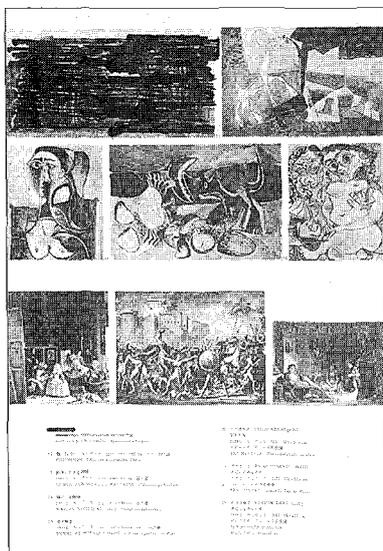


Young Mok Chung / Seoul National University

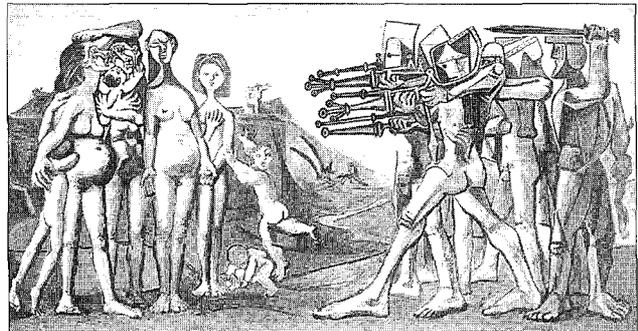
I.

Nineteen seventy-seven, a student studying art in Seoul received a book by post from Japan. It was from his father who was traveling in Japan. When the seemingly intact wrapping was unfolded, a volume from the *Gendai-sekai-bijutsu-jenshu* was revealed. The *Gendai-sekai-bijutsu-jenshu* was written in Japanese and published in Japan, and the gift from the student's father was volume 14, *Picasso*.¹ At the back of the book, plates of Picasso's works were introduced in black and white. Strangely, however, one of the pieces was blacked out with a black marker pen (Fig. 1). The title of the artwork, which was printed in Japanese, had also been blacked out. However, the French title had been left intact. It read *Massacre en Corée*. The erased piece was *Massacre in Korea* by Picasso (Fig. 2), which had first been on exhibit in 1951 at the Salon de Mai.²



<Figure 1> *World of Contemporary Art*, 6th ed., vol. 14, *Picasso*, 1977, p.106.

It was apparent that someone had deliberately erased this piece of art to conceal it. How are we to accept this fact? Even if we acknowledge that the piece was related to the Korean War and Picasso's communist activity, the late 1970s was nearly 25 years after



<Figure 2> Picasso, *Massacre en Corée*, 1951, 110x210cm, Musée Picasso, Paris.

the end of the war, and several years away from 1973, the year that Picasso died. Even the Vietnam War had been over and the heat of the Cold War era was subsiding in international society. The trace of a cover up in such a political circumstance is decisive evidence to the fact that political power had been reaching deep into the field of art by means of censorship in a systematic and delicate manner. Coming back to the Picasso, who would have erased it, how, when, and where?

This paper aims to track down how such a situation had developed in Japan and Korea following the breakout of the Korean War in the 1950s. This paper also aims to prove that such a political situation had a strong influence over the art world, and had a part in abstract art becoming the mainstream of modern art in Korea and Japan. And finally, I will present a personal comment on the fallacy of western modernism that segregates or negates the

* This research was supported by Visual Arts Institute of College of Fine Arts, Seoul National University and the paper was presented at the annual meeting of Association of Asian Studies held in April 4th-7th, 2002 in Washington DC.

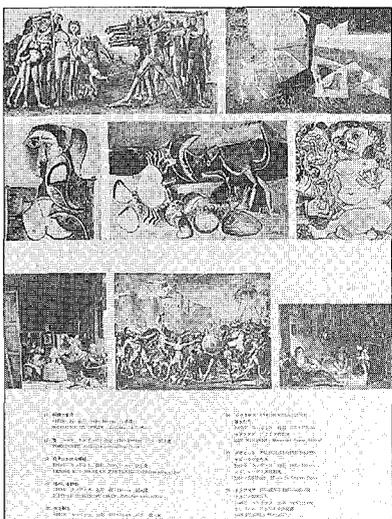
¹ *Gendai-sekai-bijutsu-jenshu*, 6th ed., vol.14, *Picasso*, Tokyo: Shueisha, 1977.

² *Ibid.*, p.106, fig.21

relationship between art and ideology, art and power, and art and the state.

II.

