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Lost Memories of Korean Cinema: Film Policies During Japanese Colonial Rule, 1919-1937

Brian M. Yecies

University of Wollongong, byecies@uow.edu.au

Ae-Gyung Shim

University of New South Wales, agshim@uow.edu.au

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Lost Memories of Korean Cinema: Film Policies During Japanese Colonial Rule, 1919-1937¹

The Korean blockbuster *2009 Lost Memories* (2002), a South Korean and Japanese co-production directed by Lee Si-Myung, tells the story of a frenzied quest to get back to the past. In this fiction film, rebel members of the “Chosun Liberation Movement” are in a desperate search for a key artifact that will open the time-travelling door to the period before Korea was occupied by Japan. A wealthy Japanese relic collector, who is also a leading figure in politics in the story, owns this significant artifact. Men, women, and child members of the rebel group openly challenge Japanese authority and are willing to die in pursuit of this mission. You see, at this moment in the film in 2009, Japan has just celebrated the centenary of its unified rule over all of East Asia. Japan was never defeated in World War II, the Korean War never happened, and the unified Korean peninsula never attained its independence. This story is introduced here because it is the search for and discovery of an important artifact that lies at the heart of the plot and drives the film’s narrative. In many ways, researching Korean cinema history embodies a similar quest, especially since so few films made before 1945 exist today.² However, what this article will share is a new and compelling discussion surrounding film policies and censorship regulations in Korea under Japanese colonial rule. With this task in mind, we may begin to revisit the lost memories of Korean cinema.

Between 1919 and 1937, changes in social, economic, political, and cultural regulatory frameworks in Korea reflected the agendas and priorities of the different Governors-General of Korea as they responded to the directions of the Japanese imperial government. In particular, significant changes in film policies and regulations came about shortly after the appointment of each new Governor-General – a high Japanese official who had the responsibility of running the administration of the Korean colony and reporting back to the Japanese government. The colonial days were under strict rule. The military regimes of General Terauchi Masatake (October 1910 to October 1916) and General Hasegawa Yoshimichi (October 1916 to August 1919) aggressively attempted to thwart the growth and articulation of an independent, national Korean spirit. Both General Terauchi and General Hasegawa used retaliatory violence against Koreans seeking independence and revolution. Louise Young (1998, 58-61) suggests the Japanese government as well as private industry in Japan had understood since the late 1860s that mass media could be a powerful tool, which could communicate ideological messages to the masses.³ There might have been several reasons why there were no Korean films made before 1919. Yet, I suggest that Koreans may have been prevented from gaining production training as a way for both Governors-General to limit the spread of potentially anti-Japanese and revolutionary ideas.⁴

The appointment of Admiral Saito Makoto as the Governor-General of Korea in August 1919 seemed to change how colonial rule was enforced, or at least how it was perceived. Between 1919-1927 and 1929-1931, Admiral Saito initiated ‘enlightened’ cultural policies, which gave the appearance of providing Koreans with more freedoms of expression than his predecessors. On one hand, as Kim Brandt (2000, 728) points out, Admiral Saito expanded the “arena of legally permissible political and cultural activity in colonial Korea”.⁵ For instance, the permission that Admiral Saito granted to Park Sung-pil, one of the few Korean entertainment entrepreneurs at that point, to produce the first Korean kino-drama film project--*Loyal Revenge (Uirijok Gutu)*--in 1919⁶ testifies to Admiral Saito’s more liberal agenda.⁷ Two other Korean kino-dramas and four documentaries were also produced in 1919. On the other hand, Michael Robinson (1988, 45-47) indicates that Admiral Saito's colonial policy was more of a promotional campaign, which successfully created a more positive

image of colonial Japan than the militaristic Governors-General who came before him.⁸ In any case, the beginnings of a Korean cinema were launched in 1919 under Admiral Saito's regime.⁹

Image Diplomacy

The history of cinema in Korea begins shortly after it commences in Europe and the United States. Conventional reports found for example in Lee Young-il and Choe Young-Chol's *The History Of Korean Cinema* (1998) reveal that motion pictures had been exhibited in Korea since October 1898, when a representative of an American tobacco company screened a series of public advertisements in a rented barn in Seoul. In 1903, Pathe shorts from France were screened to the public, and between 1904 and 1908, travel-log documentaries were screened to the Royal Korean family in private. The first permanent Korean theatres were built in 1906 in Seoul, and local exhibitors began seeking approval from local police authorities to screen foreign films in 1909. After 1910, all new motion picture theatres were owned by Japanese concerns apart from the Dansongsa, which had been screening films intermittently since 1907.

