



Negotiating Colonial Korean Cinema in the Japanese Empire: From the Silent Era to the Talkies, 1923–1939

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Abstract

This article examines what I call a “system of cooperation” (K. *hyōp’ōp*, J. *kyōgyō*, 協業) in the colonial Korean film industry from 1923, when silent films appeared, to the late 1930s, when colonial cinema was restructured within an imperial wartime system. In other words, this article examines the interworking of colonial Korean and imperial Japanese cinema from Yun Hae-dong’s “colonial modern” perspective in order to go beyond the long established lens on colonial Korean film and film historiography that merely focused on the contributions of colonial Korean filmmakers. Here the author rather focuses on the cooperation or collaboration between Japan and Korea: Japanese directors and cinematographers working in Korea, Korean filmmakers with experience in the Japanese apprenticeship system, and filmmakers working together and independently during the silent film era. During the transition from the silent to the early talkie eras, second-generation filmmakers, especially those who trained in film studios in Japan, were significant. They dreamed of the corporatization of the colonial Korean film industry and took the lead in coproductions between Japanese film companies and their colonial Korean counterparts. Korean filmmakers were not unilaterally suppressed by imperial Japan, nor did they independently operate within the Korean film industry during the colonial period. The Japanese in colonial Korea did not take the lead in forming the colonial Korean film scene, either. The core formation of colonial Korean / Korean film was a process of Korean and Japanese filmmakers in competition and negotiation with one another within a complex film sphere launched with Japanese capital and technology.

Introduction: Interworking of Colonial Korean and Japanese Cinemas

This article starts with the claim that it is impossible to separate colonial Korean cinema¹ from Japanese cinema in the Japanese empire. This may seem an obvious point, but such an assessment has been, in fact, ideologically prevented for a long time in national discourses.

The article focuses on what I call a “system of cooperation” (K. *hyōp’ōp*, J. *kyōgyō*, 協業)

between Korean and Japanese filmmakers from the early 1920s through the middle and late 1930s. In the context of Korean film history, this spans a period from the early silent film era, when feature films began to appear following hybrid genres that merged theater with film form—such as the so-called “new school” (*sinp’a*) troupe spectacles of “Play with Kine-orama” (K. *chŏn’gi ũngyonggŭk*, J. *denki ōyōgeki*, 電氣應用劇) and “Combination Plays” (K. *yŏnswaegŭk*, J. *rensageki*, 連鎖劇)²—up to 1937, when the late silent film and early talkie eras overlapped in complex ways. In terms of Japanese policies, the period began with the promulgation of the Regulation Ordinance for Theaters and Performance Venues (K. *hŭnghaeng kŭp hŭnghaeng ch’wich’e kyuch’ik*, J. *kōgyō oyobi kōgyō torishimari kisoku*, 興行場及興行取締規則) under Japanese cultural governance following the 1919 Independence Movement; it lasted until Japan initiated strict propaganda film policies at the beginning of the Sino-Japanese War in 1937, inaugurating the transition to wartime mobilization for colonial Korean film.

This article analyzes various transformations in forms of transcolonial cooperation and collaboration by distinguishing characteristics of the silent film era from those of the transitions during the late silent to the early talkie era. Below, in a section focusing on the silent film era, I will inscribe a new genealogy of colonial Korean film history by taking account of the neglected activities in nationalist historiographies of Japanese film companies that were operating in colonial Korea during that time. This section will illuminate the contributions of several Japanese filmmakers who had been previously omitted in Korea’s national film historiography despite their integral roles in it. However, my purpose here is not to claim that the early colonial Korean film scene was dominated exclusively by Japanese capital and film technology, which Korean filmmakers passively received from their Japanese counterparts. In contrast, it is important to point out that it was not Japan that took the lead in

the formation of early colonial Korean cinema. Instead, I will suggest that it is necessary to understand the complexities of the interworkings, the processes of competition and negotiation involving Japanese filmmakers, capital, and technology, as well as the activities of colonial Korean filmmakers. The purpose is to illuminate the ways in which the latter played key roles in the formation of Korean cinema both despite and in conjunction with the heavy-handed influence of Japan's filmmakers, technology, and capital.

Later in the article, I offer a historical reinscription of the experiences of those I call "second-generation colonial Korean filmmakers," many of whom worked in the Japanese film studios during the transition from the late silent era to the early talkie era. Their experiences in the Japanese studio system had considerable impact not only on the styles of individual filmmakers but also on the film industry more broadly. These filmmakers were instrumental in reigniting the issue of the corporatization of the colonial film industry, a long-cherished desire of many Korean filmmakers who actively participated in coproductions with Japanese film producers as a means toward that end under imperial film policies. In other words, unlike what has been written thus far in standard film historiographies, the cooperation between colonial Korean and Japanese filmmakers in Japanese production companies in colonial Korea during the silent film era embodied complex desires and motives and was just as noteworthy as the better documented phenomenon of the rise of coproductions between Japanese and colonial Korean film companies during the era of the talkies.

A nationalist approach has long been the mainstay of the study of Korean film history periodized as "under the colonial administration of imperial Japan." The perspectives of the first generation of postcolonial Korean film historiography is best represented by Yi Yŏng-il's influential *The Complete History of Korean Film* (K. *Han'guk yŏnghwa chŏnsa*,

한국영화전사, *J. Kankoku eiga zenshi*, 韓國映畫全史; hereafter, *Complete History*). Yi's *Complete History* claims to take an empiricist approach to film history but in fact adheres to a staunch right-wing nationalist historiography. Later, a second generation of Korean film historians attempted to recuperate records of contributions made by leftist filmmakers, including the colonial-era films of the Korean Artists Proletariat Federation (KAPF), thus implicitly and explicitly critiquing the actual incompleteness of the historiography found in *Complete History*. However, books written by this second generation of film historians (Yi Hyo-in 1992, for example) are also trapped in their own versions of nationalist frameworks. For example, they commonly claim that the colonial Korean film industry was suppressed by the Japanese Governor-General in Korea and that the colonial Korean film industry operated independently and in resistance to such suppressions, rather than having multiple links to the Japanese film industry.

There are two reasons for this. First, as the film historian Yi Sun-jin once noted, the influence of the nationalist right-wing perspective of Yi Yōng-il's *Complete History* loomed large in film historiographies written from the left and the right, because it was a pioneering effort that contains a wealth of historical materials (2004, 190). Therefore, the text has cast a deep shadow over the writing of Korean film history for subsequent generations of researchers regardless of their ideological stance.³ Secondly, the existing scholarship on Korean film history lacks comparative studies on colonial Korean and Japanese cinemas. To conduct a sound comparative study, it is necessary to understand Japanese-language materials from the colonial period within Korea and understand pre-war Japanese film history. For various reasons, few researchers have been able to undertake comparative research of this sort. Established studies have tended to depend on secondary historical materials and books on Korean film history, including oral histories from veteran filmmakers and Korean-

language materials such as newspapers, magazines, and screenplays. Thus, these studies are limited only to discussions of the origins of Korean cinema or investigations of metatextual and contextual issues, such as the controversial question of who was the actual director of *Arirang* (아리랑, 1926). In other words, they create a metatextual discourse without analyzing the original film texts. It was in 2004 that this methodology first began to change, after the Korean Film Archive (KOFA) discovered eight feature films from the colonial era.⁴ Since then, several other film texts have been unearthed. It is no exaggeration to say that this was the moment that launched a boom in the study of colonial Korean cinema; the framework of research has since changed from “Korean film history during the era of Japanese occupation” to “colonial Korean cinema,” and there has been a significant rise in interdisciplinary research beyond the field of Korean film studies. The examination of Japanese historical records and engagement in comparative studies of Japanese film and film histories are just two of the important outcomes of this process.⁵

The concept of “colonial modernity” that emerged in the late 1990s provides the theoretical framework of this article. As part of the post-modernist field, the discourse on “colonial modernity” offers an alternative perspective that considers the intersections of imperial and colonized subjects, offering an opportunity to reinscribe a scholarly terrain beyond extant impasses between two long-dominant theories: “colonial exploitation,” which prevailed in Korean history and history textbooks in the 1960s and 1970s, on the one hand, and the “colonial modernization” debates of the 1980s, which claimed that Korea was inspired to pursue modern technology thanks to imperial Japanese development. The conceptual axis opened up by the debates on “colonial modernity” asserts that the colonized are not an independent political, economic, and social unit; rather, they are part of an “Empire,” and the “Empire” and the colonized construct a “related world” with its own

interactions (Yun 2007, 52). Yun Hae-dong used this idea to postulate the notion of a “gray zone” inhabited by the colonized, to describe a space where modernization and differentiation are represented simultaneously and where the duality of “ruling power” is in operation (2007, 55). There are two aspects of the everyday lives of the subjugated people within this space that exist concurrently and not mutually exclusively: collaboration and resistance. Colonial Korean cinema was also a gray zone, hard to define via the dichotomy of exploitation / oppression and pro-Japan / collaboration.