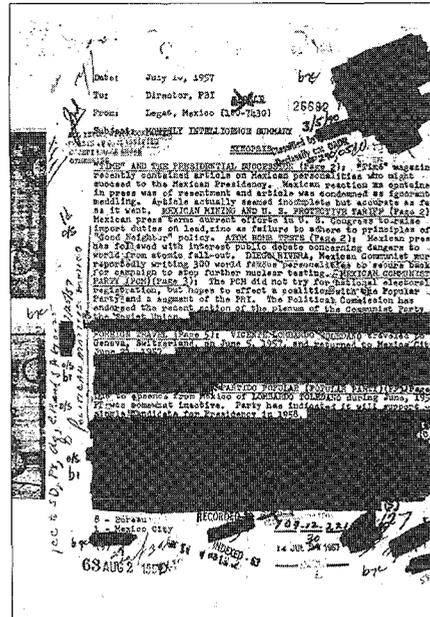
The book with the painting *Massacre in Korea* erased was published in Japan in 1977. Then, had the plate been blacked out in Japan, before it was sent to Korea, or had the book left Japan intact but became damaged in Korea in the process of being censored? Clearly, it is one of the two cases. Of particular interest is the fact that the French title was left untouched while the Japanese title, *Massacre of Chosen* was blacked out. This implies that whoever blacked it out had hoped the painting to be hidden from those who could easily read Chinese characters. However, both the Japanese people and Korean people are familiar with Chinese characters more than they are with French. Thus, it is not easy to determine which nation's intelligence agency did the job. However, the 4th edition of the same book published in Japan in 1974 shows *Massacre in Korea* on the same page as in the 1977 edition (Fig. 3), but not erased.³ This



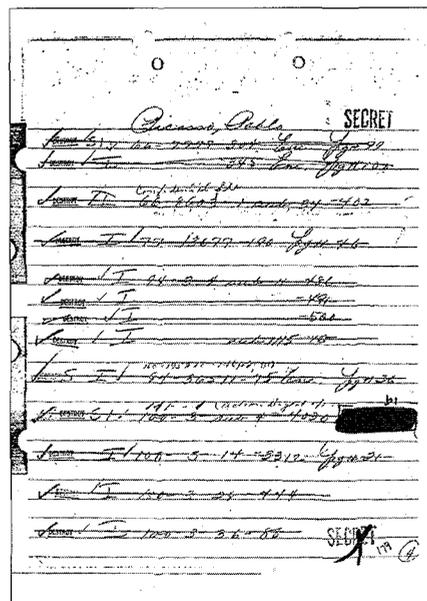
<Figure 3> *World of Contemporary Art*, 14th ed., vol. 14, Picasso, 1974, p.106.

clearly indicates that the plate for *Massacre in Korea* in the 1977 edition was not erased in Japan. It was the work of Korean intelligence agency and the erasing was done in Korea.

After World War II, Japan and Korea was subordinated under the US



<Figure 4> FBI, Picasso File.



<Figure 5> FBI, Picasso File.

⁴ For FBI files on Picasso, see <http://www.fbi.gov> and <http://www.apbonline.com/gfiles/picasso>. The existence of this file was first discovered by Herbert Mitgang. See his article, "When Picasso spooked the F.B.I.," *The New York Times* (Art and Leisure Section), November 10, 1990, I, p.39. After this announcement, Korean newspapers quoted him in their articles. See the Nov. 12th issue of the *Gyeong-Hyang Shinmun*, "F.B.I.'s Inspection Over Picasso Causing Commotion in the U.S." Recent publication—Gertie R. Utley, *Picasso, The Communist Years*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000—is also very useful for this issue.

³ *Gendai-sekai-bijutsu-jenshu*, vol. 14, Picasso, 4th ed., Tokyo:Shueisha, 1974, p.106



<Figure 6> Picasso, *La Guerre*, 1952, 470x1020cm, Vallauries.

military regime. Thus, the two nations naturally followed McCarthyism, the extreme anti-Communist policy. It is well known that the F.B.I. had a close surveillance watch over Picasso for 25 years since 1944, when Picasso joined the French Communist Party.⁴ Picasso was classified as a communist harmful to the national interest of the U.S., and even as a spy of the Soviet Union. However, the F.B.I.'s Picasso file that was made public had parts that were blacked out (Fig. 4) or destroyed (Fig. 5), depending on the level of confidentiality. The legible contents of the file were about Picasso's Communist activity, which had pretty much been made public by the time. However, nowhere in the file was mention of *Massacre in Korea* or *War* (Fig. 6), painted in 1952-53, even though these two pieces had already reached the public through other types of media. *Massacre in Korea* had been at the center of the controversy over whether the U.S. was possibly responsible for the massacre of civilians during the Korean War. *War* had been the center of attention because there were claims that the painting implied that the U.S. had waged biological warfare in China and North Korea.

The fates of these two pieces varied within the U.S. However, they met difficulty in Korea and Japan. Interestingly, the U.S. started to control Communist activity in Japan even before June 25 1950, which is



<Figure 7> Photo of the Communist Party HQ in Tokyo, Japan, 1950. 6. 7.