Film laws and regulations were enforced in Korea in similar ways in which other Japanese laws were applied to Korea since it had become a Japanese colony. After the 'New Agreement' was signed on 24 July 1907, the Korean government had narrow autonomous power to create and implement its own laws and elect government ministers without first gaining Japanese approval.¹⁰ Before the 1920s, two overlapping bodies were responsible for regulating motion pictures throughout the Japanese Empire. The judicial court system handled film copyright and piracy issues as well as taxation of the amusement industry, while the chiefs of regional police stations oversaw film censorship on a local level.¹¹ According to Freda Freiberg (2000, 18):

Initially, the control of motion picture exhibition [in Japan] was in the hands of the local prefecture police forces. They were empowered to close theatres not complying with regulations, and stop screenings of films and/or performances of *benshi* that had not received prior approval from the censors.¹²

However, unlike the legal precedents, which were set in the courts, the regulatory efforts and procedures followed by individual police precincts had little objectivity or unified standards across multiple regions. Hence, local police stations regulated the exhibition and distribution of films with their individual toughness, and at times common attitudes and ideals.

The beginnings of national film regulations were enacted in Korea on 1 August 1918.¹³ Motion Picture Regulations formed in Japan in 1917 provided the basis for the treatment of motion pictures in Korea.¹⁴ By law, every exhibitor, in conjunction with representatives or agents of distribution exchanges, had to apply in advance for a permit at their nearest regional police station in order to screen a film. When passed, the film received a formal stamp of approval and a written permit to exhibit the film for a specified period of time and a specified number of screenings. A film that initially failed to receive a permit could be edited and resubmitted to the same regional police station for censorship approval. The 1918 guidelines also created two film-rating categories--one for films suitable for audiences under fifteen years of age and a second for adults. Men and women were prohibited from sitting together unless they were married. Foreign films, which sensationalized adultery, arson, crime and murder as well as attacks on authorities, were prohibited. The evidence suggests that films, which contained these types of scenes and other liberal ideas or images, could be stopped at any moment by the law. In Korea, nearly all cinemas had two permanent seats, which local police officers used to observe films, live film narrators called *byunsa* (discussed shortly), and control the order and atmosphere of the venue. Presumably, the officers were also there

as a health and safety precaution since spontaneous fires in projection booths were frequent due to the instability of nitrate film prints.¹⁵

In essence, film regulations, including censorship and exhibition guidelines, were enacted in Korea even before Koreans began making films. Since there was no film production involving local companies in Korea at the time, the film policy initiatives of 1918 had a significant effect on the exhibition of foreign films. However, regulations began to make an impact on the distribution and exhibition of Korean motion pictures in 1919 after the first Korean kino-dramas and short documentaries were made.

Another significant turning point for local film production in Korea occurred in 1920 when Admiral Saito abolished the Japanese Corporate Law--a law enacted in 1910 that gave the state legislative power over the creation of Korean businesses and foreign subsidiaries.¹⁶ Paul Kuznets (1977, 9) points out, this decision to liberalize manufacturing and production industries in Korea led to the rise of a growing consumer base.¹⁷ The doors were now theoretically open for Korean filmmakers and production houses to compete with or at least work alongside Japanese film companies, which were attempting to compete against American films in the Korean market. Local production began to grow. A total of seven kino-dramas was created and exhibited in 1920 as well as two short documentaries. Looking back, it seems that more defined film laws would have been needed to help Governor-General Saito regulate a potentially burgeoning domestic film exhibition market.

Donald Richie (2001, 43) shows that Japan witnessed the “relaxation of government surveillance and censorship” during the “Taisho democracy” in the 1920s.¹⁸ However, the research suggests that quite the opposite was true in Korea during the same period. Japanese police control in Korea actually grew stronger during Admiral Saito’s regime as Koreans and foreign film distributors began to witness the tightening of film regulations by regional police bureaus. Having said that, the Japanese police played a central role in the enforcement of film policies in Korea. According to Andrew Nahm (1996, 225):

The Japanese gendarmerie and the civil police became two powerful arms of the Government-General. There were some 20,000 regular and 20,000 assistant gendarmes commanded by General Akashi Motojiro. The Department of Security established branches in each provincial capital, and a centralized police system emerged as more police stations and sub-stations were established in cities, towns, and villages. The number of policemen grew from 5,683 in 1910 to 7,100 in 1912. With the abolition of the system of gendarmerie in 1920, the number of policemen increased to 21,800 by 1931. There were some 60,000 policemen (one to every 400 people) in Korea in 1941.¹⁹

It seems that a lack of uniformity between different police chiefs continued to be a problem throughout the late 1910s and early 1920s because each precinct seemed to inspect films and administer punishments for violations in different ways.²⁰ In May 1922, film regulations were tightened with the enactment of a national performance and exhibition law. Governor-General Saito had declared that local police chiefs were better at handling security matters than attempting to regulate motion pictures. A formal set of regulations was established to ensure that all exhibited films did not violate any of the rules established in the 1918 regulations. In 1922, a central film police bureau was established in Korea’s Gyeonggi province. One of the key tasks of this new central film police bureau was the administration of exams for people wanting to become *byunsa* film narrators--the vocal experts who provided live explanations and additional background atmosphere to motion pictures.²¹ Korean *byunsa* performers were similar to the Japanese *benshi*. In Korea, as in Japan with *benshi*, the high police authorities held the inspection and approval of *byunsa* performers as a

high priority since *byunsa* people held such a pivotal role in Korean culture and the exhibition process in the Korean market. The Japanese government used this central police bureau as a key tool to monitor and regulate social, cultural, political and industrial activity in Korea.

