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Film Censorship as a Good Business in Colonial Korea: Profiteering From Hollywood's First Golden Age, 1926-36

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"Film Censorship as a Good Business in Colonial Korea: Profiteering From Hollywood's First Golden Age, 1926–1936"

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Abstract

Between 1926 and 1936, cinema in colonial Korea was a vibrant business, involving the production of domestic films and the distribution and exhibition of American, British, Chinese, French, German, Italian, and Russian films. During this decade, the first golden age of American cinema in Korea, Hollywood films overwhelmingly dominated the Korean market. Korea was an important territory that Hollywood used in its overall global expansion campaign. Amid this globalization operation, the Government-General of Chōsen's film censorship apparatus was a financially self-sustaining operation. It paid for its operation by profiteering from the application of more than 6,700 American and 630 other countries' feature and non-feature films, a vast majority of which were approved with minor, if any, censorship changes. The Government-General's systematization of film censorship policies was intended to obstruct Communist, revolutionary, and later, socialist themes rather than "Western" themes—at least until the late 1930s, when the Japanese Department of Home Affairs began banning the import of American films and the Government-General intensified the suppression of Korean culture.

On April 2, 2005, a conference panel at the fifty-seventh annual meeting of the Association for Asian Studies (AAS) focused on the Japanese Censorship System and Korean Responses in Colonial Korea. Collectively, the panel attempted to proffer a deeper understanding of the colonial period by showcasing the multifaceted ways Koreans negotiated hegemony with imperial Japan, and more specifically censorship policies, which were at the center of the colonial venture.[1]

The particular focus and timing of this formative AAS panel provide an explicit wake-up call about the scholarly and historical significance of censorship studies and its status as an emerging area of research. Scholars must pursue a plethora of new directions and paradigms in order to gain a more rigorous understanding of Japan's larger imperial cultural agenda. Given the challenge of scarce primary sources, among other research limitations, this is no easy task. Primary sources *do* exist. In this article, I refer to my recent discovery of a small but diverse collection of Japanese, Korean, and English language archive documents concerning film policy and censorship in colonial Korea. To my knowledge, these documents have never been discussed in English or Korean.[2]

This article attempts to contribute to the larger ongoing discussions and analyses of the Korean cinema, and to move beyond the conventional and nationalist claims reiterated in many Korean and English-language sources. There is a rich and complex story here, which revolves around the activities of the Government-General of Chōsen (*Chōsen Sōtokufu* in Japanese), Hollywood distributors, and Korean filmmakers, and their impact on the film industry in colonial Korea. Each profited from film censorship in different ways. Specifically, I focus on the colonial film censorship apparatus in Korea and the dominant role that Hollywood motion pictures played in the Korean market during the 1920s and 1930s.[3]

In 1933, a new censorship building was constructed in the Government-General complex in Seoul with state-of-the-art silent and sound film projection equipment compatible with all film formats (sizes, sprocket dimensions, etc.) from around the world.[4] According to detailed Japanese censorship statistics and other archive documents discussed in this article,

the new facility cost ¥50,475.[5] It was built to meet the demands of an astounding increase in the number of films being censored in colonial Korea. More than a quarter-million yen in total fees, generated from thousands of censorship applications of feature and nonfeature films between 1926 and 1936, helped to pay for the Government-General of Chōsen's new censorship building.[6] During this time, the total number of films censored was slightly more than 24,000 items (107,736 rolls equalling more than 25,300,000 meters), and total revenues soared to ¥262,080.[7] Censorship application fees collected by the Government-General of Chōsen between April 1, 1935 and March 31, 1936 alone amounted to ¥29,568—about 11 percent of the total fees collected over this decade. The Government-General's decision to build a new facility came at an opportune time.[8]

Within this environment, Japanese, Korean, and American distributors contributed immensely to the livelihood of the censorship apparatus—both as a process and an authority. Japanese, Korean, and American distribution agents based in both Tokyo and Seoul applied for and received censorship approval to exhibit 7,376 feature films—6,737 from Hollywood and 639 from other countries—between 1926 and 1936. These figures rise to a combined total of 9,404 foreign films after including nonfeature films (documentary, commercial, and propaganda). More than 90 percent of the films submitted were Hollywood films. As other studies briefly note, the Censorship Board often used the tactic of granting censorship approval to a film and then turning around and prohibiting it from being screened. A number of different reasons, such as fire hazard or threat to local order, were used to block some films from reaching their intended audiences.[9] Although it is unclear exactly how many films were *actually* screened, it is clear that Hollywood contributed substantially to film culture in Korea. In fact, the American film industry helped to subsidize the advancement of the Government-General of Chōsen's censorship apparatus.

To this end, I see Hollywood as an unintended "pro-imperial Japanese collaborator" (*ilche hyŏmnyŏkcha* in Korean)—not in the finger-pointing and witch-hunting ways outlined in other studies,[10] but implicitly, by legitimizing Japanese colonial authority and financially supporting the occupation of Korea. I begin by examining the Government-General of Chōsen's film censorship policy, and the ways in which its development helped the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors Association of America (MPPDAA) reach its goal of simultaneously profiting from the Korean market and expanding Hollywood's worldwide domination.[11]

Systematizing Film Censorship

In 1916, Hasegawa Yoshimichi became Governor-General of Chōsen (*Sōtoku* in Japanese). A notorious achievement of his administration was the promulgation of a set of film regulations, which attempted to restrict not only the exhibition of foreign films in Korea but also the production of local films.[12] It may be that the Government-General anticipated the coming and development of film activity in the Korean market. The origins of film policy in Korea and its later restrictions on the expression of culture can be traced back to regulations enacted by Hasegawa on August 1, 1918.[13] Motion Picture Regulations formed in Japan proper in 1917 provided the basis for this treatment.[14] Policy amendments occurred in 1920, 1922, 1926, 1928, 1933, 1934, 1935, and 1940. Major revisions usually occurred shortly after a new governor-general was appointed. Cinema's popularity in Korea and its power as an influential mass medium rose in tandem with the colonial authority's desire to regulate many aspects of both the film industry and Korean culture.[15]

Micromanaging the film industry in Korea was a governmental priority because film was thought to possess an influential power over society and culture. Indeed, Japanese

authorities had capitalized on the media as a propaganda tool as far back as 1868, when the early Meiji press policy was formed. Since this early date, the Japanese government, as well as private industry in Japan, had understood that the mass media were a powerful tool, which could communicate ideological messages to the masses.[16] It was no accident, then, that the Government-General applied these early regulatory precautions to the exhibition, distribution, and later, production of films in the Korean market.[17]

After 1918, every exhibitor, local producer, and foreign distribution agent had to apply to the nearest provincial police station for a permit to screen every film. Guidelines established two film-rating categories—the first for films suitable for audiences younger than fifteen years of age, and a second for adults (older than fifteen). Men and women were prohibited from sitting together unless they were married. Any film, domestic (Korean and Japanese) or foreign, which sensationalized adultery, arson, crime, murder, or attacks on authorities, was prohibited.[18] The Police Bureau (*Keimukyoku* in Japanese), and not the actual censorship regulations, determined what part of a film's content was "inappropriate" and "injurious to the public order, customs or health".[19] The showing of murder, torture, brutality, antireligious themes, theft, nudity, jailbreak, and revolutionary or politically independent ideas that might undermine governmental authority was considered conducive to "dangerous thoughts".[20] The provincial police stations, which oversaw film censorship at the local level, censored (cut) all films that overtly contained these types of scenes and/or revolutionary ideas and images.

Provincial police chiefs also determined scenario/script revisions and established location exceptions/restrictions. They had the power to close cinemas and/or disrupt screenings of films for violating censorship regulations and to punish the perpetrators. Exhibited films experienced varying forms of regulatory attention in an ad hoc system that varied from district to district. A lack of uniformity between different police chiefs, who may or may not have been susceptible to bribery, continued to be a problem throughout the late 1910s and early 1920s. Censorship was a crude process because each province inspected films and administered punishments for violations in different ways.[21] Unlike the legal precedents, which were set in the courts, the regulatory efforts and procedures followed by individual (provincial) police chiefs and stations had little objectivity or few unified standards across multiple regions. Hence, local police stations regulated the exhibition and distribution of films with their heavy fists rather than the censor's careful snip.