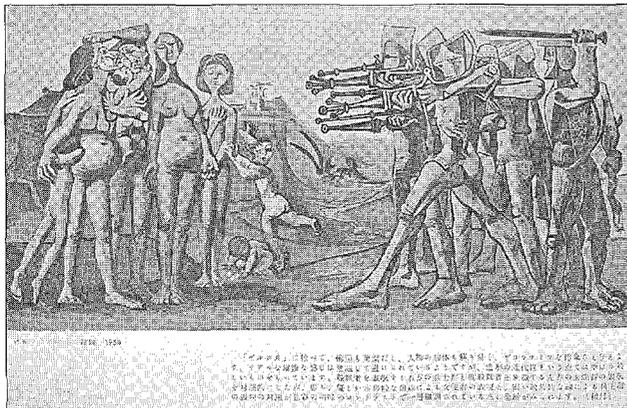
when North Korea invaded South Korea. On June 6, General MacArthur of Far East Command, General Headquarters, instructed Shigeru Yoshida, the prime minister of Japan, to purge all 24 members of the Central Committee of the Japanese Communist Party from public life.⁵ On June 7th, he ordered the removal of all 17 members of the editorial department of the *Akahata*, an institutional newspaper of the Japanese Communist Party.⁶ On June 26th, he ordered the *Akahata* to suspend printing for 30 days on grounds that it presented Communist-friendly views over the Korean War to Koreans living in Japan.⁷

The morning after the day MacArthur ordered Yoshida the expulsion of high members of the Japanese Communist Party, a crowd gathered in front of the Japanese Communist Party Headquarters building (Fig. 7) to confirm the fact. As can be seen from the picture, a sign reads off from the building, 'opposition to war', and Picasso's 'communist peace dove' is seen. Picasso's dove had been virtually an iconographic symbol for

⁵ In the letter to Yoshida, MacArthur ordered "...to remove and exclude the following named persons, constituting the full membership of the Central Committee of the Japanese Communist Party, from public service, and render them subject to the prohibitions, restrictions..." Rinjiro Sodei, ed., and trans., *Correspondence between General MacArthur, Prime Minister Yoshida & other high Japanese Officials, 1945-1951*, Tokyo: Hosei University Press, 2000, p.197.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp.198-200.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp.201-2.



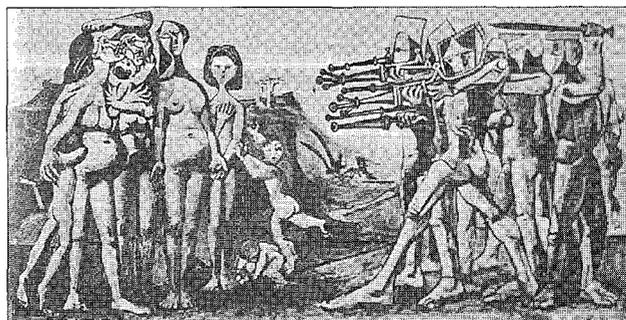
<Figure 8> Photo of *Massacre en Corée* in *Bijutsu-Techou*, 1953. 1, p.72.

peace under the Cold War era.⁸

On July 18, 1950, MacArthur had declared "I am not concerned over any destructive influence Communist propaganda may have upon the great mass of Japan's citizenry."⁹ The GHQ institutionally blocked communist propaganda from entering Japan. Picasso's *Massacre in Korea* had met the fate of being partially erased in the midst of such policy. The very fact that the F.B.I. inspected Picasso makes the conjecture that the GHQ ordered Picasso's paintings to be censored very convincing. Picasso's *Massacre in Korea* was first introduced in Japan, in color plate (Fig. 8), in the 1953 January issue of the art magazine, *Bijutsu-Techou*.¹⁰ However the title printed below the picture is partially erased. It would have read in Japanese, *Slaughter of Chosen* had the words "of Chosen" not been erased. However, a page that lists the titles of the plates, which was included to support the subject indicated by the title "L'art du sujet social", the title of the painting is introduced in full without deletion, but as *War of Chosen* (Fig. 9).¹¹ The title with the word "slaughter" used does not reveal the other part of the title "Chosen", whereas the other title that does introduce "Chosen" has placed the word "war" in the place of "slaughter" or "massacre." In September the same year, a black and white plate of the same painting was introduced on *Atelier* (Fig. 10), with the title below the painting reading *Chosen Battlefield*. However, a note next to the painting refers to the painting

