

A Study on the Origins of Cultural Films in Korea: A Focus on Films by the Japanese Government-General of Korea

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Introduction

The term "cultural film" (*munhwa yŏnghwa*) was coined in Korea under Japanese rule, and it was used as a general term for nonfiction films since the Korean liberation until the 1980s. However, unlike the term "documentary film," cultural film contains elements of propaganda, controlled and produced as part of cultural and public relations policies of the government, and thus it has been seldom studied in film studies. Ironically, research on cultural films began when the term began to fall out of use,¹

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1 Recently, research on cultural films in film studies is diversifying, from analyses of films to movie theaters. There are also various projects in progress, such as studying cultural films from a gender-critical perspective or documenting oral history of those who participated in the production of cultural films, besides the studies listed below: Byun Jae-ran(Byŏn Chae-ran), "Daehan News, Cultural Film, and Family Planning Programs as Modern Project", *Film Studies*, vol.52(2012); Lee Soon-jin(Yi Sunjin), "The Logic of Cold War and Reconstruction of Colonial Memory after Post-War Korea: Focusing on "Syngman Rhee (Yi Sŭngman) Narrative" Constructed in Cultural Films of 1950s", *Memory and Prospect*(winter 2010); Wee Gyeong-Hae(Wi Kyŏng-Hae), "Representation and Localization of Regions in

and recently, cultural films have been receiving the spotlight from various angles, not only in film studies but also in other academic fields, such as sociology, history, literature and so on.

This sudden appearance of cultural film studies results from the active discovery, collection, and disclosure of documentary films from the year 2000, as well as the new emerging perspective on film as historical documents.² Recent studies in the related fields approach texts with a focus on analyzing propaganda or policies of the producers—the nation or government organizations—rather than concentrating on the aesthetics. From the perspective of scholars in film studies, where films have been categorized either as fiction or documentary, such an approach might seem limited in that it does not explicate the nature of cultural films. However, that is an issue arising from the nature of cultural film itself rather than the limitations of scholars. Initially, the term “cultural film” did not indicate a film genre per se. Therefore it is impossible to conceptualize the term based on common formats or contents of the films which have been labeled as “cultural films.” Cultural films have been generally recognized as nonfiction films, and therefore documentary films. Yet in the production and distribution sites, fiction films and even animations were considered cultural films. In order to delve into the nature of cultural film, we have to reexamine the process in which the proper noun “Cultural Film” became a common term.

Cultural Film from the post-Korean War to the 1960s”, *Popular Narrative Studies*, no.24(2010); Cho Junhyoung (Cho Junhyōng), “Institutionalization Process of Culture Films: Focused on change of film law and policy in 1960s-70s”, *Film Studies*, 59(2014).

- 2 Particularly true for studies on cultural films by historians: Lee Ha-na (Yi Ha-na), “Representation/Propaganda Strategy of Cultural Films in 1960s”, the Second Section of Chapter 4 in *Nation and Cinema: Cultural Reconstruction and Cinema of “the Republic of Korea” in the 1950s-60s*, Seoul: Hye-an, 2013; Lee Sang-rok (Yi Sangnok), “Reconstruction of Stable, Progressive, Prosperous Images: Developmentalism and Anticommunism Represented in the “Cultural Films” of 1960s-70s, *History & Culture*15, 2008.

This paper attempts to explore the historical context in which the term “cultural film” was coined and used in colonial Korea, when cultural films began to be produced. I will examine the overall time period in which: 1) the concept of nonfiction film was first introduced in the Motion Picture Censorship Regulation, 2) the term “cultural film” became legally stipulated at a time when national policies were being established as Korea experienced the Manchurian Incident and the Sino-Japanese War, and 3) “cultural films” were screened mandatorily as “national films” that the nation had to foster through the Japan Film Law and Chosôn Film Act.

The Process of Establishing the Concept of Cultural Films

The Motion Picture Censorship Regulation and the Introduction of the Concept of Nonfiction Films

The concept of nonfiction films became formalized in the “Motion Picture Censorship Regulation (活動寫真「フィルム」検閲規則),” enacted as the Japanese Government-General Law No. 59 on July 5, 1926. The regulation was enacted in accordance with the “Motion Picture Censorship Regulation” that was legislated as a law from the Japanese Home Ministry in May 1925. Article 2, Clause 2 of the regulation states that “the Provincial Governor in charge of the area under his jurisdiction may censor *films that recorded actual images* of rituals, competition games, and other *slight current affairs* that did not have enough time to be censored by the Japanese Government-General of Korea [emphasis added].” The Police Bureau of the Government General, which was the agency in charge of censorship, published the censorship records for a year, between August 1926 and July 1927, in the *Overview of Motion Picture Censorship*. According to the commentary from the chief of the Police Bureau, “slight current affairs refer to daily affairs that are ordinary, such as ancestral rituals, field days at school, water sports competitions, or

aircraft performances recorded on a film.”³ This *Overview* divided films into different categories: 1) by country of production—Japan or a foreign country, 2) by format—actual, descriptive, and compound films,⁴ and 3) overall, fiction and “nonfiction films”(劇ニアラサル「フィルム」). The fact that the term “nonfiction film” was used meant that there was a relative concept of “fiction films;” and from the exception clause on newsreel films we can tell that the authorities intended to utilize films as a tool for news coverage.

Even before the enactment of this regulation, the Japanese Government-General of Korea recognized the importance of propaganda through films and was in the process of producing current affair films. After the March 1st Movement in 1919, the Japanese Governor-General who imposed military rule (武斷統治) over Korea was replaced with one that claimed to advocate cultural rule (文化統治). The Government-General established a Motion Picture Unit at the Records Office of the Secretariat (官房文書課) in April 1920 and produced films that signaled the beginning of “cultural films.” To dispel concerns of the Japanese government and the Japanese people regarding their rule over Korea, the Unit recorded Korean landscape and customs from Pusan to Sinûiju, titled the film *The Chosôn Situation* (朝鮮事情), and publicly screened it in Osaka, Nagoya, Tokyo, Fukui, and other regions that were related to Korea from mid-April. The film was screened for the House of Peers and the House of Representatives to reform their perception of the colonial government’s rule over Korea. Moreover, a film about Japan was recorded during the nation-wide tour of *The Chosôn Situation* in Japan. It was titled *The Mainland Situation* (内地事情) and screened in each Korean province from May. Motion Picture Units were also established in each province to

3 The Police Bureau of the Japanese Government-General of Korea ed., *Overview of Motion Picture Censorship* (1931): 6.

4 Actual films were natural recordings of people and things, which were classified into fiction and real films; descriptive films were animations; and compound films referred to films that include animated scenes.

screen this film, and interestingly, that had an unexpected effect on the people of Korea, who felt a sense of affinity to the Japanese people. Afterward, the Motion Picture Units' production activities broadened to all sectors related to the rule of the Government-General, including the promotion of production, payment of taxes, sanitation, social enlightenment, and others.⁵