If culture is defined as the various practices of a people or subjects in everyday life, then a nationalist view of history is of limited value, because nationalism regards a colony or an empire as a subject of given actions and sees the exploitation, suppression, manipulation, and control of that subject as the main deciding force in the formation of colonial history. Culture is both a field, where the “self-definition of public agents” (Yu 2006, 256–57) operates, and everyday life, where agents “negotiate, compete with, agree and adjust to the nation.” “Culturalistic colonial modernity” provides an alternative view that reflects the activities, resistance, and autonomy of various agents within everyday life. It includes culturalism, micro-history, the history of everyday life, new-cultural history, and agentism, all of which focus more on an agent’s consciousness and practices (Yu 2006, 256–57).

This article examines the “interworking of colonial Korean and Japanese cinema” from the perspective of “colonial modernity” in order to correct some of the blind spots of the long-established lens of colonial Korean and Korean film history, which merely focused on colonial Korean filmmakers’ productions. I will first focus on the process of competition and negotiation between colonial Korean and Japanese filmmakers around the question of hegemony in the field of colonial Korean film, examining the role of Japanese filmmakers. I

will then pay attention to personnel exchanges, focusing on second-generation Korean filmmakers who trained in Japanese film studios.

Colonial Korean Cinema During the Silent Film Era

An article pointing out that colonial Korean cinema was not separate from Japanese cinema appeared in a newspaper during the colonial period. A colonial Korean critic and theater educator, Hyŏn Ch'ŏl, asserted in "Colonial Korea's Theatrical Scene, 1924–1925" (*Tong-a ilbo*, January 1, 1925) that "all films by colonial Korean filmmakers were actually produced by Japanese filmmakers except *The Story of Chang-hwa and Hong-ryŏn* (K. *Chang-hwa Hong-ryŏn chŏn*, J. *Sōka kōrenden*, 薔花紅蓮傳)." Later, Sim Hun wrote "Present and Future of the Colonial Korean Film Scene" (*Chosŏn Ilbo*, January 1, 1928) and distinguished between films mainly produced by the Japanese and those made without Japanese assistance and denoted "Japanese capital and films led by Japanese filmmakers" with this mark: ▲. This was the reality of the colonial Korean film scene at that time; there were connections to Japanese cinema in terms of capital, human resources, and technology. Nishiki Motosada,⁶ a visiting member at the library of the Police Administration Bureau within the Japanese Government-General in colonial Korea who would later become the screenwriter for *Homeless Angels* (K. *Chip omnŭn ch'ŏnsa* 집없는 천사, J. *Ie naki tenshi* 家なき天使, 1941), also emphasized the role of "Japanese filmmakers who were collaborators on film productions during early colonial Korean cinema"⁷ in *Eiga hyōron* in July 1941. Using these comments to reconstruct the field of colonial Korean film production from the early days of the colonial era, we can begin to pinpoint the limitations of postcolonial nationalist film history.

Japanese Producers during the Early Silent Film Era

Study of the early silent film era⁸ in colonial Korea begins with Hayakawa Matsujirō's Tong-A Cultural Association and Pusan Chosŏn Kinema Corporation. “The first (commercialized) feature film in colonial Korea”⁹ was *The Tale of Ch'un-hyang* (*Ch'un-hyang chŏn*, 春香傳, 1923) by the Tong-A Cultural Association. Then, Pusan Chosŏn Kinema Corporation, the first production company in the colonial Korean film scene, joined forces with a new-theater troupe (K. *singŭk*, J. *shingeki*, 新劇) to produce films. Later, many colonial Korean filmmakers from these companies went on to set the stage for the colonial Korean silent film scene. Metropolitan Japanese provided film technology and knowledge, and colonial Koreans did the directing and acting; thus, technology / knowledge and directing / acting were combined in interesting ways in early colonial Korean silent films.

Tong-A Cultural Association was established by Hayakawa Matsujirō, who ran Hwanggŭm Theater (Hwanggŭm-gwan), a theater for the Japanese, and his goal was to produce films to screen in his own theater. Hayakawa hired an executive, Kim Cho-sŏng, who had been a silent film narrator (J. *benshi*, K. *pyŏnsa*, 辯士). Hayakawa even directed a film himself under the name Hayakawa Koshū. During the early days, Hayakawa was known as “the only showman in colonial Korea and Manchuria.”¹⁰

However, Yi Yŏng-il simply declares that “Tong-A Cultural Association was a strange company” and “*The Tale of Ch'un-hyang* was made by Japanese people” in order to deemphasize its significance in his narrative of Korean film history (2004, 76). He also describes Kim Cho-sŏng simply as the actor who played the role of Yi Mong-nyong. This case provides a good example of how Yi's nationalist narrative failed to reflect the stereoscopic substance of colonial Korean cinema of the colonial era. According to the silent film narrator Sŏng Tong-ho, Hayakawa was an influential person who “might have a position

with the Special Service Agency” and “had a monthly train pass and a pistol . . . someone who the chief of police came to pay tribute to; who only needed a phone call to ask for anything” (Hanguk Yesul Yŏn’guso 2003a, 39). However, even Hayakawa needed the cooperation of Kim Cho-sŏng, a former actor and silent-film narrator with a troupe known as Ch’wisŏng-jwa (聚星座), because Kim understood the tastes and interests of colonial Korean viewers. With his help, Hayakawa could make a “Chosŏn [Korean] film.” Kim Cho-sŏng acted in three films produced by the Tong-A Cultural Association, and worked as both actor and director on *The Tale of Hŭng-bu and Nol-bu* (*Hŭng-bu Nol-bu chŏn*, 흥부놀부전). He continued to gain ground in the colonial Korean film scene as a senior narrator at Chosŏn Theater.

Although *The Tale of Ch’un-hyang* was just “a slide show, not a film, without a montage” (Korean Art Institute 2003, 203), its success influenced the development of the colonial Korean film scene in two ways. First was the national-capitalist reaction. Pak Sŭng-p’il, the only Korean owner among show business entrepreneurs of the day, established the Tansŏngsa Shooting Department, where Korean filmmakers would later produce *The Tale of Chang-hwa and Hong-nyŏn* in 1924.¹¹ Second was the establishment of film companies; production companies, rather than the theaters themselves, thereafter took the lead in film production.

Pusan Chosŏn Kinema Corporation was established on July 11, 1924, by a group of Japanese entrepreneurs including Nade Otoichi. However, the key figure in the corporation was Takasa Kanchō,¹² who had studied at the Nichirenshū Buddhist University and was chief priest at Myo-gak Temple (妙覺寺) in Pusan. He took a Korean name, Wang P’i-ryŏl, to direct the company's first film, *The Sorrowful Song of the Sea* (*Hae ūi pigok*, 海의 悲曲, 1924), along with *Disguise of God* (*Sin ūi chang*, 神의 粧, *Am Kwang*, 1925), and *Hero of*

the Village (*Ch'on ūi yŏngung*, 村의 英雄, 1925).¹³ Later, Yi Kyŏng-son and some members of his Performing Arts Society who were performing on stage in Pusan at the time joined him. Yun Paek-nam¹⁴ joined as a director for their second film, *The Tale of Un-yŏng* (*Un-yŏng chŏn*, 雲英傳, 1924).

As a film scholar, Yi Hyo-in said early colonial Korean filmmakers could be divided into two groups: Tansŏng group (團成系) and Paeknam group (白南系) (1992, 43). Tansŏng, built with colonial Korean capital, included a director Yi Ku-yŏng and a cinematographer named Yi P'il-u who joined the Filming Department of Pak Sŭng-p'il's Tansŏngsa and Koryŏ Film Productions. Later, Yi P'il-u established Pando Kinema, and Yi Ku-yŏng joined Kŭmgang Kinema. Tansŏng made fewer films than Paeknam, but Tansŏng's influence on the colonial Korean film scene was considerable.