Once through the censorship process, domestic and foreign films, including multiple copies of the same film, received a formal stamp of approval. Written exhibition permits specified the period of time and number of screenings allowed. A film that failed to receive a screening permit could be re-edited and resubmitted, with additional censorship application fees, to the same provincial police station. The collection of these multiple censorship fees soon gave rise to a stronger censorship apparatus by providing opportunities to reap a steady income. In this way, the film censorship process and apparatus in Korea was financially self-sustaining.[22]

The new film censorship regime was enacted in response to the global activities of the MPPDAA, which was helping the major and minor Hollywood studios expand their distribution networks and territories throughout the world and, more specifically, in Asia. Around this time, markets in Asia, and Japan in particular, were no longer considered "junk markets" because of the potential to earn lucrative profits from film rental contracts.[23] Hollywood distributors simply desired to expand and maximize their profits throughout the "Orient," an increasingly important market for the United States after World War I due to distribution opportunities lost in European markets.[24]

In August 1919, Admiral Saitō Makoto replaced Hasegawa as the governor-general of Chōsen. Government offices and ministries throughout Korea began to encourage Koreans to

support Japan's colonial and thus nationalistic agenda, which in 1937 eventually became known as the assimilationist slogan: "Japan and Korea as one country" (*Naisen ittai*).[25] Surprisingly, however, Governor Saitō launched a new cultural policy designed to relax Japanese administrative control over Korean cultural and artistic activities across the peninsula. This was Saitō's first "gift" to Korea. It seems that Saitō was interested in altering the image of the Japanese Empire after the March First independence movement in 1919 and rendering the administrative operation in Korea more efficient.[26] Writers, actors, filmmakers, and theater entrepreneurs took advantage of this new opportunity and began developing or negotiating spaces for the expression of Korean culture. This was a hopeful time for Korean intellectuals and artists, as cinema became a "node of cultural construction."[27] Allowing Koreans to gain film production training and experience—or at least not entirely preventing them from doing so—encouraged the creation of a Korean cinema. Hence, it was not an accident that one of the earliest Korean films—*The Righteous Revenge* or *Loyal Revenge* (Ŭirichŏk kutu), a multimedia kino-drama—was made in 1919.[28]

On August 1, 1926, Governor-General Saitō's administration launched a new film policy—Government-General Law No. 59—which became Korea's first systematized, national film censorship regulations. Law No. 59 mirrored the regulations ratified in 1925 in Japan proper. The whole empire now had a cohesive approach to film censorship, giving the minister of Home Affairs a larger degree of power. The Japanese government, through the Government-General's administration, was able to control the exhibition of domestic and foreign films with stricter central censorship regulations while delegating regulatory power to provincial police authorities who could concentrate on whether or not a film was detrimental to public peace and cultural customs on a localized level. Socially acceptable films avoided violating the dignity of the emperor and were "free from impediment to the maintenance of public peace, custom, or hygiene".[29] Law No. 59 thus reinforced a kind of international/national/local hierarchy, which in reality was not always easy to control completely.

Along with Law No. 59, Saitō created a national Censorship Board (*Kenetsu iinkai*). The board began methodically to record explicit data concerning the total number of applications, reels, reel lengths, script and reel rejections, types of restrictions, and total fees of all domestic and international feature and nonfeature films censored. According to the *Film Daily Year Book*—one of the key sources in the United States for international film trade data and news—the MPPDAA immediately became concerned about the stricter censorship's implications for the distribution of Hollywood films in the Japanese imperial market, especially in Korea.[30] The MPPDAA's fears, however, were unfounded, as the censorship apparatus rejected very few American films. Hollywood films were warmly accepted, along with their associated censorship application fees.

Saitō's second "gift" to Korea and especially to the nascent Korean film industry, was his decision to enable or at least not prevent Koreans from submitting more than 450 domestic Korean and Japanese *and* more than 2,100 foreign films for censorship approval. In this way, Saitō liberated the film industry as he did other manufacturing and production industries, and encouraged an expanding consumer class with resources that supported local filmmakers and entertainment entrepreneurs.[31] Hence, film culture in Korea throughout the Japanese colonial period flourished. As discussed below, individuals and groups of Korean film people, perhaps similarly to the Korean business elite, played a noteworthy role in Korean cinema's growth and development in previously unrecognized ways.[32]

Numerous film genres, along with an active field of critical and fan-based film magazines and newspaper articles about local and international cinema, contributed to a film-literate society.[33] Feature and short films as well as kino-dramas were intended as entertainment. Education films (*kyōiku eiga*), business/public relations advertisements

(*senden* or *kōkoku eiga*) from institutions such as the Meiji Confectionary Company (Meiji Seika) and Tokyo Electric Light Company (Tokyo Dentō), and documentary films (*dokyumentarii eiga*) were used for nonentertainment purposes.[34] Other film genres, which involved a mix of both educational and entertainment purposes, included: battle records (*senki eiga*), cartoons, current-events (*jiji eiga*), industrial, newsreels (*nyūsu eiga*), public (*kōekiteki senden eiga*), record (*kiroku eiga*), sanitary, science (*kagaku eiga*), small-gauge (*kogata eiga*), sport, tourist, and war conditions films (*senkyō eiga*).[35] The three most prevalent types of films were cultural films (*bunka eiga*), public films, and short- and feature-length propaganda films (*puropaganda* or *senden geki eiga*). Cultural films aimed to alert Japanese and foreign audiences to the uniqueness of Japanese culture.[36] Public films were imperialistic films containing actual war footage. Propaganda films often presented action, adventure, and espionage narratives containing imperial and overt nationalistic Naisen ittai (*Naesŏn ilch'e* in Korean) themes.[37] Naisen ittai sentiments in both the public and propaganda films were used in Korea to serve the colonial agenda and act as inspirational recruitment tools for the war effort.

After 1926, nonfeature films designed to educate Korean and Japanese audiences were exempt from paying censorship application fees. The fees generated from an abundance of Hollywood feature films thus helped to subsidize the screenings of nonfeature and commercial films. Around the same time, the Government-General began requesting that a higher number of propaganda films be screened in Korea. Japanese distributors eagerly supplied so-called public films, which were used to educate the public. Public films were regarded highly by the Censorship Board and were exempt from application fees. This provided a drive for Japanese film companies to increase the production of cultural and educational propaganda films, which in turn promoted assimilationist ideology to Koreans and supported the Japanese film industry.

Censorship application fees were based solely on film length. In Japan, for example, a short, 1,000 meter film cost the applicant (the film owner or rental agent) ¥16.66, or approximately $8 US dollars. A feature-length film of 2,400 meters cost ¥39.98 or $19 US dollars.[38] The fees for censoring additional copies of the same film amounted to 40 percent of the cost of the first copy. Major studios such as Universal, Fox, and Paramount often sent multiple copies of the same film to a single market in order to arrange simultaneous screenings in different capital cities. Applying for re-censorship also incurred fees of 40 percent of whatever applicants paid the first time around for the first copy of the film. Newsreels and other current event films—often inspected by provincial authorities rather than a centralized censorship board—were charged one sen per length of three meters. Given the considerable monetary requirement involved in applying for censorship approval in Japan proper, only the more financially stable organizations, especially the ones that survived the Great Depression, could afford to distribute and exhibit a large number of films in Japan. This probably explains why, between the mid- to late-1920s, films made by the major Hollywood studios occupied from 22 to 30 percent share of the Japanese market while European films only attained about 3 percent.[39] There was no apparent reason for the Censorship Board to treat Hollywood films harshly.