This regulation was enacted when the term “Kulturfilm” was introduced from Germany. An article titled “the new German Cultural Film” (獨逸新文化映畫) from *The Donga Daily* (동아일보) on May 16, 1926 mentioned *Ways to Strength and Beauty* (*Wegezu Kraft und Schönheit: Ein Film übermoderne Körperkultur*) (1925), a Kulturfilm from Ufa (Universum Film Aktiengesellschaft) directed by Nicholas Kaufmann, as a “film that promotes large-scale physical education.” Kulturfilms referred to films produced by the Department of Culture (Kulturabteilung) of Ufa. These films contained ethnographic information geared toward ethnic education, and the term was known overseas as a major film genre from Germany.⁶ Although kulturfilms from Ufa had not been released in Korea at the time, in Japan the Film Department of Towa Trading Company founded in October 1928 began to distribute them directed by Kaufmann from January 1930 and promoted the films as “文化映画”, a direct translation of the term. During the Taisho Era, culture (文化) was a popular term that replaced civilization (文明開化), which was prevalent after the Meiji Restoration, and it was used in combination with different words, such as cultural nation, cultural science, cultural housing, cultural silk, and cultural stove, to denote a new form of arts and sciences and common customs. The term “cultural film” was customarily used in the same context throughout the Japanese motion picture industry.⁷

5 Tsumura Isamu, “The Prospect of Cultural Film”, *Chosôn*, no. 273 (February 1938): 144-145.

6 Lee Sang-hyun (Yi Sang Hyön), “Features and Problems of Visual Ethnography in Nazi Germany”, *The Korean Folklore* 25 no.1 (2005): 251-252.

7 Tanaka Junichiro (田中純一郎), *The Developmental History of Japanese Educational Film*, Tokyo: Kagyousha, 1979 : 105.

Film Control and Promotion of Cultural Films after the Manchurian Incident

As propaganda through film became important after the Manchurian Incident, the Japanese Home Ministry (hereafter Home Ministry), which looked for a comprehensive way to control films, conducted a survey of film policies in foreign countries from March 1933 to restructure the agency that controlled films. As a result, the Film Control Committee was established in March 1934, and film control began in full force with the implementation of “Regulations for the Control of Exported Motion Pictures” in December 1935.⁹ For the purpose of protecting and fostering domestic film industry as well as controlling the industry, the Home Ministry revised the Motion Picture Censorship Regulation in April 1937, and for the first time the term “cultural film” was stipulated in a law. The revised regulation categorized films into entertainment films (fiction films) and cultural films, and exempted censorship fees for excellent entertainment films and cultural films. As film policies changed from strict control to control and development, cultural film came to replace the term “non-fiction film” and to imply that it was promoted by the government. Then the question arose about which films can be recognized as cultural films by the nation. The Police Bureau within the Home Ministry defined the range of cultural films into 1) educational film, 2) teaching aid film, 3) academic research film, 4) documentary film (documenting of festivals, rituals, etc. for the future), 5) current affair film (recordings of actual events, such as rituals and competitions), 6) propaganda film (nonprofit films that advertise public interest materials).¹⁰

8 Tanaka Junichiro(田中純一郎), *The Developmental History of Japanese Educational Film*, Tokyo: Kagyousha, 1979 : 105.

9 For the trend of international propaganda and film control before the legislation of Motion Picture Law, refer to Kato Atsuko, *The General Mobilization System and Cinema*, Tokyo: Shinyosha, 2003: 24-30.

10 Matsuo Hidetoshi, “Recent Development of Cinema Governance”, *The Japanese Cinema, July 1937*. The author, Matsuo Hidetoshi was affiliated with the Police

In an attempt to strengthen control over film to reflect the change in the international political scene, the Government-General enacted Regulations to Control Motion Pictures as Government-General Law No. 82 and implemented it on August 7, 1934. There were largely two purposes for the regulations. The first was to control all screening activities, including movie theaters, and the second was to control the export and transport of Korean films. Movie theater owners and those wishing to screen films for a crowd were required to report the details of the film including the title, country of production, producer, number and length of reels, and running time to the provincial governor of the region (Article 4 and Article 8), and those who wanted to export or transport films made in Korea (including undeveloped films) needed the approval of the Japanese Governor-General of Korea (Article 9). There was a provision in the regulations about not limiting the running time of films produced for the purpose of social enlightenment or films about current affairs, landscape, academics, industries, etc., that were approved by the Government-General (Article 6). It seems the purpose of this provision was to improve the reporting function of films produced by the Motion Picture Unit of the Government-General or films promoted by the Government-General.

Japan, however, did not come up with the policy to control films and promote cultural film by itself; this policy was established by referring to film policies of other countries, particularly the Axis powers. In Italy, the Mussolini government established in 1922 implemented policies on two levels: to foster fiction films and control nonfiction films. When the economy went into recession, the Italian government implemented a system of quotas in 1931 and 1932 to impose taxes on foreign films, and founded a fund to reward excellent domestic films.¹¹ For nonfiction films, the Italian government integrated minor production companies to form the state-owned L'Unione Cinematografica Educativa (LUCE) on October 11,

Bureau within the Home Ministry. Cited at second hand from Kato : 36-37.

11 K. Thompson & D. Bordwell, JooJinsook and others trans., *Film History: An Introduction Volume 2*, Seoul: SikakkwaEoneo, 2000: 176.

1925, and controlled national policy propaganda through LUCE until the fascist government collapsed. Mussolini thought to make LUCE an “agency for culture and *italianità*” and passed a bill in 1926 to institute mandatory screening of a LUCE film prior to the screening of a fiction film.¹² Modeled after LUCE, the Manchukuo Film Association was established on August 14, 1937 and monopolized the Manchurian film industry,¹³ and the Manchukuo Film Law was promulgated on October 7. In such a way, national policies on film were established in Manchukuo before Japan.

As for Germany, Goebbels who was particularly interested in film propaganda, founded the Imperial Film Department (Reichsfilmkammer) on July 14, 1933 and revised the Imperial Film Law (Reichslichtspielgesetz) on February 16, 1934 to found a strong basis for film control. The revised Nazi film law clarified prior censoring of scripts, censoring finished films, and limited showings. The Japanese film law also contained prior censoring (Article 9), film censorship (Article 14), and limited showings (Article 14), which shows that it had been influenced by the Nazi film law. The German film law allowed for tax reductions on films since the time of the Weimar Republic through a system of film distinction marks. The Nazis linked this system to screening permissions and labeled every film with a distinction mark (Article 8). In 1939, there were 11 distinction marks, including “politically and artistically especially valuable,” “film of the nation (Film der Nation),” “culturally valuable,” and “valuable for youth,” and according to the distinction marks, films received tax exemption or bonus related to profits from films.¹⁴ Other provisions in the Nazi film law that influenced the Japanese film law includ-

