

## **“Colony, Empire, and De-colonization” in Taiwanese Film History**

*Misawa Mamie\**

### **Introduction**

In this paper, I will briefly explain the larger current in research to consider the unique political context in Taiwan, which is the premise for understanding Taiwanese film history during the colonial period in East Asia. Then I will situate this study in relation to previous studies. Moreover, in accordance with the theme of this section "Colony, Empire, and Post-colonialism," I will discuss the status of the production and reception of films by the Taiwanese during the colonial period, which is the focus of my research. Finally, I will also explain the possibility of "de-colonization from the bottom up" in the "post-war"<sup>1</sup> Taiwanese film market.

---

\* Professor, Department of Chinese Language and Culture, College of Humanities and Sciences, Nihon University.

1 There are difficulties in considering the period after the defeat of Japan in 1945 as a "post-war" period. At a talk at the Tokyo University of Foreign Studies on April 25, 2004, Prof. Liu Jin-Qing 劉進慶 asked, "First, what is the 'post-war' period? Was there a 'post-war' period in Asia?" Then in response to his own question, he said, "Only the Japanese use the term 'post-war.' It is a word recklessly used and monopolized by Japan; no such thing as a 'post-war' period existed for Asians." Please refer to "戦後'なき東アジア・台湾に生きて,'" edited and annotated by Komagome Takeshi 駒込武, *Zenya前夜9*, 2006: 229-246. Prof. Liu died in October 2005). I believe there will also be difficulties in considering the period

## Overview of Research concerning Taiwanese Film History during the Colonial Period

With the defeat of Japan in World War II, Taiwan was liberated from Japanese colonial rule. The Republic of China (中華民國, 中國國民黨政權), which defeated Japan in the war, requisitioned Taiwan from Japan. The people of Taiwan, who were “Japanese” during the colonial period, were now being ruled by the “Chinese,”<sup>2</sup> who had been their enemies—Japan’s enemies—in the past. Taiwan thus found itself in a very unique and unprecedented situation. It was completely different from the “post-war” situation created on the Korean peninsula: despite the division, people shared the same historical experiences they had undergone. Due to these circumstances, there were distinct differences in the sentiments felt by the residents of Taiwan who came to live in Taiwan before 1945 (benshengren 本省人) and those who moved to Taiwan from mainland China along with the Kuomintang (KMT) after 1945 (waishengren 外省人). The differences between these groups were explicitly pronounced through the 228 Incident.<sup>3</sup> Through the launch of white terror<sup>4</sup> as an anti-

---

after Japan’s defeat in 1945 as “post-war” in the Korean peninsula as well. In this paper, the term “post-war” with quotation marks will refer to the “period including and after Japan’s defeat in the Second World War.”

- 2 However, boundaries of the ethnic consciousness in the Taiwanese society cannot be distinguished only by the fact that they experienced Japanese colonial rule and the anti-Japanese war. Layers of “ethnic” boundaries with different characteristics, between indigenous minorities 少数先住民族 (indigenous Taiwanese 台湾原住民族) and the Han Chinese 漢族, benshengren 本省人 and waishengren 外省人 among the Han Chinese, and furthermore between South Fujianese 福佬人 and Hakka 客家人 among benshengren 本省人.
- 3 Prevalent corruption, deteriorating public order and security, heightening inflation, food shortage due to material procurement for the civil war, and a rising number of unemployed benshengren 本省人 as a result of appointing personnel from the top were a few of the many issues Taiwanese residents were frustrated with under the KMT. These sentiments erupted into a nation-wide anti-government movement immediately following the incident where an officer of the Monopoly Bureau fired

Communist policy, the KMT instilled fear in the people of Taiwan, forcing them into silence. At the same time, the KMT attempted, by way of the media and educational institutions, to assimilate both residents who had lived through Japanese colonial rule and new residents who came to Taiwan with the KMT as “citizens of the Republic of China.” This was done through Sinicization policies. Therefore, academic research done before the 1980s is limited to politically permissible areas. Especially studies on indigenous Taiwanese history or culture were not carried out, as it was linked to the “independence” movement, which was in direct conflict with Sinicization policies. Even after the 1990s when democratization began, academic studies continued to reflect, both directly and indirectly, a tendency toward the question of “unification or independence.” Consequently, the research environment surrounding Taiwan’s indigenous history and culture, including the history of Taiwanese cinema, influences and is influenced by social circumstances of the time, encompassing the changes in Taiwan’s political system.<sup>5</sup> For

---

at a civilian in the process of confiscating contraband cigarettes. The KMT thoroughly suppressed this movement in a vengeful way. The number of victims from the 228 Incident is estimated to be between 15,000 and 20,000. Please refer to information below. Wu Mi-cha 吳密察, “Taiwanjin no yume to 228 jiken 台湾人の夢と2.28事件” in *Kindai Nihon to Shokuminchi 8近代日本と植民地8アジアの冷戦と脱植民地化*, ed. Ōe Shinobu 大江志乃夫 and et. (Tokyo : Iwanami 岩波書店, 1993), 39-70.

- 4 According to an investigation by Xie Cong-min 謝聰敏, a legislator, there were 29,000 cases of political imprisonment between the 1950s and 1987, when martial law was lifted. During this period, over 140,000 people suffered, and about 3000-4000 people were executed. (Li Xiao-feng 李筱峰, *Taiwanshi 100 jian shijianshi zhanhoujian 台湾史100件事事件史 戦後篇* (Taipei: Yushanshe 玉山社, 1999), 40.
- 5 Meanwhile, the changes in social circumstances affected the discovery and publication of historical documents which were neglected and hidden at times. Such circumstances surrounding the documents were also reflected in academic studies. For a detailed explanation of the triangular relationship formed by researchers, society, and texts, in the study of the history of Taiwanese cinema during the colonial period, see the following: Misawa Mamie 三澤真美恵, “Chuqi

instance, activities of the Taiwanese in cinema during the colonial period are recorded in *Taiwan dianying xijushi* 台灣電影戲劇史 by Lü Su-shang 呂訴上 (1961, Yinghua 銀華出版). This is a well-known text related to the history of Taiwanese cinema during the colonial period that was most often referred to in “post-war” Taiwan. However, such records reflected the social circumstances of the 1960s and emphasized “anti-Japanese” and “patriotic” narratives, in accordance with the official ideology of the KMT.

After the 1990s, a considerable transformation in historical narratives shifted the focus to ideologies. The impetus behind this change was social movements occurring after the democratization process which placed great importance on Taiwanese history and culture.<sup>6</sup> As for historical studies, Taiwan referred to and grounded their history in Chinese modern history and Japanese modern history, on which research has been regularly conducted and accumulated, to establish Taiwanese History as their academic equal. In terms of Taiwanese film history, pioneering studies were conducted by Li Dao-ming 李道明 and Luo Wei-ming 羅維明 and published in *Dianying xinshang* 電影欣賞 no.65 (Sept-Oct 1995).<sup>7</sup> Academic dissertations and books based on primary resources appeared afterward,<sup>8</sup> and the discovery, maintenance, and publication of historical resources for film, including research gathered from audiences,

---

Taiwan dianyingshi yanjiu de fangfa yu keti 初期臺灣電影史研究的方法與課題,” presented at the international symposium, “Early Taiwan Cinema: the Regional Context and Theoretical Perspectives 東亞脈絡中的早期臺灣電影: 方法學與比較框架,” April 26, 2014 at National Taipei Art University 國立台北藝術大學. This paper also mentions the contextual relationship between the studies on Taiwanese cinema history during the colonial period and those on the “imperial history” of Japan.

6 In the case of mainland China, Cheng Ji-hua 程季華 et al., *Zhongguo dianying fazhanshi* 中國電影發展史 1·2 (Beijing: Zhongguo dianying chubanshe 中國電影出版社, 1963) had an overarching influence in mainland China up until the 1990s as it reflected the official Communist ideology. However, after the 1990s, the emphasis on empirical research grew stronger, and research topics were also diversified.

continued as a part of the general trend of emphasizing empirical research. In 2003, a set of films that had been distributed in Taiwan during the colonial period was unearthed.<sup>9</sup> With the digital restoration of the films