By comparison, the Government-General of Chōsen's censorship apparatus charged 50 to 60 percent less than applicants paid in Japan. Censorship application fees in Korea were one sen per meter of footage for the first (original) print and one-half of one sen per meter of footage for duplicate copies.[40] These considerably lower fees were a huge economic incentive for distributors of Hollywood films to flood the Korean market with their products well into the 1930s. In fact, the share of Hollywood films in the Korean market remained higher than in Japan proper, reaching heights of 40 percent of the total length of film actually screened in

Korea. The percentages of total audiences at American films, as well as the number of film rentals, also exceeded those in Japan.[41]

In August 1934, according to the American consulate-general in Seoul, U.S. films dominated the motion picture screens in Korea, with as much as 62 percent of the market. More than half of Seoul's major cinemas were screening foreign—primarily American—films, which outnumbered all other countries' films five-fold. Although box office figures are not readily available in this groundwork study, the number of German, British, French, and Russian films followed Hollywood films, in that order.[42] During this time, Fox, Paramount, Warner Bros.–First National, Universal, independent agent J. H. Morris and others who represented Columbia, MGM, RKO, and United Artists—all controlling members of the MPPDAA—had direct distribution offices in Seoul. Korea was unquestionably a key territory for Hollywood distributors.[43] There was no better market in Asia for Hollywood films than colonial Korea.[44]

Hollywood's First Golden Age in Korea

The growth of the censorship apparatus in Korea began with the increasing Japanese police presence in the colony, which grew stronger during Admiral Saitō's regime.[45] As described, police troops played a central role in the enforcement of film policies. Aspiring Korean filmmakers, as well as the MPPDAA, began to witness the tightening of film regulations by provincial police bureaus. At the same time, Japanese film studios were eager to utilize the Korean exhibition market, which included hundreds of thousands of Japanese citizens who had begun migrating to Korea after the annexation in 1910.[46]

Out of an approximate total of 31,100 reels of feature films censored between 1926 and 1936, a paltry 52 reels were rejected. In addition, a mere 537 scenarios (or 8 percent) of all 6,737 U.S. feature films censored during these two decades were restricted from being screened. Film parts cut for reasons of public peace and order (*kōan*) were 4,668 meters or six-hundredths of one percent of the 7,646,741 total meters of film censored. Similarly, an insignificant 6,604 meters of film parts were cut for reasons of manners and customs/public morals (*fūzoku*). Out of all 626 feature films submitted in 1936 alone to the Censorship Board, not a single film was rejected outright.[47] As busy as it was, the Censorship Board seemed to accept and approve of the contents of nearly all U.S. films. That is, U.S. films were not seen as jeopardizing public peace, displaying immoral manners, or marring imperial Japan's "good and beautiful customs" (*ryōfū bizoku*).[48]

The relative ease of being passed by the Censorship Board made the distribution of films in Korea extremely convenient for the Hollywood distribution agents/exchanges. It may be that Hollywood distributors exploited the censor's motives in order to submit every possible print for exhibition. In turn, the Government-General saw an opportunity to profit from thousands of would-be censorship applications and their associated fees.[49] Censorship applications were warmly accepted regardless of the quality of the print(s) in question. In this symbiotic nod-nod-wink-wink relationship, neither Hollywood nor the Censorship Board had much to lose. Moreover, the overabundance of American films in the Korean market during the 1920s and 1930s goaded Korean filmmakers. Although these connections are difficult to prove, the boom in Korea's silent film production—its first golden age—corresponded with the deluge of Hollywood films in Korea. This was undoubtedly the first golden age for the American cinema in Korea and the larger Asian territory.[50] However, the openness with which American films were received was afforded only to certain types of Korean films.

According to comments made by the Bureau of Police Affairs in 1935 during the Sixty-ninth Imperial Parliament, censorship in Korea had to be "strict" (*gensei*) and "careful" (*neniri*), because Korean customs and thought patterns were different from those in Japan (*Chōsen no fūzoku shūkan wa naichi to kotonaru*).[51] In effect, the assimilationist approach

was easier said than done. Censorship laws restricted freedoms of expression throughout the empire and suppressed films that criticized society and/or glorified revolution.[52] One of the primary aims of the Censorship Board was to suppress Korean independence and Communist themes, which criticized society and/or glorified revolution. One would have expected the censorship regime to target socialist themes too. Nevertheless, between the late 1920s and mid-1930s, members of the Korean Artist Proletarian Federation (KAPF) in Korea and Nippon Artist Proletarian Federation (NAPF) in Japan made a small number of socially conscious films.[53] For almost seven years, the Japanese Home Ministry and Government-General of Chōsen overlooked these interrelated groups of filmmakers—until films with socialist themes were stifled by the so-called cultural crackdown at the end of Governor-General Ugaki Kazushige and the beginning of Governor-General Minami Jirō's regime in 1936.[54]

Without question, historical/period (*jidai eiga*), modern/contemporary (*gendai eiga*), and documentary films made in Korea by all-Korean and/or part-Korean and part-Japanese production crews experienced censorship problems.[55] Titles that sounded overtly revolutionary were changed. Scenes too critical of the Japanese Empire were cut and/or re-shot. One of the first cases of the censorship of Korean films occurred in April 1925, when the Censorship Board changed the name of the film *Dark Light* (Amkwang) to *Make-up of God* (Sinŭi Chang), and forced Japanese director Takasa Kancho (whose Korean name was Wang Pil-yŏl) to reduce its length. The next film censored was director Yi Kyŏng-son's *King of the Mountain Bandits* (Sanch'aewang), produced in September 1926 by the Kerim Film Association (Kerim yŏnghwa hyŏphoe)—an all-Korean film company. Authorities forced the Kerim Film Association to cut *Sanch'aewang* from a seven- to a five-reel film. In November 1926, a third censorship case involved the cutting and re-shooting of about 1,000 feet of director Na Un-kyu's *The Boy with Great Ambition* (Pungun-a).[56]

Around the time of General Ugaki Kazushige's appointment as governor-general and the escalation of the Manchurian Incident in 1931, filmmakers in Korea began to experience the tightening of film regulations. This corresponded to Japan's overall tightening of cultural policies and the general oppression of Korean culture during that time. In particular, stricter film policies began to shut Korean audiences off from foreign films as a higher exhibition quota of Japanese films began to take hold. All aspects of the film industry were now subservient to Japan's Wartime Regime System (*Rinsen taisei*), which prioritized the war effort over all other social, cultural, economic, industrial, and political concerns in ways similar to those applied to the German film industry in the lead-up to World War II.

On April 26, 1933, the governor-general declared Law No. 40. It required that all foreign films shown in Korea first be imported into Japan and then later distributed to the colony.[57] Hollywood's formerly successful direct distribution strategies were no longer possible. The governor-general was attempting to create a stricter approach to the distribution and exhibition of foreign—primarily American—films in Korea as part of a larger "Surveillance State."[58] Bureaucratic mechanisms now threatened Hollywood's golden age, and the U.S. film industry's cultural autonomy in the Korean market.[59]

By the end of 1934, each imported film was subjected to a system of double censorship. First, prints were examined by customs officials at the Japanese port of entry, and then examined under closer and more bureaucratic scrutiny at the Japanese Censorship Bureau in Tokyo. Locating and deleting "objectionable" (*akueikyō*) scenes—such as those with riots or anti-authority, revolutionary, and communist propaganda—continued to be the focus of censorship cuts. The Censorship Board allowed images of naked bodies, but kissing was prohibited. Any images or stories offensive to the Japanese Empire or the monarchy were strictly prohibited.[60] The Russian films *Battleship Potemkin* and *Mother* were two such films, banned from exhibition in Korea and Japan because of their social and ideological

messages.[61] Still, only 10 out of about 2,400 imported films were banned in Japan in 1933, including 8 American, 1 Russian, and 1 German. Between January and September of 1934, only 1 out of 1,954 American films submitted for censorship was banned.[62]

A few titles of Warner Bros.–First National Pictures, which received censorship approval in 1934 and were in fact screened, included: *Footlight Parade, Gold Diggers of 1933*, *Captured*, *I Am a Fugitive from a Chain Gang*, *42nd Street*, *Crowd Roars*, *Winner Take All*, *Fashions*, *Son of a Sailor*, *Tiger Shark*, *Central Air Port*, *Frisco Jenny*, *Little Giant*, and *Last Flight*.[63] These were visually entertaining sound films that Korean and Japanese audiences could easily appreciate because their narratives relied little on knowledge of the English language. Hollywood films were not dubbed into the local language, although it would not have been illegal to do so. It was standard practice to add Korean and/or Japanese subtitles and other explanatory notes to most prints.[64] Censorship applications for all English-language films required two copies of explanatory notes or the whole dialogue script translated into either Japanese or Korean. All intertitles and subtitles had to be provided in English, as well as one of the local languages.[65]

Ironically, this stricter film policy stimulated Korean film production, as Korean films were now categorized as "domestic" (*kokusan*) films. Through the Governor-General Order No. 82, ratified on August 7, 1934, General Ugaki mandated that 25 percent of all pictures shown in Korea had to be of domestic origin—that is, of Japanese *and/or* Korean origin. The regulations had a positive impact on the Korean film industry because they gave "hope" to filmmakers.

