



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

Edinburgh Research Explorer

The Diary of Yunbogi and Japan-Korea Relations

Citation for published version:

Perkins, C 2020, The Diary of Yunbogi and Japan-Korea Relations. in R Sakamoto & S Epstein (eds), *Popular Culture and the Transformation of Japan-Korea Relations*. Asia's Transformations, Routledge, pp. 111-123.

Link:

[Link to publication record in Edinburgh Research Explorer](#)

Document Version:

Peer reviewed version

Published In:

Popular Culture and the Transformation of Japan-Korea Relations

Publisher Rights Statement:

This is an Accepted Manuscript of a book chapter published by Routledge in Popular Culture and the Transformation of Japan–Korea Relations on 2/7/2020, available online: <https://www.routledge.com/Popular-Culture-and-the-Transformation-of-JapanKorea-Relations/Sakamoto-Epstein/p/book/9780367024444>

General rights

Copyright for the publications made accessible via the Edinburgh Research Explorer is retained by the author(s) and / or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing these publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

Take down policy

The University of Edinburgh has made every reasonable effort to ensure that Edinburgh Research Explorer content complies with UK legislation. If you believe that the public display of this file breaches copyright please contact openaccess@ed.ac.uk providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.



Japan-Korea Relations and the Diary of Yunbogi

Chris Perkins

Introduction

In 2006 a new 'complete version' of *The Diary of Yunbogi* was published by the Japanese publisher Hyōgensha. The book's obi – a belt around the book that displays material designed to entice readers – proclaimed: 'Japanese and South Koreans both cried! The complete edition of the "Korean Wave Boyhood Diary"'. The back cover tells us this diary was written between 1963-64 by a South Korean boy, in the 4th year of primary school in Daegu, and that his account of life suffered in abject poverty brought Japan to tears. The front cover's pen and ink drawing shows Yunbogi sitting on an outcropping above Daegu, a bucket hanging from one hand.¹ On the back the same figure – thin, dirty, dressed in rags – stands with bucket in hand, staring back at us blankly.

The Diary of Yunbogi,² first serialised in the Korean newspaper Donga Ilbo in 1964, was a massive success in the Republic of Korea (RoK) and made into three films, the first of which (*Sorrow Even Up in Heaven*, dir. Kim Su-yong) won Best Film at the 1965 Blue Dragon Film Awards. The Japanese version of the diary, translated by Tsukamoto Isao and published by Taiheisha in 1965, was the first South Korean book published in Japan and met with great acclaim there; by year's end it had gone into 11 editions (Murata, 1965). Later that year, preeminent Japanese New Wave director Ōshima Nagisa produced a short film based on the text. In 1992, a two-volume manga version of the diary was published before we finally arrive at the 'complete version' in 2006. *The Diary of Yunbogi* lives on the Japanese Library Association basic books list, and is recommended by the Japanese Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare.

This chapter approaches the diary, and its subsequent adaptations, as sources and sites for imagining the complex social and political relations between Japan and the RoK, especially at the moment of normalization of relations in 1965. I see the diary and its retellings as examples of the *mediation* of South Korea: attempts to close the geographical and moral distance between Japan and Korea shaped by the technologies used in the process (Chouliaraki 2006, pp. 19-20). Korea in Japan's national imaginary was, at the time of publication of *The Diary of Yunbogi*, ambivalent. Before the Second World War, Korea lay within Japan's empire spatially, but lagged temporally; Koreans were citizens of Japan, but were thought to need stewardship from Japanese and were among the first to die for Japan's needs. After the war, concerted efforts were made in Japan to remove Korea from the national imaginary. Until 1951 the two nations ignored each other's existence (Lee 2011, p. 433), and after the division of the Korean peninsula, Japan recognized diplomatically neither the DPRK nor the RoK until 1965. There was very little guilt towards Korea in the Japanese public consciousness, and at least until 1952 significant support existed for deporting Koreans in Japan who "disturbed the peace" (Tonomura 2014, p. 57). As the

¹ The child's actual name was Lee Yun-bok.

² The Korean title is *Sorrow Even Up in Heaven: A Sad Story of a Self-supporting Child*.

effects of Japan's high-growth economy started to make themselves felt from the mid-1950s, attitudes towards Koreans softened, but Korean residents of Japan remained effectively stateless until normalization. Normalization, when it came, was only partial, and many in Japan, especially on the Left, decried the lack of recognition for North Korea and further integration into the US anti-communist security alliance in East Asia. Thus this diary was key to early reimagining in Japan of the newly visible South Korea.