Paeknam contained some key figures, including director Yun Paek-nam from Chosŏn Kinema Corporation in Pusan and Yi Kyŏng-son, who was an assistant director of Wang P'il-ryŏl's *The Sorrowful Song of the Sea* and Yun Paek-nam's *The Tale of Un-yŏng*. Colonial Korean director Yun directed a documentary called *A Vow Under the Moon* (*Wŏlha ūi maengsŏ*, 月下의 盟誓, 1923) for the Japanese Government-General in colonial Korea. He also directed *The Tale of Un-yŏng*, the second film released by Chosŏn Kinema Corporation. However, because of the box office failure of *The Tale of Un-yŏng*, Yun had a run-in with Takasa Kancho. As a result, he went on to establish Paeknam Productions in Seoul with Yi, Yun Kap-yong, Chu Sam-son, Na Un-kyu, Kim T'ae-jin, Chu In-kyu, Kim U-yŏn, and Nishikawa Hideo, a cinematographer. Yi debuted with the first Paeknam Productions film, *The Tale of Sim-ch'ŏng* (*Sim-chŏng chŏn*, 沈淸傳, 1925), and became the most famous director in colonial Korean silent film until the debut of Na Un-kyu.¹⁵ In fin, we can see the autonomous activities of colonial Korean filmmakers, including those of Tansŏng

cinematographers like Yi P'il-u, and the development of a system that evolved through the judicious use of Japanese capital and Paeknam cinematographers.

Japanese Producers in the Latter Silent Film Era

The structure of Japanese production companies that combined Japanese producers and cinematographers with colonial Korean filmmakers represents one aspect of the colonial Korean silent film production system. The later silent film era shows the changes that occurred between Chosŏn Kinema Productions, Dŏkkyŏng Productions, Daeryuk Kinema Productions, and Kyŏngsŏng Studio's Wŏnsan Productions. Most notably, Chosŏn Kinema Productions produced the representative colonial Korean silent film *Arirang*, which has been canonized as the foremost national film in Korean film history. This key production reveals the relationship between Japanese filmmakers on the Korean peninsula and Korean filmmakers who cooperated in the directing and cinematography for the film.

Chosŏn Kinema Productions, established by Yodo Torazō, president of Yodoya Store, produced six films overall, including *Bird in a Cage* (*Nongjungjo*, 籠中鳥, 1926). Yodo's relative, Tsumori Shūichi (his Korean name was Kim Chang-sŏn), as is well known, worked with him from the beginning and brought about a famous dispute in Korean film history: the question of who was the real director of *Arirang*? According to an article in the May 21, 1928, issue of *Kinema junpō* entitled "Colonial Korean cinema in the cradle," it was clear that Tsumori Shūichi had put his name on the credits as the director of *Arirang* and *Bird in a Cage* when these films were released.

However, there are various theories about whether the real director was Kim Chang-sŏn (Tsumori Shūichi) or the Korean filmmaker and actor, Na Un-gyu. There is no consensus on the matter to this day, because there is disagreement between the official record in

newspapers and later oral testimonies. Furthermore, names of directors in the credits were sometimes changed to bypass censorship. I suggest two new perspectives based on an analysis of the director's role at the *Arirang* shooting location. First, we must consider the question of who directed the actors whose dialogues were in the Korean language (though it is a silent film, lip reading reveals that the actors were indeed speaking in Korean).¹⁶ This was most likely the role of Na Un-gyu. Second, we should assess the roles of Na Un-gyu, who adapted the screenplay, and that of Katō Kyōhei, the cinematographer. Because the adaptation writer, Na, was also the main actor playing the protagonist of this film, Tsumori Shūichi put his name as the director because of his role in production and directing. The first film of Chosŏn Kinema Productions was *Bird in a Cage*, which was a direct translation of a Japanese film. Na's other film texts after *Arirang*, the second film of Chosŏn Kinema Productions, subsequently adapted a more Western film style instead of a Japanese film style. Considering what Kim Ŭl-han in his film criticism ("Yŏnghwap'yŏng: *Nongjungjo*, Chosŏn Kinema Chakp'um," *Tong-a ilbo*, June 27, 1926) calls the "gaps" between *Bird in a Cage*¹⁷ and Na's other film texts after *Arirang*, it is impossible to deny the contribution of both Na Un-gyu and Katō Kyōhei, even though Tsumori was officially given credit as the director.

From this point of view, a *Tong-a ilbo* article published on March 17, 1927, about the "crank-in" (start of production) of *The Field Mouse* (*Dŭljwi*, 野鼠) is very suggestive: "Original novel and adaptation by Na Un-gyu, directed by Kim Chang-sŏn and Na Un-gyu, cinematographers Katō Kyōhei and Yi Ch'ang-yong." It was a colonial Korean film production created jointly by Japanese and Korean filmmakers. Katō Kyōhei shot all six films by Chosŏn Kinema Productions. It is noteworthy that Yi Ch'ang-yong, who produced films as the president of Koryŏ Film Association in the mid- and late 1930s, and acted as an assistant cinematographer on the first two films, was listed as co-cinematographer on the

third film *A Child of Fortune* (*P'ung-un-a*, 風雲兒, 1926) and the fourth film *The Field Mouse*, and then shot three films by himself, including *Farewell* (*Chal itkōra*, 잘 있거라, 1927) directed by Na Un-gyu for Na Un-kyu Productions. This process is typical of the early colonial Korean film scene: Yi's filmography describes how colonial Korean filmmaker Yi grew into a cinematographer after being trained as an apprentice to a Japanese cinematographer who had been invited to work in colonial Korea.

The Red Lotus Flower and Blighted Love (*Hongnyōn piryōn*, 紅戀悲戀) was directed in 1928 by Yi Kyu-sōl and coproduced by To-sōng Association and Tōk-yōng Productions. Yi had been an actor in films by Yun Paek-nam Productions, Kye-rim Film Association, and Chosōn Kinema Productions. Yi's To-sōng Association also produced its first film *The Unforgettable Song* (*Bulmanggok*, 不忘曲, 1927) shot by Ōta Hitoshi, who had also shot *A Vow Made Under the Moon*. The president of Tōk-yōng Productions, Tokunaga Kumaichirō¹⁸ renovated Hwanggūm Theater (Hwanggūm-gwan),¹⁹ and turned it into Tong-A Club on April 20, 1928. He implemented an aggressive promotional strategy, aiming to become a new box office star in colonial Seoul. In December 1933, shortly before the Domestic Film Screening Regulation came into force, the Kyōngsōng Show Association changed its personnel. After Wakejima Shūjirō, president of Chosōn Film Kyōngsōng [colonial Seoul] Studio and once known as “the big boss of all Chosōn” stepped down, Tokunaga Kumaichirō became president (*Kokusai eiga shinbun*, December 5, 1933, 4). As a branch manager with Takarazuka Kinema, Tokunaga secured the right to distribute Tōa Kinema film in colonial Korea and Manchuria, and also ran Tōkyōng Productions as a producer of films including government-run educational pieces (*Kokusai eiga shinbun*, July 1929, 29: 61).

My Dear Friend (*Naüi ch'ingu yŏ*, 나의 친구여, 1928) by Taeryuk Kinema Productions was directed by Kawabata Motomizu. Kawabata was an assistant director to Nomura Hōtei who strengthened the basics of early commercial film through his work at Shōchiku Kamata Studio. Since Kawabata's name does not appear in the Japan Movie Database (JMDB), it can be conjectured that he must have come to colonial Korea to try and find a way to direct after working as a staff member in Japan. The media had a lot of interest in the incomplete second film by Taeryuk Kinema, *The Engagement* (*Yakhon*, 약혼, 1928), which followed *My Dear Friend*.²⁰

Kawabata Motomizu's productions, which have hitherto eluded Korean film history, suggest a perspective from which to expose and examine the systemic workings of colonial Korean film production during the colonial period and redefine the very concept of colonial Korean cinema. A Japanese citizen who had once been an assistant director came to colonial Korea to establish a film company; he went to China for location shooting on a commercial film based on an original novel by a writer who had sympathetic views concerning KAPF, and shot the film with colonial Korean actors and actresses. It is apparent that the film targeted primarily colonial Korean audiences. This suggests that the nationalist approach cannot fully illuminate the conditions of colonial Korean films produced and directed by Korean filmmakers. This is the fundamental reason why established Korean film historiography that insists on prioritizing the work of Korean filmmakers necessarily contains many fissures, which are only now coming to light; in other words, the categorical boundaries of "colonial Korean film" itself is an imaginary nationalist notion.

