THE MAKING OF THE RECORDING INDUSTRY IN COLONIAL KOREA, 1910-1945

By

Hye Eun Choi

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of

the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

(History)

at the

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

2018

Date of final oral examination: 4/11/2018

The dissertation approved by the following members of the Final Oral Committee:

Charles Kim, Associate Professor, History
Louise Young, Professor, History
Sarah Thal, Professor, History
Steve Ridgely, Associate Professor, Asian Languages and Cultures
E. Taylor Atkins, Professor, History, Northern Illinois University
Serk Bae Suh, Associate Professor, East Asian Languages & Literature, University of California, Irvine

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

Acknowlegements

Over the course of researching and writing this dissertation, many organizations, teachers, mentors, and friends provided me with crucial assistance. With generous funding from the Japan-Korea Cultural Foundation, the Kyujanggak Institute for Korean Studies at Seoul National University, and the History Department, I was able to research primary sources in Japan and Korea. The Department also supported me throughout the final writing of my dissertation with a Mellon-Wisconsin Summer Fellowship and two Dissertator Fellowships.

During my research in Japan, I received great practical and emotional support from my supervisor, Dr. Fukuoka Shota, and the Korea specialist, Dr. Asakura Toshio, at the National Museum of Ethnology. I am especially grateful to Saitou Toru and others at the Studio Technology and Archive Department at the Nippon Columbia Company for assisting me with my research at the company. My thanks also go to the Kyujanggak Institute for Korean Studies for supporting my research over two separate terms.

There were many scholars who very generously shared their knowledge and research materials. In Japan, I was very fortunate to receive help from Park Chan-ho, Noriyuki Yokichiya, and Drs. Asami Toshio and Ko Youngran. Drs. Zhang Yu-jung, Kim Chungkang, and Lee Jun-hee gave me much-needed comments on my papers, and Dr. Leighanne Yuh strongly encouraged me to publish. I should give special thanks to Dr. Bae Yeon-hyung for sharing his sound sources and information whenever I asked and Dr. Kyung-boon Lee for her sustained support and discussions during my research in Korea.

Through participating in three dissertation workshops, the East Asian Studies Center Consortium National Dissertation Workshop, the International Conference of NextGen Korean Studies Scholars, and the Social Science Research Council Korean Studies Dissertation Workshop,

I met professors Michael Robinson, Kyeong-Hee Choi, Kyu Hyun Kim, Hae Yeon Choo, and Yoonkyung Lee. These imminent scholars all offered me invaluable critiques and advice.

I am truly grateful to my colleagues and friends, both at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and elsewhere, for their constant encouragement over many years. My appreciation goes to So Yeon Bae, Eunhee Park, Lin Li, Jason Morgan, James Homsey, Danny Kim, Sam Timinsky, Laura Wen, Young Sun Park, Jungwon Kim, Mikyung Jung, Hyunjoon Shin, and Paige Holt. I also thank Jihoon Suk and Frederic J. Schenker for sharing their theses with me and Leslie Abadie for her unstinting practical help through the entire process.

I am of course indebted to many professors. On my dissertation committee, Professors Louise Young, Sarah Thal, and Steve Ridgely guided me throughout my PhD program with critical feedback on my papers as well as necessary advice. With their guidance, I grew as a scholar and came to feel at home at UW. I am deeply grateful to Professors Taylor Atkins and Serk Bae Suh for agreeing to take part in the committee. Their deeply informed criticism and thoughtful comments greatly enriched my dissertation. Apart from my committee, I also thank Dr. Richard Miller who helped me find affiliation for my research in Japan. At the University of Texas at Austin, Dr. Robert Oppenheim's confidence in me was the original impetus to start my PhD program. I am especially grateful to my advisor, Dr. Charles Kim. He believed in this project and stood by me through it all, balancing criticism with unfailing encouragement and support.

Finally, I would like to thank my family, my mother and my siblings as well as my in-laws, namely Patricia, William, Nereyda, Sue and Richard, for their unwavering love and support. Finally, my journey could not have been completed without support from my husband, Michael. Ever since the beginning of my graduate career, he listened to my ideas first, provided technical

support, and edited all my drafts and revisions with unconditional trust and love through many years of research and writing. I cannot thank him enough.

To My Father

Introduction

"Arirang" has long been regarded as the quintessential Korean song among Koreans and others. Many older Koreans must still remember the deep emotions they felt when "Arirang" was played for the Korean unified women's table tennis team, representing the North and South as one, when the team won a gold medal at the 1991 World Table Tennis Championships in Japan. "Arirang" was again chosen to be played for the combined Korean women's ice hockey team in place of the anthem of either state at the 2018 Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang, South Korea. Even during the colonial period, Koreans thought of "Arirang" as representing the Korean nation, as Kim San, a Korean member of the Chinese Communist party, told the journalist Helen Foster Snow (writing as Nym Wales) in 1937. Considering that Snow titled her subsequent book *The Song of Ariran*, about Kim's experience as a revolutionary, one can easily imagine what the song meant to him and his comrades fighting for Korea's independence far away from their homeland.[1] Likewise, no song can compete with "Arirang" as a signifier for Koreanness.

However, this common belief that "Arirang" has always been beloved by all Koreans throughout their country's long history is not true. The formation of social consensus regarding the national representation of "Arirang," as it has been commonly known, only occurred during the colonial period. Before then, there was no single song that people across social classes and regions could have enjoyed together in Korea's pre-modern hierarchical societies. The forms of music performed at the court, for example, were not for all subjects, but strictly limited to royalty and elite aristocrats as part of Confucian rituals and important national events. In addition, aristocrats and commoners enjoyed distinct kinds of music, which rarely overlapped. Even

[1] Kim, San and Nym Wales. *Song of Ariran: The Life Story of a Korean Rebel*, 1941.

hereditary performers were categorized into subgroups depending on the status of their audiences. Most music, whether instrumental or vocal, was transmitted by practice from one generation to the next and usually circulated within limited and distinct regions. Genres and specific pieces might occasionally move across classes and regions, as in the case of *p'ansori*,[2] but such changes were gradual and took significantly longer compared to the modern era. The fact that "Arirang" could become a national symbol within a few decades in the early 20th century is entirely a modern phenomenon.

The development of modern culture industries in the capitalist economy of colonial Korea greatly contributed to the mass consumption and appreciation of "Arirang." In other words, "Arirang" was a commercially produced product. It first appeared as the theme song for a film of the same name[3] and was derived from one local version among many other regional variations. With help from modern media, "Arirang" rapidly became familiar to all classes throughout the Korean peninsula. Its popularity was not limited to its country of origin. As Taylor Atkins aptly points out, "Though its Korean origins were never questioned, 'Arirang' circulated within an emerging cosmopolitan cultural space in East Asia, becoming well known in urban China, Manchuria, Taiwan, and Soviet Asia due to the resettlement of Koreans and Japanese as well as the operations of Japan's entertainment industry."[4] Modern culture industries operating in the

[2] *P'ansori* is known to have originated in the late 17th century as a kind of performance for common people and its musical and dramatic aspects became more refined through the 18th century. By the 19th century, aristocrats and the middle class (*chung'in*) showed much interest in and eventually acted as patrons for *p'ansori* performers. For more information, see Kim, "History of Pansori," 3–5.

[3] *Arirang,* directed by Un-kyu Na (1929, Kyŏngsŏng: Chosŏn Cinema Productions).

[4] Atkins, "The Dual Career of 'Arirang': The Korean Resistance Anthem That Became a Japanese Pop Hit," 648. For a more extensive discussion, see Atkins, *Primitive Selves,* ch. 4.; Wang, "Arirang in Taiwan: A Sketch of Its Reception History," 231–33.

Japanese Empire for multiethnic audiences were responsible for the popularity of "Arirang" in Korea as well as other countries in East Asia.

The wide appreciation of "Arirang" further shows Koreans' experience of globalized modern sound culture during the colonial period. "Globalized modern sound culture" refers to the profound changes in sound culture that took shape across the world from the turn of the 20th century, mediated by gramophones and radios. Sound culture in this study encompasses not only the content of cultural products, but also the ways in which music and other narrative genres were produced and consumed. The recording industry and later the radio industry provided sites for constructing hybridized mass sound culture which were distinct to each region, nation, and class, and their formation took place on a global level. "Arirang" can only be understood in the context of this changing sound culture. That is, it was due to the marketing and distribution efforts of modern mass media that Koreans were almost universally exposed to "Arirang" and became quickly familiar with it. Incorporating Western musical influences, "Arirang" was reinvented as a popular song through a standardizing process that reduced the extensive use of bent notes and microtones found in native Korean forms and replaced its original rhythmic structure, called *semach'i changdan*, with a waltz rhythm, among other changes. The song was also accompanied by Western musical instruments. Despite these significant differences from its original folk version, Koreans found something uniquely representative rather than foreign in the song and have generally been oblivious to its hybridized characteristics. Like Kim San, they have instead felt and expressed their affinity for the national and folk associations the song evoked. The movement of this hybridized and standardized "Arirang" into Korean mass consciousness as the representative national song thus shows how sound culture in colonial Korea became hybridized and how mass cultural products were produced and consumed during the colonial period. To understand how such a

fundamental transformation in sound culture took shape in colonial Korea, my dissertation explores the birth of the Korean recording industry at the intersection of capitalism, colonialism, and globalized modern sound culture.

Modern Sound Culture and the Recording Industry in Colonial Korea

In the study of Korea's modern cultural formation under Japanese rule, sound culture has not yet received sufficient attention. However, the newly emerged culture industries, such as gramophones, radio, film, and theater, inescapably affected Koreans' everyday urban sonic experiences. Thus, Koreans were exposed to commercially produced songs and narratives, both native and foreign, more quickly and more widely than ever before. Against this backdrop, Koreans came to accept that music and narratives were objects to be produced, advertised, and reproduced through media, especially the recording industry, for mass consumption. They also became aware that their preferences for sound products, in turn, could influence the direction of record production.

Meanwhile, a modern reconfiguration of music fields began. The dominant presence of native Korean music across the society of the Chosŏn Dynasty came to an end. Western art music joined Korean classical genres as high-culture products for elite Koreans. A generational gap in music preferences also became apparent. While younger audiences grew more interested in modern popular music and narrative styles, older Koreans still appreciated Korean folk genres, which were themselves adapted into modern forms. Modern spoken genres such as film dramas (*yŏnghwagŭk*), film narrations, and comedic skits were firmly established as distinct genres. In other words, *Chosŏn sori* (the sound of Chosŏn), which referred to native Korean music and narratives, was associated with "old" Korean culture that needed to be conserved, but at the same

time, various foreign and foreign-influenced music and narrative genres were expanding their influence. This study explores the direct and active roles that colonial-era Koreans played in the modern reconfiguration of sound culture.

These kinds of changes were not limited to Korea but were part of a global phenomenon connected with the growth of the transnational recording industry. In fact, the recording industry provides a unique window through which to examine how sound professionals directed the modern transformation of Korea's sound culture under Japanese rule. This is true for the following reasons: First, the recording industry operated throughout the colonial period, while the radio industry, which started over a decade later in the middle of the 1920s, did not. Therefore, studying the recording industry exposes the entire trajectory of the changes that occurred in sound culture in colonial Korea. More importantly, the transnational recording industry deserves close examination because of its importance as a field of cultural production over which Koreans had a significant degree of control. Koreans interested in promoting various causes, whether they were involved in evangelical activities, the children's movement, or the theatrical reform movement, tried to utilize the recording industry for its powerful influence on society. Such efforts therefore appeared, in all sorts of ways, in the products of the industry. In other words, what could be heard on records came from Korean efforts to develop a new culture. This content was not limited to traditional, Western classical, or modern popular music, but was inclusive of non-musical genres such as dramas, film narratives, comedic skits, and even speeches. The radio industry was also involved in producing such narrative genres, but in the case of music, it focused more on broadcasting than on production. In addition, the recording industry also arranged stage shows to promote their exclusive artists and records. In other words, the recording industry largely overlapped with the performing industry in

colonial Korea. Therefore, the recording industry provides fertile ground to examine how Korea's modern sound culture was achieved.

Three primary aspects of the recording industry facilitated the formation of modern sound culture in colonial Korea. First, the recording industry was "transnational." The production and consumption of records and gramophones took place across territorial and ethnicized boundaries. Moreover, the recording industry functioned as a major conduit for global funding, technology, and management, as well as for the transmission of master recordings from foreign countries and cultures to the Japanese Empire. In addition to manufacturing and marketing Japan-produced and foreign-licensed records and gramophones, the industry also allowed a space for Koreans to manage domestic record production in cooperation with their Japanese counterparts. Those records were pressed in Japan but consumed not only in Korea but across East Asia as well. "Transnational" describes the multi-directional cultural and economic engagements of the recording industry that were necessary to produce a new sound culture.

Second, the recording industry produced "transcultural" sound products. "Sound professionals" —the people who worked in the transnational recording industry—shared the same primary goal. That is, whether they were musicians, composers, songwriters, comedians, recording technicians or producers—and whether they were Japanese, Korean, or people of other ethnic heritages—sound professionals endeavored to produce hit records so that they could earn high reputations in their fields and reap commensurate financial rewards. For this, sound professionals engaged in transcultural record production since they not only appropriated various foreign elements but also incorporated local and regional flavors and characteristics to satisfy the desires and interests of their target audiences. For Korean sound professionals, their production of transcultural records was not just to construct modern Korean sound culture for Koreans but also

to win over Japanese and others across the Japanese Empire as consumers with refashioned Korean sound products. By making globally informed yet locally inflected transcultural records, sound professionals established modern Korean sound culture contemporaneously with sound culture across the globe.

Third, the recording industry became a transsocial space as sound professionals with various educational backgrounds, ethnicities, genders, and social positions negotiated, competed, and cooperated to enhance their positions in the recording industry. For example, even an elite songwriter would cooperate and negotiate with a vocalist, regardless of his or her social status or education, so long as the vocalist helped to produce a successful product. Moreover, the recording industry might favor the vocalist over the songwriter if it concluded that the contributions of the former could produce more profitable records than the latter. Therefore, these highly motivated sound professionals, who were engaged in capitalist competition within the recording industry, cannot simply be categorized as a monolithic group of colonized subjects. Rather, I contend that their professional identities should be taken seriously to properly understand them and the choices that they made in the industry. By studying their aspirations within the opportunities and constraints of the global economy and colonial politics, I uncover the complex colonial engagements that occurred in the culture industry during the colonial era.

Historiographic Discussion

I draw on several scholars to develop a broad frame for my project. Scholarship in "new imperial studies" has reconsidered the relations between metropoles and colonies and approached them within "a single analytic field."[5] More specifically, Andre Schmid has urged scholars of the

[5] Stoler and Cooper, "Between Metropole and Colony: Rethinking a Research Agenda."

Japanese Empire to integrate the colonial experience into modern Japanese history.[6] Taking a transnational and co-constitutive approach is particularly significant in my study of Korea's recording industry, as it began as part of Japan's. Further, recognizing that the colonial regime was not omnipotent, I pay close attention to the ambiguity and contingency of colonial encounters. In addition, informed by Arjun Appadurai's notion of globalization, I investigate the homogenizing effects and the simultaneous occurrence of localizing processes in the formation of modern sound culture in colonial Korea. Admittedly, Appadurai is concerned with a disjunctive order of the contemporary global cultural economy. However, his propositions are applicable to my study because the Japanese Empire experienced a similar set of global disjunctures that were engendered by the deterritorialized flow of money, finance, populations, technologies, images, and ideas that began around the turn of the twentieth century.[7] These circumstances blurred the temporal hierarchy between the metropole and its colonies, especially when the transnational culture industry established market and production sites in East Asia. Influenced by Andrew Jones, I reject the blanket assumption of "belated modernity" in Japan and Korea—and more broadly in East Asia. Instead, I approach the making of globalized sound culture in colonial Korea as occurring almost contemporaneously with its metropole.[8]

Recent scholarship, especially on Korean literature and film and largely under the rubric of "new imperial studies," has shown how mainstream Japanese culture consumed, represented, gazed at, and curated Korean culture and productions and examined Koreans' complex engagements in these processes.[9] I take a similar approach, but include Korean sound professionals

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[6] Schmid, "Colonialism and the `Korea Problem' in the Historiography of Modern Japan."

[7] Appadurai, "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy."

[8] Jones, *Yellow Music: Media Culture and Colonial Modernity in the Chinese Jazz Age*, 11–12.

[9] Suh, *Treacherous Translation*; Kwon, *Intimate Empire: Collaboration and Colonial Modernity in Korea and*

from diverse backgrounds, not just elite Koreans, and their variegated, intricate engagements in the recording industry. I demonstrate that their professional identity was a crucial factor for understanding them as much as their identity as colonized imperial subjects. Taylor Atkins's earlier study of the jazz community in Japan influenced my approach to culture in the total war period.[10] He demonstrates how incomplete and self-contradictory the imperial power was in controlling jazz and how Japanese jazz musicians continued to produce it despite the government's "total jazz ban." My study complements Atkins' work by expanding the investigation to include colonial Korea and explores how Korean sound professionals, working in the recording industry, constructed Korea's modern sound culture, focusing on their ingenuity and creativity. Though it is encouraging that more journal articles, book chapters, and dissertations related to the recording or music industry during the colonial period have emerged in recent years,[11] the dearth of English-language studies has led me to refer to Korean scholarship for more detailed research.

Most of the scholarship on the colonial-era recording and music industries has been contributed by South Korean scholars. In the 1980s, the first-generation of popular music scholars in South Korea, notably Kim Ch'ang-nam (1984) and Yi Yŏng-mi (1984), argued that Japan had established the recording industry to help perpetuate its colonization of Korea through economic exploitation. Influenced by colonial exploitation theory (*singminji sut'allon*) [12] and the

Japan; Atkins, *Primitive Selves*.

[10] Atkins, *Blue Nippon: Authenticating Jazz in Japan*.

[11] Son, "Young Musical Love of the 1930s"; Yamauchi, "(Dis)Connecting the Empire"; Lee, "Embedded Voices In Between Empires: The Cultural Formation of Korean Popular Music in Modern Times"; Atkins, "The Dual Career of 'Arirang': The Korean Resistance Anthem That Became a Japanese Pop Hit"; Maliangkay, "Their Masters' Voice"; Son, "The Politics of the Traditional Korean Popular Song Style T'ŭrot'ŭ."

[12] "Exploitation theory" foregrounds Japanese political oppression, economic exploitation and cultural destruction in colonial Korea.

counterculture movement of the era, they argued that Japanese musical influence was a remnant of transplanted Japanese culture intended for colonial exploitation and cultural assimilation. In doing so, they helped bring popular music into academic consideration in the late twentieth century.[13] The fact that Japanese influence on Korean popular music was apparent throughout the twentieth century added weight to their argument. Moreover, it did not help that close ties between government and economic sectors, prevalent during the military expansion of the Japanese Empire, continued throughout the compressed economic development in postwar East Asia, including South Korea, in the second half of the twentieth century. It is true that a small group of scholars had suggested that certain popular music genres, especially *sinminyo*, arose by "internal development" (*chasaeng*) from traditional folk music.[14] However, throughout the late twentieth century, "transplantation theory" (*isik-ron*), which sees Japanese colonial power and the culture industry as working hand-in-hand for colonial exploitation and assimilation, was the more influential framework for analyzing modern Korean music.

Entering the new millennium, a new generation of scholars, influenced by colonial modernity theory, critiqued excessively political interpretations of the development of the recording industry and popular music. This group of scholars, starting with Yamauchi Fumitaka,[15] Lee Jun-hee, and Zhang Yu-jeong[16] acknowledges the presence of Japanese elements in Korean

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[13] The musicologists Mun Ok-pae and the late No Tong-ŭn took a similar stance, arguing that the recording industry in Korea was established as part of the Japanese colonial project to assert its cultural hegemony. In particular, No devoted himself to studying so-called pro-Japanese music and musicians and promoted the creation of a counter-music culture to oppose national music derived from cultural imperialism. Mun, "Han'guk esŏŭi Ilbon Ŭmak Sanŏp, kŭ Hyŏnshil gwa Yŏksajŏnk Pip'an"; No, *Han'guk kŭndae ŭmaksa 1*.

[14] Yi, *Han'guk chŏnt'ong taejung kayo ŭi yŏn'gu*; Kang, "19-segi Ihu Taejunggayo ŭi Tonghyang gwa Oeraeyangshik Iib ŭi Munje."

[15] Yamauchi, "Ilche Sigi Han'guk Nogŭm Munhwa ŭi Yŏksa Minjokchi."

[16] Zhang, *Oppa nŭn p'unggakchaengi ya: taejung kayo ro pon kŭndae ŭl p'unggyŏng*.

popular music, but they argue that the recording industry mainly pursued economic interests, at least before the total war period, and that Korean audiences' preferences rather than Japan's assimilationist efforts played the most significant role in defining what kind of music was produced for records. At the same time, due to their interest in popular music, these scholars have tended to pay particular attention to the recording industry in the electrical era, which began in the second half of the 1920s, since production of popular music in Japan and Korea greatly increased then.

In contrast, Korean scholars of traditional music have been interested in examining the earlier acoustic era as well. One of main reasons is likely that most of the records released in this period were of traditional music. Kwon Do-hee's social history of Korean traditional music should be mentioned here, since it explains in great depth how the premodern Korean performing field was transformed into the modern one.[17] Scholars like Yi Po-hyŏng and Bae Yeon-hyung have contributed greatly to the study of the Korean recording industry and the records it produced. They have not only been productive in their research, but since the late 1980s, they have also devoted substantial time and effort to building a database of Korean gramophone records as well as various other related compilations of primary sources. As popular music scholars cooperated with Yi and with Bae on such projects, more sources pertaining to the recording industry became available than ever before. I will introduce them shortly.

In the 21st century, more scholars in varied disciplines are studying popular culture in colonial Korea, and scholarly exchanges between Korea and Japan have also increased greatly. In this context, Pak Ch'an-ho, a *zainichi* Korean (Korean resident in Japan) and former journalist, deserves special mention since his translated book *Han'guk kayosa*, based on fastidious research

[17] Kwon, *Han'guk kŭndae ŭmak sahoesa*.

of Japanese and Korean sources, has greatly contributed to the scholarship. His collection of rare records and his extensive Japanese contacts have also been invaluable resources.

Current scholarly trends on the study of the sound culture of colonial Korea have become increasingly diverse, interdisciplinary, and transnational. That is, scholars in general have moved away from producing grand narratives and instead tend to pay more attention to specific issues such as tastes, marketing, hybridity, individual professionals, genres, transnational performances, and so on. I am indebted to the achievements of recent Korean scholarship in my dissertation. I incorporate the findings of scholars of traditional music, popular music, and others to reconstruct the history of the recording industry and the sound culture of the entire colonial period, so as to demonstrate how the modern transition of sound culture occurred. I also critically engage with their arguments and approaches as well as utilize the valuable sources they have prepared.

Primary Sources

The substantial primary textual and audio sources made available by various institutions and individuals have made this study possible. Some of the most important sources directly related with the recording industry are as follows. First, *Han'guk yusŏnggi ŭmban ch'ongmongnok* (Complete Discography of Korean Gramophone Records)[18] and *Han'guk yusŏnggi ŭmban* (Korean Gramophone Records)[19] are comprehensive discographies of Korean SP records and related information categorized by record company. With these discographies, I was able to get an overview of what kinds of records were released throughout the colonial period as well as who was responsible for producing each record. More importantly, I utilize information such as dates

[18] Han'guk Chŏngsin Munhwa Yŏn'guwŏn, *Han'guk yusŏnggi ŭmban ch'ongmongnok*.

[19] Han'guk Ŭmban Akaibŭ Yŏn'gudan, *Han'guk yusŏnggi ŭmban*.

of advertisements in newspapers and rereleases to judge the popularity and influence of particular records and musicians. *Han'guk kŭndae ŭmak kisa charyojip* (Sourcebook of Articles on Music of Modern Korea)[20] is a wide-ranging compendium of music-related articles published in magazines and journals in colonial Korea. Though incomplete, this five-volume series is organized by year, so it helps to understand how performers, record companies, discourses on music, and audiences changed through the colonial period. The collection includes image files of each article, not just text, so it conveys a great deal of information through accompanying illustrations, photos and other visual elements. Another significant source is *Yusŏnggi ŭmban kasajip* (Collection of Gramophone Record Lyrics),[21] a comprehensive collection of lyrics and other content from Korean SP records. The homepage of Han'guk Ŭmban Ak'aibŭ Yŏn'guso (Archive and Research Center for Korean Recordings) under the direction of Bae Yeon-hyung provides easy access to a digital archive called *Korea SP Records.*[22] This site not only contains an extensive discography of these records but also related resources including various articles, general information about record companies, and image files of records, lyric sheets, and advertisements. The site also provides a keyword search, making it fast and easy to look up information. Kugak Ŭmban Pangmulgwan (the Korean Classical Music Record Museum) maintains a website for Korean SP records of traditional music and makes digitized original recordings available online through its HearkoreaTV YouTube channel.[23]

In Japan, the National Museum of Ethnology in Osaka, Japan has an extensive collection of audio files that were copied from a set of master recordings of Nippon Columbia's foreign records, including those from Korea, Taiwan, and China. Though the collection is not available to

[20] Kim and Yi, *Han'guk kŭndae ŭmak kisa charyojip*.

[21] Yi et al., *Yusŏnggi ŭmban kasajip*.

[22] Its address is http://www.78archive.co.kr/v2/.

[23] HearkoreaTV is available at https://www.youtube.com/channel/UChA48Y9Ch6zS82h-yBOcWfQ.

the public, I had access to the Korean files as an affiliated researcher and listened to the entire Korean collection.[24] This helped me to understand how each genre was performed and how quickly Korean performers adapted to new styles of music. It was also helpful for developing a time-sensitive approach to investigating the recording industry. The Nippon Columbia Archive in Tokyo has documents generated by the company's Korean branch regarding Korean record production along with other archival documents. I was the first Korean researcher to have access to this archive, since it is not open to the public. I was very fortunate to be able to incorporate my findings, especially photos, in this dissertation. Through my research there, I became convinced that Nippon Columbia conducted business for multiethnic audiences in colonial Korea. The National Diet Library, also located in Tokyo, holds the monthly catalogs issued by record companies over many years as well as digitized recordings of Japanese SP records. Most of these are Japanese catalogs, but they are still useful to understand the interrelations between Japan and Korea in the production and distribution of records. Listening to digitized recordings at the NDL was useful to understand the differences between cover versions and originals. Many other scholars and institutes have dedicated themselves to compiling extensive collections of primary sources, some of which have become available commercially. I have benefited greatly from them in the process of researching and writing this dissertation.

Chapter Summaries

To achieve a comprehensive understanding of the birth of the Korean recording industry in a colonial setting, my dissertation approaches the subject from both macro- and micro-level

[24] All information regarding available Korean sound files is included in Ningen Bunka Kenkyū kikō Renkei Kenkyū Purojekuto, *Nihon Koronbia gaichi Rokuon disukografī - Chōsen-hen.* This was a project by the National Museum of Ethnology.

perspectives. The first two chapters focus on the macro-level by examining the emergence of the transnational record companies in Japan and Korea through the interactions of Japanese political power and the globalized economy. Chapter One covers the acoustic recording era in the first quarter of the twentieth century. By investigating the emergence of Nihon Chikuonki Shōkai (Nitchiku hereafter), the first record company in Japan, I demonstrate that foreign funding, management, and technology were crucial for the company to maintain its leading position in the Japanese recording industry from the time of its establishment. Nitchiku, at the same time, was careful to portray itself as a representative Japanese company by deliberately using image-making techniques that obfuscated its transnational foundations. In addition, Nitchiku also expanded its transnational business by setting up operations in Japan's colonies. As Japan's primary colony, Korea very quickly became not only a market for Nitchiku's gramophone and record business but also a production site for Korean records. Therefore, it is safe to say that the recording industry in Japan was globally and regionally interconnected from its beginnings. One significant point is that Japanese record companies and the retailers for other foreign record companies operating in Korea marketed their products to Koreans and, even more so, to Japanese and other foreigners residing in Korea. Therefore, records that were produced in Japan and other foreign countries, as well as those produced locally, were sold in colonial Korea. In this way, the recording industry helped expose Koreans, Japanese, and other foreigners in East Asia to the global sound culture of the era contemporaneously.

In Chapter Two, I examine the ways in which the Japanese recording industry entered the electrical recording era in the middle of the 1920s. Japan's need for global capital and new recording technology and the transnational record companies' efforts to evade high tariffs imposed after the Great Kantō Earthquake resulted in the establishment of regional headquarters by the

record companies to produce and distribute their wares on Japanese soil. These regional corporations, Nippon Victor, Nippon Columbia, and Nippon Polydor conducted business in colonial Korea on a much larger scale than in the previous acoustic period. Interestingly, Nippon Victor and Nippon Columbia began producing records in Korea within a year of opening operations in Japan. However, Nippon Polydor delayed a few more years. I demonstrate that Nippon Polydor's belated entry into Korean record production was due to its late development rather than a weak Korean record market as is generally assumed. Further, I reveal that colonial Korea in the late 1920s already showed maturing conditions as a market for the recording industry in order to contend that the pursuit of profits by the transnational record companies was the primary reason for their decision to operate in Korea. In addition, the belated implementation of regulations on Korean record production demonstrates that the colonial authority had neither the political will nor the technical ability to take the initiative in the establishment of the Korean recording industry. In other words, based on my research of the funding, technology, and record catalogs of the transnational recording industry, I show that as it traversed geopolitical boundaries and varied cultures, it functioned as the engine of the record business in Japan and its colonies.

