35 years by Japan, while Communist China highly valued heroic sacrifice for the good of the masses. In fact, in a Chinese textbook published in Hunan province in 1990, *Burghers of Calais* was presented alongside two other works with strong socialist connotations, Jean-François Millet's *Gleaners* and Ilya Repin's painting, which depicts a group of laborers dragging a ship at the Volga (fig. 39).

It was also likely that *The Thinker* was avoided in Chinese and Korean textbooks due to its explicit nature, given that Korean newspapers had seldom published artworks depicting nudes as late as the late 1940s, and depiction of nudes in art was a controversial issue in Chinese art world in the 1980s. When Rodin's works depicting nudes appeared in Korean textbooks in the mid-decades, the lower parts of the figures were cropped similar to how they were treated in Japanese textbooks.²⁵ The uncut frontal view of *The Thinker* began to appear in Korean textbooks in the early 1980s, while in China, the first traceable example of the work, a side view of it, appeared in a middle school art book published in Liadong province in 1997.

Frequently illustrating Rodin's works in the years preceding the first Rodin exhibitions in Northeast Asian countries, art textbooks played an

important role in the spread of the sculptor's reputation in the three countries. However, schoolbooks made a more significant contribution to the public recognition of the sculptor's works in Korea than in the neighboring countries, since they were the most likely sources where Koreans saw Rodin's works before the country's first Rodin exhibition. Unlike in Japan, Rodin did not receive much attention from the Korean press before its first Rodin exhibition, and far fewer accounts of the sculptor were published in the country than in Japan. While Chinese schoolbooks featured Rodin's work just a few years before the country's first Rodin exhibition in 1993, Korean schoolbooks had included Rodin's works for about three decades before the 1985 exhibition. In fact, a number of people who visited the exhibition in Seoul were quoted in local newspapers as saying that they were familiar with Rodin's works from schoolbooks.

Secondary school art textbooks continue to play an important role in the public recognition of Rodin in Northeast Asia. Although being less frequently illustrated in the recent years, Rodin's works are still included in the art textbooks of Japan and Korea. Chinese schoolbooks have presented the sculptor's works more often since the late 1990s, and color photographs of *The Thinker*, *The Gates of Hell*, and *Burghers of Calais*, accompanied by more detailed account of each work, were included in high school art books of the country in

2004.²⁶

Introduced to Japan at the beginning of the 20th century, Rodin's works were disseminated in the country first through magazines for art and literature, and then through books on the sculptor, which began to flourish in the mid-1910s. However, in the first half of the 20th century, the sculptor's reputation remained more or less within small circles of artists and intellectuals of the country. It was in the 1950s that Rodin began to be popularized in Japan by being included in schoolbooks and by receiving tremendous amount of publicity over the return of the Matsukata collection. By the time the first Rodin exhibition was held in its capital in 1966, the sculptor had become one of the most widely recognized Western artists in the country.

In the early 20th century, Rodin received less attention in Korea than in the neighboring countries, and images of his works were seldom published in the country. However, in the mid-decades of the century, as publications on the sculptor increased, and as his works were included in the schoolbooks of the country, more images of Rodin's works became available in the country. By the time of the country's first Rodin exhibition, the sculptor was well known among a large portion of the Korean population, especially those educated after the mid-1950s.

Rodin fell into an eclipse in China before he gained public recognition in

the country, and the sculptor was inaccessible to the Chinese public in the very decades when he was being popularized in Korea and Japan. Accounts of the sculptor accompanied by images of his works began to reappear at the end of 1970s. However, articles appeared in the Chinese art magazines and a handful of books on the sculptor published between 1979 and 1993 were unlikely to have reached larger populations of the country, given that only about nine percent of the people in the country graduated from high school or above, and college graduates comprised only 0.5 percent of its population as late as 1990.²⁷ In addition, images of Rodin's works had been shown through schoolbooks in China only for a few years before the country's first Rodin exhibition.

It is difficult to estimate in the numbers of images of Rodin's works shown in China, Korea, and Japan before exhibitions devoted to the sculptor began to be held in each country. However, it is possible to measure relative amounts shown in the three countries. The largest amount of images of the sculptor's works was circulated in Japan where publications on the sculptor most flourished, while the least were published in China. A great portion of Chinese population did not know the French sculptor until the Rodin exhibition of 1993 received great attention from the press of the country, although they were more familiar with Rodinian sculptures than people in any other country in the West or in the East, since leading sculptors of the country applied Rodinian sculptural

vocabulary to their public commissions. In fact, the sculptor is still unfamiliar to many Chinese, especially those who grew up in the 1960s and 1970s. Several educated, middle-aged Chinese whom author interviewed in Beijing did not know the sculptor, while a few even asked whether *Luodan*, Rodin in Chinese, was a Chinese. Although not as widely published as in Japan, more images of the sculptor's works were shown in Korea than China by being frequently appeared in books and articles on the sculptor and by being circulated through schoolbooks since the mid-1950s. How different levels, or degrees, of the exposure to the images of Rodin's works in the three countries affected public responses to the Rodin exhibitions held in each country will be discussed in the next chapter.

¹ William Golding, "Thinking as a Hobby," in Gilbert H. Muller and Harvey S. Wiener, eds. *The Short Prose Reader*, 9th edition, (New York: McGraw Hill, 2001), 299. The article was originally published in *Holiday* in August 1961.

² Denzaburo Nakamura, "Meiji Makini Okeru Lodan (Rodin in the Late Meiji Period)," *Bijutsu Kenkyu* 163 (November 1951), 49.

³ Teichiro Nakahara, *Chokoku no Seimei* (The Life of Sculpture) (Tokyo: Chuokoron Bijutsu, 1993), 52.

⁴ For Wang Zhaowen's accounts of Rodin, see note 47 in chapter 2.

⁵ Yanagi Soetsu, *Donga Ilbo*, 2 December 1921.

⁶ An insurance policy dated February 24, 1937, Dossier Matsukata, l'Archive du Musée Rodin,

Paris.

⁷ Mina Oya, "Rodin's Sculpture Matsukata Kojiro Collected," in *Rodin Dictionary* (Tokyo: Kodansha, 2005), 328.

⁸ *The Japan Times* (Tokyo), 24 March 1958.

⁹ Mina Oya, "Rodin's Sculptures from the Matsukata Collection: Sculptures transferred from the Musée Rodin between 1937 and 1948, and the Cast of *Eve* in the National Museum of Western Art, Tokyo," *Journal of the National Museum of Western Art* 4 (March, 2000), 27.

¹⁰ A few of these photographs can be found in morning edition of *Mainichi* on January 21, *Asahi* June 29, and *Shukan Shincho* May 19, 1959.

¹¹ See the official website of National Statistical Office in Korea at www.nso.go.kr.

¹² Luo Luo, trans., "Luting zhi Yishu (Art of Rodin)," *Dongfang Zazhi* 16, no. 6 (June 1916): 89-93.

¹³ Liu Haisu, *Random Notes from My Trips to Europe* (Shanghai, 1935), 94, quoted by Mayching Margaret Kao in *China's Response to the West in Art: 1898-1937* (PhD dissertation, Stanford University, 1972) 15-16.

¹⁴ Yanagi Soetsu, *Donga Ilbo*, 2 February 1921.