Finally, let us examine Wōnsan Productions, which was established by Tōyama Mitsuru. An action actor in Japanese historical sword films from 1925 till 1951, Tōyama was married through common law to Obara Koharu, with whom he was doing screening tours in

the United States, Manchuria, and colonial Korea. In November 1930, he made an attempt to establish a production company in order to start film production in colonial Korea. At that time, an article in *Chosŏn ilbo* stated, “Man of Wŏnsan, a famous sword actor, has plans to establish a film company in colonial Seoul, in order to make Seoul the Hollywood of Korea” (*Chosŏn ilbo*, November 4, 1930).

Tōyama Mitsuru also made use of Wakejima Shūjirō, colonial Seoul’s influential showman. Wakejima established Kyōngsŏng Studio with the starting capital of 100,000 *wŏn* as part of his own business, Great Japan Film Show Corporation, and took office as its president. On November 22, 1930, *Kyōngsŏng ilbo* (*J. Keijō nippō*) reported that Narikiyo Takematsu entered as managing director and Tōyama Mitsuru and Satō Katsuta were hired as directors; on December 14th, the paper reported that Wakejima had held an opening party at the address 19 Furuimachi on the previous evening. This studio was the Kyōngsŏng Studio that would later take the lead in colonial Korean talkies. Tōyama Mitsuru produced three films in 1931: *Kūmganghan* (金剛恨), *My Husband Went to the Guards* (*Otto wa keibini*, 夫は警備に), and *No Place for a Loafer* (*Rumpen yo doko*, ルンペンよ何処). Tōyama Mitsuru might have hired a director named Shimada Akira, or an individual who used the name of Shimada Akira.²¹ There is an interesting anecdote here: *Kūmgang-han*, whose original title was *Kūmgang-am* (金剛嵐), was adapted and co-directed by Na Un-gyu, who played villains after joining Kyōngsŏng Studio (see figure 1) (*Maeil sinbo*, November 22, 1930). Since the Japanese had established the studio, colonial Korean filmmakers were morally indignant.



Figure 1. In front of Kyōngsōng Studio, approximately 1934. In the center is Yang Chu-nam, director of *Sweet Dream*. Source: Korean Film Archive.

As it happens, Wakejima Shūjirō, who is well known for having been the owner of Kyōngsōng Studio, was an extreme rightist gang member (a.k.a. Yakuza). When the Great Japan Patriotic Society (*Dainippon kokusuikai* 大日本國粹會) was founded in 1919, Wakejima became secretary-general of its colonial Korean headquarters. As Andō Naoyuki, an announcer for Kyōngsōng Broadcasting said at the time, “Wakejima Show Business was the owner of Kyōngsōng Theater. It started with Sumo and then swept over all show business in colonial Seoul.” Wakejima came to have power on the quiet as a gang boss” (quoted in Tanaka 2004). Wakejima became a “big shot” in colonial Seoul.

Although Tōyama Mitsuru left the colonial Korean film scene after directing three films, Kyōngsōng Studio continued to produce propaganda films. After Japanese director Kim So-bong (known as Yamazaki Fujie), who was formerly with Shimogamo Studio in Shōchiku Kyoto, joined Kyōngsōng Studio, it became the center of the colonial Korean film scene. It is clear that the roles of colonial Korean technicians Yi P'il-u and Yi Myōng-u were similar to the position held by Yamazaki Fujie. In the period prior to 1938, when Wakejima

Shūjirō sold off Kyōngsōng Studio to the president of Koryō Film Association, Yi Chang-yong, and the manager of Tongyang Theater, Ch'oe Sang-dōk, the Great Japan Film Show Corporation positioned itself at the center of colonial Korea's show business industry, as well as its film industry.²²

Colonial Korean Cinema in the Late Silent Film Era / Early Talkie Era

Significance of the Second-Generation Colonial Korean Filmmakers in Korean Film History

The mid-1930s in Korean film history, especially 1935, marked a new starting point for colonial Korean cinema. In accordance with the history of film technology, the advent of the first talkie, *The Tale of Ch'un-hyang*, is seen as a paradigm shift. At the center of the change was the second generation of colonial Korean filmmakers. The advent of talkies raised issues of studio equipment and the need for large sums of capital and reignited the long-postponed idea of the corporatization of film. Although the second generation did not lead in producing talkies from the beginning, they took the lead in the public discourse about talkies and the corporatization of the film industry. It is apparent that they argued over the issues based on their own experiences with Japanese film studios. They made attempts to establish film corporations, including studios, and to coproduce with Japanese production companies.

In *Complete History*, Yi Yōng-il mentions that the time from 1935 to 1939 was “the time of the advent of the talkies,” and he also paid attention to “the advent of a group of directors and cinematographers who had studied abroad” (2004, 188). Yi also comments on all the new directors and cinematographers, including all the filmmakers who studied abroad, and those who did not: *The Sprinkler* (K. *Salsuch'a*, J. *Sansuisha*, 撒水車, 1935), directed by Pang Han-jun, who was born in 1905; *Spring Wind* (K. *Ch'unp'ung*, J. *Harukaze*, 春風,

1936), by Pak Ki-ch'ae, born in 1906; *Straits of Pure Heart* (K. *Sunjŏng haehyŏp*, J. *Junjō kaikyō*, 純情海峽, 1937), by Shin Kyŏng-gyun, born in 1912; *Sweet Dream* (K. *Mimong*, J. *Meimu*, 迷夢, 1936), by Yang Chu-nam, born in 1912; *Fisherman's Fire* (K. *Ŏhwa*, J. *Isaribi* 漁火, 1939), by An Chŏl-yŏng, presumed to have been born in 1909; *Frontier* (K. *Kukkyŏng*, J. *Kokkyō*, 國境, 1939), by Ch'oe In-gyu, born in 1911; and *Filial Daughter Sim-ch'ŏng* (K. *Sim-ch'ŏng*, J. *Chinsei* 沈清, 1937), by An Sŏk-yŏng, born in 1901. As for cinematographers, there was Yang Se-ung, who was born in 1906, studied in Japan, and shot *Spring Wind*; Hwang Un-jo, who was born in 1912 and shot *Sweet Dream*; and Yi Sinung, who was born in 1908 and shot *Path of Life* (K. *Insaeng hangno*, J. *Jinsei kōro*, 人生航路) (Yi Yŏng-il 2004, 182).

Yi Hyo-in, in *Korean Film History Lecture 1* (1992), defines the period from 1935 to 1945 as one of “talkies and pro-Japanese films.”²³ Connecting the advent of new directors with the period, Yi extends this periodization to the Liberation of 1945, as cinematic expression in colonial Korean films improved, and a shift was made thanks to the filmmakers who had studied their art abroad. The reason he connected the advent of new film directors to the period before the Liberation was because these filmmakers led regular “pro-Japanese film production” after 1940, and film production after the Liberation in 1945.²⁴ Yi also mentions Pang Han-jun, who debuted with *The Sprinkler* in 1935, Pak Ki-ch'ae and his *Spring Wind* (1936), Shin Kyŏng-gyun with *Straits of Pure Heart* in 1937, An Ch'ŏl-yŏng with *Fisherman's Fire* in 1939; and Ch'oe In-gyu with *Frontier* (1939), as well as Yi Myŏng-u, An Sŏk-yŏng, and Sŏ Kwang-je, who debuted earlier than those mentioned above and were linked to the film scene through their screenplays and criticism. It is obvious that this kind of generational frame postulates the existence of an older generation of directors: Na Un-gyu, KAPF filmmakers, the filmmakers who made similar films to those made by KAPF yet did

not belong to it, Yi Kyōng-son, An Chong-hwa, Yi Ku-yōng, Yi P'il-u, Yun Pong-ch'un, and Yi Kyu-hwan. Although Na Un-gyu did direct a talkie, *O Mong-nyō* (五夢女), in 1937, he passed away soon afterward. An Chong-hwa never directed a talkie, following his silent film *Path of Life*. Thus, Yi Hyo-in's periodization is reasonable. Coincidentally, Yi Kyu-hwan is a different case; he started to learn filmmaking in Japan in 1922, which is earlier than the second-generation filmmakers, and debuted in colonial Korea in 1932.