Another positive outcome for Korean filmmakers in the late 1930s, according to the International Cinema Association of Japan, was an expanding exhibition market in Japan proper and Manchuria, which was seen as "one of the most hopeful signs for the future of the Korean cinema."[66] Although the industry remained unstable primarily because ample and continuous funding was lacking, nearly 115 films (including twelve talkies) were produced in Korea between 1926 and 1937, making this period *Korea's* first golden age of cinema.[67] An average of one film was made every five weeks, and a new film company was formed each time a new production began.[68] Korean and Japanese producers and filmmakers utilized this one-off funding strategy until 1942, when the Government-General took complete control over film production in the Korean colony and consolidated all film companies into the single company called Chosŏn Film Production Co. (Chosŏn yŏnghwa chechak chusikhoesa)—much as Adolf Hitler did in Germany when he assigned Joseph Goebbels to take over the UFA studios in 1933.

Throughout the late 1920s and 1930s, Korea's film culture grew through its ties with Japan. Korean filmmakers gained production experience by traveling back and forth to Japan.[69] For example, Yi Pil-wu—the cinematographer of Korea's first successful and most famous talkie, *Chunhyang-chŏn* (Story of Chunhyang, 1935), spent time in Osaka studying at the film libraries of the *Osaka Mainichi* newspaper, which opened its doors to commercial and artistic filmmakers in July 1927.[70] By early 1931, Korean filmmakers no longer needed to travel to Japan to gain experience because local branches of the *Osaka Mainichi* film library and training center were opened in Seoul and Daegu. Both libraries were outfitted with "well-equipped" projectors and a supply of films from the *Mainichi* library. Weekly screenings of educational and cultural films were arranged at the two Korean branches and basic production classes were offered as well.[71] The main objective was to: "raise the quality of education by films through research and experiments in actual educational and social problems."[72] In essence, the *Osaka Mainichi* library and training program was an innovative attempt to coalesce the social and political attitudes and beliefs of all of Japan's imperial subjects. Armed with technical know-how, social/business contacts with Japanese

filmmakers, and an intense desire to express themselves through film, Korean filmmakers continued to sharpen their production skills and made more films.

While Korean filmmakers were gaining production experience, producers focused on profiting from the exhibition side of the industry. Between August 1, 1926 and March 31, 1936, Korean entertainment entrepreneurs such as Pak Sŭng-pil, Yi Ku-yŏng, and Cho Chung-hwan, as well as producers and directors such as Yi Pil-wu, Kim Dong-pyŏng, and Yi Ch'ang-gŭn, applied for approval to exhibit 267 Korean and Japanese films (most likely from the smaller Japanese film companies) for entertainment purposes but only one nonentertainment contemporary film. Approximately 18.5 percent (50) of these were historical entertainment films, while 81.5 percent (217) belonged to the contemporary genre. The Censorship Board passed all of the reels of historical-entertainment films without any rejections. However, a number of scenes from both the historical and contemporary genre were restricted for violating the rules against public peace and public morals. During this decade, Korean distribution agents also brought 201 nonfeature Japanese films, such as documentaries, public films, and commercial advertisements, and around nine nonfeature foreign films before the Censorship Board. Unfortunately, these statistics do not reveal the specific names of these films.

This same group of Korean entertainment entrepreneurs, producers, and directors brought an even more impressive 1,850 Hollywood films and 276 entertainment films from other countries before the Censorship Board. If all of the approved films had reached cinema screens, Koreans would have brought an average of 106 foreign films to Korea per year—about two per week. Consequently, with the total number of American films directly distributed by Hollywood studios, people living in Korea during the colonial period would have watched a lot of American films. There may not have been continuous financial support for local film production, but there were literally thousands of opportunities to facilitate the exhibition of American and other foreign films.

However, as Hollywood film distributors were forced to import their films to Korea via Japan, Korean film companies suffered from a lack of distribution profits and regularized funding, especially for the experimentation and conversion to sound-on-disc and sound-on-film technology. As a result, Japanese film companies with access to ample funds increased their distribution opportunities throughout the Korean market. At the same time, the governor-general's policies helped regulate or reduce the penetration of so-called "bad culture" in foreign films into the minds of Korean audiences while the Japanese were preparing for war.[73] The Japanese authority was attempting to use a screen quota to control foreign films, which contained potentially influential propaganda.[74] Despite this, it was much harder to enforce the double censorship policy because of limited human resources. During 1934, a total of 17,468 film reels were submitted to the Censorship Bureau in Japan; only 651, or less than 4 percent, were rejected. About 48 percent of those rejected were from the United States.[75] The Department of Home Affairs in Tokyo, as well as its branch in Seoul, simply lacked sufficient censorship staff. For example, in mid-1925, Tokyo's Censorship Board employed forty-four members. According to statistics for the period between 1926 and 1936, the number of all domestic and foreign films submitted for censorship totaled approximately 20,320, amounting to 93,407 reels.[76] Censors throughout Japan and Korea would have had their hands full and eyes blurred.

At the end of 1935, General Ugaki attempted to protect Japan's domestic film industry further by strengthening the laws regarding the market share of domestic films in the Korean and Japanese markets. The screen quota system was raised from 25 percent to one-third, increasing exhibition market barriers for American and European distributors and their silent and sound films. One-third of the films screened at any given cinema had to be domestic—Japanese *or* Korean.

There was even greater loss of distribution opportunities for foreign film exchanges in Korea in early 1937, after General Minami Jirō, the new governor-general, declared that at least half of the films screened in Korea had to originate domestically. This had significant implications for distributors of American films. The American distributors complained about the stringent laws at numerous industry conferences.[77]

Finally, on behalf of Hollywood distributors and because of the quota limits placed on the number of imported U.S. films and the more stringent censorship regulations, the MPPDAA was forced to negotiate its members' livelihood with the Japanese Department of Home Affairs and the Government-General of Chōsen. During this time, according to Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP) archive documents, hundreds of thousands of dollars in film rental profits were at stake because U.S. films had been screened extensively and well attended throughout Japan and Korea. When the Sino-Japanese war broke out in 1937, the Japanese Empire was run by the total war system. The Japanese government prioritized the protection of its domestic film industry and the education of its imperial subjects. In effect, the Government-General no longer needed to profiteer from Hollywood censorship applications because it had already made a fortune. In 1938, when the film import quota was set at 100 features per year, Hollywood distributors were unable to recover the market strength gained from the first golden age of American cinema in Asia. The Japanese authority seemed paranoid about the potential for Hollywood films and American culture influencing citizens of the Japanese Empire.[78] Then, when the United States entered World War II, links between the American film industry and the Japanese and Korean markets were broken completely; all U.S. films and related materials from local Hollywood distribution offices (exchanges) were impounded.[79]

Concluding Thoughts

Throughout the colonial period, the production of domestic (Japanese and Korean) films as well as the distribution and exhibition of international (American, British, Chinese, French, German, Italian, and Russian) films was plentiful. The development and enforcement of colonial film policy, including censorship, were designed to manage this active sphere of film culture in Korea.

The Government-General launched strict regulations in the mid-1930s after Governor-General Ugaki Kazushige initiated a higher exhibition quota of domestic films, while blocking American films.[80] Film culture in general was seen as part of a very young industry and a new form of cultural expression. Its power to influence the masses and make an impact on society was demonstrated by the Japanese authority's fervor to regulate using means similar to those by which they regulated the telecommunications, transportation, mining, and agricultural industries.