After this macro-level study of the Korean recording industry in its global and regional contexts, I shift my focus to the micro-level in Part Two, which examines the activities of Korean sound professionals. In Chapter Three, I investigate the artists and repertoire divisions of record companies, called *munyebu*, and reveal that Korean sound professionals, by demonstrating their ability to produce moneymaking records, were able to secure *munyebu* as autonomous spaces. However, I do not contend that *munyebu* were nationalist or anticolonial/anti-imperial spaces. Rather, I emphasize that Korean sound professionals had managerial control over Korean record production. Notwithstanding the existence of some records with nationalist messages or

connotations, my study of their activities and the records they produced reveals that Korean sound professionals were more interested in producing successful records by incorporating transnational music and narratives along with elements of foreign culture popular in the era. Thus, I argue that record production in Korea was not belated, as has been commonly assumed, but was instead almost contemporaneous with that in Japan. For this, I make case studies of the *munyebu* of the four representative record companies, Nippon Columbia, Nippon Victor, Nippon Polydor, and Okeh, and explain the ways in which they produced their representative popular music and narrative genres in the 1930s. In doing so, I highlight how central the recording industry was to the modern reconfiguration of Korean sound culture.

In Chapter Four, my focus moves from production to performance. I investigate *kisaeng* who became notable female performers in the new mass media. I first examine the political, economic, and cultural changes from the late 19th century that helped talented *kisaeng* to achieve prominence in both traditional and popular music within the cultural market of colonial Korea. I therefore study two categories of *kisaeng* performers: *yŏryu myŏngch'ang* (virtuosas or female master performers), who specialized in Korean traditional music; and *kisaeng kasu* (*kisaeng* singers) who specialized in modern popular music. The reason I examine both groups in this chapter is, on one hand, to show how flexibly *kisaeng* adjusted their repertoire to meet cultural and economic demands, and on the other, to emphasize the evolving Korean soundscape in which popular music genres, influenced by Western forms, were beginning to challenge the position of native music. Hence, this chapter reveals the modern diversification of music in colonial Korea and the role of *kisaeng* performers in the process. Further, I describe how successful *kisaeng* performers, based on their artistic skills and consequent popularity, enjoyed prestigious and

lucrative positions in the recording industry, even while the general reputation of *kisaeng* was declining rapidly in the second half of the colonial era.

In Chapter Five, I explore how a new generation of Korean sound professionals, who became prominent in the second half of the 1930s, creatively produced and performed highly westernized and hybridized popular music under the ever-intensifying censorship of the total war period. Such music was usually labelled with the broad term *chaezŭ-song*. I show that though music formally categorized as *chaezŭ-song* was no longer released entering the 1940s, the production of *chaezŭ-song* did not actually cease. Instead, by adopting a strategy that I call "creative self-censorship," Korean sound professionals mixed conventional musical elements with parts of jazz and other forms of Western popular music and then released their compositions under different generic categories. This was in essence *chaezŭ-song* music, but from the standpoint of the market, it did not technically belong to the genre. By making music this way, Korean sound professionals evaded the increased government censorship of the late colonial period while producing the kinds of music that their audiences longed for. Their creative music-making even accelerated during the total war period.

In the Epilogue, I examine how the liminal identities of Korean sound professionals, being legally Japanese but ethnically Korean, affected their professional aspirations to find artistic and financial success across the Japanese Empire. Korean sound professionals performed the role of docile colonized performers, especially in print media, providing politically acceptable responses and expressing enthusiasm for their roles in the Japanese war effort. They also made and performed so-called "military popular songs" (*kunguk kayo*, J: *gunkoku kayō*) for war propaganda, though the number of such songs was surprisingly limited. Meanwhile, they advanced in the recording industry by performing across borders and Japan's imperial expansion worked in a way that was

beneficial for the top Korean sound professionals in this endeavor. I further show that they aspired to raise the reputation of Korean culture in the Japanese Empire, for which their professional identity still played the most significant role in their career choices.

Choice of Terms

I use the terms "gramophone" and "phonograph" interchangeably. Unless otherwise specified, "records" here means disc-type double-sided records made from shellac. These are called "78 rpm records" since one side could play for about three to three-and-a-half minutes at a speed of about 78 revolutions per minute. For this reason, they have also been called SP ("standard play") records since LP ("long play") vinyl records became a new standard in the second half of the twentieth century.

Identifying appropriate terms to represent genres and categories according to their use in the colonial period is not as simple as the above due to the continual transitions the occurred in the sound culture of the time. Therefore, it is worth mentioning that most of the terms and categories I use in this dissertation have rather ambiguous and transitional qualities similar to the shifting definitions over time of the Japanese popular music genre *enka*, as demonstrated by Christine Yano (28-44, 2003). If possible, I avoid using Korean expressions unless there is no better alternative. One such term is *yuhaengga,* which had two different meanings in colonial Korea. It could indicate a specific music genre rather than its literal meaning, which is popular music in general. *Yuhaengga* was a sub-category of popular music which had many characteristics in common with hybridized Japanese popular songs (J: *ryūkōka* and later *enka*.) However, *yuhaengga* also referred to popular music, a usage which became prevalent in South Korea in the second half of twentieth century, while *t'ŭrot'ŭ* and a few other terms have since become common instead, reflecting the

genre's changing position in society. If *yuhaengga* is used to refer to general popular music in original sources from the colonial period, I simply translate it as "popular music."

I should also explain my use of the term "traditional music." I acknowledge that the term is not entirely adequate since this native music, in a variety of forms, was widely popular throughout the colonial period and not yet considered a valuable cultural artifact. Moreover, it was more often called Chosŏn sori (Chosŏn sound or Chosŏn voices) among Koreans since not all traditional performances consisted only of music. Nonetheless, I use the English expression because it is more accessible. I have made similar choices for many other terms in this dissertation.

A Note on Translation, Romanization, and Transcription

Translations from Japanese and Korean are my own unless otherwise stated. Korean romanization follows the McCune-Reischauer system and romanization of Japanese follows the Hepburn system. In cases of well-known Japanese and Korean proper names, I have used the familiar rendering. Korean and Japanese names are given family name first, followed by the given name.

Chapter One

Nihon Chikuonki Shōkai and the Record Market in Colonial Korea[25]

A general approach to modernity in a colony is to assume that its level of modernization was belated in relation to the metropole. This is apparently a useful approach since Japan played the role of mediator between Western powers and its colonies in various areas. For example, Japan's implementation of music education in colonial Korea was largely based on textbooks and policies developed by the Ministry of Education in Japan.[26] However, as Andrew Jones's suggests, it is necessary to avoid applying "belated modernity" theory indiscriminately. He argues that the development of media in a metropole spreads almost simultaneously to its colonies through colonial trade routes, and it was a cultural shock to people regardless of whether they lived in one or the other.[27] In other words, Japan's intermediary role in the capitalist expansion of the recording industry in East Asia was not as strong as one might expect, since the first record company established in Japan was both foreign-funded and managed. In the acoustic recording era, this company became the most significant player in the record market in the Japanese Empire.[28] Therefore, the Korean recording industry developed almost concurrently and in conjunction with the Japanese recording industry.

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[25] Parts of this chapter have been published as "The Nipponophone Company and Record Consumption in Colonial Korea." International Journal of Korean History, vol. 20(1): 85-116., and "Ilbon Ch'ugŭmgi Sanghoe wa Singminji Chosŏn ŭi Ŭmban Sijang." *Taejung ŭmak,* vol. 14: 46-72.

[26] Min, "Chosŏn Ch'ongdokpu ŭi Ŭmak Kyoyuk kwa Ilche Kangjŏmgi ttae Pusan esŏ Palgandoen Ch'angga Kyoyuksŏnjib e Kwanhayŏ," 72–77.

[27] Jones, *Yellow Music: Media Culture and Colonial Modernity in the Chinese Jazz Age*, 11–12.

[28] Acoustic recordings were made without electricity. Instead of a microphone, a horn captured sound waves and transferred them to a stylus, which etched grooves into a wax-covered cylinder or master disc. The acoustic recording era lasted from 1877, when Thomas Edison invented the phonograph, to 1925 with the general adoption of electrical microphones, amplifiers, and recording instruments by major record companies.

In this chapter, I contend that the profit seeking of transnational record companies was the force behind the establishment of the recording industry in Japan and its colonies from as early as the acoustic recording era. Record companies from the U.S. and Europe began exploring global markets, including Japan, from their beginnings at the turn of the twentieth century. Thus, they not only exported gramophones and SP records, but also sent their engineers on global recording expeditions to make records of locally-performed music.[29] Soon after, an American businessman residing in Japan, Frederick W. Horn, established the first record company based in Japan, called Nihon Chikuonki Shōkai (K: Ilbon Ch'ugŭmgi Sanghoe, abbreviated as Nitchiku hereafter). Nitchiku remained the most influential record company in the Japanese Empire during the acoustic era. In 1927, Nitchiku began the process of becoming a subsidiary of Columbia Records, which was completed the following year.[30] Accordingly, scholars in both Japan and South Korea agree that Nippon Columbia was a transnational company. However, the fact that Nitchiku was foreign-funded and foreign-managed does not seem to have received serious consideration.

Recognizing the transnational aspect of Nitchiku's identity helps significantly in understanding the formative period of the recording industry in the Japanese Empire, not only in terms of Korea's relations with Japan, but also in both the East Asian and global politico-economic contexts. I reveal the significance of foreign funding, management, technology, and master recordings for Nitchiku's business, with which the company sustained its dominance in the Japanese Empire. I further show that colonial Korea was an attractive market for Nitchiku due to

[29] Frederick William Gaisberg (1873-1951), known as the father of sound recording, made recordings in Europe, Russia, India, and the Far East from the turn of nineteenth century. As a part of his global expeditions, Gaisberg recorded in Japan in 1903 (Gaisberg 1948, 59). Edited versions of the Fred Gaisberg Diaries vols. 1 (1898~1902) and 2 (1902~1903) by Hugo Ströbaum are available online at http://www.recordingpioneers.com/docs/GAISBERG_DIARIES_1.pdf and http://www.recordingpioneers.com/docs/GAISBERG_DIARIES_2.pdf.

[30] Nihon Chikuonki Shōkai Hen, *Nitchiku Koronbia sanjūnenshi*, 9.

the multiethnic nature of the record market there. Korean consumers were not completely out of its scope, considering that Nitchiku also produced Korean records. Meanwhile, the Japanese government, without the legal capacity to control copyrights for sound products, did not provide an advantageous environment for Nitchiku. In addition, the company's transnational identity was the main target of attack by other record companies and dealers who were suspicious that its profits would not stay in Japan. I examine how Nitchiku responded to this challenge by creating a public image of itself as a Japanese national company among various strategies of national representation, which I call "image politics." I further explore how the activities of Nitchiku and other record companies helped create transcultural record consumers in colonial Korea by exposing them to the globally popular sound culture of the era. In doing so, I illuminate the complex interconnections between colonial Korea and Japan in the circumstances engendered by the capitalism of the era.

Nihon Chikuonki Shōkai and Frederick W. Horn

Nihon Chikuonki Shōkai, the most influential record company in the Japanese Empire throughout the acoustic recording period, was not established with Japanese funding and management. According to the company's own records, the founder of Nitchiku was an American businessman named Frederick W. Horn. Horn began importing machinery and tools to Japan in 1896 through his own Horn Company. Soon he began dealing in imported wax cylinder phonographs, and about a decade later in 1907, he established the Japan-American Phonograph Manufacturing Co., Ltd. (J: Nichibei Chikuonki Seizō Kabushiki Gaisha, Nichibei Mfg. hereafter).[31] After building a factory and setting up a recording studio, within a few years Nichibei

[31] Nihon Koronbia Kabushiki Gaisha Seisaku Hen, *Uta de tsuzuru koronbia no ayumi: sōritsu hachijisshūnen kinen*, 23.

Mfg. had become the first company in Japanese history to manufacture single-sided records and phonographs. Horn arranged for another of his ventures, Nichibei Chikuonki Shōkai (also known as American Phonograph Company), to market these new products. In late 1910, Horn rebranded the marketing company as Nihon Chikuonki Shōkai and converted it into a joint stock company. In 1911, a year after its establishment, Nitchiku opened a branch office in Kyŏngsŏng (modern day Seoul). It thus became the first record company to set up operations in colonial Korea. By merging with Nichibei Mfg. in 1912, Nitchiku became the first phonograph and record company in Japan with a centralized production and distribution system. In the following year, it introduced domestic production of double-sided records in Japan.[32]

Table 1.1

Date	Manufacturing Company	Marketing Company
October 1907	Establishment of the Japan-American Phonograph Manufacturing Co., Ltd. (Nichibei Mfg.)	Establishment of Nichibei Phonograph Company
August 1910		Rebranding of Nichibei Phonograph Company to Nihon Chikuonki Shōkai (E: Nipponophone Company, known as Nitchiku)
October 1912	Merger of Nichibei Mfg. with Nitchiku	

The transition from Nichibei to Nitchiku
(created by the author)

It is true that records of local music had been sold in Japan even before Nitchiku began releasing its own records. However, Japan had depended on the importation of both Japanese and foreign records to satisfy its consumers before Nitchiku began marketing its products. Prominent

[32] Azami, "Nihon Rekōdo Sangyō no Keiseiki no Ken'insha = Nihon Chikuonki Shōkai no Tokushitsu to Yakuwari," 2–3; Kurata, *Nihon rekōdo bunkashi*, 66; Nihon Koronbia Kabushiki Gaisha Seisaku Hen, *Uta de tsuzuru koronbia no ayumi: sōritsu hachijisshūnen kinen*, 23; Nihon Chikuonki Shōkai Hen, *Nitchiku Koronbia sanjūnenshi*, 9.

agencies which imported and distributed Japanese and foreign phonographs and records, such as Sankōdō and Tenshōdō, had already been engaged in recording Japanese music since Gaisberg's recording trip to Japan in 1903. These agencies worked as intermediaries between local talent and foreign recording engineers, both from Europe and the U.S. They were therefore able to retain major foreign record companies as their suppliers.[33] The Japanese records that these agencies were involved in producing were still considered imported goods in Japan, since recording engineers sent their master recordings to Europe or the U.S. for pressing. The finished records were then exported back to Japan. Therefore, it cannot be overemphasized that Nitchiku was the first comprehensive producer of phonographs and records in Japan.

Even after its restructuring, Nitchiku's character as a foreign-funded and foreign-managed company did not change. Horn continued to lead Nitchiku as president for about a decade until 1919, when J.R. Geary, a long-term board member, replaced him as Nitchiku's second president. In addition, the board of directors of Nitchiku at the time of its establishment were all foreigners judging from their names, which were written in katakana. Moreover, except for Geary, the other four had previously worked for Horn Company.[34] Information regarding the distribution of shares in Nitchiku is unavailable, but there is an episode that indicates the significance of Horn as the company's president and major shareholder. Nitchiku had suffered financial problems due to copyright infringement since the early 1910s since at that time in Japan there were no legal restrictions on the reproduction of Nitchiku's records. This situation eventually led the company

[33] Azami, "Nihon Rekōdo Sangyō no Keiseiki no Ken'insha = Nihon Chikuonki Shōkai no Tokushitsu to Yakuwari," 8–9; Kurata, *Nihon rekōdo bunkashi*, 47–64.

[34] Nippon Koronbia Kabushiki Gaisha Henshū Iinkai, *Koronbia gojū-nenshi*, page not specified. The cited book also mentions that Matsumoto Takeichiro, who established Sankōdō, could have been included in the group considering his contributions to the launch of Nitchiku. Unfortunately, he died right before this happened. Horn became a co-owner of Sankōdō along with Matsumoto around 1900. For more information regarding Matsumoto, see Kurata, 42-43.

to reduce its contributed capital by ten percent, from 100,000 yen to 90,000 yen in 1915, which was accomplished by Horn giving up his own shares to protect the other shareholders from financial loss. As a result, Nitchiku's shareholders decided to formally express their appreciation to Horn in an emergency shareholder meeting.[35] This episode shows that Horn, as the head of Nitchiku, took full responsibility for it when the company was in major difficulty. However, once Horn resigned his position as president in 1919, he left Japan for good, having lived there for over two decades.[36]

Nitchiku's Image Politics

Along with acquiring technology for producing phonographs and records, Nitchiku further employed adroit image politics to maintain its position as the leading record company in the Japanese empire. I use the expression "image politics" because Nitchiku accommodated itself to, and appropriated features of, its environment to cultivate the image of a company with a Japanese essence, which helped it establish roots in Japan and its colonies. In Korea, Nitchiku further appropriated local images for Korean records, though it did not hide that it was a Japanese company.

The Japanese and English names of Nitchiku illustrate how it utilized image politics. As mentioned previously, the first company name of Nitchiku was Nichibei Mfg. The word Nichibei is composed of the pronunciations of the Chinese characters representing Japan (*nichi*) and America (*bei*). It was then changed to Nihon Chikuonki Shōkai by dropping the *bei*. This change would have given the impression that the company was fully Japanese while obscuring the fact

[35] Nihon Chikuonki Shōkai Hen, *Nitchiku Koronbia sanjūnenshi*, 25.

[36] Nihon Chikuonki Shōkai Hen, 32.

that both the U.S. and Japan were the primary countries associated with it. Further, the company's title was written in Chinese characters as 日本蓄音機商会, which in Sinophone countries would suggest that the company was representative of Japan's gramophone industry.

Additionally, Nitchiku was named the Nipponophone Company in English. It is easy to assume that the English name for Nihon Chikuonki Shōkai would have been something like Japan Gramophone Co. or Japan Phonograph Co. instead of a separate English name. This move was unconventional, but I believe it was also ingenious. In Anglophone countries, the name Nipponophone would have conveyed a similar meaning as that of its Japanese name in Sinophone countries, in the sense that it could have been understood either as "the sound of Japan" or "gramophones of Japan." Thus, the name again suggests that Nitchiku was a representative Japanese company.

Even more innovative is that Nipponophone was an English name, but was also one that Japanese could appreciate. That is, Nipponophone is arranged like a Japanese expression rather than an English one by situating the sound of "の" between "Nippo(n)" and "phone." Accordingly, Japanese could have understood the name without translating it. The choice of the name Nipponophone appears to reflect Nitchiku's complicated identity. Nipponophone's approach is in stark contrast to that of the famous Singer Manufacturing Company. Not as flexible as Nipponophone, Singer maintained its universal sales system instead of a localized system. After experiencing two empire-wide strikes in 1932, Singer eventually lost its monopoly position in Japan. In flyers and announcements, the participants in the strikes expressed their apprehension about "a Yankee capitalist company." [37] Considering Japan's increasing nationalism and

[37] Gordon, *Fabricating Consumers: The Sewing Machine in Modern Japan*, 102.

imperialism in the early 20th century, Nipponophone was a well-chosen name for Nitchiku's purposes.

Nitchiku's image politics in portraying itself as a purely Japanese company can be easily observed in other areas. For example, Nitchiku retained the eagle trademark of American Records, one of Nichibei's five labels,[38] with the minor modification that the eagle now sat on a Nipponophone phonograph. The eagle was not just a regular one but a bald eagle, the national animal of Horn's and most likely the other executives' home country, the United States. In other words, though the word "America" was removed from the original name of their company, the image of the eagle was still located on the label of each Nipponophone record. The trademark at that point was written and pronounced "washi" in Japanese, avoiding the term "eagle" which had been used previously. This could have been meaningful for Nitchiku's Japanese consumers. Azami Toshio, a specialist in the Japanese record industry, states that "Nitchiku not only changed its label to Nipponophone, which meant records of Japan, but also renamed its trademark from English to Japanese, 'Washi'."[39] With little modification, Nitchiku succeeded in presenting a Japanized image of the company without eliminating its already well-recognized eagle trademark.

In addition, Nitchiku attempted to represent itself as a Japanese company with pictorial devices. As shown in Figure 1.1,[40] Nitchiku used two elements for the logo on its record jackets and advertisements, a big Buddha and a Nipponophone phonograph, and positioned them in a way

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[38] Nichibei's five labels were Symphony, American, Royal, Globe, and Universal.

[39] Azami, "Nihon Rekōdo Sangyō no Keiseiki no Ken'insha = Nihon Chikuonki Shōkai no Tokushitsu to Yakuwari," 3.

[40] Nihon Bikuta Kabushiki Gaisha. 1961. *Nihon bikutā gojū-nenshi*. Page not specified (left); Research Centre for Japanese Traditional Music. "SP Rekōdo Rēberu ni miru Nitchiku–Nippon Koronbia no nekishi," accessed February 2, 2015, http://w3.kcua.ac.jp/jtm/archives/gallery/1008ohnishi (middle); Korea SP Records. "Han'guk ŭi Yetŭmban," accessed December 14, 2014, http://www.sparchive.co.kr/v2/sub/story/story.php?at=view&bid=11&uid=4174 (right).

similar to His Master's Voice, the trademark of Victor Records. Known as the most recognized trademark in the history of the recording industry, His Master's Voice portrays the dog Nipper listening or trying to listen to his deceased owner's voice coming from a Victor phonograph (Nihon Bikuta Kabushiki Gaisha 1961, page not specified). With this trademark, Victor could not only boast of the excellence of its audio reproduction technology, but also appealed to the emotions of record consumers. The overall arrangement of the two images on Nitchiku's record jackets resembles that of Victor's trademark. A possible implication is that the music from a Nipponophone phonograph can even get the Buddha's attention and make him turn, perhaps unwittingly, to listen to the sound. Considering that Japan was recognized in the West as the land of Zen Buddhism at the turn of the 20th century, this could be understood as Nitchiku's effective Japanizing appropriation of Victor's trademark.

Figure 1.1

Images for Victor, Nipponophone, Nipponophone Korean Records
(courtesy of Korea Record Archive)

Nitchiku later took a similar localizing approach with its Korean records by reducing the Japanese flavor and utilizing Korean motifs. As shown on the right of Figure 1.1, Nitchiku's jacket for its Korean records, called Ilch'uk Chosŏn Soriban (Nitchiku Records of Korean Voices), used Korean writing and pronunciation, except for "Washi," along with a localized image obtained by replacing the Buddha with a dancing *kisaeng* in Korean costume. Moreover, in the 1910s Korean

records shared the same labels as those in Japan, such as Royal Records and Nipponophone (Figure 1.2), but from the early 1920s newly recorded Korean records began to be marketed under Korean-language labels like "닙보노홍" and "일츅죠션소리반." The designs of the Korean record labels also changed to ones with a blue and red *taijitu* pattern (as on the Korean flag) or an image of the South Gate (Namdaemun in Korean) in Kyŏngsŏng as seen in Figure 1.3. The changed designs show that Nitchiku took the production of Korean records more seriously than before as Korean records had become established as a distinct category that could be marketed on its own. Given this more developed market, Nitchiku's image politics were implemented to appeal to specific audiences, whether they were interested in Korean traditional music or exotic ethnic products.

Figure 1.2

Nitchiku Korean record labels in the 1910s

Figure 1.3

Nitchiku Korean record labels in the 1920s

(courtesy of Korea Record Archive)

Expanding Subsidiaries and the Resistance of Related Companies

Under the leadership of J. R. Geary, its second president, Nitchiku grew rapidly by acquiring several other well-known record companies in Japan as subsidiaries. Starting with Oriental Phonograph Mfg. Co. (Tōyō Chikuonki) in 1919, Nitchiku went on to acquire Standard Gramophone Co. (Sutandādo Chikuonki) in 1920, Imperial Gramophone Co. (Teikoku Chikuonki)

in 1921, Sankōdō Menophone Co. in 1923, and Tokyo Record Co. in 1923. In 1925, Nitchiku established Gōdō Phonograph Co. as a subsidiary by merging these companies, with the exception of Tokyo Record Co.[41] Along with the records it released in Japan, Gōdō (K: Hapttong) went on to release a small number of Korean records under the Hikōki (airplane) label.[42]

Azami Toshio and Kurata Yoshihiro emphasize the particularity of Nitchiku's acquisition of subsidiaries by calling it the "commercial law of force" (J: *chikara no shōhō*).[43] In particular, Azami finds Geary's American-style management methods to be responsible for the company's expansion, which inhibited the development of a diverse Japanese music culture. In contrast, Tsuboi Ken'ichi approaches Nitchiku's acquisitions as a universal practice under capitalism, calling it a "mergers and acquisitions (M&A) strategy" (1993).[44] There may be various other evaluations and interpretations, but it cannot be denied that Nitchiku, through its acquisitions, had grown into a major Japanese corporation with influence across Japan and its colonies.

At the same time, the process of Nitchiku's growth was in part a process of overcoming the resistance of the companies and related organizations it targeted, for which the identity of Nitchiku was a problem. Kurata describes the following relevant episode.[45] Due to the Immigration Act of 1924, enacted on May 26, Japanese were no longer admitted to the U.S. as immigrants. This not only caused friction between the U.S. and Japanese governments, but also provoked anti-

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[41] Kurata, *Nihon rekōdo bunkashi*, 120.

[42] Han'guk Ŭmban Akaibŭ Yŏn'gudan, *Han'guk yusŏnggi ŭmban*, 23.

[43] Azami, "Nihon Rekōdo Sangyō no Keiseiki no Ken'insha = Nihon Chikuonki Shōkai no Tokushitsu to Yakuwari," 9–10; Kurata, *Nihon rekōdo bunkashi*, 120–22.

[44] Tsuboi Ken'ichi. "Taishō Shōwa Senzen no Nitchiku (Koronbia) wa Beikokunin Shachō no Dai M&A Senryaku de Seichōshitaga 1935-nen ni Eibei Shihon Ridatsu" *Diamond Online*, accessed December 1, 2014, http://diamond.jp/a rticles/-/46976.

[45] Kurata, *Nihon rekōdo bunkashi*, 122–24.

American sentiment among Japanese. Taking advantage of this circumstance, Nittō Chikuonki Kabushiki Kaisha (Nittō hereafter),[46] a rival of Nitchiku established in Osaka in 1920, immediately responded to the act by promoting its products as "the pure national products of Great Japan" in its monthly catalog. As advertisements appealing to Japanese nationalism gained popularity, Nittō's sales quickly increased. This was possible in part because of support from related dealers in the Kansai region where Nittō was based. For example, the association of phonograph dealers representing Osaka, Kyoto, Kobe, and the central Kansai region placed an advertisement in the *Tokyo nichinichi shinbun* on June 15, 1924 titled "Appealing to all Fulltime Dealers[47] of Phonographs and Records." The advertisement announced, "This is when we Japanese should show our spirit to the Americans, the enemies of our seventy-million compatriots." Dealers in the Kanto-region where Nitchiku was based, however, did not have any trouble selling Nitchiku's products, revealing a regional rivalry in the Japanese recording industry packaged as a struggle between Japan and the United States. At the same time, this episode demonstrates that despite Nitchiku's multi-year efforts at image politics, Japanese phonograph dealers understood the company's transnational identity, and there were those who felt discomfort at Nitchiku's position at the top of Japan's record industry.

Strictly speaking, Nitchiku, which was funded and managed by American settlers in Japan, and companies like the Victor Talking Machine Company of Japan Ltd. (Nippon Victor hereafter), which was set up as a subsidiary of Victor in America by direct investment, were obviously

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[46] Nittō Chikuonki Kabushiki Gaisha (日東蓄音機株式会社) was established in Osaka in 1920, and became one of the leading record companies in the middle of the 1920s. It released Korean records from 1925 to 1928. However, Nittō failed to keep up with increased competition from newly-established transnational record companies in the late 1920s and was taken over by Taihei Records in 1935. For more information regarding the activities of Nittō Records in colonial Korea, see Bae, "Chebipy'o Chosŏn Rekodŭ (Nittō Record) Yŏn'gu."

[47] Along with fulltime dealers, businesses like musical instrument stores and clock shops often sold records for recording companies on consignment in Japan and Korea in the first half of the 20th century.

different types of companies. Nittō, however, based on the reasoning that both companies were foreign-funded and foreign-managed, maintained the same strategy in its advertisements. In 1930, Nittō again argued that its products were "pure national products (*Jun kokusan-hin*)," but those from the foreign-managed companies were "pseudo-national products (*Ruiji kokusan-hin*)."[48] It further argued that such products needed to be considered imported goods, since most profits of foreign-funded and foreign-managed companies were remitted to their countries of origin. In other words, Nittō attempted to differentiate its products from those of Nitchiku and other companies affiliated with foreign record companies based on their non-Japanese funding and management. Nonetheless, Nitchiku effectively defended its status as the top record company in Japan throughout its existence.

Nitchiku's Advantage in Regional Record Production

Transnational record companies not only exported gramophones and SP records that they manufactured but also sent their engineers on global recording expeditions to produce local records. Using acoustic recording technology, these engineers were able to record music in cities all over the world by hiring intermediaries who were familiar with local music and performers. Following the recommendations of the intermediaries, engineers recorded the main repertoire of local musicians after auditioning them. For example, it was Kairakutei Burakku (Henry James Black, 1858-1923), Japan's first foreign-born kabuki actor and public storyteller, that acted as a go-between when Gaisberg made Japan's first commercial recording in 1903.[49]

As with Japan, the introduction of commercial record production in Korea began with

[48] *Asahi Shinbun* (Tokyo). June 29, 1930, 10.
[49] Gaisberg, *Music on Record*, 59.

