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Seoul-Hong Kong-Macau:

Love with an Alien (1957) and Postwar South Korea-Hong Kong Coproduction

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In May 1955, two South Korean film industry magnates embarked on a journey to Southeast Asia. Kim Kwansu, president of the Korean Motion Picture Producers Association (Han'gukyŏnghwa jejakchahyŏp'oe), and Yun Pongch'un, chairman of the Motion Picture Directors Association (Yŏnghwagamdok'yŏp'oe) had been invited to attend the second Southeast Asian Film Festival, which was to be held in Singapore. Cho Tong-je, The Asia Foundation's Seoul officer, accompanied the observers as an interpreter. The Asia Foundation, a San Francisco-based non-governmental institution,¹ had allocated three travel grants for attendance at the festival (Lee S, 2017). With the “greenbacks” given to them, Kim, Yun, and Cho left the war-ravaged country. None of them had spent time outside of South Korea other than in Japan (Rowe, 1955) and this was the first link South Korean cinema was to make with the region's film industry after the ruinous Korean War (1950-53).

¹ Although The Asia Foundation was ostensibly a private, non-governmental foundation, it has furtively received considerable, if not entire, financial subsidy from the US government, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and it should rather be called a quasi-nongovernmental organization. Like other non-governmental philanthropic institutions that were operated in the battlefield of hearts and minds, such as Beacon, Kaplan, and the Ford Foundation, The Asia Foundation was another camouflaged association shaped and carried by, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), and followed the direction of the U.S. government's foreign cultural policy (Lee S, 2017).

The South Korean delegates arrived in Singapore on May 13, 1955, just a day before the opening of the festival (Rowe, 1955). The Southeast Asian Film Festival (renamed The Asian Film Festival in 1957) was the annual event of the newly launched Federation of Motion Picture Producers in Southeast Asia (FPA). Founded in 1953, the FPA was the first postwar pan-Asian film organization. The Japanese film executive Nagata Masaichi, president of Daiei Studio, was its founding force and first president. A year later, the FPA's annual event, the Southeast Asian Film Festival, was held in Tokyo. Six countries—Japan, Hong Kong, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Taiwan—sent 15 feature films to the festival. South Korea, however, had not been invited to the inaugural event (Lee S, 2017). At the second festival in Singapore, Japan dispatched the largest delegation, with 26 delegates from all six major studios: Toho, Shochiku, Daiei, Toei, Shin Toho, and Nikkatsu. The Philippines and Hong Kong followed, sending eight delegates each. The delegations from Taiwan, Ceylon, Thailand, and South Korea were rather small. At the event, Nagata gave the opening address, and Ho Ah Loke, a local film magnate and president of Cathay-Keris Studio in Singapore, gave a summary of the films selected for the competition categories. Then Singapore's Commissioner-General, Malcolm MacDonald, declared the festival open (Far East Film News, 1955).

During the festival, the South Korean delegates were introduced to two brothers from a very powerful and wealthy Chinese family in Southeast Asia. They were Runde and Run Run Shaw, who were the owners of the Hong Kong-based Shaw & Sons and the Singapore-based Shaw Malay Production. To Kim and Yun, it was obvious that Run Run Shaw, the younger brother, stood out at the Singapore festival. He was chairman of the organizing committee; he represented Singapore/Malaya and Hong Kong; and he submitted, as a producer, four films: two from Shaw Malay Production (*Filem Merana* (B. N. Rao, 1954) and *Hang Tuah* (Phani

Majumdar, 1956)) and two from Shaw and Sons in Hong Kong (*Beyond the Grave* (*Ren gui lian*, Doe Ching, 1954) and *The Orphaned Girl* (*Mei Gu*, Yan Jun, 1955)) (The Federation of Motion Picture Producers in Southeast Asia, 1955). This new and unexpected network opened the South Korean producers' eyes to a region they had never considered seriously: Southeast Asia.

Two years later, South Korea's Korea Entertainment (Han'gukyönyejushik'oesa) and Hong Kong's Shaw & Sons began shooting the first South Korea-Hong Kong coproduction film in history, *Love with an Alien* (KR: *Igukchöngwön*; HK: *Yi guo qing yuan*) (Lee M, 1957). The film was a regional collaboration *par excellence*. Three veteran directors from three countries—Chön Ch'angkün from South Korea, Tu Guangqi [Tou Kwong-chee] from Hong Kong, and Wakasugi Mitsuyo from Japan—were involved with the film's production. South Korean stars Kim Chinkyu, Yun Ilpong, and Kim Samhwa, and Hong Kong's Lucilla Yu-ming, Yang Zhiqing, and Chan Wan appeared in this transnational melodrama set in Seoul, Hong Kong, and Macau. Japanese cinematographer Nishimoto Tadashi was hired to supervise the novel film technology, Eastman Color, and *Love with an Alien* became the first Eastman Color production in the history of South Korean cinema.