Importantly, Yunbogi's story is one of *suffering*: the diary is about poverty, pain and Yunbogi's abandonment by both his mother and South Korean society. Thus, the dynamics of suffering are key to the relationship between nations facilitated by this diary. In analyzing mediations of suffering, Chouliaraki (2006, p. 85 – 95) identifies two broad categories, *representations* and *orientations*, both of which have implications for how the relationship between nations is constructed. *Representations* encompass relationships of space and time between viewers and those viewed. Are those being represented distant or close, is their experience coeval with the viewers or trapped in the past, is the future pre-determined or open? *Orientations*, on the other hand, draw attention to agency: what kind of voice do the sufferers have? Are they humanized? What are the ethics of communication between viewer and viewed? The answers to these questions all involve essential components of the role of this diary in Japan-Korea relations.

The career of Yunbogi's diary reveals the complex dynamics of victimization and victimhood developing after the Second World War. Here I argue that *The Diary of Yunbogi* created affective linkages between the RoK and Japan, tying the two together through emotion while smoothing over complicated politics of aggression and victimization and that the diary moved Japanese commentators, especially on the Left, to review their interpretations of postwar US hegemony in East Asia, and identify with South Koreans as fellow victims of imperialism. While the diary created an imagined community of emotion and victimhood, and thus connected the two nations, it simultaneously asserted a temporal difference between them by flagging Korean backwardness. Perhaps paradoxically, this backwardness was framed in positive terms. Unlike previous Japanese discourses on Korea that defined it as needing Japan's guiding hand to modernize fully, Yunbogi, and by extension the RoK, now represented humanistic innocence and a moral exemplar for a Japan lost in the grips of rapid economic growth. This sentiment played into Japanese unease over the pragmatic 'economism' that was fast becoming a political consensus in 1960s Japan.

Yunbogi in the RoK

In the prologue to the 2006 edition of *The Diary of Yunbogi*, Tsukamoto recounts his first trip to the Korean peninsula. After learning some Korean from Zainichi Koreans in Japan, he made his way by boat to Busan before spending two weeks at a Korean friend's house in Daegu, where he was struck by the number of children he saw living on the streets. When confronted by a local journalist who wanted to know his true impressions of South Korea, Tsukamoto remembers replying: 'Now that I've arrived in South Korea I'm surprised. The cities are dirty, there are many "Yunbogis": it's like Japan 15 years ago' (Lee 2006, p. 4).

In 1965 the RoK was starting to feel the effects of economic policies instigated by Park Chung Hee, who had taken power in a military coup in 1961. Park was heavily influenced by

his experience with the Japanese during the colonial period, and on taking power adopted a Japanese-style top-down approach to economic mobilization. Through import protection and export promotion, as well as an industrial policy that channeled funds into *chaebol* business conglomerates, he oversaw the industrialization and modernization of the South Korean economy. But as Tsukamoto's observation indicates, conditions in 1965 South Korea remained dire. The 1950-53 civil war had affected every stratum of society, leaving South Korea 'a terribly depressing place, where extreme privation and degradation touch everyone'; a place in which 'orphans ran through the streets' (Cummings 2005, p. 303). There were indeed many Yunbogis.

Kim Soo-yong's cinematic adaptation of the diary (*Sorrow up in Heaven*, 1965) captures the contradictions of these early stages of Korea's economic miracle. The film vividly contrasts inner-city high growth Korea and the destitute world of Yunbogi, who lives in a brick hovel 'at the bottom of the hill'. Yunbogi and his little sister travel between the world of dust, wells and mud floors, and the world of clubs, restaurants and bustling shopping districts as they struggle to make enough money for food by selling chewing gum, while also trying to avoid the reach of orphanages that threaten to break their family apart. Their urban experiences are grim. Yunbogi is ignored, threatened, scammed and beaten time and again, and in the film's final scenes, in which he travels to Seoul to find his oldest sister, he narrowly escapes enslavement by a gang. Apart from a few kind classmates and a teacher who eventually saves the family by having Yunbogi's diary published, and, the school is indifferent to their plight. Local children, dressed in the smart jumpers, shorts, and shoes of economic success, pick on Yunbogi's family because they are beggars. Kindness, when it comes, is fleeting. Overall the film depicts a society unsympathetic, even hostile, to those left behind in the rush for economic success. All the while Yunbogi is haunted by images of his mother, whose abandonment of the family has plunged them into destitution.

In terms of *representations*, the film remains objective, with all but one scene displaying a documentary realism that makes judicious use of long-shots to place the children within their social context. Much of the time the camera follows the action at child's eye level, situating the viewer within Yunbogi's world as an equal, albeit at a slight remove. This framing is significant for spatial and temporal representation of Yunbogi. Although his hovel lies outside the city and is surrounded by signifiers of backwardness, Yunbogi nevertheless moves within the city and its institutions. His world thus overlaps with mainstream society, causing him to serve as a contradiction living within it.