Koreans performing in recording operations conducted by foreign engineers on international recording tours. According to Yamaguchi Kamenoske, when two recording engineers from U.S. Columbia, Harry Marker and Charles Carson, recorded music in Japan in 1906, the intermediary was Sankōdo, a well-known trading company and record dealer. Through its dealer in Korea, Sankōdo also assisted U.S. Columbia's Korean recording effort by recruiting five Korean traditional musicians. Han In-o and Ch'oe Hong-mae along with three others went to Osaka to record several Korean traditional pieces, which are considered the first ever commercial recordings of Korean music. As a result, thirty single-sided records were released the following year.[50] U.S. Victor also recorded Korean music in 1906. Victor's recordings were conducted in Korea on a far larger scale and resulted in about 100 single-sided records issued in 1907.[51] Yamauchi Fumitaka, well-known for the transnational approach he takes in his study of the Korean recording industry, points out that an American missionary, Homer Hulbert, was the intermediary between Victor and the Korean musicians for the recordings, taking Hulbert's letter to his parents as evidence. Hulbert mentions in the letter how happy he was to receive a costly Stroh violin[52] in return for his services.[53] Japanese stores that specialized in imported goods such as Tsujiya, the general distributor of Sankōdō, and Ori'i sold phonographs and records in the 1910s in Korea, so Korean records from

[50] Yamaguchi, *Rekōdo bunka hattatsushi*, 101, 103. Tsujiya advertised the release of Columbia's Korean records in a newspaper called *Mansebo* for several days after March 19th, 1907. Tsujiya was an imported-goods dealer and served as the Korean dealer of Sankōdo as well as Kirin Beer.

[51] Bae and Suk, "20-segi Ch'o Yusŏnggi Umban Yŏn'gu," 13.

[52] The Stroh violin, also known as a horn-violin, consists of a solid cylindrical body built from two pieces of half-round mahogany with an aluminum shoulder rest, diaphragm, and horn. It was patented in England by John M. A. Stroh. It was popular in the early 20th century as a way to overcome the limitations of acoustic recording systems. For more information, see the website of the Smithsonian National Museum of American History: http://americanhistory.si.edu/collections/search/object/nmah_606118.

[53] Yamauchi, "Ŭmban Sanŏp kwa Maegae Chagyong Yŏn'gu: Chŏnggi Nogŭm Ihu ŭi Hanguk Nogŭm Yŏn'gu," 218–21.

Columbia and Victor were most likely available in these stores.[54]

Interestingly, both Columbia and Victor stopped recording in Korea and Japan after that time.[55] Other record companies, which conducted recordings in Japan including Pathé, Bekka, the Gramophone, and Lilophone, all stopped making recordings as well.[56] This is somewhat surprising, since market share dominance was the goal of these major record companies and they competed globally in countries across all the continents of the world. Reebee Garofalo provides a vivid description: "In the 1910s the recording industry extended its tentacles into the most lucrative markets of the world, through pressing plants in the most important areas and through subsidiaries elsewhere."[57] This being the case, the fact that the world's two major record companies stopped sending recording expeditions to Japan as well as Korea from the early 1910s is highly suggestive. What caused the companies to halt the tours and moreover refrain from setting up subsidiaries or pressing plants?

Rather than offering a political explanation, Azami approaches the issue from the perspective of the global economy. He states that "The reason European and U.S. companies became less directly involved with Japan in the Taisho period (1912-1926) could be that independent Japanese record companies had formed in Japan and were consistently expanding."[58] Nitchiku, with its capacity to produce phonographs and records independently, had various

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[54] Bae, "Ilch'uk Chosŏn Sori-ban Yŏn'gu (1)," 95.

[55] According to Lee Jin-won, the only exception was Victor's 1915 recording made specifically for *Mulsan Kongjinhoe*. This was an expo-like event intended to show Korea's progress since its colonization by Japan in 1910. For more information, see Yi, Jin-won. 2007. "Taehan Chegukki ŭi Ŭmban Nogŭm e Taehan Kochal," 101-105.

[56] Yamauchi, "Ilche Sigi Han'guk Nogŭm Munhwa ŭi Yŏksa Minjokchi," 71.

[57] Garofalo, "From Music Publishing to MP3: Music and Industry in the Twentieth Century," 326.

[58] Azami, "Nihon Rekōdo Sangyō no Keiseiki no Ken'insha = Nihon Chikuonki Shōkai no Tokushitsu to Yakuwari," 2.

advantages compared to the major record companies based in Europe and the U.S. regarding the production and distribution of records in Japan and its colonies.

Even considering Nitchiku's advantages in producing Korean records, the following three points are significant. First, due to the colonial relationship between Japan and Korea, Nitchiku would have easily found intermediaries who could make informed decisions about which artists would be best for its catalogs and who could effectively arrange recording sessions for them. Second, Nitchiku could produce and distribute records more rapidly in its market than European or U.S. companies, which had to press records in their home countries with master recordings from Japan and Korea and then import them back to Japan. Third, Japanese companies did not pay tariffs on their records. Thus, it was neither cost-effective nor time-effective for European or American companies to produce local records in Japan's empire. The situation became even worse for foreign companies, since other record companies in Japan soon joined Nitchiku in producing Japanese records or even illegally reproducing them. As a result, foreign commercial recording tours to Japan and Korea stopped as Nitchiku and the other Japanese record companies monopolized regional record production.

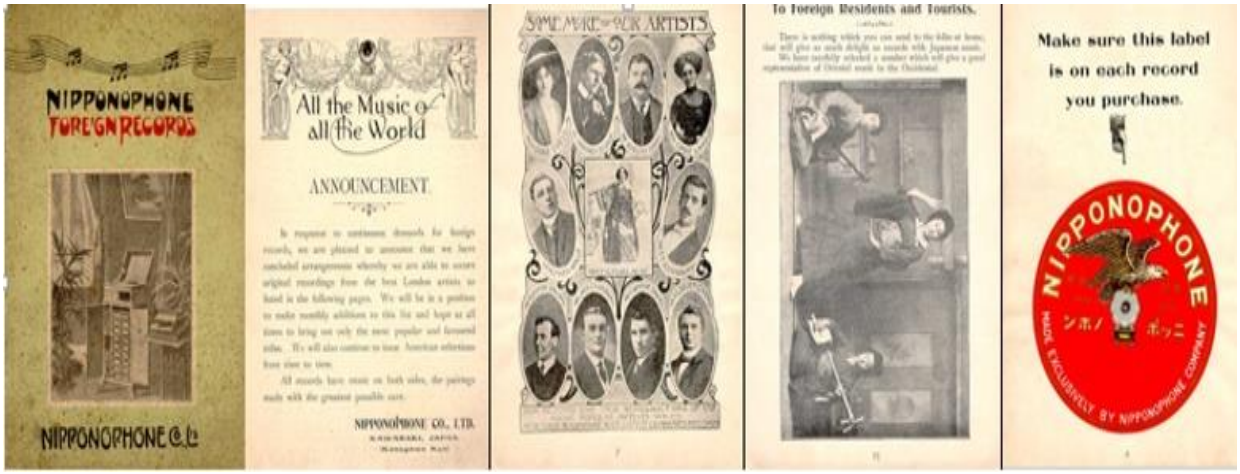
Reconsidering Nitchiku's Identity

Does this mean that Nitchiku was completely independent from foreign record companies before it became affiliated with Columbia in the late 1920s? There appear to be substantial differences of opinion among scholars regarding this issue. For example, Azami states that "Nitchiku was a company which was born in Japan, so it did not have any affiliations with major record companies in Europe and the U.S…"[59] Kurata Yoshihiro appears to take a similar position.

[59] Azami, 2.

He carefully attempts to prove his hypothesis that Yuchi Keigo was responsible for the "nationalization" of record production in Japan, saying that "the technology to produce domestic records was made possible by the efforts of Yuchi Keigo"[60] On the contrary, Pekka Gronow states that Nitchiku was established in 1908 as a Japanese subsidiary of the Columbia Phonograph Company, referencing Inoue Toshiya and Dietrich Shulz-Köhn.[61] However, Gronow does not provide primary evidence for this statement. One of the most significant reasons that scholars cannot agree about this issue is the lack of primary sources. Another important reason is that a variety of relationships between parent companies and their subsidiaries existed, from hierarchical to substantially independent regarding finances and management, as both Gronow and Jeffery Jones indicate with multiple examples.[62]

Figure 1.4



Nipponophone Foreign Records

[60] Kurata, *Nihon rekōdo bunkashi*, 67–68.

[61] Gronow, "The Recording Industry Comes to the Orient," 251, 272.

[62] To understand how diverse these relationships could be, see Jones, "The Gramophone Company: An Anglo-American Multinational, 1898-1931"; Gronow, "The Recording Industry Comes to the Orient."

There is a primary source that hints at Nitchiku's connections with U.K. and American record companies. Photocopies of a rare catalog of Nitchiku's products, called *Nipponophone Foreign Records* (Figure 1.4) are featured at Nipperhead, an Internet site devoted to antique phonographs. [63] This approximately 40-page catalog has comprehensive information on Nipponophone-labeled records as well as various kinds of phonographs and accessories. The English catalog was intended for foreigners, as shown by the section "To Foreign Residents and Tourists" on page 25. Along with a two-page introduction of foreign singers, about half of the catalog is devoted to new releases of foreign records categorized as follows: military band music recorded by the British Royal Military Band and the Metropolitan Band-New York, instrumental solos, concert songs, and ballads, as well as recitations and character sketches. The catalog also has two pages of additional records of Japanese band music, played by the Imperial Japanese Naval Band and the Toyama Military Band. These are presented as souvenirs for visitors to Japan. Ten pages are devoted to advertisements for Nipponophone phonographs and related products such as record carrying cases, needles, and other accessories.

It is not clear when the catalog was published, but based on the fact that the Nipponophone labels along with the "Washi" trademark were present, the catalog must have been printed before Nippon Columbia was set up in 1928.[64] However, the reason the publication date was most likely in the first half of the1910s, and not in the 1920s, is that all the British and U.S. records are double-sided but the Japanese records advertised in the catalog are both single- and double-sided. Nitchiku

[63] *Nipperhead*. "Nipponophone and Machine Catalog" accessed April 14, 2018, http://www.nipperhead.com/old/nippon.htm.

[64] For a few years after Nippon Columbia was established, some records continued to be released with the Nipponophone label. However, these label designs were recognizably different from the ones in the Nitchiku period and contained the text "Columbia Made Washi Record." Onishi, *SP Rekōdo Rēberu ni miru Nitchiku-Nippon Koronbia no rekishi*, 16–17.

began releasing double-sided records in February 1913, and by 1915 all single-sided records were collected and destroyed.[65] The presence of single-sided records in the catalog demonstrates that it was most likely published before 1915. Moreover, the kinds of phonographs advertised in the catalog, such as Nipponophone No. 30 and No. 35, Nipponola, and the Nipponola Grand, are identified as "the varieties of products at the time of Nitchiku's establishment" in the company's official history.[66] The catalog also includes three photos along with English captions. One can find an identical set of photos with captions in Japanese in the same history book, which indicates that they were photos of Nitchiku's Kawasaki factory taken around 1914.[67] Therefore, it is safe to conclude that the catalog was produced around that year.

Content analysis of the catalog further shows that relations between Nitchiku and foreign record companies were close and long-lasting. On the first page of the catalog, under the title "All the Music and All the World," Nitchiku announces that, in response to demand for foreign records, it has acquired original recordings of London artists and will continue to issue American records intermittently. This at least proves that Nitchiku had released American records previously. The catalog also contains a two-page section introducing 22 foreign artists along with their photos, with the headings "Some of Our Artists" and "Some More of Our Artists" respectively. Does the term "our" expose the relations between Nitchiku and companies in the U.S. and Great Britain? I acknowledge that the catalog alone is not sufficient to make an informed judgment that Nitchiku was a foreign record company subsidiary. However, it does demonstrate that Nitchiku may have been affiliated with major record companies. If not, Nitchiku at least rented master recordings from

[65] Kurata, *Nihon rekōdo bunkashi*, 294–95.

[66] Nihon Chikuonki Shōkai Hen, *Nitchiku Koronbia sanjūnenshi*, 14.

[67] Nihon Chikuonki Shōkai Hen, 28.

or exchanged them with those companies in the early 1910s.[68] The precise nature of the relationship, whether it was more complimentary or hierarchical, remains to be studied.

I have identified another of Nitchiku's significant foreign connections. Articles in *The Talking Machine World*, the main trade magazine related with phonographs and early sound recordings published between 1905 and 1928, reveal that Nichibei Mfg. received significant technological assistance from pioneers of the American recording industry in the early years of the twentieth century. These were Marshall M. Joslyn, John O. Prescott, and Thomas Kraemer, all of whom formerly worked for American Record Company (ARCo), which ceased production due to patent issues in 1906. Joslyn was in charge of the pressing plant of ARCo, while Prescott was in a partnership with the founders of the company, Ellsworth Hawthorne and Horace Sheble, serving as the sales agent as well as general manager of ARCo's recording laboratory. The October 1910 edition of *The Talking Machine World* reports that Joslyn, who had worked as the superintendent of the Stamping and Roll Department of Nitchiku for nearly a year, died of meningitis on September 8 (Figure 1.5). The article acknowledges the significant role Joslyn played in the company, stating: "Mr. Joslyn was considered by the directors of his company as one of their most valued employees and his death is felt as a very big loss by them." It also indicates that J. O. Prescott had been the general manager of Nipponophone for a few years.[69]

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[68] An invention in 1910 by Eldridge Johnson must have made possible the production of foreign records in Japan. According to Gronow and Saunio, Johnson's invention was a process for producing wax plates called "matrices." The impact of this new process was significant, since original recordings could be made into multiple matrices, and these could be pressed simultaneously in different locations. See Gronow and Saunio, *An International History of the Recording Industry*, 10.

[69] "Death of M. M. Joslyn," *The Talking Machine World* 6, no.10 (1910): 31, accessed January 6, 2017. It is not clear whether Prescott resided in Japan during the entirety of his term. http://archive.org/stream/talkingmachinewo06bill#page/n555/mode/2up/search/Joslyn.

Figure 1.5

DEATH OF M. M. JOSLYN.

Superintendent of Stamping and Roll Department of Nipponophone Co., Tokyo, Japan, Passes Away in That City—J. C. Prescott, Manager of Company.

Subheading of the article on the death of M.M. Joslyn
(source: The Internet Archive)

In addition, the January 1911 issue of *The Talking Machine World* featured a two-page article on Nitchiku, titled "The Talking Machine Trade in Japan," which described the growing Japanese record market as well as the significance of Nitchiku in it, along with four photos.[70] Prescott was introduced as being in charge of Nichibei Mfg., the gramophone and record factory for Nitchiku, as seen in Figure 1.6 in which he appears with Japanese laboratory staff.

Figure 1.6

Prescott with Japanese laboratory staff at Nichibei Mfg.
(source: The Internet Archive)

[70] "The Talking Machine Trade in Japan," *The Talking Machine World* 7, no. 1 (1911): 4-6, accessed January 6, 2017, http://archive.org/stream/talkingmachinewo07bill#page/n11/mode/2up/search/Prescott. I acknowledge that I first learned about the connection of J.O. Prescott and Nipponophone at a website called Recording Pioneers available at http://www.recordingpioneers.com/RP_PRESCOTT2.html, accessed January 6, 2017. The entry "John Osgood Prescott" was prepared by Debbi and Ted Heinly, Michael Gurem, Dieter Schulze, and Martha Kelly.

If it was Prescott who submitted the article, it reveals that his ambitions not only included the development of technology for recording and manufacturing phonographs, but also PR for both Nitchiku and himself. However, his foreign venture did not last long. In April 1911, *The Talking Machine World* reports that Prescott had returned to New York due to declining health caused by the Japanese climate. He states, "Perhaps I worked too hard getting the plant in proper shape and on a paying basis, which I did—at it day and night—that I became completely prostrated…"[71] Another report in the same issue states that Thomas Kraemer, former general manager of the Hawthorne & Sheble Manufacturing Co, accepted an offer from Japan to succeed Prescott.[72] Considering that Nitchiku was the first company to produce records and gramophones in Japan, starting in 1909 and 1910 respectively, as well as its successful introduction of double-sided records in 1913, the contributions of these American recording pioneers to Nitchiku's ascendance and the development of the Japanese recording industry as a whole should be seen as more than significant.

The Record Business and Diverse Populations in Colonial Korea

No one could deny that phonographs and records were luxury items which most Korean could not afford in the early 20th century. If this was the case, who was Nitchiku's target audience when it opened its branch office in 1911? As Morigaki Jiro, who worked for the recording industry during the colonial period, states that the record companies planned to market to Japanese and

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[71] "Returns from Japan," *The Talking Machine World* 7, no. 2 (1911): 35, accessed January 8, 2017, http://archive.org/stream/talkingmachinewo07bill#page/n93/mode/2up/search/%E2%80%9CReturns+from+Japan%E2%80%9D+

[72] *The Talking Machine World*. 7, no. 4 (1911): 30, accessed January 7, 2017, http://archive.org/stream/talkingmachinewo07bill#page/n199/mode/2up/search/Thomas+Kraemer. This is a single-paragraph article without a title.

other foreign residents in Korea along with Koreans.[73] That is, Nitchiku would have targeted all the populations in Korea that they deemed able to afford records regardless of their nationality or ethnicity.

Colonial Korea was not a space where only Koreans lived. In fact, it was multiethnic. Since the late 19th century, European and American missionaries, diplomats, and businessmen as well as Chinese expatriates had taken up residence in major Korean cities, especially in Kyŏngsŏng. As Lee Sinwoo points out, this increasing foreign presence was a concern in Korea, such that the *Tongnip sinmun*, as early as 1898, expressed anxiety about mixed Korean and foreign residence as well as the foreign occupancy of almost one third of the commercial district in Kyŏngsŏng. [74] Further, Japan's colonizing process in the early 20th century facilitated the settlement of substantial numbers of Japanese. The number of Japanese residing in Korea was recorded as only 15,829 in 1900, but the number increased to 171,543 in ten years. By 1920, it had already reached 347,850 and increased to over half a million in 1930.[75] It is also significant that most Japanese residents lived in cities where records were most actively marketed. In 1915, the total proportion of foreigners residing in Korea was only 1.8%, but the percentage of Japanese living in cities had reached 30.5%. [76] In colonial Korea, not only were there high numbers of city-residing Japanese and other foreign settlers, but the high economic capacity and education level among them also merit attention. Based on the information in a table titled "Occupations of Japanese Residents in Korea, 1910-1940" prepared by Jun Uchida, Japanese settlers categorized as officials or

[73] Morigaki, *Rekodo to 50nen*, 34.

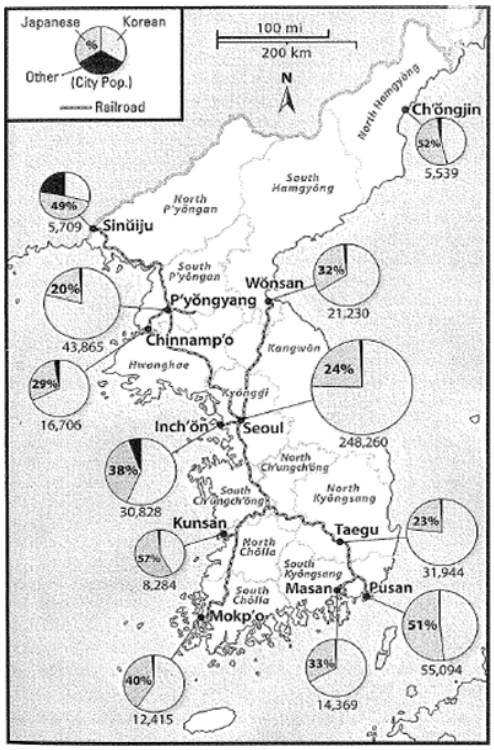
[74] Lee, "Blurring Boundaries: Mixed Residence, Extraterritoriality, and Citizenship in Seoul, 1876-1910," 83.

[75] Uchida, *Brokers of Empire: Japanese Settler Colonialism in Korea 1876-1945*, 65.

[76] Cho, "Ilcheha Singminji-hyŏng Sodosi Hyŏngsŏng kwa Tosi Konggan ŭi Pyŏnhwa," 14.

professionals by the colonial government made up 19.5% of the Japanese population in Korea in 1910 and 29.3% in 1920. This percentage increased consistently, with the number rising to 37.4% by 1945.[77] Formally educated, salary-earning Japanese professionals and officials along with other foreign residents were likely to have had great purchasing power and interest in diverse kinds of records. Considering its potential as a market, Kyŏngsŏng became increasingly important to the recording industry.

Figure 1.7



Distribution of the Japanese Population in Korea, 1914
(source: Jun Uchida, *Brokers of Empire*, 68)

Figure 1.8

Location and Numbers of Nitchiku Dealers, 1913
Map by the author, based on an advertisement by Nitchiku in the *Maeil sinbo*. May 30, 1913

Identifying the areas where Nitchiku established exclusive dealers can provide useful

[77] Uchida, *Brokers of Empire: Japanese Settler Colonialism in Korea 1876-1945*, 68.

information about whether the company targeted multicultural audiences, especially Japanese. The preceeding figures show the distribution of the Japanese population in Korea (Figure 1.7) and the nationwide distribution network of Nitchiku (Figure 1.8). By comparing these two figures, it is evident that the locations of the dealers largely conformed to the population distribution of Japanese and other foreigners in the Korean peninsula over a similar period. In other words, Nitchiku's exclusive dealers in 1914 could be found in the cities in which the largest numbers of Japanese and other foreigners resided. Admittedly, the distribution of the foreign population and Nitchiku's network do not exactly match. However, the reason that there was no exclusive dealer in an established major city like Kaesŏng, but one in Chŏngjin with a population of only 5,539, must be related with the fact that 52% of Chŏngjin's population was Japanese. This can be understood as Nitchiku having more interest in marketing their gramophones and records to multiethnic consumers rather than Koreans in particular.

Nitchiku's Korean Records

Meanwhile, Nitchiku must have had a plan to expand the number of Korean consumers when it entered the Korean market in 1911 since it showed great enthusiasm for recording Korean music. Recording local music was considered a prerequisite for major record companies to market the expensive phonographs that they manufactured. Bae Yeon-hyung, well-known for his comprehensive bibliographical research on Korean SP records, states that after Nitchiku's first recording, from September 1911 it released about 100 single-sided records of traditional Korean music under the Royal Record Nipponophone label. Several famous Korean traditional musicians of the era, Song Man-gap, Mun Yŏng-su, Pak Ch'un-jae, Kim Hong-do and Sim Jŏng-sun performed on these records. In the spring of 1913, Nitchiku conducted its second recording session

in Tokyo. This time, around ten performers took part in recording 170 record sides, most of which consisted of various traditional music genres. They were released on double-sided records with the Nipponophone label. Interestingly, two singers, Kim Yŏng-sik and Kim Ŭn-sik, recorded hymns in Korean, reflecting the influence of Protestantism on the music culture of colonial Korea. In addition, Ku Sŭng-hyŏn recorded imitations of animal sounds. In this way, Nitchiku's Korean records began to show diversity in terms of genres and performers.[78]

Unfortunately, Nitchiku did not make a consistent effort to market Korean records after the second recording session. In fact, it did not record Korean music for about ten years after 1913, but only intermittently reproduced records from master recordings made previously. Bae points out that Nitchiku advertised quite frequently when it began operating in Korea, but from 1916 it printed almost no advertisements for Korean records, and the total number of advertisements for Korean records in the *Maeil sinbo* decreased considerably.[79] A Korean-language newspaper operated by the Government-General of Korea, the *Maeil sinbo* was the only Korean newspaper available in the 1910s and hence the main venue for Nitchiku's advertisements. Even considering the fact that Nitchiku was the only company that produced Korean records from the 1910s until the middle of the 1920s, this approach might have been problematic if Nitchiku had mainly marketed its records and gramophones to Koreans.

Whether it was because Koreans' ability to purchase records had grown or Nitchiku had gained ground after overcoming its piracy issues or both, Nitchiku eventually resumed making original recordings, with about 140 pieces recorded around 1922. According to Bae, these recordings showed the increasing numbers of *kisaeng* performers, comparable to Japanese geisha,

[78] Bae, "Ilch'uk Chosŏn Sori-ban Yŏn'gu (1)," 100–107.

[79] Bae, "Ilch'uk Chosŏn Sori-ban Yŏn'gu (2)," 250.

taking part in recorded music. Further, records with music in new genres were also produced. These included covers of Japanese and foreign popular songs as well as *ch'angga*[80] (J: *shōka*).[81] In addition, classical musicians recorded Western folk songs and hymns. Chorus music and children's songs as well as instrumental music could also be found, among other styles. For the increased number of records produced in these various genres, Nitchiku applied the image politics previously discussed as it resumed recording Korean music. The labels of these records contained new design elements, including the language, which were more specifically Korean as seen in Figures 1.1 on the right and 1.3. This shows that Nitchiku engaged in the production of Korean records more seriously as it entered the 1920s.

Korean Exposure to Diverse Music Genres

If Korean records released in the 1910s and 1920s were mostly of Korean traditional music, were Korean audiences, especially young ones, satisfied with listening to those records and waiting for ones with new styles of music to be released? Though records are known as a form of mass media, record consumers in the formative period of the recording industry in colonial Korea did not really constitute a mass audience. As a matter of fact, the early Korean record consumers were so-called modern Koreans, a group composed of wealthy individuals, young urbanites with Western-style educations, some Christians, and those in the entertainment business such as *kisaeng*. Thus, while older Koreans preferred traditional music, judging from the fact that records of it were consistently produced throughout the colonial period, young Korean urban elites, most of whom

[80] *Ch'angga* was a genre popular in the early 20th century in which Western songs, especially hymns, marches, and folk songs, were adapted and given Korean lyrics. *Ch'angga* songs were composed for school music instruction as well as other purposes, notably promotion of enlightenment (*kyemong*) and independence.

[81] Bae, "Ilch'uk Chosŏn Sori-ban Yŏn'gu (2)," 262–63, 269.

were bilingual in Korean and Japanese, liked records with significant foreign content.

Given this circumstance, Nitchiku intended to market both Korean and Japanese records to Korean consumers from the start of its business in Korea. The *Maeil sinbo* carried an announcement for the opening of Nitchiku's Korean branch in September 1911. It stated that Nitchiku would sell recently released Japanese records as well as Korean records released that year.[82] The Japanese records mentioned here might not have been limited to Japanese-language records, but also those released in Japan by Nitchiku, including records of foreign music. This situation was not new. According to Bae Yeon-hyung, even before the colonization of Korea, records of Korean traditional music as well as Western and Japanese music were in circulation in Korea.[83]

Besides Nitchiku, Japanese trading agencies also helped diversify record markets in the Japanese empire by importing records of various kinds of music, especially Western classical music, from American and European record companies in the early 1900s. For example, Sankōdō, which operated dealers in Korea even before Nitchiku set up its Korean branch, imported records from U.S. Columbia, British Gramophone, German Bekka, Lirophone, U.S. Victor, and French Pathé as early as the 1910s.[84] If those records were sold in Japan, they must have been available to record consumers in Korea as well, especially foreign residents. Moreover, more Koreans attended university in Japan more than in Korea during the colonial period, so they could have enjoyed transcultural recorded sound in Japan as well. Therefore, thanks to the transnational record business, modern Korean urbanites must have been exposed to global sound culture almost

[82] "Kaejŏm Piro" *Maeil sinbo*. September 12, 1911.

[83] Bae, "Ilch'uk Chosŏn Sori-ban Yŏn'gu (1)," 93–94.

[84] Kurata, *Nihon rekōdo bunkashi*, 58–59.

simultaneously with record consumers in Japan as well as other parts of the world, though only a small number of Koreans could have actually afforded records.

An example alluding to Korean consumption of foreign records is a 1924 feature article titled "Judging *Yuhaengga*'s Popularity among Female Students" in the magazine *Sinyŏsŏng* (New Women).[85] Under the subheading "Admonishing Female Students and Women's Schools," the article, containing contributions from six Korean leaders in culture and education, expresses deep concern about the popularity of modern popular songs among female students. Songs provided as examples by the contributors of the article were "枯れスズキ," "리수일과 심순애 (a Korean adaptation of 金色夜叉の唄)," "あ あ 、 世 は ゆ め や 、 ゆ め な り や ," "Carmen," and "Fra Diavolo."[86] The kinds of songs cited as popular among female students in the mid-1920s were Japanese songs, those adapted from Japanese popular songs, and other foreign songs, which were globally popular around the same time.

Admittedly, it is necessary to consider the popularity of these songs in relation with the development of modern theater in colonial Korea, especially songs sung during intermissions, and Western music education through schools and churches as well as print culture which provided lyrics in magazines, leaflets, and songbooks throughout the early 20th century. At the same time, the sounds coming from phonographs at record dealers, cafés, *kisaeng* houses, or wealthy homes must have captured the ears and hence the minds of Koreans, which I further discuss in Chapter Two. Nitchiku and Japanese trading agencies, by providing recorded music of Korea and other countries, must have stimulated young urban Koreans' longing for new kinds of music.

[85] "Yŏhaksaenggye Yuhaengga Sibi" *Sinyŏsŏng* 6: 46-53. *Yuhaengga* before the 1930s referred to popular songs regardless of genre. See Zhang, *Oppa nŭn p'unggakchaengi ya: taejung kayo ro pon kŭndae ŭl p'unggyŏng*, 170–71.

[86] To emphasize the diversity of these songs, I intentionally wrote each title in its original language.