This important postwar classic, however, had long been lost and nearly forgotten in the chronicles of Asian cinema.² It was in May 2012, fifty-four years after the film's initial release, when the Korean Film Archive found a badly damaged negative print at a Shaw Brothers' storage facility in Hong Kong (Ch'oe, 2013). The restored film, done superbly by Japan's IMAGICA Lab, had its premiere at the Korean Film Archive on April 2, 2013. Due to the film's

² Kinnia Yau Shuk-ting's pioneering essay traces the production history of *Love with an Alien* for a discussion of the Shaw's importance of Japanese talent. And it is still the only English-language study of the film (Yau, 2003). Aaron Magnan-Park discusses the film briefly in a section of his article on Chung Chang Wha (Magnan-Park, 2011, p. 260). In Korean-language academia, Lu Yu and Han Sang Eon's recent journal article contains a detailed history of the international co-production behind *Love with an Alien* and its reception (Lu and Han, 2017). Im Hwa-su's international business ambition in the midst of the modernizing South Korean cinema industry is substantially discussed in Chung-kang Kim's article (Kim C, 2011, pp. 47-49).

missing soundtrack, the screening was accompanied by a live performance. Until the new millennium, fewer than a dozen films produced during Korea's colonial period, and only 56 films among the 308 produced during the 1950s, were available to film historians (Kim S, 2013). This "empty" archive, or what Soyoung Kim (Kim Soyŏng) terms 'phantom cinema,' (Kim S, 2011) has caused the study of Korean cinema to lag behind the scholarship on other Asian national cinemas. Since the early 2000s, however, the Korean Film Archive has been hunting down lost films. With newly discovered films from the archives in China, Japan, and Russia, the history of Korean cinema has been continuously rewritten by a new generation of scholars. This study would not have been possible without the Korean Film Archive's efforts to preserve the country's film heritage.

This chapter tells a history of the 1950s cinematic coproduction in Asia by exploring the historical, social, cultural, and intellectual constitution of the first South Korea and Hong Kong cinema network after the Korean War armistice. Throughout the chapter, I examine the network of motion picture executives, creative personnel, policymakers, and intellectuals in South Korea and Hong Kong at the height of the Cold War. The account that follows first provides an overview of the emergence of motion picture studios in Asia during the 1950s, and tackles the problem of studying cinematic coproduction. Then, it discusses *Love with an Alien* and locates the text in the complex web of a regional cinema network. I used the trade journals, newspapers, and popular magazines published in South Korea and Hong Kong. I hope this study sheds new light on the history of Asia's cinematic coproduction.

Cinematic Coproduction in Asia

It is hard to imagine today, but the film industries in Asia were tightly connected to each other throughout the 1950s. The first signs of a regional cinema link appeared in Japan as early as the 1930s and were deeply tied to Japan's imperial ambitions across Asia. Under the Japanese Empire's "New Filmic System" design—or the "Greater East Asian Cinema (*Dai-tō-a eiga*)"—each colony was linked to the others under the slogan of "the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperty Sphere (KR: *taetonga kongyōngkwōn*; JP: *Dai-tō-a Kyōeiken*)," which Japan used to instill a sense of bonding with and among its colonies. According to Kinnia Yau Shuk-ting, this early network was designed to "counteract the powerful network set up by the American film industry" (Yau, 2009). It dealt with some of the most controversial, both spatial-temporal and historical, periods in twentieth-century Asia: the colonial coproduction between colonizer (Japan) and colonized (Korea, Taiwan, China, and Manchuria) (Basket, 2008). This ambitious but exploitative network ended abruptly with the Japanese surrender to the Allies in August 1945.

The idea of creating a regional cinema network, however, revived in the mid-1950s under the US-driven world order that had drawn the new map of Asia. Threatened by the expansion of communism throughout the region, the establishment of the People's Republic of China (PRC), and the outbreak of the Korean War, the US government believed it necessary to construct a military bulwark and a "free Asia" bloc in the region. The US-driven "free Asia" alliance contained vast networks of newly sovereign nation-states in the region. Ranging from the Philippines and Indonesia to South Korea, Taiwan and Japan, this anti-communist bloc was controlled by the new hegemonic regime via financial and cultural domination (Cumings, 2010). According to this logic, Japan was no longer construed as a 'war criminal' but emerged as an adopted, "re-educated" son of the US and a financially self-sufficient "big brother" in the

metastable regional entity. Remarkably, in just a decade, the regional animosity toward the Japanese Empire that had developed during the occupation period turned into fear of communism, and under this consensus, gave way to an anti-Red matrix. Given this atmosphere, the cultural arenas of the various “free Asia” countries, particularly their motion picture industries, were linked under this new regional order. South Korean cinema entered this regional network in 1955 when the Korean delegates attended the second Southeast Asian Film Festival.

