1. Conditions of Korean Women's Playgoing

> Inspector-General Shin Kae and others wrote a memorial to the throne and insisted that "a woman does not play in the garden during the day and does not leave the inner gate without reason […]. We hope His Majesty to forbid women's leisure of spectating altogether […]."
> But the king did not grant the opinion.
> *Sejong Sillok*[1]

This chapter examines the conditions and practices of Korean women's playgoing during the Korean Empire (1897–1910). Women's playgoing was not self-evident on the Korean peninsula in the early twentieth century due to two reasons. Firstly, women's mobility, economic activities, and public presence were rigidly restricted during the Chosŏn Dynasty (1392–1897). Secondly, unlike neighboring countries such as China or Japan, there was no playhouse or theater building on the Korean peninsula before the close of the nineteenth century. Therefore, in order to comprehend the specificity of the Korean female audience, it is first necessary to understand how the complex changes in social, political, and cultural domains such as the social strata system (*shinbunje*), women's rights, and practices of playing and watching took place since the late nineteenth century.

1.1 Women's Spectatorship during the Chosŏn Dynasty

Confucian Visual Culture

The discourse and practices of Korean women's playgoing during the early twentieth century were closely related to that of the Chosŏn Dynasty. As the Chosŏn Dynasty's ruling philosophy, Confucianism had a far-reaching impact on Korean women's lives, includ-

1 *Sejong Sillok*, July 21, 1431. The dates in *Sillok* follow the lunar calendar.

ing their spectatorship.[2] Confucian teachings constructed a binary gender system based on the distinction between female (*yŏ*) and male (*nam*) and restricted Korean women's mobility and gaze. Confucian gender norms shaped the conception that women were primarily objects of gaze in Korea, which playhouse operators perpetuated in the 1900s.

From the beginning, the Chosŏn state enforced a series of laws and pedagogical interventions to reshape society following Confucian teaching.[3] The core principle of social order in Confucian teaching was the Five Social Relations (*oryun*) and Three Bonds (*samgang*).[4] Conceived by the Confucian philosopher Mencius, the Five Social Relations defined ideal interrelations between father and son, ruler and minister, husband and wife, old and young, and friends.[5] According to Mencius, love was at the core of the ideal father-son relation, duty the ruler-minister, precedence the old-young, and faith in the ideal friendship. Meanwhile, what characterized the relationship between a husband and a wife was "distinction."[6] The philosopher Tu Wei-Ming explains that "the underlying spirit is not dominance but division of labor" between a husband and a wife.[7] However, he confirms that this "benevolent" principle "served as an ideological background for the Three Bonds,"[8] another set of moral foundations in Confucian scholarship.

Tu explained that the Three Bonds "underscore[d] the hierarchical relationship as an inviolable principle for maintaining social order" by declaring "authority of the ruler over the minister, the father over the son, and the husband over the wife."[9] The Three Bonds, too, were widely circulated by the Chosŏn state through publications such as *Samgang Haengsil To* (*Illustrated Guide to the Three Bonds*, 1434), which taught Koreans the morals of

2 For the Confucianization process during the Chosŏn Dynasty and its impact on Korean women's lives, see Theodore J. Yoo, *The Politics of Gender in Colonial Korea: Education, Labor, and Health, 1910–1945*, Asia Pacific Modern 3 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 15–57.

3 Chŏng Tochŏn (1340?-) was the most influential figure in the formative phase of the Chosŏn Dynasty. As the trusted adviser of Yi Sŏnggye, later King T'aejo, Chŏng Tochŏn not only recruited men for the coup, but also incorporated Neo-Confucianism structurally as well as philosophically into the new state system. He wrote the first legal codes of the dynasty, *Chosŏn Kyŏngguk Chŏn* [*Statutes for the Governance of Chosŏn*]. This work is regarded as the outline for "the source of sovereignty, the name of the dynasty, succession to the throne, introduction of members of the royal family, and the proper form of the royal pronouncements." Chŏng Chaisik, "Chŏng Tochŏn, Architect of Yi Dynasty Government and Ideology," in *The Rise of Neo-Confucianism in Korea*, ed. William T. de Bary and JaHyun K. Haboush (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985) 59–88; quote is from 64. For the Confucianization process of Korea, see JaHyun K. Haboush, "The Confucianization of Korean Society," in *The East Asian Region: Confucian Heritage and Its Modern Adaptation*, ed. Gilbert Rozman (Princeton University Press, 1991), 84–110. See also: Martina Deuchler, "Propagating Female Virtues Propagating Female Virtures in Chosŏn Korea," in *Women and Confucian Cultures in Premodern China, Korea, and Japan*, eds. Dorothy Ko, JaHyun K. Haboush and Joan R. Piggott (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 142–69.

4 See Tu Wei-ming, "Probing the 'Three Bonds' and 'Five Relationships' in Confucian Humanism," in *Confucianism and the Family*, eds. Walter H. Slote and George A. DeVos (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998), 121–36.

5 Tu, "'Three Bonds'," 125–29.

6 Ibid., 127.

7 Ibid., 127.

8 Ibid., 130.

9 Ibid., 122.

the Three Bonds through a collection of stories and illustrations.[10] As the essence of social relations in Confucian thinking, the Five Relations and the Three Bonds defined gender norms based on the principles of binary distinction and hierarchical order between men and women.

Built upon these teachings, the Chosŏn Dynasty had a strictly hierarchical social structure based on social strata (*shinbun*), age, and gender.[11] One's position in society was determined by combining these elements, which meant that not every person of the same social stratum, age, or gender group had the same rights and duties. Instead, the life trajectories of women and men from the same social stratum were profoundly different from each other. Likewise, women of different social strata had distinct biographies.

During the Chosŏn era, every person was born into one of four social strata: the aristocrats (*yangban*), the middle people (*chung'in*), the commoners (*sangmin*, *yangmin*), and the "base people" (*ch'ŏnmin*).[12] Social stratum was principally inherited and defined one's rights, duties, and profession. Male *yangban*, "a potent fusion of landed wealth and political power,"[13] were the most privileged members of society. Either "a literatus, a Mandarin, or 'scholar [-] official,'"[14] they could devote themselves to the scholastic learning of Confucian classics and become high-ranked government officials or military officers when they passed the state examination (*kwagŏ*). The middle people (*chung'in*) became technocrats or regional government officers through examinations.[15] Commoners (*yangmin*, *sangmin*) worked as farmers, artisans, and merchants and took up the biggest part of the Chosŏn Korean population.[16] The "base people" (*ch'ŏnmin*) labored as "slaves, [...] professional mourners, shamans, servants, and *kisaeng*" as well as performers (*chaein*).[17]

Along with these divisions of social strata, Chosŏn Korean lawmakers and intellectuals envisioned distinction and hierarchical relations between women and men, too.[18] The

10 Lee Sook-in, *Chŏngjŏl ŭi Yŏksa: Chosŏn Chisigin ŭi Sŏng Tamnon* [*The History of Chastity: The Gender Discourse of the Chosŏn Intellectuals*] (Seoul: P'urŭn Yŏksa, 2014), 13.

11 Yoo, *Politics of Gender*, 30.

12 Ibid., 18.

13 Bruce Cumings, *Korea's Place in the Sun: A Modern History* (New York and London: W. W. Norton, 2005), 51.

14 Yoo, *Politics of Gender*, 18–19.

15 Ibid.

16 Ibid.

17 Ibid., 19.

18 Since the 1990s, the feminist perspective has contributed to diversifying understandings of Neo-Confucianism and Korean history. For analyses of the relationship between Neo-Confucianism and women in Korea, China, and Japan, see Dorothy Ko, JaHyun Kim Haboush, and Joan R. Piggott, eds., *Women and Confucian Cultures in Premodern China, Korea, and Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003). For insights into the influence of Neo-Confucianism on Korean women between the mid- and late Chosŏn era, see Kim Youngmin and Michael J. Pettid eds., *Women and Confucianism in Chosŏn Korea: New Perspectives* (Albany, N.Y., Bristol: SUNY Press, 2012). A comprehensive study of the gendered construction and institutionalization of chastity in the Chosŏn Dynasty can be found in Lee, *History of Chastity*. On the Japan's invasion of 1592 as the watershed in the enforcement of Neo-Confucian gender politics in Chosŏn, see Lee Sook-in, "The Imjin War and the Official Discourse of Chastity," *Seoul Journal of Korean Studies* 22, no. 2 (2009), 137–56. About Yim Yunjidang (1721–93) and Kang Chŏngiltang (1772–1832), two female Confucian scholars of Chosŏn,

distinction between women and men and women's subordination to men as illustrated in the Five Relations and Three Bonds were supported further by Confucian epigrams. For instance, Chosŏn women were expected to follow the Three Rules (*samjong chi to*), which stipulated that every woman "cultivate obedience to one's father before marriage, to one's husband during marriage, and to one's son after the death of a husband."[19] Additionally, the inside-outside principle (*naeoe*) became a powerful tool to restrict women's activities, social contacts, mobility, and visibility. As the historian Hyaeweol Choi points out, the inside-outside principle "refer[red] to both physical and symbolic differences between women and men," which required women "to stay inside the house, attending to domestic matters, while men [were] in charge of external and public affairs."[20] *The Book of Rites*, one of the Confucian classics, dictated *naeoe* as follows:

> The men should not speak of what belongs to the inside (of the house), nor the women of what belongs to the outside. Except at sacrifices and funeral rites, they should not hand vessels to one another. In all other cases when they have occasion to give and receive anything, the woman should receive it in a basket. If she [has] no basket, they should both sit down, and the other put the thing on the ground, and she then take it up. Outside or inside, they should not go to the same well, nor to the same bathing-house. They should not share the same mat in lying down; they should not ask or borrow anything from one another; they should not wear similar upper or lower garments. Things spoken inside should not go out, words spoken outside should not come in. When a man goes into the interior of the house, he should not whistle nor point. If he [has] occasion to move in the night, he should use a light; and if he [has] no light, he should not stir. When a woman goes out at the door, she must keep her face covered. She should walk at night (only) with a light; and if she [has] no light, she should not stir. On the road, a man should take the right side, and a woman the left.[21]

Clauses such as those on separating domains and keeping silent about *the other* sex's realm or wearing different garments correspond to what Choi summarizes as "physical and symbolic differences between women and men." Further clauses show that any contact between women and men was largely prohibited by the Confucian dogma, including touching or even chance encounters. The fact that only women had to cover their faces outside the home suggests that the question of gaze played a significant role in perfecting the principle of *naeoe*. Women in particular had to be concealed from men's gaze.

