

## **KIM Jaehoon**

When I heard that I needed to talk about today's topic, a lot of ideas happened in my brain. For instance, I wanted to talk about the stage and its relationship with the audience, something like that. So I wrote a lot of things, then I realized that what I wrote was too general, I felt it was like a lecture. Most people do not take class outside of school, so I thought I needed to be simple. I threw away some boring topics, and decided to share my individual thought about what good playwriting is.

When I was in my second year of my directing MFA, I had a project to direct a show. I read a lot of plays for my project. Of course, I read Chekhov, Brecht and Ionesco. They are some of the great playwrights of all time, but I felt they were not a fit for me. I asked my Korean friends, and one friend gave me a script, and I picked that story. The title of script is *Mirror Princess, Pyung-gang*, and the story is like a fairytale based on Korean history. The reason I chose that story was not due to Korean culture, but because it had very unique characters and setting. The playwright said the stage had just one tree at the center—the scenic design is very simple, but there are unique characters which are called “stage-changers.” They wear natural costumes, but they can be a tree, rock, building and so on. The stage is simple, but they make the stage more abundant. They also become various characters like a soldier, king and flamingo (main characters excluded). The playwright does not give a specific direction, she just says stage-changers create a forest. It was a challenge to me and my actors. We discussed it a lot, and tried to create a forest by using actors' bodies. Our scenic and costume designers created a totally new design after they saw our rehearsal. Thanks to overcoming the challenge, our thinking about the play was getting deeper and our chemistry was getting better. I believe it is an example of good playwriting because the script stimulated the director's, designers' and actors' imagination and creativity. That is one of the most important things for the playwright.

After I finished some directorial work in Korea, I thought I needed to write my own play. I wrote my first draft, and an elder playwright who is a friend of mine reviewed it. He said my script was good for production because it had very specific instructions and detailed visualizations for the stage. He gave me advice, however, that the play had a less value as a text itself. Too many descriptions for directing and visualization can be a good for a production of a play, but it is not good for reading. I realized the audience is also a reader. They see and listen to something on the stage at the same time. But I focused on the visual aspects rather than creating beauty in language. After that, I tried to write stage directions more poetically.

I think good playwriting not only stimulates the director's, designers' and actors' imagination, but also gives readers a beauty of language. And one more thing—this is a very personal thought. I want the audience to think differently after they see my play. I want to be a person who presents the question, not the answer. Those who want every audience to have the same thought—that thought being what the playwright thinks—might say my plays aren't good, but I do not want to teach the audience, I want to make them think. I hope that audiences will be eager to share different ideas and feelings after my play. I believe, in the process of sharing their thoughts, audiences and I will grow together.

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Gabriela Román (Mexico), Santiago Loza (Argentina),

Kim Jaehoon (South Korea), Chan Ping-chiu (Hong Kong)

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