12 Steven Ricci, *Cinema and Fascism: Italian Film and Society, 1922-1943*, University of California Press, 2008: 59-60.

13 Yamada Eikichi, *Progress of National Cinema Policy*, Tokyo: Kouseikaku, 1940: 77.

14 David Welch, Choi Yongchan (Choe Yōngchan) trans., *The Third Reich: Politics and Propaganda*, Seoul: Hye-an, 2001: 69-77 and the supplement from “The Original Film Law on February 16 of 1934”: 259-268.

ed limiting admission fees, screening advertisement films, compulsory screening of cultural films, and a quota system on foreign films.¹⁵ In terms of cultural films in particular, Japan focused on the activities of the Kulturfilm studio affiliated with the German Film Academy (Deutsche Filmakademie Babelsberg) and the condition of German cultural films being exported abroad.¹⁶

Besides Italy and Germany, the US also influenced Japan. According to *The Developmental History of Japanese Educational Film* by Tanaka Junichiro, before cultural films became an official term, “教育映畫” a direct translation of “educational film,” a term used in the US, was used. After the Anti-Comintern Pact was concluded in 1936, educational film was replaced by cultural film, but the term came back into use by the US military after the war.¹⁷ Educational films included both fiction and non-fiction films specifically screened in schools as well as films produced for the enlightenment of the people. When revising the Motion Picture Censorship Regulation in 1937, the Home Ministry Police Bureau incorporated educational films as a category under cultural films. Subsequently, the Ministry of Education, which established a film education association on May 31 of the same year, regularly distributed cultural films to schools as educational materials.

Meanwhile, as the exchanges between Japan and the Axis powers increased with the conclusion of the Anti-Comintern Pact, Japan jointly produced a film with Germany.¹⁸ The filming of *The New Land* (新しき土) began in Japan in March, right before the signing of the Anti-Comintern

15 Yamada Eikichi, *Progress of National Cinema Policy*: 96.

16 Yamada Eikichi, *Progress of National Cinema Policy*: 107-119.

17 Tanaka, *The Developmental History of Japanese Educational Film*: 105.

18 German cultural films at this time had been turned into “Völkisch Films.” In order to produce “true völkischfilm,” Goebbels established National Film Studio (Landsfilmstellen) in 1932 and distributed fiction films along with kulturfilms, which propagated Germany’s cultural activities in a very nationalistic manner. David Welch, *Propaganda and the German Cinema 1933-1945*, I. B. Tauris, 2001 (revised edition): 6-7.

Pact, when the Nazis intervened in a co-production between Arnold Fanck, a professional geologist and pioneer of mountain films, and Towa Import Company. Itami Mansaku(伊丹万作) was to be a co-director, but due to clashes between Itami and Fanck, the directors created two separate versions of the film. In Germany, Fanck's version, *The Daughter of the Samurai* (Die Tochter des Samurai), was released in March 1937. At the time, Goebbels ordered film critics to write extensively positive reviews to strengthen the relations between Japan and Germany.¹⁹ In the scene where the protagonist, Hara Setsuko(原節子), decides to commit suicide and climbs a soon-to-erupt volcano, Fanck linked Japanese nature with the nature of the Japanese people and emphasized their sublime beauty. It was a method that highlighted the ethnographic style frequently seen in German cultural films. In Japan, both versions of the film were released in February 1937, but Fanck's version received more positive reviews. Fanck had worked hard on finding great locations for the film, and the Japanese audience appreciated the enormous scale of landscape that was never before seen in Japanese films and pointed out its implications as a cultural film as well. Kamei Fumio(亀井史夫), a prominent Japanese documentary film director, remarked that *The New Land* was a feature film, yet he had watched the film thinking that it might have implications for documentary directors. Tanaka Yoshitsugu, who worked as an assistant for Richard Angst, the director of cinematography, also was encouraged by Fanck to produce a film about farming villages. Due to Fanck's ardent recommendation, Tanaka changed his career plans from directing fiction films to cultural films and came to work at Domei New Agency(同盟通信社).²⁰

19 *Document Showa 4: Appearance in the World*, Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten, 1985: 132. Cited at second hand from Peter B. High, *The Imperial Screen: Japanese Film Culture in the Fifteen Years' War, 1931-1945*(帝国の銀幕—十五年戦争と日本映画), Nagoya: Nagoya Daigaku Shuppankai, 2001(second edition): 137.

20 "A Round-table Talk discussing Japanese Cultural Films from the beginning to this day", *Cultural Film Studies* (February 1940) : 18; A corporation created through a merger between the news agency of Japan Associated Press and Japan Telegraphic

As explained above, the term “cultural film” was first adopted as a direct translation from another language and became official in the process of controlling films after the Manchurian Incident, before it could be defined. What belonged to the category of “cultural film” was decided afterward by the nation. Since it was unable to be defined, cultural film became a concept that could incorporate any film in the fascism era after the Sino-Japanese War, and it began to be called “Kokumineiga (國民映畫),” meaning “national people’s film,” as “Kokumin” became a popular term that was attached to various words—“Kokuminfuku (national uniform for Japanese males),” “Kokumingakko (national people’s school, a name attached to elementary schools),” “Kokuminbunka (national people’s culture).”

The Sino-Japanese War and the Industrialization of Cultural Films

With the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War in July 1937, cultural films became one of the most powerful films of the time along with news films. Tsumura Isamu (津村勇), a part-time staff at the Records Office of the Secretariat in the Government-General, organized the trend related to cultural films as below:

1. The Ministry of Education secured a budget of 270,000 yen for the promotion of film education; the Film Education Center was founded
2. The Film Education Department was established at the Imperial Educational Association
3. The Film Education Section was established at the 7th World Conference on Education held in Tokyo.

News Agency, two giants in the telecommunication industry, in 1936. A total of 191 Japanese newspaper companies and Japan Broadcasting Corporations were members of the corporation, and it was operated until 1945 under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Telecommunications.

4. With the outbreak of the Chinese Incident (as in the original text, referring to the Sino-Japanese War), news films increased the awareness of our people about the incident
5. Films took part in the Movement for the Total Mobilization of National Spirit (國民精神總動員運動) and boosted the spirit of sincerity and fortitude (質實剛健).
6. With increased film productions on the wartime emergency, radical films from before are nearly eradicated.
7. At the same time, control over exports and imports have led to a significant increase of Japanese films.
8. Costs for projectors and films have been raised by controlling foreign currency.
9. Considering the Manchurian Incident, the Japanese Government-General of Korea produced and distributed a number of current affair films.
10. Large companies, such as Manchukuo Motion Picture Association, which produced national policy films, in Manchukuo have been established.²¹

This series of measures created demand for cultural films, and moreover, transformed the existing production structure, which had been based on fiction films (entertainment films).