The sheer volume of censorship statistics from the period between August 1, 1926 and March 31, 1936 is astounding. As expected, the censorship fees generated from processing this magnitude of films were likewise impressive. The entire film censorship operation exploited the large number of American and Japanese films imported into the colony. In other words, the American film industry significantly helped to subsidize the advancement of the Government-General of Chōsen's censorship apparatus. Regrettably, very little funding from this windfall was reinvested in the Korean film industry. Rather, a sizable amount of this funding was redirected in 1933 to build a new censorship facility. This state-of-the-art administrative and screening facility, including new 16mm and 35mm dual sound-on-disc and sound-on-film projectors, signalled the expansion of a more lucrative censorship business.

The screening of more than 6,700 Hollywood films in Korea during the colonial period was not a fait accompli. A deeper exploration of the censorship status of all of these films is needed elsewhere. It would be revealing to learn more about the specific scenes that were cut or limited (*seigen*) from this larger group of American films that passed (*ken'etsuzumi*). In addition, this total number of films would have included multiple copies of the same film, per censorship application requirements. More scrutiny is needed to better gauge the actual number of films screened in the Korean market. Further consideration of the annual budget belonging to the Government-General's film censorship apparatus within the larger context of the entire colonial administration's budget is also needed. Nevertheless, the censorship apparatus benefited from collecting a mass of application fees while circuitously preventing some films from being screened. Without knowing more about the personal backgrounds and career paths of the members of the Film Censorship Board, it might be unfair to assert that they were unqualified to monitor and manage this highly significant cultural industry. However, it is possible to assume that the censors' subjective decisions would have swayed censorship criteria. Their decisions might have been rather crude—simply based on manifest content.

My research corroborates the view that Japanese censorship policies in colonial Korea were overwhelmingly directed at socialist, Communist, and revolutionary expressions and themes, rather than "Western" ones. Perhaps this partly explains why the rate of censorship rejection for American films was so low—a claim that complicates how the invention and development of cinema affected Korean culture. Here, one might well ask whether the act of watching thousands of Hollywood films during the Japanese colonial period constituted, for the Koreans, a form of passive resistance. Unfortunately, it is difficult to substantiate this specific argument with empirical evidence since there are few available source materials. Indeed, a large void exists in the evidence published to date, which documents and analyzes the political economy, audience reception, and cultural transformation of the film industry in Korea during the colonial period. Archive materials, business records, and government files are few and far between, not to mention that few films made in Korea before 1945 exist today. More exploratory research is needed in this fascinating area.

The Government-General permitted Korean filmmakers to create spaces, within moderate parameters, to express a national culture and spirit through Korean cinema. This continued to be the case until the mid- and late-1930s, when Governors-General Ugaki Kazushige and Minami Jirō began tightening the oppression of many facets of Korean culture. However, censorship was complicated in Korea because of the potential impact a film's contents had on Korean audiences. By their own admission, the police treated the production, distribution, and exhibition of films seriously, given the perceived influence that the development of talkie (sound) technology had on Korean society. The Censorship Board may have believed that listening to the Korean native tongue on film was the same as participating in a cultural nationalistic activity. At the same time, the police recognized that Korean films could subvert the colonial agenda, and they viewed them with great seriousness as a result.

Between 1926 and 1936, Korean filmmakers gained the practical production experience and technical know-how needed to make their own films. Japanese studios successfully expanded their domestic film market, and more importantly, served the imperial agenda. Hollywood distributors screened their films—many, many of them—and Hollywood experienced its first golden age in Korea. Finally, the Government-General and its censorship apparatus benefited from many thousands of censorship application fees. Each of these groups and aggregates of individuals struggled to maintain control, to have a cultural impact, and to attract audiences. Each player, albeit at different and overlapping times, was at least partly successful in gaining valuable ground.

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Notes

[1] The panel offered a complex of insights, ranging from the personal backgrounds and career paths of the Japanese and Korean censorship officials, to the relationships between and resistance strategies of the printing capital (*insoe chabon*), the Korean newspaper elite, and Japanese authorities. Responses pointed to the current transformations surrounding censorship studies.

[2] Makino Mamoru is one of the best-known Japanese experts on early Japanese film culture and policy. His particular area of expertise is film censorship. See Makino Mamoru, "On the Conditions of Film Censorship in Japan before its Systematization," trans. Aaron Gerow, in *Praise of Film Studies: Essays in Honor of Makino Mamoru*, ed. Aaron Gerow and Abé Mark Nornes (Yokohama: Kinema Club Publications, 2001), 46–67.

[3] For a general overview of the history of Korean cinema in English, see John A. Lent's chapter on "South Korea," in his *The Asian Film Industry* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990), 122–45; Yi Young-Il and Choe Young-Chol, *The History of Korean Cinema* (Seoul: Jimoondang Publishing, 1998); Hyangjin Lee, *Contemporary Korean Cinema: Identity, Culture, and Politics* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000); Kim Hyae-joon, "South Korea: The Politics of Memory," in *Being & Becoming: The Cinemas of Asia*, ed. Aruna Vasudev, Latika Padgaonkar, and Rashmi Doraiswamy (Delhi: Macmillan India, 2002), 281–300; and Charles K. Armstrong, "The Origins of North Korean Cinema: Art and Propaganda in the Democratic People's Republic," *Acta Koreana* 5, no. 1 (Jan. 2002): 1–19.

[4] For architectural, electrical, and other pertinent documents, see "Motion Picture Film Censorship Building Re-construction Work" (Chōsen Sōtokufu; Katsudō shashin firumu

kenetsujo shinchiku kōji), 1933 Financial Year (*Shōwa hachi nendo*), Government-General of Chōsen, File #CJA0012809, Ministry of Government Administration and Home Affairs, Government Archives and Records Service, Daejon, Korea (hereafter cited as Archives and Records Service).

[5] This 146.45 *tsubo* (approximately 44.4 square meters) building was constructed on the site where the current Kyŏngpok Palace stands in central Seoul. See "Number 21 (*Nijūichi*), Motion Picture Film Censorship Situation" (Katsudō shashin firumu ken'etsu jōkyō), *Sixty-ninth Imperial Parliament Document* (Dai rokujūkyū kai Teikoku Gikai Setsumei shiryō), Bureau of Police Affairs (Keimu kyoku), 1935, File #CJA0002448, Archives and Records Service.

[6] A majority of the censorship statistics cited in this article come from "Table of Censored Motion Picture Films, 1 August 1926 to 31 March 1935" (Katsudō shashin firumu ken'etsu tōkeihyō, ji Taishō jūgo nen hachigatsu tsuitachi, itaru Shōwa jū nen sangatsu sanjūichinichi), Library Section of the Bureau of Police Affairs, Government-General of Chōsen (Chōsen Sōtokufu Keimukyoku Toshoka), File #CJA0002448, Archives and Records Service; and "Table of Censored Motion Picture Films, 1 April 1935 to 31 March 1936" (Katsudō shashin firumu ken'etsu tōkeihyō, ji Shōwa jū nen shigatsu tsuitachi, itaru Shōwa jūichi nen sangatsu sanjūichinichi), Library Section of the Bureau of Police Affairs, Government-General of Chōsen, File #CJA0002471, Archives and Records Service.

[7] See "Number 21, Motion Picture Film Censorship Situation," File #CJA0002448, Archives and Records Service.

[8] Initially, these figures appeared to be rather large. However, after detailed discussions with colonial experts Han Gi-hyeong from Sunkyunkwan University and Han Man-soo from Dongguk University, it has become apparent that these figures *are* significant, but not as big within the larger context of the Government-General of Chōsen's annual budget. Nevertheless, the steady stream of annual fees paid for most if not all of the film censorship office's operating expenses, including employee salaries.

[9] See Richard H. Mitchell, *Censorship in Imperial Japan* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983), 209.

[10] See Koen De Ceuster, "The Nation Exorcised: The Historiography of Collaboration in South Korea," *Korean Studies* 25, no. 2 (2002): 207–42; and Chung Youn-tae, "Refracted Modernity and the Issue of Pro-Japanese Collaborators in Korea," *Korea Journal* 42, no. 3 (Autumn 2002): 18–59.