ピカソ	グルニカ	Pablo Picasso	(1881-
アージュロン	戦時中の戦争	André Fouquieron	(1913-
ピエモン	労働者	Edouard Pignon	(1901-
レジエ	雑誌者たち	Fernand Léger	(1881-
ロルジウ	原子時代	Bernard Lorjou	(1908-
ミノエ	アバダンの園い	André Minoux	(1921-
ピュウエ	十字架降下	Bernard Buffet	(1920-
リヴェラ	花売り ナオ文化	Diego Rivera	(1880-
シケロス	今日のわれわれの集落	David Alfaro Siqueiros	(1896-
オロスコ	農民の指	José Clemente Orozco	(1882-1964)
ベン・シャーン	ザバタの指導者	Ben Shahn	(1898-
グニヤシ	疎勤工場 解放	Yasuo Kuniyoshi	(1893-
エルニ	民族の伝説の鐘・スイス	Hans Erni	(1909-
グワットウ	殺陣舞	Renato Guttuso	(1911-

<Figure 9> *Bijutsu-Techou*, 1953. 1, p.69.



<Figure 10> Photo of *Massacre en Corée* in *Atelier*, 1953. 9, p.54.

as *Massacre of Chosen*.¹² Such variations over the title of the same painting indicates that, in Japan as well, the intelligence agency directly intervened to prevent any possibility of Picasso's *Massacre in Korea* from being used in a manner favorable to communist propaganda.

Meanwhile, in 1953, Picasso's *War* was shown on exhibit for the first time in Rome and Milan. In

⁸ According to Utley, Picasso's dove and its variations were widespread, even on posters in Japan, and on postage stamps in china and the Soviet Union. The Picasso's peace dove was hung on the entrance of a building in Panmunjom in Korea where the United Nations delegates gathered to sign the armistice ending the war. See Utley, pp. 118-9, and p.128 and FBI Picasso file Serial No., 100-10123-418.
⁹ Sodei, ed., and trans., *Correspondence*, p.205
¹⁰ "L'art du sujet social," *Bijutsu-Techou*, no. 64, January 1953, p.74.
¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 69.
¹² *Atelier*, no. 319, September 1953, pp.54-5.

September the same year, the painting was introduced in Japan in *Bijutsu-Techou*.¹³ However, the article on the painting inserted in the magazine makes no mention of the international controversy over the painting reflecting the communist propaganda that the U.S. engaged in a bacteriological warfare during the Korean War.¹⁴

Although *Massacre in Korea* was left out of it, a large scale exhibition on Picasso was held in Tokyo in 1951. The fact that Picasso was a communist and that he participated in communist activities did not mitigate Picasso's public fame and reputation in Japan. Picasso's 'peace activity' had rather been well accepted by the Japanese, as the shock of atomic bombing and war had yet to be forgotten in the minds of the Japanese people. Although Picasso's two paintings that dwelt on the Korean War had been censored and their titles partially erased, they have been continuously mentioned and discussed in a positive manner.

III.

However, the situation in Korea was a bit different from that in Japan. Before the outburst of the Korean War, communist activity was allowed to some extent even under a U.S. military regime. At this time, Picasso's fame and reputation were high in Korea as were in Japan. The fact that Picasso had joined the French Communist Party had already been known.¹⁵ Moreover, even amid the battles of the Korean War, a newspaper published in Busan on September 1st 1951

carries a Picasso-friendly article. The article comments that although Picasso's works of art incessantly create a stir, shocking and confusing the public, one should be free from a sense of wariness when observing the work of art.¹⁶ It would have to be taken into consideration that the sources for overseas news that a Korean reporter could obtain during war time would mostly have been publications from Japan or the U.S., and that there is no way to confirm whether this reporter had written this article knowing the controversy over *Massacre in Korea*. However, this particular article indicates that at that time, censorship over Picasso had rather been mild.

It was between June and July 1953 that an abstract painter from North Korea had read some sort of announcement titled "Parting with Picasso" in front of writers and artists in a coffee shop in Busan where he was taking refuge from the war.¹⁷ The artist was Kim, Byungki, who had a particular fondness for Cézanne. The following are excerpts from the announcement.¹⁸

Mr. Picasso!.....What does your painting *Massacre of Chosen* signify?.....Your non-explanatory expression may not permit an exhaustive interpretation, but we can presume who and what the group of robot soldiers aiming their guns and the group of naked women being shot at represent.....that may well be a reasonable understanding under the communist formula. However, I have witnessed massacres in Korea for several years since 1945 and enough to become tired of it during the turmoil of this war, and I cannot help but point out that the massacres in Korea started out from quite the opposite than the one shown in your *Massacre in Korea*. We want to say here, that we stand at a political position different from the one you do.

War and Peace introduced recently in *Time* magazine is not far away from such a formula.....the backgrounds that signify the smoke of artillery on the battlefield, and the villain on top of a

¹³ *Bijutsu-Techou*, no. 73, September 1953, p.7.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp.6-7. According to Utley, the issues of bacteriological warfare on this painting were already known in Japan at this time. See Utley, p.167 and p.239, f.98.