After the Sino-Japanese War, cultural film promotion policies were part of the measure to prevent the outflow of foreign currency and protect the growing Japanese film industry by raising the cost of film equipment and placing a ban on importing foreign currency as seen in clauses 7 and 8 above. Because of the war, popular demand for cultural film soared, and the number of productions commissioned by the government and government offices increased as well. In addition, cultural films were exempted from paying censorship fees. As a result, large production companies, which used to consider cultural films as a by-product, began to

21 Tsumura Isamu, "The Prospect of Cultural Film": 143.

create an independent department for the production of cultural films. Furthermore, as the box office value of cultural films began to increase, small production companies that claimed to specialize in cultural film production, such as Geijutsu Eigasha(芸術映画社), began to flourish.

It is interesting that Japanese documentary writers produced a space for discourse that “can overlook the critical ‘reality’”²² through cultural films during this time. Immediately after the Sino-Japanese War, *Documentary Film* (1935) written by Paul Rotha was translated into Japanese and published in Japan under the title *Cultural Film Theory* (文化映画論) (1938). It was considered a textbook for filmmakers.²³ Magazines, such as *Cultural Film Studies* (published by Geijutsu Eigasha from March 1938) praised the value of cultural films as a substitute for commercial fiction films. The discourse on “purely” cultural films as an aesthetic alternative to fiction films enabled the productions of science films such as *Snow Crystals* (雪の結晶) (1939) and folklore films such as *Snow Country* (雪国) (1939) produced by Geijutsu Eigasha. However, cultural films were also developed for national cultivation, and therefore they were not completely free from mobilization for war. After the implementation of the film law, the Home Ministry and the Ministry of Education began to interfere in making decisions regarding the topics of cultural films. Production of science films was encouraged as a means to foster technicians during the war by

22 FujiiJinshi, “YanagitaKunioand Cultural Films: The Discovery of Everyday Life and the Creation/Imagination of a Nation in 1935-1945”, Hase Masato and Nakamura Hideyuki ed., *Politics of Cinema*, Tokyo: Seikyusya, 2003 : 267.

23 For instance, Akimoto Ken, a director of the Cultural Film Division at the Toho Studios commented, “For us, this is an uncharted territory, and We ourselves are the map. So we must find our way through this path...*Cultural Film Theory* is the best map we have in our hands, and no one gave us a better map than this. Director Kamei Fumio linked the Documentary Film Movement in the UK headed by Rotha to cultural films, saying “Instead of talking about how Paul Rotha’s book guided us, it would be more accurate to say that he instilled confidence in our solitary work.” “A Round-table Talk discussing Japanese Cultural Films from the beginning to this day”: 19-20.

popularizing science and to advertise Japan as a scientific powerhouse; production of folklore films were promoted as a means to achieve national integration by locating the particularity of different regions in Japan within the universality of the Japanese Empire and to increase the productivity of farming and fishing villages. For these purposes, *Snow Crystals* was screened at the Pacific Conference, held in Chicago in August 1939, and was entered into the Venice Film Festival through the recommendation of the Ministry of Education. *Snow Country* was evaluated as a film that went beyond simple record keeping, suggesting the direction cultural films needed to take. As a result in 1940, the film received the Minister of Education Award. After the enactment of the film law, both films were designated as cultural films recommended by the Minister of Education.

However, in colonial Korea and Manchukuo where the film industry was not as developed as in Japan, the Government-General and national policy corporations were in charge of producing cultural films, as noted in 9 and 10. Therefore it was nearly impossible for private organizations to produce purely cultural films.²⁴ As soon as the war broke out, the Motion Picture Unit of the Government-General stopped the routine production of films and produced a talkie propaganda film to promote “ways to help the country behind the frontlines,” *Home Front of Chosôn* (“銃後の朝鮮”) (1937, 2 reels), on 16mm film. Thirteen copies of the film were made and

24 Tsumura equated films produced by the Motion Picture Unit of the Government-General to cultural films. “Most of the entertainment films in Korea are imported from Japan, but that does not mean that there aren’t any Korean films. As for cultural films, there are ones that are imported from Japan, but most are produced by the Records Office of the Secretariat of the Government-General. Tsumura Isamu, “The Prospect of Cultural Film,”: 142; Park Lu-weol, the publisher of the *Film Age*, also understood that the production of cultural films requires a guiding principle, an implementation agency, and implementation methods. In addition, “each organization must collaborate with each other, spearheaded by government offices. Park Lu-weol, “Gratitude of Imperial Troops and Cultural Film”, *Film Age*(August 1939): 23; Regarding cultural films of Manchukuo, refer to Kim Ryeosil, “A Study on KeiminEiga, the Documentary of Manchurian Motion Picture Association: Focused on the Nation Building Project”, *Film Studies*, vol. 57(September 2013)

distributed on October 8 to each province. When the “Imperial Oath and Pledge of the Imperial Subjects” became official in October 1937, 300,000 copies of the *Imperial Oath and Pledge of the Imperial Subjects 1* (for adults) and 115 copies of the *Imperial Oath and Pledge of the Imperial Subjects 2* (for children) were mandatorily screened in 180 film theaters across Korea. In addition, the Motion Picture Unit purchased all volumes of the *Chinese Incident News* from Domei News Agency as well as films made by the Ministry of Education, such as the *Movement for the Total Mobilization of National Spirit: Speech Meeting*, and screened them throughout Korea along with the Unit’s cultural films. Afterward, the Unit also produced *Volunteering at the Home Front* (銃後に捧ぐ) (1937, 3 reels), a film that emphasized preparation for a protracted war and the necessity for dispatching Korean troops, and distributed it to each province. For six months after the outbreak of the war (until January 1938), “current affair films” that the Motion Picture Unit of the Government-General produced numbered 36 reels, and the Film Unit alone held 84 screenings of the films.²⁵

After the film law was implemented, and the Chosôn Film Act was heralded, private film companies which had a weak basis closely observed the Japanese film circle and the Government-General of Korea and searched for counterplans. As issues arose regarding the supply and demand of raw films due to the war, a discourse emerged regarding the uselessness of producing Korean films. Some argued that films should only be in the national language (Japanese) to promote the “Korea and Japan are One”(内鮮一體) policy, and others asserted that Japanese films were enough to educate the people. As a result, private film companies had to prove the necessity of Korean films. Lee Chang-yong, the president of the Koryô Film Association argued that Korean films need to be circulated

25 Tsumura Isamu, “The Prospect of Cultural Film”: 147-148; “Home Front of Chosôn Distributed to Each Province”, *Donga Daily*, 9th October: 2; “Break-through 36 rolls, Current Situation Film of the Government-General”, *Donga Daily*, 15th January, 1938: 3.

for the illiterate (Koreans who do not speak Japanese). He further asserted that not only would the distribution of film in Korea, where 80 percent of the population were farmers, be effective with cultural films, but also that it was the ultimate purpose of Korean films.²⁶ Among the private institutions, the Chosôn Film Company and Koryô Film Association, which were relatively well established companies, established their own cultural film departments in response to mandatory screenings. the Chosôn Film Company established a cultural film department in April 1940 and invited production staff, including cameramen from Japan.²⁷ the Koryô Film Association successfully negotiated with the Japanese forces in Korea as well as the Government-General and produced a cultural film about the Army Volunteer Training Center to commemorate the 30th anniversary of rule of the Government-General in Korea. The film *Garden of Victory* (1940) was exported as the first film that was approved by the Government-General since the implementation of the film act,²⁸ and *Bearing Fruit on the Soil* (土に實る)(1942), which was commissioned by the Monopoly Bureau and produced by the Chosôn Film Company, was also exported to Japan.

