



### **One Film, or Many?: The Multiple Texts of the Colonial Korean Film *Volunteer***

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#### **Abstract**

Until recently, studies on films from colonial Korea in the Japanese empire had to rely primarily on secondary texts, such as memoirs, journal and newspaper articles, and film reviews. The recent discovery of original film texts from archives in Japan, China, Russia, and elsewhere and their availability on DVD format, prompted an important turning point in the scholarship. However, juxtaposing these newly released DVD versions with other archival sources exposes significant differences among the existing versions of texts. For instance, a newly discovered script reveals that important segments are missing in the recently released DVD version of the propaganda film *Volunteer*. There also exist important discrepancies in the dialogue among the original film script, the actual film version, the synopsis, and the Japanese subtitles. Some of the Korean-language dialogue, which might be interpreted as exhibiting some ambivalence toward Japanese imperial policies, was completely silenced through strategic omissions in the Japanese-language subtitles targeting Japanese audiences. Some Japanese-language translations of the script also exhibit drastic changes from the original Korean-language dialogue. Piecing together such fragmented and fraught linguistic dissonance found in the colonial archives, we can conjecture that viewers from the colony and the metropole of *Volunteer* may have consumed very different versions of the film. This article aims to examine the significance of such dissonance, which has only recently become audible in so-called films of transcolonial coproduction.

## Introduction

Since 2000, the field of modern Korean literature has taken a turn toward cultural studies, in response to a widely noted “crisis in the humanities.” Scholars have begun to pay attention to various genres of popular culture, such as magazines, films, television dramas, gramophone music, and radio entertainment programs, all of which had previously been neglected in favor of the literary canon. Both competing with and complementing the latest research trends in North America and Japan, this emerging discourse on popular culture and modernity from Korea offers new perspectives on the everyday life of colonial Korean subjects in the Japanese empire, which had previously been overlooked by overtly nation-centered paradigms. Although these new trends have rightly drawn criticism for disregarding regional, class, and gender inequalities underpinning complex entanglements of colonial modernity, their recognition of universally-shared aspects of coloniality and modernity is gaining prominence, especially among younger scholars.<sup>1</sup>

One of the biggest challenges facing the new research on the mass culture of the colonial period is the lack of available research materials, which limits the possibilities of rich interpretations. For instance, visual and auditory materials in the form of film and radio content have rarely been preserved, unlike literary materials found in newspapers or magazines or popular music on standard-playing records. In the case of film, remaining primary texts are extremely scarce; as a result, research on film history has had to rely instead on newspaper and magazine articles, commentaries, or biographical records and oral histories of filmmakers. Broadcast material for radio dramas or stories is almost nonexistent, with a small amount of the material broadcast in the 1940s still accessible as printed texts in newspapers and magazines

(Seo 2007). Only the late colonial texts that were considered important by the colonial government were fortunate enough to survive in the colonial archives. This scarcity is a major obstacle to more in-depth research on the theme of colonial modernity in popular culture.

Nevertheless, research on colonial film history reached a turning point in the 2000s after the rediscovery of films from the 1930s and 1940s in the Chinese Film Archive and the Russian Gosfilmofond Film Archive. The Korean Film Archive (KOFA) restored and digitized these old films, making them available to researchers and contributing significantly to the study of film history by enabling, for the first time, textual analysis of actual films. Also, a fair number of film dramas from the 1930s and 1940s have been reissued on DVD by the KOFA or made available via video on-demand service on the Korean Movie Database, stoking interest in colonial-era films among the general public as well as among researchers.

The public release of newly recovered films, however, raises the issue of how to confirm the definitive original texts. Each film from the colonial period consisted of several reels, some of which have since been lost. Furthermore, the chronological sequence of some film reels has been shuffled around in the process of restoration itself. Therefore, some films may exist in multiple versions with different content, and even versions that had been considered to be “complete” may actually be lacking important segments.

As a segue into the problem of access to “original” or “complete” texts from the colonial archive, this paper examines the multiple textual versions of the film *Volunteer* (*Chiwŏnbyŏng*, 1941), a collaborative, pro-Japanese propaganda film recently discovered in the Chinese Film Archive. Researchers began to study the newly discovered film before confirming its original text, which led to an initial misreading. I have since confirmed that the DVD edition

of the film (Hanguk Yöngsang Charyowön [KOFA] 2007), which most researchers consider as the complete version, is actually incomplete.

In this article, I offer a new interpretation of the film *Volunteer*, first by demonstrating—on the basis of detailed analyses of contemporaneous publications as well as through the restoration of a lost segment of the film—that the DVD text is indeed an incomplete version of the film. I also show that the problem of the text goes beyond the problem of ruin or loss to show that audiences of the time in fact encountered the text of *Volunteer* not only in the form of the filmic text, but also through texts that were printed in journals around the time of the film's release. The coexistence of these various versions, in Japanese and Korean languages formed dual levels of orality and literacy, which were consumed variously by at least two distinct ethnic and linguistic communities in the imperial theater. I thus show how a single film could have been used and interpreted by imperial Japanese and colonial Korean audiences in starkly different ways and thereby highlight one aspect of the multilayered characteristics of film texts from the colonial period.