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see Kim Youngmin, "Voices of Female Confucians in Late Chosŏn Korea," in *Religions of Korea in Practice*, ed. Robert E. Buswell (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 223–30. On the vulnerability of the patriarchal social order based on Neo-Confucianism and the manifold gender relations in the late Chosŏn Dynasty, see Jung Ji-Young, *Chilsŏ ŭi Kuch'uk kwa Kyunyŏl: Chosŏn Hugi Hojŏk kwa Yŏsŏngdŭl* [Building and Cracking Order: Late Chosŏn Family Registers and Women] (Seoul: Sŏgang Taehakkyo Ch'ulp'anbu, 2015).

19 Yoo, *Politics of Gender*, 30.

20 Hyaeweol Choi, *Gender and Mission Encounters in Korea: New Women, Old Ways* (Berkeley, London: University of California Press, 2009), 209 (see note 127).

21 *The Sacred Books of China: The Texts of Confucianism, Part III The Li Ki, I-X*, trans. and ed. James Legge (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1885), 454–55.

Such teachings had a real impact on Korean women's life during the Chosŏn era. Following this principle, King T'aejo, the founder of Chosŏn, ordered married couples living in the capital to separate their sleeping rooms.[22] As a result, noble residences had an extra door and walls that separated women's quarters from the rest of the house by the mid-sixteenth century.[23] A law was enforced to restrict *yangban* women's social contact as well: according to the 1397 law, aristocratic women were not allowed to meet "anyone else but their parents, siblings by blood, brothers of fathers, and siblings of mothers."[24] Furthermore, girls of all social strata were, on the whole, excluded from academic education in the Chosŏn Dynasty, following the ancient idea that "at the age of seven, boys and girls did not occupy the same mat nor [ate] together" and "a girl at the age of ten ceased to go out (from the women's apartments)."[25] Instead, they were expected to perfect the so-called "women's work," which included sewing, cooking, and preparing food for rituals.[26]

Notably, restrictions on women's role, activities, and visibility based on Confucianism mainly targeted noble women in the Chosŏn Dynasty. While women of the commoner and the lowest stratum had greater mobility and visibility, *yangban* women were put under daytime curfew and forced to ride in a sedan chair to remain invisible to the public eye.[27] The historian Martina Deuchler states that *yangban* women were seen as "guardians and transmitters of Confucian norms and values" and required "to embody the ideal of female virtue"[28] as defined by Confucian dogma. To enforce these rules, the officialdom drew upon Confucian epigrams such as "a woman does not play in the garden during the day and does not leave the inner gate without reason."[29]

With the popularization of the Confucian teachings during the second half of the Chosŏn Dynasty, however, some commoner women, too, hid themselves to a certain degree. Louise Jordan Miln (1864-1933), who read Dutch sailor Hendrick Hamel's *Journal and a Description of the Kingdom of Korea, 1653–1666*, noted the change of custom during the last two hundred years of the dynasty. Depicting Korean women's green-colored covering cloth (*chang'ot*), Miln wrote:

> This green dress, which is used as a cloak, is almost exclusively the garment of the women of the middle class—the women who are not so poor that they are obliged to draw water, or to engage in any other forms of hard labour which would make the covering of their faces impossible—but who, at the same time, are occasionally obliged to go

22 Yi Chaehŭi, "Kukka ka Kyŏnje han Yangbandŭl ŭi Hwaryŏ han Chugŏ Munhwa: Yangban ŭi Kŏjuji wa Chugŏ Saenghwal [Korean Aristocrats' Splendid Residential Culture Under State-Control: Yangban's Residence and Living]," in *Chosŏn Yangban ŭi Ilsaeng* [*Lives of Yangban in the Chosŏn Dynasty*], ed. Chŏng Kŭngsik (P'aju: Kŭl Hang'ari, 2009), 201.

23 Yi, "Korean Aristocrats' Residence," 202–03.

24 Lee, *History of Chastity*, 30 and *T'aejo Sillok*, September 21, 1392.

25 Legge, *Sacred Books*, 478–79.

26 Ibid., 479.

27 Yoo, *Politics of Gender*, 27–28; Jung Ji-young, "Chosŏn Shidae Punyŏ ŭi Noch'ul kwa Oech'ul: Kyuje wa T'ŭmsae [Escaping the Inner Room: Women between Regulation and Resistance in the Chosŏn Dynasty]," *Yŏsŏng kwa Yŏksa* 2 (2005), 149–81; refer to 152–57.

28 Deuchler, "Propagating Female Virtues," 165.

29 See *Sejong Sillok*, June 25, 1431, and *Sejong Sillok*, July 21, 1431.

> abroad on some matter of household business. Wives and concubines and daughters of mandarins and of men of wealth do not often leave their own (by courtesy) house and gardens. When they do, they go in palanquins. They enter the palanquin in their own court-yard; the blinds or curtains are tightly closed.[30]

An observation made by William Richard Carles (1848–1929), the British vice-consul to Korea, corroborates that women's social stratum, labor, and visibility were closely related in the Chosŏn Dynasty. In contrast to women of wealth and higher status, "women of the lowest class were standing at the doors of their houses, suckling their children, or doing some household work. Their faces, which were uncovered, bore the signs of smallpox, hard work, and hard fare."[31] Likewise, Horace N. Allen (1858–1932), who came to Chosŏn in 1884 as a missionary doctor of the American Presbyterian Church, pointed out that Korean women's visibility depended on their social status and wealth.

> The women labour in the fields, sometimes knee-[d]eep in the mud and water of the rice plantations. They also engage as porters and peddlers along the roads, such, of course, *being poor creatures reduced to this work and unable to preserve the seclusion so dear to their more favoured sisters*. In cities the chief occupation of the similar class of women is that of the laundress. The washing is done wherever there is a brook and even at the sides of wells, the water sometimes finding its way directly back into the well from which it was dipped. All about the cities wherever there is a little brook or spring, there may be found a company of women with their paddles, pounding clothes on smooth stones in the water (emphasis added).[32]

The stringent control of women's visibility under Confucian rule evidences that they were primarily regarded as objects of gaze rather than as beholders. *Kisaeng* women, who belonged to the lowest stratum (*ch'ŏnmin*), were yet another example that shows the complex entanglement between normative gender roles, strata, and visibility in Korea. Trained in poetry, music, and dance, *kisaeng* women belonged to the state and served as slave entertainers for noblemen.[33] In the service of men of a higher stratum, *kisaeng* women were allowed to have luxurious clothes and fancy accessories, which caught foreign visitors'

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30 Louise J. Miln, *Quaint Korea* (London: Osgood, McIlvane & Co., 1895), 116–17.

31 William Richard Carles, *Life in Corea* (London, New York: Macmillan and co., 1888), 27. For the biographic details about Carles see Brother Anthony (Ahn Sŏnjae), "The Life of William Richard Carles," http://anthony.sogang.ac.kr/Carles/WilliamRichardCarles.html.

32 Horace Newton Allen, *Things Korean: A Collection of Sketches and Anecdotes, Missionary and Diplomatic*, Elibron Classics Edition (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1908), 96–97.

33 Woo Insu explains that "playing musical instruments or singing and dancing belonged to *kisaeng* women's *shinyŏk* [tasks assigned by the state]." As they could not secure their living solely through these duties, they had to perform in the private realm as well. Sometimes, female physicians (*ŭinyŏ*) and needlewomen (*ch'imsŏnbi*) working at the court were also assigned to perform dance and music at state banquets and private festivities, especially after King Injo halted the education of Seoul *kisaeng* women at the Bureau of Music (*chang'akwŏn*) as part of his political reform. See "Kisaeng ŭi Sam kwa Saenghwal [The Life and the Livelihood of Kisaeng Women]," in *Ch'ŏnmin Yein ŭi Sam kwa Yesul ŭi Kwejŏk* [*Trajectories of the Low-Born Artists' Lives and Art*], ed. Kuksa P'yŏnch'an Wiwŏnhoe (Seoul: Doosan Donga, 2007), 19–75; the quote is from 53–54.

attention.[34] Miln depicted the contrast between *kisaeng* women and other people: "She looks like some marvellous [sic!] human flower when you meet her in the streets of Söul [Seoul], and forms an indescribable contrast to the draggled crowds that draw apart to let her pass as she goes on her laughing way to her well-paid work."[35] Despite the luxury they were entitled to, *kisaeng* women were not always the owners of their own pleasure. Miln noted her observation of *kisaeng* women: "No geisha girl [*kisaeng*] expects to be entertained. It is her business to entertain."[36]

Western travelers noticed the differences in *kisaeng* women's vivid presence and the elusive, if not invisible, existence of aristocratic women. George W. Gilmore (1858–1933) wrote:

> Naturally, from the peculiarity of their mode of life and from the seclusion which limits them to the female apartments, boldness is not a trait of Korean women. Of the few women seen by the author during his residence in Korea, only two, and they were *keesang* (dancing-girls), were anything but modest.[37]

An anecdote of the American movie maker Burton Holmes (1870–1958) implies that *kisaeng* women were regarded as objects of the gaze. As he amused a young prince of the Korean Empire with his motion picture machine, the imperial family endowed him with presents and invited him to the palace. "Next day [,] there came an invitation from the Fat Prince to appear at the palace to see the Imperial dancing girls; but a postscript begs us to be sure to bring the picture-machine."[38] For the Korean royal family, *kisaeng* women's performances were a currency whose value corresponded with Holmes's motion pictures, as they, too, were a fascinating spectacle to foreign eyes.