On one hand, the growth and development of a Korean cinema at the end of 1919 fits into the restructuring policies that Admiral Saito is known to have implemented. Dennis McNamara (1990, 1-18) observes that Korean businesses and entrepreneurial private enterprises were encouraged by the state.²² However, on the other hand, as Jurgen Kleiner (2001, 31) documents, the growth of Korean businesses came under tighter scrutiny as Korea witnessed the arrival of huge numbers of Japanese. The population of Japanese living in Korea grew twice over to 347,900 people between 1910 and 1920, and nearly doubled again to 650,100 people between 1920 and 1939.²³ 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.²⁴

The Japanese judicial court system, as previously discussed, was not always efficacious at protecting the motion picture industry, especially concerning the interests of foreign distributors. In March 1925, the Japanese Formal Assembly began considering a bill, which would prevent the fraudulent exhibition of films that were acquired by ‘suspicious’ means. This was a significant development in the Japanese market because prior to 1925 there were no formal copyright enforcement agencies in Japan despite the existence of the 1906 and 1908 copyright laws. Nathaniel B. Stewart, the American Consul-General in Tokyo at the time, was monitoring the distribution and exhibition market on behalf of the US motion picture industry. He was watching closely-- Hollywood distributors wanted to continue expanding and maximizing their profits. Kristin Thompson (1985, 45) has gestured that the ‘Orient’ was an increasingly important market for the US after World War I because of the distribution opportunities American exchanges lost in Europe.²⁵ Perhaps this explains why Consul Stewart attempted to reassure US film interests that once the aforementioned bill was passed it would sufficiently protect film owners and their products.²⁶ The bill was passed at the end of May 1925. The National Film Censorship Regulations, which was comprised of fifteen acts, took effect on 1 July 1925 and became Japan’s first formal censorship laws for the whole of the Empire. In Korea, these laws took effect on 1 August 1926 and became known as the Government-General Law No. 59.

Regulatory Enterprise

The Government-General Law No. 59 was Korea’s first set of nationally unified film laws. They required that all films exhibited had first to be subject to and approved by a board of censors. In the process, every application for censorship had to demonstrate that the distributor had the right of copyright. Two copies of the story of each film (pamphlets translated in English) were lodged with the Japanese Department of Home Affairs. Once approved, films and stories were given official stamps and seals and could then be exhibited for a period of up to three years. However, the board of censors reserved the right to limit the place and period of exhibition, and film owners were forbidden to change a film’s titles without seeking permission to do so. In addition, inspectors had the power to re-censor or restrict the exhibition of a film, which previously had passed the censorship process. This seemed like an important development at the time because it shows that government officials believed that censored films had the potential power to make an impact on audiences in ways that the board of censors could not imagine while conducting their examinations. In this way, the Japanese government was able to control the exhibition of domestic and foreign films by imposing strict censorship regulations while delegating regulatory power to local and

regional police--authorities who could concentrate on whether or not a film had become detrimental to public peace and cultural customs during its actual exhibition.

Once again, Japan's censorship regulations served as a legal framework in which the Japanese Police Bureau in Korea could then enforce with private and more specific rules. For example, it was the Japanese Police Bureau and not the actual censorship regulations, which identified a list of "unsuitable" or "inappropriate" content. Material, including a film's inter-titles, found to be "injurious to the public order, customs or health" was considered unacceptable.²⁷ Essentially, the showing of murder, torture, brutality, anti-religious themes, theft, nudity, jailbreak, and revolutionary or politically independent ideas that threatened to undermine governmental authority were all considered to be conducive to "dangerous thoughts".²⁸ As Freda Freiberg (2000, 17-18) observes, "the state had a strong indirect influence on the industry...its role was largely a censorious one, acting as policeman through its censoring agencies".²⁹ Japanese authorities--the state--clearly wanted to protect the social, moral and cultural values of its citizens living in Japan proper and in Korea.