### **Problems of Textual Restoration Based on a “Film-on-Paper” Version**

The production of the film *Volunteer* was planned in August 1939, the year after the promulgation of the military volunteer system in colonial Korea, and it was completed in March 1940 by Ch'oe Söng-il, a former playwright of The Korea Proletariat Artist Federation (Korea Artista Proleta Federatio in Esperanto [KAPF]) and the first radio producer in Korea. The play was dramatized and staged by An Sök-yöng, a cartoonist and painter, based on the original script authored by Pak Yöng-hüi, a critic who had also been formerly affiliated with KAPF. Featuring Mun Ye-bong, a top actress at the time, enhanced the film's popularity. The film received the

full support of the Government-General of Korea, with Minami Jirō, then the governor-general, actually appearing on-screen as he inspected the troops.

The film first premiered in Japan in 1940 and was released in Korea a year later, in 1941.<sup>2</sup> Before its release, however, the film's synopsis and a summary section of the script were published in the form of what was called a “movie-story” (*eiga monogatari* 映畫物語) in the January 1940 issue of *Kankō Chōsen* (觀光朝鮮), a Japanese-language magazine published by the Japan Tourist Bureau and its branch office in Korea (figure 1). Prior to the film's release in Japan, a series of four “films-on-paper” (*shijō eiga* 誌上映画) was also published in *Kokumin shinpō* (國民新報), the weekend edition of the Japanese-language daily *Keijō nippō* (京城日報) (figure 2).<sup>3</sup> Because the original text was published in two versions, as a movie-story (a narrative of the film) and as a film-on-paper (akin to a script read by actors), many Korean viewers who were literate in Japanese were likely familiar with the content of the film before they encountered it in the theater.



Figure 1. The “movie-story” version of *Volunteer* in *Kankō Chōsen*, January 1940.

Analyzing clues provided by several time markers on the screen, we are able to surmise the timeline of the scenario. The first part of the film can be inferred to take place in the autumn of 1937, immediately following the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War, and the year before the promulgation of the volunteer system (which occurred in February 1938). We see autumn scenes from a rural area where harvesting has just been completed. The male protagonist, Ch'un-ho, returns to his village from a trip to the capital city of Seoul, and we can see the date marked on a placard that reads “Our Duty Behind the War,” hung out for the lecture meeting that Ch'un-ho and his friend Ch'ang-sik attend. The film does not provide a clear time marker for the ending scenes; however, the protagonist's voyage to a training camp in the final scene suggests that the ending of the narrative may be set around June 1938, when the enrollment of the first round of volunteer recruits began.<sup>4</sup> The spatial backdrop of the film is harder to discern: it could be any rural village near the seaside with a train station.



Figure 2. The “film-on-paper” version of *Volunteer* in *Kokumin shinpo*, June 2, 1940.

The story unfolds as Ch'un-ho becomes a *marŭm* (마름) (a tenant supervisor working for an absentee landlord who lives in Seoul) after the death of his father. Ch'un-ho, who is now working to reclaim the barren land, faces the threat of losing his job, having been deceived by an old man, Tök-sam, who lives in the same village. Ch'un-ho goes to Seoul to meet the landlord and declares that he will continue to reclaim the wasteland even if he has to quit his job as a *marŭm*; he then returns home. Ch'un-ho's agony is not because of personal issues, such as his relationship with Pun-ok, or the fact that he is going to be fired. Punok misrecognizes the reasons for Ch'un-ho's woes and even feels responsible for not being able to help him because of her low social position. However, the viewer soon finds out that the real reason for Ch'un-ho's despair is that, as a colonized Korean, he is ineligible to serve as a soldier in the Japanese army.<sup>5</sup> To the dismay of Pun-ok, Yöng-ae, the landlord's younger sister and Ch'un-ho's childhood friend, visits Ch'un-ho to comfort him. Meanwhile, Ch'un-ho's friend Ch'ang-sik approaches Pun-ok in a more than friendly way, which leads Ch'un-ho to misunderstand the relationship between the two. Pun-ok's worry grows after she sees Tök-sam asking Pun-ok's father for permission to make her his daughter-in-law. On the way home from the station, where he saw Yöng-ae off, Ch'un-ho hears the news about the volunteer recruitment system in Korea from the village chief and imagines himself undergoing training to become a volunteer. Pun-ok meets Ch'un-ho and relays the apology from Ch'ang-sik, which he made before leaving for Seoul. However, Ch'un-ho says that there are more important matters and reveals his determination to become an imperial soldier. Upon reading the news of Ch'un-ho's acceptance into the imperial army in the newspaper, the landlord becomes supportive of Ch'un-ho and decides to help him support his family while he is in the army. Therefore, the landlord decides not to give Ch'un-ho's position of

*marūm* to Tök-sam. The film ends with a scene in which Ch'un-ho boards a train as a proud volunteer, amid congratulations from his family, his fiancée, and everyone in his village.