- 
- 7 Li Dao-ming 李道明, “Dianying shi ruhe laidao Taiwan de 電影是如何來到臺灣的?”; LuoWei-ming 羅維明, “Huodong huandeng yu Taiwan jieshao huodong xiezhen 「活動幻燈」與臺灣介紹活動寫真” and “Rizhi Taiwan dianying ziliao chutu xinkuang 日治臺灣電影資料出土新況”. Before this empirical research was carried on *Dianying xinshang* 電影欣賞 (magazine), another text that led such critical thinking on the topic was “Zhimindi wenhua huodong lingyizhang 殖民地文化活動另一章”, “Zhinmin yu fanzhimin/ Taiwan zaoqi dianying huodong 殖民與反殖民 / 臺灣早期電影活動” in *Pianmian zhi yan* 片面之言 (Taipei: Zhonghuaminguo dianying tushuguan chubanshu 中華民國電影圖書館出版部, 1985) by Chen Guo-fu 陳國富. In addition, a newspaper article written by Huan Ren 黃仁 (“Huainian sange zouhong zhongguo dalu de Taiwan yingren 懷念三個走紅中國大陸的臺灣影人,” *Lianhebao* 聯合報, October 25, 1995, 37) focused on He Fei-Guang 何非光 and Liu Na-Ou 劉吶鷗, from an academic perspective rather than a journalistic one. This is one of the pioneering studies in the field and is noted for its treatment of Taiwanese film professionals who were active in mainland China.
- 8 There are a number of publications—one of the most representative works among them being *Rizhi shiqi Taiwan dianyingshi* 日治時期臺灣電影史 (Taipei: Yushanshe 玉山社, 1998) by Ye Long-yan 葉龍彥. However, the lack of credibility of the listed accounts leaves much to be desired in dealing with historical materials.
- 9 Restored films are available for viewing at the place listed below: “Piange zhuandongjian de Taiwan xianying 片格轉動間的臺灣顯影,” on the website of National Museum of Taiwan History, <http://digimuse.nmth.gov.tw/Jplan/index.aspx> (accessed May 20, 2014). As I have been asked by the National Museum of Taiwan History to research these films, I was jointly conducting the research getting the Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research (KAKENHI, Type of Grants Programs: Challenging Exploratory Research, Project title: Historical Analysis and Classification of Film Records on the Colonial Taiwan 植民地期台湾映画フィルム史料の歴史学的整理分析) from 2008 to 2009, and am currently conducting the project “Constructing a diversified model of researching on East Asian Film History under colonization 東アジア植民地期映画フィルム史料の

and their eventual release to the public, scholars gradually began to publish analytical studies on the content of the films. The environment surrounding such historical resources also quickly became more suited for research. In the past, scholars needed to look through catalogues of documents and resources on paper, find where they were held, and travel to that location in order to view the materials. However, many written materials have now been digitalized and organized into a database that scholars are able to search via internet.<sup>10</sup> With the help of these digital databases, research topics have also diversified into various areas, exploring movie theaters and playhouses, film and local culture, film and literature, etc.

Furthermore, in recent years, historical approaches are gaining importance in film studies just as audio visual resources are gaining importance in historical studies. Conferences slated for this year include “東亞脈絡中的早期臺灣電影：方法學與比較框 (Early Taiwan Cinema: the Regional Context and Theoretical Perspectives)” (Apr 26, 2014) at the Taipei National University of the Arts, “New Approaches to History

---

多角的研究モデル構築,” (Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research (KAKENHI), Type of Grants Programs: C) from 2011 to 2014. Related results of these projects include Misawa Mamie 三澤真美恵, “1970nendai Taiwan xinli kensetu toshiteno terebi tousei 1970年代台湾「心理建設」としてのテレビ統制,” *Media shi kenkyu メディア史研究* 32(2012): 83-105; “Eiga film shiryō no Lekishigaku geki kousatsu ni muketa shiron 映画フィルム資料の歴史学的考察に向けた試論: 台湾教育会製作映画『幸福の農民』(1927年)をめぐる” in ed. Wang De-wei et al., *Teikokushugi to Bungaku 帝国主義と文学* (Tokyo: Kenbun shuppan 研文出版, 2010), 367-393.

10 However, in this “convenient” digital environment, I believe there is an aspect that “disables” the sense to look critically at these historical sources, which one was able to develop through the physical process of finding materials. For instance, this digital environment may impede scholars from gaining access to information that will allow for critical examination of materials, such as the contents of articles placed next to the article, the position of the article within the magazine, or the prevalent subjects of the articles that have been published before or after the specific article.

through the Visual Media” (July 4-5, 2014), at Korea University, and “影像與史料: 影像中的近代中國 (Visual images and historical documents: Modern China in visual images)” (Oct 11-12, 2014) at the National Chengchi University in Taipei. Considering the colonial status of East Asia in the past, these international symposiums, which are being held in succession, reflect the increasing historical value of films and footage in research.

I would like to situate my research about Taiwan during the colonial period in the research trend I've described above. With a desire to learn about the history of Taiwanese cinema, I went to study abroad in Taiwan in the mid-1990s, when Taiwanese history was only starting to be viewed as a legitimate area of academic research. Due to these circumstances, gaps in the history of Taiwanese cinema existed in terms of achievements from empirical studies. By analyzing historical documents left in Taiwan by the Japanese Government General (statute book, magazines from educational institutions, such as "*Taiwan kyōikukai zashi* 台湾教育會雜誌," "*Taiwan kyōiku* 台湾教育", and magazines from law-enforcement institutions, such as "*Taiwan kēsatsukyōkai zashi* 台湾警察協會雜誌," "*Taiwan kēsatsu jihō* 台湾警察時報"), I wanted to form a chronological narrative of film history through the colonial period from the patchwork narratives which were more common at the time (Master's thesis at National Taiwan University in 1998; published by Qianwei 前衛出版社 as *The Screen under Colonial Rule: A study on the movie policy of the Colonial Government of Taiwan 植林地下的「銀幕」: 台灣總督府電影政策之研究 1895-1942*, in 2001 (Chinese)). However, as you can tell from the title of the book, the perspectives presented were closely aligned with the policy of the Japanese Government-General. Therefore, the book does not provide enough information about the film industry in the private sector or activities of the people living under colonial rule. To improve upon the points I omitted in my Master's thesis, I shifted the focus of my research on the meaning and the significance of film to the colonized Taiwanese. In my Ph.D. dissertation, I traced the steps of the Taiwanese in their film activities in relation to

film policies in Taiwan, Shanghai, and Chongqing. (This dissertation written in 2010 was published under the title, “Between ‘the Empire of Japan’ and ‘the Motherland China’: Collaboration and border-crossing of Taiwanese film activists in the colonial period” 「帝国」と「祖国」のはざま: 植民地期台湾映画人の交渉と越境, in 2010 (Japanese). In 2012, it was published in Chinese 在「帝國」與「祖國」的夾縫間: 日治時期臺灣電影人的交渉和跨境 by National Taiwan University Press, which was translated by Li Wen-qing 李文卿 and Xu Shi-jia 許時嘉.<sup>11</sup> This study explicitly discussed the work of film distributors and filmmakers who were born in Taiwan, using statistical documents, journals, letters, and oral records. Moreover, this study offered a general image of the film regulation policies implemented by the KMT in Shanghai and Chongqing through archival documents (stored in ROC Academia Historica 中華民國國史館 and the KMT Party History Institute 中國國民黨文化傳播委員會黨史館所藏檔案). In terms of Taiwan’s colonial period, using a quantity of different statistical data, it can be divided into three “phases,” according to the changes in the film market: the “market formation phase” (beginning to mid-1920s); the “market expansion and diversification phase” (mid-1920s to mid-1930s); the “market unification phase” (mid-1930s to 1945). The study also analyzed the characteristics of the Taiwanese reception of film during the colonial times, concluding that there were “segmental channels” and “localization on the spot.” In the following, I will explain the characteristics of the Taiwanese production and reception of films in the colonial period.

---

11 This book considers film as “modernity” and analyzes the historical footprints of film professionals using the keywords “negotiation” and “border crossing.” The reason this book adapts these keywords is due to the influence from research in closely related fields, such as Korean history during the colonial period.

## Characteristics of the Production and Reception of Films in Taiwan during the Colonial Era

The Taiwanese film market began to expand and diversify in the mid-1920s, and there were attempts by the Taiwanese to produce films. However, these attempts were merely experimental and unable to make it to the big screen. In fact, research has shown that only a handful of films produced during the half century of the colonial era were made by Taiwanese. During the same period of time, the number of feature film productions multiplied exponentially in China, which was considered to be in a state of "semi-colonization 半殖民地" or "sub-colonization 次殖民地." Between 1923 and 1926, the number of Chinese films increased year by year, going from a mere five films in 1923 to 101 in 1926,<sup>12</sup> and the number of movie theaters owned by Chinese also increased during this four-year span.<sup>13</sup> In the 1930s, large-scale film production companies began to appear which had their markets not only in China but also in Southeast Asia, where many overseas Chinese lived.<sup>14</sup> In Korea, which had also been under Japanese colonial rule, films began to be produced

---

12 The data is from *Zhongguo dianying zong mulu 1st* 中国電影總目錄(第一輯) (stored at *Zhongguo dianying ziliaoguan* 中国電影資料館藏, 1960), and it does not include works produced in China with foreign capital. (Hong Shi 弘石, "Wusheng de cunzai 無声的存在", in *Zhongguo wusheng dianying* 中国無声電影ed. *Zhongguo dianying ziliaoguan* 中国電影資料館 (Beijing : *Zhongguo dianying chubanshe* 中国電影出版社, 1996), 5.