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34 *Kisaeng* women sometimes engaged in affairs with male aristocrats and became their concubines, yet they were distinct from *yunyŏ*—women involved in prostitution—who were not affiliated with the government and lacked artistic skills. See Woo, "Life of Kisaeng," 22. *Kisaeng* women played manifold roles in cultural life during the Chosŏn Dynasty. In addition to music and dance, they actively participated in literary gatherings with aristocratic men and created poems. While male aristocrats considered such literary meetings a private entertainment, thus could be unconcerned about their occasionally vulgar creations, *kisaeng* women were held accountable for the content and quality of their poems. See Pak Yŏngmin, "19-Segi Yŏsŏng Sihoe wa Munhak Konggan: Unch'o Kŭrup ŭl Chungsim ŭro [Women's Poetry Gatherings and Literary Space in the 19th Century: Focused on Unch'o Poetry Circle]," *Minjok Munhaksa Yŏn'gu* 46 (2007), 37–67; refer to 42–44. For examples of *kisaeng* women's literary creations, see Woo, "Life of Kisaeng," 62. Since women's scholarship was considered deplorable under the influence of Confucianism, only few aristocratic women could—often posthumously—publish their texts. However, throughout the dynasty, aristocratic women also engaged in writings, leaving behind autobiographical accounts, letters, poems, household related books, and moral teachings for women. See Lee Sook-in, *Tto Hana ŭi Chosŏn: Shidae ŭi Tŭm esŏ 'Na' ro Chonjae Haettŏn 52-myŏng ŭi Yŏjadŭl* [Yet Another Chosŏn: 52 Women Who Existed as "I"] (Seoul: Han'gyŏre Ch'ulp'an, 2021).

35 Miln, *Quaint Korea*, 157–58.

36 Ibid., 159.

37 George W. Gilmore, *Korea from Its Capital: With Chapters on Missions* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication and Sabbath-School Work, 1892), 150.

38 Elias Burton Holmes, *Burton Holmes Travelogues: With Illustrations from Photographs by the Author*, 10 vols. 10 (New York: The McClure Company, 1908), 107.

The visibility of *kisaeng* women seems to refute the strict control exerted over bodies of noble women. However, it was in accordance with the gendered gaze of Confucianism which forcefully defined women as objects of the gaze and their visibility as a sign of moral flaw. *Kisaeng* women were visible, not *despite*, but *because* of their low social status, as Lilias H. Underwood (1851–1921) points out: "And yet, thus [,] to appear in public, allowing their faces to be seen by strangers, is the gravest breach of propriety in the eyes of all Koreans."[39]

Koreans of that time interpreted a woman's visibility as an index of their social status. Some regarded it as a universal rule that might be applied to other cultures, too. Allen, who guided the first Korean minister of United States Pak Chŏng'yang (1841–1905) to the high society of Washington D.C., observed the Korean aristocrat's astonishment to meet "wives and daughters of [the] most distinguished citizens"[40] at a banquet. Pak mistook them for "'*gesang* [kisaeng]' or dancing girls," as "respectable women would never be seen by strangers"[41] in Chosŏn.

During the Chosŏn era, a person's gaze and visibility were closely related to Confucian gender norms and the social strata system. Confucian teaching dictated the binary distinction between women and men and regulated women's mobility and visibility in the public domain. Until the late nineteenth century, being seen by others was regarded as immoral for women of Chosŏn, although not all women could afford to remain invisible from the public eye. Women of higher social position and economic status could use palanquins or covering clothes, while women who labored were ubiquitously visible. *Kisaeng* women, engaged as spectacular dancers for male aristocrats and their guests, fascinated the public with their unique garments, yet at the same time, they garnered little respect among the Korean people. Despite the varying degree of visibility among Korean women, Chosŏn-era custom and regulations indicate that they were primarily considered the object of gaze instead of the looking subject. As discussed below, however, the restriction does not mean that there was no female spectator in public altogether.

Chosŏn Women's Spectating of Processions

The restriction on women's mobility and social control of their visibility during the Chosŏn Dynasty did not necessarily mean that there was no female spectator. Far from remaining as objects of the gaze, they sought opportunities to participate in public events as onlookers and sometimes even actively outwitted rules banning their participation.

Analyzing the Chosŏn government records, this section first outlines how Chosŏn women attended processions from the fifteenth to the nineteenth century, subsequently analyzing the observations made by two British visitors regarding Korean female spectators during the late nineteenth century. Expanding on Jung Ji-young's 2005 study of aris-

39 Lilias H. Underwood, *Fifteen Years Among the Top-Knots: Or Live in Korea* (Boston: American Tract Society, 1904), 93.

40 Allen, *Things Korean*, 160–61.

41 Ibid.

tocrat women's pastimes,[42] I investigated *The Annals of the Chosŏn Dynasty* and *The Record of Daily Reflections* (*Ilsŏngnok*) to understand court debates on female spectators.[43] Using keyword-search, I collected and analyzed 139 accounts about onlookers of processions and other state events between 1428 and 1861.[44]

Processions of the Chinese delegation and the Korean royal families were the most spectacular event of Chosŏn, thus attracting people of every age, stratum, and gender. The Chinese envoy's procession was often amplified through the stunts and play of *chaein*. Tongwŏl, a diplomat who visited Chosŏn in 1488, documented that the Chosŏn government prepared "endless advent of fishes and dragons, a terrapin carrying a mountain on its back, two [outdoor] stages that are as high as the castle gate, acrobats running down tightropes, lions and elephants made out of horse leather, and phoenix made out of pheasants' feathers"[45] upon his arrival to the capital. Creating such spectacle burdened the Chosŏn Dynasty, particularly after the Japanese Invasion in 1592 and Manchu War in 1636. Therefore, the government discussed abolishing *narye*, the festive performances of *chaein*, in 1623, yet it was continued until 1784.[46] Consequently, the Chosŏn government discussed general conditions of such processions, including women's attendance, until the late eighteenth century.

Jung Ji-young emphasizes that noblewomen were relatively free to watch processions and other public festivities until the late fifteenth century, as the new Confucian dogma was not quickly adopted in their everyday lives.[47] For instance, some aristocratic women installed tents on the street side to enjoy *sandaehŭi*, the festive play, while others observed the Chinese envoy from pavilions, fully revealing their faces to the public eye.[48] By the mid-1400s, the custom did not change much, and some aristocratic women even climbed up the walls and trees to have the best view of processions.[49]

However, as the officialdom tried to transform Chosŏn into a normative Confucian state, women's presence in public became a problem.[50] Thus, the Chosŏn government

42 Jung's analysis is based on nine cases spanning the years 1431 to 1670. See Jung, "Escaping Inner Room," 159–62.

43 Written by royal historians, the chronicle records offer detailed insight into Chosŏn-era custom and the officialdom's evaluation and reaction to them. The records are translated into contemporary Korean language. The digitalized version of the former is serviced by the National Institute of Korean History, the latter by the Institute for the Translation of Korean Classics.

44 Part of the research was presented at Cambridge 2017 AHRC DTP Conference *Tradition and Transformation* on September 19, 2017. I am grateful to a.r.t.e.s. Graduate School for the Humanities Cologne for their generous funding, which allowed me to participate in the conference.

45 Cho Kyŏng'a, "Chosŏn Shidae Chungguk Sashin ŭi Ch'um Hyang'yu [The Dance Appreciation of the Chinese Envoys in the Chosŏn Dynasty]," *Muyong Yŏksa Kirokhak* 35 (2014), 176–77.

46 Sa Chinsil "Injo Ihu Narye ŭi Sasŭp kwa Sandae Togam P'ae ŭi Hŭnghaeng Hwaltong [The Informal Practice of *Narye* and the Popularity of Sandae Togam P'ae after King Injo's Reign]," *Kong'yŏn Munhwa Yŏn'gŭ* 28 (2014): 83–151; refer to 93–99.

47 Jung, "Escaping Inner Room," 159–62.

48 See *Sejong Sillok*, July 21, 1431; *Sejong Sillok*, January 22, 1449.

49 See Jung, "Escaping Inner Room," 159–62.

50 JaHyun Kim Haboush, a historian of Confucian ideology, explains that the Chosŏn Dynasty "had become a normative Confucian society" by the eighteenth century, which was characterized by "patrilineage with its attendant ancestral and mourning rites, the universal acceptance of ethics concerned with the five social relations [*oryun*], the supremacy of the civil bureaucracy, the recruit-

discussed their attendance at processions as an important matter while organizing or reviewing those events between the early fifteenth century and late eighteenth century. As Jung points out, the continuum of the debate shows a situation in which regulations on women were difficult to establish.[51] While the Confucianism-oriented officials insisted upon banning noblewomen's attendance of festivities from 1431 onwards,[52] it was not until 1511 that a king agreed on enforcing such a ban.[53] During these 80 years, the Confucian scholars tried to persuade kings to ban noblewomen's onlooking on occasions of festive performances (*sandaehŭi*) in 1431,[54] processions of the Chinese envoy in 1450,[55] 1480,[56] 1492,[57] and 1503,[58] and King Sŏngjong's plowing ceremony (*ch'in'gyŏng*) in 1493.[59] Based on inside-outside norms, they argued that it was immoral for women to occupy the same space as unknown men and were particularly concerned that the violation of the Confucian gender norm would negatively impact diplomats from the Ming Dynasty.[60]

King Sŏngjong was the first king to partially restrict Korean women's watching of public festivities. Throughout his reign (1469–95), King Sŏngjong upheld aristocrat women's rights to watch, yet he also enforced their duty to cover themselves.[61] In 1481, he obliged the use of beaded curtains to cover noblewomen's faces during the procession.[62] Seven years later, he prohibited women and men from climbing up the roofs as well.[63] Still, he did not entirely ban noblewomen's attendance of processions out of the belief that it counted as one of Chosŏn's custom.[64] Furthermore, he regarded the beaded curtains and tents standing along the streets as an integral part of the festive scenery.[65] By granting noblewomen the right to watch Chinese envoys, King Sŏngjong intentionally placed them on the scene as a subtle sign of Chosŏn's authority and defiance towards the Ming Dynasty.