In the 1950s, the film industries in Asia embraced a new phase of development. Rapid urbanization, an influx of American culture, industrialization, and a collective desire to mass produce films were all factors that contributed to the coming of big movie studios in Asia, particularly in Hong Kong, the Philippines, Indonesia, and Malaysia/Singapore. Each nation/city-state in Asia faced an abrupt influx of migrant workers. The number of city residents spiked, and, accordingly, the film industry was boosted by these new patrons. Hong Kong’s population tripled to reach 2 million by 1950 from a mere 550,000 in 1945. The Shaw family’s Shaw Malay Production, which was established in 1939, had churned out over a hundred films, mostly in local languages. Run Run Shaw, the youngest of the four patriarchs (Runje, Runde, Runme, and Run Run), managed Malay Film Production until he took over his brother’s Shaw & Sons in Hong Kong in the late 1950s. The Shaw family’s motion picture business thrived in Malaysia, Singapore, and Hong Kong throughout the decade. The Philippines had four vertically integrated studios, commonly called the “Big Four” (LVN, Premier, Sampaguita, and Lebran-Movietec), and the big four studios had been producing around a hundred films per year since the beginning of the 1950s. Due to this ever-increasing annual output, film studios in the Philippines sought to export their movies. At the time, Indonesia was experiencing the most significant political uncertainty, and its two film moguls, Djamiludin Malik and Usmar Ismail, were under heavy

pressure from both the country's communist party and the government. Loke Wan-tho's Motion Picture and General Investment (MP&GI, a.k.a. Cathay Pictures) took the lead in Malaysia and Singapore, and the company was eager to acquire up-to-date technologies, especially cinemascope and color processing, to fill its vast theatre chains in Southeast Asia.

Their shared aspiration was to rationalize and industrialize film production and deliver high-quality products that lured the postwar metropolitan inhabitants. In addition, they also needed to produce "big" films that could compete against Hollywood and European cinema and expand the size of the market. Coproduction was considered an excellent means for this purpose. In theory, it doubles the audience if two (or more) countries produce films together. However, there were many obstacles: each country's protective economic policies, the rapidly shifting, unstable geopolitical conditions, the rise of nationalism, and the ever-increasing market influence of Hollywood cinema (and Indian cinema in the Indonesian market). In this regard, the FPA was crucial to many of the region's new motion picture executives. During the first several years of the Asian Film Festival, each of the FPA members gathered and discussed ways to collaborate with each other to expand the market of Asian cinema. Coproducing with FPA members was considered the most effective way out of the predicament, since each associate was practically the representative figure in their domestic market.

According to this logic, Shaw & Sons and Daiei coproduced *The Princess Yang Kwei-fei* (*Yōkihi*) in 1955. Shaw put up thirty percent of the film's total budget, and the film was directed under Mizoguchi Kenji's touch. A year later, Toho went on to work with Shaw, coproducing *Madame White Snake* (*Byaku fujin no yoren*, 1956), which was based on a well-known story not only in both Japan and Hong Kong but also in the Philippines and South Korea (Richie, 1982). It is noteworthy that most film producers in Asia during the period, not just Shaw, desired to

collaborate with the technically superior Japanese cinema. Many of them hoped to obtain the latest filming techniques along with Japan's advanced production knowledge of musicals, comedies, and the sophisticated melodrama conventions. Since almost no directors and technicians in Asia, except those in Japan, were experienced in or trained to film in colour photography or to do its lab processing, working with Japanese filmmakers constituted a valuable apprenticeship.

During the late 1950s and early 60s, Shaw Brothers and MP&GI sent many production crews, including cinematographers, editors, production designers and, later, actors to studios in Japan, particularly Daiei and Toho. This mode of production is, at heart, a process of "catching up" to the technologically advanced cinema, i.e., Hollywood and Japan. Peter J. Katzenstein's insightful study reveals that Asia's technological order has been defined by a "relatively hierarchical regional division of labour even though first Japan and other Asian states later have improved rapidly their technological profiles" (Katzenstein, 2003). Postwar Japan extricated itself from a position of technological backwardness by instituting a strict government-guided screening system for importing foreign technology, especially from the United States and Western Europe. As Japan mastered the techniques of colour photography and development, widescreen process, synchronization, and cutting-edge special effects, the Hong Kong film industry, during the mid to late 1950s, coproduced many epic films with Japan's major studios.

Apart from Japan and Hong Kong, between 1953 and 1958, a significant number of regional coproductions were also completed. In 1953, Manuel de Leon, a general manager of LVN, produced the US-Philippines propaganda film *Huk in a New Life* (*Huk sa bagong pamumuhay*, Lamberto V. Avellana, 1953), based on a Filipino independent activist, a leftist force (the Huk), and the American endeavour to defeat this force (Benitez, 2010). Two years

later, the first postwar Philippines-Hong Kong coproduction *Sarawak* (Weilianluo, 1955) was released in both countries. More significant success, however, came with *Sanda Wong* (a.k.a. *The Revenge of Sanda Wong*, 1955). The Cantonese film producer Chapman Ho and the prominent Filipino director/producer Gerardo de Leon joined the project by casting a Hong Kong starlet, Lola Young, and the Filipino actor Jose Padilla Jr. The president of the Philippines, Ramon Magsaysay, attended the film's premiere in Manila. The film played in Tagalog in the Philippines and in Mandarin and Cantonese in the Southeast Asian market (Law K. a., 2005). Following the success of *Sanda Wong*, Young, the daughter of Chinese and French parents, became the first Hong Kong star to enjoy a Filipino following. She starred in another Hong Kong-Philippines coproduction, *Treasure of General Yamashita* (Rolf Bayer and Chapman Ho, 1957), but retired afterward and went to Italy to study music (Law K. a., 2005). *Sanda Wong* and *Treasure of General Yamashita*, in fact, demonstrated the possibility of crossing markets, since the films made significant profits in both countries.