Our *orientations* to Yunbogi are also fashioned by Kim's cinematic choices. Even when depicting Yunbogi's reveries about his mother's return, the camera maintains objectivity, refusing to occupy the same subjective space as Yunbogi even while delving into his psychological torment. We often see the children's faces in pain, but never in melodramatic close-up. Furthermore, the characters, including Yunbogi, are complex and conflicted. The sick father wants to provide for his children but cannot; he skips meals for them, but is a drunk gambler, prone to violence. The little brother is bullied by other children for being poor but is selfish and mean to his sister. The mother is both deserter and savior. The teacher who makes publication of the diary possible engages in decisions that damage his marriage. And Yunbogi gets angry with his siblings and his father, and acts in ways that

could have dire consequences for the family unit. In other words, these are complex characters trapped by circumstance. They have depth.

Combined, these techniques create a powerful humanist ethic that permeates the film. Yunbogi, despite his hardships, displays a strong moral compass –going so far as to give up his meagre earnings to help an even poorer family, for which his father beats him. Yunbogi continues to attend school, write in his diary, and do his best to support his family. He has agency in this process; he overcomes obstacles and makes decisions that push the narrative forward. Indeed, the end of Kim’s film is very different from the diary itself, which closes with Yunbogi informed of its publication. But in the original diary, Yunbogi does not find his sister, although it is hinted that the family knows where she might be, and his material circumstances change little. His father says that he might be able to get a job but that’s it. Kim’s film, however, allows catharsis for both the characters and audience: Yunbogi, after a harrowing experience in Seoul, returns to jubilant crowds and addresses his schoolmates on a podium before being reunited with his family, mother included. Yunbogi’s morality is vindicated, and salvation for his family, and for South Korea, is possible.

Yunbogi Travels to Japan

With interest in South Korea at an all-time high due to the RoK-Japan Treaty, the scene was set for the diary to travel to Japan. According to Tsukamoto, the Japanese publishing company was cognizant of the diary’s success in South Korea and wanted to replicate that success in Japan (personal communication 2017). The motivation for publication, however, was not solely profit. Choe Yeong-deok, the managing editor of Taiheisha, the diary’s original publisher, saw in Yunbogi a powerful vehicle for communicating about his homeland to the Japanese. Tsukamoto himself was at the time teaching Korean in Ōsaka and working on the first Japanese-Korean dictionary. When approached by the publishers, Tsukamoto’s Korean was not sufficient to read the diary, and he spent much time consulting within the Korean community in Ōsaka to finish his translation. Tsukamoto states that he went to such lengths because he thought that ‘if a best seller was translated, it would prompt some understanding of South Korea and North Korea [in Japan]’ (personal communication 2017). Given the paucity of Korean-language material in Japan at the time, without Tsukamoto’s efforts it is unlikely that the diary would have been published.

Furthermore, a template for the success of *Yunbogi’s Diary* had already been established by *Nian-chan* (Yasumoto 2003), the diary of a 10-year-old Zainichi Korean girl in Japan published in 1958. Like *Yunbogi’s Diary*, *Nian-chan* became a surprise bestseller and was made into a film by Imamura Shōhei in 1959. That year *Nian-chan* topped the national book sales rankings. Interestingly, *Nian-chan* was then translated and published in the RoK, where it also became a best-seller and set a publishing industry precedent for Yunbogi. So, while the Japanese edition of *Yunbogi’s Diary* was packaged as a ‘South Korean version’ of *Nian-chan* and promised to evoke similar emotional response, the Japanese publishers were actually following the Korean marketing approach in reverse (Muno 1965, pp. 49-50; Asahi Shimbun 10 August 1965, p. 8). This framing, however, rendered the *Diary of Yunbogi* a derivative work in a genre already established in Japan. In other words, Japan led with *Nian-chan*, and Korea followed with *Yunbogi*.

Commentary on the diary in the mainstream press largely framed it as an opportunity to reflect on the relationship between Japan and the RoK, although the depth of that reflection was limited to the parlous state of relations to date. The headline of the *Asahi Shimbun* (10 August 1965, p. 8), for example, 'Korea's *Nianchan*', used the publishers' marketing template and in doing so reinforced the temporal separation of Japan and Korea. The last paragraph of their commentary made the issue of temporality explicit by stating that the 'diary calls to mind the life-styles of the Japanese at the end of the war'. This point, the commentary concludes, and the fact that the diary was the first South Korean book published in Japan, 'should be cause for the Japanese to reflect on a great number of things'. Just what those things are, however, is left unspecified. In a more direct opinion piece about Japan-RoK relations, Murata Kiyooki, editor-in-chief of the *Japan Times*, characterized Japanese attitudes towards Korea as 'disdainful indifference' that turned into 'antipathy at the personal level'. For Murata, the diary was thus an opportunity for the Japanese to discover Korea: 'No doubt, tens of thousands of Japanese who read it realized for the first time that Koreans, too, are after all human' (1965, p. 12).