Concluding Remarks

Studies of Korea under Japanese rule have generally focused on the bilateral relationship between Japan as colonizer and Korea as colonized, but their relations also intersected with the activities of transnational companies with new technology and global capital. By examining Nitchiku's identity as a transnational company in which the U.S. and Japan were the primary countries involved, I attempt to identify the ways in which Nitchiku maintained its position as the dominant record company in both Japan and Korea. Though I recognize the fact that Nitchiku's being based in Japan gave it significant advantages in competing against major foreign record companies in the record market of the Japanese Empire, its ability to act like a so-called national company using "image politics" greatly contributed to its success in Japan. As the sole foreign-managed and foreign-funded record company in Japan during the acoustic era, Nitchiku represented itself as a Japanese national company through masterful appropriation of sounds and images. Admittedly, there were other foreign-funded and managed companies operating in Japan, but the reason Nitchiku was careful to portray itself as a Japanese company was most likely because it mainly marketed Japanese cultural products. Considering the cultural nationalism prevalent in Japan then, the company must have perceived that its transnational identity was a vulnerability that could be exploited by its business rivals.

Nitchiku maintained its top position in the recording industry precisely because of its transnational business. Established with assistance from important figures in early electrical recording technology at the American Record Company, Nitchiku was able to manufacture more technically sophisticated products. It also diversified its catalog targeting multicultural consumers in the Japanese Empire, assisted by its connections with foreign record companies. Likewise, Japanese trading agencies engaged in the transnational record business while delivering global

sounds to local consumers. Therefore, the transnational profit-seeking of record companies and agencies was the main force behind the formation of modern sound culture in colonial Korea, which allowed Koreans, along with Japanese and other foreigners living in Korea, to be simultaneously exposed to mechanically reproduced sound in the acoustic recording era.

Chapter Two

The Korean Record Business in the Electrical Recording Era

The transnational recording industry sought profits at the regional and the global levels from the start of the acoustic era. Its business became far more direct and vigorous in Japan and its colonies as the electrical era began in the second half of the 1920s. Commercial implementation of new recording technology in 1925 offered much higher levels of audio fidelity for gramophone listeners and enabled them to enjoy clearer and more full-bodied sound reproduction than ever before. The acoustic recording era then came to a quick end. Japan acquired electrical technology within a few years of its introduction by allowing the transnational record companies, headquartered in Europe and the United States, to set up local production and distribution facilities. Thus, I reveal in this chapter that the transnational record companies, as gateways for foreign technology, capital, management, and master recordings, led Japan's transition into the electrical era while the imperial government facilitated the establishment of their operations in Japan.

The newly-established record companies accelerated transnational and transcultural record making in the Japanese Empire from the late 1920s. Nippon Victor, Nippon Columbia, and Nippon Polydor, shortly after they put in place manufacturing facilities and dealer networks in Japan, set up subsidiaries with their own networks in colonial Korea. These regional branches manufactured the same gramophones and records in Japan as their company headquarters did, but they produced records in Japan and its colonies on a far larger scale than in the acoustic era to compete for market share in the region. Accordingly, Japanese records (K: *naeji-ban* or *Ilbon-ban*, J: *hōgaku-ban*) along with records produced in Europe and the U.S. (K: *yang'ak-ban* J: *yōgaku-ban*) became more readily and cheaply available on the Korean peninsula. In addition, the record companies devoted

part of their resources to producing records intended mainly for Korean consumers, which were called “Korean records” (K: *Chosŏn-ban*, J: *Chōsen-ban*). In other words, the recording industry gave Koreans access to a modern soundscape of the Japanese Empire.

I focus on the fact that colonial Korea became not only a market for the transnational record companies but also a production site for Korean records. Aligned with contemporary Korean scholarship that views the recording industry as not arising from Japan’s colonial project, as discussed in the Introduction, I reinforce this argument by demonstrating that Korea in the modern colonial period had a greater market value for the record companies than it had in the acoustic era. This higher market value becomes evident through an exploration of: Korean record production in the acoustic recording era; the infrastructure to promote record sales in colonial cities; and the existence of potential and real Korean record consumers. Due to these factors, the record companies produced an increasing number of music and narrative records with substantially hybridized and diversified content for mass consumption by Koreans. Another of my concerns in this chapter is the colonial government’s delayed implementation of regulations on Korean record production. This somewhat unexpected delay demonstrates that the Japanese government did not actively utilize the recording industry for its political purposes at the beginning of the electrical recording era. Rather, competition among the transnational record companies underlay the formation of the recording industry in colonial Korea. The record companies operating in the Japanese Empire were representative of how the transnational record industry sought profits while transcending geopolitical boundaries and traversing diverse cultures.

Transitions in the Japanese Recording Industry

International recording expeditions declined as the transnational record companies endeavored to set up recording studios and pressing factories in strategic markets. However, the record companies were not able to establish local production in Japan until the first half of the 1920s. According to Azami, Japanese legal barriers as well as the development of domestic record companies restricted such plans. In fact, these Japanese companies nearly monopolized the production and distribution of records in Japan and its colonies from the 1910s.[87] Though they were not producing records locally, this does not necessarily indicate that the transnational record companies were idle. Japan remained one of the world's most significant importers of gramophones and SP records, notably classical music records.[88] These imported products were sold to Japanese and foreigners residing in Japan and its colonies. In other words, the transnational record companies were able to make considerable profits by exporting their products to Japan without directly manufacturing them there.

The major record companies' export profits from Japan, however, were put at risk after the Great Kantō Earthquake of 1923. The Japanese government, in need of revenue to rebuild its devastated capital and concerned about the outflow of yen, promulgated an act to raise tariffs up to 100 percent for luxury items, including gramophones and SP records, which resulted in a drastic decline in consumption of foreign records in Japan.[89] According to Pekka Gronow, the U.S. exported 215,141 records to Japan in 1922, but the number dropped dramatically to 20,646 in 1925. German record exports to Japan likewise declined to 84,212 in 1924 from 155,000 in 1922.[90] To

[87] Azami, "Nihon Rekōdo Sangyō no Keiseiki no Ken'insha = Nihon Chikuonki Shōkai no Tokushitsu to Yakuwari," 2.

[88] Mason, *American Multinationals and Japan*, 154:36–38.

[89] Oka, *Rekōdo no sekaishi: SP kara CD made*, 85; Azami, "Nihon Rekōdo Sangyō no Keiseiki no Ken'insha = Nihon Chikuonki Shōkai no Tokushitsu to Yakuwari," 12; Ch'oe, *Han'guk taejung kayosa*, 42–43.

[90] Gronow, "The Recording Industry Comes to the Orient," 282–83. Based on reports by the U.S. Department of

evade Japan's heavy tariffs, transnational record companies responded aggressively by investing in manufacturing their products in Japan.

Interestingly, the transnational record companies' establishment of local operations in Japan happened rather smoothly. The Japanese government, favoring foreign technology and capital over finished products, no longer limited or obstructed local record production but instead even encouraged it.[91] That is, multinational companies such as Western Electric, General Electric, Singer Sewing Machines, General Motors, and Ford were able to manufacture their products in Japan in the mid-1920s.[92] The world's major record companies, Victor, Columbia, and Deutsche Grammophon, followed this trend when they set up operations on Japanese soil. Moreover, Japan's record companies and dealers also accommodated the transnational record companies' direct business in Japan instead of resisting it. Obtaining new recording technology must have been one of the most significant reasons for this welcoming attitude. Electrical recording technology had been rapidly replacing the previous acoustic methods since the middle of the 1920s in Europe and the U.S., so record companies in Japan must have realized the necessity of adopting this technology to survive domestic as well as global competition. At the same time, the new radio industry only heightened this necessity. Thus, the transnational record companies were able to establish subsidiaries and affiliates in Japan in relatively amenable circumstances.[93] There were serious challenges to the recording industry at the beginning of the 1930s due to the Great Depression

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Commerce as well as Statistisches Reisamt, the German government statistics office, Gronow provides tables regarding the overseas record trade in an appendix.

[91] Mason, *American Multinationals and Japan*, 154:46.

[92] Mason, 154:22-25,46. Mason also notes that the restrictions on direct investment on some significant fields of industry such as banking, mining, and shipbuilding were also removed.

[93] U.K. Columbia even became the parent company of U.S. Columbia with help from J. P. Morgan in order to acquire the right to the patent, since Western Electric wished for U.S. companies to have electrical recording technology (Kawai 2012, 720-73).

along with the popularity of radios in the U.S. Many smaller labels were bought by the major ones, which were in turn bought out by radio companies such RCA and CBS. In contrast, the recording industry was growing strong in East Asia, and small and medium-sized record companies were established in Japan, making East Asia an ever more attractive market as well as a production site for foreign majors.

The Transnational Record Companies in Japan

In these rapidly changing economic, technological, and political circumstances, Nippon Columbia, Nippon Victor, and Nippon Polydor officially established operations in Japan from 1927 through 1928. Though all of them were transnational companies, the funding and structure of each were quite distinct. As the sole investor, Victor Talking Machine Company in the U.S. set up Nippon Victor (Victor Talking Machine Company of Japan, Ltd., also referred to as JVC) in September 13, 1927. In the process, U.S. Victor sought help from Sales & Frazer Co., its long-term general agency in Japan, and began building a factory in Yokohama. The construction of this factory, the largest in Asia then, was completed in 1930. Meanwhile, Nippon Victor became a joint-stock company through investment from Japan's two conglomerates, Mitsubishi and Sumitomo, in 1929. Also in that year, the parent company of Nippon Victor became RCA Victor, since RCA (Radio Corporation of America) had become the majority shareholder for Victor. Thus, Nippon Victor's business expanded in a few years to include the manufacturing of radio and other audio devices. Its first chief executive officer, B. Gardner, known to have laid the company's foundations in Japan, left the country after the completion of the Yokohama factory, and H. L. Summerer took over his position in 1930.[94] With its high-quality "Orthophonic" recording

[94] Nihon Bikuta Kabushiki Gaisha Henshū Iinkai, *Nihon bikutā 50-nenshi*, 52–53, 56–58; Kawai, "Oto no rekishi to Bikuta," 36.

technology and rich catalog of foreign and Japanese recordings, Nippon Victor led the recording industry in Japan and the countries in its empire.

The establishment of Nippon Columbia took a very different course. Nitchiku, the oldest record company in Japan, affiliated itself with Columbia by yielding its stocks to both U.K. Columbia (35.7%) in May and U.S. Columbia (11.7%) in October 1927.[95] The company's name, Nitchiku, remained. However, its long-lasting Nipponophone label as well as the "Washi" (eagle) logo were replaced by "Columbia" and the company's famous "Magic Notes" logo.[96] Thereafter, it was usually called Nippon Columbia to differentiate it from the old Nitchiku. The second president of Nitchiku, J. R. Geary, who was responsible for the company's transformation to Nippon Columbia, kept his position for about a year. The company's American vice president, L. H. White, was then promoted to president in June 1929. A.E. Brian and E.B. シデル (possibly Sidel) assisted him as vice presidents. [97] White first and foremost carried out structural adjustments like reforming the distribution system. He also liquidated most master recordings, which Nitchiku had produced using acoustic recording methods, and began recording Japanese music with Nippon Columbia's "Viva-tonal" recording equipment. After about a year of technological improvements with U.K. Columbia's assistance, Nippon Columbia's Kawasaki factory was outfitted with the latest equipment by December 1928.[98] Nippon Columbia was then fully ready to mass-produce records and gramophones in Japan.

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[95] Nihon Koronbia Kabushiki Gaisha Seisaku Hen, *Uta de tsuzuru koronbia no ayumi: sōritsu hachijisshūnen kinen*, 30. According to Mason, German subsidiaries of Columbia were also involved in this acquisition process in *American Multinationals and Japan*, 38.

[96] Releases on Nitchiku's labels such as "Washi," "Hikōki," and "Orient" continued for a few more years.

[97] Nihon Koronbia Kabushiki Gaisha Seisaku Hen, *Uta de tsuzuru koronbia no ayumi: sōritsu hachijisshūnen kinen*, 30–32.

[98] Nihon Chikuonki Shōkai Hen, *Nitchiku Koronbia sanjūnenshi*, 57–65; Nihon Koronbia Kabushiki Gaisha Seisaku

In May 1927, a few months earlier than Nippon Victor and Nippon Columbia, Nippon Polydor (Nippon Polydor Chikuonki Kabushiki Kaisha) was established as a licensee of Deutsche Grammophon Gesellschaft. Interestingly, funding for the company was provided by the Japanese side, through Anan Company and Jujiya, both of which had been major dealers of Deutsche Grammophon products.[99] Hence, its management was always in Japanese hands. Though Nippon Polydor functioned as the de facto subsidiary of Deutsche Grammophon, it was substantially underfunded compared to Nippon Victor and Nippon Columbia, and its development was significantly slower. Additionally, Nippon Polydor's main foreign catalog was not as rich as those of the other two since Deutsche Grammophon mainly featured the Berlin Philharmonic (G: Berliner Philharmoniker) and the Berlin State Opera (G: Staatsoper Unter den Linden).[100] After releasing foreign classical and dance music under license for its first two and a half years, Nippon Polydor eventually was able to begin releasing Japanese records in 1930 using Deutsche Grammophon's "Polyfar" recording system.[101]

The Record Business in Colonial Korea

The Korean market must have been important to Japan's record business, since both Nippon Victor and Nippon Columbia began producing Korean records within a year of their first Japanese releases. Nippon Victor made recordings of Japanese music for the first time in January

Hen, *Uta de tsuzuru koronbia no ayumi: sōritsu hachijisshūnen kinen*, 30–32.

[99] Azami, "Shōwa Shoki ni Okeru Ōbei Mejā no Hogaku-teki Kōsei to Nibon no Rekōdo Sangyō no Hatten," 8; Yamauchi, "Ilche Sigi Han'guk Nogŭm Munhwa ŭi Yŏksa Minjokchi," 131.

[100] Azami, "Shōwa Shoki ni Okeru Ōbei Mejā no Hogaku-teki Kōsei to Nibon no Rekōdo Sangyō no Hatten," 9.

[101] *Porodōru rekōdo geppō*. *1*930 (1): cover, 1, 5.

1928, and five months later it began recording Korean music as well.[102] After releasing its first Japanese records in March 1928, Nippon Columbia also went on to record Korean music in November the same year. These Korean records were released the following February.[103] In this way, Nippon Victor and Nippon Columbia competed for the larger share of the Korean record market.

Unlike its rivals, Nippon Polydor took significantly longer to begin producing Korean records. It did not release its first such records until September 1932. Yamauchi notes that there are no documents available to indicate the reason for the delay. He speculates that the new president of the general dealer of Nippon Polydor in Korea, Hiroe Sawajirō,[104] might have taken the initiative in promoting Korean record production. Yamauchi adds that the heated competition among the record companies in the early 1930s must have worked favorably for Hiroe's efforts to influence Nippon Polydor to release Korean records at that time.[105]

Yamauchi's speculation about why Nippon Polydor produced Korean records in 1932 is quite plausible, but the reason why Nippon Polydor took so long to start producing Korean records still requires some explanation. Focusing on Nippon Polydor itself rather than the Korean record market, I contend that the company's delay in releasing Korean records was because it needed a

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[102] Nihon Bikuta Kabushiki Gaisha Henshū Iinkai, *Nihon bikutā 50-nenshi*, 54. An advertisement regarding Nippon victor's first Korean recording is also available in the *Tong'a ilbo* (June 21, 1928).
[103] Nihon Koronbia Kabushiki Gaisha Seisaku Hen, *Uta de tsuzuru koronbia no ayumi: sōritsu hachijisshūnen kinen*, 31; Bae, "Columbia Rekodŭ ŭi Han'guk Ŭmban Yŏn'gu (1)," 42, 46.

[104] Yamauchi introduces his surname as "Hiroezawa" in his dissertation, 132. If this person, 廣江澤次郎,was the same one who manufactured and sold tobacco in Kyŏngsŏng from 1904, as Yamauchi suggests, his surname should be "Hiroe." OCLC Worldcat spells his name Hiroe Sawajiro for his publications, and the name on the sign of his shop is 廣江商会 (the Hiroe Company) not 廣江澤商会 (the Hiroezawa Company). A photo of this sign is available at https://www.facebook.com/ModernitySeoul/photos/a.158262384235812.39837.142936589101725/514922378569809/, accessed November 1, 2015.

[105] Yamauchi, "Ilche Sigi Ŭmban Sanuŏp-kye esŏ Han'guggin Chunggaeja ŭi Yŏksajŏk Chuch'esŏng Koch'al," 132–33.

few more years to acquire the capacity to produce them. As noted earlier, both Nippon Victor and Nippon Columbia received major financial and technological investment from their corporate headquarters from the start. However, Nippon Victor began operating as a mere licensee and had to spend its first few years without such support. For example, the initial capital for outlay for Nippon Victor was 2,000,000 yen in 1927, which was doubled in December 1930.[106] Nippon Columbia's capital was recorded as 2,800,000 yen after a 700,000-yen capital increase in 1929.[107] Moreover, the parent companies Victor and Columbia not only placed their regional headquarters in Japan under foreign management sent from their corporate headquarters but also built and renovated their factories and recording studios, outfitting them with new equipment from their home countries. In addition, foreign engineers and technicians were dispatched to Japan to transfer technology and train Japanese workers. Thus, Nippon Victor could produce all the products manufactured by its parent company RCA Victor within a few years of its establishment.[108] Nippon Columbia was also able to manufacture gramophones and records as well as musical instruments like pianos and organs. With these products, Nippon Columbia exported to global markets including Burma (currently Myanmar), Iraq, Egypt, Canada, Brazil, Norway, Sweden, and many other countries by 1933.[109]

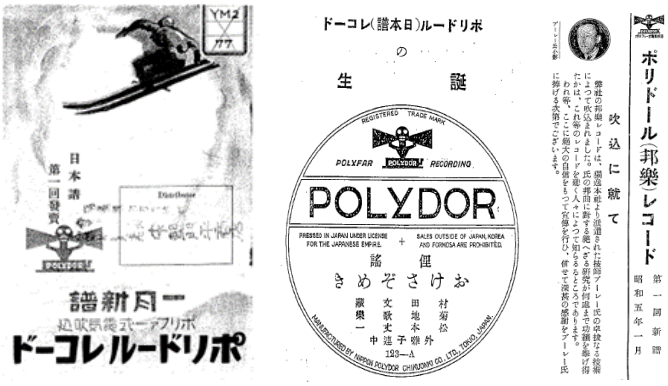
[106] Mason, *American Multinationals and Japan*, 154:40.

[107] Nihon Chikuonki Shōkai Hen, *Nitchiku Koronbia sanjūnenshi*, 72.

[108] Mason, *American Multinationals and Japan*, 154:40.

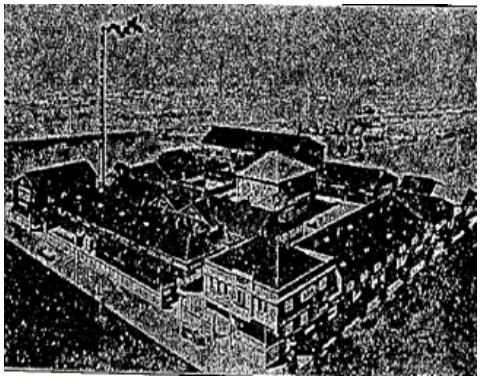
[109] Nihon Chikuonki Shōkai Hen, *Nitchiku Koronbia sanjūnenshi*, 76–77.

Figure 2.1



Announcement of the first Japanese release
Nippon Polydor catalog, January 1930

Figure 2.2



Renovated Nippon Polydor Factory
Nippon Polydor catalog, January 1932

I have not yet found the amount of initial capital for Nippon Polydor, but there are many examples demonstrating that the company was in a highly unfavorable position compared to Nippon Victor and Nippon Columbia in terms of funding and technology. Contrary to a common assumption by both Japanese and Korean scholars that Nippon Polydor began producing Japanese records soon after it started releasing foreign ones,[110] Nippon Polydor's first Japanese records were released in January 1930. This was over two and a half years after its establishment. As seen in Figure 2.1, the company's monthly catalog from January 1930 belatedly announces, "The First Release of Japanese Records" on its cover and "The Birth of Polydor Japanese Records" on page one. Page five introduces a recording engineer named ブーレー,[111] including his photo, who was

[110] Azami Toshio, a specialist in the recording industry and popular music of Japan, mentions that Nippon Polydor was engaged in producing Japanese records from 1927 Azami, "Shōwa Shoki ni Okeru Ōbei Mejā no Hogaku-teki Kōsei to Nibon no Rekōdo Sangyō no Hatten," 9. Bae Yeon-hyung provides rather oblique information regarding this period, writing that "Polydor at first was engaged in manufacturing foreign records under license..." Bae, "Polydor Rekodŭ ŭi Han'guk ŭmban yŏn'gu," 160.

[111] *Porodōru rekōdo geppō*. 1930 (1). The engineer's name is only written in katakana, so based on this information I can speculate that he was French-German. Possible spellings of his name are Boullee, Bouret, or Boulet.

sent by Deutsche Grammophon to conduct the recordings. All things considered, it is safe to say that Nippon Polydor was not prepared to release Korean records until at least 1930.

Nippon Polydor subsequently had the opportunity to raise additional revenue since Kingu Rekōdo (King Records hereafter), which was set up as a division of the well-established publisher Kōdansha, began manufacturing its records through Nippon Polydor from 1931, and the strategic alliance between it and Nippon Polydor continued through the middle of the 1930s.[112] Reflecting its increased financial and technological strength, Nippon Polydor boasted of its fully renovated factory in the New Year's greeting from its monthly catalog in January 1932 (Figure 2.2). Therefore, it is safe to say that Nippon Polydor, equipped to produce records on a larger scale by early 1932, was ready to undertake the production of Korean records. It finally released its first such records in September of that year. However, not like Nippon Victor and Nippon Columbia who conducted their business globally, its business area was still limited to the Empire of Japan.[113] Therefore, Nippon Polydor's belated release of Korean records was related with its capacity rather than circumstances in the Korean record market.

In addition to the three major record companies, other smaller Japan-funded record companies became involved in Korean record production from the early 1930s.[114] Many of them quickly collapsed, but Okeh Records (1932), Chieron Records (1931), and T'aep'yŏng Records (J:

[112] King Records' first release most likely occurred in February 1931 since Nippon Polydor's April catalog advertises King Records' third release. With technical help from Telefunken, King Records was able to manufacture Japanese records in its own factory from September 1935. In colonial Korea, King Records only sold Western classical and Japanese records through Nippon Polydor's dealers. For more information see Pak, "1930nyŏndae Han'guk Taejung Ŭmak Sanŏb ŭi Koch'al," 22.

[113] The label presented on page one of the January 1930 catalog contains the text, "Pressed in Japan under license for the Japanese Empire + Sales outside of Japan, Korea and Formosa are prohibited."

[114] There were about ten companies that began producing Korean records, though most of them were short-lived. Lee identifies the following: Deer, Tombo, Million, Lucky, Korai, Shōchiku, Sister, Corea, New Korea, and Kinchō. For more information, see Lee, "Ilche Sidae Kunguk Kayo Yŏn'gu," 143.

Taihei, 1932) remained competitive in the Korean SP record market. Thus, in 1930s colonial Korea, the expression "the Six Record Companies" was often used in magazines and newspapers. These Japan-based companies must have been successful at acquiring technical assistance from foreign record companies, which they needed to survive, and they entered the Korean market as well despite their less sophisticated technology. Their records were of lower quality than those manufactured by the three major companies and sold at much cheaper prices. The *Tong'a ilbo* reports that the price of Nippon Victor and Nippon Columbia's regular records was 1.50 yen, but Okeh's counterpart was 1 yen.[115] Responding to this market transition, Nippon Victor, Nippon Columbia, and Nippon Polydor started releasing records on their discount labels Victor Junior, Regal, and Polydor Chŏkban (Red Label)[116] respectively. In other words, the intensifying competition among the record companies helped make recorded music more accessible to Koreans, through which colonial Korea was more deeply incorporated into Japan's transnational record business

Maturing Conditions for Korean Record Production

The significance of colonial Korea as a record market in Japan's empire is well-reflected in the size of the building that housed Nippon Columbia's Kyŏngsŏng branch (Figure 2.3). That is, if the company took its Korean business lightly, it would probably not have set up business on such a scale. The building appears in a photo featured in the May 1935 edition of *Columbia News*, a monthly magazine published by Nippon Columbia, along with photos of the Kyŏngsŏng branch director, vice-director, and five sales representatives over two full pages under the headline of

[115] *Tong'a ilbo*, July 2, 1932.

[116] Nippon Polydor's regular record labels were black.

"The Kyŏngsŏng Branch Directors."[117] The two-story stone building seems to look even grander than many of Nippon Columbia's branches in Japan.

Figure 2.3

Front view of the Kyŏngsŏng Branch
(courtesy of the Nippon Columbia Archive)

As discussed in Chapter One, it is important to note that the Korean record market did not just consist of Koreans since Korean cities were multiethnic during the colonial era, so one cannot assume a direct correlation between the size of the Korean branch building and the importance of the consuming power of Koreans then. As with Nitchiku's Korean business in the previous period of acoustic recording, Japanese residents were still the main buyers of records in Korea even in the electrical recording era. This was because their already strong consuming power increased even more as Japanese continued to settle in colonial Korea over time. With the onset of electrical recording in Japan in the late 1920s, Japanese residents in Korea numbered close to half a

[117] Pages are not specified for the graphic section in the magazine. *Columbia News* provides information regarding Nippon Columbia's business, including products, artists, marketing, and promotions. It also mentions the activities of each branch including those in Japan's colonies. Unfortunately, the issues from January 1934 to December 1935 are only available at the Nippon Columbia Archive.

million.[118] Therefore, the purchasing power of Japanese settlers in Kyŏngsŏng and other open-port cities must have been a significant reason for the record companies to set up Korean branches and a comprehensive nationwide network of dealers as soon as they could.[119]

In fact, even during the heyday of Korea's record production in the middle of the 1930s, more Japanese and foreign records were sold than Korean records in Korea. A 1935 edition of the magazine *Samch'ŏlli* reports that the annual sales of records in the Korean market amounted to 120,000 copies, of which Korean records constituted thirty percent.[120] Even considering the preference of Korean elites for foreign classical music along with modern Koreans' consumption of Japanese popular songs, the significance of Japanese and other foreign settlers for the Korean record market cannot be overemphasized. Therefore, the sonic environment in colonial Korea increasingly consisted of Japanese music, which must have become increasingly familiar to Koreans. Meanwhile, Japanese settlers were also consistently exposed to Korean music due to promotional activities for Korean records.

At the same time, the fact that both Nippon Columbia and Nippon Victor began producing Korean records soon after their establishment in Japan reveals their confidence in Koreans' consuming power. Such confidence must have been due to the increased production of Korean records in the middle of the 1920s. Though Nittō Records stopped making Korean records at the end of 1927 with the rise of electrical recording, it had been a fierce competitor with Nitchiku,

[118] The following table shows the growth of the Japanese population in Korea from 1910 to 1944 based on information provided by Jun Uchida (2011, 65).

Year	1900	1910	1920	1930	1940	1944
Total	15,829	171,543	347,850	501,867	689,790	912,583

[119] According to the January 10, 1934 edition of the *Tong'a ilbo*, there were 520 shops selling gramophones and records. Kyŏnggido had the highest number with 78 shops, followed by 66 in Chŏllabukto, and 50 in Kyŏngsangnamdo.

[120] "Chakkoka Chaksaja ŭi Kosimgi," 151.

releasing about twenty records every three to five months in Korea over the three years of its business there.[121] Having made Korean records since 1911, Nitchiku responded by producing them with more diverse performers and content. Against this backdrop, the transnational record companies could not have taken the market potential of Korean records lightly.

i. Modern Koreans and Their Record Consumption

The competition between Nittō and Nitchiku could have been understood as a positive indicator of expected market growth, which was closely related with the increasing number of modern Koreans who enjoyed products of modern popular culture. According to Chu Ch'ang-yun, the modern generation of Korean consumers which emerged in the second half of the 1920s shared some similar characteristics. They were typically born after Korea was colonized in 1910 and received a formal colonial education in either Korea or Japan. They enjoyed Japanese as well as Western consumer culture at department stores, cafés, coffee shops, theaters, restaurants, parks and other places in the Namch'on area, the Japanese commercial and residential district in Kyŏngsŏng, together with Japanese residents.[122] That is, this new generation of Koreans were the main consumers of modern cultural products such as gramophones and records, and their numbers went up through the 1930s.

Though gramophone ownership became a significant cultural identifier for modern Korean consumers, the number of Koreans who were able to appreciate SP records at home was still very limited during the colonial period.[123] Even when articles depicting families enjoying gramophone music became prevalent in magazines and newspapers in the 1930s, they often eschewed Korean

[121] Han'guk Ŭmban Akaibŭ Yŏn'gudan, *Han'guk yusŏnggi ŭmban*, 65.

[122] Chu, "1920-1930-nyŏndae 'Modŏn Sedae' ŭi Hyŏngsŏng Kwajŏng," 191–92.