One of the noteworthy private organizations is the Chosôn Cultural Film Association, which claimed to specialize in cultural film production. It was a type of government group established by Tsumura Isamu, a part-

26 Lee Chang-yong, "The Future of Chosôn Film: Its Life or Death actually from now on", *International Movie Newspaper*, no. 252(The end of August 1939): 3.

27 "Chosôn Film Company, Completed the Studio and Prepared for Full Equipment", *Donga Daily*, 1st. Apr.: 5.

28 With the implementation of the film act, the Department of Social Education in the Bureau of Education Affairs at the Government-General evaluated general films, non-general films, approval and non-approval of cultural films. General films were films without an age limit; non-general films were films allowed for an audience of 14 years and older. Among general films, "those suitable for cultivation and increase of the intellect of the people" were approved as cultural films. Non-approved cultural films were not subjected to mandatory screenings. Sase Naoe, "About Films in Chosôn", *Chosôn*, January 1943: 78-79. Sase is a part-time employee at the Bureau of Education Affairs.

time staff at the Government-General in April 1939. Equipped with film sound recording and development facilities, the association regularly acquired films from the Government-General and its daily *Keijo Daily* (경성일보) Company, and was commissioned by the Government-General to produce *Chosôn News* twice a month. Production Manager Yamanaka (山中裕) and other Japanese people headed each department within the association, and both Japanese and Korean staff worked together.²⁹ The first production of the Chosôn Cultural Film Association was *I Will Die under the National Flag* (国旗の下に我なん)(1939), a story about Lee Won-ha, the village leader of Jôngju-gun and his work on the home front. Tsumura supervised the whole production, which was directed by Lee Ik (李翼) and Chôn Chang-tae (田倉太-assumed to be the Korean name for 山中裕). Choi Soon-hûng (崔順興) and Okano (岡野進一) were in charge of cinematography, and actors and actresses such as Kim Kôn (金健), Pok Hye-suk(卜惠淑), Choi Un-bong(崔雲峯), Kim Il-hae(金一海), Kim Ok-ryôn(金玉蓮), Lee Ae-sun (李愛順) starred in the film.³⁰ In other words, *I Will Die under the National Flag* was a film that reconstructed an actual event with actors. According to the synopsis of the film that was published in a newspaper, the film was full of propaganda for the “Korea and Japan are One” campaign and “Helping the Country at the Home Front” (銃後報國) campaign. In the film, Lee Won-ha who was working hard to foster youths on the home front after the Chinese Incident hears about the fall of Nanjing. He then makes “national flags” by himself, distributes it to the neighbors, and leads the neighbors to go and pay respects at the Japanese shrines. He finally meets death under the national flag, facing the royal palace.³¹ Originally the film was made up of 6 reels, but currently only a

29 “A List of Filming, Sound Recording, and Development Laboratory: surveyed in June 1941”, *Eiga Junpo*18 (1st, Jul. 1941): 137.

30 “Korean Culture and the Industrial Exhibition: movie part, *Samcholl*12 no.5(May 1940): 229; “Chosôn Cultural Film Association Established” (朝鮮文化映畫協會創立), *Donga Daily*, 12th, May. 1939: 5.

31 “The First Film of Cultural Film Association:I Will Die under the National Flag”, *Chosôn Daily* , 14th, Jul. 1939(morning edition): 4.

9 minute sequence of Lee Won-ha and the members of Sachang-li Women's Association donating the profits from their co-op farm to the nation. In the film that was shot in Chôngju, there is a scene where an actress with full makeup and members of the local women's association are working together. The film was manipulated for real effect. This method called "dramatization (劇化)" was dominant in cultural films, and even "cultural films with a story," which was not much different from fiction film, were made. After this film was produced, the Chosôn Cultural Film Association produced *Light of the Sea* (海の光)(1939), a cultural film with a story, to promote the fishing fleet rescue operations of the Chosôn Fisheries Association, as well as *Gallant Loyalty of Blood* (장렬피의충성)(1939), a war film based on the story of the death of the first Korean volunteer soldier Corporal Lee In-sôk(李仁錫). All three films were designated as films guided and sponsored by the Government-General and were exported to Japan.³²

Mandatory Screening of Cultural Film after the Promulgation of the Chosôn Film Act

After the Japan Film Law (Law No. 66) was promulgated on April 4, 1939, the Government-General proclaimed the Chosôn Film Act on January 4, 1940. The full text of the act is as follows: "The production, distribution, and screening of films shall be ruled by the Japan Film Law, with the exception of Article 19. However, "Imperial Order" in the Film Law shall be changed to "the Law of the Japanese Government-General of Korea," and "Cabinet Minister in charge" into "the Japanese Governor-General of Korea". Article 19 of the Japan Film Law stated "A Film

32 "Light of the Sea by Chosôn Cultural Film Association", *Chosôn Daily*, 8th July, 1939, morning edition: 4; Advertisements: Light of the Sea, I Will Die under the National Flag", *Kinema Junpo*690 (21st, Sep. 1939); *A Group of Pro-Japanese*, Samsung Munhwasa, 1948, Cited at second hand from Korean History Database at National Institute of Korean History, <http://db.history.go.kr/item/level.do?itemId=pj&setId=207236&position=1>.

Committee shall be established to advise the Cabinet Minister in charge regarding important matters about the implementation of this law.” It was removed in 1941, and therefore it is clear that the Chosôn Film Act directly reflected the Japan Film Law. However, there were differences in the enforcement regulations of the Film Law and the Film Act. For censorship standards in the Film Act, a provision was added about “Films that may create disturbances in ruling over Korea” (Article 28). Moreover, a provision about the censorship of films for exports in the Film Law was expanded to include films for export and transport, as well as undeveloped films in the Film Act (Article 25 and Article 26). There was a clause of exception about allowing current affair films that require urgent attention to apply for censorship to the provincial governor of the region where the screening will take place instead of to the Home Minister (Article 25 in the Enforcement Regulations of the Film Law). Yet in the Film Act, the principal agent of all censorship was the Japanese Governor-General of Korea without exception.³³

Regarding cultural films, the Film Act complied with the Film Law, and inserted supplementary provisions to adapt to the situation in Korea. First, there was a provision about the promotion of cultural films. Article 10 in the Film Law stated, “The Cabinet Minister in charge may select and promote films that are considered to improve the national people’s culture.” There was also a provision about the mandatory screening of cultural films. Article 15 stated, “The Cabinet Minister in charge may