Likewise, the second generation, including those who studied in Japan, drove the energy of the colonial Korean film scene from the mid-1930s. The filmmaking attempts by new filmmakers who had experiences in the Japanese film studios also had an effect on colonial Korean film discourse and styles at that time. In existing Korean film history, Yi Kyu-hwan, who debuted with a silent film, *A Ferry Boat That Has No Owner* (*Imja ōmnŭn narutpae*, 임자없는 나룻배, 1932), was classified as one of the old-generation filmmakers. His career in Japan suggests that he preempted traces of the colonial Korean film industry in the mid- and late 1930s. As such, it seems reasonable to position him at the top of the list of “new filmmakers.”²⁵ That is why we must investigate the careers of other colonial Korean filmmakers who learned to make films in Japan and colonial Korea along with him.

Second-Generation Experiences in Japanese Film Studios

Yi Kyu-hwan's career overseas illustrates how colonial Korean cinema was positioned between two cinematic empires: Hollywood and Japanese cinema. In 1922, when Yi was 19 years old, he went to Tokyo to learn filmmaking at Kanda Japanese Film Art Institute for six months. He also went to Shanghai in or around 1928 as part of his plan to study film in Hollywood (Yi Sun-jin 2006a, 236). Colonial Korean cinema aimed for a Hollywood style, but the actual textbooks came from Japan. When his plan to study in

Hollywood died on the vine, he went to Japan again and got unpaid experience as an assistant director. He joined the Directing Department of Uzumasa Studio of Teikoku Kinema in Kyoto in 1930 or 1931 and worked as an assistant director to Toyoda Shirō and Suzuki Shigeyoshi. Yi took part in *What Killed Her* (*Nani ga kanojo o koroshitaka*, 何が彼女を殺したか, 1931), directed by Suzuki Shigeyoshi at Shinkō Kinema, and then came back to colonial Korea.

The relationship between Yi Kyu-hwan and Suzuki Shigeyoshi continued with their co-direction of *Drifter* (*Tabiji*, 旅路, 1937), coproduced by Chosŏn Sŏngbong Films and Japanese Shinkō Kinema. Sŏngbong Films was responsible for the screenplay, director, actors, and location costs; Shinkō Kinema provided cameras and did the cinematography and development, recording, and overall post-production. This film is an example of technical cooperation through equipment support. Shinkō Kinema distributed it in Japan; Yi Kyu-hwan handled colonial Korea and Manchuria distribution; Suzuki Shigeyoshi took care of overseas markets (Anonymous 1937, 34). The film was released in movie theaters including Meijiza, a Japanese theater in colonial Seoul and Umi-gwan, a colonial Korean theater. The film was quickly acclaimed as the best talkie in colonial Korea. Im Hwa, the influential critic asserts, “This work built the foundation for colonial Korean cinema in the talkie era, leaving how much aid it received from Japan aside” (1941). The same year in May, a film called *Drifter* (*Tabiji*, 旅路) was released in three re-run theaters owned by Shinkō Kinema: Tamazukuriza, Irohaza, and Yukaruza in Osaka (*Kokusai eiga shinbun*, June 1937, 200: 33). It was a hit as well. The success of *Drifter* showed that coproduction and local color were the shortcuts to exporting colonial Korean film to Japan. Later, second-generation directors with experiences in Japanese studios commonly embraced the strategy of “coproduction” as their production method and “local color” as their commercial tool. “Local color,” in particular, was used as

the basis of an argument put forward by the Japanese Government-General in colonial Korea to continue to produce colonial Korean films when Korea Motion Picture Production Corporation, which was a Japanese state-owned company, was established in 1942.

From 1930 to 1934, the colonial Korean film scene welcomed new filmmakers who had studied in Japan to such an extent that news of filmmakers such as Pang Han-jun, who worked at Shōchiku Kinema's Kamata Studio; Pak Ki-ch'ae and Shin Kyōng-kyun, representative directors who had studied in Japan; and cinematographers Yang Se-Ung and Kim Hak-sōng appeared in newspapers. Their activities in Japan and return home to colonial Korea were all reported.

Pang Han-jun joined Kamata Studio in about 1930, and worked there for five years, returning to colonial Korea at the end of 1934 or early 1935.²⁶ Unlike most colonial Korean filmmakers, who got their experience in the Kyoto, Pang learned film in Tokyo. He debuted with *The Sprinkler* (1935), whose producer was Kim Sōng-ch'un, the gaffer to first-generation colonial Korean filmmakers. Kim had worked as the head gaffer at Uzumasa Studio of Shinkō Kinema in Kyoto and Fuji Film Company in Tokyo. Pang Han-jun wrote, directed, and produced his second film, *Han River* (*Hangang*, 한강, 1938), by himself. Recording was done at Mizunaka Film Studio in Tokyo (*Tong-a ilbo*, September 1, 1937). When Pang suffered financial setback in the throes of production, Tōwa Trading Firm supported it to completion and took responsibility for distribution (Ota 1938, 12). When *Han River* was released at Hibiya Cinema Theater in Tokyo, it was acclaimed for its display of local color depicting the unique landscape of colonial Korea after *Drifter*. "Local color" became a commercial strategy when colonial Korean filmmakers made plans to produce colonial Korean films, and the Japanese accepted it as a film genre called "Colonial Korean film" or "Peninsula film."

Pak Ki-ch'ae, who went to Kyoto around 1927 and entered Tōa Kinema as a commissioned student in 1930, became an assistant director after moving to Takarazuka Kinema and then debuted as a director, according to a report carried by *Tong-a ilbo* on January 11, 1934. According to the Japanese Cinema Database of the Agency for Cultural Affairs of Japan, the director of *The Elegy of Youth* (*Seishun no hika*, 青春の秘歌), produced by Takarazuka Kinema in 1933, was Takeda Kazuo. It is highly likely that Takeda Kazuo is Pak Kich'ae, since Takeda made only two films *The Heroic Boy at Port* (*Minatono Kyōji*, 港の侠児) and *The Elegy of Youth* in 1933.

After returning to colonial Korea, Pak Ki-ch'ae debuted as a director with *Spring Wind*, which Yang Se-Ung joined as cinematographer in 1935. As we can see from the discussion between Sō Kwang-je and Park Ki-ch'ae, *Spring Wind* exposed the conflict between the grammar of classical Hollywood cinema and Japanese film. Sō Kwang-je said at the time, "If *Spring Wind* wants the status of a colonial Korean film, put the Japanese subtitles on today and release it in Tokyo and other areas. If it goes there, it will be better positioned as a Chosŏn film than a film in Chosŏn" ("Review of *Ch'unp'ung*," *Tong-a ilbo*, December 6, 1935). Sō's criticism regarded Pak's film in one way but viewed colonial Korean cinema in another way.²⁷ From this, we can see the position and direction of colonial Korean cinema, which was located between the styles of Hollywood and Japanese cinema.

Pak Ki-ch'ae set out to establish a studio with the aid of Ch'oe Na-ju, a millionaire in Kwangju, launching Chosŏn Film Corporation in 1937. In 1939, Pak directed *Heartless* (K. *Mujŏng*, J. *Mujō*, 無情), originally written by Yi Kwang-su, at Chosŏn Film Corporation Studio in Ŭijŏngbu. The studio had opened on May 19th of that year. From the discussion that took place in reviews between Pak and Sō Kwang-je, we can see that colonial Korean cinema had a greater affinity for Japanese film style rather than classical Hollywood film.

Later, Pak entered the Directing Department of Korea Motion Picture Production Corporation, directing a propaganda film for the promotion of the draft, *We Are Going to War* (*Warera imazo yuku*, 吾等今を征く), and a feature film, *Straits of Chosŏn* (K. *Chosŏn haehyŏp*, J. *Chōsen kaikyō*, 朝鮮海峽), in 1943.

