

Revolutionary Literature Went Abroad: Novel *The White Dress* and Its Imprint in Japan and South Korea

소설 <사이공의 흰옷>의 일본과 한국에서의 번역 및 유통

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This paper examines the dissemination of Nguyễn Văn Bông's *The White Dress* (Áo trắng, 1972) in Japan and South Korea. The novel recounts South Vietnam's student movement in opposing the suppression of the US-backed Ngô Đình Diệm Government in the 1960s via the real-life character of Nguyễn Thị Châu, a Saigon schoolgirl arrested and prosecuted due to her antigovernment activities. Proffering the symbolic image of the long white dress (*áo dài*), the Vietnamese schoolgirls' uniform and Vietnam's national costume, which represents Vietnamese feminine beauty and the immaculacy and loyalty of Vietnamese women, the novel was welcomed outside Vietnam. Shortly after its Vietnamese publication, Isao Takano, a Japanese Communist and Hanoi-based correspondent translated it into Japanese. However, it was Isao's tragic death in Vietnam during the 1979 Sino-Vietnamese border war that led to the novel's publication (1980) and brought its belated recognition in Japan. Meanwhile, when introduced to the South Korean readers in 1987, the novel moved the university students, those who were at the forefront of the democratization movement against dictatorship. Dozens of editions printed, and several hundred copies sold underground despite its sensitive topic. *The White Dress* is now appreciated as a bridge connecting the Vietnamese and Korean cultures. This paper argues that the novel set foot on Japanese and Korean soil and left its deep imprints there under different circumstances, and the particular political grounds in Vietnam, Japan, and South Korea, and their various practices in terms of reading revolutionary literature outweighed the original ideological narratives.