33 For provisions and supplementary regulations for the Japan Film Law, Chosôn Film Act, Enforcement Regulations for the Japan Film Law, and Enforcement Regulations for Chosôn Film Act, refer to the following: Yamada Eikichi, “Supplement: Film Law and Enforcement Regulations”, *Progress of National Cinema Policy*; Supervised by Makino Mamoru, “Chosôn Film Act and Enforcement Regulations”, *An Outline of Japanese Film Discourse I: The Period of the Wartime Film Control vol.9*, Tokyo: Yumani Shobo(2003); Information Center of Government Legislation at Ministry of Government Legislation, <http://www.law.go.kr/lsSc.do?menuId=0&subMenu=3&query=%EC%A1%B0%EC%84%A0%EC%98%81%ED%99%94%EB%A0%B9>.

order movie theaters to screen a particular type of film that would be beneficial for national people's education. According to the order, the administrative authorities may issue films necessary for enlightenment and propaganda to particular movie theaters and have the films screened for a designated duration of time." Article 16 of the Enforcement Regulations of the Film Law, which was enacted on September 9, 1939 and implemented on October 1, specified 1. recommendation of the Home Minister and 2. issuance of prize money for the producers as ways to promote cultural films, as stated in Article 10 of the Film Law. Although the term "cultural film" was not used, Article 35, Clause 1 stipulated the types of films for mandatory screening as "films that help to foster national people's spirit or promote the enlightenment of national people's intellect (excluding fiction films) that have been approved by the Minister of Education." In addition, Article 35, Clause 2 specified that for one screening, the movie theater shall screen 250 meters of a type of films mentioned in Clause 1.

Article 16 and Article 37 of the Enforcement Regulations of the Chosôn Film Act, which was enacted on July 25, 1940 and implemented on August 1, coincide with Article 16 and Article 35 of the Enforcement Regulations for the Film Law, respectively, with the exception of changing the Minister of Education into the Japanese Governor-General of Korea. The only difference is Supplementary Provision No. 58, which stipulated that mandatory screenings of cultural films in Kyôngsang, Pusan, Pyôngyang, and Taegu, will begin on November 1, 1940; and in other cities and villages, on January 1, 1941. In Korea, there were not a lot of movie theaters in areas other than big cities, and therefore it was impossible to enforce mandatory screenings across the colony. Considering this, the Governor-General seemed to have planned for gradual expansion of mandatory screenings in stages.

In such ways, the legal basis was laid for mandatory screenings, but mandatory screenings of cultural films only began on July 1, 1940 in Japan.³⁴

34 Asano Tatsuo, "Popularization of Cultural Films 2: Production Report on *Science*

As Korea relied on importing most cultural films from Japan, distribution of cultural films were expected to be fragmented from the beginning. Therefore, the Government-General stipulated the supplementary provision on mandatory screening of cultural films on the one hand, and attempted to improve the quality of cultural films by improving the production environment as well as the staff of the Motion Picture Unit. The Government-General upgraded equipment such as cameras and lighting, built a film development room, projection room, editing room, and drying room, and expanded sound recording facilities. Moreover, professional filmmakers were invited to work as part-time staff on directing, filming, sound recording, and projection, which had been previously under the charge of amateur technicians. They were also given assistants as well. The first film produced after the reform was *Emerging Chosôn* (新興朝鮮)(1940), a cultural film produced to commemorate 2600 years of the imperial rule and 30 years of the rule of the Government-General. The film was screened all over Korea, and 50 copies of 16 mm films were donated to each province, as well as Hokkaido, Karafuto (樺太), and Taiwan.³⁵ In addition, the Government-General planned to establish the “Chosôn Film Development Association” to expand the distribution network. The plan became active in July 1941, and starting in August, they leased cultural films produced by the Film Unit (changed from the Motion Picture Unite) to general movie theaters, free of charge. The association, headed by the head of the Information Division (changed from the Records Office of the Secretariat) and made up of provincial governors of every province, was to distribute and lease cultural films, integrating all the existing government films in Korea. The Chosôn Film Development Association was officially established in January 1942 including the Chosôn Finance Cooperation as the second member, and furthermore,

in A Farm Village”, *Cultural Film Studies*, no.7 (July 1940): 311.

35 “News of the Peninsular’s Cinema: the Motion Picture Unit of the Government General of the”, *Eiga Junpo*24 (1st, Sep. 1941): 36; “*Emerging Chosôn* Donated to Prefectures and Provinces in Mainland Japan”, *Donga Daily*, 4th, May. 1940: 3.

government offices such as the National Mining Association, major state-run companies, also Cheju Island and Ullung Island were added as the third member in April 1943.³⁶

The production status of cultural films at the Film Unit of the Government-General in 1941 is as below:³⁷

An examination of the contents of films in Chart 1 shows that the Government-General's cultural films attempted to explain the particularities of colonial Korea, while being aware of the "mother land," Japan. Since this was the basis on which cultural films, or "Japanese films of the peninsula," were created, the Film Unit of the Government-General had to produce propaganda films about the "Korea and Japan are One" ideology, while producing current affairs films to show the Japanese "the determination of the peninsula." For example, *Nongôp Poguk Chôngnyôndaë* (*A Delegation of Korean Youths to Serve the Country through Agriculture*), which was approved as a Government-General recommended film in 1941, was a film that fulfilled both of these production goals. A journalistic film about the daily life of a member of Chosôn *Nongôp Poguk Chôngnyôndaë*, who was assigned to a family of a Japanese soldier dispatched to the front, this film was recommended for introducing the state of farming villages in Japan, and effectively depicting the Korean youth's serious attitude toward life as well as the Japanese villagers who appreciated him.³⁸ However, despite these efforts, cultural films produced by the Film Unit of the Government-General were generally considered to be of poor quality, and therefore it was not enough to stop the discourse on the uselessness of producing Korean films. Even *Ondol*, which was the only approved film by the Government-General among films produced by

36 "Introduction to Major Movie-related Groups in Chosôn", *Eiga Junpo*87(11th July, 1943): 39

37 "News of the Peninsular's Cinema: the Motion Picture Unit of the Government General of the Chosôn", compiled from: 36-37.

38 "The Eighth Recommendation of Chosônese Films", *Eiga Junpo*36(21th January, 1942): 17. Cited at second hand from Institute for Korean Film History at KOFA ed., *Korean Films in Japanese Magazines III*, Seoul: KOFA (2012): 182.