Anyone who has seen the film's DVD version, however, would notice the abrupt discontinuity in the middle of the story. This occurs around the 46-minute mark in the DVD edition, when the conflict between Ch'un-ho and Tök-sam builds to a climax (clip 1). Ch'un-ho has decided to volunteer for the Japanese army and imagines he is marching in a military uniform; Tök-sam brings him to the woods and Ch'ang-sik takes off after them. The setting at that point suddenly shifts to Pun-ok's house, where Ch'ang-sik repents for his improprieties toward Pun-ok and says he will go to Seoul to earn a driver's license to serve the country. This is followed by the scene in which Ch'un-ho reveals to Pun-ok his determination to volunteer for the army. No convincing motivation is provided for why Tök-sam lures Ch'un-ho to the woods, nor for why Ch'ang-sik goes after them or goes to Seoul so hastily without saying goodbye to Ch'un-ho.

In the DVD edition, a total of six scenes are omitted, compared to the "film-on-paper" published in the *Kokumin shinpō*. Of the 44 total scenes, scenes 31 through 35 are missing.<sup>6</sup> In scene 31 ("In the Woods"), Ch'un-ho gets embroiled in a fight with Tök-sam's party, with the help of Ch'ang-sik, who has followed him into the woods. In scene 32 ("Ch'un-ho's Room"), Ch'un-ho informs his mother about going to war as a volunteer. In scene 33 ("In Front of Ch'un-ho's House"), Ch'un-ho's mother cannot sleep after hearing of her son's decision, and Ch'un-ho loiters around the front yard. In scene 34 ("At the Office of the Police Chief"), Ch'un-ho visits the chief of police to ask for help; in scene 35 ("Pun-ok's House"), Pun-ok listens to her father talking about the argument between Ch'un-ho and Tök-sam. Although these scenes could have been deleted in the editing process for reasons such as censorship by the

colonial authority, several factors suggest that the scenes are most likely missing because film segments were lost during the compilation of the film or during its storage after its initial release in movie theaters.<sup>7</sup>

First, the film-on-paper version of *Volunteer* was published in *Kokumin shinpō* after the film edition was finalized and before it premiered in Japan. Since it is unlikely that a censored text would be restored in the printed version, it is reasonable to assume that the film text would have been almost identical to the text of the film-on-paper. Second, the list of characters shown in the introductory part of the film includes the role of the police chief, played by Yi Paek-su (figure 3), who does not appear in the DVD edition of the film. It is unlikely that a character that had been deleted in the editing process would appear in the film's list of characters. Third, and most decisively, the five scenes that are missing from the DVD edition had originally been placed between the reels, rather than in the middle part of the film.<sup>8</sup> If an entire reel disappeared altogether, we can assume that this was the result of an unintentional film loss, rather censorship.

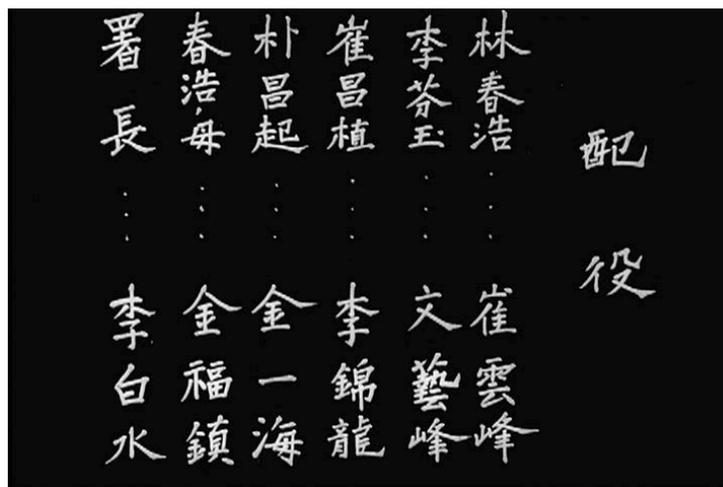


Figure 3. List of featured characters. The name of the police chief, Yi Paek-su, appears in the list of characters in the first part of the movie. (KOFA's DVD version, 00:01:26, printed with permission from KOFA).

Adding the omitted scenes to the DVD edition, based on their presence in the film-on-paper, improves the flow of the narrative. First, scene 31, in which Ch'ang-sik aids Ch'un-ho, helps to explain the resolution of the conflict between them regarding Pun-ok and suggests that Ch'ang-sik left for Seoul in order to learn how to drive. This scene also explains why Tök-sam, who had been so hostile to Ch'un-ho, joined the cheering crowd that saw him off. Second, scenes 32 and 33 reveal the mixed feelings Ch'un-ho's mother had as she listened to her son's decision to volunteer for the army, thus making her tears in the later scene of his departure more realistic. The audience can perceive the inner feelings of the mother, who does not want to send her son into the jaws of death, while she simultaneously faces the imperative to let him heed the call of the state.<sup>9</sup> Also, in scene 35, the audience can see that the father had been cynical about Tök-sam's demand to make Pun-ok his daughter-in-law.