In 1511, however, King Chungjong (1488–1544) banned *yangban* women's viewing of public events for the first time in Chosŏn history.[66] The government enforced a law that punished the head of household if a woman violated the ban; if there was no male head

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ment of officials through a civil service examination, and the uniform adoption of a Confucian curriculum in educational establishments." See Haboush, "Confucianization of Korean Society," 84.

51 Jung, "Escaping Inner Room," 150.

52 *Sejong Sillok*, June 25, 1431.

53 *Chungjong Sillok*, August 28, 1511.

54 *Sejong Sillok*, June 25, 1431.

55 *Munjong Sillok*, August 2, 1450.

56 *Sŏngjong Sillok*, April 22, 1480.

57 *Sŏngjong Sillok*, June 22, 1492.

58 *Yŏnsan'gun Ilgi*, April 1, 1503.

59 *Sŏngjong Sillok*, February 26, 1493.

60 *Sejong Sillok*, June 25, 1431, *Sejong Sillok*, January 29, 1450, and *Sŏngjong Sillok*, January 28, 1488.

61 *Sŏngjong Sillok*, March 9, 1488, and *Sŏngjong Sillok*, March 7, 1493.

62 *Sŏngjong Sillok*, May 8, 1481.

63 *Sŏngjong Sillok*, January 20, 1488.

64 *Sŏngjong Sillok*, March 9, 1488.

65 *Sŏngjong Sillok*, May 8, 1481.

66 *Chungjong Sillok*, August 28, 1511.

of household in her family, she was punished while wearing a single layer of clothes, thus revealing her to the public eye. However, its stringency led to a revision in 1513.[67]

Nevertheless, some noblewomen found ways to watch spectacular state events despite the ban. Jung Ji-young draws attention to *yangban* women's appropriation of palanquins as mobile auditoriums from the early seventeenth century onwards.[68] When King Sŏnjo (1552–1608) noticed this during a rehearsal for the Chinese envoy's procession in 1606, he forbade women's attendance regardless of their social status, arguing that the Chinese would not be able to distinguish the commoner women from the noblewomen, thus leading them to think that Chosŏn's custom might be corrupt.[69] However, the general ban on noblewomen's attendance of the processions had to be reiterated in 1670, as the younger generation of *yangban* women, too, made use of palanquins.[70] Against all these regulations, noblewomen of the Confucian dynasty actively sought visual pleasure at various occasions such as the sudden appearance of a camel in the walled capital in 1695,[71] the arrival of an envoy from the Qing Dynasty in 1727 on the street,[72] or at home by hiding behind a paper wall with peepholes in 1787.[73]

Isabella Bird Bishop (1831–1904), a British traveler and photographer who frequented Chosŏn between 1894 and 1897, observed how the capital's thoroughfares changed its hue during the King's procession due to the colorful clothes of women and children.[74] She wrote: "The singular monotony of baggy white coats and black crinoline hats [of men] was relieved by boy bridegrooms in yellow hats and rose-pink coats, by the green silk coats of women, and the green, pink, heliotrope and Turkey red dresses of children."[75] The fact that "the white crowd [men in white coats] once more overflowed" the street shortly after the procession indicates how quickly the inside-outside norm was reestablished, with women disappearing from the public realm even as old norms were being questioned at the close of the nineteenth century.

Court debates of the Chosŏn Dynasty show that women's viewing of processions was restricted in the sixteenth century. Policymakers, equipped with the Confucian gender norm, problematized aristocrat women's attendance in particular, arguing that this was against the inside-outside norm. Depending on the kings' decision, noblewomen (and sometimes even women of all strata) were forbidden to watch the public spectacles. Nevertheless, these women did not cease to pursue their pleasure. As they were forced to hide their faces and bodies during King Sŏngjong's reign, Korean women invented ways to comply with the ban while still watching the processions: the noblewomen used palanquins as a mobile auditorium, while commoner women wore covering clothes. This

67 *Chungjong Sillok*, August 24, 1513.

68 Jung, "Escaping Inner Room," 161.

69 *Sŏnjo Sillok* 198, April 8, 1606.

70 *Hyŏnjong Kaesu Sillok*, February 18, 1670.

71 *Sukjong Sillok*, April 14, 1695.

72 *Yŏngjo Sillok*, March 7, 1727.

73 *Ilsŏngnok*, February 21, 1787.

74 On Isabella Bird Bishop's travel photography see Luke Gartlan, "'A Complete Craze': Isabella Bird Bishop in East Asia," *PhotoResearcher* 15 (2011), 13–26.

75 Isabella Bird Bishop, *Korea and Her Neighbors: A Narrative of Travel, With an Account of the Recent Vicissitudes and Present Position of the Country* (New York, Chicago, etc.: F.H. Revell Co., 1898), 51.

practice continued until the end of the nineteenth century. Foreign visitors' accounts show that Korean authorities, female spectators, and the public found a balance between women's participation in public events and the Confucian gender norms. While perceived as the object of the gaze, Korean women challenged the boundaries of the inside-outside rule by pursuing their visual pleasure in public, which established a spectatorial precedence for Korean women's playgoing and theatergoing.

1.2 Women's Playgoing during the Korean Empire

Seoul's Playhouses

One of the biggest changes to the visual culture of the Korean peninsula in the late nineteenth century was the rise of the indoor theater. Unlike in China and Japan, there was no playhouse on the Korean peninsula before the late nineteenth century.[76] Instead of theaters, Korean plays took place on streets, marketplaces, in gardens, or out in nature.[77] The first indoor venues for plays appeared as an increasing number of foreign settlers came to Korea. The earliest account of such a venue on the Korean Peninsula was written by Lilias H. Underwood, a missionary of the American Presbyterian Church. As she returned from Chicago to Korea in the summer of 1893 and had to stay in Chemulp'o, present-day Inch'ŏn, due to her child's illness, her family found a lodging across from a Chinese theater:

> On our return to Korea [,] most of the summer was spent at Chemulpo, as our baby was very sick. We stopped in a so-called *hotel*, kept by Chinamen. The long hot nights were rendered almost intolerable by the noise and odors of such a place. From early in the evening till past midnight [,] we were tortured by the high falsetto singing of the actors in a Chinese theatre across the street.[78]

As a treaty port near the capital, Chemulp'o was an entrance for foreign travelers coming to Korea and had separate concessions (*chogye*) for Chinese, Japanese, and Euro-American merchants.[79] Underwood's recollection implies that the increase in movement of people and goods led to the establishment of theaters in Chemulp'o.

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76 Yu Kiljun, *Sŏyu Kyŏnmun: Chosŏn Chisigin Yu Kiljun, Sŏyang ŭl Pŏnyŏk Hada* [*Travels in the West: Yu Kiljun, the Chosŏn-Korean Intellectual, Translates the West*], trans. Hŏ Kyŏngjin (Seoul: Sŏhae Munjip, [1895]2004), 454.

77 See Gang, "From Streets to Theaters," 146–48.

78 Underwood, *Fifteen Years*, 103–04. Her statement that they spent the summer in Chemulp'o may include an error, because she and her family left Chicago in January 1893 and arrived in Seoul in early May 1893, before the summer began in Korea. See Yi Manyŏl, and Ok Sŏngdŭk (eds.), *Ŏndŏudŭ Charyojip II* [*Horace Grant Underwood Papers II*], *Yŏnse Kukak Ch'ongsŏ* 48 (Seoul: Yŏnse Taehakkyo Ch'ulp'anbu, 2006), 330 and 725.

79 Kang Tŏku and Kang Okyŏp (eds.), *Inch'ŏn Kaehangjang P'unggyŏng* [Sceneries of the Open Port in Inch'ŏn] (Inch'ŏn: Inch'ŏn Kwangyŏk Si Yŏksa Charyogwan Yŏksa Munhwa Yŏn'gushil, 2006), 10.

Meanwhile, Seoul's inhabitants, too, encountered Japanese and Chinese play venues in foreign concessions starting from the close of the nineteenth century.[80] The play companies installed tents or even built buildings to attract audiences and made them to pay to enter the sites.[81] Although Koreans were attracted by circus and stunts, Chinese- and Japanese groups' business model was met with aversion because Korean spectators were not used to the idea of having to pay to attend a performance.[82] Until the playhouse business was established in the early twentieth century, Korean players lived on voluntary payment of onlookers or customers who hired them to play at their festivities.[83] Therefore, Korean newspapers criticized Japanese and Chinese venues for charging audiences, calling their business "robberies" and "begging."[84] Eventually, however, the logic that each spectator must pay for performance took roots in Korea, as a growing number of playhouses started operating in the first decade of the twentieth century.

The Hansŏng Electric Company (HEC) gave additional impetus to the emerging Korean theater business in Seoul. Established by Arthur H. Collbran and Harry R. Bostwick in 1898, two American businessmen, the HEC built and operated the "electric streetcar, electric lighting, and telephone systems in Seoul."[85] Rumors had it that the company was also behind the sudden appearance of Korean play venues just outside the capital "because the benefit from the increase in passengers due to the dance [performance]" was "not little."[86] By the early 1900s, at the latest, the HEC's impact on the Korean theater industry became evident. The company began to show various Korean plays and motion pictures in its garage near the East Gate, and by 1904 it attracted more people by installing a merry-go-round in front of the garage theater.[87] The nameless yet vibrant theater of the HEC evolved into a regular playhouse in June 1907 under the name of *Kwangmude*, or The Light Stage.[88] The HEC's garage theater is known as the first indoor facility that presented shows and motion pictures for the Korean audience.

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80 On the Japanese concession in Seoul after the opening of Korean harbors to foreign powers see Yi Yŏn'gyŏng, *Hansŏng-bu ŭi 'Chagŭn Ilbon,' Chin'gogae hogŭn Ponjŏng* [*The Little Japan in Seoul: Chin'gogae or Honmachi*] (Seoul: Sigong Munhwasa, 2015). For the architectural heritage of the Japanese and Chinese concessions in Chemulp'o (present day Inch'ŏn) see Han'guk Kŭndae Munhakkwan, ed., *Inch'ŏn, 100-nyŏn ŭi Shigan ŭl Kŏtta: Kŭndae Yusan kwa Hamkke Hanŭn Toshi T'amsa* [*Walking through the 100 Years of Inch'ŏn: An Exploration of the City with the Focus on the Modern Heritage*] (Seoul: Buk Ment'o, 2019).