[123] Though the focus of record production moved to popular music in the 1930s, older middle-class Koreans continued to buy records of Korean traditional music. Such records were produced throughout the colonial period.

realities. A 1932 survey by the magazine *Sintong'a* reports that twenty-two out of thirty-nine "new families" (K: *sin-kajŏng*) chose gramophones as a source of family entertainment, with singing and playing Western musical instruments also stated as important aspects of entertainment for such families.[124] Reading closely, the "new families" in the article were educated working couples with children who spent about ninety yen per month on living costs. These city-dwelling salaried nuclear families were the ones who could most likely afford costly gramophones, at least on installment, as well as new records released monthly. Considering that doctors in 1932 on average made about seventy-five yen, bankers seventy yen, and newspaper reporters fifty yen per month,[125] the families discussed in the survey belonged at least to the upper middle class. Reflecting on such circumstances, Lee Sang-gil states that the household distribution of gramophones was lower than 7% even by 1935 in colonial Korea. He further argues that the rate must have been even lower for Korean families, since Japanese and other foreign families residing in Korea would have shown higher rates of gramophone ownership.[126] Though pianos and gramophones were promoted as must-haves for "new families," most Koreans could not afford gramophones during the colonial period.

ii. Public Sites for Music and Leisure

Nonetheless, modern Koreans were able to consume recorded sound indirectly due to the development of public sites such as cafés, coffee shops, bars, and Western-style restaurants, in which gramophones were an important feature. Yano Kanjō in his city culture report of 1936 states that Kyŏngsŏng denizens spent every night enjoying jazz, entertained by around one thousand

[124] "Sin-kajŏng Naeyong Konggae," 90–111.

[125] "Tosi Saenghwal Chŏnsŏn." Requoted from Lee, "Yusŏnggi Hwaryong kwa Sajŏk Yŏng'yŏk ŭi Hyŏngsŏng," 66.

[126] Lee, "Yusŏnggi Hwaryong kwa Sajŏk Yŏng'yŏk ŭi Hyŏngsŏng," 67–69.

female servers in over 100 cafés and 27 bars. He also mentions that coffee shops called *kkittachŏm*, which were frequented by intellectuals, flourished in Kyŏngsŏng. Playing gramophone music was the distinctive characteristic of these establishments.[127] Though Yano did not differentiate Koreans from Japanese in his reports, no one would deny that visiting such sites, where music was a critical part of the ambiance, had become a form of leisure for modern Koreans by the 1930s.

Figure 2.4

Inside of Nangnang Parlor

To be more specific, in their interviews for the magazine *Samch'ŏlli* in 1936, the female managers, called "madams," of three well-known coffee shops in the Korean district of Kyŏngsŏng, Mona Lisa, Venus, and Nangnang Parlor, verified that their main clientele was composed of intellectuals such as journalists, directors, actors, writers, artists and musicians as well as professionals like bankers, company employees, and teachers. They all agreed that their customers were young, between their early twenties and late thirties. The SP records they played for their

[127] Zhang, "Ilbonin ŭi Nune Pich'in 1930-nyŏndae ŭi Kyŏngsŏng - Yano t'at'ek'i ŭi Siinp'an Kyŏngsŏng annae ro but'ŏ," 255–57. Taken from "Sinp'an Tae-Kyŏngsŏng Annae" (New Introduction to Great Kyŏngsŏng) which was originally published by the Kyŏngsŏng City Culture Studies Institute in April 1936. The author's name is given as Yano Tadeki in Korean pronunciation in the translated version of 2011 that I have cited here. However, the OCLC (Online Computer Library Center) records his name as Yano Kanjō, so I have used that version.

customers varied depending on the coffee shop. Mona Lisa mainly played jazz and other styles of American music, but no Korean music was available. Venus often played jazz as well and had a large quantity of Korean *yuhaengga* records along with Japanese records by Kouta Katsutaro (1904-1974) and Ichimaru (1906-1997). Nangnang Parlor (Figure 2.4) mostly played serenades. It had various records by Enrico Caruso (1873-1921), Fujiwara Yoshie (1898-1976, Japanese tenor), and Josephine Baker (1906-1975). Moreover, folksongs, Scottish music, and Spanish dance music were also popular among its customers.[128] Though the mangers only mentioned high-status intellectuals with careers as their main clientele, probably for the sake of their reputations, jobless intellectuals, "modern boys," "modern girls," and even *kisaeng* could have been regular customers as well. The interviews ultimately reveal that the managers and owners of such establishments carefully selected their record selections depending on the tastes of their customers, since music significantly contributed to the atmosphere they desired.

Figure 2.5

People listening to a gramophone in the street
(courtesy of Nippon Columbia)

[128] "Kkiktachŏm Yŏnae P'unkyŏng," 56–61.

Those who could not even afford to visit a simple coffee shop could still listen to recorded music outside. Record dealers in cities all over Korea advertised their records by playing them loudly and directing the sound into the streets. Figure 2.5 shows people of various ages and clothing styles holding lyric sheets and listening to or singing along with a gramophone played by a Nippon Columbia dealer.[129] A similar scene is described in a short story called, "Asŭp'alt'ŭ rŭl Kŏnnŭn Ch'inggu" (A Fellow Walking on an Asphalt Pavement), where a flâneur-type main character describes about one hundred people standing mesmerized by the sound from a gramophone in front of a shop.[130] Not just record dealers, but other merchants joined in and played gramophones to attract the attention of passers-by as a form of modern advertisement.[131] The folklorist Song Sŏk-ha in the 1935 *Tong'a ilbo* complains that even countrymen went to the market on a market day which opened every five days just to listen to gramophone music.[132] In these ways, Koreans, especially city residents, were routinely exposed to recorded sound regardless of their age or economic capacity.

iii. The Development of Mass Media

The rapidly developing mass media in colonial Korea must have helped to make it an attractive record market, since record companies could expect their advertisements and public relations to reinforce one another, which could help to improve sales of records especially among Korean consumers. During Japan's "cultural rule" following the March First Independence Movement of 1919, vernacular newspapers and magazines sprang up. The publication of song

[129] *Columbia News.* May 1934, 19.

[130] "Asŭp'alt'ŭ rŭl Kŏnnŭn Ch'inggu," 161. It is possible that the story was written by Kim Yŏng-p'al since this name is given a few stories earlier, but the following stories, including this one, do not have the authors specified.

[131] Sŏ, "Sang'ŏp Chisik: Sangp'um Chinyŏlbŏb kwa Kwanggo Yiyong," 37.

[132] His articles entitled "Nongch'on Orak ŭi Ch'ŏnghwa e Taehan Sakyŏn" were published between June 22 and July 10, 1935 in the *Tong'a ilbo*.

books and lyric sheets also continued to climb. Meanwhile, films and theater performances became increasingly popular among city dwellers. Radio was another new form of media. Established in 1927 as the fourth radio station in the Japanese Empire after those in Tokyo, Nagoya, and Osaka, the Kyŏngsŏng Broadcast Corporation (KBC hereafter) included music and other narrative genres in its playlists. A second Korean-language KBC station was established in 1933 and provided more Korean entertainment programing. The rapidly developing media environment in colonial Korea must have looked promising to the record companies, which intended to market their products and musicians nationwide.

How record companies advertised their new releases and performers in close cooperation with other media can be found in the example below. Figure 2.6 shows an advertisement in the *Chosŏn ilbo* for a performance called "Okeh Demonstration Nights" (Okeh Silyŏn ŭi Pam) in 1935 in which Okeh's famous musicians and other artists would perform for two nights. There were two classes of tickets. Prices for the more expensive white tickets and cheaper blue ones were .50 yen and .30 yen respectively. However, concertgoers who brought the boxed part in Figure 2.6 could buy both kinds at reduced prices, .30 yen and .20 yen respectively. The advertisement was an attempt by Okeh to ensure sufficient turn-out for the concert since the *Chosŏn ilbo*'s subscribers were most likely members of Okeh's target audience. At the same time, it also encouraged Koreans to subscribe to the newspaper to get future discounts. Figure 2.7 shows another example of cooperation between record companies and the *Chosŏn ilbo*, which reported that it organized a song lyric contest with the intention of providing high quality popular music to Koreans. Three record companies, Nippon Columbia, Nippon Polydor, and Chieron, sharing the same purpose with the *Chosŏn ilbo,* produced records of the winning songs. Thus, both the newspaper and the

record companies could publicize their cultural contributions to Korean society while indirectly kindling interest in their future releases.

Figure 2.6

A voucher attached to an Okeh performance ad
Chosŏn ilbo, March 30, 1935

Figure 2.7

Results of the song lyric contest
Chosŏn ilbo, Feb 17, 1934

Magazines also closely cooperated with the record companies, often running song lyric contests and popularity polls. Ku In-mo points out that most newspapers and magazines even included song lyrics as a competitive category along with literary criticism, short stories, children's stories, plays and others in their prestigious annual spring literary contests (*sinch'un munye hyŏnsang kongmo*) from the middle of the 1930s.[133] They also frequently published special articles on music trends and hit songs along with interviews and gossip about musicians and songwriters. Informative articles on records, gramophones, and classical music could often be found as well.

[133] Ku, *Yusŏnggi ŭi sidae, yuhaeng siin ŭi t'ansaeng: si wa yuhaeng kayo ŭi kyŏnggye e sŏn siindŭl*, 169–72.

KBC also helped record companies by having musicians perform their new releases at the station in addition to playing records, with the programs announced daily through newspapers.

Moreover, it was a routine practice to record the same theme song for a film and a play to obtain a reinforcing marketing effect. For example, one of the most popular Korean *yuhaengga* in 1929 was "Nakhwayusu" (Falling Blossoms on Running Water, Columbia 400016-A, Victor 49082-A). Written by Kim Sŏ-jŏng,[134] "Nakhwayusu" was the theme song of a successful film with the same title released in 1927.[135] According to a cartoon published in the *Chosŏn Ilbo* in 1928, "Nakhwayusu" spread faster than cholera. The people in the cartoon who sang "Nakhwayusu" were a *kisaeng*, a lady, a bride, a beggar, an intellectual, a drug addict, an innkeeper, a kindergartener, and a mother putting her baby to bed.[136] Reflecting its popularity, both Columbia and Victor released the song in 1929 and 1930.[137] Likewise, the makers of print media, films, theaters, and KBC worked closely with record companies to increase their respective profits and influence in Korea.

Regulating the Recording Industry

Meanwhile, Japan's regulatory policy regarding the recording industry was largely reactive, at least up to the early 1930s. This fact is interesting given that the Japanese government monopolized radio by incorporating its first three radio stations in Tokyo, Osaka, and Nagoya,

[134] Kim Yŏng-hwan was a director, playwright, songwriter, and film narrator known as *pyŏnsa*. Kim Sŏ-jŏng was the name he used for his songwriting. Kim Yŏng-hwan wrote the screenplay and theme song for "Rakhwayusu."

[135] The song was also known as "Kangnam Tal" since its lyrics start with that expression.

[136] "The Land Without Poets - They went to Kangnam following Swallows." *Chosŏn Ilbo*. October 16, 1928. It was re-quoted from (Sin 2003, 147-149).

[137] Yi Chŏng-suk was a sister of the director of the film, Yi Ku-Hyŏng. Yi recorded the song for Nippon Columbia, and Kim Yŏn-sil was the singer for the Nippon Victor record.

which were initially established as independent and privately funded stations in 1925, into the Japan Broadcasting Corporation (J: Nippon Hōsō Kyōkai, abbreviated as NHK) within a year of each being set up. Thus, radio developed as state media under the tight control of the Japanese government from the start.[138] Michael Robinson has shown that such government control extended to broadcasting in colonial Korea.[139] In contrast, though the recording industry took shape in the 1910s, the Japanese government did not formulate specific laws to control sound recordings for over a decade. Hiromu Nagahara, a historian of Japanese popular music, points out that the Japanese Supreme Court took the side of Japanese copyright violators against Richard Werderman[140] in his court case against them, which left sound recordings outside of copyright protection under Japanese law. Such protection did not become part of the law until 1920.[141] Though the recording industry grew extensively from the late 20s, the Government-General of Korea (GGK hereafter) censored records only if it found them to have objectionable messages. Yamauchi Fumitaka[142] describes the GGK's relations with the industry:

> The overall state-industry relationship, while varying over time, can be summarized as follows: The Government-General, rather than actively developing the industry, generally disregarded it while moderately (but closely when necessary) monitoring it through censorship, whereas the recording industry primarily pursued economic profits without overly challenging governmental policies or dominant ideologies… [143]

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[138] Yoshimi, *Koe no shihon shugi: denwa rajio chikuonki no shakaishi*, 226–27.

[139] Robinson, "Broadcasting, Cultural Hegemony, and Colonial Modernity in Korea, 1924-1945," 58–61.

[140] Richard Werderman was a German trader who produced records featuring the famous *naniwabushi* performer, Tōchūken Kumoemon (1873–1916) and he sued Japanese copiers of these records in 1914.

[141] Nagahara, *Tokyo Boogie-Woogie: Japan's Pop Era and its Discontents*, 30.

[142] Yamauchi points out that even when the Ministry of Education (J: Monbushō) implemented a record recommendation system in 1923 for social purposes, it was not concerned with Korean records (2009, 155-157).

[143] Yamauchi, "(Dis)Connecting the Empire," 147.

Once modern popular music began to circulate more widely in the early 1930s in Korea, the GGK finally responded with a set of censorship regulations called *Ch'ugŭmgi rek'odŭ ch'wichae kyuch'ik* (Ordinance Concerning Surveillance of Gramophones and Records) in May 1933.[144] In the following year, the Japanese government finally instituted a similar policy for Japan proper. Lee Jun-hee, through his investigation of the Imperial Diet records[145] as well as Korean-language newspapers of the era, states that it is not clear if pre-screening was implemented from the formulation of the ordinance, but it was at least conducted in 1937.[146] Judging from this information, the GGK's censorship was for the most part not aggressive enough to attract serious media attention in colonial Korea by the middle of the 1930s.

There might have been many intersecting reasons for the GGK to take a lenient approach to censoring Korean records. It may have concluded that gramophones were benign compared to radios. That is, private radio transmissions could be utilized for anti-government or revolutionary purposes, as seen in the espionage activities of Richard Sorge (1895-1944), who was executed in Sugamo Prison in Japan.[147] The Japanese government therefore might have been more interested in controlling the radio industry than the recording industry. Another possibility is that the government might have judged that record companies would not jeopardize their profits by producing records with noticeably subversive messages, especially considering that they were still luxury products. An additional reason is that it might not have been able to devise effective ways

[144] The ordinance was issued as Ch'ongdokpu-ryŏng No. 47.

[145] The Imperial Diet (1889-1947) was established by the Meiji Constitution as Japan's first modern legislature. The documents mentioned are named *Cheguk ŭihoe sŏlmyŏng charyo*, which are indexed on the website of the National Archives of Korea at www.archives.go.kr.

[146] Lee, "Ilche Sidae Ŭmban Kŏmyŏl Yŏn'gu," 169–70.

[147] Richard Sorge was a Soviet military intelligence officer who worked as an undercover German journalist in Japan. He sent and received messages using radio technology.

to censor sound products at first. Otherwise, due to the record companies' connections with their corporate headquarters in other imperial states, such as Great Britain, the United States, and Germany, Japan might have been hesitant to fully censor their records, as it still needed their technology and investment. All of these reasons must have worked in combination. In any case, the result was that Japanese authorities did not even develop a system to regulate or utilize the recording industry until 1933.

Concluding Remarks

Japan joined the electrical recording era in the second half of the 1920s by opening its borders to transnational record companies. Financial difficulties after the Great Kantō Earthquake pressured the Japanese government to accommodate various global companies, including major record companies, to obtain foreign investment and technological assistance. Realizing the necessity of acquiring new electrical recording technology, the existing record companies in Japan chose to accept local production by foreign companies. Soon after the establishment of Nippon Columbia and Nippon Victor, they opened branches in Korea. Nippon Polydor, due to its late development, was delayed in joining the competition to produce Korean records. In the meantime, smaller Japanese record companies, despite their less sophisticated technology, also entered the Korean record market. Thus, Korea's integration with the transnational record business occurred almost simultaneously with Japan.

Korea's immediate incorporation into the business sphere of transnational record companies in East Asia was because it was an attractive market for their business. In other words, Japanese political power was not directly involved in establishing and developing the recording industry in Korea, though Korea's colonial relations with Japan must have worked in its favor for

transnational record companies to conduct their business there. In other words, the conditions for Korean record production and consumption were well in place, as reflected in the existence of modern Korean consumers, public sites for music and leisure, and modern mass media to promote records. On top of these, the considerable Japanese population in colonial Korea must also have been a significant reason for the record companies to develop their business in Korea. Thus, profit-seeking was the impetus behind every move of the transnational record companies, at least before they were nationalized in the middle of the 1930s.

Chapter Three

Munyebu and Korean Record Production in the 1930s

The Korean recording industry entered its most productive and creative period in the 1930s. A distinctive aspect of record production during those years was the prevalence of records with original content. This was a significant change from the previous two decades, when most records contained music and narratives that were already popular. In other words, before the 1930s, approximately ninety percent of the Korean records contained traditional music and plays.[148] Roald Maliangkay identified high production costs as the reason for this practice, since record companies were "unlikely to take chances."[149] Reflecting growing confidence in the sales potential of the Korean market, the record companies in the 1930s increasingly attempted to create new material that would appeal to modern Korean consumers. To accomplish this, the companies implemented carefully planned strategies conceived by sound professionals. The artists and repertoire divisions (A&Rs) of the record companies, called *munyebu*, took charge of the entire process of producing Korean records and made most artistic and executive decisions concerning style and content. In doing so, *munyebu* greatly helped their associated record companies remain competitive in the Korean market despite the uneven funding and technology available to them.

Recognizing the co-constitutive quality of record-making, this chapter focuses more on *munyebu* than on individual sound professionals. Those working in *munyebu*—lyricists, composers, division heads (K: *munye-pujang* hereafter), and others—had to contest, negotiate, and

[148] Yi et al., *Yusŏnggi ŭmban kasajip*, 1067.

[149] Maliangkay, "Their Masters' Voice," 59.

cooperate with one another to produce marketable records. Even when I mention significant individual contributions, this is not to deny that records were the products of a group effort. Further, almost all Korean sound professionals tended to transfer companies when their exclusive contracts expired, usually for more money and better benefits. This fact makes examining the activities of *munyebu* more useful than those of individual professionals, especially for articulating an overview of the Korean recording industry from the corporate perspective.

In this chapter, I examine how Korean elites initially became involved in the recording industry and how their involvement helped *munyebu* to develop into relatively autonomous spaces, which were distinct from the A&Rs of their headquarters in Japan. That they were relatively autonomous was initially argued by musicologist Yamauchi Fumitaka. He points out that the record companies' "systemic indifference" (*kujojŏk mugwansim*) to Korean record production allowed for "Korean intermediaries" (*Han'gugin chunggaein*) to acquire comparatively unconstrained positions in the recording industry.[150] Yamauchi equates *munye-pujang* to foreign intermediaries who functioned as "cultural intermediaries" in the contact zone of the recording industry. He states, "like foreign intermediaries, these (Korean) intermediaries, utilizing their abilities and their position in the middle, profited or earned the opportunity to participate in new businesses."[151] By approaching Korean *munye-pujang* like foreign intermediaries, Yamauchi overlooks the agency that *munyebu* and *munye-pujang* exercised within—and their significant

[150] Yamauchi, "Ilche Sigi Ŭmban Sanuŏp-kye esŏ Han'guggin Chunggaeja ŭi Yŏksajŏk Chuch'esŏng Koch'al," 102.

[151] Yamauchi, "Ŭmban Sanŏp kwa Maegae Chagyong Yŏn'gu: Chŏnggi Nogŭm Ihu ŭi Hanguk Nogŭm Yŏn'gu," 139. This explanation seems to fit foreign intermediaries well since, as discussed in Chapter One, the reason that the Sankōdo trading agency became involved with U.S. Columbia's recording expedition was to secure exclusive rights to deal in the company's products. In addition, Homer Hulbert, the intermediary for U.S. Victor's Korean recording tour in 1906, also expressed his desire to market Victor's gramophones through his company in Korea, in addition to his satisfaction with the high-priced violin he received as a promotional gift from Victor. For more information see 218-221.

contributions to—the Korean recording industry. In contrast, I recognize that Koreans working in *munyebu*, especially *munye-pujang*, acted both as cultural intermediaries and cultural producers simultaneously. In other words, the responsibilities of *munye-pujang* did not stop at mediating between local musicians and transnational record companies; indeed, *munye-pujang* and other Korean workers in *munyebu* managed Korean record production. Further, this cultural autonomy was allowed since Koreans in *munyebu* had proved themselves to be best equipped at effectively responding to Korean music consumers' changing preferences and desires. Therefore, I contend that the allowance of relative autonomy to Korean *munyebu* was a rational business decision for record companies rather than the result of their being indifferent to Korean record production.

Though Munyebu were spaces of autonomous cultural production, they were not necessarily either counterhegemonic spaces or the free artistic zones. The record-making that I investigate in my dissertation occurred on an industry level, which was inevitably involved in the capitalist economy and (colonial) politics. Approaching the employees of munyebu as sound professionals working within the culture industry, what was most expected of them and was most significant for maintaining their careers in the industry, was their ability to produce marketable and therefore profitable records. This is the reason I do not approach them artists. Their professional goal was to provide sound products that appealed to modern audiences without attracting negative attention from the colonial government. By proving that they were better equipped than their Japanese counterparts to make profitable Korean records, Korean sound professionals could assume managerial roles in Korean record production through *munyebu*. What I investigate is how Korean sound professionals maneuvered around political and economic constraints by taking advantage of their managerial capacities. With overall decision-making rights

in their hands, I contend that *munyebu* essentially constructed modern sound culture in colonial Korea.

Munyebu in fact became a laboratory for their transcultural music making. Korean sound professionals in *munyebu* combined and reconfigured various foreign influences to produce new kinds of transcultural music and narrative genres. Focusing on four representative *munyebu* and their characteristic genres and activities, I demonstrate how Korean sound professionals exceeded their basic role as cultural intermediaries and functioned as cultural producers. I also show that their main intentions, which were identical with those of their headquarters, were to craft successful records that crossed cultural and geographical boundaries. In doing so, they worked to earn empire-wide professional recognition while receiving the financial rewards they desired.

The Significance of Popular Music Production

The transnational record companies invested substantial capital and transferred technology to Japan from the second half of the 1920s, as discussed in the previous chapter. It therefore became imperative for them to produce greater numbers of successful records both in Japan and in its colonies to earn greater profits. The transnational record companies in Japan very quickly learned that expanding their catalogs by acquiring talented exclusive songwriters was vital for their business. In particular, Nippon Victor made a fortune with its records of original popular music, which secured the position of this newly-established company in the Japanese market. According to Azami Toshio, successive hit songs by Nakayama Shinpei (1887-1952), such as “Habu no Minato” (The Port of Habu, 1928) and “Tokyo Kōshinkyoku” (Tokyo March 1929), helped Nippon Victor to take the leading position in the Japanese recording industry in the burgeoning electric recording era. Nippon Columbia lagged behind Nippon Victor for a few

years, but once Koga Masao (1094-1978) wrote a series of best-selling songs, starting with "Sake wa Namidaka Tameikika" (Is Sake a Teardrop or a Sigh? 1931), Nippon Columbia caught up with Nippon Victor. In addition, the success of "Shuchō no Musume" (Daughter of the Chief, 1930) by Ishida Ichimatsu (1902-1956) saved Nippon Polydor from deep financial trouble. Azami even called the song "the saving god" (*sukui no kami*) of Nippon Polydor.[152] Such events must have affected popular music record production in the Japanese Empire as the transnational record companies expanded into Japan's colonies.

Against this commercial and cultural backdrop, the record companies began focusing on Korean popular music production as they entered the 1930s. It is true that some diversification of record catalogs had appeared in the 1920s as more non-traditional music was made into records, such as popular theme songs for plays, Western classical music, hymns, foreign folk songs, and cover versions of Japanese songs. Even so, most of these had already been popular through churches, missionary schools, theaters, and songbooks before they were recorded, rather than being created specifically for commercial purposes. The record companies, in need of producing popular records regularly in the 1930s, began hiring songwriters while moving away from their dependence on temporary intermediaries.

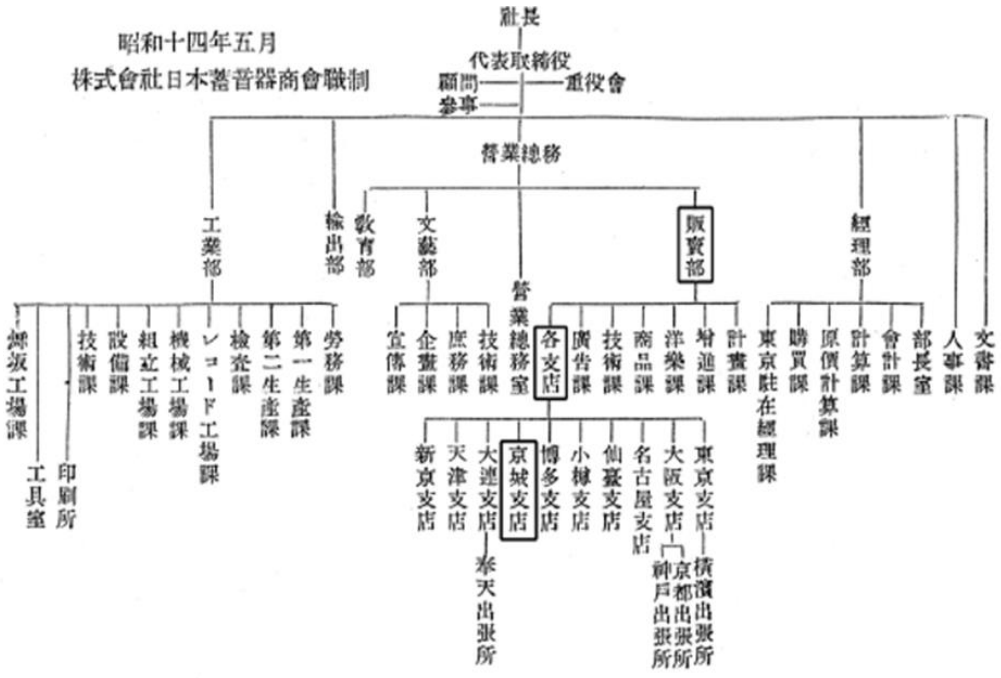
***Munyebu* as Autonomous Spaces**

To produce profitable records with original content required more than writing songs, and there needed to be systematic cooperation among multiple professionals. Accordingly, the transnational record companies organized *munyebu*, which were responsible for creating songs and narratives in various genres and categories, recruiting and managing artists, organizing

[152] Azami, "Shōwa Shoki ni Okeru Ōbei Mejā no Hogaku-teki Kōsei to Nibon no Rekōdo Sangyō no Hatten," 4–9.

recording trips, making press-related decisions, advertising, PR, and even distribution of Korean records. The responsibilities of *munyebu* closely resembled those of contemporary South Korean entertainment companies such as JYP Entertainment or SM Entertainment but were even broader. This was because *munyebu* not only produced traditional, classical, and popular music genres but also narrative ones such as plays, film narratives, comedy sketches and others.[153]

Figure 3.1



Organizational chart of Nippon Columbia
(source: *Nitchiku Kronbia sanjūnenshi*, 82)

Munyebu produced Korean records in cooperation with Japanese music professionals in

[153] The narrative records they produced allowed consumers to enjoy interesting parts or abbreviated versions of popular stories from plays and films at home with the voices of their favorite actors and actresses as well as narrators (K: *byŏnsa*, J: *bensi*).

Japan, especially concerning arrangements and recording, but *munyebu* were not sub-organizations of the A&R divisions at their Japanese headquarters, known as *bungeibu.* As Yamauchi Fumitaka rightly points out, *munyebu* belonged to their Korean offices. Figure 3.1 shows an organizational chart for Nippon Columbia in 1939.[154] The rectangular box on the top row indicates the Marketing Department, Individual Branches is written in the middle box, and the Kyŏngsŏng Branch is located in the bottom box immediately following the Japanese branches in Tokyo, Osaka, Nagoya, Otaru, and Hakata,[155] whereas the Japanese *bungeibu* is to the left of the Marketing Department. In other words, Nippon Columbia was organized in a way that allowed its *munyebu* to produce Korean records without receiving direct orders from the *bungeibu*.

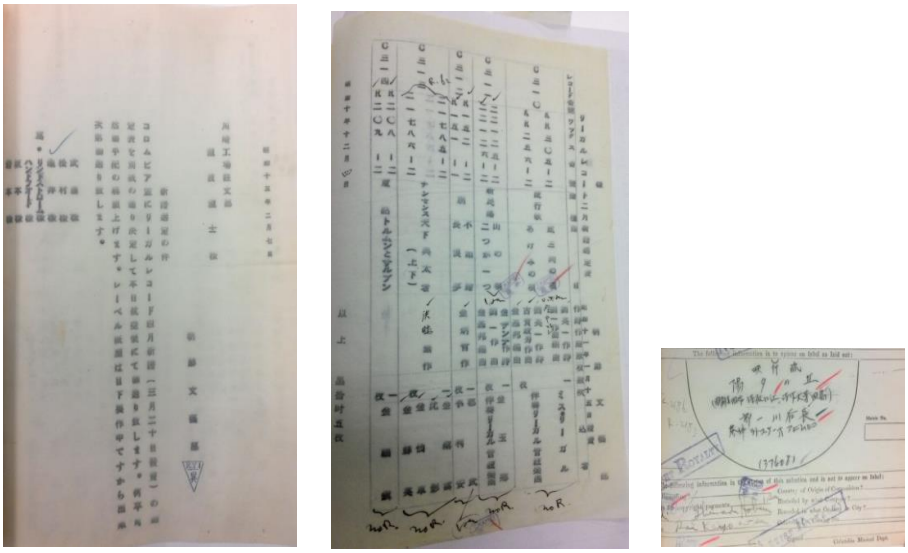
The following figure further indicates how *munyebu* conducted Korean record production independently. Figure 3.2 shows photocopies of order sheets, lists of records for release, and label content information regarding Korean records. An investigation of the order sheets and accompanying lists reveals that the *munyebu*, rather than a person or organization in a higher managerial position, placed direct orders to Nippon Columbia's Kawasaki Factory and specified which and how many records should be manufactured, when they should be ready, how many sample records were necessary, and if certain records needed to be sent by air rather than sea. The *munyebu* also specified other related facts such as what information should be printed on the record labels. Thus, it is clear that Nippon Columbia's *munyebu* made decisions about even the minor details involved in producing Korean records. Admittedly, there might have been other *munyebu* that received directions from their associated *bungeibu*, but this possibility seems very

[154] Nihon Chikuonki Shōkai Hen, *Nitchiku Koronbia sanjūnenshi*, 82; Yamauchi, "Ŭmban Sanŏp kwa Maegae Chagyong Yŏn'gu: Chŏnggi Nogŭm Ihu ŭi Hanguk Nogŭm Yŏn'gu," 204.