<Chart 1> Production Status of Cultural Films at the Film Unit of the Government-General in 1941

	Title	Reel Count	Content
Completed (3)	Sardine (鯖)	1	Fishing sardines, which accounts for the largest production in the Korean fisheries; process of producing various items containing sardines
	Cheju Island (濟州道)	1	Introduces the customs and folklore of Cheju Island
	Kûmgang Mountain (金剛山)	2	Introduces Kûmgang Mountain, a global spiritual mountain where all Korean tourists visit
In Production (5)	Nongôp Boguk Chôngnyôndaek (農業報國青年隊)	2	Publicizes “Korea and Japan are One Policy” by dispatching Nongôp Boguk Chôngnyôndaek (A Delegation of Korean Youths to Serve the Country through Agriculture), which had been recently established, to farming villages in Yamaguchi, Hiroshima, and Okayama
	News from the Frontier (開拓地便り)	3	Describes the situation of Koreans who moved to Manchuria with the help of Seaman (鮮滿) Colonization Company to arouse the awareness and understanding of Koreans about migration policies
	Ondol (溫突)	1	Introduces the Korean style of architecture through <i>ondol</i> , which can be found in all Korean homes in farming villages. Claims that Japanese homes also need them.
	Sketch of Chosôn (朝鮮の素描)	3	Introducing Korea through historical landmarks and customs from the Three-han period or before
	Emerging Chosôn (1941 version)	4	Sequel to <i>Emerging Chosôn</i> , depicts rapid progress of the peninsula which became the logistics basis after the Manchurian Incident, in various aspects, including industries, education, transportation

In Planning (5)	Total Mobilization Movement (総力運動)		Korea's National Total Mobilization Movement, along with Japan's Imperial Rule Assistance movement, is a spiritual movement for the Korean people
	Rising Chosônese Women (立上かる朝鮮婦人)		The horrible custom of Korean women hating to go out of their homes is changed after the Manchurian Incident and the Chinese Incident; women advance into the mountains, fields, and villages along with men
	Multifaceted Farming Methods (多角の営農法)		The authorities appeal to Korean farmers about their farming methods and spur the increased food production
	Korean Rice (朝鮮米)		Producing more rice(産米增收). The value of Korean rice and harvesting
	A Day at the Training Center (修練所の一日)		An event held at a Youth Educator Training Center of the Japanese Government-General of Korea in Buyeo, South Ch'ungch'ông Province
	Pioneer Volunteer Corps (開拓義勇隊)		Introduces Manchu Pioneer Training Camp in Sepo (洗浦), Kangwôn Province, which is similar to the Manchu Pioneer Volunteer Corps in Uchihara (内原), Ibaraki

the Film Unit, received criticism that “although it seems to have been made to show the Japanese... it is no more than a film made by nonprofessionals.”³⁹

Private film companies were also concerned with the same grievances. Statistics of cultural films in Korea from August 1940 when the Film Act was implemented to August 1941 show there was a great reliance on Japanese films. Among approved films, there were 570 rolls of Japanese films, 36 rolls of Korean films, and 46 rolls of foreign films. Even for

39 “Impression of Chosônese Film Industry”, *Eiga Junpo*51 (21th June, 1942): 20. Cited at second hand from *Korean Films in Japanese Magazines III*: 267.

non-approved films, there were 99 rolls of Japanese films, 1 roll of Korean film, and 16 rolls of foreign films.⁴⁰ Although the Korean filmmakers asserted that as Korea was under special circumstances, production of cultural films in Korea was necessary to preserve the Korean culture and introduce the Korean culture to Japan,⁴¹ Japanese film companies at the time were already producing films about the localities of Korea or the propaganda of “Korea and Japan are One” policy, such as *Friend* (ともだち)(1940), *Kyôsong*(京城)(1940), and *Paengmu Line* (白茂線)(1941). It is true that these films were criticized for distorting the current situation in Korea, and some argued that it is impossible to fully rely on Japanese films for cultural maneuvering in Korea.⁴² However, as the scarcity of raw films worsened dramatically, the opinion that raw films should not be provided for low-quality Korean films gained ground among Japanese filmmakers. Leaving aside fiction films, some argued that at least cultural films need to be coproduced with Japan, with the intention of introducing Korea to Japan.⁴³ Although there were attempts to produce raw film in Korea,⁴⁴ eventually all film companies were

40 SaseNaoe, “About Films in Chosôn”: 79.

41 JooYoungsop (Ju Yöngsöp), “The Future of Korean Cultural Film”, *Samchollil* 13 no. 6 (June 1941): 212.

42 Refer to the criticisms of *Friend* and *Gyeongseong* by Mizui Reiko, a Japanese critique residing in Korea, and the opinion of Karashima Takeshi, a professor at Keijo Imperial University, about obligations of Korean films. Mizui Reiko, “Looking Back Chosônese Film Industry”, *Shin Eiga* (November 1942): 92-93. Cited at second hand from Institute for Korean Film History at KOFA ed., *Korean Films in Japanese Magazines II*, Seoul: KOFA(2011): 284; Karashima Takeshi, “Chosôn and Cinema”, *Eiga Junpo* 87 (11th July, 1943): 9. Cited at second hand from Institute for Korean Film History at KOFA ed., *Korean Films in Japanese Magazines IV*, Seoul: KOFA(2013): 63.

43 IijimaTdash, Hazumi Tsuneo, HirokawaSoyo, “Round-table Talk: To Construct New System of Chosôn Cinema.”, *Eiga Junpo* 30 (1st November, 1941): 17. Hirokawa Soyo is Lee Chang-yong’s (Yi Chang-yöng) Japanese name.

44 At the time the Government-General came up with the plan to establish Chosôn Cinema Inc., Tsumura of the Cultural Film Association proposed a plan to manu-

merged into Chosôn Cinema Production Company, Inc. (Sadanbôpin Chosôn yônghwa jusikhoesa, hereafter Chosôn Cinema Inc.) in September 1942, by the Government-General. This state-run company set the production goal based on the amount of raw film it received from the Information Bureau of the Home Ministry. In 1942, the company planned to produce six fiction films, five cultural films, and 12 current affairs films annually.

The Enforcement Regulations of the Chosôn Film Act (The Japanese Government-General of Korea Law No. 411) was revised on May 11, 1942, and the term “cultural film” was stipulated in the law. Article 37, Clause 1 specified that “Films that need to be screened mandatorily according to Article 15, Clause 1 of the Film Law shall be cultural films and current affair films approved by the Japanese Governor-General of Korea,” and Clause 2 stated that cultural films are “films, not fiction films, that help increase the national people’s intellect, and current affair films are films that recorded current affairs, which allow the national people to gain necessary knowledge of the political situation at home and abroad”. This was a direct copy of the same article and clauses in the Japan Film Law, but within the context of colonial Korea, there was added information about cultural films as a means to enlighten the Korean people to become Japanese, in other words, to instill the characteristics and attitude of the Japanese people in the Korean people. Afterward, the Film Unit of the Government-General surrendered film production to the Cultural Film Division⁴⁵ of the production department at Chosôn Cinema Inc., where Korean and Japanese filmmakers were positioned for deployment, but still continued to plan the production of cultural films and produced

facture raw films, produce and distribute films with the capital of 10 million won and contacted Shuto, who was planning on manufacturing raw film in Kyoto, to invite a professional technician. Takajima Kinji, *The History of Regulation on Chosônese Film*, Keijyo: Chosôn Institute of Film Culture, 1943: 44.