Shin Kyōng-gyun went to study film around 1930 and joined Kyoto Film and Play School.²⁸ Shin experienced talkie film production at Shinkō Kinema's Uzumasa Studio and J. O. Studio in Kyoto from 1933 to 1934. Since he was called the "first Korean / Chosŏn recordist" (*Chosŏn ilbo*, May 22, 1934), it is assumed that he belonged to the Recording Department of the Japanese studios. Shin Kyōng-gyun also came back to colonial Korea in 1934 as Pak Ki-ch'ae did, worked as a critic like Pang Han-jun and Pak again, and debuted as a director with *Straits of Pure Heart* in 1937. He joined Korean Motion Picture Production Corporation, worked as a line producer on *Figure of Youth* (*Wakaki sugata*, 若き姿, 1943) by director Toyoda Shirō, and then directed a culture film, *Poignant Diary* (*Kangeki no Nikki*, 感激の日記, 1944), and a feature film, *Our War* (J. *Warera no Senzo*, 我等の戦場), in 1945.

Yang Se-ung started his career at Tōa Kinema in Kyoto in 1926, and became a cinematographer at Tōkatsu Film Company in 1932. Both companies used Tōjiin Studio for shooting. JMDB contains three films in the name of Shindō Minoru, the Japanese name of Yang Se-ung. He is recorded as an assistant cinematographer on *Mr. Takayama Hikokurō* (*Takayama Hikokurō*, 高山彦九郎) in 1928, which was shot in the Tōa Kyoto Studio, and cinematographer on *Dawn of Tears* (*Namidano Akebono*, 涙の曙) and *Two Breasts* (*Futatsu no chibusa*, 二つの乳房) in 1932, produced by Tōkatsu. Yang joined J. O. Talkie Studio in 1934 and returned to colonial Korea. Then he joined Yōnghwa Sidae Productions and shot *Spring Wind* (*Ch'unp'ung*, 春風, 1936), the debut work of Pak Ki-ch'ae. A writer, Shim Hun,

welcomed Yang Se-ung since Shim had experienced Daishōgun Studio of Nikkatsu in Kyoto in 1927. Shim wrote a review of *Spring Wind*, saying, “I would like to be clear that for its cinematography, *Spring Wind* occupies the highest position of all Korean films to date” (see figure 2).



Figure 2. On location for the filming of *Spring Wind* (春風, 1936). From the left, Kim Hak-sōng, Parbo Camera of Kyōngsōng Studio, and Yang Se-ung. Source: Korean Film Archive.

Kim Hak-sōng, who worked on *Spring Wind* as Yang Se-ung’s assistant, studied at Senshu University in Tokyo from 1932 to March 1934, when he came back to colonial Korea as an apprentice at Kyōngsōng Studio. He returned to Japan in February 1936 to join Tokyo Shinkō Kinema as an assistant cinematographer and then passed the Japanese Society of Cinematographers exam in March 1939, becoming an official member of the Society. Kim debuted as a cinematographer with Shinkō Kinema.²⁹

According to JMDB, there are two films by Kanai Seiichi (金井成一), the Japanese name of Kim Hak-sōng. Kim shot *Where Are You Going, Wife?* (*Tsuma yo doko e iku*,

妻よ何処へ行く) in 1940 as a cinematographer and *Confession of a Woman Lawyer* (*Arunna bengoshi no kokuhaku*, 或る女弁護士の告白) in 1940 as a co-cinematographer with Aoshima Junichirō at Shinkō Studio in Tokyo. He also shot two documentaries, *Progressing Chosōn 2* (*Zenshin suru Chōsen 2*, 前進する朝鮮) and *Progressing Chosōn 3* (*Zenshin suru Chōsen 3*, 前進する朝鮮), in 1939 in Japan,³⁰ though these are not on the JMDB. As a matter of fact, Kim Hak-sōng first debuted as a cinematographer in colonial Korea. He temporarily visited colonial Korea to shoot the second film by Pang Han-jun, *Altar for a Tutelary Deity* as a cinematographer. On October 25, 1938, *Tong-a ilbo* reported that *Altar for a Tutelary Deity* would be cranked-in soon and that Kim Hak-sōng, who was “working at Shinkō Kinema now,” would be the cinematographer.³¹

The second-generation colonial Korean filmmakers with experience in Japanese studios began to consider how to build a directing and production system for the colonial Korean film industry in the mid-1930s. They became subjects searching for practical methods by which to export colonial Korean films to Japan and coproduce with Japanese filmmakers, in order to realize the long-cherished desire for corporatization. The remainder of this article will examine the real picture of colonial Korean coproductions by analyzing the representative coproductions *Military Train* (K. *Kunyong yōlch'a*, J. *Gunyō ressha*, 軍用列車) and *Fisherman's Fire*.

The Discourse and Practice of Film Coproductions

After the Sino-Japanese War in 1937, colonial Korean film was reorganized under the wartime system by imperial Japan. In October 1939, Japan enforced the Motion Picture Law (映画法), the first film legislation in Japan. Then, in August 1940, it started Korea Motion Picture Ordinance, which formed the basis for the New Film Order (K. *yōnghwa shinch'eje*, J.

eigashintaisei), in 1941. It is necessary to keep in mind the situation of the mid- and late 1930s, shortly before the film control policies during the Asia-Pacific War. It was a time when colonial Korean film policy was streamlined. Owing to the Domestic Film Screening Regulation, one of the Motion Picture and Film Regulations (*Katsudō shashin eiga torishimari kisoku*, 活動寫真映畫取締規則) that had been implemented since September 1934 specified that colonial Korean or Japanese films had to account for more than half of the total meters of film screened at theaters every month from 1937. As Yi Ch'ang-yong asserted, “[A] new phenomenon” that made colonial Korean filmmakers imagine “regular ways to screen Korean films outside Korea” and “uplift domestic film productions” did not come from their own abilities and contributions, but passively stemmed from the national film policy” (*Kokusai eiga shinbun*, August 1939: 3). At that time, it was apparent that filmmakers in the colonial Korean film scene regarded the Domestic Film Screening Regulation as a favorable condition. Corporatization of film companies in the colonial Korean film industry began when two major film studios, Chosŏn Film Corporation and Koryō Film Association, were founded. Some companies tried to coproduce with Japanese film companies for the “reinforcement of corporations.”

The coproduction between Sŏngbong Films and Shinkō Kinema on *Drifter* continued with the coproduction of *Military Train* by Sŏngbong and Tōhō Films in 1938. The screenplay was completed by Sŏngbong; Tōhō provided a producer, Taniguchi Sengichi; an assistant director, Satō Takeshi; and supporting actors Kobayashi Jūshirō and Sasaki Nobuko. Yi Kyu-hwan’s original work was adapted by Kikuchi Morio and Cho Yōng-p’il; Sŏ Kwang-je was the director; Satō Takeshi was assistant director. Sŏ Kwang-je also studied at Tōkatsu Kinema in May 1932 with Kim Yu-yōng.³² Recording was done at Tōhō Films’ Tokyo Kinuta Studio at the end of May. *Military Train* was a failure at the box office in both Japan

and colonial Korea. Nevertheless, immediately after the release, Sō Kwang-je commented, “After examining *Drifter* and *Military Train* seriously, producers in this land should not think of cooperation and coproduction as tragedies” (Sō 1938, 85).³³

An Ch’öl-yōng, who studied film in Germany and majored in photographic chemistry, established Kūkgwang Film Studio with a group of filmmakers. There, An coproduced *Fisherman's Fire* with Shōchiku Kinema. It is interesting that the film was sent to Shōchiku Ōfuna Studio for post-production in order to polish it as a commercial film for release. The same opening credit design on *Fisherman's Fire* and films with a modern setting, (現代劇) at Shōchiku suggests that Japanese editors, developers, musicians, and sound recorders took part. Especially, director Shimazu Yasujirō supervised the film, and director Yoshimura Kōsaborō was the editor before he made his debut with *Warm Current* (*Danryū*, 暖流) in 1939. *Fisherman's Fire* was released at Shinsekai Tōhō Shikishima Theater in Osaka in August (*Tong-a ilbo*, July 27, 1939). Pak Ki-ch’ae noted that the “dramatic situations in this film are distracting and the connections in the plot are too daring. That is why it is difficult to understand this film” (Pak Ki-ch’ae, “Air View on the Film Scene,” [*Chosŏn haehyōp*, 조선해협], *Tong-a ilbo*, December 16, 1938). He added that the biggest reason for this was that “Shōchiku editors who did not know the sentiment of colonial Korean people edited the film.” A Japanese film review by *Kinema junpō* lamented, “Without editing by Shimazu, it would be boring. On the other hand, it could have more “Chosŏn color” even if it were boring” (Shigenu 1939, 75).

