

Dear all my colleagues,

I received an email in Japanese asking me to "write what you want to tell in the current situation not representing Japan but as one of the active arts managers" from one of the oldest friends of Korea Arts Management Service. It said, "A lot of Japanese performances have been shown in Korea in this March, and I myself saw Shinjuku Ryozanpaku the next day of the earthquake and a work of the New National Theatre yesterday, and will see chelfitsch next week as it was planned. On the other hand, other foreign performances that had been planned to come to Korea were canceled because of the earthquake. In this situation, personally, I cannot help thinking of what art should do. So I have been thinking that I should hear what Japanese people have to say, although I think this is not the right time for that." I would like to express my gratitude toward the offer of an opportunity for me, who have the nationality of this country that has caused the irreparable nuclear disaster, to make a remark now.

Since the earthquake, I have received a lot of emails from friends in other countries telling me to "stay strong" or "be strong." I suppose these words are naturally chosen when encouraging someone in this kind of situation, and receiving these emails, I thought that I had to reaffirm what it is to be strong in the vocabulary of my profession.

An earthquake is a natural phenomenon, but man-made disasters accompany it. Especially, I take the accident of the nuclear power plants seriously as an incident on a different level, not only because of the scale and nature of the disaster, but also because the fact that we tried to control nature and to make the maximum use of nature, of which results were pollution beyond the nature's ability of self-preservation and a crisis of the condition of human beings' survival, is directly related to the conditions of society and art.

As far as I know, at least among Japanese and European performing arts professionals, in recent years, concerns about reduction of public support for art due to the economic crisis and political reactionism have been shared, and such themes as the *raison d'être* of art or what art can do have been discussed. I do not intend to express doubt about the necessity of these discussions at all, but I think there are assumptions that art might not be able to survive or that we might not be able to explain why art should exist if art cannot do anything are in the background of these questions. What I would like to say here is, as a number of forerunners have said, that art always exists no matter how bad situations are. What art can do or to what art can contribute are not questions

about the condition of art but questions about what benefits society can draw from art. I would like to reaffirm again here that art itself always exists and the fact that art exists as art is enough for art.

In Japan, currently, it seems that a lot of people are claiming through mass media that "mental care" is important. They say "mental care" is needed for the victims of the earthquake as well as "excessive fear" of radioactivity. What if art is incorporated into this? Society and art will be in harmony without contradiction, and a whole will be constituted. Art will obtain its *raison d'être* and mission. However, if a society in which art functions only in that way is formed, it is a society that recognizes only "mental" pain when it causes pollution beyond the nature's ability of self-preservation and a crisis of the condition of human beings' survival.

I had been thinking that it is impossible to keep forever the living standard, which used to be taken for granted in Japan until the earthquake or probably until a few years ago. My attempt about that in the last decade was just to live without a refrigerator, air conditioner, and TV. I do not think this small personal attempt gives me any certification to say anything, but what I have understood is that it is important not only to consume less but also to re-question the preconditions. And if I have to dare to say what art can do, I would say that art can re-question the preconditions, and can do that in a thoroughgoing way.

Art can re-question the preconditions in a thoroughgoing way because it is absolutely outside of society. Sometimes an act of trying to be absolutely outside of society results in thoroughgoing re-questioning of the preconditions. Sometimes an act of thoroughgoing re-questioning of the preconditions results in being absolutely expelled from society. Anyway, I think that the profession loosely defined by the term "arts manager" is about sending back this outside to society and reconsidering every precondition through art to redefine "benefit" of society.

Society cannot continue to exist without renewing itself, but an opportunity to renew itself does not exist inside society itself. It seems that society rarely explicitly expresses necessity of art, because society tends to behave as if it is autonomously sufficient, in other words, as if it does not need outside. However, fundamentally, society needs art for its own survival. I think our work is to clarify this.

Although aftershocks have been continuing and we do not really feel safe yet, the earthquake itself has somehow settled, and efforts to recover have begun.

However, the accident of the nuclear power plants is ongoing, and the most immediate victims of it are the victims of the earthquake. The accident of the nuclear power plants, whether it settles or results in the worst scenario, obliges not only recovery but also renewal of society. As a sheer member of this society, which has created the condition of the possibility of this incident, and as an arts manager, I feel that I am questioned how to renew this society now.

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