Newsreels and other films of current events, such as ceremonies and sports, were exempt from the national censorship process and could be taken for inspection directly to prefecture and regional governors or local police chiefs for censorship approval. This was especially the case if the film in question dealt with content from the inspector's own geographical and jurisdictional area.³⁰ However, local and regional inspectors could only grant approval for a film's exhibition period of up to three months and only for the region considered. This was a way to expedite the censorship for these types of films and keep the topical content competitive with foreign newsreels, for example, which had become prolific in Europe and in the US in the early 1910s.³¹ This would prove to be a valuable regulatory clause after 1925 as Japanese current events began to revolve around the aggressive expansion of the Empire, which included Japan's military clashes in Manchuria in the early 1930s.³² At the same time, controlling each aspect of film exhibition remained a primary concern for the Japanese Department of Home Affairs.

Given that these new changes would have incurred significant expenses for capital equipment and manpower, the board of censors, the Japanese government began charging censorship fees to all applicants in Korea and Japan. The fees were structured on the basis of a film's length.³³ However, in some rare cases fees were eliminated when the board of censors or the Governor-General of Korea deemed it necessary or "when it would be considered a public service to do so".³⁴ Looking back, this particular clause may have been used to give special preferences to filmmakers whose work glorified Imperial Japan and pleased the police in the process.

Korea's 1925 National Film Censorship Regulations also required the hiring and training of a considerable number of government officials. It was the responsibility of these inspectors, who were either recruited from the police force or made new members of the police force, to frequently visit the cinemas and motion picture halls in order to examine the films and their explanatory pamphlets in their exhibition environment. As Cho Hee-Moon has pointed out, there were at least two permanent seats or a "police box" in almost every cinema in Korea.³⁵ Police and censorship inspectors, who were meant to be wearing identification cards, randomly entered places of exhibition and examined story translations or explanations of films--all while making sure the film and story's official stamps and seals were in order. Severe penalties, including arrest, up to three months imprisonment, and or cash fines, resulted from censorship violations and/or the fraudulent exhibition of films under the 1925 regulations. In addition, anyone caught tampering with or falsifying censorship documents,

unlawfully exhibiting inappropriate films, or screening films in an unapproved location faced the same harsh punishment.³⁶

During this time, feature films made in Korea by Koreans as well as by Japanese production companies experienced censorship problems, including the changing of titles that may have sounded too revolutionary and the cutting and re-shooting of scenes that may have been too critical of the Japanese Empire. According to the detailed documentation in Kim Jong Won's recent two volume book, *Korean Cinema Collection, Part 1 (1903-1945.8)*, one of the first cases of the censorship of Korean films began in April 1925 when the National Censorship Board changed the name of the film *Dark Light (Angwung)* to *Make-up of God (Shinui Jang)* and reduced its length.³⁷ The next film censored was *King of the Mountain Bandits (Sanchae-wang)*, which was produced in September 1926 by the Korean Film Association--an all-Korean film company. Authorities forced the Korean Film Association to cut their *Sanchae-wang* from a seven to a five-reel film.³⁸ In November 1926, a third censorship case involved the cutting and re-shooting of about 1,000 feet of *The Boy With Great Ambition (Pungun-a)*--a film about a boy with a Russian name and a laundry shop owner who helped the boy continue his studying.³⁹ Perhaps one of the most controversial cases was the censorship of *Arirang*--one of Korea's most famous silent films.⁴⁰ Twice the board of censors, due to its apparent revolutionary themes, censored *Arirang*. First, words on the poster advertisements for the film were blacked out because they promoted song lyrics which told the tearful story of a once-prosperous farming village whose inhabitants lost all of their wealth and became a group of beggars without a bright future. Second, the censors of *Arirang* required a re-edited version before it was exported to Japan.

Few changes were made to the Government-General Order No. 59 while Admiral Saito was Governor-General of Korea. However, film regulations were modified slightly in September 1928 with a fee increase. Until 1933, this was the only set of laws governing the distribution and exhibition of motion pictures in Korea.

Cultural Crackdown

After General Ugaki Kazushige was appointed as Governor-General of Korea, filmmakers in Korea began to experience the further tightening of film regulations. This corresponded to Japan's overall tightening of cultural policies and its crackdown on Korean culture during that time. Nahm (1996) documents that in early 1931:

All efforts were concentrated on making Korea serve Japan's nationalistic and aggressive ambitions. General Ugaki began his administration of Korea in June 1931, in the atmosphere of crisis with tighter control, in order to make Korea contribute more to the "fulfillment of the sacred aims" of the Japanese Empire.⁴¹

For example, Korean language newspapers were shut down, it was forbidden to study the Korean language in public schools, and Koreans were compelled to observe the Shinto religion. According to Kim Yersu (1976, 30), Japanese cultural policies "attempted to deny even the ethnic origins of the Koreans".⁴² 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. In effect, the national policies of the Japanese Imperial government began to encompass the exhibition of motion pictures.