¹⁵ Lu Xun translated *A Young Man's Dream* by Mushanokoji Saneatsu into Chinese in 1922, and wrote a review of the Chinese translation of Arishima Takeo's account of Rodin in 1928. On the other hand, Lu's brother Zhou Zuoren translated the anthology of Mushanokoji's writings and is known to have visited *Atarashi Mura* (New Village), a utopian community that the editor of *Shirakaba* established in Japan in the late 1910s and organized a number of the photographs of Western art exhibitions in the 1920s. (See Keishu Saneto, *Chugokujin Nihon Ryugaku shi* (The History of Chinese Students in Japan), (Tokyo: Kurosio shutpan, 1970), 285.) While the *Shirakaba* painter Arishima Ikuma went to Shanghai to meet Chinese artists and intellectuals in 1928, Yanagi Soetsu, who organized the first two exhibitions of photographs of Western art in Korea in 1921, visited China as early as 1916.

¹⁶ Yanagi Soetsu, *Donga Ilbo*, 2 December 1921.

¹⁷ *Donga Ilbo*, 4 December 1921

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 31 July 1922.

²⁰ Youngna Kim, "Hanguk Geundae Hoihwa esooui Nude (Nudes in Korean Modern Paintings)," in *Seoyang Misulsa Hakhoi Nonmunjib* 5 (December 1993), 33.

²¹ Kyungsung Lee, interview by author, 15 June 2005, Seoul.

²² *Chosun Ilbo*, 24 July 1985.

²³ A number of catalogs of the exhibitions of photographs of Western art are in the collection of the Tokyo Research Institute of Cultural Properties.

²⁴ Kodansha, *Chugaku no Zuga Kosaku* (Middle School Art), (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1956), 27.

²⁵ For a few of these images, see Hangseung Lee, ed. *Godeung Misul* (High School Art) (Seoul: Munhwa Kyoyuk Chulpansa, 1957), and *Saeroun Misul I* (New Art I) (Seoul: Jungeumsa, 1968).

²⁶ See *Renmin Jiaoyu Chubanshe*, ed. *Meishu Jianshang* (Art Appreciation) (Beijing: Renmin Jiaoyu Chubanshe, 2004), 205-06.

²⁷ See National Bureau of Statistics of China at www.stats.gov.cn or Hazama Naoki, Iwai Shigeki, Mori Tokihiko, and Kiwai Satoru, *Deita ro Bon Joongguk Geundaesa* (Chinese History in Data), IISub Shin, trans. (Seoul: Shinseowon, 1999), 56.

4. Direct Encounters: Rodin Exhibitions and Publics

The first Rodin exhibition in a Northeast Asian museum was held a few years after the sculptor was fully revived in the West with a series of exhibitions held at the major museums of Europe and North America in the early 1960s. *Rodin Inconnu*, the first Rodin exhibition ever held at the Louvre, opened in December 1962, while some of the small bronzes shown at the exhibition traveled to London the following summer. Two other Rodin exhibitions opened in New York in the spring of 1963. The Museum of Modern Art, New York, organized 'the largest loan exhibition of Rodin's works held in the United States' in May, and the show moved to The California Palace of the Legion of Honor in San Francisco in the fall. Another exhibition devoted to the sculptor was opened at the Charles E. Slatkin Gallery; this exhibition traveled to twelve other cities in Canada and the United States, including Montreal, Ontario, Cleveland, Dallas, Minneapolis, and Ontario until January 1965.

Among a number of Rodin exhibitions held in Europe and America in the second half of the 20th century, *Rodin Inconnu* and the MoMA show were the most influential to the first Rodin exhibitions in Japan, Korea, and China. The exhibitions in New York and Paris, in their critical re-evaluations of the sculptor's art which had been overshadowed by his legendary persona, not only

made great contributions to the Rodin revival in the West, but also set a pattern for the first Rodin exhibitions in Northeast Asian countries.

Rodin Inconnu was a landmark exhibition in the revival of Rodin's reputation on both sides of the Atlantic. Consisting of 230 works, mostly rescued from the basement of the Rodin Museum in Paris and Meudon, the Louvre show cast light on the unknown, or rarely discussed, aspects of Rodin's art, as its title suggests. On one hand, the exhibit highlighted Rodin's interest in genres other than public monuments by integrating a number of earlier portrait busts, chimney pots, porcelain vases, and drawings and watercolors in the style of Gustave Moreau. On the other hand, a large number of highly personal plasters, terra cottas, and bronzes, which had been perceived either as less important or too unfinished to be exhibited, presented Rodin as an artist for whom bold experimentation was central.

In contrast to the Louvre exhibit, which was focused on Rodin's less-known works in a smaller scale, in an attempt to "assess what seems most durable and significant in his art," the MoMA show took an opposing approach.¹ Focusing on displaying "as much of his finest work and as many of the best bronze casts as possible," the exhibit included, according to its organizer Albert Elsen, "all the major large-scale bronzes" except *The Gates of Hell*.² Although consisting of a large number of familiar pieces arranged more or less in

chronological order, the MoMA exhibit highlighted the complexity of the development of individual monuments rather than the historical or sequential development of the sculptor's career. Individual monuments, accompanied by a group of preparatory drawings and three-dimensional studies, were displayed to constitute "many separate presentations of different aspects of Rodin's total oeuvre," as one reviewer observed.³

Presenting Rodin as an artist who needed a serious critical reassessment, the exhibition at the MoMA did much "to counter or dissipate conventional and often unsympathetic images of Rodin and to excite artists as well as critics and the public by making possible discovery of much that was unknown in his art."⁴ Albert Elsen, who published his monograph on Rodin in conjunction with the MoMA show, claims that "the myths, facts, and scandals of his life have ceased to color feelings about the intrinsic merit of his sculpture."⁵ However, the New York exhibition, as any other Rodin exhibitions held outside France at the time, was somewhat handicapped by its lack of enough plasters and terra cottas. At this time, oversea loans for Rodin's works were still limited, while materials on the sculptor were not yet fully accessible at the Musée Rodin. No "complete history of Rodin's life and art" could be undertaken before scholars gain full access to the materials in Paris and Meudon, as Elsen emphasized:

Until the great archives of the Musée Rodin in Paris, containing

correspondence, atelier notes, uncast terra cottas and plasters, and almost seven thousand unexhibited drawings, together with the materials in his studio in the Villa des Brillants at Meudon, are made fully available (presumably when, in accordance with French law, the canonical fifty years after his death will have elapsed), no complete history of Rodin's life and art can be undertaken.⁶

A breakthrough came in the mid-1970s, when Monique Laurent, the new director of the Musée Rodin, adopted a new policy for loans of Rodin's works and made materials on the sculptor more accessible to scholars. "A substantial body of Rodin's work, much of which had never been seen before, even in France, suddenly became available," and international exhibitions of Rodin's works dramatically increased in the following years, while the contents of these exhibitions became more diverse and comprehensive.⁷

1966: "Rodin Typhoon" in Japan

Rodin's sculptures were exhibited in Japan as early as 1912. However, the debut of Rodin's works in the country was, by all accounts, unlikely to have a powerful impact on Japanese people. Most of all, the tiny bronzes, *Head of a Ruffian*, *Head of Madame Rodin*, and *Little Shadow*, 3.5, 10, and 12.4 inches high, respectively, were never enough to present the vigor of Rodin's oeuvre, as the sculptor himself mentioned in his letter to *Shirakaba* members, informing them of

the shipment of the three pieces to Japan in 1911.⁸ Before the opening of the exhibition, the Japanese press expressed great excitement about Rodin's sculpture being exhibited for the first time in the country, as quoted in chapter two. However, few reviewers seemed impressed when they actually saw these relatively modest works.