The most substantial discussion of the diary, penned by Muno Takeji, appeared in the October 1965 edition of the journal *Rekishī hyōron*. Muno had worked for the *Asahi Shimbun* during the war but resigned and moved to the countryside on Japan's defeat in atonement for contributing to the wartime propaganda machine. Muno treats the diary as a site for articulation of war guilt and the figure of Yunbogi as a symbol for something that had been lost in Japan. His commentary also provides evidence, albeit limited, that the diary had an impact on how left-wing Japanese intellectuals imagined Japan's relationship with South Koreans.

Muno begins by noting that his first thought on finishing the diary was of Japan's 'fatal' (*chimeiteki*) lack of boys like Yunbogi, not in the simple sense that Japan's rapid growth had done away with poverty, but as a commentary on the relationship between modern development in Japan and the morality of Japanese youth. Japan's economic successes had resulted in social conditions – parental obsession with their offspring's academic achievement – that made children with Yunbogi's sense of justice impossible (p. 49). Muno also stresses how the book left him thinking about colonial legacies in Korea, and Japan's lack of action on behalf of Asian neighbors it had victimized in the war. There is a palpable tension here: Japan as victimizer of Korea, and Japan as victim of its own advancement. In a perverse sense, Korea's ability to produce Yunbogi directly resulted from Japan's colonial occupation, and on this logic, subsequent economic retardation saved Korea from becoming like Japan: prosperous but morally vacuous. The logic of civilizational progress is thus turned on its head. Muno, however, shows awareness of this tension. Using the aforementioned *Asahi Shimbun* commentary as a starting point, he asks: 'as an aggressor nation, what are we to think about the fact that the pain [of the war] which for us has become a memory, is to this day present in the victim nation?'

Muno's answer involves reimagining Japan's relationship with Asia and contains two key aspects. First, Muno offers a moral injunction to young Japanese. Through an anecdote about a Japanese youth orchestra who used a flood as a pretext to shirk performing, Muno relates how he flew into a rage and told the children that during the Korean War, North Koreans created stages deep underground and performed plays while American aircraft

dropped bombs above. Muno thus implies that Japanese youth growing up amidst the 1960s economic miracle had lost a sense of both social obligation and resilience. In his reading, however, these values could be resurrected by re-imagining Japan as part of Asia and exercising empathy for fellow Asians, including the Vietnamese who had now replaced North Koreans as the object of American wrath.

Muno's second point is a *mea culpa* that addresses Japanese reactions to the Korea-Japan normalization treaty. Muno states flatly that, 'like all Japanese with any commonsense' (p. 50), he supports Korean unification, which means he 'hates US imperialism' and deeply respects the 'people of the DPRK who fought like heroes against US aggression' (p. 51). But a consequence of this hatred, Muno recognizes, was that it extended to South Koreans for bowing to US pressure. Muno expresses contrition for allowing his hatred for US imperialism to blind him to hardships suffered in the RoK as well and giving the lie to his own talk of 'solidarity of the people'. Muno acknowledges his ignorance of South Korea and promises to study more (p. 51). Thus, for Muno the diary facilitated ways of relating to the people of victim nations as distinct from their governments.

Evidence also exists that the diary acted as a site in Japan for the domestic contest between North and South Korean residents. According to a contemporary RoK news source, the DPRK-aligned General Association of Korean Residents in Japan (Chongryon) seized upon the diary to argue that Yunbogi's experience was typical of families in the South (Chosun Ilbo December 22, 1965). The same article argues that Chongryon had instructed left-wing director Ōshima Nagisa to make a film of the diary for propaganda purposes. While the circumstances in which the film was made and screened do not support this argument, as we will see, Ōshima's film does have a strong political message that equates the world of Yunbogi with the RoK in general. It is to Ōshima's *Yunbogi* that we now turn.