On 29 March 1933, the Japanese government enacted the Foreign Exchange Control Law No. 28 for the purpose of controlling foreign exchange in its colonial territories. This law became known as Governor-General Law No. 66 and was declared in Korea on 26 April 1933 (and made applicable on 1 May 1933). At the same time, the Governor-General Law No. 40 (also declared on 26 April 1933) required that all foreign films shown in Korea must first be imported into Japan and then later distributed to the Korean peninsula. Although none of the

above laws gave any particular foreign country, such as the US or Britain, overt and preferential treatment in the matter of exhibiting their motion pictures, it would seem that the Japanese government was clearly attempting to create a stricter approach to the distribution and exhibition of foreign (primarily American) motion pictures in Korea.⁴³

An important outcome of the stricter film policies enacted in Korea after 1933 was the stimulation of Korean film production. Through the Governor-General Order No. 82, dated 7 August 1934, General Ugaki mandated that twenty-five per cent of all pictures shown in Korea had to be of domestic origin--that is, of Japanese and/or Korean origin. In 1935, thirteen films were made in Korea (three others were planned, but not completed), while five were made in 1936 (two others were planned, but not completed). Korean productions continued in 1937 with eight productions (three others were planned, but not completed). At the same time, according to Yi Hyoin (1994, 243), the Governor-General's policies helped block "bad culture" in foreign films from penetrating the minds of audiences in Korea while the Japanese were making preparations for World War II.⁴⁴ Clearly, the Japanese government was attempting to control foreign films, which contained potentially influential propaganda.⁴⁵ There was no shortage of work for the Japanese censors. During 1934, a total of 17,468 films was submitted to the Japanese Censorship Bureau and 651 were rejected. About forty-eight per cent of those rejected were from the US.⁴⁶

By the end of 1934, the contents of each Korean and foreign film imported into Japan were subjected to a system of double censorship. Prints were first 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 the Department of Home Affairs in Tokyo. Locating and deleting "objectionable" scenes such as those with riots, anti-authority, revolution, and communist propaganda continued to be the focus of censorship cuts. According to Cho Kyung Hwan (1999, 84-85), the Soviet films *Battleship Potemkin* and *Mother* were two such films, banned from being exhibited in Korea and Japan because of their ideological messages.⁴⁷ Only ten out of about 2,400 imported films were banned in Japan in 1933, including eight American, one Russian, and one German, and between January and September of 1934, only one out of 1,954 American films submitted for censorship was banned.⁴⁸ Incidentally, the showing of naked bodies was typically passed by the censors, but any images or stories offending to the Japanese Empire or the Monarchy were strictly prohibited.⁴⁹ The relative ease of being passed by the Japanese Censorship Bureau clearly made the distribution of films in Korea more convenient for the American exchanges, such as Fox, Warner Bros., Universal, Paramount, United Artists, MGM and RKO – all controlling members of the Motion Picture Distributors Association of America, and all operating in Japan and Korea (Seoul) since the 1920s.

Despite the fact that Japan essentially extended its domestic and international film policies and censorship regulations to Korea, the evidence suggests that between 1926 and 1937, the exhibition market in Korea was significantly different from that in Japan. For instance, in 1926, about thirty per cent of motion pictures shown in Japan were of foreign origin--a majority of these were from the US. Approximately 1,000 feature films were made in Japan while only six feature films were made in Korea.⁵⁰ In September 1927, about seventy-five per cent of all films exhibited in Japan were locally-made while twenty-two per cent were American and three per cent were from other countries.⁵¹ Japanese films continued to dominate the exhibition market in Japan well into the 1930s. Between the end of 1930 and the end of 1935, eighty-five per cent of films screened in Japan were Japanese while only about twelve per cent were American.⁵² However, in August 1934, according to the American Consulate-General in Seoul, US films dominated the motion picture screens in Korea with as much as sixty-two per cent of the market.⁵³ Korea was an important territory

on which the Hollywood distribution companies had their eyes. In the early 1930s, more than half of Seoul's major cinemas were screening foreign films.

At the end of 1935, General Ugaki attempted to protect further Japan's domestic film industry by strengthening the laws regarding the market share of domestic films in the Korean and Japanese markets. The screen quota system was raised from twenty-five per cent 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 Japanese. There was a greater loss of distribution opportunities for foreign film exchanges in Korea in early 1937 after General Minami Jiro, the new Governor-General of Korea, declared that at least one-half of the films screened in Korea had to be of domestic origin. Once again, the film laws in Korea had been updated to reflect the agendas of the new Governor-General. This had significant implications for American distributors who had been operating distribution exchanges in Korea since the 1920s. Apparently, the American distributors had made their complaints about the stringent laws known at multiple industry conferences.⁵⁴ However, looking back, only Hollywood's leadership during the coming of sound could offer a potentially larger share of the exhibition market in Korea, with, of course, the negotiated approval of the Japanese government.