The *Kokumin* review grumbled that *Head of a Ruffian* (fig. 40), displayed on dark-colored matting in a vitrine, looked like a *netsuke*.⁹ Another reviewer expressed concerns for Japanese sculptors' overheated passion for foreign sculpture by saying, "Because of these works, should the sculpture world in Japan, which is yet to be matured, again, lose its mind, being aimlessly infatuated with other's theory as if it is its own?"¹⁰ The *Miyako* reviewer also seemed rather disappointed with his or her first encounter with Rodin's sculptures and wrote as follows:

Are these works by the world's best sculptor? They are somewhat different from the Rodin that I knew from what I read and saw in books and magazines. Those works may present something powerful, but we need to see more works by Rodin to understand him. We cannot understand the quality of his works only by what we see for the first time.¹¹

It is known that a few more sculptures by Rodin that Japanese collectors brought back from Europe were exhibited in Japan before 1920, but no detailed accounts on these exhibits remain in the country.¹² It was not until the early

1920s when a number of works by the sculptor, including *The Thinker*, *Monument to Balzac*, *Walking Man*, *La Défense National*, *The Age of Bronze*, *The Kiss*, and *Eve* were shown at the annual Modern French Art exhibition organized by a French art dealer named Hermann Dœl'snitz in Tokyo and a few other cities from 1922 to 1931.

By the time the first French art exhibition was held in Tokyo, enthusiasm for Rodin among Japanese artists and writers had cooled, and Rodin's sculptures, shown with a large number of works by other artists, did not receive as much press attention as the debut of his sculptures in the country in 1912.

Furthermore, the number of Rodin's works included in the French art exhibitions declined after the first two exhibitions, which included twenty-nine sculptures each, and only one sculpture by the artist was shown in the 1926 exhibition.¹³

After the 10th anniversary exhibition of 1931, which included fourteen sculptures by Rodin, including *Monument to Balzac*, *The Age of Bronze*, and a series of eight hands, the sculptor's works were seldom exhibited in Japan until the Matsukata collection returned to Japan. Only a handful of sculptures by Rodin were available in the public collections of the country. The Tokyo National University of Fine Arts and Music had *The Age of Bronze* and *Monument to Balzac* that Dœl'snitz had donated to the school in 1923 and 1927, respectively, while several other works by the sculptor were in the collection of the Ohara Museum

in Kurashiki, located several hours south of Tokyo by train.¹⁴

When the National Museum of Western Art (NMWA), Tokyo, designed by Le Corbusier to house the Matsukata collection opened in July 1959, Rodin, the collection's most representative artist, received due attention at the newly built museum. The museum's forecourt was devoted to Rodin's works, while a group of his sculptures were installed at the entrance foyer to the museum's permanent collection (fig. 41). Being the largest Rodin collection in Japan, the NMWA still uses *The Thinker* as a symbol of the museum. The piece is printed on all sizes of envelopes and plastic sacks available in its museum shop, while the same sculpture appears on the cover of the catalog of the museum's collection. In addition, the museum shop carries various reproductions of *The Thinker* including key rings and mouse pads.

With the opening of the NMWA, Rodin's public acclaim reached its peak in Japan, and the collection attracted 584,861 people by the end of 1959.¹⁵ Rodin's works were widely published in the newspapers and magazines of the country until the mid-1960s, while books on the sculptor targeting general readers also flourished in the country. In 1960, Iwanami published its first printings of Rainer Maria Rilke's *Rodin* and Takamura Kotaro's *Rodin's Words* in pocket-sized paperbacks, which have since been widely read in the country.

In 1966 the NMWA organized the first Rodin exhibition in Japan, which

traveled to Kyoto and Fukuoka. Consisting of 157 works drawn from the Matsukata collection and loaned from the Musée Rodin, Paris, the exhibition was more comprehensive than any other Rodin exhibition held outside France in the 1960s. To show Rodin's art in its full range and variety, the NMWA show combined Rodin's major monuments such as *Monument to Balzac*, *Burghers of Calais*, *The Thinker*, and *The Gates of Hell* and the sculptor's less known pieces such as *Dancers*, *Nijinsky*, *Martyr*, and a number of partial figures, shown at the Louvre.

The Rodin exhibition was more enthusiastically received in Kyoto and Fukuoka than in Tokyo. Rodin's works, having been accessible for several years in permanent display at the museum in Ueno, were no longer fresh to the Tokyo public. However, the sculptor's works created public spectacles in the two southern cities, where original works by the sculptor had rarely been shown in the previous years, and the Kyoto exhibition was more crowded than any other Rodin exhibition ever held anywhere, as can be seen in a picture appeared in *Yomiuri* (fig. 42). Under the heading of "Rodin Typhoon," the newspaper reported that on the opening day of the exhibition in Kyoto, in spite of rain from the influence of a typhoon, people lined up in front of the Kyoto City Museum of Art before the museum opened for the day.¹⁶ The exhibition became more crowded toward the end, when about 20,000 people visited the show each day, and attracted 450,000 visitors in the 43 days from September 18 to October 30, an

average of 10,465 people a day.¹⁷ The number is close to the yearly total of visitors to the Musée Rodin in Paris, the world's number one tourist city, in the mid-1990s.

Rodin's works were received with the same enthusiasm in Fukuoka. The exhibition created a festive mood around the city, where department stores hung enlarged pictures of *The Thinker*, and one of them presented a Rodin bag to the first 10,000 visitors to the store. According to *Yomiuri*, about 15,000 people visited the exhibition on November 23, and 12,000 on December 4, and the total number of visitors to the exhibition was 150,125 during the 33 days, an average of 4,549 people a day.¹⁸ The figure is striking given that the population of Fukuoka was one fifth that of Tokyo at the time, and the city attracted far fewer tourists than Kyoto.

A great percentage of visitors to the Rodin exhibitions in Japan were teenagers who likely saw the sculptor's works in their schoolbooks. From the first day of the Kyoto exhibition, large crowds of junior high and high school students came to see Rodin's works, and more than one hundred schools across Japan, which had school trips to the city, brought their students to the show.¹⁹ On the first day of the Fukuoka exhibition, about 2,500 high school girls from the Nakamura School and about 270 students from a middle school in Nakamashi were waiting in line for the opening of the show at the Fukuoka Cultural Center,

as in a picture appeared in *Yomiuri* (fig. 43).²⁰

Although less visited than in Kyoto, the Rodin exhibition in Tokyo drew significantly larger audience than major Rodin exhibitions held in Europe and North America. The exhibition at the NMWA was visited an average of 5,800 people per day, while the Rodin show held at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts in 1963 was visited by about 1,030 people, the National Gallery exhibition of 1981 by about 3,430, and *Rodin en 1900* exhibition held in Paris in 2001 by 755 people each day.²¹

After the 1966 exhibitions, an increasing number of Japanese museums acquired Rodin's works, with the number of his sculptures in Japanese public collections reaching 178 by 2001.²² In 1994, another major Rodin collection in Japan, the Shizuoka Prefectural Museum of Art, opened a newly built Rodin Wing with 32 works by the sculptor, including *The Gates of Hell*, *Burghers of Calais*, and *Monument to Balzac*. Exhibitions devoted to the sculptor were held in Japan almost every year in the last three decades of the 20th century, and more than a dozen of them traveled to cities and towns across the country. However, no other Rodin exhibition held in Japan during the period was as passionately received as in 1966, and the number of visitors to Rodin exhibitions dramatically decreased in the country.²³

1985: “Rodin Crowds” in Korea

Although Rodin’s acclaim in Korea in the early 20th century was not as high as in the West or in the neighboring countries, it gradually increased from the mid-decades, when books on the sculptor began to be published and images of his works were more widely available in the country. The first Rodin exhibition in Korea was held when the country achieved dramatic economic development in a few decades after the devastating war of 1950-53, and was appointed as a host nation for two international sports events, the 1986 Asian Games and the 1988 Summer Olympic Games.