81 Examples of and conflicts over the paying system in Chinese and Japanese concessions are analyzed in Gang, "From Streets to Theaters," 148–51.

82 For instance, a government official was caught and lynched by Chinese playgroup as he tried to peep into the bear play. See "Uhan Yŏung [Stupid Like a Bear]," *HS*, March 29, 1899, 3. I became aware of this case through Woo Sujin's study. See Woo, *Modern Korean Theater*, 28.

83 For a detailed analysis see Gang, "From Streets to Theaters," 146–48.

84 "Chal Ttudŭrinda [Beating Well]," *Cheguk Shinmun* (hereafter *CS*), March 7, 1899, 3.

85 Son Minsuh, "Electrifying Seoul and the Culture of Technology in Nineteenth Century Korea" (PhD diss., University of California Los Angeles, 2008), 79.

86 "Muhŭi Tanggŭm [The Dance Must Be Immediately Banned]," *HS*, March 31, 1900, 2. I became aware of this article through Woo Sujin's study. See *Modern Korean Theater*, 22 and 30.

87 HEC, "Tongmun an … [Near East Gate …]," *HS*, June 23, 1903, 3.
HEC, "Near East Gate" *HS*, June 23, 1903, 3; HEC, "American Korean Electric Company. Light and Power," *TMS*, August 4, 1904, 2.

88 Yu, *New History* 1, 65.

Soch'undae started operating on December 4, 1902, in Seoul's city center, and became a powerful competitor for HEC's Korean playhouse business.[89] This playhouse marks a watershed in Korean theater history due to three reasons: Emperor Kojong's involvement, the location, and the business structure. Firstly, Soch'undae was ostensibly set up by high-ranking government officials (*taegwan*) of the Korean Empire.[90] In fact, however, Emperor Kojong himself was one of the main investors and profiters of the venture.[91] As the landlord, the Ministry of the Royal Household received rent and earnings from the entertainment company, which went directly into Emperor Kojong's vault.[92]

Secondly, Soch'undae was the first playhouse built within the walled capital. During the Chosŏn Dynasty, performers (known as *chaein*), who belonged to the lowest stratum, were not allowed to reside inside the walled capital. Therefore, the decision to open a permanent playhouse in Seoul marked a radical departure from the past.[93] The impetus for this change may have come from the observations of Yu Kiljun, who was assigned to travel and inspect Western societies by Kojong. Yu's report emphasized the educational value of plays and highlighted the financial benefits of taxing commercial shows, which would contribute to state coffers.[94] The two-story building with a conical roof was built amidst the three major royal palaces (Kyŏngbokkung, Tŏksugung, and Kyŏnghŭigung), signalizing a strong connection to the Korean royal family and the commercial interests associated with it.[95] Due to its geographical and institutional ties to the Korean Empire's officialdom, Soch'undae swiftly became the center of the public discourse on the role of plays and playhouses.[96]

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89 Soch'undae was known by many different names, including Hŭidae, Hyŏmnyulsa, and Wŏn'gaksa. Hŭidae referred to stages in general, while Hyŏmnyulsa and Wŏn'gaksa were names of operating companies. To avoid any confusion, this study exclusively uses Soch'undae to refer to the playhouse building, although this name was quickly forgotten in the 1900s. For translations, other names will be replaced by Soch'undae if the original text refers to the building or the venue. Hyŏmnyulsa and Wŏn'gaksa will only be used as names of operating companies. For further discussions on the name see Cho, *Correcting History*, 55 and 112–50.

90 "Hyŏmnyulsa Kugyŏng [Watching Plays at Hyŏmnyulsa's Playhouse]," *CS*, December 16, 1902, 1.

91 Kwŏn Tohŭi, "Taehan Cheguk Ki Hwangsil Kŭkchang ŭi Taejung Kŭkchang ŭro ŭi Chŏnhwan Kwajŏng e taehan Yŏn'gu [Converting Process from Imperial Theater to Public One during the Korean Empire: Focusing on Hŭidae and Hyŏmnyulsa]," *Kugagwŏn Nonmunjib* 32 (2015), 97–129.

92 Kwŏn, "Converting Process," 114–15.

93 Theater historian Sa Chinsil points out that there were a few exceptional performers called "clowns in the capital (*kyŏngjung uin*)" who resided in Seoul during the Chosŏn Dynasty, yet the advantages of living in the capital city gradually diminished. See *Han'guk Yŏn'gŭksa Yŏn'gu* [*The Study of the Korean Theater History*] (Seoul: Taehaksa, 1997), 211–18 and 309–11.

94 Yu, *Travels in West*, 454–56. About the possible impact of Yu's book on the establishment of Soch'undae see Gang, "From Streets to Theaters," 151–54.

95 For the design of Soch'undae see Cho, *Correcting History*, 202–11. The playhouse was at the present-day address 56 Shinmunro-1-ga, Jongno-gu, Seoul. See Yun Howoo, "Ch'oech'o Kŭndaesik Kŭkchang Wŏn'gaksa Chŏnghwak han Wich'i Kirok Ch'ajatda [Record of the Exact Location of Wŏn'gaksa, the First Modern Theater, Is Found]," *Chugan Kyŏnghyang*, October 15, 2013, http://weekly.khan.co.kr/khnm.html?artid=201310081637251&mode=view.

96 The criticisms of playhouses during the 1900s are discussed in detail in chapter 2.

Thirdly, Soch'undae was the first playhouse in Korea managed by an entertainment company named Hyŏmnyulsa, which engaged exclusive performers.[97] Under the state and police's cooperation, the entertainment company boldly claimed that all Korean entertainers, including singers, dancing children, and *kisaeng* women of the capital, might be under their jurisdiction in 1903.[98] This monopoly was broken around August 1906, as Emperor Kojong was no longer involved in the playhouse business.[99] Afterwards, the operators and the playhouse's name changed several times until its final closure in 1912.[100]

While the 1905 Protectorate Treaty between Japan and Korea posed a serious threat to the Korean Empire's sovereignty, the legal changes that followed gave rise to Seoul's Korean playhouse district. Specifically, the 1906 Road Management Rules, enforced as the second order of the newly reformed Police Department, banned, among others, "giving speeches, playing, or gathering the crowd on the street" under the pretext that these activities disturbed the traffic.[101] Based on a 1872 Japanese ordinance, this rule "subjected acts, which had been either uninteresting for the power or unpunished publicly, to punishments as a part of the discipline that corresponded with [the colonizer's notion of] *civilization*."[102] A similar clause in the 1907 Security Law, too, forbade earning money by showing gigs on the streets.[103] As the usual space of performance disappeared, indoor playhouses became the only alternative for Koreans to enjoy music, plays, and dances.

In line with these changes, three new Korean playhouses opened in the city center between 1907 and 1908. In June 1907, three Korean businessmen established Tansŏngsa near Jongno, the main street of the capital.[104] Soon after, Chang'ansa was opened just across the street from Tansŏngsa. In November 1907, a further three Korean businessmen erected Yŏnhŭngsa about 450 meters west of Tansŏngsa.[105] With the rejuvenation of Soch'undae under the new operation company named Wŏn'gaksa ("The Conic House") in July 1908 and that of HEC's garage theater under the new name of Kwangmudae ("The Light Stage"), Northern Town (Pukch'on) of Seoul and the East Gate area became a small yet meaningful Korean playhouse district.[106]

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97 Woo, *Modern Korean Theater*, 41–43. The operating company lasted until July 1908. See Cho, *Correcting History*, 151.

98 "Yulsa Koshi [Hyŏmnyulsa's Notice]," *CS*, March 27, 1903, 3; "Kŭmji Kiyu [Ban on Kisaeng Women's Play]," *HS*, April 30, 1903, 2.

99 Kwŏn, "Converting Process," 117–18.

100 Cho, *Correcting History*, 190.

101 "Toro Kwalli Kyuch'ik (Kyŏngshich'ŏng Ryŏng che 2-ho)," *Kwanbo*, January 6, 1906, as cited in Yi Chongmin, "1910-nyŏndae Kyŏngsŏng Chumindŭl ŭi 'Choe' wa 'Pŏl': Kyŏngbŏmjoe T'ongje rŭl Chungsim ŭro [Crime and Punishment on Residents of Kyungsung in the 1910's: Focused on the Control of Minor Offences]," *Seoul Hak Yŏn'gu* 17 (2001), 95–130; refer to 102.

102 Yi, "Crime and Punishment," 103.

103 See Yi Sŭnghŭi, "Mudan T'ongch'i Ki Hŭnghaeng/chang T'ongje ŭi Kisul [The Technique of Control to Play and Theater During the Military Colonial Rule Period]," *Han'guk Kŭk Yesul Yŏn'gu* 39, no. 3 (2013), 21.

104 See Yi Sunjin, *Chosŏnin Kŭkchang Tansŏngsa 1907–1939* [The Korean Theater Tansŏngsa 1907–1939] (Seoul: Han'guk Yŏngsang Charyowŏn / KOFA, 2011), 11.

105 See Yu, *New History* 1, 66–73.

106 See Yu, *New History* 1, 63–67.

The Korean playhouses presented various Korean plays, dances, musical recitals, stunts, slide shows, and motion pictures. Wŏn'gaksa and HEC distinguished their venues from other playhouses by foregrounding specific genres and players. Upon starting the business on July 26, 1908, Wŏn'gaksa advertised that audiences could count on "twenty-four singing *kisaeng* (*kagi*), who are the top-tier of Seoul, and forty *p'ansori* singers including the renowned master singer Kim Ch'anghwan."[107] Meanwhile, Kwangmudae continued to broaden its program in terms of genres: After impressing the public with a dazzling show including motion pictures and the musical play Ch'unhyangga on the opening night, Kwangmudae presented educational slide shows on hygiene as well as old and new dances, such as the "electric dance."[108] Audiences of Yŏnhŭngsa, too, could enjoy various shows, including the small drum dance, folk songs, *p'ansori* pieces, and a *kisaeng*'s recital on a single night of the show in 1909.[109]

Seoul's Korean theater district offered a wide range of entertainment choices for the onlookers, and its establishment meant more opportunities, competition, and the need for distinction for performers and theater operators of that time. However, the burgeoning theater business coincided with the Korean Empire's political crisis and Japan's increased control over Korea. This met with social criticism from the theater industry and its spectators, which had a significant impact on the discourse on theater and audience that had just begun. A more detailed analysis of the political crisis and its impact on Korean female audiences is undertaken in chapter 2.