It seems clear that during the 1930s, Korea was a market towards which US studios aggressively targeted sound pictures. Sound mattered. A more thorough discussion of the impact of sound on film production, distribution, and exhibition in Korea and Japan is needed elsewhere. Having said that, however, between 1926 and 1937, film policies and censorship regulations seemed to lag behind technological change. Neither the Japanese Department of Home Affairs nor the Governors-General of Korea seemed to create new and specific laws or acts which dealt with a sound industry or with sound shorts and features. That is to say, the coming of sound did not initially signal the need to create a new industry regulatory framework. It may be that the censors were busy trying to regulate *byunsa* in Korea and *benshi* in Japan. It may also be that each Governor-General of Korea had larger and more imperative issues to worry about, such as how to maintain Korea as a key Japanese territory in the looming War.

¹ A shorter version of this paper was presented at the 2003 Asian Cinema Studies Conference in Seattle, WA. The author's gratefully acknowledge the valuable feedback given at that time by Chris Berry and the other conference attendees. Funding for this research was made possible by a University of Wollongong Start-up research grant, and conference travel was facilitated by funding from the UOW Centre for Asia Pacific Social Transformation Studies (CAPSTRANS). A more detailed analysis of film culture in colonial Korea can be found in: Brian Yecies, "Systematization of Film Censorship in Colonial Korea: Profiteering From Hollywood's First Golden Age, 1926-1936." *Journal of Korean Studies* (Fall 2005): 59-84, (article also available on 'Research Online', the University of Wollongong's institutional repository at: <http://ro.uow.edu.au/artspapers/103/>).

² According to the Korean Film Archive's Korean Movie Database, the oldest-known Korean sound film in existence is An Sökyöng's 1937 feature *Shimch'öngjön* (The Story of Shimch'öng). Sadly, only one reel (a total of about thirteen minutes) of *Shimch'öngjön* survives. Other well-known colonial-era propaganda or "military" films, which display the spirit of Japan and Korea as one country, were found in 2004 and 2005 in Chinese and Japanese archives. The list includes: Suh Kwang-je's *Troop Train* (Kunyong Yölch'a, 1938), *Fisherman's Fire* (Ohwa, 1939), *Homeless Angel* (Chipöpnün Ch'önsa, 1941) and AHN Sug-

young's *Volunteer Soldier* (Chiwŏnbyŏng, 1941) and Pak Kich'ae's *Straits of Cho Cusn* (1943). These were all "pro-Japanese" films that contrasted significantly against the "national films" from the late 1920s and early 1930s. In the case of *Troop Train* and *Volunteer Soldier*, the projects were co-productions between the Korean Film Company and Toho Film of Japan.

³ See Louise Young, 'War Fever: Imperial Jingoism and the Mass Media,' *Japan's Total Empire: Manchuria and the Culture of Wartime Imperialism*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998. 55-114.

⁴ For a more detailed discussion regarding the colonization of Korea see: Andrew Nahm, 'Korea Under Japanese Colonial Rule,' *Korea Tradition and Transformation: A History of the Korean People*. 2nd ed., Elizabeth, NJ: Hollym, 1996. 223-260.

⁵ Kim Brandt, "Objects of Desire: Japanese Collectors and Colonial Korea" *positions: east asia cultures critique* 8.3 (2000) 711-746.

⁶ Most Korean film scholars agree that the first Korean-made film, a kino-drama, was exhibited in 1919. Kino-dramas were multimedia performances, which mixed live theatre and filmed sequences on one stage. A series of still photos was also often displayed on the stage as well. The first Korean kino-drama, *Loyal Revenge (Uirijok Gutu)*, was shown in public on 27 October 1919. Since 1966, Korea has celebrated its annual national film day on 27 October. See You Hyun Mok, *History of Korean Film Development*. Seoul: Chaeknuri Press, 1997; Lee Young-il and Choe Young-chol, op. cit.; and Kim Jong Won and Jung Joong Hun, *100 Years of Korean Film*. Seoul: Hyunam Press, 2001.

⁷ For a discussion of *Loyal Revenge* and other examples of early Korean cinema see: Lee Young-il and Choe Young-Chol, 'Early Days of Motion Picture Production,' *The History of Korean Cinema*. Seoul: Jimoondang Publishing, 1998. 25-40.

⁸ See the discussion of Korea's "fall into colonial status" in Michael E. Robinson, 'Modern Korean Nationalism,' *Cultural Nationalism in Colonial Korea, 1920-1925*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1988. 14-47.

⁹ See Nahm, op. cit., 224-226. In December 1927, General Yamanashi Hanzo replaced Admiral Saito as Governor-General for a short period of time. Admiral Saito 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 Korea from 1931 until August 1936.