Two newspaper companies, *Chosun Ilbo* and *Joongang Ilbo*, competed for the Rodin exhibition. *Chosun* contacted the Musée Rodin a couple of years earlier than *Joonang*. In October 1982, *Chosun*’s correspondent in Paris, Shin Youngsuk, sent a letter to Monique Laurent saying that the newspaper would like to organize a Rodin exhibition in Seoul.²⁴ In the letter, Shin asked Laurent whether the museum could loan about thirty sculptures, twenty drawings and watercolors, and some audio-visual materials on the sculptor for three months in the spring of 1983. But *Chosun*’s plan for the exhibition was not realized for unknown reasons, and in September 1984, the general director of the newspaper sent another letter to Laurent, stating that the company would like to hold a

Rodin exhibition in the spring of 1986 on the occasion of the inauguration of the new National Museum of Contemporary Art.²⁵

Meanwhile, *Joongang*, which belonged to the Samsung business group, contacted the Musée Rodin for a Rodin exhibition.²⁶ The Director-general of Culture and Arts Bureau in Korea sent a letter to the museum supporting the newspaper, and Samsung purchased nine casts of Rodin's sculptures from the museum in July 1984.²⁷ In spite of *Joongang's* efforts, the Musée Rodin agreed to loan Rodin's works to *Chosun*.²⁸

The result could have been predicted from the beginning. Whether intended or not, using the letterhead of Samsung France for its letter addressed to the Musée Rodin, *Joongang* emphasized its kinship with a commercial enterprise, while suggesting "a grand exhibition of Rodin" consisting of 100 to 120 works to be held at a gallery owned by the company.²⁹ For its part, *Chosun* contacted the Musée Rodin through the newspaper's correspondent in Paris, and suggested a moderate-sized exhibition to be held at a national museum. In addition, the newspaper won support from the Korean ambassador to France and the director of the National Museum of Modern Art in Seoul, Kim Sejoong.³⁰ Kim not only wrote a letter supporting *Chosun* in the fall of 1984 but also visited Paris to meet Monique Laurent in April 1985.

In addition to displaying superior diplomatic skills, *Chosun* was more

experienced in organizing large-scale art exhibitions, as Kim Sejoong properly emphasized in his letter to Laurent.³¹ Beginning with the Modern French Art exhibition of 1970, *Chosun* had sponsored ten exhibitions on French art, including those of Jean-François Millet, Pablo Picasso, Impressionism, Post-Impressionism, and French Art from the 18th and 19th Century, by the time the newspaper was planning the Rodin exhibition. In fact, among the fourteen foreign art exhibitions that *Chosun* sponsored between 1970 and 1986, twelve were exhibitions of French art.

The first Rodin exhibition in Korea opened at the National Museum of Modern Art in Duksoo Palace, Seoul, on July 25, 1985.³² The exhibit was significantly smaller in scale than the first Rodin exhibitions in the neighboring countries. Yet, it was still a good sampling of Rodin's art in its variety, and included in the 46 sculptures were *The Age of Bronze*, *The Thinker*, *La Défense National*, *Monument to Balzac*, figures derived from *The Gates of Hell*, several studies for *Burghers of Calais*, and a number of smaller bronzes shown at the Louvre in 1962/1963. In her entry to the catalog of the show, Monique Laurent, who made an important contribution to the proliferation of international exhibitions of Rodin's works in the 1970s and afterwards, celebrated the Seoul exhibition in the context of the globalization of art exhibitions:

One of the merits of our times is the wide dissemination of works

of art. In this respect, temporary exhibitions, which circulate great works of all time across the world and give them new life in their contact with an ever-new public, have an importance without precedent. That's why the exhibition of Rodin's sculptures in Seoul presents a particular significance since it is the first exhibition in Korea dedicated to the great artist whose place no one doubts as the precursor of the sculpture of our times.³³

The Rodin exhibition in Seoul was well received by the Korean media.

Beginning with the announcement of the exhibition appearing on its front page, *Chosun*, the most widely circulated newspaper in the country, published a number of reports on the show throughout its duration, including interviews with the visitors. On the other hand, KBS-TV presented an hour-long camera tour of the exhibition in which a slowly moving camera showed individual sculptures from various angles and in great detail.

Although it was held during the hottest season of the year, the Rodin exhibition attracted a wide Korean audience. In an article entitled "Rodin Crowds," *Chosun* reported that about 8,500 people came to see Rodin's works on the first Saturday after the opening of the show, which was visited by an average of about 3,000 people each day.³⁴ As in Japan, students from secondary schools also comprised a great portion of visitors to the Seoul exhibition, and those young audiences who "sincerely appreciate[d] Rodin's works" impressed the French ambassador to Korea who was visiting the exhibition at the time.³⁵

In the years following the 1985 exhibition, more works by Rodin were

shown in Korea in various exhibitions, including the *Masters in Modern Sculpture: Rodin, Bourdelle, and Maillol* organized by Samsung's Hoam Art Museum in the fall of 1985 and *Camille Claudel and Rodin* exhibition held at Donga Gallery in 1993. Meanwhile, Samsung, which began collecting Rodin's works in the mid-1980s, acquired more works by the sculptor, including the seventh cast of *The Gates of Hell* and the final edition of *Burghers of Calais*, and opened a museum devoted to the sculptor in May 1999.

The Rodin Gallery, a glass pavilion built on a design inspired by Rodin's *La Cathedrale*, received great publicity. Reporting on the museum's inauguration which was attended not only by luminaries in Korean business, politics, and the art world, but also by the director of the Musée Rodin and the French ambassador to Korea, both local and foreign presses celebrated the new museum annexed to the headquarters of Samsung Insurance in Taepyungro, Seoul, as a symbol of "sharing world culture." In an article entitled "Rodin in Seoul: a Triumph of Multicultural Exchange," published in *The Boston Sunday Globe*, noted Rodin scholar Ruth Butler viewed the opening of the museum, designed by American architectural firm Kohn Pedersen Fox, as "perfect witness to the genius of Rodin, the high quality of contemporary American architecture, and the judicious decisions of the South Korean patrons" and "a sure sign of the country's economic recovery from the financial crisis which hit the country in

1997.”³⁶

The Rodin Gallery’s opening show focused on *The Gates of Hell* and its offspring. It consisted of 23 pieces selected from Samsung’s collection and 62 works loaned from the Musée Rodin in Paris, including a number of plasters that had rarely been shown outside France. Although it was widely covered by the Korean press, this show, by far the most extensive Rodin exhibition in the country, attracted a smaller audience than the 1985 exhibition. About 181,000, an average of 1,470 people per day, visited the exhibition in four months from May 12 to September 12, 1999.³⁷ Rodin exhibitions held in Korea in the following years were also less visited than the first Rodin exhibition of the country. However, the number of visitors to these exhibitions did not decrease as dramatically as in Japan, where far more works by the sculptor are in the collections of museums across the country, and where more Rodin exhibitions than any other countries outside France were held in the last three decades of the 20th century.