I have demonstrated here that key scenes that resolve narrative conflicts are missing in the DVD edition of *Volunteer*. Although there have been no serious interpretive errors in previous studies thus far that assumed the completeness of the DVD edition or other restored versions, some comments that point out the film's lack of narrative tension do need to be reconsidered, since the assessment was based on an incomplete version of the film.<sup>10</sup>

### **Rejection of the “Well-Made Drama”**

The Korean film industry faced a crisis in the transition from silent film to sound film, due to a lack of capital and technology. To overcome this crisis, the industry sought to expand the market for Korean films to the entire Japanese empire. In this context, we can see that *Volunteer*, which had been made by former Korean leftist intellectuals with the support of the Japanese state, was also aimed at the Japanese market. It premiered first in Japan and was

released in Korea much later.<sup>11</sup> In addition to adopting a theme that answered to imperial purposes, the Korean filmmaker exploited the local color of the colonial locality as a way to maximize the film's value in the imperial market. The film featured *chumak* 酒幕 (traditional Korean pubs); *kisaeng* 妓生 (Korean geishas); *chapka* 雜歌 (a style of Korean folk song usually performed by a *kisaeng*); traditional objects and spaces, such as waterwheels and the sides of wells; and thread sticks being made on the *maru* (an open floor in the *hanok* 韓屋 or traditional Korean courtyard house).

Furthermore, the film used a variety of techniques that had not been seen in previous Korean films. These include filming the crowd waving flags from a moving train in both the first and the last scene, as well as employing shadows, a Shakespearean motif, to depict Pun-ok's inner conflict and the resolution of the conflict between the two main protagonists. These techniques represented efforts toward a new screen structure in the cinematic history of Korea. In addition to showing Korean local color/locality, the careful choice of costumes (the traditional Korean *hanbok*) and the evocative use of sound effects show that the movie was made in the style of a "well-made drama."<sup>12</sup> In particular, it is noteworthy that the movie uses various musical elements to express the protagonist's emotions.<sup>13</sup> For instance, fast-tempo music was used in the scene in the water mill depicting Pun-ok's despair after she witnessed Yōng-ae and Ch'un-ho together; the music, along with the turning water mill, acts as a leitmotif representing Pun-ok's emotional state.<sup>14</sup>

The most prominent aspect of the sound design was the use of music or sound to bridge the scenes. Four scenes using this bridging effect are included in the DVD edition. The first bridge song is sung by children in the field after harvest as they pretend to be soldiers.<sup>15</sup> In the scene that follows, the song leads into the tune hummed by Ch'un-yōng, Ch'un-ho's younger

sister (clip 2).<sup>16</sup> The second bridging effect was used to connect the scene in which Ch'ang-sik agonizes over Ch'un-ho's suspicion of his relationship with Pun-ok after the water mill incident with the scene in the *chumak* (clip 3). A *chapka*, sung by a *kisaeng*, is heard in scene 27 ("Ch'ang-sik's Backyard") and continues into scene 28 ("Village Pub"). The third use of the bridging effect is the sound of soldiers marching as Ch'un-ho wakes up from the dream that he is a volunteer in uniform (clip 1); in his room, a portrait of Prince Itō Hirobumi hangs on the wall. In the film-on-paper, the scene is presented as scene 29 ("Ch'un-ho's House"). In the movie, there is a close-up of Ch'un-ho's face as he closes his eyes; the scene then shifts to the majestic march of troops amid a resounding trumpet call, in front of a signboard reading "Training Camp for Volunteers, Government-General of Korea." The audience is saved from the mistaken assumption that Ch'un-ho has actually become a volunteer; they realize that this is only his fantasy when they view the close-up on Ch'un-ho's face that follows the marching scene, while the sound of the marching soldiers' army boots continues. Lastly, the bridging effect is used in the scene at the side of the well (scene 38, "On the Road to the Well-side"), which is appraised by Yi (2010) to be the most important scene in the movie (clip 4). In this scene, Ch'un-ho tells Pun-ok that he is going to volunteer for the army. After they resolve their misunderstanding, the two draw water from a well under the moonlight as a lyrical violin melody echoes in the background. Then, the scene dissolves to scene 39 ("Yōng-ae's Room"), in which Yōng-ae plays the piano. By letting Yōng-ae, who had created the misunderstanding in the love triangle, naturally follow the violin piece included in Ch'un-ho and Pun-ok's well-side scene, a mood of reconciliation is emphasized.<sup>17</sup> As the conflicts of emotion in the love triangle are resolved in favor of the greater cause of volunteering, the natural bridging of the violin and piano music

seems to predict the cooperation and harmony in the future relationships of the three characters.<sup>18</sup>