¹⁰ For a detailed discussion of the 'New Agreement' and Korea's political, economic and social changes during Japanese colonial rule, see Juergen Kleiner, 'The Japanese Rule,' *Korea: A Century of Change*. New Jersey: World Scientific, 2001. 29-44.

¹¹ See "Japan Rules Against Piracy," *Film Year Book 1922-1923*. New York: Wid's Films and Film Folks, Inc., 1923. 371. Copyright treaties were signed in Japan on 17 May 1906 and 11 August 1908, bringing motion picture copyright and pirating dispute cases to court. One such case occurred in late 1922, when a Japanese court set a precedent of protecting American films when it ruled in favor of United Artists' attempts to stop the illegal screening of D. W. Griffith's *Way Down East*. Theoretically, Japanese law now protected the rights of the author and legal owner of a film.

¹² See the discussion of the Japanese state's relationship with the film industry in: Freda Freiberg, 'Comprehensive Connections: The Film Industry, the Theatre and the State in the early Japanese Cinema,' *Screening The Past* 10 (November 2000) 1-23.

¹³ See Choe Young-chol, 'Film Policy Under Japanese Colonization,' *Understanding Korean Cinema: From 'Arirang' to 'The Silver Horse Never Comes'*. Shin Eunsoo, ed., Seoul: Yenni Press, 1996. 217-242. According to Choe, 1918 marked the beginning of film regulation in Korea--that is, specifically the regulation of foreign films in the Korean exhibition market, since the first Korean film was not made until 1919.

¹⁴ Freda Freiberg, op. cit.

¹⁵ Before the 1930s, disastrous theatre fires caused by flammable nitrate film stock were significant occurrences all over the world. See Eileen Bowser, *The Transformation of Cinema, 1907-1915*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1990. Vol. 2 of *History of the American Cinema*. Charles Harpole, gen. ed. 5 vols. 1990-97. 74-75.

¹⁶ For a more detailed discussion of the Corporation Law (*kaishareit*) of 1910, see: Dennis L. McNamara, "Colonial State," *The Colonial Origins of Korean Enterprise, 1910-1945*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990. 34-50

¹⁷ See the discussions of Korea's past economic growth during the colonial period in: Paul W. Kuznets, 'Historical Background,' *Economic Growth and Structure in the Republic of Korea*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977. 1-42.

¹⁸ Donald Richie, *A Hundred Years of Japanese Film: A Concise History, with a Selective Guide to Videos and DVDs*. Tokyo: Kodansha International, 2001.

¹⁹ Nahm, op. cit.

²⁰ Examples of differences between local police chiefs are referenced in: "The Foreign Market - Tokio," *Wid's Year Book 1920-1921*. New York: Wid's Films and Film Folks, Inc., 1921. 275.

²¹ A detailed explanation of *byunsa* is given in: Cho Hee-Moon, 'Reflection from the Silent Film Era - Byunsa, the Narrator,' *FLAF 58th Congress Seoul 2002: Asian Cinema - Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow*. Seoul: Korean Film Archive, 2002. 161-177.

²² McNamara, op. cit.

²³ Kleiner, op. cit.

²⁴ See "Future Outlook - Conditions in Oriental Territories," *Film Year Book 1925*. New York: The Film Daily, 1925. 663-666; and "The Foreign Market - Japan," *Film Year Book 1925*. New York: The Film Daily, 1925. 657. 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 group's primary aim was to develop and improve self-censorship standards and lobby the government for lower tax obligations. One of the Japanese combine's first strategic actions in early July 1924 was the organized boycott of American films in Japan. However the boycott proved to be a failure--it lasted less than 2 weeks, and it never made it to the Korean exhibition market. Apparently, Japanese audiences preferred American films much more than Japanese films, and as a result of the embargo, Japanese exhibitors lost more business than the American distributors did. The Japanese cohort also aimed to collectively increase its export opportunities.

²⁵ Kristin Thompson, *Exporting Entertainment: America in the World Film Market 1907-34*. London: British Film Institute, 1985.

²⁶ "The Foreign Market - Japan," *Film Year Book 1926*. New York: The Film Daily, 1926. 860.

²⁷ "Censorship - Japan," *Film Year Book 1926*. New York: The Film Daily, 1926. 820.

²⁸ 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.

²⁹ Freda Freiberg, op. cit.

³⁰ *Film Year Book 1926*, op. cit., 820.

³¹ See the brief discussion of "Newsreels" in Eileen Bowser, op. cit., 185.

³² For further discussions concerning Japan's colonization of China see: Louise Young op. cit.; Leo T. S. Ching, 'Colonizing Taiwan: Japanese Colonialism, Decolonization, and the Politics of Colonial Studies,' *Becoming "Japanese": Colonial Taiwan and the Politics of Identity Formation*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001. 15-50; and Yoshihisa Tak

Matsusaka, *The Making of Japanese Manchuria, 1904-1932*. Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2001.