13 According to Zhai Min 翟民, "Guopian fuxing yundong zhongguo nei yingyuan zhuangkuang zhi yiban 國片復興運動中國內影院狀況之一斑" (*Yingxizazhi* 影戲雜誌 7-8(1930), cited from *Zhongguo wusheng dianying* 中国無声電影, 209), of the nearly 250 movie theaters in China in 1930, film theaters that only played Chinese films numbered between 50 and 60.

14 The company that pioneered the Southeast Asian film market was "Tianyi yingpian gongsi 天一影片公司." Please refer to ed. Huang Jian-ye and Huang Ren 黄建業 · 黄仁總 編集, *Shijie huigu* 世紀回顧: 圖說華語電影 (Taipei : Wenjianhui 文建会, 2000), 25.

successfully by Koreans starting in the 1920s. The number of Korean films produced over the colonial period numbered around 200 including leftist films that were often called films from the “Trend School (傾向派),” and the total number of people working in the film industry reached over 10,000.<sup>15</sup> Considering that the films were produced with private funds, Taiwan’s situation was an obviously imbalanced one even when considering its status as a Japanese colony in East Asia. A number of reasons for the stagnant production of films made with Taiwanese private funds have been mentioned in the past. An article from the newspaper *Taiwan Xin Minbao* (臺灣新民報) in 1932, which examined Taiwanese cinema, pointed out three reasons for the lack of films produced by Taiwanese: a complete lack of fixed capital, a complete lack of screenplays, and the existence of censorship system in Taiwan.<sup>16</sup> In “post-war” studies referenced above, technological capability was added to the list, citing four factors: lack of capital, limited technological capabilities, limited creativity, and pressure from a strict censorship system.<sup>17</sup> These factors undoubtedly hold some of the responsibility for the sluggish pace of Taiwanese film production. However, considering the success of industries established with private funds and literature

---

15 In Korea, over 50 film production companies were established between 1920 and 1930. Information on ten film theaters can be gained from a survey in 1941, and over half of them were established and represented by Koreans. In 1939, the Association of Chosôn Film Makers was established as well. Please refer to Ichikawa Sai 市川彩, *Ajia eiga no sôzô oyobi kensetsu* アジア映画の創造及建設 (Tokyo : Kokusai eiga tsûshinsha 国際映画通信社, 1941), 99–114; 扈賢贊, translated by Nemoto Rie 根本理恵, *Waga shinema no tabi* わがシネマの旅: 韓国映画を振りかえる (Tokyo: Gaifûsha 凱風社, 2001), 46–94; 李英一, “Nitsei shokuminchi jidai no chosen eiga 日帝植民地時代の朝鮮映画” in *Koza Nihon eiga 3 講座日本映画3* (Tokyo: Iwanami 岩波書店, 1986), 312-335.

16 G. Y. “Taiwan eiga kai no kaiko 台湾映画界の回顧(上・下),” *Taiwan xin minbao* 臺灣新民報 400, January 31, 1932, 15; *Taiwan xin minbao* 臺灣新民報401, February 6, 1932, 14.

17 Lu Su-shang 呂訴上, *Taiwan dianying xijushi* 台湾電影戲劇史, 6-7.

produced by Taiwanese, instead of limiting the scope of research to film, and also compared to Korea which was under Japanese rule and China which was considered a “sub-colony” or a “semi-colony,” the factors mentioned above are insufficient to explain the reason for the lackluster Taiwanese film production. Possibly, certain factors on the demand side—specifically the size of the market—might have played a decisive role in limiting the production of films by Taiwanese.<sup>18</sup> For example, it is said that Japanese silent films experienced its golden age from 1924 to 1930,<sup>19</sup> and the population of mainland Japan (including Hokkaido and Okinawa, excluding its colonies) at that time was 14 to 15 times larger than that of Taiwan.<sup>20</sup> In the case of *Kago no Tori* 籠の鳥 (1924), which is famous for being a big hit despite its low budget and being filmed within a short span of time (four and a half days), earned a gross profit of 170,000 Yen with a production cost 1,500 to 1,600 Yen (the net sales were over 100 times its production cost) within mainland Japan.<sup>21</sup>

For the sake of further comparison, we can look to China where film was being gradually commercialized with Chinese private funds in the 1930s. According to the data from the boom period in the film industry before the outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese War, the production cost of a Talkie film (a film with accompanying audio) was about 26,180 yuan. Of the total revenue for films from mainland China and Southeast

---

18 According to Sato Yukihiro (佐藤幸人), analysis of an industry should take five factors into consideration: market (factor on the demand side), money, manpower, material, and management (factors on the supply side).

19 Tanaka Junichiro 田中純一郎, *Nihon Eiga Hattatsushi 2* 日本映画発達史2 (Tokyo: Chuokoronsha, 1980), 12.

20 In 1925, the population of Japan was around 59,737,000, and that of Taiwan was 3,993,408. In 1930, the population of Japan was around 64,450,000, and that of Taiwan was 4,592,537. Numbers are based on the Census population. Please refer to the “Portal Site of Official Statistics of Japan” (<http://www.e-stat.go.jp>) and Taiwan Database for Empirical Legal Studies (<http://tcsd.lib.ntu.edu.tw>).

21 Tanaka Junichiro 田中純一郎, *Nihon Eiga Hattatsushi 2* 日本映画発達史2 (Tokyo: Chuokoronsha, 1980), 12.

Asia, which was 37,800 yuan, Shanghai (population in 1930: 3.7 million) accounted for twenty-six percent at 10,000 yuan.<sup>22</sup> From this data it is clear that screening films in Shanghai alone did not generate enough revenue to fund even a single film, and production of films was dependent on the profits made through screenings of the film in mainland China and Southeast Asia. Comparison of the Taiwanese film market to the Korean film market is difficult, as data on the Korean film market was unavailable for the purposes of this study, but certain observations can be made if the larger size of the Korean market is taken into consideration. At this time, the population of Korea was about 4.7 times larger than that of Taiwan; the Korean film market was therefore also larger. Records from the 1920s reveal that some companies were able to make their ends meet even with films of poor quality when they were screened for only a week. A record indicates that *Arirang* (1926), a huge box office hit, reaped tens of thousands of yen in profits due to a huge amount of investment in the film just by opening at Danseongsa in Seoul, and tickets were sold out each time the film was brought back into theaters.<sup>23</sup> Na

---

22 Ichikawa Sai 市川彩, *Ajia eiga no sōzō oyobi kensetsu* アジア映画の創造及建設, 195-196. From a survey conducted by the Publicity Department of the KMT, production cost of one film was 20,000 yuan at film companies, such as Tianyi 天一, Minxin 民新, and Yueming 月明, and 40,000 yuan at larger production companies, such as Mingxing 明星. Please refer to the archival document, “Zhongyang buzhu Shanghai dianyingjieshezhi kangzhan yingpian jihua 中央補助上海電影界攝製抗戰影片計劃,” KMT Party History Institute 党史館檔案 [5・3-57・11]. Therefore the production cost reported by Ichikawa 市川 seems to be also valid.

23 Chosen eiga bunka kenkyūjo 朝鮮映画文化研究所 eds., *Chosen eiga sanjyu nenshi* 朝鮮映画三十年史, *Eiga shunpo* 映画旬報88 (July 11, 1943): 16-19. We have to pay attention to the fact that the investor of this film was a Japanese merchant Yodo Torazo 淀虎蔵, who lived in Seoul. That is the reason that on the one hand we can regard this film as a Korean film in terms of its director and audience: on the other hand the film also can be regarded as a Japanese film in terms of the ethnic character of its fund. However, this paper, for sake of comparison to Taiwan, attaches greater importance to the former viewpoint than to

Woon-gyu, the director of *Arirang*, directed *Soldier of Fortune* (1926), *The Wild Rat* (1927), *Goldfish* (1927) and other films in quick succession of one another.<sup>24</sup> It would therefore be safe to assume that the Korean film market was large enough for the Korean filmmakers to recover the production cost and reproduce films that had been made for Korean audience<sup>25</sup>.

For Taiwanese films, we might consider the film *Bloodstain* 血痕 (released in 1930), a feature film that was produced, directed, and filmed by Taiwanese and additionally featured a Taiwanese cast. *Bloodstain* is a martial arts romance film<sup>26</sup> about a girl who disguises herself as a man and goes into the mountain after her father is killed in a robbery. Along with her lover, who follows her into the mountain, she avenges her father in the film. The production cost of this film was 2,000 yen,<sup>27</sup> and it was a record box office hit that generated gross sales of 950 yen over three days of screening at Yongle Theater.<sup>28</sup> However, the estimated amount of net gain from the film was less than ten percent of the gross earnings.

For instance, there was a temporary screening of a film at a regional

the latter.

24 Chosen eiga bunka kenkyūjo 朝鮮映画文化研究所 eds., *Eiga shunpo* 映画旬報88 (July 11, 1943): 16-19.

25 Chosen eiga bunka kenkyūjo 朝鮮映画文化研究所 eds., *Eiga shunpo* 映画旬報88 (July 11, 1943): 16-19. The case of Na Woon-gyu might be considered as a special one, because he was considered as an extraordinary talented director. However, it is still important that a Korean filmmaker could produce films one after another with profits from the Korean film market at that time.