1993: “Rodin or Kentucky Fried Chicken” in China

In China, Rodin underwent an eclipse during the so-called “twenty lost years” marked by a series of disasters and disorders, which began with the anti-Rightist campaign of 1957 in which many intellectuals, being stigmatized as “enemies of the people,” became the target of persecution. Some 20 to 30 million people lost their lives from famine and malnutrition due to the failure of the Great Leap Forward Movement of 1958-60 that emphasized heavy industry at the expense of agriculture. After a few years of slow economic recovery in the early 1960s, Mao Zedong mobilized teenage students into the Red Guards to attack the bureaucrats of the Communist Party, who were increasingly skeptical of Mao’s economic policy, and the country underwent a decade of “brutal reign of terror” as noted historian John King Fairbank described:

Whatever may have been Mao’s romantic intention, the Red Guards turned to destructive activities that became a brutal reign of terror, breaking into homes of the better-off and the intellectuals and officials, destroying books and manuscripts, humiliating, beating, and even killing the occupants, and claiming all the time to be supporting the revolutionary attack on the ‘Four Old’ – old ideas, old culture, old customs, old habits. These student youths, boys and girls both, age nine to eighteen, roamed through the streets wearing their red armbands, accosting and dealing their kind of moral justice to people with any touch of foreignism or intellectualism.³⁸

Under the storm of the so-called “Cultural Revolution,” which marked

the last ten years of Mao's rule, universities were shut down, professors and students were sent to rural labor camps, and any artistic and intellectual activities other than those glorifying Maoist ideals were severely suppressed. A mere glance at the covers of Chinese art magazines from the period will present the picture of the turbulent decade that the Chinese art world went through. Until the mid-1950s, art magazines in China celebrated lively internationalism and works by Western artists, especially Impressionist paintings, appeared frequently on their covers, as in the March 1957 issue of *Meishu Yanjiu* with *Luncheon on the Grass* by Edouard Manet on its cover. However, most art magazines soon went out of print, while a few such as *Meishu* survived Cultural Revolution by promoting propaganda art. Beginning with a New Year painting depicting Mao surrounded by a group of people admiring him, *Meishu* presented many variations on his portrait on its covers from 1959 to the end of the 1970s.

Works by Western artists reappeared in Chinese art magazines when 'the twenty lost years' ended with Mao's death and the arrest of the Gang of Four. The country, now led by Deng Xiaoping, slowly moved to an open-door policy, which was manifested in the Thought Liberation Conference held in Beijing in 1979. The reissued *Meishu Yanjiu* presented *Venus de Milos* on the cover of its January issue in 1979, while *Monument to Balzac* appeared on the back cover of *Meishu* the following September.

Books and articles on Rodin began to be republished in China from the late 1970s, and a piece by the sculptor, *The Age of Bronze*, was exhibited in Shanghai in 1985. But it was not until 1993, when the first Rodin exhibition in the country was held in Beijing, that the sculptor came out of total eclipse in the country. By the time of the exhibition, post-Mao reforms toward a market economy had begun to take roots after a decade of confusion and conflicts, and a more open political atmosphere allowed room for diverse cultural, intellectual, and artistic exchanges with the outside world. Regarding the cultural milieu in which the Rodin exhibition was held, *The New York Times* wrote as follows:

Throughout the ideological and cultural worlds, Chinese are again testing the limits, and mostly getting away with it. Bold films, plays, and books are appearing, newspapers are virtually becoming readable, China's foremost rock-and-roll star is back on stage, and sex and democracy (in that order) are again on the agenda.³⁹

In the article entitled "China Warms To Sex, Art, and Other Entertainment," the American newspaper presented a picture of Chinese elders laughing in front of *Meditation*, a female nude by Rodin, (fig. 44) with a caption saying, "While the ideological winds shift in China, the cultural world has opened up. An exhibit of Auguste Rodin's sculptures and paintings is among the new offerings."⁴⁰

While the first Rodin exhibitions in Japan and Korea received little international attention, the exhibition in China was widely covered by the French

and international press not only because it was perceived as an expression of China's open-door policy but also because the show was held when diplomatic conflict between China and France over a French attempt to sell 60 fighter planes to Taiwan resulted in the closure of the French Consulate in Guangzhou and the exclusion of French enterprises from the construction of the subway in Beijing.

Feeding into the suspicions about the real intentions behind the Rodin exhibition, the Musée Rodin, or the French government, granted unusual favors to the China exhibition. Most of all, the museum decided to loan *The Thinker*, which had never left French soil since its installation in the front garden of the museum in Paris. More surprisingly, it was decided that the statue would be exhibited outdoors at the forecourt of the China Art Museum in Beijing "à la vue de tous et de toutes," as declared by Micheline Chaban-Delmas, the president of the Council of Administration of the Musée Rodin.⁴¹ Furthermore, *The Thinker* was not included when the China tour of Rodin's works traveled to Hong Kong and Taipei, although the sculpture had never been exhibited in both cities.

Accordingly, *The Thinker* received special attention from both the Chinese and French newspapers. Reporting the sculpture's premier voyage to China as headline news, mostly accompanied by the pictures of the bronze, which weighed some 700 kilograms, being hoisted up with the golden dome of The Invalides in the background, French newspapers expressed concerns about the

exhibition in China being affected by the political dispute between the two countries. *Le Herisson* presented a satiric cartoon on Chinese politicians and *The Thinker* (fig. 45) in which an armed *gongan* (public security officer), standing behind a seated Deng Xiaoping, says, "Attention... He thinks!!" and Deng replies, "Then, lock him up!!" *Le Figaro* was still unsure of the Chinese leaders' reaction to the show:

The deterioration of Paris-Beijing relations from the French support of demonstrators in Tienanmen to the sale of *Mirage 2000-5* planes to the nationalist island of Taiwan, elicited fear that this ambitious plan – sixty-two Rodin sculptures, twenty-five drawings, twenty-six photographs of the time – would be a victim of retaliation by the Chinese government. On behalf of cultural circles and Chinese journalists, there is no need to fear a sabotage of the exhibition. But the attitude of the political leaders will not be known until the last minute.⁴²

As if to prove French concerns unnecessary, *The Thinker* was sincerely welcomed in Beijing. *China Daily* assigned its front page to a picture of the sculpture being unveiled at the China Art Museum surrounded by a crowd of workers, reporters, and citizens (fig. 46), while *Renmin Ribao* (People's Daily) depicted the excitement over the sculpture's installation on its pedestal prepared in advance at the forecourt of the museum:

... Yesterday about a hundred cameras and video cameras, about 200 passersby, many workers, and officials gathered to welcome *The Thinker*.... Not to disturb "his" thinking, workers opened the box very carefully so that *The Thinker* could breathe the air of

Eastern art. At that moment we could only hear clicking sounds from cameras. When “he” was hoisted up by crane high above the square, the lookers became tense. When he sat down, they all applauded...⁴³

When the news about *The Thinker*'s installation in Beijing appeared in the French press, however, the excitement present in Chinese newspapers was absent, while the picture that appeared in a number of French newspapers conveyed a completely different atmosphere. Rather than capturing the welcoming spirit in Beijing, the picture focused on *The Thinker* and a Chinese worker wearing *Zhongshanfu* (Sun Yatsen outfits), a symbol of Communist China, standing side by side (fig. 47).

The French press continued to politicize the Rodin exhibition after its opening, and *Ouest France* claimed that China did not make any effort to promote the exhibition as retaliation against the France's sale of fighter planes to Taiwan.⁴⁴ However, the Chinese press did promote the exhibition, and hardly any newspapers of the country related the exhibition to the political dispute with France. In fact, expressing excitement about works by the world famous sculptor being exhibited in their country, Chinese newspapers celebrated the exhibition as a landmark in 'cultural exchanges between the East and West.'