Ōshima's *Yunbogi* and transnational student politics

Ōshima's version of the diary was, in his own words, his 'humble message to the Korea-Japan Treaty' (1992, p. 101). Perhaps paradoxically, then, Ōshima also states that no plans existed to show the film in cinemas: after one private showing, the documentary would be made available to borrow on request (ibid.). In the event, *The Diary of Yunbogi* had a successful run at the arthouse Shinjuku Bunka theatre in Tokyo and brought in modest profit. Ōshima's film is a multimodal experiment quite different from Kim Soo-yong's adaptation of the same year, and through its mediation of Yunbogi's experience the film fashions its own relationship with Korea in space and time. As commentators have noted, *Yunbogi* differs stylistically from Ōshima's previous documentary work (Turim 2000, p.375). Visually the film is a montage of approximately 600 photographs Ōshima took on a trip to South Korea in 1964. These photographs primarily had children as their subject, which Ōshima argued happened because the children stood out to him rather than because of a specific intention on his part (Asahi Shimbun 2 December 1965, p. 12). The photos were then assembled and transferred to 16mm film using stop-motion techniques, and music and sound effects were added. The film is held together by quotes from the diary spoken in Japanese by a child actor and narration by an unidentified Japanese man, which includes passages addressed to Yunbogi directly.

An obvious reason for this innovation was necessity: Ōshima only decided to adapt *Yunbogi* as a film after returning from Korea, and so had to make use of the material at hand (Yomiuri Shinbun 27 November 1965, p. 12). But he also appears to draw inspiration from contemporary currents in avant-garde filmmaking, particularly the work of French photographer and filmmaker Chris Marker, who had been introduced to Ōshima by television producer Ushiyama Junichi in the mid-60s (Turim 2000, p.375). Marker had himself documented South Korea in his 1957 photobook *Coréennes* (Koreans), which he dubbed an ‘essay film’,³ and later in his science fiction short *La Jetée* (1962) he pioneered a photo-montage approach to filmmaking (Furuhata 2012, p.251; see also Turim 1998, p. 223-224). With *Yunbogi*, Ōshima seems to have appropriated Marker’s photobook concept of the ‘essay film’ about Korea and updated it using techniques Marker developed later to produce a ‘film essay’. Indeed, Ōshima frames his film as a ‘Film Document’ (*Firumu Dokyumento*): an ambiguous category that straddles (fiction) film and (factual) documentary.

Ōshima’s writings on his time in Korea offer useful context for interpreting his version of the diary. A key theme that arises from his reflections is ambivalence over the ethics of his engagement with Korea, and representing the temporality of Korea vis-à-vis Japan. In his article ‘Korea as I saw it’ (1992 [1964], p. 61-63) Ōshima repeats the trope that Korean cities resemble Japanese cities in the immediate aftermath of the war. But he also notes the concern Koreans have for how they are represented in Japan: ‘when I told Koreans with whom I became acquainted that I was there to gather material for television, most— from government officials to filmmakers, from journalists to bar hostesses – asked me not to photograph or mention poor or dirty areas’ (p. 61). Across his writings Ōshima notes his cognizance of and respect for the national pride behind these requests from Korean informants, especially given the shame of Japanese colonization and the painful reality for Koreans of Japan’s rapid economic rise after the war. Representing the poverty he witnessed would perpetuate the temporal logic of a Japan that leads, and a Korea that lags. Ōshima argues, however, that achieving piece requires dismantling the ‘framework of that national consciousness’. The ethical injunction for the filmmaker is thus to ‘always seek the truth and communicate it’ (p. 62), and – as with Munō’s revelation – only when Japan comes to know Korea properly can the two establish a positive relationship.

It seems, however, that the truth that Ōshima wanted to communicate was tied to Korean poverty. The majority of the film’s photographs depict impoverished children, covered in grime and wearing worn clothing. We are shown frame after frame of shanty towns, dirt roads, children with babies on their backs, and oil drums used for collecting water and cooking. Unlike Kim Soo-yong, who placed the children within the context of rapid urban economic growth, Ōshima dwells on their destitution and the backwardness of their surroundings. The film thus represents the RoK as firmly in the past, with little hint of economic development. The photographs’ style contributes to this effect by recalling the work of early postwar documentary photographers such as Tanuma Takeyoshi, Hayashi Tadahiko and Kimura Ihee. The aesthetics of the film place Korea not only in the past, but in

³ According to John Fitzgerald, this description of *Coréennes* as an ‘essay film’ was left off the front cover of the English edition (chrismarker.org).

Japan's past. The choice of photographs has an impact on the agency of the children presented on screen, as they stand frozen, unable to move the narrative forward. The extracts from Yunbogi's diary are read but rather than having a narrative thrust, simply inform the audience of Yunbogi's grim reality. The act of writing the diary, ironically the one thing that gave Yunbogi power over his own life, is omitted from the film.

The adult Japanese male narrative voice in the film addresses Yunbogi directly, sometimes expressing back to Yunbogi what the child has narrated in the diary excerpts, at others asking questions related to Yunbogi's circumstances. What is interesting, however, is the development of an authorial voice for this narrator. The first few minutes of the film involve interplay between Yunbogi and the narrator. A diary section is read, then the narrator retells a simplified version to Yunbogi. Through this potentially redundant process of repetition the narrative voice begins to take on a sense of omniscience, stating what is seen and heard in the plainest terms possible. It does so without emotion. As with the photographs, viewers are presented with reality, enhancing the film's documentary-like effect (Lichten 2014, p. 9). Significantly, it is a Japanese voice that becomes authoritative and which pushes the film forward. This voice takes agency away from the Korean children and enables Ōshima to move the narrative, and with it Yunbogi's future, in new directions.