26 Lu Su-shang 呂訴上, *Taiwan dianying xijushi* 台湾電影戲劇史, 6.

27 Around the same time, the wage of a male farm worker was 80 sen per day; female farm worker, 44 sen. Please refer to Mizoguchi toshiyuki 溝口敏行 and Umemura mataji 梅村又次 eds., *Kyūshokuminchi keizai toukei* 旧植民地經濟統計: 推計と分析 (Tokyo: Toyo keizai shinpōsha 東洋經濟新報社, 1988), 258. Therefore the production cost of this film was equivalent to about seven year's worth of wages of a male farm worker.

28 G.Y, "Taiwan eiga kai no kaiko 台湾映画界の回顧(上・下)," *Taiwan xin minbao* 臺灣新民報.

city in 1928 that attracted about 3,000 viewers over three days. The organizers of this event, Fu Shun-nan 傅順南 and Cai Qing-chi 蔡清池, donated the total gains of over 100 yen to a company in Kaohsiung that was on strike.<sup>29</sup> Admission fees for film theaters cost from 0.1 yen (10 錢) to 1.2 yen (1円20錢). Since the film was distributed by a for-profit company, if we assume that proceeds made from ticket sales was 0.5 yen (50錢) per person, earnings from the screening that Fu Shun-nan 傅順南 and Cai Qing-chi 蔡清池 made would amount to about 1500 yen. Therefore, net earnings would account for about 6.6 percent. As for the Taiwanese Theater Corporation (台湾劇場株式会社, operated “Ying Zuo 榮座,” a theater that screened films and put on performances), a large-scale company for film screening in Taipei, the company made net earnings of 752.22 yen from gross earnings of 9,589.31 yen as noted in the 36th Term Business Report (June 1, 1930–Nov 30, 1930), at the time *Bloodstain* was appearing in theaters. The profit rate was 7.8 percent, falling short of 10 percent. This corporation opened a new movie theater in December 1935, and in the 47th Term Business Report (Dec 1, 1935—May 31, 1936), gross earnings from theaters including Ying Zuo and the new theater was 55,162.74 yen. The net profit was 9,800.77 yen, and the profit rate was 17.7 percent. We need to take into account the fact that this was a large-scale corporation that owned movie theaters, and the high profit rate resulted from a combination of factors including the large population in Taipei, the opening of a new theater, and it being a popular season for theater-going due to the New Year’s holiday. Therefore if the distributor only owned the film and screened it at a rented theater, the profit rate would have normally remained below ten percent, not even reaching twenty percent at a time when the number of theater-goers was at its highest.<sup>30</sup>

---

29 “Zhongguo yingxi da haoping Jiang Song jiehun renqi 中國影戲大好評蔣宋結婚的人氣,” *Taiwan minbao* 臺灣民報 208(May 13, 1928), 7.

30 From “Taiwan gekijō eigyō hōkoku 台湾劇場營業報告,” no.41 (from December 1, 1932 to May 31, 1933), 5-6.(“Taiwan gekijō eigyō hōkoku 台湾劇場營業報告,”

Considering the situations above, despite the record breaking popularity of *Bloodstain*, net gains only amounted to 95 yen. The film needed to be screened for over sixty days to break even with the production costs. However, since European and American films as well as Japanese and Chinese films were released in the theaters, it was impossible for a single film to be screened for over sixty days even if the film was shown in various theaters around Taiwan.

Although this is an assumption from analyzing fragmentary data, I believe that it would be safe to assume the supply was sufficient in the Taiwanese film market, but the market was not large enough for production companies to break even with the production cost of films that were made with private funds. The Chinese film market also underwent a period where “single film companies” (一片公司, lit. “companies that disappeared after making a single film”) were prevalent in the 1920s and only reached a stable point for reproduction of films in the 1930s. Taiwanese film production companies that were established during the colonial period would not have had the capacity and the capability to pioneer beyond the area of production into overseas markets. The idea of expanding overseas had been under scrutiny,<sup>31</sup> but whether it was realized has not been confirmed.

I would like to call to attention the fact that films that became the seeds for the growth and the industrialization of film production made with private funds in China and Korea became box office hits due to the fervent support of the audience.<sup>32</sup> Likewise, the reason *Bloodstain* became a record-breaking box office hit at the Yongle Theater 永樂座 was because

---

microfilm, stored at University of Tokyo 東京大学経済学部, produced by Yushodo shuppan 雄松堂出版, photographed by Takahashi joho shisutemu 高橋情報システム, 1995).

31 G.Y, “Taiwan eiga kai no kaiko 台湾映画界の回顧(上・下),” Taiwan xin minbao 臺灣新民報.

32 Although some of these discourses might be considered to be retroactively constructed because they are based upon national ideologies constructed after the war, they are still worthy of examination, as they have been strongly influential.

the audience showed their support for a film made by a Taiwanese due to their nationalistic sentiment.<sup>33</sup> However, even this popularity spurred by nationalism was not enough to recover the production cost or begin the production of a sequel. In the end, the size of the market decided whether the film ended up in the red or the black.

Still, tens of Taiwanese-language<sup>34</sup> films per year and sometimes over 100 films were produced in the “post war” period, between the mid-1950s and the 1960s, targeting the Taiwanese market. In this context, since the Taiwanese film market was smaller than the Chinese or Korean markets, it might have been possible for the production of films made with private funds to be commercialized if there had not been competing films.<sup>35</sup>

33 There are other examples of film popularity spurred by nationalistic sentiment, such as the case of the newsreel about the marriage of the Chinese leader Chiang Kai-shek with Song Mei-ling. The newsreel was so welcomed by the Taiwanese that the *Taiwan xinbao* (May 13, 1928) carried the following article: the audience clapped their hands at the scene of their marriage. The report concluded by saying that it was thus clear that differences in national sentiments were reflective of differences in the type of entertainment people preferred.

34 Talkies in Taiwanese were called “Minnanyu pian 閩南語片,” “Xiayu pian 廈語片,” since some of them were filmed by Minnan (閩南系) film makers from Hong Kong. After the production of talkies was revitalized in Taiwan in the mid-1950s, the term “Taiwanese-language film (Taiyu pian 台語片)” became a fixed term.

35 According to Huang Ren 黃仁, Taiwan dialect films shrank in volume after enjoying five years of tremendous popularity. The major cause of this was the influx of Japanese films. The government imposed a quota on Japanese films, considering a feature length film to be equivalent to a short film. Therefore, two feature length films were calculated as one feature length film. As a result eight more Japanese films were screened per year, and pirated Japanese films were also proliferated; and these copies were screened in theaters in the southern and central regions. This was a huge blow for Taiwanese-language films, and small production companies which lacked the skills to survive went out of business one after another. (Beiqing taiyu pian 悲情台語片, Taipei: Wanxiang tushu 萬象圖書, 1994, 15). Over the three years in which Japanese films were banned (due to an incident involving corruption), theaters that used to screen Japanese films began to screen

Therefore, the crucial problem might have been the existence of products that could compete with films produced with private funds. In terms of this problem, it seems that the characteristics of film reception in Taiwan was the key, that is to say, “segmented distribution channels (分節的普及経路)” and “localization on the spot (臨場の土着化).”

In Taiwan during the colonial period, there were no homogeneous or diversified film distribution channels, but many different channels, including film screenings led by the Japanese Government-General and not-for-profit film screenings that went on for a short period of time, protested the strict control of the Government-General. These were the “segmented distribution channels (分節の普及経路).” The factors involved in segregation included the time of screening films, whether the screening was for-profit or not-for-profit, the ethnicity of the organizer and manager, the language used in the screening, and the group targeted as the audience. In classifying distribution channels when they had been most diversified, we can categorize them into eight different types, “a through h” as in the chart below.

Films transported through the distribution channels by and for the Taiwanese (a, c, f, g in the chart) were accompanied by silent film narrators who added explanations in the Taiwanese dialect. These films were “Taiwanized,” or “localized” for reception. In cases where the film came through independent Taiwanese distribution channels, a narrator was provided, even for films with sound. Silent film narrators were necessary for Japanese films, European and American films that only had Japanese subtitles, and Chinese films because the language that was used

---

Taiwanese-language films. The absence of the strongest competitor naturally led to the increased number of screenings for Taiwanese-language films. Even under the pressure of the development of Mandarin films and the establishment of Taishi (台視, Taiwan Television Entertainment Company) on the National Day of the Republic of China (双十節, the day the Republic of China was established) in 1962, Taiwanese-language films reached the pinnacle of their popularity. (op.cit.16-17). Taiwan dialect films are assumed to have prospered during this “post-war” period between the balances of supply and demand in the market.

the most in Taiwan (Taiwanese-dialect 台灣語) was different from the standard Chinese spoken in films produced in Shanghai.