In keeping with its objective of being a well-made drama, the movie used virtually every technique available in Korean filmmaking and made various efforts to incorporate Korean local color/locality. Nevertheless, the response from Japanese audiences was far from enthusiastic. The slow tempo, which has frequently been pointed out as a typical quality of Korean films, the insufficient depiction of the main character's psychological state, and the unnatural transition between locations were a few of the reasons cited for the imperial audience's lack of enthusiasm.<sup>19</sup> Such negative responses are summarized in a critique by film specialist Shimizu Akira (1940), who commented that the movie was merely an awkward combination of two narratives: a worn-out *shinpageki* 新派劇 (Japanese melodrama) depicting a commonplace love triangle and the heroic act of sacrifice, which had long been the wish of the protagonist. To the sophisticated eyes of a specialist, the movie was nothing more than a crude mixture of *shinpageki* format with enlightenment content. The film was considered to be deficient as a work of art and was rejected by the imperial audience, which it had targeted from the beginning. However, its unpolished nature was not the sole cause of its rejection in Japan.

### **Five Levels of the Text of *Volunteer***

First, let us remember that the film's text existed in several forms. At least five different forms of the text can be identified:

1. The original script, written by Pak Yǒng-hŭi
2. The movie-story, as published in *Kankō Chōsen*
3. The oral performance, seen on-screen in the movie theater
4. The Japanese subtitles on the movie screen
5. The film-on-paper, as reconstructed in the print medium (namely, *Kokumin shinpō*)

The first form is the original text by Pak Yǒng-hŭi, a former KAPF member and writer of proletariat literature, on which the film script was based; it is the most authoritative text, made before the film was completed. Since this text does not, to my knowledge, exist today, it is hard to discuss it. However, it is possible that Pak Yǒng-hŭi had the film in mind when he wrote the novel. The second form of the text was a three-page article published in *Kankō Chōsen*. The “movie-story” is a literary genre that appeared for the first time with the advent of films and had its origins in the “movie commentary” performed by a *benshi* 辯士 (silent-film narrator), a unique figure in the history of East Asian cinematic history. In the era of silent films, the narration skill of the *benshi* had tremendous influence on a film’s box office receipts; therefore, many theaters competed to sign exclusive contracts with popular narrators.<sup>20</sup> During this period it was impossible to enjoy a film after its run in the theaters, so record companies released highlight albums of movie commentaries on standard-playing records for those who wanted to listen to *benshi* narration. Similarly, the movie-story, which was the printed version of the popular narration of the *benshi* published in magazines or newspapers, formed a unique, hybrid literary genre.<sup>21</sup> Even after the era of silent film gave way to sound film, the movie-story remained popular, a legacy of the tradition of film consumption mediated by the *benshi*.

The third form of the text is that which audiences at the time encountered on the theater screen, with the text audible through recitation by the characters, and which is now available in the DVD edition of the film. In the case of *Volunteer*, most of the lines are in Korean, which may not be noteworthy since many characters, including the protagonist, are ethnically Korean. However, some of the lines are, significantly, rendered in Japanese, such as in the scenes in which Ch’un-ho and the village chief discuss the volunteer system. Japanese characters also appear in official spaces, such as on posters hung in the streets of Seoul in the war footage and

on placards advertising an official lecture. Interestingly, the use of the Korean and Japanese languages in media and communications such as telegrams and letters changes to cater to the particular class or gender of the speaker. For instance, Ch'un-ho reads out loud in Japanese the telegram from the landlord in Seoul that was written in Japanese; this shows that Ch'un-ho, a middle-school dropout, has some ability to read Japanese. In contrast, when Tök-sam receives a letter from the landlord, he reads it aloud in Korean. This is presumably because Tök-sam is a middle-aged farmer who has little knowledge of Japanese.<sup>22</sup>

The fourth form of the text is comprised of the Japanese subtitles, created for the imperial target of the Korean film. The subtitles were written at a time of diglossia, when the Korean and Japanese languages coexisted in a hierarchical relation, differentiated into oral and written levels.<sup>23</sup> Most Japanese who did not understand Korean would have received the film through its subtitled script. In the process of translation, the vocabulary related to the historical and cultural particularities of Korean was often translated into general, concise Japanese.<sup>24</sup> For example, the Korean word *marŭm*, which means “an agent supervising tenants for an absentee landlord,” was translated as *tochi kanrinin* (土地管理人), the Japanese expression meaning “land manager.” *Ch'imakkam* (치맛감), the Korean word for textiles used in women and girls' clothing, is smoothly translated into the Japanese word *habutae* (羽二重), which means “Japanese traditional costume.”<sup>25</sup> Excessive localization in the translation is not confined to vocabulary. In the case of Pun-ok, the female protagonist who epitomizes the traditional Korean woman, her lines are recreated in the Japanese subtitles in an eloquent, feminine style.