The '*veritable rétrospective de l'œuvre de Rodin,*' consisting of 113 pieces, which included not only major monuments by the sculptor, but also a number of

figures and partial figures in smaller scales, drawings, watercolors, and photographs, excited Chinese audiences. In fact, a few French newspapers did report its success, as in the review appearing in *Le Figaro* under the heading of “Rodin, Bons Baisers de Pékin,” which depicted how well Rodin’s works, especially *The Thinker*, were received in the Chinese capital:

Thousands of passionate Chinese make a triumph of the French sculptor. Hundreds and hundreds of people with cameras take photographs of a naked man. Rodin’s *Thinker* is the star of all Beijing. “We’ve waited for it for a long time, it’s hard to believe it,” says Vong, a young Chinese man, who traveled more than eighty kilometers on a bike... In front of and around him (*The Thinker*), Chinese of all ages rush to the nude man and take photographs at his feet. The rush is huge. It is necessary to bump elbows to enter the rooms of the museum.⁴⁵

Although being held when the political tension between China and France was ever more serious, the Rodin exhibition in Beijing attracted about 120,000 people, an average of 4,000 people a day in a month from February 14 to March 15.⁴⁶ The figure is phenomenal given that the admission for the show, 15 *yuan*, was not affordable for a majority of the people in the country. In an article entitled “Who Would Go to See Rodin?” a dismayed Chinese reporter made cynical remarks on the over-priced admission by saying, “So, go to Kentucky Fried Chicken to have a meal, or go and have a look at Rodin?”⁴⁷ (KFC was too expensive for most Chinese people at the time, and it still is to many.)

Consequently, many people stayed outside the China Art Museum and saw only *The Thinker*, and French newspapers estimated that an average of about ten thousand people would see the sculpture each day. A majority of the visitors who actually saw the exhibit inside the museum were “public de qualité, certes: étudiants des Beaux-arts, artistes and conservateurs,” as a French reporter observed.⁴⁸ Artists and art students from distant cities such as Xian, Chungqing, and Qingdao would not miss the lifetime chance and traveled several to a few dozen hours to see Rodin’s works. While art schools outside Beijing reserved tour buses in advance to bring their students to the exhibition, students in the city did not mind a long bike ride to the museum.

Although its admission fee was high, the widely publicized exhibition had a great contribution to the spread of Rodin’s reputation among the larger population of China, who had not had many opportunities to be exposed to Rodin’s works, even through pictures, before the exhibition opened in Beijing. *Si-xiang-zhe*, or a thinker in Chinese, has been a popular word in the Chinese media since the exhibition, and *The Thinker* continued to be popular in the country. While a few other Rodin exhibitions held in China in the following years were entitled “*The Thinker* and the Art of Rodin,” and the country acquired three casts of the sculpture in the recent years.⁴⁹

Meanwhile, more Chinese people became exposed to images of Rodin’s

works, as publication on the sculptor increased after the 1993 exhibition, and his works appeared more frequently in Chinese schoolbooks. Rodin is no longer an esoteric artist known within small artistic or intellectual circles in China, although many people in the country still experience his works in words and pictures.

¹ Elsen, *Rodin* (1963), 11.

² Elsen, "Rodin Recovered," *Art International* (September 1963), pages unknown. The article is included in The Museum of Modern Art Public Information Scrapbooks (MoMa microfilm, reel number 24, Frame 378, MoMA Exhibition # 721), The Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington D. C.

³ *Connoisseur* 154 (Summer, 1963), 64.

⁴ Elsen, "Rodin's Modernity," *Artforum* (November 1963), 23.

⁵ Elsen, *Rodin* (1963), 11.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Elsen, quoted in Peter Andrews, "The Making of a Blockbuster Exhibit," *Saturday Review*, (August 1981), 19.

⁸ See Rodin's letter to *Shirakaba* group published in the February 1912 issue of the magazine.

⁹ *Kokumin*, 27 February 1912. *Netsuke* is an ivory object carved to be attached to a string and tucked into the belt of men's outfits to carry miscellaneous items such as seals and cigarette cases during the Tokugawa period.

¹⁰ *Nihon*, 20 February 1912.

¹¹ *Miyako Shimbun* (Tokyo), 29 February 1912.

¹² Regarding Japanese collectors of Rodin's works from the early 20th century, see Hajime Shimoyama, "Daishoki Nihon no Lodan Shushuka Gunzo (Rodin Collectors in Japan during the Daisho Period): 1912-1927," in Shizuoka Prefectural Museum of Art, *Rodin et le Japon* (Shizuoka: Shizuoka Prefectural Museum of Art, 2001), 166-175.

¹³ For the list of works exhibited at the Modern French Art exhibitions from 1922 to 1927, see Shizuoka Prefectural Museum of Art, *Rodin et le Japon*, 319-20. Also see the catalog of the 10th Anniversary Exhibition of Modern French Art Exhibition.

¹⁴ By the 1950s the Ohara Museum of Art acquired *St. John the Baptist*, *Burghers of Calais*, *Walking Man*, and the three bronzes that Rodin sent to *Shirakaba* members in 1911, which were permanently deposited to the museum in 1950. Sara Durt, Assistant Curator of the museum provided this information in her email to author on September 4, 2005.

¹⁵ *Bulletin Annuel du Musée National d'Art Occidental* (Tokyo: The National Museum of Western Art, 1967), 67.

¹⁶ *Yomiuri*, 19 September 1966.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 31 October 1966.

¹⁸ Chizuru Kawanami, the Curator of Fukuoka Prefectural Museum of Art, email to author, 13 March 2006.

¹⁹ *Yomiuri*, 31 October 1966.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 9 November 1966.

²¹ The Rodin exhibition in Tokyo attracted 295,898 people in 51 days, while the exhibition held in Montreal from August 17 to September 17, 1963, was visited by 33,000, and the Washington D. C. exhibition by 1,053,223 in 307 days from June 28, 1981 to May 2, 1982. In Paris, 117,932 people visited *Rodin en 1900* exhibition during the four months from March 12 to June 15, 2001. For the number of visitors to the Montreal exhibition, see the letter dated October 2, 1963, written by Evan H. Turner, the director of the National Museum of Fine Arts in Montreal to Charles E Slatkin, who organized the touring exhibition (Dossier 1963, l'Archive du Musée Rodin, Paris). For the numbers to *Rodin en 1900* and the Tokyo exhibition, see *Musée Rodin: Rapport d'activité 2001*, 15

and *Bulletin Annuel du Musée National D'Art Occidental* (1967), 49. For the audience figure of the National Gallery show, see footnote 11 in the introduction.

²² For the list of Rodin's sculptures in the collection of Japanese museums, see Shizuoka Prefectural Museum of Art, *Rodin and Japan*, 321-26.

²³ *Rodin and The Gates of Hell* exhibition held at the NMWA in 1989 attracted 69,576 visitors in 58 days (October 21 to December 17), *Marbles of Rodin* exhibition at the Shizuoka Prefectural Museum of Art in 1994/95 was visited by 140,640 in the 104 days (October 4, 1994 to January 16), and the 2001 *Rodin and Japan* exhibition in Shizuoka by 26,268 in 44 days (April 28 to June 10). For the number of visitors to the NMWA exhibition, see *Bulletin Annuel du Musée National D'Art Occidental* (Tokyo: The National Museum of Western Art, Tokyo, 1989). For visitors' records on the two exhibitions in Shizuoka, see *Musée Rodin: Rapport d'activité* 1994 and 2001.