The situation of coproduction in the late 1930s is recognizable since the success of the coproduction film *Drifter* did not carry over to *Military Train* and *Fisherman's Fire*. The reason why the colonial Korean film scene became more active in 1937 is that it accepted the Domestic Film Screening Regulation as a “chance to revive the colonial Korean film industry”

as mentioned above, and because several film companies were founded with colonial Korean capital, including Chosŏn Film Corporation. It can be assumed that colonial Korean film production companies could not reject exchanging distribution rights in Japan for the production costs, because their own capital and technology were behind the curve. It can also be assumed that Sŏ Kwang-je and An Ch'ŏl-yŏng got a chance to debut in colonial Korea, but they had not displayed their directing abilities before then. It was a difficult situation in which they could barely show their own talents because of interference in production by Japanese companies. This kind of trial and error could not be repeated any more. All the production companies in colonial Korea were forced into one company, Korea Motion Picture Production Corporation, in September 1942.

CONCLUSION

This article has examined the inextricable relationship of the colonial Korean cinema to the Japanese film industry from 1923, when silent films appeared, to the late 1930s, when colonial Korean cinema was reorganized within the system of wartime mobilization. It focused on the intersections between the colony and the metropole in terms of Japanese directing and cinematography in colonial Korea; the experience of colonial Korean filmmakers with the Japanese apprenticeship system; and the two, Korean and Japanese filmmakers working together and independently during the silent film era. At the end of the silent film and early talkie era, second-generation filmmakers, especially those who had studied at film studios in Japan played a significant role. They dreamed of the corporatization of the colonial Korean film industry and took the lead on coproductions between Japanese film companies and their colonial Korean counterparts.

Colonial Korean filmmakers were not suppressed by imperial Japan on a unilateral basis, nor did they independently control the colonial Korean film industry during the

colonial period. Nor did the Japanese in colonial Korea take the lead in forming the colonial Korean film scene. At the core of colonial Korean film production was the response process of colonial Korean filmmakers in competition and negotiation within the colonial Korean film field, which had been launched with Japanese capital and technology. The guiding concern of this study is that research on colonial Korean / Korean film history will recover a kind of balance in the fullness of time and thus overcome the limits of today's nationalist film studies.

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Notes

1. In this article, I use the terms “colonial Korean cinema” and “colonial Korea” instead of “Chosŏn cinema” and “colonial Chosŏn” for English readers. Chosŏn is the name of the dynasty that ruled the Korean Peninsula from 1392 to 1897, right before the Japanese colonial era began. In 1897, when King Kojong declared the Korean Empire, the name Chosŏn was not used anymore. In 1910, the Japanese forcibly colonized the Korean Peninsula, and the name Chosŏn was used again. In this article, “Chosŏn” also refers to the Korean Peninsula that was colonized by the Japanese from 1910.
2. I reason that “Play with Kine-o-rama” emphasizing cinematic spectacles and “Combination Play” called “Sinp’a combination moving pictures” (*shinpa rensa katsudō shashin*, 新派連鎖活動寫真) are the reactions of colonial Korean cinema to Western moving pictures. These formats are colonial Korea's early cinema practices.
3. As Yi Sun-jin indicates in his article (2004), a symposium hosted by a film webzine formally mentioned the generation frame of the research on Korean film history in 2004. At that time, Yi Hyo-in, president of the Korean Film Archive, said, “[T]he first generation acted as a Don Quixote to complete the grand Korean film history; the second generation held Korean film history sacred ideologically; the third lacks something (since they focus on side issues)” (Yi 2004). According to Yi Sun-jin's division, Yi Yŏng-il and other film historians are the first generation that left voluminous Korean film history materials, including *The Complete History of Korean Film* in 1969. Yi Hyo-in and others belong to the second generation that tried to restore the left-wing filmmaking of KAPF. The third generation includes Yi Sun-jin and others who try to re-read and work on revisionist history writing as seen from the revised edition of *The Complete History of Korean Film* in 2004.
4. The discoveries of the Korean Film Archive began in 2004, and the results quickly became visible. The Korean Film Archive staff visited the Chinese Film Archive in that year and found the prints of four films: *Military Train* (1938) by Sŏ Kwang-je, *Fisherman's Fire* (1941) by An Ch'ŏl-yŏng, *Volunteer* (1941) by An Sŏ-gyŏng, and *Homeless Angels* (1941) by Ch'oe In-gyu. In 2005, it discovered the prints of three

- more films: *Sweet Dream* (1936) by Yamazaki Fujie and Yang Chu-nam, *Spring of Korean Peninsula* (1941) by Yi Pyöng-il, and *Straits of Chosön* (1943) by Pak Ki-ch'ae. In 2006, in my capacity as a researcher at the Korean Film Archive, I continued to examine the catalog of the Japanese film database before 1945, which the Chinese Film Archive retained. As a result, we discovered one more film entitled *Dear Soldier* (1944) by Pang Han-jun, produced by the Chosön Army Press Bureau. Although some experts mentioned that there would be no more discoveries, all of a sudden, in 2007, the son of Tansöngsa's owner sold the nitrate film of *Crossroads of Youth* (1934) by An Chong-hwa to KOFA (Korean Film Archive) in 2007. For more information regarding these films (except for *Crossroads of Youth*), refer to the DVD series from Hanguk Yöngsang Charyowön (Korean Film Archive), 2007, 2008, 2009.
5. Recent researchers who actively examine Japanese historical materials and reflect on them in their research using a comparative view of film history include, among others: Kim Ryö-sil (2006), Yi Yöng-jae (2008), Ham (2009), Han Sang-ön (2010), Yi Hwa-jin (2010), and Chung (2012). Recently, Yi Hyo-in (2010) also complements existing discussions by examining Japanese historical materials.
 6. Nishiki Motosada worked in the Japanese film scene after he experienced filmmaking in colonial Korea. According to the Japanese Movie Database (JMDB), he worked as a screenwriter on twelve films after the Second World War at Töhö Films, including *Hell's Lady* (*Jigoku no kifujin*, 地獄の貴婦人, 1949) and *Challenge of Blue Night Fog* (*Aoi yogiri no Chösenjō*, 青い夜霧の挑戦状, 1961).
 7. Nishiki Motosada, "As for the Material of Chosön Film," *Film Review* (*Eiga hyöron*, 映画評論), July 1941 (nos. 1–7): 52. This article was translated as *Chosön Cinema in Japanese Magazines I*, edited by the Korean Film Institute of the Korean Film Archive (Hanguk yöngsang charyowön yönghwasa yönguso), 2010: 259.
 8. I follow the division in Yi (1992): that the period of "early silent cinema" in colonial Korea lasts from 1919 to 1926, when *Arirang* was released, and the "late silent film era" lasts from 1926 to 1935, before the first talkie in colonial Korea—*The Story of Ch'un-hyang*—was released. This division imparts particular significance to the vitality of colonial Korean film production since *Arirang*. This article also follows this division because *Arirang*'s production company was Chosön Kinema Production by Japanese capital, and at the same time the film is a pragmatic collaboration between colonial Korean and Japanese filmmakers in directing and cinematography.
 9. Yi Chang-yong, "Future of Chosön Film: A Vital Question Begins with . . ." *International Film Newspaper*, August 1939 (no. 252): 2. Translated to *Chosön Cinema in Japanese Magazines I*, Korean Film Archive, 2010: 164. On the one hand, Im Hwa acclaimed that *The Story of Ch'un-hyang* had "a completely independent format of film," not a moving picture, not an appendage of a play, and also not a propaganda method such as advertisement of government offices (1941, 198). Although this article is not interested in the discussion about the first Korean film, it is still on going, and many assumptions exist from the nationalist point of view (whether the directors and producers were colonial Korean or not) or from the criteria of feature films (whether the film was released at theaters as a commercial film). Yi Yöng-il writes that the date of October 27, 1919, when a combination play *Fight for Justice* and *The Panoramic View of the Whole City of Kyöngsöng* were first released at theaters, is "the first day of releasing the first Korean film produced by Koreans." *The Border* and *The Vow Made Under the Moon*, both released in 1923, fail in this discourse of the origin: the former was directed and produced by Japanese and not released at theaters; the latter was directed by Yun Paek-