¹⁵ Hong, Han-Gyun, "World Art Trends," *Shincheonji*, August, 1948, p.159: "Picasso is famous than any other person. He is more popular, and with more visitors than the President. However, immediately after he was released from the Nazi, he has declared that he will be a member of the French Communist Party until he returns to his homeland Spain, because the Communist is the bravest people [on earth]."

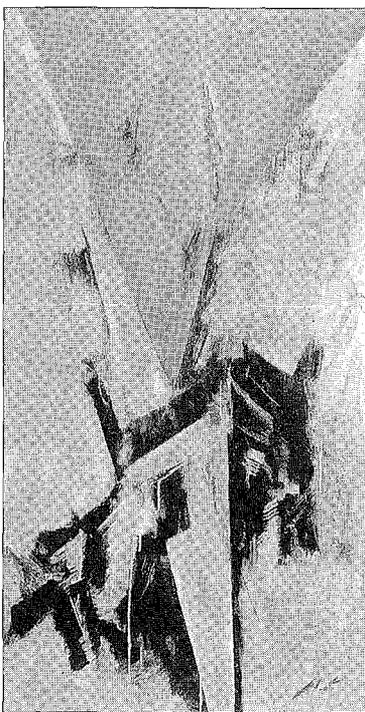
¹⁶ "Picasso's Art," *Busan Ilbo*, September 1, 1951.

¹⁷ Interview with Kim, Byungki.

¹⁸ This announcement was inserted in pp.90-96 of the first issue of *Munhak Yesul*, published in 1954 in Seoul.

black funeral coach, carrying a bundle of skeleton over his shoulder and holding a blood stained dagger in his hand!.....the stabbing movements of the spear and axe made by a gang of villains are urging the young partisan holding a shield of doves. Books trampled on! Do these books signify culture? Is this villain a representation of capitalism? Then what about this innocent young man, and the doves? .What kind of peace is your peace?

This quotation is more than a personal comment made by an intelligent artist named Kim, Byungki. It was the first writing that starkly revealed the ideological and political relation between the Korean War and Picasso as viewed in South Korea. Kim, Byungki had come from a wealthy bourgeois family. He was the typical right-wing intellect who had moved to the south as soon as the Korean War broke out. He had even studied in Japan. As his works show(Fig. 11), he was a devout follower of Cézanne and Cubism. Coming from such a background, he may well have felt somewhat betrayed by Picasso, who had painted "such" pictures.¹⁹



<Figure 11> Kim, Byungki, *View of the South Side of the Mountain*, 1966-67.

In the above quotation, we can see that Kim, Byungki has used the title *Massacre of Chosen*, instead of *Massacre of Korea*. This is proof that he has used the title as inserted in an art magazine published in Japan. As for the painting *War*, the picture plate and related information were obtained from "Murals from the Party", an article inserted in the 1953 June 1st issue of *Time* magazine, as he reveals.²⁰ However, it seems that Kim, Byungki had not been aware that "evil lobster-sized germs" was an allusion to the controversy over a bacteriological warfare.²¹ Any information that Kim, Byungki could obtain at the time was limited to the realm of Communist propaganda highly controlled by the policy and sentiment of the U.S. McCarthyism. Naturally, any Picasso related information accessible in South Korea at the time would already have been filtered through the unilateral interpretation of the U.S. intelligence agency within the United States.²²

Following the truce in July 1953, there was nothing the South Korean government could do independently amid the ruins of war. While McCarthyism was subsiding in the international arena, it spread relentlessly in the country that was suddenly divided in half, with the other half turned to an enemy due to ideological difference. Picasso was not immune to the lunacy of McCarthyism (a sort of Red Complex) spreading across South Korea. In

¹⁹ For his work and life in English text, see Jeffrey Wechsler, ed., *Asian Traditions/Modern Expressions: Asian American Artists and Abstraction, 1945-1970*, New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1997, pp.60-61 and 159-160.

²⁰ "Murals from the Party," *Time*, June 1, 1953, p.72: "Picasso's War shows a team of horses pulling a hearse through seas of blood. Atop the carriage sits a monster with a pack full of corpses; his snorting horse trample the world's culture and in his wake float evil lobster-sized germs.....Standing alone is the Communist version of mankind's protector; a heroic Red peace partisan, with a peace dove shield."

²¹ Debates over a bacteriological warfare had begun from February 1952, and had been reported in *Time* magazine and the Japanese periodical *Bijutsu-Tochou*. See "Foreign News," *Time*, April 7, 1952, p. 30, and "Foreign News," *Bijutsu-Tochou*, no. 72, August 1953, p. 74.