<Chart> Film Distribution Channels in Taiwan During the Colonial Period (mid-1920s to mid-1930s)

Type	For-profit						Not-for-profit	
Screening Method	Screening Tour		Theater				Screening Tour	
Organizer/ Manager	Taiwanese	Japanese	Taiwanese	Japanese	Japanese	Taiwanese	Taiwanese (The Taiwanese Cultural Association, etc.)	Japanese (Government General)
Language	Taiwanese	Japanese	Taiwanese	Japanese	Japanese	Taiwanese	Taiwanese	Japanese
Target Audience	Taiwanese	Japanese, Taiwanese	Taiwanese	Taiwanese, Japanese	Japanese, Taiwanese	Taiwanese	Taiwanese	Taiwanese, Indigenous Taiwanese 台灣原住民族, Japanese
	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h

Reference: Created by the author

Comment: Other factors, such as gender and the difference between Han Chinese (漢族) and ethnic minorities of Indigenous Taiwanese (台灣原住民族) should also be explored. However, considering the context of this paper, distribution channels were classified, mainly focusing on the difference between the Japanese (the colonizer) and Taiwanese (the colonized). After the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War, for-profit screenings of films in the private sector through all channels listed above except for “h” were unified in accordance with institutions such as *Taiwan kōgyō tōsei kaisha* 台灣興行統制会社 (the company controlling performances in Taiwan) and other regulations to control the screenings. Therefore “h” came to be in charge of the lowest rank of channels to transport the films. As for films distributed through “h,” explanations were offered in Japanese in principle. However, there are records of fantong (蕃童, a child from an ethnic minority group

of Indigenous Taiwanese 台湾原住民族 who live in the mountains) translating the films on screening tours to the mountains. Therefore it is plausible that the Taiwanese dialect or languages spoken by ethnic minorities were also used.

Also, the technology necessary to play the audio which accompanied the films was usually only found in movie theaters in large cities (Refer to <Figure: Number of “Motion Picture Narrators” in Taipei (1930-1941)>). Even in the late 1930s, when an increasing number of sound films led to a rapid decline in the number of Japanese silent film narrators, the number of Taiwanese narrators did not diminish.<sup>36</sup> Moreover, silent film narrators did not stop at translating the subtitles or the dialogue but sometimes added an impromptu satire, spiraling off into a “political speech” at times. For instance, film screenings hosted by the Taiwanese Cultural Association 台湾文化協會, which was considered to be nationalistic and resistant to Japanese colonial rule, did not exclude Japanese films or other foreign films from screening, but rather “localized” most films into “<our> films” as the following: when they screened a film about the North point, a Taiwanese film narrator Lin qiu-wu 林秋梧 explained “animals get their food by themselves when they are grown up. People are the same. However, what if society didn’t give him what he needed, what if the food was not enough, or what if he was ----ed, it would be terribly tragic, wouldn’t it? In this kind of society, if we didn’t think of

---

36 According to a fragmentary data, there were nine Japanese (neidiren 内地人) and 10 Taiwanese (bendaoren 本島人) “Motion Picture Narrator” at Taichung in 1933 (Taichūshū keimubu 台中州警務部, “Taichūshū keimu yōran 台中州警務要覽”, 1933, 77). The other data also noted that 20 “Motion Picture Narrators” were in Tainan, but disregarded information regarding the narrator’s nationality (Tainanshū keimubu 台南州警務部, “Tainanshū keimu yōran 台南州警務要覽”, 1935, 131). The aforementioned silent film narrators possessed permits. However, it is likely that there were a number of silent film narrators who probably had no permits (According to an interview with Mr. Chen Yong-sheng 陳勇陞 on Dec 11-12, 1998. Guojia dianying ziliao guan ziliao zu 國家電影資料館資料組: Hong Ya-wen 洪雅文 · Xue Hui-ling 薛惠玲 · Wang Mei-ling 王美齡. At the residence of Mr. Chen Yong-sheng 陳勇陞. Accompanied by the author as well).

a way, the light would go out and the darkness would emerge” (*Taiwan minbao*, November 21, 1926). When they screened a drama film and a villain with a moustache appeared, a Taiwanese narrator explained “a guy with a moustache must not be a good guy,” and was ordered to stop his explanation, as the policeman checking the screening in the theatre had a moustache (*Taiwan minbao*, March 6, 1927). In this way, any film could be interpreted and made into something that the Taiwanese populace could enthusiastically consume. In these film-screening spaces, the content of the films heavily depended upon the silent film narrator’s explanations and interpretation.<sup>37</sup> In other words, at a time when barely any Taiwanese films were in existence, explanations of films in the Taiwan dialect were part of the “Taiwanization” or “localization” of films on the spot.

Some people might question whether “localization” means the same thing as “creolization.” However, if pidgin (a common supplementary language used as a communication tool between groups of people who do not share a common language) develops into a mother tongue of a certain group, the language is called a creole language. Given this context, creolization refers to a rather stable situation where hybrids that were localized have been turned into something the populace views as its own. On the other hand, localization is a “momentary” and temporary movement. Silent film narrators play a decisive role in this. In the redundancy and invariability of reproduced content, silent film narrators add a touch of “local flavor” and “variability.” Through this, the charm of watching a film is that “<our> film” (i.e. the ability the film has to transform a space or mesmerize an audience) is reproduced in a unique manner. Therefore, “localization” of a film on the spot may be an emergence of an ethnic sentiment within the entertainment space that is not necessarily turned into a direct anti-Japanese movement.

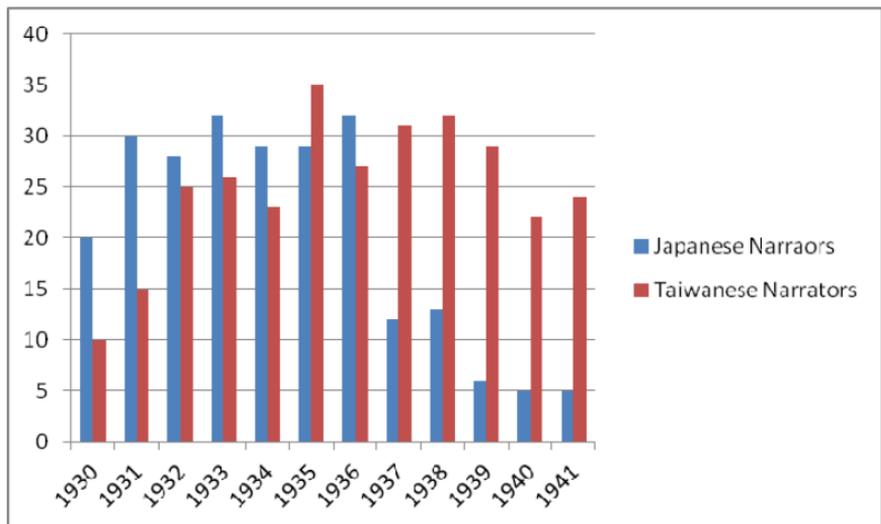
At the same time, it is hard to deny the possibility that localization on

---

37 Please refer to Chapter 1 of Misawa Mamie 三澤真美恵, *Teikoku to sokoku no hazama* 「帝国」と「祖国」のはざま for more detailed information.

the spot repressed Taiwanese film production, which was politically and economically riskier than localizing non-Taiwanese films at the screenings. Since the explanation presented by Taiwanese silent film narrators “localized” and “Taiwanized” films for the audience, the Taiwanese audience came to enjoy that these were films they could call “<our> films,” even though the films were not necessarily made with Taiwanese private funds.

<Figure> The Number of “Motion Picture Narrators” in Taipei (1930-1941)



Reference: The data of “occupations and organizations under police control (Keisatsu torishimari ni zokusuru shokugyo oyobi dantai 警察取締ニ属スル職業及団体)” from *Taihoku prefecture statistical report* (Taihokushu tokeisho 台北州統計書), the fiscal years of 1930 to 1941 (published by Taihokushu chijikanbo bunshoka 台北州知事官房文書課, published in 1932~1943 respectively).

In other words, film productions with Taiwanese private funds were conspicuously sluggish in Taiwan among the colonies in East Asia for two reasons (aside from the causes mentioned in previous studies which are also important): first, the size of the Taiwanese film market, and second, the “localization on the spot” of non-Taiwanese films (the making

of “<our> films” in the space for film reception) through local silent film narrators within the unique categories of “segmented distribution channels” in Taiwan.