The final form of the film text is that which was serialized in the weekly print newspaper *Kokumin shinpō*. For the most part, its content is identical to that of the script performed orally by the actors in the originally released version seen in movie theaters; its Japanese expressions

are, in many ways, similar to those observed in the Japanese-subtitled script. Although it was released when the movie was almost completed, if we consider the fact that the content is more abundant than the film itself, we can assume that this text was produced ahead of the third or fourth forms. It would seem that it was based on the final scenario before filming. However, as with the movie-story of the silent film era, the film-on-paper provided more than just a scenario, since it enabled people to enjoy the film in private spaces, as opposed to public spaces such as movie theaters.

It is important to note the significant differences between the five forms presented here. Aside from Pak Yǒng-hŭi's original script, which has been lost, and the movie-story, which is a synopsis, there remain a few differences between the film-on-paper based on the scenario and the actual movie.<sup>26</sup> Moreover, there are important differences between those final forms of texts directly received by the audience—namely, between the oral performance in Korean and the corresponding Japanese subtitles—and between the Japanese subtitles and the film-on-paper in Japanese.

An analysis of the film based on the film-on-paper shows us that some scenes were erased as a whole or that the order of these scenes was reversed. Such changes are especially noticeable in the parts corresponding to scenes 14 and 25 in the film-on-paper version, which depict the increasing tension in the love triangle of the protagonists. Two scenes where Yǒng-ae visits Ch'un-ho—scene 15 (“On the Hillside Road”) and scene 16 (“The Village”)—as well as the scene where the two converse at the beach under the secret presence of Pun-ok (scene 19, “The Sandy Hill at the Beach”) have been erased and shortened. It also seems that scene 17 (“The Valley”), in which Pun-ok witnesses Yǒng-ae and Ch'un-ho in the middle of their

discussion, as well as scene 19, where she follows them, were deemed too risky for the film-on-paper and were thus erased from the film version.

In general, translated subtitles can only convey approximately 70 percent of the spoken lines, due to differences in the speed of reception between hearing and reading. In *Volunteer*, there are many omissions in the translation of Korean into Japanese. Some loss of the uniqueness or flavor of expressions is inevitable in translation of subtitles, and such is the case not just for *Volunteer*, but for subtitled films in general. Taking this inevitable loss into account, the key problem in the Japanese subtitles of *Volunteer* involves the modifications or outright omissions in the meanings of important lines. For example, in the dialogue between Ch'un-ho and Ch'ang-sik in the first part of the movie, Ch'un-ho advises Ch'ang-sik to learn how to drive. In response, Ch'ang-sik says, as if in self-mockery, "What's the use of having a wish for people like me?" (나 같은 게 뜻이 있으면 무얼 하겠나?). The subtitles, however, read, "It's not a big deal" (そんなにおおげさに言ってくれるなよ). In the next scene, Pun-ok's self-deprecating line, "I'm such a good-for-nothing" (참 나 같은 건 무엇에다 쓰나), uttered because she feels helpless seeing Ch'un-ho in distress, has disappeared in the subtitles altogether.<sup>27</sup> This might be a minor difference; however, it seems significant that the expression of the decadent sensibilities or pessimistic emotions of the Korean youth have disappeared in the process of translation. Words such as *pando* (半島), which refers to the Korean peninsula, and expressions such as "although we are the same nation" (같은 국민이면서도) were also omitted in the subtitles. Thus, Korean words were neatly translated into eloquent Japanese in some cases, but blanks were left in the subtitles in others, perhaps to prevent any uneasiness on the part of Japanese audiences. Japanese dissatisfaction based on the film's lack of perfection could have

been due, at least in part, to the fact that they had to receive the film's textual content through Japanese subtitles.

## Conclusion

In this paper, I have demonstrated that the DVD edition of *Volunteer* currently available is an incomplete edition; furthermore, its incompleteness is likely to have resulted from a loss of reels containing certain scenes, rather than from external factors such as censorship. Therefore, any interpretation of the film should be complemented by its newly discovered film-on-paper text. I have also emphasized that the film's initial release was accompanied by simultaneous publications in various print media and that the film was consumed in Korean and Japanese languages in imperial movie theaters, thereby forming multiple levels of literacy and orality.

When colonial films targeted the imperial market, their accessibility inevitably depended on translated subtitles. *Volunteer* targeted the Japanese market and premiered first in Japan, in order to provide a breakthrough in the crisis of the Korean cinematic industry. The Korean vocabulary presented by the Korean actors was translated into crisp and eloquent Japanese subtitles, and the heroine's words were transformed into beautiful and feminine Japanese expressions. By contrast, the dialogue expressing pessimistic sentiments among Korean youths or Korean images deemed to be incompatible with colonial local color were silenced in Japanese, existing only in the performance on the screen.

In view of such antinomies, audiences consuming the film through the oral performance of its Korean text would have consumed a film that was somewhat different from that consumed by Japanese audiences reading subtitles. This represents the inevitable consequence accepted by

Korean filmmakers producing films in the late colonial period that were aimed for imperial consumption.