[11] For a revealing study of the history of Hollywood's global expansion, see the collection of essays in *"Film Europe" and "Film America": Cinema, Commerce, and Cultural Exchange, 1920–1939*, ed. Andrew Higson and Richard Maltby (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1999); Barry R. Litman, *The Motion Picture Mega-Industry* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1998); Kerry Segrave, *American Films Abroad: Hollywood's Domination of the World's Movie Screens* (London: McFarland, 1997); and Jorge A. Schnitman, *Film Industries in Latin America: Dependency and Development* (Norwood, NJ: Ablex, 1984).

[12] It is no coincidence, then, that 1916 is the year the International Cinema Association of Japan—the editors of *Cinema Yearbook of Japan* published in English—stated that permanent film production, distribution, and exhibition began in Korea. This time corresponds to the noticeable increase of U.S., Japanese, German, and French films in the Korean market, as well as the Korean and Japanese co-production of documentaries and travelogue films. See "Motion Picture Production in Korea," *Cinema Yearbook of Japan, 1938* (Tokyo: Society for International Cultural Relations [Kokusai bunka shinkokai], 1939), 49–50.

[13] See Choe Young-chol, "Film Policy under Japanese Colonization" in Understanding Korean Cinema: From "Arirang" to "Silver Stallion" ("Ilche Singmin Ch'ihaŭi Yŏnghwa Chŏgchaek" in *Han'guk yŏnghwaŭi ihae: 'Arirang' esŏ 'Ŭnmanŭn Ochi Annŭnda' kkachi*) ed. Sin Ŭnsu (Seoul: Yenni, 1996), 217–42. According to Choe, 1918 marked the beginning of film regulation in Korea. That is, the regulation of foreign films specifically began in the Korean exhibition market, since the first Korean film, *The Righteous Revenge* or *Loyal Revenge* (Ŭirichŏk kutu)—a kino-drama—was not made until 1919.
[14] For a review of early Japanese film industry laws, see Makino Mamoru, "On the Conditions of Film Censorship in Japan before its Systematization," in *Praise of Film Studies*, 46–67; Freda Freiberg, "Comprehensive Connections: The Film Industry, the Theatre and the State in the Early Japanese Cinema," *Screening the Past* 10 (Nov. 2000): 1–23; and "Japan Rules against Piracy," *Film Year Book 1922–1923* (New York: Wid's Films and Film Folks, 1923), 371.
[15] For a more detailed discussion of Korea's colonization, see Andrew Nahm, "Korea under Japanese Colonial Rule," *Korea Tradition and Transformation: A History of the Korean People,* 2nd ed. (Elizabeth, NJ: Hollym, 1996), 223–60. In December 1927, General Yamanashi Hanzo replaced Admiral Saitō as governor-general for a short time. Admiral Saitō resumed his position as governor-general in August 1929 and was replaced by General Ugaki Kazushige in June 1931. General Ugaki served as the governor-general of Chōsen from 1931 until August 1936.
[16] See Gregory J. Kasza, *The State and Mass Media in Japan, 1918–1945* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988).
[17] It seems that throughout the colonial period, films were screened everywhere and to everyone. For example, Hollywood pictures were shown in Korean prisons purely for therapeutic purposes. From June 15 to 17, 1936, the P'yŏngyang Constant-Existence Foundation (Zaidan-hōjin Heijō Yūkōkai**)** sponsored "rehabilitation" evenings by screening Twentieth Century Fox/United Artists hit *Les Miserables* (directed by Richard Boleslawski, 1935) for the male and female Korean inmates of P'yŏngyang Prison. According to the event's posters, the foundation aimed to use this film along with various other Japanese shorts to educate inmates about preventing and eliminating crime in society. See correspondence from the governor of P'yŏngyang Prison (Heijō keimushochō) to the chief of sentence enforcement (Gyōkeikachō), "Holding the Rehabilitation Propaganda Motion Pictures Sessions" (Hogo shisō senden katsudō shashin kai kaisai ni kansuru ken) and "Motion Picture Screening for Safeguarding Ideology" (Bohosasang Sŏnjŏn Hwaldong Sachinhoe Kaech'oe e kwanhan Kŏn), 1936, File #CJA0004316, Archives and Records Service.
[18] Freiberg, "Comprehensive Connections"; and "Japan Rules against Piracy", 371.
[19] "Censorship—Japan," *Film Year Book 1926* (New York: Wid's Films and Film Folks, 1926), 820.
[20] See Chosen Motion Picture Notes and Supplementary Materials, *Records of the U.S. Department of State Relating to the Internal Affairs of Korea, 1930–1939*, File 895, Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration (31/3/1934), 3; and Chosen Motion Picture Control Ordinance, *Records of the U.S. Department of State Relating to the Internal Affairs of Korea, 1930–1939*, File 895. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration (8/9/34).
[21] Examples of differences between provincial police chiefs are referenced in "The Foreign Market—Tokio," *Wid's Year Book 1920–1921* (New York: Wid's Films and Film Folks, 1921), 275.

[22] In some cases, fees were eliminated when the Censorship Board or the governor-general deemed it necessary or "when it would be considered a public service to do so." This clause gave special preferences to filmmakers whose work glorified imperial Japan and pleased the police in the process. See *Film Year Book 1926* (New York: Wid's Films and Film Folks, 1926), 820.
[23] See Kristin Thompson, *Exporting Entertainment: America in the World Film Market 1907–34* (London: British Film Institute, 1985), 45.
[24] Thompson, *Exporting Entertainment*, 45.
[25] For a detailed discussion of *Naisen ittai*, see Carter J. Eckert, "Class Over Nation: Naisen Ittai and the Korean Bourgeoisie," in *Offspring of Empire: The Koch'ang Kims and the Colonial Origins of Korean Capitalism, 1876–1945* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1991), 224–52.
[26] See Carter J. Eckert, Ki-Baek Lee, Young Ick Lew, Michael Robinson, and Edward W. Wagner, *Korea Old and New: A History* (Ilchokak: Seoul, 1990), 282.
[27] The phrase "node of cultural construction" is from Michael E. Robinson, "Broadcasting in Korea, 1924–1937: Colonial Modernity and Cultural Hegemony," in *Japan's Competing Modernities: Issues in Culture and Democracy, 1900–1930*, ed. Sharon A. Minichiello (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1998), 358–78.
[28] Kino-dramas mixed live theater, still photographs, and filmed sequences on a single stage. *The Righteous Revenge* or *Loyal Revenge* (Ŭirichŏk kutu) was a story about a family dispute over property. It was shown in public on October 27, 1919. Since 1966, Korea has celebrated its annual national film day on October 27 to honor the birth of the Korean cinema. However, it is best not to refer to Ŭirichŏk kutu as the "first" Korean film as this is a hotly debated topic among Korean scholars. For a discussion of *this film* and other examples of early Korean cinema, see See Yi and Choe, *The History of Korean Cinema*, 25–40; You Hyun Mok, *History of Korean Film Development* (Han'guk yŏnghwa paldalsa) (Seoul: Ch'aengnuri, 1997); and Kim Chong-wŏn and Chŏng Chung-hŏn, *100 Years of Our Film* (Uri yŏnghwa 100nyŏn) (Seoul: Hyŏnamsa, 2001).
[29] Academy of the Motion Picture Arts and Sciences Library Archives (AMPAS), MPAA Censorship Regulations—Foreign, File #7, Censorship Reports: Japan. 501.
[30] See "Future Outlook—Conditions in Oriental Territories," *Film Year Book 1925* (New York: Wid's Films and Film Folks, 1925), 663–66; and "The Foreign Market: Japan," *Film Year Book 1926* (New York: Wid's Films and Film Folks, 1926), 657, 820, 860. In Japan, a large combine was formed in mid-1924 between the Japan Moving Picture Producing Co., Shochiku Cinema Co., Teikoku Cinema Co., and Makino Moving Picture Producing Co. The combine's primary aim was to develop and improve self-censorship standards and lobby the government for lower tax obligations. One of the combine's first strategic actions was an organized boycott of American films. The boycott proved to be a failure because it only lasted about two weeks, and never made it to the Korean market. Apparently, Japanese audiences preferred Hollywood films to Japanese films. Because of this temporary embargo, Japanese exhibitors lost more business than American distributors. The Japanese cohort also aimed collectively to increase its export opportunities in Korea and in other overseas markets.
[31] I am not convinced that Saitō was entirely an enlightened liberal. He was, after all, a strict regulator and the police presence in Korea *did* increase during his regime. However, his actions can be read in multiple ways. He simply may have been a canny cultural administrator who saw that Japan's film industry could benefit if film production and distribution activities in Korea eased off.
[32] For an analysis of the Korean business elite, see Changzoo Song, "Business Elite and the Construction of National Identity in Korea," *Acta Koreana* 6, no. 2 (July 2003): 55–86; and

Dennis McNamara, "The Keishō and the Korean Business Elite," *Journal of Asian Studies* 48, no. 2 (May 1989): 310–23.