45 For cultural films produced by Chosôn Cinema Inc., refer to the following: Han Sang-eon (Han Sang-ün), “Control Film Production Company in Korea during Last Years of Japanese Domination”, *Film Studies* 36 (2008): 416-418.

commissioned films.

Conclusion

In this paper, I examined cultural films diachronically focusing on films produced by the Motion Picture Unit of the Government-General rather than those of private film companies because private production of films staggered due to the reasons I stated in chapter 2, section 3. Cultural films produced by Chosôn Cinema Inc. were already mentioned in a landmark study (Han Sang-eon's "Control Film Production Company in Korea during Last Years of Japanese Domination"). As none of the films exist to date, it relied on written documents only. Cultural films produced by the Government-General are also in a similar state, I was able to get access to six documentary films that had been collected by Gosfilmofond of Russia between 1993 and 2006. Among the six films, two films, *Home Front of Chosôn* and *Patriots Day in Korea* (朝鮮の愛国日)(1940), specify the Government-General as the producer, and I was able to confirm through written documents that *Chosôn, Our Rear Base* (1938) had also been produced by the Film Unit of the Government-General.⁴⁶

These films were mobilization films targeting Koreans, and also an information film to show Korea's military preparedness to foreigners. The films were able to be collected because the Government-General sent them abroad to prove its successful rule over Korea, and the fact that these films were discovered in Russia means that they have been sent to Manchukuo. Also, *Home Front of Chosôn* had been presented to the Japanese imperial court, and *Chosôn, Our Rear Base* had been given to the Italian Goodwill Delegation who appear in the very film and was sent to

46 Refer to Tsumura Isamu, "Cultural Film: the Situation of Using Films in Chosôn", *International Movie Daily*222, the end of May 1938: 15. Cited at second hand from Institute for Korean Film History at KOFA ed., *Korean Films in Japanese Magazines I*, Seoul: KOFA (2010): 146.

Italy. It is difficult to discuss the format of all cultural films produced by the Government-General with only these films. However, the three films are similar in three aspects: 1) the focus on recording events held by the Government-General, military, school, women's associations, and other organizations instead of a certain person(s), 2) simple editing of the film, listing the events just like in a newsreel, and 3) heavy reliance on narration instead of images.

The Korean film Archive already gave basic information about the cultural films above, based on the contents and production background, nevertheless there has been no follow-up study till now. One of the reasons Korean film scholars did not pay closer attention to them is the lack of materials written or visual. There were not enough reference materials as the Korean-language media was discontinued since 1940, and there were limitations even with documents written in Japanese. However, the fundamental reason for their indifference lies not only in the lack of references, but in their lack of consideration regarding what can be newly written in Korean film history through researching cultural films. Cultural films made by the Government-General and the Chosôn Cinema Inc. pose a similar question of the category of Korean film as what we call pro-Japanese film does. So little has been written on these films in Korean film history, with the same reason found in Japanese film history. As we see above, cultural film was produced and screened in the political, economic, and cultural network that transcends the boundaries of empire and colony. To search for research methodology to learn how to look at cultural film beyond Korean film history, in this paper, I tried to show how the notions of cultural film was built and evolved comparing institutions and laws concerning cultural films between Chosôn and Japan. I could also recognize, on the other hand, the importance of cultural films in East Asian film history during the Second World War. Therefore, I would like to emphasize a focus on cultural film and the construction of culture in the context of a "Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere (大東亞共榮圈)". And in order to do so, joint research should be considered for the next step.

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<Abstract>

A Study on the Origins of Cultural Films in Korea: A Focus on Films by the Japanese Government-General of Korea

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The term "cultural film" was coined in Korea under the Japanese rule, and it had been used as a general term for nonfiction films since the Korean liberation until the 1980s. However, unlike the term "documentary film," cultural film contains implications of propaganda film, controlled and produced as part of cultural and public relations policies of the government, thus it had been seldom studied for a long time. The term "cultural film" did not mean a film genre in the beginning. Therefore it is impossible to conceptualize the term based on common formats or contents of the films which have been called "cultural films." Cultural films have been generally recognized as nonfiction films, and therefore documentary films. Yet in the production and distribution sites, fiction films and even animations were considered cultural films. In order to delve into the nature of cultural film, we have to reexamine the process in which the proper noun "Cultural Film" became a common noun. This paper attempts to explore the historical context in which the term "cultural film" was coined and used in the colonial Korea, when cultural films began to be produced. I examine the overall time period in which: 1) the concept of nonfiction film was first introduced in the Motion Picture Censorship Regulation, 2) the term "cultural film" became legally stipulated at a time when national policies were being established as Korea experienced the Manchurian Incident and the Sino-Japanese War, and 3) "cultural films" were screened mandatorily as "national films" that the nation had to foster through the Japan Film Law and Chosôn Film Act.

Keywords: Cultural film, Kulturfilm, Documentary film, Japan Film Law, Chosôn Film Act, The Motion Picture Unit of the Japanese Government-General

〈국문초록〉

문화영화의 기원연구: 조선총독부 제작영화를 중심으로

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‘문화영화(文化映畵, cultural film)’는 일제시기에 만들어진 용어로 한국에서는 해방 이후부터 1980년대까지 대체로 극이 아닌 영화(nonfiction film)의 총칭으로 사용되었다. 그러나 기록영화(documentary film)라는 용어와 달리 문화영화는 국가의 문화·공보정책의 일환으로 제작된 관제 선전영화라는 속성을 지녔고 그동안 연구대상으로 주목 받지 못했다. 문화영화는 애초에 장르의 명칭이 아니었다. 따라서 문화영화로 불린 작품들의 형식적, 내용적 공통성을 바탕으로 이 용어를 개념화하는 일은 불가능하다. 문화영화는 비(非)극영화=기록영화로 범박하게 인식되어 왔지만 제작과 유통현장에서는 극영화나 애니메이션조차 문화영화에 포괄되기도 했다. 그러므로 문화영화의 본질을 규명하기 위해서는 문화영화라는 고유명사가 일반명사화 되어갔던 과정을 다시 들여다볼 수 밖에 없다. 이 논문에서는 문화영화가 등장한 일제시기로 거슬러 올라가 이 용어가 만들어지고 통용된 맥락을 살피고자 한다. 비극영화의 개념이 처음 도입된 ‘활동사진필름검열규칙’에서부터 만주사변과 중일전쟁을 거치면서 영화국책이 수립되어가는 과정 속에서 문화영화가 장려되고 일본영화법과 조선영화령을 통해 국가가 육성해야 하는 ‘국민영화’로서 명문화되어 강제상영 되기까지의 과정을 고찰해본다.

주제어: 문화영화, 기록영화, 일본영화법, 조선영화령, 조선총독부활동사진반