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### **Notes**

1. See Cho (2007) on the possibility and limits of the debate on “colonial modernity” in Korea.
2. For a broad analysis of this film, see Kim (2006) and Yi Yōng-jae (2008). These analyses seem to be based on the rough cut distributed to the researchers before it was made into a DVD for broader public consumption.
3. Yi Tōk-ki (2010), who first introduced these two materials to academic circles, suggests that these films were cut as a result of censorship, but I see it differently. Lee calls the movie-story in *Kankō Chōsen* a “synopsis” and the film-on-paper text in *Kokumin shinpō* a “scenario.” But such nomenclature seems to reflect a perspective that is too contemporary, since it overlooks the special characteristics of the hybrid genres of the movie-story and the film-on-paper.
4. The time markers throughout the film are confusing. For example, the scene in which Yōng-ae visits the village after the lecture and the scene depicting the fight between Ch’un-ho and Tōk-sam with his gang occur on the same day, but these two scenes have confusing seasonal backdrops. In another scene, Ch’un-ho, shows the head of the district a newspaper advertisement announcing the new policy allowing Koreans to volunteer for the military. Considering that this policy was announced in February 1938, the clothes worn by

the characters are not appropriate for the season. Also, from a historical perspective, the final scene, in which Ch'un-ho departs for the military training camp, should have been summer, but the clothes worn by the characters are similar to those worn in the autumnal first scene with the platform of the train station as its backdrop. Moreover, the newspaper article seen in the close-up on the movie screen can be identified as that on page 2 of the morning edition of *Keijō nippō* on February 23, 1938.

5. According to Japanese law, Koreans were Japanese nationals—that is, by law there was no Korean nation, because Korea was a Japanese colony. Instead, Koreans had Japanese *kokuseki* (nationality). However, Koreans were not allowed into the military until 1938, because the Japanese family registration law did not apply to Koreans.
6. The original text of the film-on-paper as published in *Kokumin shinpō* included no scene number, only the name of the scene. For the convenience of discussion, I have added numbers to the scenes, with names following their order of appearance.
7. Yi Tōk-ki (2010, 252) suggests that the film was cut partly because of censorship, on the grounds that the omitted part shows “the absence of the father in Chōsen . . . , which in effect shakes the narrative of *naisen ittai* (assimilation ideology) from its very foundation.”
8. According to the Korean Film Archive, a total of seven film reels for *Volunteer* were copied from the Chinese Film Archive in 2004. However, documents during that time introduce a total of eight film reels (“A Chronological Table of Korean Cinema,” *Eiga junpō* [映畫旬報], July 11, 1943). We can determine, based on the DVD released by the Korean Film Archive, that the film reel that would have come between the sixth and seventh reels has been lost.
9. See the discussion by Miyata (1985) on the internal resistance in Korea against military voluntarism, based on the mentality expressed in the old Korean saying “Good iron does not make a nail, and a good man does not make a soldier.”
10. In addition, there are several mistakes in the subtitles in the DVD rough cut, such as “Mr. Lee” (Ri-sang 李樣) in the place of “Mr. Lim” (Rin-sang 林樣). These should be corrected in reference to the film-on-paper texts.
11. It was previewed first on June 10, 1940, and premiered on August 1 of the same year in the Teikoku Theater (Teikokukan). It was then released in Korea the next year, on March 19, 1941, at Tōhō Wageki and stayed on screen for one week (see the film advertisement on the bottom of page 12 of the March 26, 1941 issue of *Keijō nippō*). However, the attention of the public had already shifted to the films *Long Distance from Happiness* (*Fukuchi*

*Banri*, 福地萬理, 1941) and *Homeless Angels* (*Je naki tenshi*, 家なき天使, 1941) by that time.

12. The term “well-made drama” originally appeared to designate the popular theaters that appeared in France in the nineteenth century in the search for a harmonious and balanced worldview (Hauser 1999). In this paper, I use the term to refer to movies that used a variety of techniques to perfect the film as a whole.
13. Kim Chun-yōng, in charge of the movie score, was a pianist who graduated from the Musashino Music School in Japan. He is best known for his composition of the song “Don’t Cry Hong-do” (Hong-do-ya ujimara, 흥도야 우지마라, 1939), the theme song that transformed *Fooled by Love, Hurt by Money* (*Sarange sokko ton e ulgo*, 사랑에 속고 돈에 울고, 1936) into an operetta. The latter drew the most numerous audiences during the colonial era. Kim was in charge of the composition, arrangement, and direction of the performance of “Song of Arirang” by the Shōchiku Opera in 1940 at the Kokusai Theater in Asakusa, Tokyo. His work there allowed him to be recruited by the Shōchiku Kinema in Japan, and he actively worked in cinematic music in Japan as well (Pak 2009). I thank Professor Yi Kyōng-bun at the Institute for Japanese Studies at Seoul National University for her advice and feedback on my analysis of cinematic music.
14. The music used in this scene is used again when Ch’ang-sik approaches a distressed Pun-ok with a flower in her hand. The use of the same music in this scene further demonstrates the conflicts of the love triangle. Unlike the one-time use of music we will encounter later in this paper, the fact that this music is used repetitively, reminding the audience of a particular character or a certain meaning, is an example of the use of music as a leitmotif.
15. According to Yi Kyōng-bun (2010), the music used in this scene is titled “Song of the Camp” (露營の歌) and was a military song made as a result of an open contest organized by the Mainichi newspaper to support the war effort during the Sino-Japanese War. It was released by Japan Columbia Records in 1937, and 600,000 copies were sold, an unusually high sales number for that time.
16. In the film-on-paper version, this is where scene 10 (“Meadow”) is connected to scene 11 (“Ch’un-ho’s Home”); however, in the text, there is no such direction. From this point forward, the names and numbers of scenes will be indicated in the text and in parentheses.
17. Yōng-ae returns to her hometown with her permed hair, her Western clothes and shoes, and her handbag, representing the image of the “modern girl” (Fujitani 2011). However, unlike in other movies or novels of this period, the modern girl that she embodies does not convey a negative image. The love triangle that results, with Pun-ok as the traditional Korean woman