Material Conditions of Theatergoing in the 1900s

For Seoul's female spectators, the emerging playhouse business of the early 1900s meant both a new opportunity and a new limitation. They could attend first-class *kisaeng* women's dances in Soch'undae theater, which used to be performed exclusively at royal banquets.[110] Alternatively, they could take a streetcar to the last stop and watch motion pictures at Hansŏng Electric Company's garage theater.[111] Instead of envoys from the Qing Dynasty, visitors from the West caught their eyes and fulfilled their curiosity.[112] Concurrently, theatergoing required spare time and money to spend on this pastime. This section specifically evaluates the impact of economic power, leisure time, and childcare responsibilities on the female audience. By considering these factors, we can gain a

107 Wŏn'gaksa, "Advertisement," *HS*, July 26, 1908, 3. The same advertisement was published in *TMS*, July 26, 1908, 3.

108 See "Yŏn'gŭk Kigwan [Wonderous Sight of Theater]," *Mansebo*, May 30, 1907; "Wisaeng Hwandŭng Hoe [Hygiene Slide Show]," *TMS*, July 31, 1907, 2; Kwangmudae, "T'ŭkpyŏl tae Kwanggo [Special Advertisement]," *HS*, May 26, 1908, 3.

109 Talgwansaeng, "Yŏn'gŭkchang Chuin ege [To a Theater Owner]," *Sŏbuk Hakhoe Wŏlbo* 16 (1909), 32.

110 Émil Bourdaret, *En Corée* (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1904), 337.

111 "Yuwan Chowi [Watching Is at a Risk]," *HS*, July 10, 1903, 2.

112 Foreigners in the Korean Empire shared the memory of being observed by Korean people as a spectacle. For examples, see Allen, *Things Korean*, 18; Henry Savage-Landore, *Corea or Cho-sen: The Land of the Morning Calm* (London: William Heinemann, 1895), 71; Gilmore, *Korea from Its Capital*, 86.

deeper understanding of the context in which news briefs about women in playhouses were written and received.

Newspaper advertisements of the time indicate that Korean playhouses in Seoul showed plays at night.[113] The business hours of playhouses were far from bad news for Seoul's female spectators because the capital's streets belonged to women during that time, while most men were under night curfew (*yagŭm*). Beginning in 1400, under King T'aejong's reign, the night curfew was a means of prohibiting crimes.[114] At the close of the nineteenth century, Seoul's city government restricted its residents' movements in the capital between 8 p.m. and midnight, with exceptions for women and *yangban* men accompanied by servants.[115] Setting part of the night as the women's outing time allowed them to engage in social activities without revealing themselves to others following the inside-outside norms. Allen, who enjoyed extraordinary rights as a diplomat from the U.S. and could go outside at nights like *yangban* men, described the liberty that women enjoyed in the late night from his observation:

> The only lights to be seen were those from the lanterns of the few pedestrians. Most of the people to be met were women, each one white clad and closely veiled, carrying a tiny paper lantern giving out a feeble glow from its beeswax taper. For from the tolling of the "curfew bell" for the closing of the city gates, until the opening of the same at dawn, all common men except the attendants of a person of rank, were excluded from the streets[,] which were then given over to the women, who seemed to enjoy to the full this liberty of the city, and were taking this time to make their social calls and get some necessary out-of-door exercise. What better occasion could there be for the lone woman from a distant land to make her first progress on foot through the streets of this, to her, unexplored city.[116]

The night curfew policy changed several times after the Kabo Reform in 1895.[117] Initially, the night curfew was abolished through the Reform in 1895. However, in June 1899, the movement of individuals was restricted again after 10 p.m.[118] In May 1905, the police department banned women's going out after 9 p.m., drastically changing the custom.[119] Nevertheless, it seems that such changes had a liminal impact on women's playgoing at night. Depicting the success of motion pictures in and around Seoul, a 1903 article in the *Taehan Maeil Shinbo* mentioned that the new spectacle "contributed to aristocratic women's onlooking" at Hansŏng Electric Company's garage and to the gathering of "thousands of prostituting women (*yunyŏ*)" at Soch'undae.[120] It is unclear if different groups of women went to separate venues, but the article shows that screenings between

113 See *HS*, December 4, 1902, 3 and *HS*, June 23, 1903, 3.

114 Yu Sŭnghŭi, "17-18-segi Yagŭmje ŭi Unyŏng kwa Pŏmyaja ŭi Silt'ae [The Night-Curfew of 17th-18th century and Violators]," *Yŏksa wa Kyŏnggye* 87 (2013), 87.

115 See Holmes, *Travelogues*, 58; Allen, *Things Korean*, 79.

116 Allen, *Things Korean*, 69–70.

117 Yu, "Night-Curfew," 104–05.

118 "Yagyŏng Kiŏm [Night-Curfew Reintroduced]," *HS*, June 26, 1899, 2.

119 "Kyŏngsa Kŭmnyŏng [Police Ban]," *CS*, May 20, 1905, 2.

120 "Watching Is at Risk," *HS*, July 10, 1903, 2.

8 p.m. and 10 p.m. were no problem even for women of a higher social stratum because they were used to going out at night.

Despite the 1905 ban on women's outings after 9 p.m., female audiences continued to frequent Seoul's playhouses. When Soch'undae reopened on March 4, 1906, contemporaries observed "thousands of men and women gathered like a cloud."[121] On June 26, 1906, as the Tano Festival was held, the same playhouse presented shows all day from 9 a.m. to 10 p.m. and earned several one thousand wŏn a day, attracting "sons of prestigious families and playgirls."[122] Likewise, when the upper floor of Tansŏngsa collapsed at 9 p.m. on July 3, 1908, the injured were mostly women because the accident happened in the women's section.[123] These cases suggest that Korean women continued to visit playhouses even after the 1905 ban on nighttime outings, raising questions about the duration and effectiveness of the ban.

Economic power was another decisive factor for a woman to become the audience of commercial playhouses. Soch'undae distinguished seats in three categories and priced them differently. For the first show on December 4, 1902, the playhouse charged one wŏn for a high-class seat, seventy chŏn for a middle-class seat, and fifty chŏn for a low-class seat.[124] Thereby, seats closest to the stage were the cheapest, while seats placed physically higher were more expensive than others.[125] This pricing scheme derived from the hierarchical social structure of Korean society and remained unquestioned until 1925.[126] Meanwhile, the HEC sold tickets for a motion picture screening night at a flat rate of ten chŏn, lower than any seats in Soch'undae playhouse.[127]

In short, to attend a play or a motion picture in a playhouse, one had to pay at least ten chŏn. To understand the value of playhouse tickets, it is helpful to investigate an expenditure record from the year 1904. The Ministry of the Royal Household left a long list of prices paid for the funeral of the Empress Dowager Myŏnghŏn in the winter of 1904.[128] The ministry paid 264 wŏn for twenty-two *pyŏlgam* (special directors), who safeguarded the coffin for twenty-three days, as food expenses. In other words, the average daily meal cost per person was 0.52 wŏn or fifty-two chŏn. This means that for the price of the high-class seat in Soch'undae, or one wŏn, one could feed an adult man for two days, and ten

121 "Yulsa Pŏnhwa [Bustling Hyŏmnyulsa]," March 4, 1906, *TMS*, 2.

122 "Yulsa Kyŏnghwang [Hyŏmnyulsa's Current Situation]," June 27, 1906, *HS*, 2. *Tano* is a festive day celebrated on the fifth day of the fifth Lunar month.

123 "Tansŏng Naksang [Accident at Tansŏngsa]," *HS*, July 5, 1908, 2. The women's section is discussed in chapter 3.

124 Hyŏmnyulsa, "Ponsa esŏ … [Our company …]," *CS*, December 4, 1902, 3.

125 See Bourdaret, *En Corée*, 247. The seating plan, which reflected economic power and gender, is discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

126 As late as in 1925, an anonymous writer pointed out that the pricing should not follow the logic of social hierarchy, but the perspective that each seat offered. YK-Saeng, "Kaebangnan: Sok'i Kaeryang Hal Kŭkchang ŭi Chwasŏk. Uch'ŭng kwa Area Ch'ŭng ŭl Patkoa Kkumyŏ Nora [The Open Column: Theater Seats Need an Immediate Improvement. Exchange the Upper and Lower Floors]," *MS*, September 19, 1925, 2.

127 HEC, "Near East Gate," *HS*, June 23, 1903, 3.

128 Min Pyŏngsŏk, "Chohoe," March 11, 1904, *Kaksa Tŭngnok Kŭndae P'yŏn* [Copies of Administrative Bureaus Records], http://db.history.go.kr/id/mk_017_0060_0740.

chŏn would be about 20 percent of daily food expenses for an adult man. This was never a small amount in Korean society where famine and poverty were an ongoing problem.[129]

Considering the relatively steep ticket prices, it was no coincidence that a Korean newspaper depicted theatergoing as a luxurious pastime of aristocrat women in April 1908 under the title "Some Are Singing, Others Are Crying." The journalist wrote: "innumerable aristocrat women chased after [plays] in groups at places such as Tansŏngsa and Yŏnhŭngsa," indicating that they had time and money at their disposal.[130] The noblewomen used their conditions of privilege to fulfill their desires for entertainment and participation in public life. Another group of women who could afford the ticket price was *kisaeng* and prostituting women. As companions of "sons of luxurious families,"[131] *kisaeng* women and prostituting women often attended plays.