I would like to once again reiterate that since film requires a huge sum of capital and a distribution system, the agent who attempts to produce, distribute, and screen films—whether the agent is located in the colony (Taiwanese) or metropole (Japanese)—within “legal” boundaries must “negotiate” with the dominating authority in the relevant society. Furthermore, considering that the “law” in the colony is harsher than in the metropole and the management of regulations is arbitrary, it is easy to imagine that the colonized people who wish to surpass the limitations of negotiations will opt to “cross borders.” In my book, I mainly focused on Liu Na-ou 劉訥鷗 and He Fei-guang 何非光<sup>38</sup> among the Taiwanese film makers who decided to “cross the border.” There is also a leading study about a Korean director during the colonial period,<sup>39</sup> named Hô Yông (許泳, his Japanese name is Hinatsu Eitaro 日夏英太郎, Indonesian name is Dr. Huyung). Hô worked in the Japanese film industry during the age of silent films, directed *You and I* (君と僕) in Korea, and went to Java, which was occupied by Japan, as a member of the military press corps (陸軍報道班) to direct *Calling Australia* (豪州への呼び声). After Japan’s defeat in the Second World War, Hô contributed to the revolution for Indonesia’s independence, directing plays and films such as *Between Sky and the Land* (天と地のあいだで), and later dying in Jakarta in 1952. Hiding the fact that he was Korean, he got his start in the Japanese film world as a scriptwriter, directing *You and I* (君と僕) by using his Korean-

---

38 The article about He Fei-guang can be read in Korean. Please refer to the followings: “A forgotten director of resistance film, He Fei-guang: ‘We’ that the colonized Taiwanese imagined,” Yerim Kim and Liu Shu-qin, eds., *The War as Threshold: The Cultural Situation of Chosun and Taiwan at the end of the 1930s* (Seoul: Greenbee, 2010) (Korean, Translator: Song Taewook).

39 Utsumi Aiko and Murai Yoshitaka 内海愛子・村井吉敬, *Cinéaste Heo Young no “Showa”* シネアスト許泳の「昭和」(Tokyo: Gaifusha 凱風社), 1987.

ness as a cultural asset. After moving to Java with the military publicity bureau as a member of a “repressed ethnic group,” Hô reflected upon his past as a “pro-Japanese” hoping to return to the Korean peninsula, and stayed in Indonesia, gaining fame in the Indonesian film world as a “quiet and hardworking” director. Just like Liu Na-ou 劉吶鷗 and He Fei-guang 何非光, traces left by Hô were also full of solitude of having been born into a colony, crossing borders to follow his dream of creating films, and living between the cracks. In studying the cinematic history of countries in East Asia which fell under colonial rule, we must not leave out the names of those who decided to “cross borders” in order to actively pursue their ambitions. The traces of these individuals reflect the situation of being colonized as much as the activities of the people who decided to stay in the colony.

### **Conclusion: "Decolonization from the bottom up" in the "post-war" Taiwanese film market**

This paper gives an overview of the discussion about Taiwanese film history during the colonial period in East Asia by looking at the production and reception of films by Taiwanese during the colonial period in line with the theme of this section, “Colony, Empire, and Post-colonialism.” One important point I would like to add concerns “decolonization from the bottom up” in the film market in “post-war” Taiwan, or Taiwan following Japanese colonial rule. Before proceeding, an overview of Taiwan’s unique historical and political situation is necessary. The cinematic history of “post-war” Taiwan hinges on a point where the society that had been colonized under Japanese rule and the government that faced military invasion by the Japanese came together. Therefore, there are two kinds of continuities: first, in terms of policies, film regulations imposed by the KMT which fought in a global war and a civil war; second, in terms of film distribution channels and film perception, the unique characteristics of Taiwanese film market that

had been formed during the colonial era and continued on afterward.

Under these circumstances, when we consider the cinematic history of “post-war” Taiwan, the clearest example of decolonization that can be observed is the “Sinicization” policy (which was a move away from “Japanification” as well as “Taiwanization” which favored independence) which was centered on promoting the Mandarin language through the media or education under the KMT. In the 1950s, a system was implemented in movie theaters to show short propaganda slides and films in support of the Sinicization policy, and to urge the audience to stand and sing the national anthem of the ROC in unison before the actual screening of a film.<sup>40</sup> However, despite the efforts to “decolonize from the top,” Japanese films gained popularity among the Taiwanese public in the private sector, disappointing the KMT.<sup>41</sup> It is highly symbolic that the first international film festival held in “post-war” Taiwan was the Japanese Film Exhibition of 1960.<sup>42</sup> Some people might look at this

---

40 Misawa Mamie 三澤真美恵, “1950年代前半臺灣電影院國歌齊唱秩序の確立: 由國民黨電影統制統合國民的觀點來思考 (The National anthem at theaters in Taiwan during the first half of the 1950s: from a perspective of the Chinese Nationalist Party’s Film Regulation ),” presented at the International symposium 第一屆臺灣研究世界大會 (The 1st World Congress of Taiwan Studies, on April 28, 2012, at the Academia Sinica 中央研究院 (台湾).

41 Japanese films were temporarily banned in the “post-war” period. However, the KMT administration of the Republic of China, which was relying on the US militarily and economically, resumed trade with Japan, its anti-Communist ally. As a result, a limited number of Japanese films per year were imported and released in the film market as a type of “present” on top of the security guarantee and economic cooperation. (Refer to the publication listed in the 43rd footnote for more information).

42 Please refer to Misawa Mamie 三澤真美恵, “Sengo Taiwan ni okeru Nihon eiga mihonichi 「戦後」台湾における「日本映画見本市」: 一九六〇年の熱狂と批判,” in *Teikoku no shikaku/shikaku* 〈帝国〉の視角 / 死角: 昭和史のなかの学知とメディア, ed. Sakano Tōru 坂野徹 and Shin Chang-gong 慎蒼健, Tokyo: Seiyusha 青弓社, 2010, 207-242) about the film festival that was not only popular among the audience but also provided a severe criticism of the KMT. The revised

event and the failure of the policy mentioned above as proof of Taiwan's "pro-Japanese" tendencies.

However, what I would like to focus on is the fact that Taiwanese-dialect films that began to emerge in the film market were in a competing relationship with Japanese films. For example, when *Xue Ping-gui and Wang Bao-chuan* 薛平貴與王宝釧<sup>43</sup> directed by He Ji-ming 何基明 became a huge hit in 1956, opening the golden age of Taiwanese-dialect films, Japanese films took a huge blow, losing a large share of the market to Taiwanese-dialect films which moved ahead of Japanese films in the category of highest grossing net earnings per film.<sup>44</sup>

The KMT also took notice of the popularity of Taiwanese-dialect films in the market. At the time, the institution that was in charge of the film market's supervision (actively regulating films while also pursuing more passive measures related to censorship) was the "Film Industry Guidance Committee 電影事業輔導委員會" (under the control of the Ministry of Education 教育部 between 1956-1958, and the Government Information

and edited version of the same paper in French is "Aliénation ou acculturation coloniale ? Taiwan et l'énigme" d'un succès: le festival du Film japonais de Taipei (1960)," (traduit par A. Nanta, L.Lespoulous et A.Kerlan), *Cipango - cahiers d'études japonaises*, numéro 19, 2012, à paraître 2013. It is possible to get the full-text of this French paper at the following web site: <http://cipango.revues.org/1632>

- 43 This film was considered lost for a long period of time, but was discovered last year thanks to the efforts of Prof. Jing Ying-Rui 井迎瑞, the former director of Taiwan Film Archives (台灣電影資料館) and professor at the National Tainan University of the Arts (台南芸術大学). The film was restored and screened at the Taipei Film Festival in 2014.
- 44 Lu Su-shang 呂訴上, *Taiwan dianying xijushi* 台灣電影戲劇史, 101. On the other hand, when Japanese films began to be imported to Taiwan in 1965 after a year of prohibition, all the theaters beside ones that distribute American films were monopolized by Japanese films. As a result, Taiwanese-language films and Mandarin films were seriously affected due to reduction of screening opportunities. Please refer to Liu Xian-cheng 劉現成, *Taiwan dianying, shehui yu guojia* 台灣電影, 社會與國家 (Taipei xinzhuang : Shijue chuanbo yishu xuehui 視覺傳播藝術學會, 1997), 78.

Office 新聞局 between 1958-1967). In the 7<sup>th</sup> Committee Meeting Minutes 第7次委員會會議錄 (Jan 30, 1957),<sup>45</sup> the perspective of the KMT administration regarding Taiwanese-dialect films, which were rapidly being produced at the time, is apparent. The meeting minutes include a negative perspective on Taiwanese-dialect films: 1) Taiwanese-dialect films conflict with the national language policy that the government is pursuing, 2) The content of Taiwanese-dialect films does not correspond to the demands of the time, 3) Taiwanese-dialect films led to a decline in artistic standards. The minutes also state that an individual more sympathetic to Taiwanese-language films commented, “The box office numbers for Japanese films are decreasing because Taiwanese-dialect films are screened consecutively. This is possibly due to the audience of these two types of films being the same.” The popularity of Taiwanese-dialect films was kept under a tight watch because they impeded Sinicization, but some people had sympathetic views toward the films because they were part of the de-Japanification movement.

Through this study, we can see—both from the market and from the government’s comments about it—that Japanese films and Taiwanese-dialect films shared the same audience, which led to competition between the two. As local films (particularly Taiwanese-dialect films) were only beginning to emerge at this time, Japanese films in the 1950s and 1960s might have been consumed as an alternative to those films less appealing to audiences.