Some of the notable coproduction titles are worth mentioning here, such as the Zhang Shankun-produced, Hong Kong-Japan collaboration *Madame Butterfly* (*Hu die fu ren*, Yi Wen, 1956); *The Autumn Phoenix* (Wang Yin, 1957), which was one of the first Thai-Hong Kong coproductions; and *Affairs in Ankuwat* (*Ankoru watto monogatari utsukushiki aishu*, Kunio Watanabe, 1957). Notably, *Affairs in Ankuwat* starred Li Xianglan (a.k.a. Shirley Yamaguchi/Rikoran), one of the biggest Japanese film stars during and after the Pacific War who symbolizes Japan's failed imperial dream (Southern Screen, 1958). Few of the listed films had much success in local and regional markets, with the exceptions of the Hong Kong-Philippines coproductions *Sanda Wang*, *Treasure of General Yamashita*, and *Golden City Pagoda* (*She nu si fan*, Wong Tin-Lam, 1957). The local audiences of each country dismissed many of these coproduction

films, due to their lack of “cultural authenticity.” As Law Kar writes, the 1950s coproduction films in Asia suffered from “rough technique, mediocre writing, and generally conservative ideas” (Law K. a., 2005: 208). Worse still, many coproductions released during the 1950s were lost and have not been properly documented. Due to their transnational nature, many of the films that do exist have not been included in the dominant narrative of national cinema. They “lost” their place and became “orphans” in the history of Asian cinema.

Cinematic coproduction is, indeed, a notoriously dubious entity to most national cinema scholars. Susan Hayward, while discussing France-Italy coproductions during the 1950s and 1960s, refers to coproduction as a “murky area” and a “thorny problem” (Hayward, 1993, p. 9). In a similar vein, Roy Armes denounces coproduction films as being “designed for an anonymous international audience and with pretensions which were commercial rather than artistic” (Armes, 1985, p. 148). South Korean film historian Yi Yong-il, in his classic text on Korean film history, which was written in 1968, uses the term “denationalized” film when he refers to Hong Kong-South Korean coproductions (Yi Y, 2004). Yu Hyôn mok, who directed *Aimless Bullet (Obalt'an)* in 1961, denounces coproductions as a “problem” of national cinema, accusing them of serving the shallow desires of low-class audiences (Yu, 1980).

As such, the effort to historicize cinematic coproduction is still in its early phase. Anne Jackel, a UK-based cine-economist, asserts that coproductions between France and Italy during the 1950s and 1960s significantly contributed to the resuscitation of the two industries, and argues that France-Italy coproduction films were far less French-centered and more European, less conservative, and more generous than French cinema. Jackel points out that many European art films were also coproductions but these films were hardly ever examined as such (Jackel, 2003). The name of the auteur transcends the discourse, as Betz argued. Concerning French film

history, the period before *nouvelle vague* was often regarded as a *pro tem* era. On the other hand, the study of coproduction and popular cinema proves that the period of the 1950s was not one of inert transition but rather one of intense cultural activity at a time of international economic and ideological change. In line with this, Marc Silverman scrutinizes the 1950s' East German and French coproduction films (Silverman, 2006) and Tamara L. Falicov, an Argentinian film historian, reconstructs the practice of Roger Corman-Hector Oliviera coproductions during the 1980s (Falicov, 2004). Tim Bergfelder remaps the 1960s' German popular genre films and its remarkably linked network with other European film industries. He wrote that the aim of his historical research is "to focus specifically on and to write a history of the hitherto under-researched and particular areas of production practices and distribution patterns and particular areas of contemporary reception" (Bergfelder, 2005, p. 10).

If we turn our attention to the other side of the world, we see that the historical account of cinematic coproduction in Asia is still a rarely studied, if not ignored entirely, subject except for a few studies done by mostly Hong Kong film historians (Yau, 2009). The aim of the rest of this chapter is, therefore, to *reconstruct* the production history of *Love with an Alien* and delineate the film from a number of perspectives; South Korea's nation-building project, an aspiration to achieve modern production system, cultural proximity, and the clash of two cultures.