²² For the U.S. Propaganda Policy that tried to conceal the atrocities committed during the Korean War and related cases, see Kang, Jun-Man, "The Korean War and the United State's Propaganda," *Journalism*(published in Seoul), Summer 1991, pp. 172-87.

the early 1960s, a company had manufactured crayons under the brand name "Picasso." This manufacturer was forced to change the brand name to "Phoenix." The intelligence agency had banned the use of the artist's name because he happened to be a Communist. This case starkly reveals what reputation Picasso had and how that reputation was damaged by McCarthyism in South Korea. Moreover, the public had to satisfy themselves at being able to purchase a Time magazine, however damaged it was; all articles related to Korea had been cut out by the intelligence agency and the public had to buy Time magazine with holes in it.

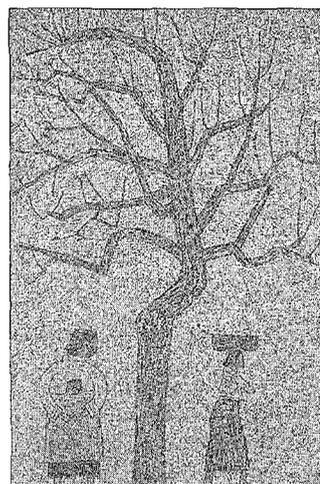
McCarthyism was also used by the military dictators to justify and maintain their illegal control of power. In particular, under the 'Yushin' regime of president Park, Chung-Hee, the freedom of press, publication, and expression were excessively oppressed under the pretense of anti-communism. That is why the book Picasso published in Japan in 1977 ended up in Korea with the plate of *Massacre in Korea* blacked out by the Korean intelligence agency. I do not believe that the inspection over Picasso conducted in South Korea was an independent decision of the Korean intelligence agency. Even now, Korea relies on the U.S. for a considerable part of world information. The very existence of a Picasso file in the F.B.I. leads to the deduction that there would have been some kind of influence exerted on the Korean intelligence agency, especially true for anti-communism.

Ironically, damaging as U.S. influence may have been in Korea, reconstruction of Korea from the ruins of war would have been impossible without the aid of the U.S. Such aid from the U.S. had reached to all areas of state affairs, from politics to economy, and from society to culture. To Koreans who thought it a great privilege to have an acquaintance with a G.I. stationed in Korea, the influential power of the U.S. was enormous. The art world was no exception. In the 1950s, the best way to make a living while being a full-time artist was to have a



<Figure 12> Photo of an American Military Camp, during the Korean War.

friendly relationship with an American or an American



<Figure 13> Park, Soo-Keun, *Tree and Two Women*, 130x89cm, 1962.

soldier. The artist could earn income by drawing portraits for American soldiers, and Americans had been the majority of the small population that actually paid money for paintings. Moreover, it was with the help of Americans that an artist could obtain canvas and color, which were otherwise almost im-

possible to get hands on.

Such has been the personal experience of artist Park, Soo-Keun as well. Although his works are now traded at the highest prices and he is acknowledged as a master of Korean modern art, he wouldn't have been able to continue his career as a painter had he not had the good fortune of working at the portrait department of an American military camp (Fig. 12) right after the Korean War. Thanks to this occupation, he was able to bring the bread to the table for his family and continue painting pictures that so remarkably describe the Korean sentiment (Fig. 13).²³ The bare trees represent absence

²³ Korea Art Research Institute, ed., Park, Soo-Keun, A Painter of Our Own, Seoul: Shigongsa, 1995.

of the bread-winner and the Korean society marred by poverty in the 1950s. However, the trees also represent hope and the people's willingness to make new shoots come out and to groom them into beautiful leaves. As sculptors of old times carve into a stone to create the image of Buddha(Fig. 14), he drew paintings as if to carve portrait of contemporary people over a unique texture that resembles the surface of gray granite. Park Soo-Keun has thus interpreted the Korean sentiment associated with the traditional culture of stones.



<Figure 14> Photo of Buddha, Silla Dyn.

The hardships and pain suffered by artist Lee, Joong-Sub depicts, without a doubt, the typical tragedy suffered by the Korean people of that time. Just like Kim Byungki, Lee was also from a wealthy bourgeois background and had fled to the South after the onset of the Korean War. He