Once the authority of the narrative voice is established, its argument starts to rearrange Yunbogi's diary into a story about war and oppression. Unlike *Sorrow Up in Heaven*, Ōshima links the poverty we see through the photographs to the Korean War early on. Yunbogi is interpellated as an orphan of the war, in that the stresses and strains that caused his mother to leave and his father to become an alcoholic arise from structural factors rather than inescapable human flaws. As such, Yunbogi is told not to blame his father for their situation. His father is a victim too. But the story of victimhood does not start and end with the Korean War. Ōshima also steps away from Yunbogi's narrative to link his story to a two-fold oppression, Japanese colonialism and the succession of postwar dictatorships, that each boil down to state-militarism. In a powerful metaphor the narrator tells us about the curfew in South Korea. Asking what happens if you are caught on the streets after curfew the narrator tells us:

And what would you do if you're caught?
Say "I'm a dog, woof"
"I'm not a human. Woof."
"So please overlook me. Woof."
"Saying this, walk on all fours."
"Nothing to be ashamed of, as you live a dog's life after all."

All this is delivered in the narrator's matter-of fact voice: a voice that, as has been established, makes authoritative statements about reality. State-militarism in the RoK has reduced the Koreans to the level of animals living on the streets. But the story is not a simple attempt to elicit empathy from a Japanese audience. It is a rhetorical device that creates connections and makes warnings.

At this point the temporal work of Ōshima's film becomes complicated. The obvious connection here is between oppression in the RoK and in prewar Japan. So far, so simple:

Korea continues to lag behind Japan. But another temporal layer is added when we think about the context in which Japanese audiences watched *Yunbogi*. In 1965, Japan's economic miracle was in full swing, having been launched five years earlier with Prime Minister Ikeda Hayato's Income Doubling Scheme. However, Ikeda's economic pragmatism was essentially a method of steering the Japanese public away from unresolved issues concerning the war, fascism, democracy, and Japan's place within the emerging political order: issues that came to a head in the massive, and inconclusive, protests against the renewal of the US-Japan Security Treaty in 1959/60, known in Japan as the Anpo. But while Ikeda's scheme, and spectacles such as the 1964 Tokyo Olympics, were cementing economic consensus, the spectre of Japan's wartime militarism still loomed large in public consciousness. Thus, although the stories of oppression in *Yunbogi* lived ostensibly in Japan's past, they also served as a reminder that militarism, oppression, and the destruction of human dignity existed in the present.

In fact, Japan's aggression towards Korea is used in the film to construct a future orientation for *Yunbogi* and the children he represents. In conjunction with a section in the diary that recounts *Yunbogi*'s impressions of South Korea's Liberation Day, the narrator speaks as follows:

36 years of domination.
36 years of exploitation.
36 years of oppression.
36 years of massacres.

His voice is accompanied by the sound of jackboots marching and dissonant strings that add to the tension. Images of peasants working in villages amongst grass huts create an impression of a pure countryside life, rooted in an indeterminate past, destroyed by Japanese oppression. While the jackboots march on in the background the narrator continues:

A paper that was forced out of existence in 1940 proclaimed:
"Boiled down, red peppers become even hotter,
And wheat, once dead, sprouts anew.
Boiled down, red peppers become even hotter,
And wheat, once dead, sprouts anew.
Yi *Yunbogi*, you too are a boiled-down red pepper.
Yi *Yunbogi*, you too are wheat that, once dead, sprouts anew."

Here we learn more about Ōshima's message to the new RoK-Japan Treaty. Later the film shows images from the April 19 Student Revolution of 1960 that forced Syngman Rhee out of office. The narrator notes that South Korean youth go either into the military or to university, and that university students were instrumental in bringing down Rhee's government. As viewers see images of the protests the narrator asks *Yunbogi* whether he will someday throw stones. As the montage continues, Ōshima shows us the child who has substituted for *Yunbogi*. He then zooms back into his face. The shot lingers and we hear shouting, screaming, running. *Yunbogi* is now witnessing the protests, looking at his future. Again, in contrast to Kim's film, which grants *Yunbogi* agency and thus hope within the

current structure of the RoK, Ōshima suggests that the only way forward for the youth of Korea is, like in Japan, to protest violently against the state.