Postwar South Korean Cinema

Yi Pyöngil's *The Wedding Day* (*Shijipkanün Nal*, 1957) was South Korea's official submission to the 4th Asian Film Festival, which was held in Tokyo in 1957. It won the best comedy film award. This award was the country's first achievement at an international film festival. The whole country was caught up in the excitement, and one film critic proudly wrote: "Our [South

Korean] film industry successfully proved that the cinema could participate in the movement of rebuilding the country. Now it is time to move on and acquire dollars in line with [Syngman] Rhee government's export-encouragement policy!" (Tongailbo, 1957). The Korean film critic Yi Min, along these lines, proudly proclaimed, "South Korean cinema is now paving the way for the world, at least in Southeast Asia. The South Korean cinema had a warm response at the 4th Asian Film Festival, which is the biggest achievement South Korean cinema ever made. We can export our cinema to Southeast Asia, and, ultimately, acquire foreign currency" (Yi, 1957).

Acquiring foreign currency was the ultimate goal of the Syngman Rhee government (1948-1960), which sought to rebuild the country's decimated economy. The damage from the war to industrial offices, plants and equipment, public facilities, private dwellings, and transport equipment was severe. The US government had poured 200 million dollars into the Rhee government, which relied heavily on foreign aid for postwar reconstruction projects. In fact, between 1954 and 1959, about 70 percent of all reconstruction projects were funded by aid from the US (Suh, 1992). South Korea also faced an abrupt influx of migrant workers after the War, and in particular, the number of Seoul residents spiked. The population of Seoul more than doubled to reach 1.5 million by 1955 from a mere 650,000 in 1951. Along with the overflow of migrant workers to the metropolis, postwar Korea faced a rapid influx of American culture. South Korean film executives dreamed of constructing state-of-the-art soundstages, adopting mass-production assembly lines and effective management systems, and "borrowing" modern technologies such as sound synchronization, colour cinematography, special effects, and camera techniques. Unfortunately, they lacked everything: equipment, sound stages, modern filming techniques, and, most importantly, money.

The turning point came with the government policy. In 1954, the Rhee administration enacted a tax policy to support the war-torn film industry, under which movie tickets for foreign films would be taxed at 90 percent, while domestic cinema would be exempted. This gave a competitive edge to local films and served as a considerable incentive for film production. Together with this policy, the astonishing successes of *Chunhyang* (*Ch'unhyangjŏn*, Yi Kyuhwan, 1955) and *Madame Freedom* (*Chayubuin*, Han Hyŏngmo, 1956) in the domestic film market boosted the whole industry. In 1953, only six films were produced, but in 1959, the number reached 108. In addition, USIS, the UN Korean Reconstruction Agency (UNKRA), and the US Military Aid Groups competitively allocated endowments to South Korean government agencies for purchasing equipment and constructing motion picture facilities. Moreover, Hong Ch'an, a thriving theatre and motion picture producer, began construction of what would become the biggest motion picture studio in South Korea, with the support of the Rhee government (Shinyŏnghwa, 1957). *Love with an Alien* came out in this context.

Coproducing *Love with an Alien*

Love with an Alien was the brainchild of Im Hwasu, an influential South Korean show-business entrepreneur s and ex-gangster who was close to the Rhee government. Im attended the 3rd Southeast Asian Film Festival, which was held in Hong Kong in 1956. Run Run Shaw was chairman of the festival committee. Speaking to the press about his trip, Im said:

I had a chance to look at the Hong Kong film industry during the trip. The Hong Kong film industry had a modern production system equipped with state-of-the-art facilities, but the quality of Hong Kong cinema was not as great as I thought. Korean cinema does

not fall behind them. Once South Korean cinema becomes modernized and industrialized, I believe that it could surely produce many great films with international excellence. But looking at our film industry today, I can't bear the tears (Im, 1957).

As Im described in *Chosŏnilbo*, he was well aware of the Shaw family's wealth, power, and influence in the Southeast Asian market. Im mentioned that the family owned over seventy movie theatres throughout the region and churned out fifty films per year (Im, 1957). For Im, it was a great leap forward for his career to collaborate with Southeast Asia's most powerful entertainment company.

In March 1957, Im flew to Hong Kong. He brought Chŏn Ch'angkŭn (a director) and Kim Sŏkmin (a screenwriter) to discuss in detail the process for producing a film together. What Runde Shaw wanted was to produce the film in Eastman Colour. Both agreed instantly. As a mutually invested film, *Love with an Alien*'s script had to be carefully adjusted as the film had to satisfy both countries' audiences. During the pre-production stage, therefore, two Korean screenwriters (Kim Sŏkmin and Yu Tuyŏn) and Shaw's contract writer Cheng Kang worked together at a hotel in Hong Kong to develop a script that could fulfill the criteria of two different cultures (Shinyŏnghwa, 1957). Kim and Yu's initial draft, entitled *The Dawn of Asia* (*Ashiaŭi Yŏmyŏng*), focuses on the story of a Korean independence fighter who died in Manchuria, leaving behind a Chinese wife and two children. His daughter left for Hong Kong with her Chinese mother, while his son stayed in Korea. His two children later meet in Hong Kong after many years and, heartbreakingly, fall in love with each other. Kim and Yu insisted on a tragic ending while Cheng wanted a happy one. In the end, Kim and Yu had to compromise with the needs of Shaw & Sons.