At this point, I would like to take note of the “localization on the spot,” which is a characteristic of how films in Taiwan were received. In Taiwan’s colonial history when local film production had not yet been commercialized, Japanese films were included in the market through a process of “Taiwanization” whereby they were turned into “<our> film”

---

45 “Jiaoyubu dianying shiye fudao weiyuanhui di qi ci weiyuanhui huiyilu 教育部電影事業輔導委員會第7次委員會會議錄”, January 30, 1957, No. 172-3, 2987, Material of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, owned by Academia Historica of the ROC.

through explanations and interpretations in the Taiwanese-dialect. Considering this unique characteristic and the competitive environment surrounding Japanese films and Taiwanese-dialect films, the popularity of Japanese films in “post-war Taiwan” reflects the fact that Japanese films were not excluded, but rather Taiwanized or localized. Because there were film-narrators who used Taiwanese-dialect for explaining Japanese talkie films in “post-war” period.<sup>46</sup> Furthermore, as the production of Taiwanese-dialect films increased in the 1960s, Japanese films were remade into Taiwanese-dialect films. In this context, the voracious consumption and use of such films in the arena of Taiwanese film production can be seen as an extension of “localization,” one of the primary characteristics of film reception in Taiwan during the colonial period. Thus, the colonial-era practice of “Taiwanizing,” or “localizing” Japanese films as “<our> films (temporary events)” with the help of a narrator’s explanation evolved in “post-war” Taiwan. Instead of a narrator giving a running commentary of the film as it appeared on the screen, Japanese films were “Taiwanized,” or “localized,” into “our films (duplicable contents)” at the production stage: stories and ideas from Japanese cinema became the building blocks for Taiwanese-dialect films.

This is of course a hypothesis that needs to be backed up by more detailed research, yet if we can understand the consumption and process of remaking Japanese films in Taiwan, we will have a clearer understanding of a major transition which occurred in the Taiwanese film market: the “Taiwanizing” or “localization” of Japanese films and “decolonization (de-Japanification) from the bottom up” [“consuming Japan,” meaning digesting and incorporating Japanese elements by consuming Japanese cultural products] in phases in the mass market.<sup>47</sup>

---

46 According to an interview with Mr. Chen Yong-sheng 陳勇陞 on Dec 11-12, 1998. We also can see the scene a narrator using Taiwanese-dialect for explaining a Japanese talkie film in Wu Nian-zhen 吳念真’s movie *A Borrowed Life* 多桑 (1994), which is a story based on his own experiences.

47 Moreover, in consideration of the characteristics of film reception during the colonial period, there is a possibility of Mandarin films being “localized” and

Interpreting the popularity of Japanese films in the "post-war" Taiwanese film market as nothing more than proof of "pro-Japanese" sentiment<sup>48</sup> is a view that turns a blind eye to Taiwan's unique political situation. Such a view might reflect the blind spot of the former colonialists who are unable to untangle themselves from "imperialization." Thus, in closing, I reiterate the need to focus on the unique context surrounding the history of Taiwan—an island ruled by different foreign powers since the 17th century—in order to explore Taiwan's film history within East Asia.

---

consumed by Taiwanese as well. This point should be explored further in the future.

48 Even at the time, some Japanese people, who were unaware of the Japanese colonialism and the political history "after the war," remarked that the popularity of Japanese films was due to a "Japanese boom" or "nostalgia" about Japan in texts such as Tamura Tarō 田村太郎, "Taiwan manpo 台湾慢歩," *Imahashi news* 今橋ニュース(社団法人今橋クラブ), August, 1959, 72–72 (stored at the archive of the Academia sinica 中央研究院近代史研究所檔案館所藏, 外交部檔案「對日宣傳」 [003/0001]), "Taiwan no sugao 台湾の素顔," *Sangyo keizai shinbun* 産業經濟新聞, August 9, 1959 (stored at the archive of the Academia sinica 中央研究院近代史研究所檔案館所藏, 外交部檔案「對日宣傳」 [003/0001]).

\* This paper is written for the conference "New Approaches to History through the Visual Media" held by Center for Korean History, Korea University. I appreciate Prof. Heo Eun and all the members of "The Collecting and Digitalizing Project about Film Documents In Modern Korea" who gave me this opportunity. This study also includes research results of the project "Constructing a diversified model of researching on East Asian Film History under colonization 東アジア植民地期映画フィルム史料の多角的研究モデル構築," (Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research (KAKENHI), Type (C), 2011-2014).

\*\* I appreciate that Prof. Lee Pui-tak and other participants gave me provocative comments at the conference and the specialists of the screening committee of the IJKH submitted important points to be examined. These ended up being very helpful in the revision of my paper. I also thank the great effort of translator(s) of this paper; Ms. Bowoom Keum and Mr. Shin Chiang-Geon who translated those evaluations written in Korean into English and Japanese respectively; and Mr. Evan Peters who helped me to proofread my paper as a native speaker.

## References

1. Chosŏn Film and Culture Research Center (朝鮮映画文化研究所), ed. "Thirty years of the Chosŏn cinema 朝鮮映画三十年史" *Eiga junpō* 映画旬報88. (July 11, 1943): 16-19.
2. Chen YongSheng 陳勇陞, interviewed by Chinese Film Archive Resource Division 國家電影資料館資料組 (Hong Yawen 洪雅文, Xue Huiling 薛惠玲, Wang Meiling 王美齡, and Misawa Mamie 三澤真美惠), December 11 and 12, 1998, at Chen YongSheng's Residence.
3. "Government-subsidized plan for the production of anti-Japanese films in Shanghai 中央補助上海電影界攝製抗戰影片計劃," file number (5-3 / 57-11) from KMT Party History Institute 中國國民黨文化傳播委員會黨史館.
4. Ichikawa Sai 市川彩. *The creation and construction of Asian cinema* アジア映画の創造及建設. Tokyo: International Cinema Association, 1941.
5. "Propaganda against Japan 對日宣傳," Taiwanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs Document, file number [003 / 0001] from Institute of Modern History, Academia Sinica Taiwan 中央研究院近代史研究所.
6. "Results of the 2nd Taiwan National Census" Taipei: Governor-General Cabinet Provisional Bureau of Census Investigation of Formosa, 1927, and "Results of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Taiwan National Census" Taipei: Governor-General Cabinet Provisional Bureau of Census Investigation of Formosa, (1934). Taiwan Colonial Statistics Database from Taiwan Database for Empirical Legal Studies", (<http://tcsd.lib.ntu.edu.tw>).
7. Statistics Bureau, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications. *Population Census of Japan* (Taishō 9 - Heisei 12). Officially published on July 6, 2012. "Portal Site of Official Statistics of Japan" (<http://www.e-stat.go.jp>).
8. Taichū Prefecture Police Bureau (台中州警務部). *Taichū Prefecture*

*Police Brochure* 台中州警務要覽, N.p.:n.p.1933

9. Tai n a n Prefecture Police Bureau (台南州警務部). *Tai n a n Prefecture Police Brochure* 台南州警務要覽. 1935, N.p.:n.p., 1935.
10. Taihoku Prefecture Regional Document Bureau 台北州知事官房文書課. *Taihoku Prefecture Statistics Report 1930* (台北州統計書, Shōwa 5). *Taihoku Prefecture Statistics Report 1931* (Shōwa 6). *Taihoku Prefecture Statistics Report 1932* (Shōwa 7). *Taihoku Prefecture Statistics Report 1933* (Shōwa 8). *Taihoku Prefecture Statistics Report 1934* (Shōwa 9). *Taihoku Prefecture Statistics Report 1935* (Shōwa 10). *Taihoku Prefecture Statistics Report 1936* (Shōwa 11). *Taihoku Prefecture Statistics Report 1937* (Shōwa 12). *Taihoku Prefecture Statistics Report 1938* (Shōwa 13). *Taihoku Prefecture Statistics Report 1939* (Shōwa 14). *Taihoku Prefecture Statistics Report 1940* (Shōwa 15). *Taihoku Prefecture Statistics Report 1941* (Shōwa 16).
11. Taiwan Theater Company (台湾劇場株式会社). *Taiwan theater business report* 台湾劇場營業報告. Microfilm. Filmed by Takahashi information system, produced by Yoshodo.
12. “The 7<sup>th</sup> Committee Meeting Minutes of Film Industry Guidance Committee under the Government Information Office 教育部電影事業輔導委員會第7次委員會會議錄, January 30, 1957,” file number 172-3,2987, Material of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, from Academia Historica of the ROC 國史館 (臺灣).
13. Chen Guofu 陳國富. *Partial Reflections* (片面之言). Taipei: Republic of China Film Library Press, 1985.
14. Cheng Jihua 程季華, ed. *History of the Chinese cinema's development 1 & 2* 中国電影發展史1・2. Beijing: China Film Press, 1963.
15. Ho Hyōnchan (扈賢贊). *My Film Journey: Remembering Korean Films* わがシネマの旅: 韓国映画を振りかえる. Translated by Rie Nemoto根本理恵. Tokyo: Gaifusha, 2001.
16. Hong Shi 弘石. “Existence of silent films 無声的存在” on China Film Archive, *Chinese silent films* 中国無声電影. Beijing: China Film Press, 1996.