[33] Titles of Korean film journals and magazines include *Samch'ŏlli*, *Movie Age* (Yŏnghwa sidae), *Korean Film* (Chosŏn yŏnghwa), and *Popular Film* (Daechung yŏnghwa). Newspapers such as *Dong-a Ilbo*, *Chosun Ilbo*, and *Maeil Shinbo* also carried film-related stories, editorials, photos of film people, and advertisements.

[34] Tadasi Iizima, "Documentary Films," in *Cinema Yearbook of Japan, 1936–1937* (Tokyo: Sanseido, 1937), 58–60.

[35] On June 2, 1927 the chief of the Bureau of Internal Affairs of the Government-General of Chōsen (Naimu kyokuchō) sent a catalog of some of these genre films to the mayor of each municipality (*fuin)*. See correspondence regarding "Motion Picture Distribution" (Katsudō shashin eiga haifu kata no ken) in "The List of Films in the Custody of the Government-General" (Chōsen Sōtokufu naimukyoku hokan eiga mokuroku), File #CJA0019728, Archives and Records Service. Additional details concerning these film genres can be found in a 1937 16mm film library catalog, which the Government-General kept among its film distribution and exhibition records. See *Jūroku miri Eiga sōmokuroku*, edited and published by the Section of Film Promotion, Fukada Ltd & Co. (*Henshū ken hakkōnin: Fukada Shōkai Eigabu Sendenka*), *Hakkōjo: Fukada Shōkai Eigabu Ōsaka sakai-suji Honchō kōsaten*), File #CJA0019728, Archives and Records Service.

[36] A two-reel film called *Kokumin kaiyei* (Let Every Japanese Learn to Swim), a one-reel *L'Art des Fleurs au Japon* (The Floral Art of Japan), and *Aki no sanya* (Secret of Nature in Autumn) were three popular cultural films released in 1937. See Takao Itagaki, "Cultural Films," *Cinema Yearbook of Japan, 1938*, 44–46.

[37] An excellent discussion of these film types can be found in Peter B. High, *The Imperial Screen: Japanese Film Culture in the Fifteen Years' War, 1931–1945* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2003); and Abé Mark Nornes, *Japanese Documentary Film: The Meiji Era through Hiroshima* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003).

[38] According to exchange rates published in July 1966 by the Bank of Japan, 100 Yen traded for an average of $46.875 US dollar in New York in 1926 and $28.951 in 1936.

[39] Foreign Market Reports, "Japan," *Film Year Book 1927* (New York: Wid's Films and Film Folks, 1927), 970–71; "Japan," *Film Daily Year Book 1928* (New York: J.W. Alicoate, 1928), 969; "Japan," *Film Daily Year Book 1929* (New York: J.W. Alicoate, 1929), 1033–36; "Japan," *Film Daily Year Book of Motion Pictures 1933* (New York: Film Daily, 1933), 1003; and "Japan," *Film Daily Year Book of Motion Pictures 1934* (New York: Film Daily, 1934), 1037–38.

[40] In Japan, owners paid 5 sen per 3 meters of original film and 2 sen per 3 meters of the second copy of the film. See Chosen Motion Picture Notes, *Records of the U.S. Department of State Relating to the Internal Affairs of Korea, 1930–1939*, (31/3/1934): S1–4.

[41] See Foreign Market Reports, "Chosen (Korea)," *Film Daily Year Book of Motion Pictures 1939* (New York: Film Daily, 1939), 1174; and "Chosen (Korea)," *Film Daily Year Book of Motion Pictures 1940* (New York: Film Daily, 1940), 1103–4.

[42] See Chosen Motion Picture Control Ordinance (8/9/34), 2; and Nathan D. Golden, "Review of Foreign Film Markets during 1937—Chosen (Korea)," *Film Daily Year Book of Motion Pictures 1938* (New York: Film Daily, 1938), 1191–93.

[43] Records from the Warner Bros. Archives at the School of Cinema-Television, University of Southern California, indicate that First National began distributing its films directly to the Korean market on January 1, 1928. See File: Japan #13101A.

[44] This momentous fact is commonly overlooked in most recent studies and discussions of the contemporary Korean Screen Quota System debate and the 1988 (re)opening of the Korean market to the direct distribution of U.S. films.
[45] See *Annual Report on Administration of Chosen, 1923–24* (Seoul: Government General of Chosen, 1925), 28.
[46] As early as 1923, it was estimated that approximately 76,000 out of a total of 288,000 (26 percent) of the population in Seoul alone was Japanese. The southernmost port city of Busan had nearly 44 percent Japanese among its 80,000 inhabitants. See the discussion of Korea's city populations in *Annual Report on Administration of Chosen, 1923–24*.
[47] In 1936, Universal films averaged 3.48 reels, Fox averaged 7.89 reels, and Paramount 7.55 reels. I interpret these figures to demonstrate that Hollywood studios employed differentiated distribution and exhibition strategies in the Korean market. "Hollywood" was not a monolithic agent operating in colonial Korea. Universal's distribution strategy primarily aimed at the exhibition of short films while Fox and Paramount concentrated on feature-length films. See "Table of Censored Motion Picture Films, 1 August 1926 to 31 March 1935"; and "Table of Censored Motion Picture Films, 1 April 1935 to 31 March 1936."
[48] See comments in "Number 21, Motion Picture Film Censorship Situation" ("Katsudō shashin firumu ken'etsu jōkyō"), *Seventy-third Imperial Parliament Document* (Dai nanajūsan kai Teikoku Gikai Setsumei shiryō), Bureau of Police Affairs (Keimukyoku), 1937, File #CJA0002471, Archives and Records Service.
[49] Researching the specific scenes cut during the censorship process and what the Censorship Board members were actually thinking during screenings is extremely difficult because such documentation and oral testimony is scant or nonexistent. Nevertheless, the bulk of Hollywood films gained censorship approval with little or no resistance.
[50] Hollywood's second golden age occurred from 1945 to 1948, during the occupation in Korea by the U.S. Army Military Government (USAMGIK), when American films absolutely dominated the Korean market. However, the Motion Picture Export Association of America (MPEA) and its members would have to wait another forty years until 1988, when Hollywood distributors *regained* direct distribution rights in the Korean market—what I call Hollywood's third golden age in Korea.
[51] See "Number 21, Motion Picture Film Censorship Situation," File #CJA0002448, Archives and Records Service.
[52] Given the massive number of Japanese films censored in colonial Korea, it is fair to say that Japanese films, too, were gouged. Between 1926 and 1936, approximately 14,550,971 meters of Japanese feature and 1,447,610 meters of nonfeature films passed through the censors, generating ¥162,507—a colossal amount in application fees.
[53] See the discussion of KAPF in Yi Hyoin, "Film Censorship, Industry and Produced Films in the Late Silent Film Period, 1926–1935" (Musŏng yŏnghwa hukiŭi Chosŏn yŏnghwa sanŏpkwa yŏnghwa chakp'um, 1926–1935), *Korean Film History Lecture 1* (Han'guk yŏnghwasa kangŭi 1) (Seoul: Iron'gwa silch'ŏn, 1994), 239–50; and Hyangjin Lee, *Contemporary Korean Cinema,* 25, 27–30, 38.
[54] Given the strict film laws propagated by the Japanese Ministry of Home Affairs and the Government-General of Chōsen, it is notable that Korean and Japanese socialist filmmakers were able to make subversive films for as long as they did. More research is needed to explain how between the mid-1920s and early 1930s KAPF and NAPF—two leftist literary groups—invited filmmakers to join the resistance against suppressive film laws and inspired them to make films containing covert and, at times, overt social criticisms.
[55] *Jidai eiga* films expressed the sentiments and feelings of the feudal period by portraying creative scenarios involving the day-to-day dealings between Japanese and Korean society in

the early seventeenth to mid-to-late nineteenth centuries. *Gendai eiga* films portrayed aspects of present-day life and attitudes (the period in the early part of the twentieth century). For a detailed discussion of these historical and contemporary film genres, see *Cinema Yearbook of Japan, 1936–1937*, 7. A more recent account can be found in Joseph L. Anderson and Donald Ritchie, *The Japanese Film: Art and Industry* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1982), 48, 315–18.