²⁴ Youngsuk Shin, letter to Monique Laurent, 18 October 1982, Dossier Corée, l'Archive du Musée Rodin, Paris.

²⁵ Youngbang Woo, letter to Laurent, 6 September 1986, Dossier Corée, l'Archive du Musée Rodin, Paris.

²⁶ Chonggi Lee, the president of *Joongang Ilbo*, letter to Laurent, 20 June 1984, Dossier Corée, l'Archive du Musée Rodin, Paris.

²⁷ Kwangsik Kim, the Director-General of Culture and Arts Bureau in the Ministry of Culture and Information, Korea, letter to Laurent, 16 May 1984, Dossier Corée, l'Archive du Musée Rodin, Paris). Regarding Samsung's purchase of Rodin's works in 1984, see *Chosun Ilbo*, 6 July 1984.

²⁸ See the Memorandum of Agreement dated May 30, 1985, signed by *Chosun Ilbo* and the director of the Musée Rodin, Dossier Corée, l'Archive du Musée Rodin, Paris.

²⁹ Chonggi Lee, above mentioned letter to Laurent.

³⁰ Sukhyun Yoon, Korean ambassador to France, letter to Laurent dated August 24, 1984, Dossier Corée, l'Archive du Musée Rodin, Paris.

³¹ Sejoong Kim, the Director of the National Museum of Modern Art, Korea, letter to Laurent, 23 October 1984, Dossier Corée, l'Archive du Musée Rodin, Paris.

³² Korea's plan for having a Rodin exhibition at the new National Museum of Contemporary Art, however, was not realized, and the first Rodin exhibition in the country was held about a year earlier than the proposed date. Given that Rodin's works shown in Seoul were sent to Japan for another exhibition, it is likely that the exhibition was scheduled to the convenience of the Musée Rodin, Paris. However, it is also possible that the Korean museum changed its schedule for the Modern Asian Art exhibition that was more suitable show for a museum scheduled to be open at the time of the Asian Games in 1986.

³³ Monique Laurent, in the preface of the catalog of Rodin exhibition held in Seoul in 1985, unpaginated: L'un des mérites de notre époque aura été la très large diffusion des oeuvres d'art. A cet égard, les expositions temporaires, qui font circuler à travers le monde les chefs d'oeuvres de tous les temps et leur font connaître une vie nouvelle au contact d'un public toujours

renouvelé, ont une importance sans précédent. C'est pourquoi l'exposition de sculptures de Rodin à Séoul revêt une signification toute particulière puisqu'elle est la première manifestation consacrée en Corée au grand artiste dont personne aujourd'hui ne conteste la place de précurseur de la sculpture de notre temps.

³⁴ See *Chosun Ilbo*, 28 July and 17 August 1985.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 17 August 1985.

³⁶ Ruth Butler, "Rodin in Seoul: a Triumph of Multicultural Exchange," *The Boston Sunday Globe*, 1 August 1999.

³⁷ *Chosun Ilbo*, 16 September 1999.

³⁸ John King Fairbank and Merle Goldman, *China: A New History* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1998), 393.

³⁹ *The New York Times*, 24 February 1993, B1.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ "Le Penseur Ambassadeur," *Charente Libre*, 19 January 1993.

⁴² *Le Figaro*, 23 January 1993: La détérioration des relations, Paris-Pékin, depuis le soutien français aux manifestants de Tien An Men, jusqu'à la vente d'avions Mirage 2000-5 à l'île nationaliste de Taiwan, avait fait craindre que cet ambitieux projet – soixante-deux sculptures de Rodin, vingt-cinq dessins, vingt-six photos de l'époque – ne soit victime des représailles déclenchées par le gouvernement chinois... De la part des milieux culturels et journalistiques chinois, il n'y a donc pas lieu de craindre un 'sabotage' de l'exposition. Mais l'attitude des dirigeants politiques est une inconnue qui ne sera peut-être pas levée avant le dernier moment.

⁴³ *Renmin Ribao* (People's Daily), February 9, 1993.

⁴⁴ "Une exposition plutôt discrète à Pékin, pas de tapis rouge pour Rodin," *Ouest France*, 23 February 1993.

⁴⁵ *Le Figaro*, 18 February 1993: Des milliers de Chinois enthousiastes font un triomphe au sculpteur français... Des centaines et des centaines de personnes armées d'appareils photo se présentent pour photographier un homme nu... *Le Penseur* de Rodin est la star de Tout-Pékin. "Nous attendions cela depuis longtemps, sans trop oser y croire," nous raconte Vong, un jeune Chinois, qui vient de faire plus de quatre-vingt kilomètres à bicyclette... Et devant lui, autour de lui, les Chinois de tous âges qui mitraillent l'homme nu et se font photographier à ses pieds. La bousculade est immense. Il faut jouer des coudes pour entrer dans les salles du Musée.

⁴⁶ *Musée Rodin: Rapport d'activité* 1993, 13.

⁴⁷ *Zhongguo Qingnianbao* (China Youth Daily), 11 February 1993.

⁴⁸ *Ouest France*, 23 February 1993.

⁴⁹ The cast of *The Thinker* purchased by the Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing in the year 2000 has been displayed in front of the academy's main library, while another cast acquired by a land developing company in Shanghai in 2002 was exhibited in the company's real estate show held in Beijing in the spring of 2003. The third cast, which had been in the collection of art dealer Emmanuel Javogue, was exhibited in Shanghai for a year before being given to the city to be permanently installed at Shanghai Public Library in 2004.

Conclusion: Words, Photographs, and Colonial History

From the time of his introduction to Northeast Asia at the beginning of the 20th century to the mid-decades, when exhibitions devoted to Rodin began to flourish in the region, the sculptor's works had been shown in the Far East largely through pictures. Accordingly, the first Rodin exhibitions in Japan, Korea, and China were celebrated by the press of each country as a rare opportunity to see actual works by the sculptor. Chinese newspapers welcomed *The Thinker's* arrival in Beijing under such headings as "Rodin Arrives in Beijing for the First Time" and "At Last Rodin Came to Beijing"; Korean newspapers published interviews with citizens who were excited to see Rodin's works for the first time. In Japan, the English edition of the *Mainichi* newspaper urged its readers to visit the exhibition in Kyoto to verify the impression already transmitted in print:

Rodin's works are familiar to many of us mainly through art books or magazines, although some of his chefs-d'œuvre are permanently in Japan. But our acquaintance is fragmentary after all, and one could not acquire the verification of what one has learned about him in books unless one could step into [the] Musée Rodin in Paris. The present exhibition gives us this chance.¹

As noted in chapter four, a significant percentage of the visitors to the three Rodin exhibitions were those who had already experienced the sculptor's works through images. The shows held in Japan and Korea, where art textbooks for secondary schools had illustrated Rodin's works since the 1950s,

attracted a large number of young visitors, while artists and students from art schools were a majority of viewers of the exhibition held in China, where the largest number of images of Rodin's works had been transmitted through survey books on Western art since the early decades.

Although they were impressed that Rodin's works were much livelier than the images of his works that they had seen in prints, Northeast Asian visitors to the Rodin shows were often taken aback by the difference between the images and actual works. The images of Rodin's works circulated in China, Japan, and Korea in the preceding decades were mostly small or even tiny, as examined in chapter three. Interestingly, however, in their interviews with local newspapers, a number of visitors to the three exhibitions mentioned that they were surprised at how much smaller Rodin's actual pieces were in comparison to what they had imagined.