These pictures of protest also tie together Japan and the RoK through a shared photographic aesthetic of memory (cf. Perkins 2015 chapter 1). Although released five years after the Anpo protests of 1959/1960, Ōshima's images would have no doubt resonated with Japanese who had either taken part or seen news coverage that documented the protests. Through this shared imagery a visual argument emerges that victimhood binds Koreans and Japanese because they live under oppressive states. Thus, while the film acknowledges Japan's oppression of Korea, it also forges a transnational link through radicalism: both nations labour under governments that must be resisted through direct action.

So, even if Chongryon did not engage Ōshima to make the *Diary of Yunbogi*, he does not offer a rosy picture of life in the RoK. Indeed, some newspaper commentary on the film took Ōshima's use of Yunbogi as a symbol for the RoK and exploited it. In a discussion of the film the *Yomiuri Shimbun* (November 27 1965, p. 12), for example, ran the headline: 'Painting the reality of South Korea through "Yunbogi's Diary"', arguing that 'the diary captured the reality and sentiment of the Korean people'. The article makes clear the nature of this reality: 'In extreme poverty, starving, his mother and sister gone, Yunbogi sells gum in the streets and polishes shoes'.

The film also provoked criticism from filmmaker Kuroki Kazuo in the preeminent film periodical *Eiga Hyōron* (1965), which, interestingly, focuses not on South Korea but the political dynamics of filmmaking in Japan. Although Kuroki praises the film's structure, particularly the refrain spilling out of the screen to address the audience and the film's portrayal of child poverty, he also uses the opportunity to take radical cinema in Japan to task. For him Japanese cinema is becoming increasingly conservative, and *Yunbogi* does not succeed as a political film because, unlike Ōshima's maiden work *A Town of Love and Hope* (*Ai to kibō no machi*, 1959), which Kuroki praises highly, the film does not present the audience with a vision of the future. Quoting Brecht, Kuroki argues that only when films highlight the relations of production and ownership underpinning the circumstances depicted on screen can they suggest an alternate future.

As noted, Ōshima pays little attention to the economic contradictions of the RoK in 1965, and instead pushes a message that Yunbogi's poverty results from colonial, then domestic oppression. In the context of Kuroki's criticism, Yunbogi's agency becomes problematic: what exactly is he to demonstrate against, and what would be the desired outcome? In fashioning a transnational link between the students of Korea and of Japan, Ōshima also through omission imposes the problems of Japan back on the RoK: namely, a lack of coherent radical ideology following the failure of the Anpo protests. But there exists another interpretation of Ōshima's approach to the *Diary of Yunbogi*, one that is precisely about Japan's future. As Kim Yongon argues in a 2007 article on the new Hyōgensha edition of the diary, Japan in the mid-1960s had left the Age of Politics (*Seiji no jidai*) and entered the Age of Economics (*Keizai no jidai*). South Korea in the mid-1960s, on the other hand, although beginning to enter the economic boom of the Park years, remained firmly within the Age of Politics. As Ōshima himself said that he wanted Japanese high school students to

watch his film (Asahi Shimbun 2 December 1965, p. 12), he likely wished to treat South Korean students, who live in Japan's political past, as an example that would reinvigorate the culture of protest in Japan. In this sense, contra Kuroki, Ōshima *was* supplying a vision of the future of Japan, albeit one that required a trip, via South Korea, into the past. Thus, if Munro looked to Yunbogi as a source of humanistic values lost in an age of rapid economic development, Ōshima saw Yunbogi as a vehicle for returning to Japan's Age of Politics.

Conclusion

We end where we began, with Hyōgensha's 2006 publication of the 'complete' version of *The Diary of Yunbogi*. The diary has once again become a site for articulating a particular story about South Korea, Japan and economic development. Part of that story is directed at Zainichi Koreans. Yasuda, the man behind Hyōgensha's decision to republish the diary, is a third-generation Zainichi Korean, who wanted new generations of Zainichi Koreans to learn that even as Japan's economy boomed in the mid-1960s, their home country (*sokoku*) was experiencing extreme poverty. Furthermore, the book becomes regarded as a text that teaches selfish contemporary school children to think about the meaning of life via a vicarious encounter with poverty. Yasuda has also tried to refashion Yunbogi himself. Addressing the Korean Wave, he argues that South Korea has achieved its current success because of the 'tough times' Yunbogi lived through (Kim 2007, p. 69). Yunbogi's life, therefore, is recast as an act of sacrifice for the Korea of skyscrapers seen today.