[155] The Kyŏngsŏng branch was followed by three Chinese branch offices in Xīnjǐng, Tiānjīn, and Dàlián.

slim. This is because Nippon Columbia was well organized and managed and had the most knowledge of the Korean market since it had done business there since its Nitchiku period. Various roundtable discussions by *munye-pujang* representing each record company featured in magazines from the 1930s further reveal that the *munyebu* of each company set the direction for Korean record production, reflecting the preferences of their Korean audiences.[156] Thus, one can assume that these companies shared a similar business model with Nippon Columbia.

Figure 3.2



Order sheet **List of new releases** **Label content information**
(courtesy of Nippon Columbia Archive)

However small the Korean record market was compared to Japan's, as long as the record companies were producing Korean products, they could not be indifferent to their increasing profits. If Korean sound professionals could manage *munyebu* more effectively than any other foreign workers, it made sense for them to produce Korean records just as Japanese sound

[156] "Chakkoka Chaksaja ŭi Kosimgi"; "Chosŏn Munhwa ŭi Chaegŏnŭl Wihaya"; "Recodŭgye ŭi Naemak ŭl Tŭnnŭn Chwadamhoe."

professionals had control over Japanese record production. In fact, almost all the Koreans working in *munyebu* were college graduates who already had reputations in various cultural fields such as journalism, education, theater, music, and literature. For example, according to the magazine *Pyŏlgŏn'gon*, when Nippon Columbia was hiring for one position at its *munyebu* in 1933, about sixty people applied. Those who moved on to the second round, after passing an exam as difficult as a college entrance test, all turned out be well-known figures in Korean society such as literature critics, playwrights and others.[157] With such expansive cultural and social capital, sound professionals in *munyebu* could produce records that responded to Koreans' interests and consuming patterns, global musical trends, and political circumstances. Thus, the most significant reason that the transnational record companies allowed *munyebu* to produce Korean records autonomously was that *munyebu* were staffed by able Korean elites. Moreover, it is unlikely that Japanese sound professionals in *bungeibu* were interested in producing Korean records, considering that the Korean record market was so much smaller than the Japanese one. Even if some of them might have wanted to produce Korean records, their lack of competence in the Korean language, social connections, and cultural awareness made this difficult. Therefore, I contend that it was a rational business choice for the transnational record companies to grant a significant degree of autonomy to their *munyebu*.

Munyebu and Korean Elites

One might be curious about why so many Korean elites in the colonial era were willing to work in the recording industry. Yoo Sun-young's description of these elites provides a good explanation. According to Yoo, colonial intellectuals acted as all-around men, continually

[157] Ho, "Rek'odŭ ŭi Yŏlgwang Sidae," 30.

crossing fields and changing their associations for the purpose of modernizing as well as enlightening Korea to the utmost of their abilities.[158] For example, Yi Ha-yun (1906-1974), as a Hosei University graduate, was a poet as well as a translator of French and British poems. He was also a founding member of a few literary coteries in addition to a New Theater group called Kŭgyesul Yongguhoe (Society for Research in Dramatic Arts). Furthermore, he worked as a newspaper reporter and programmer for the Kyŏngsŏng Broadcasting Company (call number JODK, KBC hereafter) before he became *munye-pujang* at Nippon Columbia in 1935. Likewise, colonial Korean elites were active in various fields and genres. Yoo adds that the number of intellectuals was limited, and modernization was understood in connection with enlightenment in colonial Korea, so they continually reorganized themselves, crossing specialties when they considered it necessary.[159]

More specifically, Ku In-mo, through a case study of the Chosŏn Song Association (Chosŏn Kayo Hyŏphoe), [160] provides a detailed illustration of how established Korean poets and musicians came to make popular songs, notably *sinminyo* (new folksongs) and children's songs. Ku identifies the reasons for the establishment of the Chosŏn Song Association in 1928 as the frequent failure of literary magazines, a lack of readers who appreciated modern poems, and financial hardship, among other causes. They believed they could overcome such problems by writing poems to be sung rather than read. This effort was based on their shared conviction that folk songs (K: *minyo* hereafter) were equal with modern literature and poetry in the milieu of the

[158] Yoo, "Singminji Taejung Kayo ŭi Chapchonghwa," 21, 23.

[159] Yoo, 23.

[160] According to the *Chosŏn ilbo* onFeb. 24, 1929, the members who participated in the inaugural general meeting were as follows: Yi Kwang-su, Chu Yo-han, Kim So-wŏl, Byŏn Yŏng-ro, Yi Ŭn-sang, Kim Hyŏng-wŏn, An Sŏk-ju, Kim Ŏk, Yang Ju-dong, Pak P'al-yang, Kim Tong-whan, Kim Yŏng-hwan, An Ki-yŏng, Kim Hyŏng-jun, Chŏng Sun-ch'ŏl, Yun Kŭk-yŏng.

1920s, when cultural nationalism was becoming prevalent.[161] Criticizing traditional folk songs and other popular music as being decadent and escapist, the members of the Chosŏn Song Association endeavored to create Korean songs with poem-quality lyrics in Western music styles while incorporating some Korean musical characteristics. Thus, these poets named their works "*kayo-si*" (song poems) or "*minyo-si*" (folksong poems) instead of mere "lyrics."[162]

Influenced by folksong movements in Japan as well as the West, a group of well-known classical musicians was also inspired to modernize Korean folk songs. For example, at the end of the 1920s, An Ki-yŏng (1900-1980), a tenor and composer with three years of training at a conservatory in the United States, organized a tour for the Ehwa Women's College Choir during which they performed Korean *minyo* arranged as Western-style choral music. According to An, the reception of the tour was mixed. Older audience members complained that female students were singing *minyo,* which in the past had been part of the repertoire of low-ranking *kisaeng*, and even called the college "Ehwa *Kisaeng* School" (*Ehwa kwŏnbŏn*). Some younger audience members, on the contrary, expressed their appreciation for the performances.[163] Most likely realizing that Western arrangements of *minyo* were positively received among younger Koreans, Nippon Columbia was willing to record three *minyo* songs performed by the choir in 1929.[164] An and his colleague at Ehwa, Mary E. Young (1880-1950), also published a songbook called *Korean Folksong Choral Music* (*Chosŏn minyo hapch'anggok-jip*) in 1931, which contained 11

[161] After the suppression of the March First Movement of 1919, cultural nationalists promoted the education of Koreans in traditional culture as the precondition for a new nation-state. For more information, see Robinson, *Cultural Nationalism in Colonial Korea, 1920-1925*.

[162] Ku, "Kŭndae-gi Si'in ŭi Hyŏnsil kwa Yuhaeng Kayo Ch'angjak ŭi Ŭimi," 221–26; Ku, "Yi Ha-yun ŭi Kayoshi wa Yusŏnggi Ŭmban," 171.

[163] An, "Chosŏn Minyo ŭi Kŭ Akpohwa," 67.

[164] All three recorded songs "*Yip'al Chŏngch'unga*," "*Toraji Taryŏng*," and "*Pang'a Taryŏng*" were arranged by Mary E. Young (Columbia 40014), and the advertisement for the record can be found in the *Tong'a ilbo* from April 1, 1929.

minyo songs arranged for three-part chorus. In the same year, four more songs in the book were made into records by Nippon Columbia with performances by the Ehwa Women's College Choir.[165] An and the choir continued to tour various cities across the Korean peninsula until 1932.[166]

Precedents for elites' genre crossing can easily be found in Japan, such as the cases of Saijo Yaso and Noguchi Ujō (1882-1945). They were established poets but went on to earn fame as popular music lyricists. This must have greatly eased any anxiety Korean intellectuals may have felt about getting involved in popular music record production. According to Ku In-mo, Korean songwriters not only covered Saijo's songs frequently but also referred to him in their publications.[167] This was also the case with Nakayama Shinpei and Koga Masao. Nakayama graduated from the prestigious Tokyo School of Music (Tokyo Ongaku Gakkō) while Koga was a Meiji University graduate, though he did not major in music. The two became the most significant composers of Japanese *enka*, known as *ryūkōka* then, and were also very popular in colonial Korea.

Without a doubt, the high-paying and stable white-collar positions available at the transnational record companies, such as *munye-pujang* or exclusive songwriters, must have been very appealing not only to many elites in Japan, but even more so for the numerous ambitious Koreans who faced financial difficulties during the economic downturn of the 1930s. The famous popular music composers Chŏn Su-rin and Hyŏng sŏk-ki in their interview with Mori Akihide,

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[165] The record (Columbia 40141) contained "*Yangsando*" and "*Nongbu'ga.*" "*Hanyang ŭi pom"* and "*Chajinsan t'aryung"* were released on Columbia 40235. These songs were rereleased in 1991 on a CD titled *Myŏng'in Myŏngch'ang Sŏrjip (3) – 1910-1945 Yŏ'myŏng ŭi Norae* by Han'guk Koŭmban Yŏn'guhoe.

[166] Shin, "Chosŏn minyo hapch'anggok-jip Yŏn'gu," 285–87, 297.

[167] Ku, *Yusŏnggi ŭi sidae, yuhaeng siin ŭi t'ansaeng: si wa yuhaeng kayo ŭi kyŏnggye e sŏn siindŭl*, 7.

the author of *Enka no kaikyō* (*The Strait of Enka*), state that they wrote about ten pieces per month in 1932 and 1933, though their contracts only required them to write two per month. They received fifteen won[168] per piece.[169] Considering they were most likely paid a salary through their exclusive contracts, they must have made over 150 won per month then. This number was more than twice than average salary for professionals in the 1920s and 30s, which was between 60 and 70 won.[170] On top of it, if a song turned out to be a hit, songwriters must have received a bonus for it. For example, Kim Chun-yŏng, who composed the hit song "Ch'ŏnyŏ Ch'onggak" (Maiden and Bachelor, lyrics by Pŏm O, sung by Kang Hong-sik, Columbia 40489-A, 1934) earned enough from it to buy a piano.[171] Therefore, it is not hard to imagine how strongly talented individuals from various fields and genres were attracted to work for the record companies in colonial Korea.

Lessons from Nippon Victor's Failures and the Emergence of *Yuhaengga*

The importance of *munyebu* is apparent from observing Nippon Victor's early operations in Korea. Nippon Victor, which dominated the Japanese popular music market from its establishment, did not have a similar position in Korea. On the contrary, the company had bitter experience producing records of both Korean traditional and popular music. Its first recording consisted of one kind of Korean court music called *a'ak*, performed by the court musicians of Yiwangjik A'akpu (the Royal Conservatory of the Yi Household) in 1928.[172] An American

[168] Won and yen were interchangeable during the colonial period. There is a possibility that both Chŏn and Hyŏng might have received more than other composers considering their popularity.

[169] Akihide, *Enka no kaikyō: chōsen kaikyō o hasanda dokyumento enkashi*, 32, 35.

[170] Sŏ, "Sangshil gwa Pujaeŭi Sigonggan: 1930nyŏndae Yorijŏm gwa Kisaeng," 174.

[171] Park, "1930-nyŏndae Han'guk Taejung 1930-nyŏndae Han'guk Taejung Ŭmak e Kwanhan Yŏn'gu," 292.

[172] Yiwangjik A'akbu was the institution in charge of performing and preserving court music under the Japanese

engineer transferred from U.S. Victor was in charge of the recordings, which took place over several sessions in a building at Unhyŏn Palace in Kyŏngsŏng. However, since the building did not have the features of a proper recording studio for orchestral music, the sound quality of this ambitious project was not up to Victor's standards. Though the musicians wished to release only six records (12 sides) out of about forty masters they had recorded, Nippon Victor nonetheless released a total of thirteen records (26 sides). This decision was because of the intervention of L. C. Kling,[173] the manager of Nippon Victor's general agency in Korea, who hoped to prevent Nippon Victor from suffering serious financial losses.[174]

Figure 3.3

Performance by *Yiwangjik A'akpu*, photo by Tanabe Hisao in 1921
(courtesy of the National Palace Museum of Korea)

Why did Nippon Victor choose *a'ak* for its first set of recordings in Korea? It might not have given serious consideration to the marketability of Korean court music but wanted to produce

occupation.

[173] The name is given in Korean, so Kling is only the presumed spelling.

[174] "Chosŏn a'ak iwangjik a'akpu yusŏnggi ŭmban," 20–21.

records which could display its prestige as the regional headquarters of a major global record company. Influenced by figures like Tanabe Hisao,[175] who revered *a'ak* as the progenitor of *gagaku*, Japanese court music, Nippon Victor might also have had the noble intention of preserving *a'ak*, which was on the verge of being lost. Oda Shōgo, a professor at Keijō Imperial University in Kyŏngsŏng, must have expressed such an opinion, since he acted as the intermediary between Nippon Victor and the court musicians for their recording. However, having been restricted to performances for royal audiences during the Chosŏn Dynasty, *a'ak* was largely unknown to common people in colonial Korea. Even during the early colonial period, small-scale performances were held for special guests from Japan or other foreign delegations, but public performances were reserved for major national events.[176] Thus, the records failed to generate interest among general record buyers when they were initially released.

To make matters worse, Nippon Victor's early Korean popular music records were not successful either. Yi Ki-se (1889-1945) in his magazine article blames a Japanese producer for this problem because of his unfamiliarity with Korean audiences and goes on to relate that Nippon Victor was subsequently unwilling to produce more records of Korean popular music, asserting that Koreans' cultural level was too low, and the Korean language was not suitable for recording.[177] Yi's recollection that Nippon Victor refused to produce new Korean records must have been true. In researching *Han'guk yusŏnggi ŭmban* [178] (Korean Gramophone Records), I found that Nippon

[175] Tanabe Hisao is generally considered the founder of Japanese Ethnomusicology and promoted the preservation of *a'ak* after his music research in Korea in 1921. For more information on Tanabe, see Hosokawa Shuhei (1998, 5-19).
[176] For more information, see Jeong-hee Lee. 2004. "Iwangjik A'akpu ŭi Hwaltong kwa Anp'ak ŭi sigak," *Tongyang ŭmak*, 26:49-96.

[177] Yi, "Myŏng-kasu rŭl Attŏkke Palkyŏnhayŏnnŭga," 184.

[178] *Han'guk yusŏnggi ŭmban* is a comprehensive five-volume discography of Korean SP records and related information categorized by record company. It also indicates when and where records were advertised.

Victor stopped advertising its products in the *Tong'a ilbo* after April 1930 for thirteen months in a row. This was unusual considering that Nippon Victor's new releases had been advertised in the newspaper almost once per month from December 1928 until early 1930. Yi's frustration is further understandable since he, as an intermediary for Nittō Records, had successfully promoted Yun Sim-duk's posthumous record "Sa ŭi Ch'anmi" (Homage to Death), which was a hit as early as 1926.[179]

Interestingly, Nippon Victor renewed its monthly advertising in the *Tong'a ilbo* from May 1932. According to Yi Ki-se, this was possible because he successfully negotiated with the president of Nippon Victor and received permission to restart Korean record production in 1931.[180] Whether Yi took the initiative to contact Nippon Victor or if the company was already looking for a proper intermediary / producer among Koreans around that time, the fact that Yi received permission reveals that Nippon Victor realized the importance of a Korean specialist who understood Korean consumers and their interests.

Among Nippon Victor's new releases, "Hwangsŏng ŭi Chŏk"[181] (Grounds of a Ruined Castle, lyrics by Wang P'yong and music by Chŏn Su-rin, VictorKJ 1169-B, 1932) was a major hit, allegedly selling fifty thousand copies. This success not only made its singer, Yi Aerisu, the first star in the history of Korean popular music but also greatly helped to put Nippon Victor's Korean business back on track. According to Park Ch'an-ho, a Korean resident in Japan and

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[179] Yi Ki-se arranged Yun Sim-duk's recordings for Nittō and promoted her posthumously-released records after she committed suicide along with her lover, the playwright, Kim U-jin, on the way back from her recording trip to Japan in 1926. Among them, Yun's recording of "Homage to Death" (Sa ŭi Ch'anmi) to the tune of "The Waves of the Danube" by Ion Ivanovici became a big hit.

[180] Yi, "Myŏng-kasu rŭl Attŏkke Palkyŏnhayŏnnŭga," 184.

[181] The digitized original recording of "Hwangsŏng ŭi Chŏk" can be heard at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7TbZVQG2kNc, accessed February 23, 2017.

pioneering scholar of colonial Korean popular music, the song was even known to Japanese as "Serenade of Chosŏn", and the *Keijō nippō*, the government-sponsored Japanese newspaper in Kyŏngsŏng, published a series of special articles featuring Yi Aerisu for four days in a row.[182]

It is worth noting that "Hwangsŏng ŭi Chŏk" was in the style of Japanese *ryūkōka* (contemporary *enka*), an emerging hybridized genre with both Japanese and Western musical elements. Written in the minor *yonanuki* five-tone scale, the song is known to be the first Korean-language *ryūkōka* (K: *yuhaengga* hereafter) song in the history of the Korean recording industry. Many scholars conclude that the success of "Hwangsŏng ŭi Chŏk" gave the record companies confidence that they could produce profitable Korean *yuhaengga* songs.[183] More such songs were released through the 1930s, which made *yuhaengga* one of the main popular music genres in colonial Korea.[184]

"Koyohan Chang'an" (Quiet Chang'an, lyrics by Yi Hyŏn-kyŏng[185] and music by Chŏn Su-rin), released in the same year, shows how Korean-produced *yuhaengga* songs were even appreciated by Japanese audiences. After listening to the song for the first time during Yi Aerisu's recording session in Japan, Saijo Yaso immediately wrote Japanese lyrics for it. Thus, the Japanese cover version, named "Adanasake" (A Resentful Love), was released a few months later in October 1932 with Yi Aerisu's vocal. Considering the pattern of Korean singers recording

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[182] Park, *Han'guk kayosa*, 213. The articles were released in 1933 between January 7 and 20 under the title "Songstress Yi Aerisu and Him" (*Utahime* Yi Arisu *to Kare*). Aerisu's name was pronounced "Arisu" in Japanese.

[183] Ku, "Kŭndae-gi Si'in ŭi Hyŏnsil kwa Yuhaeng Kayo Ch'angjak ŭi Ŭimi," 219; Lee, "1930-nyŏndae Han'guk Taejung Kayo ŭi Changrŭ Honyong Yangsang," 195; Park, "1930-nyŏndae Han'guk Taejung 1930-nyŏndae Han'guk Taejung Ŭmak e Kwanhan Yŏn'gu," 18.

[184] Better known as *t'ŭrot'ŭ* in contemporary South Korea, the genre has thrived in the popular music field. The great popularity of *t'ŭrot'ŭ* songs, especially in the second half of the twentieth century, became a source of anxiety and discomfort among some South Koreans, especially nationalist scholars, in the process of decolonization.

[185] Yi Hyŏn-kyŏng is a pen name that Yi Ki-se used as a lyricist.

many songs at once during their recording trips to Japan, for which the company's exclusive Japanese songwriters wrote arrangements or conducted the company's in-house orchestra or band, such encounters were rather natural. In any case, Yi became popular enough in Japan that she had the chance to hold a recital at the prestigious Hibiya Public Hall in Tokyo.[186]

Though Saijo Yaso might have been motivated by the song's expression of Korean sensibility to produce a Japanese cover, "Adanasake" must have sounded fully modern to Japanese audiences rather than evoking an exotic or nostalgic image of Korea. The lyrics to "Adanasake" have no apparent connection to Korea, and the music appeared on two additional records, one by the Japan Victor Jazz Band in 1932 and the other by the Keio University Mandolin Club in 1934.[187] Neither of these records would necessarily have been perceived as having special Korean qualities by Japanese listeners, especially considering that both jazz and mandolins were seen as quintessentially modern and Western in Japan by then.

The following episode related with "Adanasake" further shows the characteristics of the music. According to Park Chan-ho, Koga Masao's legendary song "Sake wa Namidaka Tameikika" was accused of copying "Adanasake" in the gossip section of a Japanese magazine, *Shin seinen* (New Youth), when it was released. However, Park dismisses this, saying that Koga's song was released earlier.[188] Thus, the accusation may have been an underhanded attack on Nippon Victor by a rival company. What is intriguing here is the contemporaneity of Koga's and Chŏn's songs. Otherwise, such an article could not have been published in a popular magazine. At the same time, Saijo Yaso found something original, rather than derivative, in "Koyohan

[186] Park, *Han'guk kayosa*, 216–18.

[187] Information regarding both records is available at the National Diet Library Digital Archive by title.

[188] Park, *Han'guk kayosa*, 218.

Chang'an," for which he voluntarily added new lyrics. In other words, "Koyohan Chang'an" was a typical *ryūkōka* / *yuhaengga* song distinguished by a unique quality, which is exactly what makes a popular song a hit.[189]

Nippon Victor, after a few years of struggle, finally gained momentum with the release of a series of hit songs under Yi Ki-se's direction and at last established its *munyebu* in Korea in 1934. It should come as no surprise to learn that that Yi Ki-se became its first *munye-pujang*. Nippon Victor had learned a hard lesson that the expertise of Korean sound professionals was a necessity for producing successful Korean records.

Nippon Columbia and Adapted Japanese Songs

As Koreans began producing their own popular music, the prevalence of Japanese and foreign cover versions declined. However, Korean versions of Japanese hit songs were still produced throughout the colonial period. It is significant that there was not much time lag between releases of an original and its Korean version. Nippon Columbia produced "Chongno Haengjin'gok" (Chongno March, Columbia 40071-A) in January 1930, which was a Korean cover of "Dōtonbori Kōshinkyoku" (Dōtonbori March, 1929). Nippon Columbia most likely chose to produce their version of the song because of Nippon Victor's hit, "Tokyo Kōshinkyoku" (Tokyo March, 1929).

According to Nakayama Chikako, the huge success of "Tokyo Kōshinkyoku" in Japan inspired the production of similar songs, which described modern consumerist life in the form of

[189] I acknowledge that most Korean music must have been appreciated by Japanese as colonial kitsch, as successfully demonstrated in Taylor Atkins's case study of "Arirang," but my study of "Koyohan Chang'an" also reveals that Korean popular music had the potential to be appreciated like other Japanese popular music if it was properly packaged.

jazzy marches with place names in their titles. Interestingly, Nakayama also points out that "Tokyo Kōshinkyoku" emulated the song "Dōtonbori Kōshinkyoku." Though both songs were released as records in 1929, "Dōtonbori Kōshinkyoku" preceded "Tokyo Kōshinkyoku" and was already popular in the Kansai area in 1928 as the theme song for a popular play with the same title.[190] Hence, the lyricist and composer of "Tokyo Kōshinkyoku," Saijō Yaso and Nakayama Shinpei respectively, might have been influenced by the trendy "Dōtonbori Kōshinkyoku," considering that Osaka's Dōtonbori area had emerged as Japan's jazz mecca in the mid-1920s. Likewise, marches representing both Osaka and Tokyo were produced in the late 1920s and early 30s such as "Osaka Kōshinkyoku" (1929) and "Dai Osaka Chikatetsu Kōshinkyoku" (Great Osaka Subway March, 1933) as well as "Asakusa Kōshinkyoku" (1930) and "Kamata Kōshinkyoku" (1929).

Nippon Columbia's *munyebu* must have attempted to make records with musical and thematic elements that drew on popular songs in both Japan and the U.S., similar to Japanese *bungeibu*. The company produced the hit song "Nak'hwayusu"[191] (Fallen Blossoms on Running Water, music and lyrics by Kim Sŏ-jŏng, Columbia 40016-A) just two months after its first Korean release in 1928, showing how quickly it had advanced in the Korean record market in the early electrical recording era.[192] Observing the Korean reception of Japanese march records, Nippon Columbia's *munyebu* quickly jumped on the trend and produced a Korean version titled "Chongno Haengjin'gok." Given Kyŏngsŏng's modern cityscape, the *munyebu* must have concluded that it

[190] Nakayama, "'The Continental Melody' – Soldiers and Japan's Imperial Screen," 102. For more information regarding "Tokyo Kōshinkyoku," see Mitsui, "Introduction: Embracing the West and Creating a Blend," 7.

[191] This song is also known as "Kangnam Tal" following the first word of the song. The digitized original recording is available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZLNm-cXLEtE. (accessed January 18, 2017).

[192] "Nakhwayusu" is still valued as the first hit record of Korean popular music in the electric recording era (Zhang 2006, 343; Park 2004, 31; Yi 1999, 59). It was the theme song for a film with the same title, written and narrated by Kim Yŏng-hwan (1898-1936). He also wrote the song, and Kim Sŏ-jŏng is the pseudonym he used for his work in music.

would be more effective to replace Dōtonbori with Chongno, the Korean downtown area of Kyŏngsŏng. In other words, it may have judged that Kyŏngsŏng's consumer culture was developed enough that changing the setting would attract more interest from Koreans without causing any reservations. Soon, numerous such marches, both Japanese covers and original Korean songs, were produced by various record companies, such as "Sŏul Haengjin'gok" (Victor 49157-A, 1930), "Hollywood Haengjin'gok" (DeerD 임 06-A, 1931; Chieron 29-A, 1932), "Kyŏngsŏng Haengjin'gok" (Columbia 40437-A, 1933), "Chosŏn Haengjin'gok" (Chieron 77-B, 1933), and "Chongno Haengjin'gok" [193] (Victor 49323-B, 1934). Nippon Columbia's quick move to produce Korean marches was not only successful, it also helped initiate an additional trend in Korea. This case further shows how mimicking a successful musical form occurred in both the core and the periphery of the Japanese Empire almost simultaneously, and that Korean urbanites enjoyed Japan-produced marches, the Korean covers of Japanese marches, and original Korean marches almost at the same time.

Nippon Polydor and *Sinminyo*

Nippon Polydor's Korean record business is generally known to have been very successful, though it did not release as many records as Nippon Victor and Nippon Columbia. As seen in Table 3.1, Both Nippon Victor and Nippon Columbia produced Korean records for 13 to 15 years, while Nippon Polydor's Korean record production only lasted about eight years due to its late start in Korea, as discussed in the previous chapter. Thus, even though Nippon Victor and Nippon

[193] A new song with the same title "Chongno Haengjin'gok" (music by Chŏn Su-ring and lyrics by Yi Ha-yun) was released in 1934 by Nippon Victor. I express my appreciation to Zhang Yu-jŏng for informing me of this important point.

Columbia released a relatively small number of records in the 1940s, Nippon Polydor's output of 649 Korean records is still considerable.

Table 3.1

	N. Victor	N. Columbia	N. Polydor	Chieron	Taihei	Okeh
Business Period	1928-1943[194]	1929-1943	1932-1940 (1930-1940)	1931-1936	1932-1943	1933-1943
Estimated Number of Records Released	1005 (2010)	1570 (3140)	649 (1289)	277 (554)	596 (1188)	1297 (2594)

Record release information for the record companies in colonial Korea
(slightly modified from a table created by Ku In-mo, *Yusŏnggi ŭi sidae, yuhaeng siin ŭi t'ansaeng*, 95)

Nippon Polydor must have approached its Korean record production with great care from the beginning since it sought out help from Yi Wŏn-bae, the *munye-pujang* for Nippon Columbia. According to Yi Sŏ-gu, Yi Wŏn-bae contributed to recruiting future stars for Nippon Polydor such as Wang Su-bok (1917-2003), Sŏnu Il-sŏn (1919-1990), and Kim Yong-hwan (1909-1949).[195] Thanks to their remarkable recordings and performances over many years, Nippon Polydor successfully competed with the other major record companies. As a latecomer, it clearly understood the importance of acquiring talented producers and performers and even utilized the talents of a rival company's *munye-pujang.*

Nippon Polydor's choice for its first official *munye-pujang*, Wang P'yŏng, also proved to be a good one. Wang began working for the company in 1933, and the multitalented artist and

[194] No evidence has been found to conclude exactly when Victor's Korean records were first released. According to the editor Bae Yeon-hyung, the first newspaper advertisement by Nippon Victor was published on December 12, 1928 in the Tong'a ilbo. Nonetheless, scholars assume that Victor's first release of Korean records must have been earlier since the release numbers of the first Victor Korean records start from 49000, but the numbers of the advertised records in the Tong'a ilbo start from 49025. Thus, Pae assumes that Victor's first release must have been a few months earlier. For more information, see Han'guk Ŭmban Akaibŭ Yŏn'gudan, *Han'guk yusŏnggi ŭmban*, 81.