In the completed script, the original emphasis on the Korean activist's heroic fights against the Japanese Empire had been reduced significantly. And the film, under the new title *Love with an Alien*, focused on the young couple instead. *Love with an Alien* became a melodrama with strong comic elements that were considered crucial for the Southeast Asian market. Hong Kong starlet Lucilla Yu-ming portrayed a young and promising singer Fang Yin (Pang Ŭm). Her parents first met in 1930s Kyōngsōng (the old name of Seoul). They instantly fell in love with each other, got married, and were living happily in colonial Korea with two children: Fang Yin and her brother P'yōng. Fang Yin's father Muryong (played by Korean actor Ch'oe Muryong) was a Korean independence fighter. But his way of fighting against the Japanese colonial forces was not with guns and swords but with his music. Muryong was a musician who composed and performed songs that conveyed Korean people's anger toward Japan. Muryong was scheduled to visit China for his children and, particularly, his wife, Ping Sim (played by Hong Kong actress Chan Wan), who missed her hometown. But his mother's illness prevents Muryong from joining the family trip. Ping Sim has to leave Muryong behind and wait until her husband joins several months later. But on the day of their departure, P'yōng falls off a roof and is forced to stay in Kyōngsōng with his father. A year later, when Ping Sim returns to Kyōngsōng, she has to face the tragic death of her husband. Muryong had been arrested by the Japanese police and tortured to death. And no one knows where her son is. Ping Sim was desperate to find her son but had to leave Kyōngsōng immediately to avoid being caught by the Japanese police. Ping Sim was deeply saddened and never returned to Korea.

After leaving Korea, Ping Sim remarried and raised Fang Yin with her new husband in Hong Kong, not revealing her past even to her own daughter. But her traumatic past returns when her beloved daughter falls in love with a Korean man Kim Sup'yōng (played by South

Korean actor Kim Chinkyu) who is a talented composer. Sup'yǒng was visiting Hong Kong for business, when he met Fang Yin at a club where she was working as a singer. Sup'yong had lost his biological mother during the Japanese colonial period. Having shared their past, they fall in love. But Ping Sim intervenes in their nascent relationship, fearing that Sup'yǒng is the son she bore with her ex-husband. Even worse, his name—Sup'yǒng—sounds similar to her lost son, P'yǒng. But as the mother's objections grow, their love only deepens. Ping Sim asks for help from the Korean Embassy in Hong Kong, and also turns to Ch'ōlgo (Yun Ilpong), who is a good friend of Sup'yǒng, to help separate the couple. The couple leaves for Macau, looking for Sup'yǒng's lost mother, but they are followed by Ping Sim. Just as Ping Sim confronts her daughter and opens up about her past life, Sup'yǒng arrives with his long-lost mother. All worries are gone, and everyone is happy in the end.

Two months after production began, four Korean stars—Kim Chinkyu, Yun Ilpong, Ch'oe Muryong and Kim Samhwa—arrived at Shaw's soundstage. *Southern Screen*, a popular film magazine published by Shaw Brothers, reported on the production: “following Japan, Thailand and Philippines, the movie workers of South Korea have already begun producing films in cooperation with those of Hong Kong....their [Korean crew] stay in the colony lasted for about two months and a part of the foreign scenes was shot in Macau” (Southern Screen, 1957). Shaw Brothers' crews, Tu Guangqi, Yang Gun (cinematographer), and Shaw Brothers actress Chan Wan landed in South Korea on September 12 and spent two weeks for location shooting in Korea's major tourist spots, then went back to Hong Kong. It is worth mentioning that Lucilla Yu-ming was a hot commodity for the Singapore-based MP&GI at the time, and she was loaned to the project (International Screen, 1960). A few years later, she played a similar role with Japanese actor Takarada Akira in a trilogy of MP&GI-Toho coproduction films—*A Night in*

Hong Kong (1961), *A Star of Hong Kong* (1962), and *Hong Kong-Tokyo-Honolulu* (1962)—which were very successful in both markets (*International Screen*, 1962). This trilogy led her to transnational stardom, although she retired shortly after the phenomenal success of the films (*International Screen*, 1963).

Im produced two more films in Hong Kong simultaneously. The second and third installment, *Love in Heaven and Earth* (*Ch'ŏnjiyujŏng*, 1958) and *Everlasting Love* (*Kŭrimja sarang*, 1958) were not done with Shaw but with an independent producer, Wang Lung's Jinfeng (Golden Phoenix). Im returned to Hong Kong in October 1957, three months after the wrap up of *Love with an Alien*. He brought Yang Hun and Yang Sŏkch'ŏn, two very popular Korean comedians. *Love in Heaven and Earth* was directed by Kim Hwarang, a veteran South Korean director, and was entirely financed by Im's Korea Entertainment (Law, 2004). *Everlasting Love* also stars Yang and Yang, and, according to the film's production notes, it was assumed to be a sequel of *Love in Heaven and Earth*. These two films were shot concurrently in November 1957. Unfortunately, neither film is available at the Korean Film Archive, and the Hong Kong Film Archive's official documents do not have a record of the precise release date in Hong Kong. However, a Taiwanese newspaper had an advertisement for *Love in Heaven and Earth* on July 18, 1958, which indicates that the film was theatrically released in Taiwan by way of Jinfeng's distribution network (Hong Kong Film Archive, 2004).