³³ See Chosen Motion Picture Notes, op. cit., (31/3/1934): S1-4. Additional prints of the same film were charged slightly less than the first print, and any film requiring re-censorship attracted additional charges per each three meters of film. Newsreels and other films of current events that were inspected by regional authorities were charged less than feature entertainment films. However, in the case of censorship fees in Korea, applicants paid fifty to sixty per cent less than what film owners paid in Japan. Looking back, these lower fees may have been an economic incentive for Korean filmmakers and may help explain the subsequent boom in Korea silent film production.

³⁴ *Film Year Book 1926*, op. cit., 820.

³⁵ Interview with Cho Hee Moon, Seoul, Korea, December 2002.

³⁶ In some cases where fines were involved, perpetrators had to pay up to Yen 100 (approximately USD \$46.875 in 1926 and USD \$28.951 in 1936—changes due to currency fluctuations between New York and the Bank of Japan). In other cases, police inspectors were known to beat “violators” on the spot. Exhibitors were held liable for all of the films screened at their place of business regardless of who actually loaded the films on the projectors. That is to say, penalties were directed at the proprietors of the cinema of motion picture hall even if the above violations were made by one of his employees or family members. Furthermore, anyone caught lying on the censorship application forms or editing a film without the knowledge of the board of censors or local police chiefs could be fined and or detained.

³⁷ See *Korean Cinema Collection, Part 1 (1903-1945.8)*. Kim Jong Won, ed., Seoul: Gukhak Archive, 2002. 185. This was initially a fourteen-reel film that was edited by the censors to ten reels. It was produced and made by Japanese filmmakers who worked for the Chosun Kinema company, but all of its actors were Korean.

³⁸ *Korean Cinema Collection, Part 1*, op. cit., 248-249.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 339-341. *The Boy With Great Ambition (Pungun-a)* was produced by the Chosun Kinema Production company and employed an all-Korean production crew except for a Japanese cinematographer.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 257-260. *Arirang* was produced in late 1926 by the Chosun Kinema Production Company and starred Na Un-kyu, one of Korea’s most popular silent film stars at the time.

⁴¹ Nahm, op. cit., 230.

⁴² Kim Yersu, *Cultural Policy in the Republic of Korea*. France: UNESCO, 1976.

⁴³ Nathan D. Golden, ‘Review of Foreign Film Markets During 1937 - Chosen (Korea),’ *Film Daily Year Book 1938*. New York: The Film Daily, 1938. 1191-93. It is interesting to note that there appeared to be stricter control of foreign films in Korea despite the fact that Chikushi Tani, the correspondent for the *Motion Picture Almanac* writing in Tokyo at the end of 1935, claimed: ‘No restriction has been set by the [Japanese] government upon the exhibition of foreign pictures [in Japan].’ (1936-37, 1122-23).

⁴⁴ Yi Hyoin, ‘Film Censorship, Events and Industry in the Late Silent Film Period (1926-1935),’ *Korean Film History Lecture 1*. Seoul: Theory and Practice, 1994. 239-250.

⁴⁵ I see this as the beginning of Korea’s compulsory screen quota system, which in 2003 currently requires every cinema screen to show Korean films for a minimum of 106 days of the year or about thirty per cent of total screening days. This is an important detail that needs to be developed elsewhere.

⁴⁶ *The 1936 Film Daily Year Book of Motion Pictures*, 1189-1190. The evidence suggests that distributors and producers were able to edit most of the films themselves in order to pass inspection.

⁴⁷ Cho Kyung Hwan, *The Study of Korean Film: Introducing its Background and Problems*. Unpublished MA Thesis, Choong Ang University, 1999.

⁴⁸ *Motion Picture Almanac 1935-1936*, 1020.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 1021-1023.

⁵⁰ *Film Year Book 1927*. New York: The Film Daily, 1927. 970-71.

⁵¹ *Film Daily Year Book 1928*. New York: The Film Daily, 1928. 969. Although Japan seemed to be a world leader in producing films, the editors of the *Film Daily Year Book* understood most Japanese films to be of poor quality. The evidence suggests that a large number of Japanese producers had contracts with exhibitors, obliging them to provide exhibitors with three feature films per week (*Film Daily Year Book 1930*, 1032-1033). The editors at the *Motion Picture Almanac* also understood Japanese features to cost less to produce and, as a result, saw them as competing with other Japanese films and not films from the US and other countries (1932, 218).

⁵² These exhibition statistics are reported in both of the following sources: *Motion Picture Almanac 1932*, 218; and *Film Daily Year Book 1936*, 1189-90.

⁵³ See Chosen Motion Picture Notes, *op. cit.*, 8/9/34: 2.

⁵⁴ *Motion Picture Almanac 1937-1938*, 1173-75.