[56] See *Korean Cinema Collection, Part 1 (1903–1945.8)* (Sillok Han'guk yŏnghwa ch'ongsŏ [sang] che 1 chip (1903–1945.8), ed. Kim Jong-ŭk et. al (Seoul: Kukhak charyowŏn, 2002). *Sinŭi Chang* was initially a fourteen-reel film cut by the censors to ten reels. It was produced by Japanese filmmakers who worked for Chosŏn Kinema Production, but all of its actors were Korean. *The Boy with Great Ambition* (Pungun-a, 1926) was also a Chosŏn Kinema Production. It employed an all-Korean production crew except for a Japanese cinematographer. It was a film about a boy named Nicholai Pak who left Russia and returned to his home in Korea. But he became frustrated with Korea's harsh social conditions and soon returned to Russia. Chosŏn Kinema Productions made *Arirang* in late 1926. Na Un-kyu, one of Korea's most popular silent film stars at the time, directed and starred in the film.

[57] This suggests that Korea may have been a dumping ground for thousands of older and perhaps damaged third- and fourth-run prints of American films.

[58] Chosen (Korea)," *Film Daily Year Book of Motion Pictures 1938* (New York: Film Daily, 1938), 1191–93. Although there appeared to be stricter control of foreign films in Korea, Chikushi Tani, the correspondent for the *Motion Picture Almanac*, writing in Tokyo at the end of 1935, claimed in English: "No restriction has been set by the [Japanese] government upon the exhibition of foreign pictures [in Japan]." *Motion Picture Almanac 1936–37* (New York: Quigley Publishing Co., 1937), 1122–23.

[59] For a detailed study of how Japanese authorities developed the infrastructure for this "Surveillance State," see Richard H. Mitchell, "The Rise of the Surveillance State, 1900–17," *Censorship in Imperial Japan* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983), 132–71.

[60] *Motion Picture Almanac 1935–1936*, 1021–23.

[61] See Cho Kyŏng Hwan, "The Study of Korean Film's Introduction, Background and Problems, 1919–1935" (Ch'och'anggi Han'guk yŏnghwa t'ŭksŏnge kwanhan yŏng'u: Ilche kangchomgi yŏnghwa hwan'gyŏng punsŏk, 1919–1935), M.A. thesis, Chungang University, 1999, 84–85.

[62] *Motion Picture Almanac 1935–1936*, 1020.

[63] United Artists collection, Series 1F Box 5-5, State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

[64] "Chosen (Korea)," *Film Daily Year Book of Motion Pictures, 1938*, 1191–93.

[65] Censorship application requirements were more demanding with the advent of sound because it became essential to submit translated records of all spoken dialogue as well as descriptions of all speech. See "Chosen (Korea)," *Film Daily Year Book of Motion Pictures 1938*, 1191–93; and Marcel Ruot, "The Motion Picture Industry in Japan," *Journal of the Society of Motion Picture Engineers* 18, no. 5 (May 1932): 640.

[66] See Akira Iwasaki's review of "The Korean Film" in *Cinema Yearbook of Japan, 1939* (Tokyo: Society for International Cultural Relations [Kokusai bunka shinkokai], 1940), 64–65. The Manchurian Picture Monopoly and the German-Manchuria Trade Agreement, as well as the distribution and exhibition of German films in the Korean market during the colonial period, is an underdeveloped topic that needs more scholarly attention.

[67] Film production activities in Korea were followed closely by the International Cinema Association of Japan and published annually in the *Cinema Yearbook of Japan* by the Society for International Cultural Relations (Kokusai bunka shinkokai). See *Cinema Yearbook of Japan*, 1936–1937, 1938, and 1939.

[68] Roughly 113 of these productions were staffed entirely by Korean filmmakers, while 54 were staffed by a combination of Korean and Japanese filmmaking crews. Companies active in this way during the colonial period included: Chosŏn Kinema Production, Donga Cultural Association (Tonga munhwa hyŏphoe), Koryŏ Film Studio, Kerim Film Association (Kerim yŏnghwa hyŏphoe), Chŏng Ki-tak Production, Pando Kinema, Kŭmsŏng Production, Kŭmgang Kinema, Pukyŏng Production, and Na Un-kyu Production. These data were tabulated from *Korean Cinema Collection, Part 1 (1903–1945.8)*.
[69] This is in spite of the United States' then limited view that "only a small number of moving pictures are taken in Chosen, they being by amateurs for personal use and government agencies for propaganda purposes." Undoubtedly, film culture was thriving in Korea. See Nathan D. Golden's comments in "Chosen (Korea)," *Film Daily Year Book of Motion Pictures 1938*, 1191–93.
[70] According to a newspaper article, "Education by Movie Films," in the 1932–33 special *Japan Today and Tomorrow* edition of the *Osaka Mainichi*, the library contained feature and documentary films from all over the world, including Italy, France, Austria, Canada, Mexico, Peru, Brazil, and the Philippines.
[71] There is scant information known about the various *Osaka Mainichi* institutes that operated throughout the empire. A detailed comparative study of how these institutes were used in Japan, Korea, Manchuria, and Taiwan would be very interesting.
[72] "Education by Movie Films," *Japan Today and Tomorrow* (Osaka: Osaka Mainichi, 1933).
[73] See Yi Hyoin, "Film Censorship," 243.
[74] I do not claim that the contemporary Korean screen quota system, which in 2005 required every cinema screen to show domestic films for a minimum of 106 days (about 30 percent of total screening days), has its origins in the colonial period. Rather, I emphasize that a continuum of screen quotas in Korea dates back to the colonial period, an important detail that needs to be developed elsewhere.
[75] *Film Daily Year Book of Motion Pictures 1936* (New York: Film Daily, 1936), 1189–90.
[76] AMPAS Library Archives, MPAA Censorship Regulations—Foreign, File #7, Censorship Reports: Japan. 506.
[77] References to their complaints appeared in English in the *Motion Picture Almanac 1937–1938* (New York: Quigley Publishing Co., 1938), 1173–75.
[78] United Artists collection, Series 1F Box 5-4, State Historical Society of Wisconsin. According to the August 31, 1936 Trade Bulletin from the Department of Commerce, almost all *benshi* (or *pyŏnsa* in Korean) performances during foreign films had ceased in Japanese-controlled Manchuria, as foreign films were titled with Japanese dialogue along the sides of the film frame. For a detailed explanation of pyŏnsa in Korea, see Cho Hee-moon, "Reflection from the Silent Film Era—Byŏnsa, the Narrator," *FIAF Fifty-eighth Congress Seoul 2002: Asian Cinema—Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow* (Seoul: Korean Film Archive, 2002), 161–77.
[79] General Headquarters, Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers, *Summation No. 2: Non-Military Activities in Japan and Korea for the Month of November 1945*, 174.
[80] A more detailed discussion of film policy in Korea during the colonial period can be found in Brian Yecies with Ae-Gyung Shim, "Lost Memories of Korean Cinema: Film Policies during Japanese Colonial Rule, 1919–1937," *Asian Cinema*, 14, no. 2 (Fall/Winter 2003): 75–90.