17. Huang Jian-ye 黃建業 and Huang Ren 黃仁, ed. *Spectrums of the century: Chinese cinemas 1896-1999* 世紀回顧：圖說華語電影1896-1999. Taipei: Council of Cultural Affairs of the Executive Yuan, 2000.
18. Huang Ren 黃仁. *Sorrowful Taiwanese-language cinema 悲情台語片*. Taipei: Wan-xiang Books, 1994.
19. Huang Ren 黃仁. “Three Taiwanese filmmakers loved by mainland China 懷念三個走紅中國大陸的臺灣影人” *United Daily News*聯合報. October 25, 1995.
20. Li Daomin 李道明. “How did cinema come to Taiwan? 電影是如何來到臺灣的?” *Film Appreciation Journal* 電影欣賞65 (September & October, 1995): 107-108.
21. Li Xiaofeng 李筱峰. *100 major events in Taiwan history: post-World War II* 台灣史100件事件史 戰後篇, Taipei: Yushan Press, 1999.
22. Liu Xiancheng 劉現成. *Taiwanese cinema, society and state* 台灣電影, 社會與國家. Xinzhuang District, New Taipei City: Communication Arts Research Institute, 1997.
23. Lu Sushang 呂訴上. *History of cinema and drama in Taiwan* 台灣電影戲劇史. Taipei: Yinhua Publishing, 1961.
24. Luo Weiming 羅維明. “‘Motion slides’ and motion pictures about Taiwan 「活動幻燈」與臺灣介紹活動寫真” and “Unearthed Taiwanese film sources from the Japanese colonial period 日治臺灣電影資料出土新況” *Film Appreciation Journal* 電影欣賞65 (September & October, 1995): 118-119.
25. Misawa Mamie 三澤真美惠. *Between “the Empire of Japan” and “the Motherland China”: Collaboration and border-crossing of Taiwanese film activists in the colonial period* 「帝国」と「祖国」のはざま——植民地期台湾映画人の交渉と越境, Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 2010.
26. Misawa Mamie 三澤真美惠. “An attempt at historical analysis on film materials – the case of ‘The Happy Farmer’ (1927) produced by Taiwan association for education 映画フィルム資料の歴史学

- 的考察に向けた試論：台湾教育会製作映画『幸福の農民』（1927年）をめぐって” In *Imperialism and Literature* 帝國主義と文学, 367-393. Tokyo: Kenbunshuppan, 2010.
27. Misawa Mamie 三澤真美恵. “A trade fair of Japanese films in Taiwan ‘after the war’: Enthusiasm and criticism in 1960”, *The perspective and the blind spots of the Empire: Academic knowledge and media in the history of the ‘Showa’ era* 〈帝国〉の視角 / 死角：昭和史のなかの学知とメディア, edited by Tōru Sakano and Shin Changgōn, 207-242. Tokyo: Seikyusha, 2010.
  28. Misawa Mamie 三澤真美恵. “The National anthem at theaters in Taiwan during the first half of the 1950’s: from a perspective of the Chinese Nationalist Party’s Film Regulation 1950年代前半台湾の映画館における国家斉唱の確立：国民党映画統制における国民統合の視角から考える”. *The 1st World Congress of Taiwan Studies* collection of papers from Academia Sinica, (April 28, 2012).
  29. Misawa Mamie 三澤真美恵, “Control over television as a part of ‘psychological building’ in the 1970s of Taiwan 1970年代台湾「心理建設」としてのテレビ統制”, *Media History*32. (2012): 83-105.
  30. Misawa Mamie 三澤真美恵. *Between “the Empire of Japan” and “the Motherland China” : Collaboration and border-crossing of Taiwanese film activists in the colonial period* 「帝國」與「祖國」の夾縫間：日治時期臺灣電影人の交渉和跨境. Translated by Li, Wenqing 李文卿 and Xu, Shijia 許時嘉. Taipei: National Taiwan University Press, 2012.
  31. Misawa Mamie 三澤真美恵. “Methods and challenges of research on the early Taiwan cinema history 初期臺灣電影史研究の方法與課題” *Early Taiwan Cinema: the Regional Context and Theoretical Perspectives* 東亞脈絡中的早期臺灣電影：方法學與比較框架(A collection of papers from Taipei National University of the Arts). April 26, 2014.
  32. Mamie Misawa. (traduit par A. Nanta, L.Lespoulous et A.Kerlan)

2012 “Aliénation ou acculturation coloniale ? Taiwan et l'énigme” d'un succès: le festival du Film japonais de Taipei (1960),” *Cipango - cahiers d'études japonaises*, numéro 19, 2012, à paraître 2013.

33. Mamie Misawa (Translated by Song Taewook). “A forgotten director of resistance film, He Fei-guang: ‘We’ that the colonized Taiwanese imagined” Yerim Kim and Liu Shu-qin, eds. *The War as Threshold: The Cultural Situation of Chosun and Taiwan at the end of the 1930s* (Seoul: Greenbee), 2010.
34. Mizoguchi Toshiyuki 溝口敏行 and Mataji Umemura 梅村又次ed. *Basic economic statistics of former Japanese colonies, 1895-1938: Estimates and findings* 旧植民地経済統計: 推計と分析. Tokyo: Toyo Keizai Inc., 1988.
35. Ryū Shinkei 劉進慶. “Still living in Non-postwar East Asia and Taiwan 「戦後」 なき東アジア・台湾に生きて,” organized by Takeshi Komagome 駒込武. *Zenya*前夜9. (2006): 229-246.
36. Tanaka Junichiro 田中純一郎. *History of Japanese cinema's development*, vol. 2日本映画発達史2. Tokyo: Chuokoron-Shinsha, 1980.
37. Utsumi Aiko 内海愛子, and Yoshinori Murai 村井吉敬. *Cineaste Hō Yōng's Showa*シネアスト許泳の「昭和」. Tokyo: Gaifusha, 1987.
38. Wu Micha (呉密察). “The dream of the Taiwanese people and the 228 Incident台湾人の夢と2.28事件” *Modern Japan and Colonies 8: Cold War and Post-colonialism in Asia* 近代日本と植民地8 アジアの冷戦と脱植民地化, edited by Shinobu Ōe 大江志乃夫, et al. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1993: 39-70.
39. Wu Nianzhen 吳念真. *A Borrowed Life* 多桑, Taiwan: LongXiang Film Production Co. and ChangShu A & V Production, 1994.
40. Ye Longyan 葉龍彦. *The history of Taiwanese movies during the Japanese colonialization*日治時期臺灣電影史, Taipei: Yushan Press, 1998.
41. Yi Yōngil 李英一. “Korean cinema during the Japanese colonial period 日帝植民地時代の朝鮮映画” Translated by Takashiki Soji 高崎宗治, *Lecture on Japanese cinema*3 講座日本映画3. Tokyo:

Iwanami shoten, 1986: 312-335.

42. Zhai Min 翟民. “Study on the conditions of Chinese movie theaters during the domestic film revival movement 國片復興運動中國內影院狀況之一斑” *Film Magazine*影戲雜誌7 & 8(1930). Included in *Chinese Silent Films*中国無声電影 (1996):209-211.

<Abstract>

## “Colony, Empire, and De-colonization” in Taiwanese Film History

*Misawa Mamie*

A consideration of Taiwanese cinema during the Japanese colonial period must take into context the unique political history of Taiwan. This paper will first explain the larger current of research related to this political context and situate itself in relation to the observations and findings of others. This paper will then introduce the focus of the author's research under the theme of this section, "Colony, Empire, and Post-colonialism," illustrating an argument about the production and the reception of films by the Taiwanese during the colonial period. Lastly, this paper will also note the possibility of "de-colonization from the bottom up" in the "post-war" Taiwanese film market.

**Keywords:** Taiwan, film history, colony, empire, de-colonization

〈국문초록〉

## 대만 영화사에서의 ‘식민지와 제국, 탈식민주의’

미사와 마미에 (니혼대학 중어중문학과 교수)

식민지 시기 대만 영화는 대만의 정치사적인 맥락에서 고려되어야 한다. 이 논문은 우선 이 정치사적 맥락과 관련한 방대한 연구사를 설명하고, 이들과 다른 관점과 분석을 제시한다. 그리고 “식민지, 제국, 그리고 포스트식민주의”라는 주제 하에 식민지 시기 대만인의 영화 생산 및 수용 양상을 서술한다. 마지막으로 이 논문은 전후 대만 영화시장에서의 “아래로부터의 탈식민주의”의 가능성을 서술할 것이다.

주제어: 대만, 영화사, 식민지, 제국, 탈식민주의