- nam but was an enlightenment film produced by the Postal Service Bureau of the Japanese Government-General of colonial Korea (2004, 58–60). As mentioned above, I believe that the combination play *Fight for Justice* is the earliest film practice of colonial Korea, because the film was first starred in by colonial Korean actors, shot in the setting of the Korean Peninsula, and shown to colonial Korean audiences who were attracted to Western moving pictures. This perspective moves beyond the level of nationalist discourse, which only explains colonial Korean production.
10. According to the *Directory of Japanese Businessmen in Chosŏn, No. 1*, Hayakawa Matsujirō was born in Tokyo in 1879. He worked at Division Headquarters 13 in Sakhalin in 1905 and came to Hamhŭng, Hamgyōngnam-do, Chosŏn. He was invited by the Japanese Government-General in colonial Korea to the Department of Finance in 1906. He quit in March 1909 and then engaged in the delivery business. He started to work in measurement and as a scrivener in July 1911, and also ran a business of “Regular Moving Picture” (a theater used for constant everyday screenings) in Hwanggŭm-gwan Theater (黃金館) in 1913. See the Korean History Database by the National History Compilation Committee at <http://db.history.go.kr/url.jsp?ID=im_215_23082>.
 11. When *The Tale of Chang-hwa and Hong-nyŏn* produced by Tansōngsa was released in September 1924, Hayakawa Matsujirō’s Chosŏn Theater re-ran *The Story of Ch’unhyang* (1923) on September 5, 1924.
 12. Takasa Kanchō was born in 1896. He entered Nichirenshū Buddhist University (日蓮宗大学) in 1916 and moved to Pusan’s Myo-gak Temple in Chosŏn as a member of his wife’s family. Chosŏn Kinema Corporation produced films with the purpose of propagating Nichirenshū Buddhism, and it distributed films via screening tours. For more details, see the Nichirenshū Buddhism Modern Institute.
 13. Its Japanese title is written as *Mura no gōketsu* (村の豪傑) (Sai 1928, 29). Sai is a pen name.
 14. Yun Paek-nam first joined the new-drama (*shingeki*, 新劇) movement in the theatrical world and became the director of *A Vow Under the Moon* (1923), the first film of colonial Korea. The film was produced by the Communications Office of the Japanese Government-General of Chosŏn.
 15. Yi Kyōng-sŏn tried to make colonial Korean commercialized filmmaking based on Japanese Sinp’a films (*Gendai-geki*). Yi directed *Changhanmong*, adapted from the original novel, *The Golden Demon* (*Konjiki yasha*, 金色夜叉), translated by Cho Chung-hwan, and *A Captain of Bandits* (*Sansaewang*, 山寨王), which mimicked Japanese period sword films based on the original novel written by Cho Chung-hwan dealing with the Jōkkŏn Bandit (赤巾賊) at the end of the Koryŏ Dynasty.
 16. According to testimony by director Tanaka Eizō (田中栄三) who started to work in 1917 at Nikkatsu Mukōjima Studio, which produced Japanese feature films, a director could barely handle actors’ acting and dialogues in Japanese early feature filmmaking. Satō (2006, 153–54). If you watch the colonial Korean silent film *Crossroads of Youth* (1934), stored in the Korean Film Archive, you can discern that the actors are speaking Korean by reading their lips.
 17. Na Un-gyu offered some evidence, saying, “When you watched western films in Chosŏn at that time, there were many western genre films, and it was the age of spectacle films. When I watched D. W. Griffith’s *Orphans of the Storm* (1921), the audiences stamped their feet; when Douglas Fairbanks’s *Robin Hood* (1922) played

- Chosŏn audiences clapped so hard that their hands hurt.” Shortly before Na made *Arirang* (1926), he suggested to senior director Yi Kyŏng-son: “[L]et’s make a film mimicking western films. I’m so angry since we can’t make that kind of film.” This shows that Na’s *Arirang* aimed for a Western style film (Na 1936, 46).
18. According to the *Official Directory of Great Kyŏngsŏng*, Tokunaga Kumaichirō (徳永熊一郎) was born on July 26, 1887, in Fukuoka (福岡). After graduating from middle school, he worked at Nikkatsu. He went to colonial Korea and established Tokunaga Moving Picture Trading Firm (*Tokunaga katsudō shashin shōkai*, 徳永活動寫真商會) in 1920. He took over Hwang-gŭm-gwan (黃金館) and changed it to Tong-a Club (東亞俱樂部) in 1929. He distributed the films of Tōa (東亞) Kinema and Tōkatsu (東活) Films throughout colonial Korea. When Tōa and Tōkatsu were dispersed, he ran Tonga Club, after renaming it Songjukchwa (松竹座). He directly ran ūp’ae-gwan (邑愛館) at Ch’unchŏn, Kangwon-do, since 1934. He was an influential man in colonial Korean show business as the representative (總代) of Koganemachi (黃金町), 4 chōme (4丁目), the advisor of Chosŏn Domestic and International Film Distribution Union (朝鮮内外映畫配給業組合), and the accountant of Kyŏngsŏng Show Association (京城興業協會). Re-cited from the National History Compilation Committee (1936).
 19. It opened at 4 chōme, Koganemachi (黃金町), Kyŏngsŏng, in 1913.
 20. The original novel version of *The Engagement* was an eponymous serial story by Kim Kijin, published by *Sidae ilbo* (時代日報).
 21. It is possibly assumed, because his real name is Shimada Midori.
 22. See details about Yamazaki Fujie and Kyŏngsŏng Studio in Chung (2011, 361–64).
 23. The subsequent period from 1940 to 1945 is considered to be the peak of suppression and control.
 24. It is important to note that the second generation, including An Sŏ-gyŏng, Sŏ Kwang-je, Pak Ki-ch’ae, Pang Han-jun, Ch’oe In-gyu, and Shin Kyŏng-gyun, actively took part in pro-Japanese activities, while Yi Kyuh-wan, Yun Pong-chun, Chŏn Chang-gŭn, and others did not join the pro-Japanese government-patronized filmmaking at all. The latter stopped filmmaking because they did not participate in the Korea Motion Picture Production Corporation at the end of the colonial period. This does not mean that they had not engaged in any “pro-Japanese” activities. Yi Yŏng-il situates Yi Kyu-hwan, Yun Pong-chun, and Chŏn Chang-gŭn in the structure of nationalism / realism / resistance.
 25. Im Hwa wrote about the advent of new directors in his *Brief History of Chosŏn Film Development*: “The early Chosŏn film directors, including Yun Paeng-nam, Yi Kyŏng-son, and Na Un-gyu, bowed out of the frontline of productions, and new filmmakers such as Yi Kyuh-wan, Pang Han-jun, Pak Ki-ch’ae, Yun Pong-chun, and others appeared. As mentioned above, there were many events, for example, Mr. An Chong-hwa entered the film industry from theatrical play business” Im (1941, 203).
 26. Shōchiku ran Kamata Studio in Tokyo from June 1920 until January 15, 1936.
 27. See Chung (2012, 200–01). My dissertation examines how colonial Korean silent film styles were determined through direct influences from Euro-American films and Japanese films (which were also, in turn, influenced by Euro-American films). At the same time, the dissertation also maintains that these styles should be defined in the context of colonial Korea.
 28. According to various Korean documents, Kyoto Film and Play School is thought to be a

- Japanese Film and Play School established in Kyoto (Anonymous, 1932). “Rakusai” refers to the west side of Kyoto.
29. See Kim Hak-sōng's curriculum vita in his own handwriting in the Korean Film Archive's collection. See details in Yi Sun-jin (2004, 79).
 30. Again, see Kim Hak-sōng's curriculum vita in his own handwriting in the Korean Film Archive's collection.
 31. *Altar for a Tutelary Deity* was recorded with the format of the Shigehara Shinkō phone (茂原式新興フオーン). Itō Senji was in charge of music, and Tokyo Shinkō Kinema developed the film. See Kim Chong-uk (2002, 551–52).
 32. As *Fire Wheel* (K. *Hwaryun*, J. *Karin*, 火輪, 1931) directed by Kim Yu-yōng and co-written by Sō Kwang-je failed at the box office, Sō and Kim went to study Tōkatsu Kinema in Kyoto in May 1932.
 33. It is interesting that Sō argued in favor of “Film Corporatization” in newspapers since 1935 and used the classical Hollywood cinematic styles as his standard for criticism.

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