Although there are few accounts about commoner women, they, too, visited playhouses. The French traveler Émile Bourdaret documented how a woman with green covering cloth (*chang'ot*) attended plays at Soch'undae in the winter of 1902–03:

> The lower rows are quieter, more modest. Here is a good woman, covered in her green coat, who shyly slips into an empty place, and, not knowing that the bench is made to sit, settles down comfortably on the ground. As she is in the front row, she will not lose a single note of the soft music that is to come.[132]

Bourdaret's account shows that the commoner woman, who was obviously in the playhouse for the first time in her life, tried to comply with the inside-outside-norm by wearing *chang'ot* inside the building as well.[133] The late 1900s witnessed women of lower-income households going to playhouses with "some change in their pocket,"[134] too, which implies that playgoing became popularized among Koreans.

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129 For instance, foreign residents commonly pointed out poverty and famine as problems of the Korean Empire. Allen wrote: "Speaking of cheese, it is remarkable that in Korea where are to be found such fine large cattle, there is no use made of milk, and this too in a land of such poverty that it would seem that all proper foods would be cherished as such." Alle, *Things Korean*, 121. Savage-Landor explained how poor Koreans sold themselves as slaves due to poverty: "[…] many people used to sell themselves in order to acquire a comfortable living. In time of famine this must have very often occurred […]." Savage-Landor, *Corea*, 245. Gilmore pointed out that among others the low wage was responsible for poverty: "Koreans are wretchedly poor; poor not merely according to our standard, but judged by one much lower. One gauge of this poverty is afforded by their scale of wages." Gilmore, *Korea from Its Capital*, 88.

130 "In'ga In'gok [Some Are Singing, Others Are Crying]," *HS*, April 29, 1908, 2.

131 "Yŏnsa Ilgŏp [Theaters Threaten]," *HS*, May 1, 1908, 2.

132 Bourdaret, *En Corée*, 249.

133 To manage the separation between different price categories of seats as well as women and men, playhouses would introduce makeshift architectural elements and a designated women's section in the late 1900s, which is discussed in further detail in chapter 3. As a photograph of the auditorium from 1934 shows, women and men were still seated separately, yet curtains or other means of segregation were no longer used in the early 1930s (see figure 17). According to Roh Jiseung, the coercion of gendered separation in theaters seemed to have been abolished by the late 1930s, likely in line with the abolishment of relevant laws in Japan in 1931. See Roh, "Colonial Female Audiences," 5.

134 "Yŏnhŭijang ŭi Yasŭp [Savage Custom of Playhouses]," *HS*, November 29, 1907, 2.

The female audiences of playhouses, who paid money for tickets, understood their right as customers and insisted on it. The 1909 article shows how they confronted theater operators when their expectations were not met:

> On the day before yesterday, in total four female spectators entered Yŏnhŭngsa at Sa-dong, Chung-bu; two of them promptly reclaimed the ticket price and gave the owner of the playhouse good scolding, saying "this, too, is a business, thus install a heater inside the playhouse so that visitors do not freeze to death" and returned home immediately. The company stopped the show one hour after they opened.[135]

This article shows how two female visitors complained about the lack of heating in the hall. They were aware that the ticket price covered the cost of watching plays and the right to be in a convenient setting. Reminding the theater operator that running theater was "a business," these confident women demanded proper treatment as paying customers. This case shows that Korean female spectators quickly became familiar with the logic of commercial playhouse business, which was unknown to Koreans until the late nineteenth century.[136] While women's presence in public was still a rarity, some female audiences of Seoul actively exercised their rights, however trivial they might look.

While child-rearing was typically regarded as a women's responsibility, having children did not appear to hinder women's playgoing. In fact, it was common practice to bring children along. The theater reformer Hyŏn Ch'ŏl (1891–1965), for instance, remembered that some adults took him to motion pictures when he was twelve or thirteen years old.[137] In the 1910s, mothers would frequently bring their children to watch popular *shinp'a* drama like *Nunmul* (*The Tears*).[138] An anonymous audience member even complained in a reader's letter in 1920 about noisy children at motion picture shows, but the presence of children at plays and motion pictures was not restricted.[139]

Children in colonial Korea were allowed to watch plays and later movies with adults for both cultural and legal reasons. Firstly, there was a long-standing custom of playful watching in Korea. Korean audiences used to actively engage in performances by conversing with players and other spectators during performances.[140] As a result, there was a greater acceptance for people making noise or going around the theater during a performance within Korean playhouses. Even in 1917, as colonial intellectuals had long advocated an emotional immersion into plays, some Korean audiences urged theater operators to notify them more actively during a show, when someone called theaters and

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135 "Yŏnhŭng Muro [No Heater at Yŏnhŭngsa]," *HS*, November 26, 1909, 3.

136 For the commodification of plays, see Gang, "From Streets to Theaters," 146–54.

137 See Hyŏn Ch'ŏl, "Chosŏn Kŭkgye to Imi 25-nyŏn [Already Twenty-five-years of Korean Theater]," *Chogwang* 1, no. 2 (1935), 88, as cited in Cho, *Correcting History*, 230

138 See "Puin Aedokcha Nunmul Kŭk Kwallam Hoe Tae Sŏnghwang [The Big Success of the Play *Nunmul* for Female Readers]," *MS*, February 1, 1914, 3.

139 Namsansaeng, "Tokja Kurakpu [Readers' Club]," *MS*, February 11, 1920, 4.

140 Chŏng Ch'ungsil, a cinema scholar, points out that this specific type of spectating was common to the working-class movie theaters in Japan and Korea and calls this playful watching. *Watching Movies*, 212. Such spectating practices became a target of *modernization* and cultural assimilation under the colonial rule. See chapter 3.1.

wanted to talk to them. An audience advised theater operators to learn from Japanese theaters, where employees called the person from the stage and eventually put the name on the curtain or even walked around the auditorium with a flag bearing the audience member's name.[141]

Secondly, there were no age-based restrictions on media consumption in colonial Korea. In 1917, the Japanese government introduced Control Regulations for Motion Picture, which categorized films as suitable for the general audience or for those aged 15 and older. However, for reasons unknown, the age limit was not adopted in colonial Korea until 1940, although the Government-General usually enforced similar rules in colonial Korea.[142] As a result, child-rearing did not principally hinder Korean women from going to theaters.

In the early 1900s, women of Seoul could easily visit playhouses as long as they could afford the ticket price. The fact that shows took place at night and that they might have to bring their children along did not discourage them from going to playhouses. The most prominent female audience members in the 1900s were aristocrat women, *kisaeng* women, and prostituting women, who had enough time and money to spend on their audiovisual pleasure.

The Gendered Interpellation of the Audience

As shown, Korean women were an integral part of the auditorium from the very beginning of the playhouse business. Nevertheless, operators of playhouses and playgroups exclusively interpellated men as the audience in their advertisements. These advertisements raise questions about how the gendered visual culture of the Chosŏn Dynasty was continued into the early twentieth century.

Throughout the 1900s, playhouses and companies frequently used *ch'ŏmgunja* or *chegunja*, plural forms of *kunja*, to address readers of their advertisements. *Kunja* refers to a realistic version of the ideal human with virtue and erudition in Confucian learning.[143] *The Analects of Confucius* characterizes *kunja* as persons possessing virtues such as wisdom, humanity, courage, decorum, modesty, and trustworthiness who try to perfect themselves by learning and studying.[144] *Kunja* had a gendered connotation because the term seldom referred to women. The historian Kim Ŏnsun points out that the Chosŏn Dynasty's male scholars never introduced *kunja* as a role model for Korean noblewomen. Instead, Confucian books taught aristocratic women to perfect *womanly works* (*yŏgong*), such as making clothes for their families and preparing foods for ancestral rituals.[145]

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141 "Putpang'a [Brushstrokes]," *MS*, November 28, 1917, 3.

142 See Yi Sŭnghŭi, "Shingminji Shidae Hŭnghaeng (Jang) Ch'wich'e Kyuch'ik ŭi Munhwa Chŏllyak kwa Yŏksajŏk Chu'i [The Cultural Strategy and Historical Progress of Play and Playhouse: Control Regulations in Colonial Period]," *Sanghŏ Hakpo* 29 (2010), 149–87; see 159.

143 Pak Mira, "Chungguk Yugyo ŭi Isangjŏk In'gan Hyŏng: Sŏng'in kwa Kunja rŭl Chungsim ŭro [The Ideal Human Types of the Chinese Confucianism: Through the Examples of *Sŏng'in* and *Kunja*]," *Chonggyo wa Munhwa* 7 (2001), 215–39; refer to 231.

144 Pak, "Ideal Human Types," 232.

145 See Kim Ŏnsun, "Ye wa Sushin ŭro Chŏng'ŭi Toen Mom [Bodies Defined by Decorum and Cultivation]," *'Mom' ŭro Pon Han'guk Yŏsŏngsa. Han'guk Munhwasa* 35 [The History of Korean Women

According to Kim Ŏnsun, some exceptional aristocratic women were posthumously called "*kunja* among women (*yŏjung kunja*)."[146] She points out that those women were commonly praised for having learned Confucian classics, which they successfully hid during their lifetime.[147] They pretended not to read or write and, if they were able, did it in the night after finishing their *womanly works*; some "burned their texts so that even a husband had no clue about his wife's scholarship until she died."[148] Kim deduces that by emphasizing a scholarly woman's silence about her intellectual activities, male clan members could foreground that she knew her place in society, which enhanced the family's glory.[149]

Kim's study reveals a gendered bias in how *kunja* was imagined and established as the ideal human being in the Chosŏn Dynasty. The fact that scholarly women were referred to as "*kunja* among women" instead of simply *kunja* reinforces the fact that that a *kunja* was generally imagined as a man, even without any markers of gender. The lack of the term "*kunja* among men (*namjung kunja*)" in *The Annals of Chosŏn Dynasty*, which encompasses over 500 years of royal records, confirms that *kunja* generally referred to men, too.[150]

Is it possible that business owners of the Korean Empire did not address Korean women in newspaper advertisements because a significant part of women was illiterate?[151] While this question cannot be entirely ruled out, advertisements for other businesses imply that the target customer was a decisive factor. With the establishment of Korean newspapers and the possibility of print advertisement, *kunja* became a common word for companies to address their target group in the late 1890s. Big companies such as the Bank of Hansŏng, as well as Seoul's local businesses, such as Yimunsa Publishing Company and Gorschalki's German Import Store, used the word in their newspaper advertisements.[152] Unlike these companies, the Kumamoto Store in Seoul clearly articulated that it regarded Korean women as potential customers by using an extra appellation. Promoting a French perfume in the Korean newspaper *Tongnip Shinmun* in April 1897, the Japanese store wrote: "The artificial scent and perfume are produced in France, and they are goods of high quality. We hope many gentlemen (*che kunja*) and many ladies

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through the Body. Korean Cultural History 35] (Seoul: Kyŏng'in Munhwasa, 2011), 123–63; refer to 156. About *womanly works* see ibid., 146.