As visitors to the Rodin exhibitions in Northeast Asian countries noticed, an original work of art could be significantly different from its images. In his celebrated essay, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," Walter Benjamin aptly points this out by saying, "Even the most perfect reproduction of a work of art is lacking in one element: its presence in time and space, its unique existence at the place where it happens to be." In the same vein, Benjamin goes on to argue that by being widely disseminated through

reproductions, original works of art lose some of their authority.²

However, the phenomenal success of the first Rodin exhibitions in the Far East suggests that dissemination of images of artworks does not necessarily diminish the aura of the works, even when most of those images were poor quality reproductions. Other art exhibitions held in the region also prove that repeated exposures to the images of an artwork strengthen the desire to see the original, similar to how a movie star attracts large crowds wherever he or she goes. A large number of images of *Venus de Milos* and Leonardo da Vinci's *Mona Lisa*, not of any better quality than that of Rodin's works, had been widely circulated in Japan before actual works were shown in the country in 1964 and 1974, respectively. When exhibited, both pieces attracted record-breaking audiences in the country.³

On the other hand, a number of Western artists who were introduced to Northeast Asia at the same time as Rodin, or a little later, and whose works had been shown through images rather than actual works before the second half of the 20th century, also had great public success in the region, rivaling that of Rodin's. A few of these artists are Jean-François Millet, Vincent van Gogh, and Pablo Picasso.⁴ The first Picasso exhibition in China, held in Beijing in 1983, was a great public success, while van Gogh, who was also introduced and promoted by the *Shirakaba* group in the first decades of the 20th century, drew a huge

audience in Tokyo in 2005.⁵ Millet and Picasso exhibitions have appealed to a large Korean audience since the 1970s, and the most recent Picasso show, held in Seoul in the spring and summer of 2006, was as crowded as any previous Picasso exhibition held in the country.⁶

Paradoxically, the Northeast Asian enthusiasm for Rodin does not seem to have much to do with the quality of his works. First of all, Rodin's reputation was established in the Far East when actual works by the sculptor were seldom exhibited in the region. In addition, images of his works shown in China, Japan, and Korea before each country's first Rodin exhibition were mostly poor or mediocre quality black-and-white photographs, which were never enough to present the vigor of his works, not to mention the scale, texture, color, and other details.

It was also unlikely that the degree of economic development in each country or the populations of the Northeast Asian cities, where the first Rodin exhibitions were held, affected significantly the audience figures of the three exhibitions. By the time the Rodin exhibition was held in Tokyo, Seoul, and Beijing, each city had a population of over ten million people. And the Gross National Income per capita in Japan in 1966 was less than one fourth of Korea's in 1985, while that of Korea was more than ten times as much as that of China in 1993.⁷ In addition, other countries with an economic standing similar to China,

Japan, or Korea did not respond to Rodin's reputation as passionately as the three countries.

Nor did other Asian countries with cultural, linguistic, and religious traditions similar to those in Northeast Asian countries. Rather, enthusiasm for Rodin was significant in countries or regions where Japan was a model for modernization. Even within Chinese culture, the sculptor's reception was significantly more favorable in Taiwan, a former Japanese colony, than in Hong Kong, a former British colony. In fact, Taiwan had received Rodin more enthusiastically than both China and Korea did. Its first exhibition devoted to the sculptor, held in Taipei in 1993, was visited by about 250,000 people in about one month's time, although the population of the city was only about one third of Beijing's at the time.⁸ In contrast, Rodin's reputation in Hong Kong was insignificant compared to Taiwan, Korea, and the People's Republic of China, and Hong Kong's first Rodin show attracted less than one fifth the number of visitors to the Taipei exhibition.⁹

Rodin's reputation was spread and established in Northeast Asia in the early 20th century, when the three countries of the region were undergoing dramatic social changes after a century's struggle in the face of intensifying colonial aggression from Euramerican powers. Forced to open to the West in the middle of the 19th century, Japan industrialized itself at frenzied speed,

emulating not only its enemies' advanced technologies but also their mindset.

Witnessing Japan's rise as a powerful nation within a few decades, China and Korea waged social reforms toward modernization, turning to the West in search for its model.

The West was a slippery concept in which individual countries were not much differentiated, while geographic boundaries were not clearly defined, as is still the case to some extent in the Far East. And Northeast Asian enthusiasm with Rodin and other French artists was unlikely because France was more favored or feared in the region than other Western powers. In fact, France was not much different from other Occidentals, who encroached on their lands in the 19th century: While pressing the advantages of other powers in the region -- Britain in China and the United States in Japan -- France united with Britain to seize Beijing in 1860, sent warships to the coast of Korea in 1866, and backed up Russia to force Japan to return the Liaodong peninsula in 1895.

Rather, Rodin's reception in Northeast Asian countries reflects a more complex process of the three countries' self-redefinitions in the face of colonial intrusion of the West, whose political, economic, and military powers made it the primary "other" for these countries. Defining themselves in terms of the powerful other, who was both a threat to their integrity and yet a referent for progress and enlightenment, Northeast Asian countries made great efforts to

learn from the culture of the West. Rodin was, after all, a part of the culture, and the wide dissemination of images and written accounts of his works, fueled by the fervor for Western culture, created a powerful version of the Rodin myth in the Far East.

¹ *Mainich Daily News*, 30 September 1966.

² Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," in *Marxism and Art*, eds. Berel Lang and Forrest Williams (New York: David McKay, 1972), 283.

³ *Venus de Milos* exhibition, held at the National Museum of Western Art, Tokyo, attracted 835,166 visitors within less than a month from April 8th to May 5th, 1964, while 1,505,239 people visited *Mona Lisa* exhibition, held at the National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo, in 52 days from April 20th to June 10th, 1974. Both exhibitions were visited by an average of about 30,000 people a day, even without including the days when the museums were closed. For the numbers of visitors to the two exhibitions, see *Bulletin Annuel du Musée National d'Art Occidental* no. 1 (1967), 49, and *Thirty Years of The National Museum of Western Art Tokyo 1959-1989* (Tokyo: The National Museum of Western Art, 1989), 240.

⁴ For Millet's reception in East Asia, see Youngna Kim, "Mile eui Nongminsang Migookgwa Dongasia esoeui Suyong Hyunsang (Acceptance of Millet's Image of Farmers in America and East Asia)," *Misulsa Nondan* 6 (March 1998), 81-115.

⁵ The Picasso exhibition held in China in 1983 drew about 20,000 people on weekends (See *Chosun Ilbo*, 21 May 1983), while *Van Gogh in Context* exhibition held in the National Museum of Modern Art in Tokyo attracted 518,307 visitors in two months from March 23 to May 22, 2005.

⁶ In Korea, about 350,000 people visited the Millet exhibition of 2002 (See *Chosun Ilbo*, 20 December 2002, A24). Regarding Picasso exhibitions, see *Chosun Ilbo*, 11 September 1974 and *Hankuk Ilbo*, 1 June 2006.

⁷ By the time the first Rodin exhibition was held in Northeast Asian countries, the GNP per capita in Japan was 1,070, in Korea 4,435, and in China about 386 dollars in present value.

⁸ *Musée Rodin: Rapport d'activité 1993*, 13.

⁹ *Ibid.* About 42,000 people visited the Rodin exhibition in Hong Kong in 1993.

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