[195] Yi, "Yuhaeng Kasu Kŭmsŏk Hoesang," 153.

smart businessman soon proved to be indispensable for Nippon Polydor's Korean record business.[196] More importantly, unlike most other *munye-pujang* whose tenures only lasted a couple of years, Wang remained with Nippon Polydor for most of his career, working longer for a single company than any other *munye-pujang.*[197] Wang must have created a stable environment for Nippon Polydor's performers. The aforementioned singers, despite their great popularity, all maintained exclusive contracts with the company for relatively long periods, which was uncommon due to the fierce recruitment competition among the record companies. Therefore, it is safe to say that Nippon Polydor's *munyebu* under Wang P'yŏng's direction was a preferential space for its exclusive performers, with which the company could effectively compete in the Korean record market of the 1930s.

Nippon Polydor's Korean records were most successful in two genres, *sinminyo* and modern dramas, and Wang greatly contributed to the success of the latter.[198] The fact that he was the lyricist for "Hwangsŏng ŭi chŏk," the first hit *yuhaengga* in Korean recording history, is enough to demonstrate his talent as a lyricist. Before Wang's sudden death in 1940, he had written 134 lyrics in various genres.[199] However, since most *munye-pujang* were successful lyricists, this fact alone does not make him distinctive. What made him one of a kind was that he was also a talented playwright and actor, contributing over sixty works in narrative genres such as plays and film narrations. These narrative records were so successful that they became representative

[196] According to Lee Dong-sun, both Wang P'yŏng and Yi Kyŏng-sŏl worked as *munye-bujang*. Yi was Wang's classmate at *Chosŏn Paeu Hakkyo* (Chosŏn Acting School) and was famous as an actress and singer. See Lee, "1930-yŏndae Singminji Taejung Munhwa Undong ŭi Sŏngkyŏk kwa Panghyang," 404.

[197] Park, *Han'guk kayosa*, 26.

[198] Lee, "1930-yŏndae Singminji Taejung Munhwa Undong ŭi Sŏngkyŏk kwa Panghyang," 405.

[199] Lee, 409.

products for Nippon Polydor. An example is his play "Hanggu ŭi Ilya" (One Night in the Harbor, Polydor 19062), released in 1933, in which Wang performed with the famous actress and singer, Chŏn Ok (1911-1969). This record was popular enough that a sequel was released with the same title (Polydor 19209) in 1935. Nippon Polydor's *munyebu* took the step of including a whole-page advertisement featuring the main actress in its monthly catalog, not just placing it among other advertisements, as seen on the left in Figure 3.4. In 1936, Nippon Polydor released the conclusion to the series, titled "Nunmul ŭi Ch'uŏk (Tearful Memories, Polydor 19283). This time, the *munyebu* put the three records together in another single-page advertisement to persuade buyers to purchase all three records as a set. In this way, Nippon Polydor attained success in producing narrative genres with careful management from its *munyebu*.

Figure 3.4

Advertisements for "Hanggu ŭi Ilya" in monthly catalogs for Nippon Polydo
Sep. 1933 (p13) Aug. 1935 (p5) July 1936 (p10)
(courtesy of Korea Record Archive)

Nippon Polydor was even more famous for its successful production of songs in the *sinminyo* genre. In fact, the company became known as "the kingdom of *minyo*" (*minyo*

wangguk).[200] As mentioned in a group article by the *munye-pujang* from each record company, titled "What Songs will be Popular this Year?" (Sinch'un e'nŭn Ŏttŭn Norae ga Yuhaenghalkka), *sinminyo* was the most popular category of music in 1935, and they all believed that its popularity would continue to be strong in 1936.[201] In other words, all the record companies in Korea attempted to produce hit *sinminyo* songs, but there were two main reasons why Nippon Polydor earned the title of "the kingdom of *minyo*." First, it was able to produce a great number of popular *sinminyo* records because many representative *sinminyo* songwriters of the time, such as Yi Myŏn-sang (1908-1989),[202] Hyŏng Sŏk-ki (1911-1994),[203] and Kim Yong-hwan (1909-1949),[204] worked for the company. In particular, Yi is known to have written the highest number of *sinminyo* songs in colonial Korea.[205] Second, Nippon Polydor established a good precedent in promoting *kisaeng* to be successful "*kisaeng* singers" (*kisaeng kasu* hereafter), which I will discuss in depth in the next chapter. Formally trained in traditional as well as Western-style music at *kisaeng* schools in the 1930s, but choosing to perform highly hybridized popular music, *kisaeng kasu* proved themselves to be suitable to perform *sinminyo*. Nippon Polydor's exclusive *kisaeng*

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[200] Park, *Han'guk kayosa*, 269.

[201] "Sinch'un enŭn Ŏttŭn Norae ga Yuhaenghalkka," 123–28.

[202] Yi Myŏn-sang later became famous in North Korea. He was the president of Pyŏngyang Music University and was appointed as a "People's Artist," the highest honor for artists in the North.

[203] Hyŏng Sŏk-ki studied piano and composition at Tōyō Music School (the predecessor of the Tokyo College of Music) and became famous for composing musicals incorporating many traditional music elements. For more information see, Encyclopedia of Korean Culture at http://encykorea.aks.ac.kr/Contents/Item/E0063545, accessed on June 16, 2018.

[204] Kim Yong-hwan did not receive a formal music education but learned music at church while growing up. With his experience as an actor and singer, he later composed many songs and musicals. For more information see, Encyclopedia of Korean Culture at http://encykorea.aks.ac.kr/Contents/SearchNavi?keyword=%EA%B9%80%EC%9A%A9%ED%99%98&ridx=0&tot=4, accessed on June 16, 2018.

[205] Yoo, "Singminji Taejung Kayo ŭi Chapchonghwa," 21.

kasu, especially Sŏnu Ilsŏn (1919-1990), Wang Su-bok (1917-2003), and Yi Hwa-ja (1918?-1950?)[206] were top stars of the time and remained committed to Nippon Polydor for many years. Thanks to these singers' voices as well as their songwriters' ability to create *sinminyo* songs that matched their vocal qualities and techniques, Nippon Polydor could maintain its high reputation in the genre.

Okeh Records and Stage Performances

Okeh Records, the Korean label of Teichiku Records, had splendid success in the recording industry in colonial Korea. In fact, Okeh released the second highest number of SP records following Nippon Columbia. It also released the most popular music records during the colonial period, which numbered 1,057. Nippon Columbia, which produced the second highest amount of popular music records, only released 917.[207] Scholars are not hesitant to give credit for Okeh's success to Yi Ch'ŏl (1903~1944), the company's general manager. Unlike foreign mangers who had very limited involvement in Korean record production, Yi significantly influenced the *munyebu* along with his brother-in-law, Kim Sŏng-hŭm (1908-1986). Entering the Korean record market, which was largely controlled by Nippon Columbia, Nippon Victor, and Nippon Polydor by 1933, Okeh's headquarters in Japan must have needed a figure like him who could take an innovative and proactive approach to its business in Korea. Yi proved himself by meeting his company's expectations from the start.

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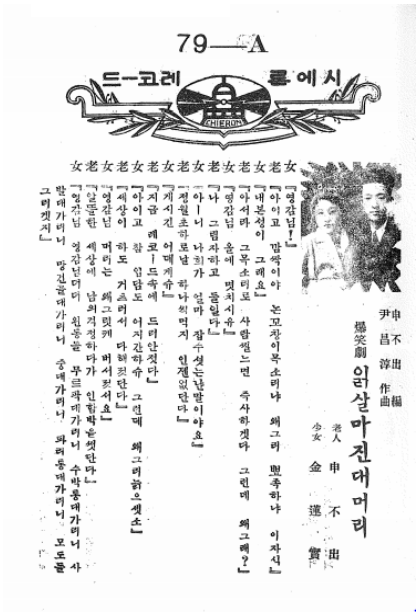
[206] In their article on Yongdong Kwŏnbŏn, the representative *kisaeng* guild in Inch'ŏn, Yi Sŭng-yŏn and Song Chi-yŏng contend that Yi Hwa-ja was a *kisaeng* who belonged to the guild based on statements by long-term Inch'ŏn residents who still remembered her inYi and Song, "Ilche Sidae Inch'ŏn Kwŏnbŏn e Taehan Yŏnggu," 65.Kwŏnbŏn later became Inch'ŏn Kwŏnbŏn. Yi Hwa-ja moved to Okeh Records in 1938.

[207] Zhang, *Oppa nŭn p'unggakchaengi ya: taejung kayo ro pon kŭndae ŭl p'unggyŏng*, 356.

Figure 3.5

"Taemŏri" (Okeh 1518-A)
(courtesy of Korea Record Archive)

Figure 3.6



"Iksalmajin Taemŏri" (Chieron 79-A)
(source: *Yusŏnggi ŭmban kasajip*, 927)

Under Yi's direction, Okeh's strategy for entering the Korean market was to sell low-priced records with wide appeal, especially popular music and narrative records. It is well-known that Okeh sold its regular records for one yen, .50 yen cheaper than the price of those by the three major companies in Korea. Bae Yeon-hyung reveals that Okeh even sold a *nansensŭ* (nonsense) record by Sin Pul-ch'ul, "Taemŏri" (A Bald Man), for just .50 yen as seen in Figure 3.5 where the number is stamped in reddish ink.[208] As one of the most famous comedians and actors in Korea at the time, Sin could release records with largely the same content from both Chieron and Okeh with slightly different titles, without having to make an exclusive contract with either company. Chieron's version was advertised earlier on January 19th, which was followed by Okeh on February 1st in the *Tong'a ilbo*. Since the actresses who performed on each record were

[208] Bae, "Ilche Sidae ŭi Okeh Ŭmban Mongnok," 210. *Nŏnsense* was the name for a narrative genre in which two actors engaged in farcical and satirical arguments. For more information regarding *nŏsense* records, see Ch'oe and Kim, "1930-nyŏndae Yusŏnggi Ŭmban e Suroktoen Mandam, Nansensŭ, Sŭch'ech'i Yŏn'gu," 72–75.

different, the records were not technically identical. However, the situation was not so favorable to Okeh. The fact that ".50 yen" was stamped on the content sheet further shows that the company had not initially planned on selling them for such a low price. Under Yi's direction, Okeh not only kept its general prices low to be competitive but was also flexible enough to adjust them when necessary.

There is a possibility that Yi Ch'ŏl might have had a positive influence in making trendy popular music records since he was a musician himself, having been a saxophone player in the Yŏnhŭi College band (currently Yonsei University) as well as a silent film accompanist before becoming Okeh's general manager. Yi even worked for C.M.C., Okeh's in-house band, in the company's initial period. Considering that most *munye-pujang* were not musicians during the colonial period except for Kim Chun-yŏng (1907-1961)[209] and Yi Myŏn-sang, who only became *munye-pujang* near the end of the 1930s, Yi Ch'ŏl's musical discernment and professional connections must have contributed to Okeh's success.

Another critical element for its success was that Okeh used any means it found necessary to acquire top-notch musicians. In fact, the *munyebu* did not show any inhibitions even in recruiting those who were already affiliated with other record companies. According to a report based on the diaries, photos, and other possessions of the late Hyŏn Kyŏng-sŏp, a long-time trumpeter with Okeh, many of Okeh's most famous artists, including Nam In-su, Yi Hwa-ja, Yi Nan-yŏng, Kim Chŏng-gu, Ko Pok-su, and Pak Hyang-rim, were recruited in this way.[210] The singer Paek Nyŏn-sŏl (1914-1980) was especially well-known for the great amount of money

[209] Kim Chun-yŏng studied music in Musashino Music School in Tokyo and became a famous composer and arranger during the colonial period.

[210] Lee, Zhang, and O, *T'ŭrŏmp'et yŏnjuja Hyŏn Kyŏng-sŏp*, 83.

involved in his recruitment. Paek's popularity was behind the rapid growth of Taep'yŏng (J: Taihei) Records, which reached the point of challenging Okeh's position in the early 1940s. Okeh deterred Taep'yŏng by recruiting Paek with a payment of 5,000 yen for an exclusive contract and a promised salary of 350 yen. In addition, because of Paek's breach of contract with Taep'yŏng, Okeh had to pay the Record Production Association a fine of 500 yen and agree to not release records by Paek for six months.[211] How large a sum of money Okeh invested in Paek can be understood by noting a detail in Yi T'ae-jun's I-novel "A Story of Rabbits" (*T'okki iyagi*) published in 1941.[212] In this story, the main character earns a salary of only 100 yen as a reporter but manages to enjoy a cultured life with his wife before losing his job when his newspaper shuts down. That is, for his exceptional singing talent, Paek received a lump sum payment equivalent to the amount that a reporter would have earned working at a newspaper for a little over four years and still expected to receive three and a half times more per month. Okeh's willingness to spend so much money on Paek shows that it was committed to using every possible means to acquire the artists it wanted, especially when it meant seriously wounding a rival company.

Even without Okeh's aggressive recruitment efforts, multitalented singers and musicians must have been attracted to Okeh since it not only produced the highest number of popular music records, but had also operated a recording studio in Kyŏngsŏng with a visiting engineer from Japan since 1936.[213] When recordings were made in Japan, arrangements and accompaniments

[211] Park, *Han'guk kayosa*, 469.

[212] The I-novel is a literary genre in Japan influenced by Naturalism. It is a kind of confessional story based on the author's life.

[213] Other record companies also ran recording studios, but they did not seem to be fully equipped like Okeh's and were not in continuous operation either. Yamauchi indicates the year each company began recording in Korea: Nippon Victor in 1937, Nippon Polydor in 1932, Chieron between 1935 and 1936, and Okeh between 1937 and 1938. For more information, see Yamauchi, "Ilche Sigi Han'guk Nogŭm Munhwa ŭi Yŏksa Minjokchi," 125–49.

were mostly carried out by Japanese, so producing and recording records locally should have been beneficial for Korean recording artists. That is, for Okeh's musicians who could write, arrange, and perform music, such as Kim Hae-song, Son Mok-in, and Pak Si-ch'un, recording music in Kyŏngsŏng meant that they could control the entire process from writing to recording their own works. In addition, they could have chances to make additional income. In an interview with four senior musicians in 1963, Pak Si-ch'un recalled his time at Okeh as a "golden age" (*hwanggŭm sidae*), explaining that, besides his substantial salary, he was paid for his compositions as well as performances. Paek Nyŏn-sŏl added that the company had five to six recording sessions per year and Pak Si-Ch'un earned enough to buy a decent house each time.[214] Since it produced large numbers of records and recorded them locally, the *munyebu* could more easily recruit multitalented and ambitious artists.

Within a few years of its establishment, Okeh had already proven itself to be a strong competitor in the Korean record market. It then attempted to raise its reputation further by producing respectable classical, traditional and educational records like the three major companies. As part of this effort, it recruited the soprano Chŏng Hun-mo (1909-1978), a Tokyo Imperial Music School graduate. Given that a reporter from the popular magazine *Samch'ŏlli* was invited to cover her 1935 recording session, it is clear that Okeh's *munyebu* was in the process of promoting Chŏng even at the recording stage. This effort was not in vain, since the magazine article provided detailed information about how a Japanese recording engineer recorded her rendition of "Ave Maria" in the studio and praised her voice as a "precious thing that all Koreans

[214] Pan, *Na ŭi sam, na ŭi norae*, 119. The interview was conducted by Ch'oe Chae-bok, a reporter with the *Kukche sinbo*, with four famous musicians from the colonial period, Paek Nyŏn-sŏl, Pak Si-Ch'un, Pan Ya-wŏl, and Na Hwa-rang on June 13, 1963. The interview makes up a chapter in his biography.

(*uri modu*) should be proud of." [215] Chŏng's records were released as part of its premium-priced series, which had a distinctive red label. In addition to Chŏng, the tenor Yi In-sŏn (1906-1960) and the violinist An Pyŏng-so (1908-1979), who had been trained in Italy and Germany respectively, were also featured on these red-label records along with a few top-tier court musicians.[216]

Okeh's *munyebu* produced three sets of *ch'anggŭk* (*p'ansori* modified into a kind of multi-actor opera) records. The first set was released in 1937 and contained *Ch'unhyang-chŏn* (The Tale of Ch'unhyang, 20 records). It featured top *p'ansori* performers and musicians of the time such as Chŏng Chŏng-yŏl (1876-1938), Yim Pang-ul (1904-1961), Yihwa Chung-sŏn (1898-1943), and Kim So-hŭi (1917-1996).[217] Bae Yeon-hyung states that these records helped develop the *ch'anggŭk* genre by having an individual role for each actor, using string music accompaniment and sound effects and adding entertaining theatrical elements.[218] The *munyebu* went on to produce *Hŭngbo-chŏn* (The Tale of Hŭngbo, 12 records) in 1941 and *Simch'ŏng-chŏn* (The Tale of Simch'ŏng, 16 records) in 1942. Okeh therefore became the only company to make three *ch'anggŭk* series and the only one that produced *ch'anggŭk* records in the 1940s.[219] Okeh even produced twelve Korean Language Education Records (Chosŏnŏ Kyoyuk Recodŭ) in 1935 with official permission from the GGK, which no other record company attempted.[220] Making

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[215] "Chŏng Hun-mo Yŏsa ŭi Recodŭ Ch'wi'ip Kwangkyŏng – Okeh Ch'wi'ip-sil esŏ.," 120.

[216] Between 1934 and 1936, about twenty records in Okeh's "Red Seal" series were released priced at 1.50 yen. More specific information is available in *Han'guk yusŏnggi ŭmban ch'ongmongnok,* 868-72.

[217] Bae, "Okeh-p'an Ch'unhy'ang-chŏn Chŏnjip Yonggu," 306.

[218] Bae, 302.

[219] Bae, "Ch'anggŭk Yusŏnggi Ŭmban kwa Ŭmakchŏk Byŏnhwa Yangsang," 377, 392–98. The following are the numbers and years of the *ch'anggŭk* record series released during the colonial period: Nitchiku (1, 1926); Chieron (1, 1934); Polydor (2, 1935); Victor (1, 1937).

[220] Related information is available at the Korea Creative Content Agency (KOCCA) website:

these records was a bold move for the company, considering the high cost and risk involved in such a large-scale production. How much it raised its reputation through such efforts is not apparent, but what is clear is that Okeh's record business must have been successful enough to finance such ambitious projects.

Record production became constrained in the late 1930s as total mobilization began across the Japanese Empire, so record companies in Korea turned to theater performances to maintain their revenue as well as recognition. Yoo Sun-Young contends that this trend was also affected by changes in the Korean entertainment market as moviegoers became more interested in jazz-based revue performances. The government restricted the importation and showing of foreign films while mandating the screening of state-promoted ones (*kukch'aek yŏnghwa*), but Koreans under Japanese rule generally preferred foreign, especially Hollywood films to Korean productions. They were even less interested in Japanese films. Thus, the vacuum of foreign films was filled in with "attractions" and revue shows.[221]

This situation must have been advantageous for Okeh Records. According to Park Ch'an-ho, Okeh was the first to organize an in-house orchestra with which it promoted its performers and records on stage. This inspired the other record companies to start organizing their own shows.[222] That is, Okeh had for a long time been building its reputation for live performances. In

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https://www.culturecontent.com/content/contentView.do?search_div=CP_THE&search_div_id=CP_THE008&cp_code=cp0903&index_id=cp09030068&content_id=cp090300680001&print=Y, accessed March 4, 2018.

[221] Yoo, "Hwangsaek Singminji ŭi Yŏnghwa Kwallam kwa Sobi ŭi Chŏngch'i," 462–74.

[222] Park, *Han'guk kayosa*, 543. Interestingly, the entry for the C.M.C. Band on the website of the Korea Creative Content Agency reveals that both Yi Ch'ŏl and Kim Sŏng-hŭm played the saxophone and the double base respectively in 1934. The band acquired many more members in 1935 but Yi and Kim's names no longer appeared. The entry is available at https://www.culturecontent.com/content/contentView.do?search_div=CP_THE&search_div_id=CP_THE006&cp_code=cp0903&index_id=cp09030059&content_id=cp090300590001&search_left_menu=2, accessed July 15, 2017.

1939, after receiving funding from Yoshimoto Kōgyō, one of Japan's major show promoters, Okeh changed the title of the Okeh Grand Show to Chosŏn Akkŭktan, and focused on touring across the empire, which I will discuss in detail in the Epilogue. The Okeh *munyebu*, working alongside Chosŏn Akkŭktan, produced programs incorporating a variety of music genres, dances, comedy skits and musical dramas, and the musicians, dancers, and comedians in Chosŏn Akkŭktan were able to perform these programs at a high enough standard to satisfy both Korean and foreign audiences. Whether their appreciation of the troupe's performances was based on imperial sentimentality for an "unspoiled" Korea or an appetite for something foreign or modern, the *munyebu* understood how to appeal to multiethnic audiences by modifying the troupe's repertoire as well as switching performance languages appropriately. Thus, Chosŏn Akkŭktan continued to tour all over East Asia including Korea, Japan, China, and Manchuria as the most representative such troupe of colonial Chosŏn until Yi Ch'ŏl's death in 1944.[223]

Concluding Remarks

The role of *munyebu* in the recording industry was significant such that the success or failure of a record business in Korea rested on its *munyebu's* performance. That is precisely the reason why *munyebu* could enjoy a considerable degree of autonomy. Korean elites initially became involved in the recording industry out of nationalist motives to help modernize Korean culture, but soon reconfigured themselves as modern profit-seeking sound professionals. This was because only those who could consistently contribute to producing successful records were recognized and rewarded in the industry. In other words, whatever lofty convictions they may

[223] Kim, "Chosŏn ŭl Yŏnch'ulhada: Chosŏn Akkŭkdan ŭi Ilbon Chinch'ul Kongyŏn kwa Kungminhwa ŭi (Pul)hyŏphwaŭm (1933-1944)," 181–98.

have had, these professionals could not have continued to work in recording industry *munyebu* unless they were able to produce highly profitable records. In a roundtable discussion for the magazine *Chogwang* in March 1939, the reporter Kim Rae-sŏng asked, "In the end, don't you think there needs to be eroticism for a song to be successful?" Wang P'yŏng's answer was, "That's right. The erotic (*erosŭ*) is an important element in popular music." Wang also lamented that though Nippon Polydor tried to make a small number of wholesome songs, statistically the company did not make any profit from them. [224] The *munye-pujang*'s confession reflects the core dilemma of Korean sound professionals in the colonial recording industry. That is, they were certainly cultural producers with the desire to elevate Korean sound culture for Korean people. At the same time, they were also employees of record companies which wanted to succeed in the increasingly competitive Korean record market.

The fact that *munyebu* were autonomous spaces does not necessarily mean they were nationalistic spaces against imperial power or spaces free from market logic. They were spaces where transcultural music and culture were experimented with, reconfigured, and created. While Japanese musicians were producing popular music appropriating both vernacular and foreign musical elements, Korean sound professionals were engaging in a similar process in the transnational recording industry and delivered globalized local music and narratives for audiences in the Korean peninsula and beyond. Record-making in Japan and Korea was therefore almost contemporaneous rather than being belated in Korea as is often assumed.

[224] "Recodŭgye ŭi Naemak ŭl Tŭnnŭn Chwadamhoe," 320.

Chapter Four

Kisaeng as Modern Professionals in the Music Industry

It is true that most Koreans working in *muyebu* were elites, but the recording industry was also a transsocial space where many individuals, especially performers, from diverse backgrounds participated in making modern sound products. They were valuable assets for the recording industry due to their performing talent and star quality. Among female singers, these included classical musicians such as the sopranos Yun Sim-dŏk (1987-1926)[225] and Chŏng Hun-mo. Though they were usually graduates of elite music schools and representative "new women" of the era, the number of classical music recording artists was small due to the general preference for foreign-produced classical music records. Another group were those who recorded songs and dramas for children. They usually began their training at a kind of preschool teachers' institute called *poyuk hakkyo* and then went on to make records. Yi Chŏng-suk (1910?-?)[226] was representative of these singers. Yi, who recorded over fifty children's songs during the colonial period, graduated from Chung'ang Poyuk Hakkyo and received special voice lessons from Hong Nan-p'a, one of the most influential classical musicians of the time. She was also a member of the Dahlia Association (K: *Da'aliahoe*), which was the first children's song choir founded in colonial Korea.[227] As educated modern women, students and graduates of *poyuk hakkyo* shared the same

[225] Yun Sim-dŏk entered Tokyo Music School with a scholarship from the Government-General and debuted as Korea's first professional soprano. On the way back from her recording trip to Osaka in 1926, she allegedly committed double suicide with her lover, Kim U-jin, which became a huge scandal. Among her recorded songs, "Sa ŭi Ch'anmi" (Homage to Death) became a major hit. According to Park Ch'an-ho, the song's popularity caused her records to become more widely circulated. Park, *Han'guk kayosa*, 195.

[226] Yi Chŏng-suk's brother was a famous director and screenwriter of the colonial era, Yi Ku-yŏng (1901-1973). The theme song from the film *Nak'wayusu* (Fallen Blossoms on Running Water), directed by her brother, was sung by Yi Chŏng-suk. It was a huge hit. Kang et al., *Singminji sidae taejung yesurin sajŏn*, 230.

[227] Lee, "Nuga 1930nyŏndae Ch'oego ŭi Tongyo Kasuyŏnna?" This article is part of series of essays by Lee Dong-

convictions with male activists in the children's song movement, which sought to provide an enriched music culture for Korean children. However, they mostly left the recording industry once they married, even Yi Chŏng-suk. In contrast, most *kisaeng*, once they were established in the recording industry, tended to continue their careers as singers. Actresses performing in modern theater were another significant group who secured positions for themselves in popular music. The success of these women, with broadly different backgrounds and educations, shows how the recording industry provided conditions under which diverse individuals could compete, negotiate, and cooperate to achieve their goals and interests.

In this chapter, I make a case study of *kisaeng* recording artists and how they ascended to become core performers in the recording industry. What makes this particularly interesting is that it occurred while *kisaeng*'s general reputation as artists was declining and the stigma of their traditional low-class status and association with sex work persisted in Korean society. The two categories of *kisaeng* performers that I examine are *yŏryu myŏngch'ang* (virtuosas or female master performers) who excelled at Korean traditional music and *kisaeng kasu* (*kisaeng* singers), who specialized in modern popular music. Despite their shared social and cultural roots, these *kisaeng* performers have rarely been examined together in recent scholarship, which has tended to adhere to the disciplinary distinction between traditional and modern popular music. By examining the activities of *yŏryu myŏngch'ang* and *kisaeng kasu* in the same frame, I explain how traditional Korean music became available to mass audiences rather than being served to specific status groups, while modern popular music expanded its influence in the capitalist cultural market in colonial Korea. Thus, I show the ways in which *kisaeng* transformed themselves into modern sound professionals. It should be noted that their success was not characteristic of all *kisaeng* who

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sun about popular music on *Chosunpub*, which is a website with six magazines from the publisher of the *Chosŏn ilbo*.

lived through the harsh capitalistic competition in the sex and entertainment industries in colonial Korea, since the polarization of wealth and fame among *kisaeng* grew throughout the colonial period. Finally, I demonstrate how *yŏryu myŏngch'ang* and *kisaeng kasu* were able to significantly raise their wealth and status based on their performing skills and popularity.

Changes to the *Kisaeng* System

The *kisaeng* system is thought to have existed over ten centuries. Whether one accepts this claim or not, no one would deny that the system naturally experienced many changes in concert with economic, political, and cultural transitions throughout its existence. However, it was at the turn of the 20th century that a fundamental restructuring of the *kisaeng* system occurred. As a result of the Gabo Reform of 1894, the premodern hierarchical system was abolished. Liberated from their hereditary lower-class status, *kisaeng* were freed of their mandate to provide sexual and entertainment services as a duty to the state. Thus, *kisaeng* affiliated with the royal court and local government offices, no longer being slaves, were gradually released from their positions. This also meant that they had to give up certain privileges as well as other protections formerly provided by the state. Their modern transition in legal status was completed in 1908 as the authority to register and monitor *kisaeng* was transferred from the Royal Music Bureau to the colonial police as required by the "*Kisaeng* Regulatory Act" (*Kisaeng Tansokryŏng*).[228] Accordingly, *kisaeng* were left on their own to cope with changing economic and social circumstances and many did so by

[228] Both the "*Kisaeng* Regulatory Act" and "*Ch'anggi* Regulatory Act" were announced by the Cabinet Legislation Bureau in the official gazette on September 9, 1908. The contents of both acts are available at Son, Pak, and Yu, *Kŭndae kisaeng ŭi munhwa wa yesul: charyo p'yŏn 2*, 41–42, as well as the website of the National Archives of Korea (Catalog Number: CJA0002399 – 0027129577) at http://theme.archives.go.kr/next/government/viewGovernmentArchivesEvent.do?id=0001563939&docid=0027129577.

transforming themselves into modern professional performers in the entertainment and culture industries.