For Im, the Southeast Asian market was not a primary interest. What he craved was to make a South Korean “national” film with some exotic ingredients: palm tree-filled locales and Hong Kong beauties. In addition, there were other international coproductions with Hong Kong between the late 1950s and early 1960s. Wong Cheuk Hon (Huang Zhuohan), president of Lan Kwang Pictures, was one of the most active Hong Kong producers in South Korean cinema

during the 1950s and 1960s. As a Cantonese cinema producer who had an intimate alliance with Taiwan, Wong's Liberty Pictures (renamed Lan Kwang Pictures in 1961) cooperated with Korea Entertainment for *Because I Love You* (*Sarang hanŭn kkadak e*, 1958), which was directed by Han Hyŏngmo, a South Korean veteran who had helmed the famous and influential *Madam Freedom* (*Chayu puin*) in 1956. Im Hwasu helped to arrange the collaboration (Huang, 1994). The story of *Because I Love You* was set in South Korea and Malaysia (Pak S, 1959). Yun Ilbong and Kim Chingyu performed in the film, along with Hong Kong's Lan Di and Chan Wan. *Because I Love You* was one of five South Korean films chosen to compete at the 6th Asian Film Festival, held in Kuala Lumpur in May 1959, and it eventually won the best dance choreography award at the festival (Kukche yŏnghwa, 1959).

Interestingly enough, most of the South Korea-involved coproductions made in the 1950s and 60s involved Hong Kong in some way. From the Koreans' point of view, Hong Kong, a newly emerging financial center in Asia, was a place to long for and emulate. Since postwar South Korea's traumatic colonial past constantly negated Japan as an ideal country to follow, Hong Kong's dizzying cityscape was perceived as a blueprint for modernizing Seoul in the near future; it was an alternative and middle space other than the United States and Japan. Hong Kong's new Kai Tak International Airport, with its 8,350-foot runway, was completed and began operation in 1962. It was, as Tan See Kam highlights, a "'coming-of-age' for Hong Kong's postwar modernity" (Tan S, 2015). Hong Kong's Cathay Pacific Airways (CPA) began in 1946 as a small and unscheduled operator. It extended its capacity as a genuine regional airline and finally opened the "jet age" by purchasing the Lockheed prop-jet *Electra* in April 1959. It frequently flew between Singapore, Bangkok, Tokyo, Manila, Hong Kong, and Seoul. In August 1960, CPA began flying to farther destinations: Tokyo, Osaka, and Sydney (Far Eastern

Economic Review, 1960). In contrast, South Korea's aviation industry severely lagged behind its Asian competitors. Korean National Airlines (KNA), the nation's first national flag carrier and lone airline company at the time, only operated international flights between Seoul and Hong Kong every Thursday until the early 1960s and then gradually extended to Japan and Taiwan by the end of the decade. Visiting foreign countries, even an adjacent land, was reserved solely for a few privileged people. For postwar South Koreans, thus, Hong Kong was a place of wealth, fortune, and exotic beauty. Consequently, South Korean audiences saw Hong Kong's highly modernized cityscape and exotic tropical landscape through the coproduced films (Kim S, 2005).

Love with an Alien and Shaw

By the second half of the 1950s, Hong Kong had not yet achieved status as a regional media capital. Singapore was still the headquarters of the Chinese diaspora's film industry, and the corresponding production centers were dispersed in Malaysia, Singapore, and Hong Kong. When Shaw & Sons suggested coproducing *Love with an Alien* with Im, the Shaw family had a greater emphasis on its large distribution and exhibition networks than motion picture production. Their distribution network was laid out in major capitals in Southeast Asia, such as Kuala Lumpur, Jesselton (Kota Kinabalu), Johor Bahru, Singapore, Saigon, Hong Kong, and Bangkok. It was not until the mid-1960s that the Shaw Brothers' territorial dominion really appeared. By the late 1950s, MP&GI was solidly ahead of Shaw Brothers in Southeast Asia. In 1956, the Shaw family owned more than 100 theatres in Malaysia, Singapore, North Borneo, Vietnam, Thailand, Taiwan, and Hong Kong (Southern Screen, 1957). To meet the demands of its theatre circuit, Shaw Brothers had to stabilize its supply. Shaw Malay Production had dominated the Singapore and Malaysia markets by the mid-1950s as the single major studio in the region (Uhde, 2000).

However, with the infiltration of MP&GI, the competition took off. Feeling pressure from the family's rivals, Run Run Shaw decided to go to Hong Kong in 1957. His move was primarily aimed at securing the Chinese audiences overseas in Southeast Asia (Lim, 2006). To meet the swelling demand, most Hong Kong producers were coerced into manufacturing Mandarin-language pictures. Shaw Brothers was not an exception.