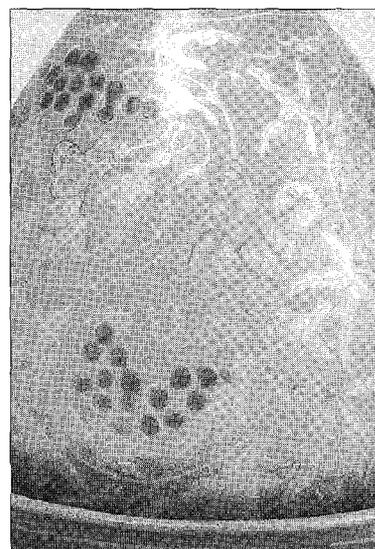
also had a Japanese wife. Having said all that, it seems that the difficult and painful life that he led in the South may well have been foreseeable. It is unfortunate, however, that he has had to die at the young age of 40 due to such hardships and pain. However, there is irony in his paintings. The *Fantasy of Seogwipo*(Fig. 15) that he painted in 1951 while he was taking refuge from the war in Cheju Island and the pictures that he drew on the silver inner wrapping of cigarette pack(Fig. 16) in 1954, which was collected by MOMA, all depict the traditional theme of "Peach Blossom Utopia", which has nothing to do with the war.²⁴ It is common for artists to paint their utopia as an ironical expression of reality. However, just like Park, Soo-Keun, Lee Joong-Sub had created the



<Figure 15> Lee, Joong-Sub, *Fantasy of Seogwipo*, 56x92cm, 1951.



<Figure 16> Lee, Joong-Sub, *Paradise*, 8x14cm, 1954.



<Figure 17> Photo of the Surface of Celadon, Kroryo Dyn.

²⁴ Three pieces of silver-wrapping pictures were purchased by Arthur J. Mctaggart, the Head of US Public Relations Office in Korea. He sent the paintings to MOMA in New York. After review, they were registered as collections of MOMA since 1956. Choi, Seok-Tai, *A Critical Biography of Lee, Joong-Sub*, Seoul: Dolbege, 2000, pp. 248-49.

modern re-interpretation of the grapevines and a boy that appear on the surface of Kory_ Dynasty Celadon(Fig.17) for his theme. Their works reveal their desires to pass on the traditional culture through visual expression, despite the hardships and pain they had to go through.

IV.

It is 50 years since the Korean War ended with a truce. Ideological differences no longer matter as they used to then, and the international political environment has changed greatly. However, remnants of the Cold War still linger between the two Koreas. This testifies to how a conflict of two ideologies, namely communism and democracy, has, and how a war triggered by a conflict of interests between the two nations of the Soviet Union and the U.S. has deeply scared the people of the two Koreas. Now that the conflict of ideologies has long been forgotten, the Korean War seems as if it has been a play featured by the two puppets of North and South Korea, amid the clashes between the superpowers. I say this because I have witnessed, on numerous occasions, that the U.S. and the Soviet Union could do whichever political act necessary to achieve their 'national interest', and that ideology was just an excuse. Culture and art was not immune from the 'political act.' In the Cold War environment, censorship and control by the intelligence was imposed on matters as personal as the F.B.I.'s surveillance over Picasso, to matters as formal as the cultural propaganda exercised upon third world countries. The very existence of such censorship was an act of betrayal to the dreams and ideal of all modernists across the world. The autonomy and purity of art that modernists so faithfully believed in had after all been nothing but a fantasy.

This is why I say that the fervor for pure, non-representative abstract art that rose in Japan and South Korea was not a spontaneous development, but a political

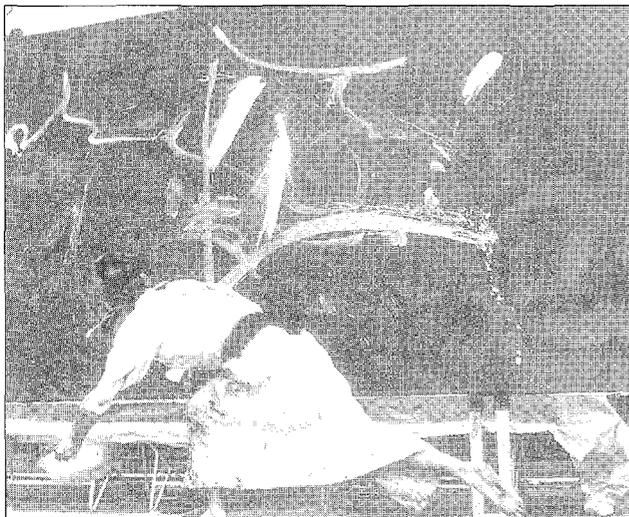
derivative. The European Art Informel and American Abstract Expressionism are respected in Japan and South Korea as an avant-garde visual expression of freedom and democracy. That is, it was an alternative form of expression that allowed artists to freely let out their freedom of expression that had so been repressed by political control and war. These styles were the center of attention until 1964 in Japan and 1967 in Korea.²⁵ These artists did not want to make representative image that was misinterpreted in ideological and political directions, which were far from what they had in mind. Naturally, they avoided creating representative images. In particular, the color red used in representative image was often wrongfully interpreted by the intelligence agency as being in favor of communism in Korea. It was a common sight in South Korea at the time to see art works using the red color pulled down from the walls of the exhibition hall, or painters using the red color to be summoned for interrogation. This only exacerbated the avoidance of representative image.