and Yōng-ae as the modern girl, is settled within the greater cause of “volunteering,” in the process of which Yōng-ae performs her role as a helper to Ch’un-ho.

18. The sound used in movies can be divided into “nondiegetic sound” and “diegetic sound.” “Nondiegetic sound” depicts the emotions of the character or the general atmosphere of the scene and allows for a smooth transition between scenes, and the source of the sound is not shown. On the other hand, “diegetic sound” is included in the narrative of the film, and the sound source is directly displayed on the screen (Ku 2006). *Volunteer* includes diverse usage of both kinds of sound, using solely diegetic music for transition (first case), using the transition from nondiegetic music to diegetic music (third and fourth case), and using the transition from diegetic sound to diegetic sound (second case).
19. Fukuda Kiyoto, who was present at the movie premiere, stated that, unlike most earlier Korean films, *Volunteer* did not focus on the localities or lifestyles of the traditional countryside; rather, it showed many Western-style backdrops, as seen in the landlord’s house in colonial Seoul. He regretted that this change had deprived the film of local qualities; nevertheless, he also assessed that the film showed the signs of change that colonized Korea was facing, something he pointed out Japan could learn from (Fukuda 1940).
20. See Satō (2006) for the historical origin of the silent film narrator. After they were introduced in Japan, silent film narrators also appeared in Korea, and Thailand. (Musei Eiga Kanshōkai 2001).
21. Chōn (2007) introduces the hybrid genre of the movie-story, which was coming into vogue in colonial Korean society at that time, and discusses it as a new genre of storytelling after the introduction of the movie.
22. The reply to Ch’un-yōng’s letter to a Japanese soldier was read by Ch’un-ho, instead of by Ch’un-yōng, who is only an elementary school student. Meanwhile, in the film-on-paper version of *Volunteer*, it is a “telegram” that Ch’un-ho received and a “postcard” that Tōk-sam received.
23. The term “diglossia,” derived from the French words *diglossique* and *diglossie*, was originally defined by the sociolinguist Charles A. Ferguson as “two distinct varieties of the same language” (1996). Generally, however, the term is also used to refer to a situation in which two or more language varieties are used by a single language community. Unlike the term bilingual, which simply means “using two languages,” diglossia refers to a situation in which the two languages used in a society exist in an asymmetrical relationship. This term is thus appropriate for the language situation in colonial Korea, where Japanese and Korean stood in a hierarchical relation to each other.

24. This phenomenon explains how the subject of translation or communication was based on the assumption of a “homolingual address” (Sakai 2005).
25. Interestingly, the term “film-on-paper” in Japanese uses the *kanji* character 袴 (hakama) with *furigana* (small phonetic-alphabet symbols used to indicate pronunciation of words in *kanji* lettering) of *ch’ima* (チマ) such as 袴<sup>チマ</sup>, instead of the *kanji* characters 羽二重 (*habutae*). This shows that the writer of the film-on-paper version put great effort into exhibiting Korean color in his or her translation.
26. The most prominent characteristic of the movie-story of *Volunteer* is that Pun-ok is described as being more open in expressing affection than she is in the film version (Yi Tök-ki 2010).
27. On the other hand, in the same scene, Ch’un-ho tells Pun-ok in a rather defeatist tone, “You know whose son I am. I am a farmer’s son, what else would I be but a farmer?” (내가 누구의 아들인데, 농부의 아들이 농부밖에 더 되겠소). In the film-on-paper, this dialogue had been rendered as “I am a peasant’s son. A young frog is still a frog” (僕は百姓の子だ。蛙の子は、何時までも蛙でいいのさ). It can be assumed that the disturbing image of the colonized as “tadpoles” that the original line suggest was to be avoided in the film version, hence the use of a less disturbing expression.

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