Instead of making local cinema in vernacular languages, Shaw Brothers began to produce numerous Mandarin films for the thriving overseas Chinese communities. Hong Kong was a legitimate base camp for making Chinese films because the eldest brother, Runde, and his sons had already been operating a small-scale film production company, Shaw & Sons, in Hong Kong since 1950. While Runde was in charge of the studio's Mandarin films, made by Shaw & Sons, he was less enthusiastic about filmmaking than about real estate, a highly profitable business due to the skyrocketing land prices in postwar Hong Kong and Malaysia (Southern Screen, 1957). Runde Shaw proudly decreed in January 1957 that "Shaw's production of oriental films, promotion of noble amusement and beautiful town life in Southeast Asia are clearly visible" (Southern Screen, 1958). Between 1957 and 1959, Runde and Run Run Shaw set sail on a far-reaching expansion venture, the so-called "theatre-a-month" project in newly independent Malaysia (Southern Screen, 1958). The plan was to construct 22 new, modern movie theatres in 24 months (Southern Screen, 1959). By 1962, the Shaw Brothers had retained nine amusement parks and 127 theatres in major cities in Southeast Asia (Southern Screen, 1962). Run Run Shaw repositioned to Hong Kong to take over the feature film production in the British Crown Colony while Runme remained in Singapore to take care of Shaw Malay Production. *Love with an Alien* was one of the last films Runde produced before his younger brother took over the family's film production business in Hong Kong.

Love with an Alien opened in February 1958 in South Korea's major cities. Im, answering questions at an interview about the film's foreign distribution deal, stressed, "We [Korea Ent.] sell the rights of *Love with an Alien* to Shaw & Sons, then they distribute the film to the Southeast Asian circuit. By selling the film, we acquire foreign currency [USD] which will help to modernize our country" (Shinyŏnghwa, 1957). Thus, the film was perceived not as any ordinary piece of cinema but as a symbol of national pride that promulgated the now "much-developed" new country. However, the results were rather below par: the film only sold 50,000 tickets, less than average for the period's A-level films. These numbers look even worse considering the film's budget; one billion won were poured into the project, two-to-three times more than other South Korean productions of the time (Shinyŏnghwa, 1957). *Love with an Alien* was not profitable for the Shaw Brothers either. Law Kar, a veteran Hong Kong film critic, argues that the film's lukewarm reception was due to its "Korean subject matter which the Chinese communities in Southeast Asia would find it hard to feel an affinity with." Similarly, Tu Guangqi complained that the script was "too Korean" to be grasped by Chinese audiences (Law, 2001). But what exactly was "too Korean" and which "Korean subjects" failed to resonate with them? Paradoxically, the film was criticized by most South Korean critics as being "too Chinese." *Chosŏnilbo* lambasted: "Due to remnants of feudalist notions in Hong Kong, the Hong Kong people asked for the original script to be changed in the film to a happy ending. The story may have ended on a happy note, but it did irreversible damage to the work as a whole (Chosŏnilbo, 1958). Indeed, the conservative family values of South Korean society caused the unwelcome reception among Southeast Asians. As a result of the poor performance, Shaw's effort to branch out by collaborating with a South Korean partner was temporarily halted following the release of *Love with an Alien*. Shaw & Sons was, in 1958, still heavily hinged on

the Southeast Asian market, and investors from the region did not want to invest in such experiments.

Epilogue

The most intensive phase of cinematic coproduction between South Korea and Hong Kong began a few years later. In May 1962, Run Run Shaw encountered an iconic director of 1960s South Korean cinema, Sin Sangok (Shin Sang-ok), at the 9th Asian Film Festival in Seoul. Sin was an emerging power in the South Korean film industry, and he was deeply involved with the Park Chung Hee government's film policies. Sin was, for the Park regime (1962-1979), a model entrepreneur. The Park regime supported Sin in establishing a modern and profitable motion-picture industry that could export its products to foreign markets. During the 1960s, Sin actively engaged in multiple coproduction projects with Hong Kong and tried to export Sin Films' outputs overseas using his formal and informal connections with Shaw Brothers of Hong Kong and other small-scale regional productions. As a result, Shaw and Sin agreed to coproduce films. Consequently, from 1964 to 1967, four big-budget color epic films were completed and distributed in each market. All four coproductions, *Last Woman of Shang (Dalgi, 1964)*, *The Goddess of Mercy (Tae P'okkun, Im Wönsik, 1966)*, *That Man in Chang-An (Hüktojök, Yan Jun, 1966)*, and *King with My Face (Ch'ölmyönhwangje, Ho Meng-hua, 1967)*, shared the budget, casts, directors, and production duties, all necessary and sufficient conditions for being considered true coproductions. South Korea embraced its first "golden age" of cinema. Shaw Brothers became an unrivaled force in Asian cinema by the late 1960s. The film industries in Asia entered a new phase in their development.

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