Meanwhile, Abstract Expressionism in the U.S. was supported on a national level amid censorship and control, and was used as if it was a weapon by the American government. Many scholars have already revealed such a fact.²⁶ It has also been revealed that the U.S. policy has been exercised in Asian countries such as Japan, Korea, and India.²⁷ In 1957, Georges Mathieu performed an "action painting" at Osaka wearing a kimono (Fig. 18). The following year, the exhibition "The International Art of a New Era: Informel and

²⁵ In the 1963 October issue of *Bijutsu-Tochou*, an article titled "Japanese Art after Informel" was inserted. This article heralded a new wave of international trend in art, such as Conceptual Art, Optical Art, and Pop Art sweeping Japan after Informel. These trends were started to be seen in South Korea from 1967.

²⁶ See Max Kozloff, "American Painting during the Cold War," *Artforum*, 11,9, May 1973, pp.43-54; Eva Cockcroft, "Abstract Expressionism, Weapon of the Cold War," *Artforum*, 12, 10, June 1974, pp.39-41.; David and Cecile Shapiro, "Abstract Expressionism: The Politics of Apolitical Painting," *Prospects*, 3, 1977, pp. 175-214.

²⁷ Chung, Moojeong, "Abstract Expressionism, Art Informel, and Modern Korean Art, 1945-1965," Ph.D. dissertation, The City University of New York, 2000, pp.111-183.



<Figure 18> Photo of Georges Mathieu in "Action Painting", 1957. 9., Osaka.



<Figure 19> Photo of the International Art of a Newera: Informel and Gutai, 1958.



<Figure 20> Photo of Park, Seo-Bo in "Action Painting", 1958.

Gutai"(Fig. 19) held in Osaka clearly showed that such a movement had reached its peak at this time in Japan.²⁸ In 1958, the young Korean artist Park, Seo-bo performed an "action painting," creating a piece in front of a massive canvas, in a gesture resembling Mathieu(Fig. 20). This shows that Korea was next in Japan to welcome the era of pure abstract art.

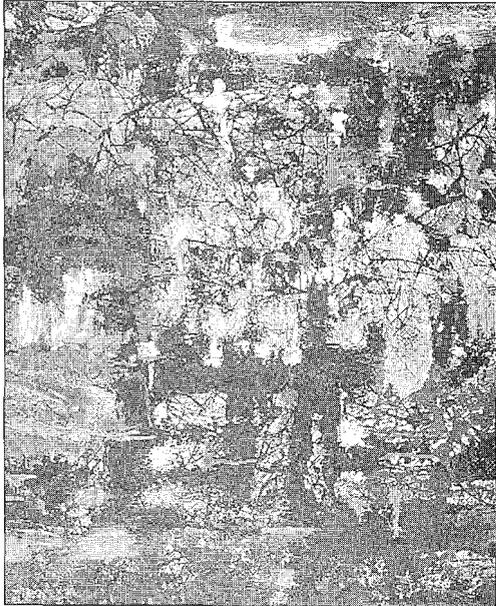
V.

Looking at Park, Seo-bo's painting of 1957-58, titled *Painting No. 1*(Fig. 21) and Imai Toshimizu's painting(Fig. 22),²⁹ every one will agree to the strong influence of Jackson Pollock's 'dripping' method reflected in the two works, although the two paintings are the work of two different people of different nationality painted in a different country. Man is always constrained by time and space. In order to overcome such constraints, artists rely on the visual information they can obtain. Thus, whichever influence is laid upon an artist is, in many cases, heavily dependent on such visual information. Once we acknowledge the importance of visual information in relation to influence, the process in which such information is passed on also becomes an important matter to consider. From the works of French Impressionists and Post-Impressionists, the influence of Japanese Ukiyo-e is felt. However, I do not think Ukiyo-e was exposed to the western world, valued as an information, or means of political or cultural propaganda. That is, the relationship of influence between Japanese Ukiyo-e and Monet or van Gogh was truly an encounter of art and artist. However, the art of Pollock was degraded to a piece of information as politics and power intervened in its distribution process. However, what has happened was totally irrelevant to Pollock's intentions. Likewise, the U.S. government has treated Picasso's work not as a piece of art but as a piece of information.

²⁸ Alexandra Munroe, ed., *Japanese Art after 1945: Scream against the Sky*, New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1995, pp. 94-96; Jeffrey Wechsler, ed., *Asian Traditions*, pp. 36-37.

²⁹ The color plate is in *Bijutsu-Techou*, December, 1957.

Whether this has been a unique circumstance resulting from the Cold War regime, or an ever-lasting discord between art and politics, at this moment I cannot say.



<Figure 21> Park Seo-Bo, Painting No.1, 95x82cm, 1957-58.



<Figure 22> Imai Toshimizu, Painting, 1957.

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