But what of that sacrifice? By all accounts Lee Yun-bok's life improved after publication of his diary: he became a businessman and later a salesman, and married in 1984. He continued to live with his family until he died in 1990. Ironically, however, although Lee made enough money from his diary in the RoK to get through school, he never received royalties from the publication and adaptation of his diary in Japan. In fact, not until 1985, when a Mainichi Shimbun journalist visited him in Seoul, did Lee learn that his story had provoked a huge reaction in Japan. The journalist was outraged, but Lee was philosophical: 'I'm just satisfied if my book touched some people, whether the Japanese publishing company's reward includes royalties will depend on their conscience' (The Kyunghyang Shinmun 1985).

References:

A Town of Hope and Love, 1959. Directed by Ōshima Nagisa [DVD]. Seoul: Korean Film Archive. Tokyo: Shochiku.

Asahi Shimbun, 1965. 'Korea's "Nian-chan" [Kankoku no Nian-chan]', 10 August.

Asahi Shimbun, 1965. 'The Short Film "The Diary of Yunbogi" is Completed [Tanhen Eiga "Yunbogi no Nikki" Kansei]', 2 December.

Chōsun Ilbo, 1965. 'The Sadness in the Sky is used for Chongryon Propaganda: making a movie with a Japanese left-wing director ['Joyeongye seonjeon akyong doeneun "Jeohaneul-edo seulpeum-i" iljwaikgye gamdok sikyeo yeonghwahwa]', 22 December.

Chouliarakis, L., 2006. *The Spectatorship of Suffering*. London: SAGE Publications.

- Cummings, B., 2005. *Korea's Place in the Sun: A Modern History*. London: W.W. Norton and Company.
- Furuhata, Y., 2012. Audiovisual Redundancy and Remediation in Ninja bugeichō. *Mechademia*, 7(1), pp.249–262.
- Fujitani, T., 2011. *Race for Empire: Koreans as Japanese and Japanese as Americans during World War II*. London: California University Press.
- Kim Yon-gon, 2007. The real wealth taught to us by poverty. Why "The Diary of Yunbogi Again?" [Mazushisa ga oshietekureru 'hontō no yutakasa'. Naze, ima futatabi "Yunbogi no Nikki" na no ka]. *Bōsei*, 453(38), pp. 64-69.
- Kuroki, K., 1965. 'Ōshima Nagisa's "Diary of Yunbogi"', *Eiga Hyōron*, 21(1), 68-71.
- La Jeteé*, 1962. Directed by Chris Marker. Paris: Argos Films.
- Lee, Min Yong, 2011. 'Normalization of relations with Japan: Towards a New Partnership', in Kim Byung-Kook and Vogel, E.F., eds. *The Park Chung Hee Era: The Transformation of South Korea*. London: Harvard University Press, pp. 430 - 456.
- Lee, Yun-bok, 2006. *Sorrow up in Heaven: the Diary of Yunbogi*. Translated by Tsukamoto Isao. Tokyo: Hoyōgensha.
- Lichten, J., 2012. Japan's Vietnam War: 1960s Politics, Korea, and the US in the Films of Ōshima Nagisa. *AGLOS: Journal of Area-Based Global Studies* (Special Issue), pp. 1 - 24.
- Muno, T., 1965. 'Reading the Diary of Yunbogi [Yunbogi no nikki o yonde]'. *Rekishi Hyōron*, 182, pp. 49 - 52.
- Murata, K., 1965. The 'Distant' Neighbors. *The Japan Times*, 21 December, p. 12.
- Ōshima, N. 1992. *Cinema, Censorship and the State: The Writings of Ōshima Nagisa*. London: The MIT Press.
- Perkins, C., 2015. *The United Red Army on Screen: Cinema, Aesthetics and the Politics of Memory*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Sorrow up in Heaven*, 1965. Directed by Kim Soo-yong [DVD]. Seoul: Korean Film Archive.
- The Kyunghyang Shinmun*, 1985. 'Yunbok Lee, the basis for the protagonist of The Sadness in the Sky says: "My younger brother, just a little kid before, is now a university student"' ["Jeohaneul-edo seulpeum-i" ju-ingong iyunbokssi "koheulligae mangnaeneun daehak danyeoyo"], 26 January.
- Tomomura, D., 2014. How did the Japanese think about the "Zainichi Korean Problem"? [Nihonjin wa "Zainichi Chōsenjin Mondai" o dō kangaetekita ka?] *European Studies*, 14, pp. 55-59.
- Turim, M., 2000. Virtual discourses of history: Collage, narrative or documents in Chris

Marker's level 5. *Sites*.

Turim, M., 1998. *The Films of Oshima Nagisa: Images of a Japanese Iconoclast*. London: University of California Press.

Yasumoto, S., 2003. *Nian-chan*. Fukuoka: Nishi-Nihon Shinbunsha.

Yomiuri Shimbun, 'Painting the Reality of South Korea [Kankoku no genjitsu o egaku], 27 November, p. 12.