146 Kim, "Bodies Defined by Decorum," 156.

147 See ibid.

148 See ibid., 157.

149 See ibid.

150 Keyword search results show no accounts including *Kunja* among men (*Namjung Kunja*) while there are two accounts of members of the royal family praised as *Kunja* among women during King Chŏngjo's reign in the late eighteenth century. See *Chŏngjo Sillok*, January 17, 1795, and *Chŏngjo Sillok* 15, February 6, 1783.

151 According to Hyaeweol Choi, women's literacy gained public support as a part of the modernization process and the Western missionary's expansion to Korea. See Choi, "Women's Literacy and New Womanhood in Late Choson Korea," *Asian Journal of Women's Studies* 6, no. 1 (2000), 88–115.

152 See Bank of Hansŏng, "Hansŏng Ŭnhaeng Kwanggo [The Advertisement for Bank of Hansŏng]," *Tongnip Shinmun* (hereafter *TS*), April 15, 1897, 4; Yimunsa, "Hundong Yimunsa [The Publishing Company Yimunsa at Hundong]," *TS*, April 1, 1897, 4; Koshalgi, "Koshalgi Kwanggo [The Advertisement for Gorschalki's Store]," *TS*, April 3, 1897, 4.

(*che puin*) come to buy it."[153] This example shows that if a company wanted to address women as customers, it had to use *che puin* in addition to *che kunja*.

As mentioned above, Seoul's playgroups and playhouses adopted the term *kunja* to address their potential customers, too. For instance, the group presented dancing children (*mudong*) on the riverside near Seoul called their target group *kunja* in 1900.[154] Another example is a 1907 advertisement by Seoul's Majŏn Hotel, which attracted audiences with slide shows and motion pictures while addressing them as *kunja*.[155] Operators of Soch'undae championed publishing advertisements and called their customers *ch'ŏmgunja*, a plural form of *kunja*, throughout the years between 1902 and 1908, regardless of the occasion. When they announced the opening of the playhouse, a new program, closure, or reopening, they used the term:

> We close from the 26th of this month to the 3rd of the following month. The ticket prices are one wŏn for the high-class, sixty chŏn for the middle-class, and forty chŏn for the low-class seats, so we hope you gentlemen (*ch'ŏmgunja*) honor our place by coming to us. Hyŏmnyulsa.[156]

> We reopen the former Hyŏmnyulsa [Soch'undae] and start various artistry on February 8 by the lunar calendar. As before, the show starts at 5 or 6 p.m. and goes on until 11 p.m., so we hope many gentlemen (*ch'ŏmgunja*) will watch. Hyŏmnyulsa.[157]

> We start a play from July 26 onwards with the twenty-four outstanding *kisaeng* singers and forty master *p'ansori* singers, including Kim Ch'anghwan. The location is former Hyŏmnyulsa at Yaju-hyŏn, and it opens at 7 p.m. every evening and closes at midnight. We hope gentlemen in general (*ilban ch'ŏmgunja*) will gather like clouds. Wŏn'gaksa.[158]

The robust usage of *kunja* needs an explanation because there was always a female audience in Korean playhouses and the operators could have used the term *che puin* to address them. Furthermore, limiting the advertisement's target group could negatively affect the sales, which contradicted the profit-oriented nature of the playhouse business. Although they set up ladies' seats surrounded by curtains, thus enabling women to attend plays and motion pictures, theater operators did not address them as spectators until the early 1910s.[159]

According to the French philosopher Louis Althusser's concept of interpellation, these advertisements showed that Korean playhouse operators of the early 1900s imagined men as the audience and strengthened this gendered bias in the imagination of

153 Kumamoto Store, "Injo Sahyang Han'gae Kap Tatnyang [A Piece of Artificial Scent Costs Five Nyang]," *TS*, April 15, 1897, 4.

154 See Dancing Children's Site, "Yangnyŏk Iwŏl Iship Ch'iril … [From the February 27 by the solar Calender …]," *HS*, February 28, 1900, 3.

155 See Majŏn, "Hwaltong Sajin Kwango [Motion Picture Advertisement]," *TMS*, May 9, 1907, 3.

156 Hyŏmnyulsa, "Kwanggo [Advertisement]," *HS*, January 26, 1903, 3.

157 Hyŏmnyulsa, "Chŏn Hyŏmnyulsa rŭl … [The former Hyŏmnyulsa is …]," *TMS*, February 28, 1906, 3.

158 Wŏn'gaksa, "Ponsa esŏ Ch'irwŏl Iship Yugil putŏ … [From July 26 onwards, our company …]," *TMS*, July 26, 1908, 3.

159 The meaning and function of women's seats in Korean plays are discussed in chapter 3.3.

the Korean audience. Althusser considers such acts of calling out an "interpellation" or "hailing."[160] Interpellation is a process through which ideology "*recruits* subjects among the individuals (it recruits them all) or *transforms* the individuals into subjects (it transforms them all)."[161] Althusser depicts how a simple act of calling out by a police officer on the street can make the targeted person "recognize[] that the hail was *really* addressed to"[162] oneself and affect the person's self-conception. For Althusser, targeting, hailing, and identifying oneself as the target are core mechanisms of ideology.[163]

The usage of the term *kunja* in playhouse advertisements, too, can be regarded as interpellation. As such, *kunja* induced Korean readers to imagine men as bearers of the gaze in playhouses. The fact that there were women in playhouses, too, does not negate the thoughts beneath the gendered hailing but underlines them. Repeatedly using the term *kunja,* advertisers chose not to consider other members of the auditorium. Instead, the continuous interpellation of audiences as *kunja* was a part of the ideological process which alienated those who were not adult men in the public space, and which transformed women in the auditorium into objects that required a different explanation for their presence.

Not everyone necessarily read advertisements before going to playhouses. Instead, some simply enjoyed the plays without prior knowledge. These attendees defied the expectation that only men were meant to be in playhouses as the bearers of the gaze. Throughout the Chosŏn Dynasty, few scholarly women, including Queen Sohye (1437–1504), Andong Changssi (1598–1680), Kim Hoyŏnjae (1681–1722), Yim Yunjidang (1721–93), and Kang Chŏng'ildang (1772–1832), left texts in which they asserted that women, too, could become *kunja*, challenging the widespread belief that only men could aspire to such a status.[164] While these women of the Chosŏn Dynasty studied Confucian classics to become persons of knowledge and erudition, the women of early 1900s Korea took seats in playhouses alongside men who were flattered as *kunja*, thus exposing and questioning the gendered interpellation and expectations associated with playhouse audiences.

At the dawn of a new century, Korean men were encouraged to visit theaters, which might have enticed them with the somewhat indulgent name of *kunja* for a night of entertainment. Newspaper advertisements refashioned them as connoisseurs of the emerging urban culture. However, the exclusive interpellation of men as audiences underlines that even in theaters, the new institution promising fresh spectacles, continued the archaic Neo-Confucian regime of the gaze that defined solely men as normatively acceptable spectators.[165] The fact that Korean women frequented theaters and playhouses, re-

160 Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses: Notes towards an Investigation," trans. Ben Brewster, *On the Reproduction of Capitalism: Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses* (London and New York: Verso 2014), 232–72.

161 Althusser, "Ideology and State Apparatuses," 264.

162 Ibid.

163 Ibid.

164 See Kim, "Bodies Defined by Decorum," 161–63.

165 Here, I use the term "regime of the gaze" as a translation of German word *Blickregime*. One of the earliest references to *Blickregime* was in the German translation of Kaja Silverman's lecture given at Depot in Vienna in the autumn/winter of 1995 and 1996, based on her book *The Threshold of the*

gardless of lacking formal interpellation as audiences, reveals that the process of subjectification took unexpected turns at times. Althusser's ideas remain still relevant to the discussion of Korean female spectators of the early twentieth century since this lacking interpellation preempted the media discourse of them as those who appeared in theaters as spectators, *nevertheless*. Despite not being summoned, Korean women went to theaters, purchased tickets, and took seats among other audience members. In the dark, they were about to become targets of persistent gaze and diverse politics aimed at transforming them into *modern* subject for various visions.

Visible World (New York and London, 1996). Natascha Noack and Roger M. Buergel, the translators, suggested using *Blickregime* for Silverman's "gaze", which again was building upon Jacques Lacan's notion of *le regard*. Choosing *Blickregime* instead of *Blick*, which would have been the literal translation of "gaze," Noack and Buergel moved the concept further from physiology while reinforcing the structural moment inherent to the English notion. Furthermore, they echoed Silverman's attention to the historicity of the gaze and its constructive characteristic by adding *Regime* to the *Blick*. See Christian Kravagna, "Vorwort," in *Privileg Blick: Kritik der Visuellen Kultur*, ed. Kravagna (Berlin: Edition ID-Archiv, 1997), 7, and Silverman, "Dem Blickregime Begegnen," in ibid., 62. By using "regime of the gaze" instead of simply "gaze," I aim to focus more on the political than the psychoanalytical aspects inherent to the notion and debate of gaze in English speaking academia. Drawing upon Lacan's *Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*, Silverman explains that "he [Lacan] associates the gaze not with values specific to the last century and a half, but rather with illumination and 'the presence of others as such' (91, 84)" and uses camera as a "signifier of the gaze." For Silverman's concept of gaze see *Threshold*, 125–61, cites from 132 and 131.