To acquire artistic competence as well as make a living as professional performers, *kisaeng* needed a new institution to organize, train, and represent them. Thus, *kisaeng* guilds (K: *kisaeng chohap*), following the model of Japanese geisha guilds, were organized in major cities in Korea. In 1917 these were renamed *kwŏnbŏn*, sharing the same Chinese characters with their Japanese counterparts, *kenban*. According to Suh Ji-young, *kisaeng* guilds were management organizations providing *kisaeng* working in the entertainment industry with administrative help and protection. They had the additional function of educating *kisaeng*-trainees by running affiliated *kisaeng* schools.[229] Once they graduated from these schools, the trainees could become professional *kisaeng*. Before starting their careers, it was necessary for them to first obtain a performance license (K: *kiyechŭng*) from the colonial government. Then they began working primarily at first-grade restaurants called *kapchong yorichip*, designated as such by the colonial government. These restaurants were equipped with banquet halls with stages as well as private rooms with performance spaces, as seen in Figure 4.2. The photograph shows *kisaeng* performing on a stage in the deluxe Room Number One at Myŏngwŏlgwan, one of the most famous restaurants in colonial Korea.[230] In this way, *kisaeng* became registered taxpaying entertainers in colonial Korea.

[229] Suh, "Sangsil kwa Pujae ŭi Sikonggan: 1930-nyŏndae Yorijŏm kwa Kisaeng," 170.

[230] T'aehwakwan was established in 1918 as a branch of Myŏngwŏlgwan. It became famous after the ceremony for the Declaration of Independence of 1919 was held there. Myŏngwŏlgwan even had a branch in Tokyo. For more information regarding Myŏngwŏlgwan, see Sin, *Kisaeng, Chosŏn ŭl sarojapta: Ilje kangjŏmgi yŏnyein i toen kisaeng iyagi*, 13–51.

Figure 4.1

Pyŏngyang *Kisaeng* School music lesson

Figure 4.2

***Kisaeng* performance at Myŏngwŏlgwan**

(courtesy of National Folk Museum of Korea)

Meanwhile, the premodern hierarchy within the *kisaeng* system was also disrupted by the increasing stature of *samp'ae*, which were third-level or para-*kisaeng*. In the Chosŏn era, *kisaeng* performed for royalty and aristocrats known as *yangban*, while the main clientele for *samp'ae* were local wealthy commoners, *chung'in* (lit. "middle people"), or merchants, whose economic power had increased from the late Chosŏn period. They had their own vocal repertoire but did not perform dances, unlike regular *kisaeng*. Interestingly, the colonial police treated *kisaeng* as professional performers, but they attempted to control *samp'ae* and regular prostitutes by placing both in the same category of *ch'anggi* based on the "*Ch'anggi* Regulatory Act" (*Ch'anggi Tansokryŏng*) of 1908.[231]

Under these circumstances, it is not surprising that *samp'ae* were discontented with their designation as *ch'anggi* along with prostitutes called *galbo*. According to Kwon Do-hee, an authoritative scholar of the social history of Korean traditional music, *samp'ae* centered in the

[231] The "*Kisaeng* Regulatory Act" was announced together with the "*Ch'anggi* Regulatory Act" (*Ch'anggi Tansokryŏng*), which was intended to regulate prostitution. Nonetheless, the content of both acts was largely the same.

Sikok area in Kyŏngsŏng responded by organizing a guild in 1908 and training themselves in music and dance from the repertoire of *kisaeng* in addition to their own. They also built up their popularity and reputation on stage. Eventually, in 1914 these *samp'ae* were allowed to call their guild *Sinch'ang Kisaeng Chohap* rather than a *ch'anggi* guild, though it was designated as second-class (K: *ŭljong*). Even so, their performing abilities must have been highly recognized, since the guild was hired to perform along with two recognized *kisaeng* guilds as well as Japanese geishas based in Korea at the Chosŏn Industrial Exhibition (Chosŏn Mulsan Kongjinhoe) of 1915, organized by GGK. This is significant since traditionally, *kisaeng* who belonged to the royal palaces and local governments were in general subjects to be mobilized for national events, which were obligatory for them but also demonstrated their artistic status. *Samp'ae* were excluded from such occasions. Meanwhile, the *samp'ae* guild persistently demanded that the colonial government revise their designation. In 1916, it was finally recognized as a first-class *kisaeng* guild.[232] Though they began as a *ch'anggi* guild in 1908, *samp'ae* in the Sigok area were finally able to secure their status as high-level performers like *kisaeng* or simply as *kisaeng*. Likewise, in early colonial Korea the concept of *kisaeng* became increasingly inclusive of female performers from various backgrounds as long as they were highly trained.

This phenomenon reflects the increased popularity of *samp'ae* performers in the early 20th century, and *kisaeng* in no time adapted to the preferences of modern Korean audiences by learning the *samp'ae* repertoire, which was mainly composed of *chapka* (lit. miscellaneous songs). *Kisaeng* adopted *chapka* in the same way they had done with *pansori*, the longform musical storytelling genre. Previously restricted to men, *kisaeng* began performing *p'ansori* once its popularity had spread among aristocrats in late Chosŏn. How responsive *kisaeng* were to the music market is

[232] Kwon, "20-segi Kisaeng ŭi Kamu wa Chojik," 15–20; Kwon, "20-segi Kwanggi wa Samp'ae," 101–8. "*Kisaeng* doen Shinch'ang Chohap."; *Maeil sinbo,* May 16, 1916.

revealed in a newspaper report recording that ten *kisaeng* entertained a great number of people by singing *chapka* at the 1907 Seoul Exhibition[233] (K: *Kyŏngsŏng Pangnamhoe*) organized by the Japanese Resident-General of Korea.[234] That *chapka* was the only music genre mentioned in this short news article attests to its popularity among the Korean masses, which must be the precise reason that *kisaeng* performed it. As *kisaeng* and *samp'ae* shared repertoires as well as audiences in colonial Korea, the boundaries between them became substantially blurred.

Kisaeng's Modern Transformation and Diversified Performing Spaces

The modern transformation of *kisaeng* was possible through their transregional, transclass, transsocial, and transcultural performing practices. Kwon Do-hee rightly points out that if premodern *kisaeng* monopolized specific music and dance forms, modern *kisaeng* responded flexibly to social changes by incorporating various music and dance repertoires.[235] *Kisaeng*'s transclass and transregional approaches toward music genres became conspicuous throughout the colonial period. *Kisaeng* performed their original repertoire, including *sijo* and *kasa* songs,[236] which were enjoyed by aristocrats, as well as popular *p'ansori* works which up to that time had been dominated by male performers. They also incorporated *chapka* and other folk songs for mass audiences. They further diversified their repertoire by adopting regional songs, which became

[233] I have used "Seoul Exhibition" instead of "Kyŏngsŏng Exposition" based on the information from a stamp used on postcards for the exhibition. Photos are available at http://blog.daum.net/_blog/BlogTypeView.do?blogid=0PKKE&articleno=7749&categoryId=3&regdt=20151013082309.

[234] *Taehan maeil sinbo*, September 7, 1907.

[235] Kwon, "20-segi Kisaeng ŭi Kamu wa Chojik," 25.

[236] According to *Encyclopedia Britannica*, *sijo* is the longest-enduring and most popular form of Korean poetry, which the Confucian upper class and *kisaeng* enjoyed. *Kasa* also developed about the same time, influenced by Chinese *tz'u* (lyric poetry). It tends to be much longer than *sijo* and is usually written in balanced couplets. https://www.britannica.com/art/Korean-literature#ref1050780, accessed March 14, 2018.

increasingly available because of their own settlement in cities as well as propagation through mass media. The same process occurred with *kisaeng*'s dance repertoire, which added newly choreographed pieces based on Korean traditional styles and even Westernized modern dance to their collection of traditional court dances. In fact, they were the first ones to learn and perform Western dance in colonial Korea.[237] Moreover, *kisaeng* took part in productions of the newly constructed operatic genre *ch'anggŭk*, in which a group of performers played the different roles in a *p'ansori* narrative. *Ch'anggŭk* itself was a transcultural genre invented by incorporating Japanese, Chinese, and American theatrical and other cultural influences into the *p'ansori* tradition.[238] It is true that the first *ch'anggŭk* performances included only men, but *kisaeng* soon carved out positions for themselves by playing female characters.[239] In this way, rather than just playing the role of carriers of Chosŏn culture, *kisaeng* challenged social norms and inspired cultural changes through their professional performances.

The main performing space for *kisaeng* was in first-grade restaurants, but distinguished *kisaeng* performers found various other venues in which to perform. Modern theaters emerged as one of the most popular entertainment spaces in colonial Korea, and *kisaeng* performed there for city residents who could afford to attend rather than exclusively for aristocrats and other dignitaries who retained their premodern status. After the establishment of Hyŏmnyulsa in 1902 as the first modern indoor theater in Kyŏngsŏng, the opening of other private theaters, such as Yŏnhŭngsa, Kwangmudae, Tansŏngsa, Wŏngaksa,[240] and Chang'ansa, soon followed.

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[237] Kang and O, "Kŭndae Sŏgusik Kŭkjjang Sŏllip e Ttarŭn Kisaeng Kongyŏn ŭi Pyŏnmo Yangsang," 16–19.

[238] Killick, "Korean Ch'angguk Opera," 54–55. Kim, "Ch'och'anggi Ch'anggŭk Kongyŏn Yangsang ŭi Chaekoch'al," 39–47.

[239] Kim, "Ch'och'anggi Ch'anggŭk Kongyŏn Yangsang ŭi Chaekoch'al," 45.

[240] In most cases, the name of a building and the name of the theater troupe that performed there were used interchangeably in colonial Korea. After Hyŏmnyulsa was closed, Wŏngaksa in 1908 occupied the same building,

Performing on theater stages turned out to be advantageous for *kisaeng* due to their performance skills in dance and music, and of course their looks. In fact, theater performances were mostly in the form of variety shows during the colonial period, so a talented young *kisaeng* could make her debut without learning entire musical pieces. According to a statement by the *yŏryu myŏngch'ang* Kim Ch'o-hyang, she could start performing at Chang'ansa after spending about 50 days learning several important *p'ansori* parts from the best male *myŏngch'ang* of the era, such as Yi Tong-baek (1867-1950), Chŏng Chŏng-nyŏl (1876-1938), and Song Man-gap (1866-1939).[241] Likewise, after completing the short training courses organized by *kisaeng* guilds or theaters, *kisaeng* could start performing on stage. Though they still needed to dedicate themselves to rigorous training to be recognized as *yŏryu myŏngch'ang,* the emergence of theaters would have been advantageous for young, pretty, and talented *kisaeng*.

The performing activities of *kisaeng* did not stop at theaters. They regularly appeared on radio programs for KBC. Pak Yong-kyu, in his article on KBC music programs between 1933 and 1939, reveals that Korean traditional music programs were broadcast the most, followed by classical music programs. Pak brought forth evidence that traditional music programs made up 70 percent of all music broadcast in 1933, which decreased to around 65 percent in 1939.[242] Therefore, it is not an exaggeration to say that KBC provided a very favorable environment for traditional

which caused much confusion. To avoid this problem, scholars, notably Lee Hee-hwan and Kim Min-su, have suggested calling the building Hŭidae, the term used to indicate the building only. For more discussion regarding the first modern theater in Korea, see Kang and O, "Kŭndae Sŏgusik Kŭkjjang Sŏllip e Ttarŭn Kisaeng Kongyŏn ŭi Pyŏnmo Yangsang"; Kim, "Ch'och'anggi Ch'anggŭk Kongyŏn Yangsang ŭi Chaekoch'al"; Yi, "Inchŏn Kŭndae Yŏngŭksa Yŏn'gu"; Yi, "20-Segi Ch'o Hyŏmnyulsa Kwallyŏn Myŏngch'ing Kwa Kŭ Kaenyŏm."

[241] So, *Sumŏ sanŭn woet'olbagi: chŏnt'ong sahoe ŭi hwanghon e sŏn saramdŭl: "Naesi" esŏ put'ŏ "Paekchŏng" kkaji*, 69.

[242] Pak, "Ilche-ha Radio Pangsong ŭi Ŭmak P'ŭrogŭram e Kwanhan Yŏn'gu: 1930 Nyŏndae rŭl Chugsimŭro," 143.

music performers including *kisaeng*, and it helped them to raise their reputations as professional performers.

Kisaeng were also active in record production. In fact, their place in the recording industry was quite different from that of popular musicians. When releasing a new song, most popular music singers had no choice but to be dependent on their affiliated *munyebu*, since *munyebu* had power over the writing or selection of songs that fit performers' voices as well as organizing promotional events and advertisements, among other responsibilities. *Kisaeng* who performed traditional music usually had reputations already as stage performers with a recognized repertoire along with their preferred accompanists. Thus, *munyebu* could not exert as much influence over the production of traditional music records as they could with popular music ones. For these reasons, unlike popular musicians who had to make exclusive contracts with record companies for fixed periods, *kisaeng* and other traditional musicians enjoyed relative autonomy in the music industry, recording music for various record companies.

Becoming *Yŏryu Myŏngch'ang*

One indication that a musician was recognized in the traditional music field was if he or she was called *myŏngch'ang*. In other words, the title of *myŏngch'ang*, which had been reserved only for the most acclaimed male *p'ansori* performers in the Chosŏn Dynasty, was more generally applied to successful stage performers of *p'ansori* during the colonial period.[243] The most representative example showing the common use of the title *myŏngch'ang* was a kind of theater

[243] Yi Po-hyŏng explains that neither *sori kwangdae* (vocal *kwangdae*), whose title indicated their musical storytelling and singing specialties as well as their lower-class roots, nor *kagaek*, with their elevated status among *kwangdae* due to their aristocratic patrons, would likely have been suitable as *p'ansori* performers in colonial Korea, considering the rapidly modernizing social environment. Yi, "P'ansori Kongyŏnmunhwa ŭi Pyŏndong-i P'ansori e Kkich'in Yŏnghyang," 305–6.

performance based on Korean traditional music called *myŏngch'ang taehoe*, which appeared in the middle of the 1920s.[244] Kim Min-su, a scholar of Korean traditional music, explains the emergence of *myŏngch'ang taehoe* as follows. From the 1910s, the popularity of theater performances of Korean traditional music and dance had decreased, but thanks to the production of records by Nitchiku and Nittō, Korean folk music began to regain its popularity. Kim further mentions that Nitchiku and Nittō competed to organize promotional concerts featuring their own recording artists. For example, Nitchiku presented a concert on September 13, 1925 to celebrate its new releases, where the audience could listen to records played on a gramophone and compare them to live performances of the same pieces by the original performers. Only five days later, Nittō held its own concert with a similar format. Therefore, Kim concludes that based on the popularity they gained after the release of their records and the following promotional concerts, Korean traditional musicians built up enough influence to frequently organize their own performances called *myŏngch'ang taehoe* from the late 1920s.[245] In addition to the recording industry, radio must have made significant contributions to the spread of the term *myŏngch'ang* as well as *myŏngch'ang taehoe*. According to Seo Jae-kil, the KBC broadcast *myŏngch'ang taehoe* and *ch'anggŭk* more often than any other music programs.[246] Thus, it is safe to say that modern media contributed to the general use of the term *myŏngch'ang.*

Meanwhile, the term *yŏryu myŏngch'ang* became more frequently used to refer to acclaimed *kisaeng* traditional music performers. The prevalence of the term was exemplified by *kisaeng* concerts called y*ŏryu myŏngch'ang taehoe*. The use of "*yŏryu*" here is significant since it

[244] Here "*taehoe*" did not necessarily mean a competition. Instead it usually meant a "big event with performances," though it was also used to indicate a competition at times.

[245] Kim, "Ch'ogi Myŏngch'ang Taehoe e kwanhan Il Koch'al," 100–104.

[246] Seo, "JODK Kyŏngsŏng Bangsongguk Sŏllip kwa Ch'ogi ŭi Yŏnye Bangsong," 166–67.

reflects their status as recognized female figures in the 1930s. "*Yŏryu*" did not simply mean "female" but indicated educated and socially successful "new women."[247] The first performance featuring *yŏryu myŏngch'ang* was held on September 28, 1931 and was produced by Chosŏn Ŭmnyul Hyŏphoe (the Korean Music Association, or KMA)[248] as well as Columbia Records with support from the *Maeil sinbo*.[249] The reputations of male *myŏngch'ang* were still much higher than those of *kisaeng p'ansori* performers in the early colonial period, so it was conventional to organize *myŏngch'ang taehoe* centering on influential male *myŏngch'ang*.[250] However, the KMA made the unprecedented decision to let three *yŏryu myŏngch'ang*, Pak Rok-ju (1905-1979), Kim Ch'o-hyang (1900-1983), and Pak Wŏl-jŏng, perform by themselves. This concert, featuring only *yŏryu myŏngch'ang*, can therefore be considered a historic turn in the history of Korean traditional music. It is not possible to know how much influence Nippon Columbia and the *Maeil sinbo* had in producing the concert, but it cannot be overemphasized that without their confidence in the abilities of the three *yŏryu myŏngch'ang* as well as the strong likelihood of selling tickets, neither the record company nor the newspaper would have sponsored it.[251] Their expectations must have been met since the KMA organized another performance a month later featuring Pak Rok-ju, Pak Wŏl-jŏng,

[247] The entry for y*ŏryu myŏngch'ang taehoe* can be found in *Han'guk minjok munhwa tae-paekkwa sajŏn* [Encyclopedia of Korean Culture], available at http://encykorea.aks.ac.kr/Contents/Index?contents_id=E0072440.

[248] An organization of *p'ansori* musicians to promote the study and performance of Chosŏn music, it was active from 1930 to 1933.

[249] "Chosŏn ŭi Yŏryu Myŏngch'ang, Samin Kongyŏn Ŭmakhoe, Chosŏn Koyu ŭi Ŭmak Hyangsang ŭl Ŭihaya Chosŏn Sihŏm" (The Concert Performance of Three *Yŏryu Myŏngch'ang* of *Chosŏn*, the first Experiment in Chosŏn to Improve Native Music), *Maeil sinbo*, Sept 23, 1931. p8.

[250] No y*ŏryu myŏngch'ang* were part of the so-called "*Kŭndae O Myŏngch'ang*" (Five Best *Myŏngch'ang* in the Modern Period). Yi T'ong-baek, Song Man-gap, Kim Ch'ang-hwan, Kim Chang-ryong and Chŏng Chŏng-yŏl were considered the five best *myŏngch'ang*, and *yŏryu myŏngch'ang* were disciples of male *myŏngch'ang*.

[251] *Mail sinbo*, September 28, 1931, p4.

and Pak Chŏng-ok, this time sponsored by Nippon Victor.[252] Subsequently, *yŏryu myŏngch'ang taehoe* were organized in various cities throughout the 1930s, which in turn demonstrate that *kisaeng* performers had escaped from the shadow of male *myŏngch'ang* while earning recognition as their counterparts in colonial Korea.

Becoming *Kisaeng Kasu*

According to a *Chosŏn ilbo* report from December 1933, members of both the younger and older generations were sending letters demanding that KBC broadcast their favorite Korean popular and traditional music respectively.[253] This clearly shows the generation gap between audiences in the music market of colonial Korea. As noted earlier, the radio industry took the side of the older generation as well as Korean intellectuals, allocating the majority of its music programming for Korean traditional music, followed by Western classical music. In contrast, the recording industry focused more on producing substantially hybridized popular music in the 1930s, though producing Korean traditional music was still significant part of its business.

Interestingly, it was *makkan kasu* ("intermission singers") that were first sought out by the record companies. *Makkan kasu* were mostly female singers who performed during the intermission in modern theaters to keep audiences entertained.[254] Usually chosen from among actresses in Western and Japan-influenced new theater, *makkan kasu* were expected to sing songs in modern popular music genres rather than Korean traditional ones. Their vocal performances were well received, and some *makkan kasu* earned fame onstage. For example, Yi Aerisu's singing

[252] "Sam Yŏryu Myŏngch'ang ŭi Konyyŏn Ŭmakhoe" *Maeil sinbo*, December 22, 1931. p8.

[253] "Singu Sasang Atena sŏ Ch'ungdol" (New and Old Ideas Clash on Antennas), *Chosŏn ilbo*, December 17, 1933.

[254] Yi Aerisu, Pok Hye-suk, Kang Sŏk-yŏn, Kim Sŏn-ch'o, and Yi Kyŏng-sŏl were representative of stars in the recording industry in the 1930s who started out as *makkan kasu*.

became even more popular than the main performances at the theater Ch'wisŏngchwa, to which she belonged.[255] Record companies then recruited popular *makkan kasu* as their exclusive singers. This prompted the literary critic Sŏ Kŭng-yang to lament in a 1933 article that due to the long-lasting slowdown in the Korean film and theater industries, actresses were leaving the theater by getting married or working as café waitresses. In the new year, however, most remaining actors and actresses had made exclusive contracts with record companies as singers or comedians, leaving the stages empty.[256] Considering the fact that most record companies' *munyebu* had been set up by 1933, it is not hard to understand why such a development occurred then.

As the production of popular music increased, the record companies soon found themselves in need of new talent. Interestingly, they did not have much trouble recruiting male musicians and singers since even those with conservatory training were willing to participate in making Korean popular music. For example, Ch'ae Kyu-yŏp, known as the first professional popular music singer in Korea, was a baritone trained at Chūō Music School in Japan. Writing his own debut song "Yurang'in ŭi Norae" (The Song of a Nomad, Columbia 40087-A, 1930), Ch'ae was a versatile musician. He also recorded multiple Japanese records under Japanese stage names, among which Hasegawa Ichiro was the most well-known. Hong Nan-p'a, one of most famous classical musicians during the colonial era, also experimented with composing and performing jazz music, *yuhaengga*, and even children's songs. However, the record companies were not able to recruit female classical musicians, at least as singers of popular music. Unlike the Tokyo Music School graduate, Satō Chiyako (1897-1968), who became Japan's first female popular music star with her recording of "Tokyo Kyōshinkyoku" (Tokyo March), classically-trained Korean female singers were in most

[255] Choi, "Akkŭk Sŏngnip e kwanhan Yonggu," 403.
[256] Sŏ, Kŭng-yang. 1933. "1933-nyŏn Kŭkkye ŭi Ilnyŏn ŭl Hoegoham" *Sin Togn'a* 26:(12). Requoted from Kim, *Han'guk kŭndae akkŭk yŏn'gu*, 98.

cases reluctant to record popular songs. That is, male musicians seemed to enjoy more freedom in cross-genre music production than female ones, so the record companies did not have any other choice but to resort to recruiting *kisaeng* to become popular musicians.

The question here is how, as they were originally trained in traditional music, were *kisaeng* able to become popular music singers? The answer can be found in the changes in their musical training. By the 1930s, the number of people who understood traditional *kisaeng* entertainment culture had greatly decreased, since this understanding required much knowledge of traditional music and its associated customs. Modern Koreans, who had gone through a Western-style education system, were not familiar with them. In addition, Korea's colonial status led to more Japanese becoming clients of *kisaeng*, and their knowledge of Korean traditional music was in general very limited. Reflecting such changes, the curriculum for *kisaeng* at the Chosŏn Chŏng'ak Chŏnsŭpso, the most prestigious music institute of the time, included shamisen and Japanese dance courses as early as 1912.[257] This was only two years after Korea was colonized, but Japanese clients had already become significant enough for *kisaeng* that they started learning Japanese music and dance. Subsequently, the courses at *kisaeng* schools became more and more diverse and hybridized. Figure 4.3 shows a postcard promoting the P'yŏngyang Kisaeng School, and in it three *kisaeng* can be seen playing piano, accordion, and violin in the school orchestra. The photograph in Figure 4.4, which was included in the official brochure for the entertainment program of the Chosŏn Exposition of 1929, shows either *kisaeng*-trainees or *kisaeng* of Hannam Kwŏnbŏn performing a Western dance. Likewise, performing Western-influenced music and dance became more and more common for *kisaeng* in colonial Korea.

[257] "Chŏngak ŭi Punggyosil: Chŏngak Chŏnsŭpso Punggyosil esŏ Mubugi ildong Yŏlsim Kyosu" *Meil sinbo*, August 29, 1912.

Figure 4.3

***Kisaeng* singer and**
the P'yŏngyang Kisaeng School Orchestra

Figure 4.4

Performance of Hannam Kwŏnbŏn
at the Chosŏn Exposition of 1929

Such changes led to a decline in *kisaeng*'s ability to perform traditional music and dance. Muho Nang'in, in his long magazine article published in 1935, deplores the emergence of "mute" *kisaeng,* which referred to those who had failed to inherit the Korean vocal music tradition. He identifies the cause of the problem as their "deaf clients," who were not able to effectively appreciate traditional music, so "mute" *kisaeng* could dare to call themselves *kisaeng* so long as they were physically attractive. Losing about half of their clients to seemingly more modern and less expensive cafés by the middle of 1930s further motivated *kisaeng,* in imitation of café girls, to sing popular songs and dance to jazz music for their modern clients. This circumstance was worsened by the fact that those who spoke Japanese and were good at performing Japanese music could make more money than traditionally skilled *kisaeng* as the number of Japanese clients increased. The author adds that only *munyebu* and the KBC entertainment department showed any interest in Korean music performers.[258] Considering that Muho Nang'in was most likely a pseudonym, meaning "nameless nomad," and the fact that *Chung'ang* was a popular magazine, it

[258] Muho, "Taegyŏngsŏng Hwaryugye Kŭmsŏk Kamsanggi," 84–95.

may not be advisable to take every word in the article as fact. However, since the author appeared to have extensive knowledge about *kisaeng* and their modern transformation, his remarks still call for serious attention. Paek Hwa-rang, in his 1936 article "A Vanished Folk Custom: The Characteristics of *Kisaeng*" also confirms that the name *kisaeng* had survived but their performance skills and special system of etiquette were long gone.[259] In other words, to accommodate the preferences of diverse clients as well as to compete in the newly emerging entertainment and sex industries, *kisaeng* no longer exclusively performed Korean traditional music but by necessity had learned music and art forms from other countries as well. From the perspective of Korean traditional music culture, this must have been a devastating transition, but it turned out to be beneficial for the development of Korean popular music.

Kisaeng Performers' Position in the Korean Recording Industry

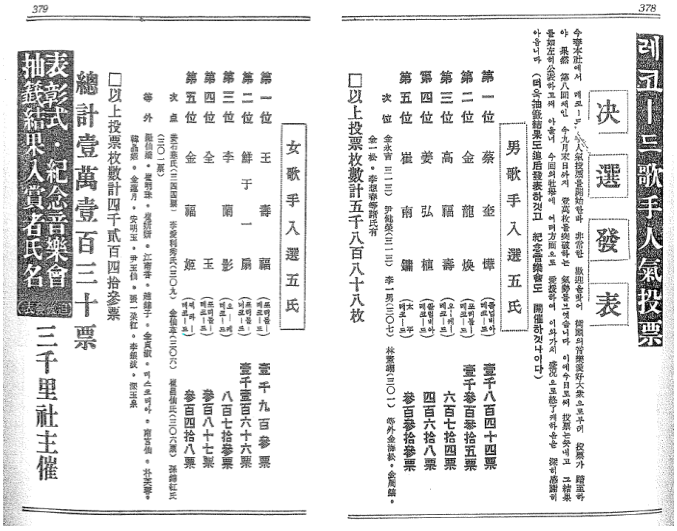
The activities of *kisaeng kasu* became conspicuous in the mid-1930s. There were several well-known popularity polls conducted by the magazine *Samch'ŏlli* from November 1934 to the end of September 1935 in which readers chose their top five male and female singers in Korea. The available results cover five months: January, February, March, June, and October of 1935. In the final October result for female signers, seen on the left side of Figure 4.5, Wang Su-bok (1917-2003) was first, followed by Sŏnu Ilsŏn (1919-1990) with Yi Nan-yŏng coming in third place. Chŏn Ok (1911-1969) and Kim Pok-hŭi (1917-?) placed fourth and fifth respectively.[260] Interestingly, Wang Su-bok, Sŏnu Ilsŏn, and Kim Pok-hŭi were *kisaeng*, while Yi Nan-yŏng (1916-1965) and Chŏn Ok were originally *makkan kasu*. Admittedly, these results only show the

[259] Paek, "Ŏpsŏjin P'ungsok: kisaeng ŭi T'ŭksaek."

[260] Zhang, "1930-nyŏndae Kisaeng Ŭmak Hwaldong ŭi Il Koch'al," 475.

singers' popularity over less than a year, but the importance of *kisaeng kasu* and *makkan kasu* in the recording industry in the middle of the 1930s cannot be ignored.

Figure 4.5



Results of the Recording Artist Popularity Poll in 1935
Samch'ŏlli, October 1935 (378-379)

Zhang Yu-jeong, through her research on the recording activities of representative *kisaeng kasu*, reveals that they mostly performed both *sinminyo* and *yuhaengga.*[261] The number of songs that representative *kisaeng kasu* recorded, as seen in Table 4.1, further highlights their significance as the primary singers in both genres. In other words, *kisaeng kasu* rarely performed Korean traditional music unless it was arranged more like popular music and accompanied by Western musical instruments. Even so, since *kisaeng* were expected to play up their "Koreanness" to both Koreans and Japanese, their performances of the *chaejŭ-song* style were quite rare. Since *chaejŭ-*

[261] Zhang, 502–3. Zhang Yu-jeong estimates that 2,954 *yuhaengga* and 544 *sinminyo* songs were released during the colonial period, but only 111 *chaejŭ-song* songs. Zhang also includes *manyo*, which expressed satire and humor, as one of the main genres and states that there were 115 such songs released (Zhang, *Oppa nŭn p'unggakchaengi ya: taejung kayo ro pon kŭndae ŭl p'unggyŏng*, 357.)

song was a kind of popular music with substantial foreign characteristics, including those found in jazz and other genres of Western music such as chanson and rumba, *kisaeng* singing *chaejŭ-song* might have been considered undesirable from a production point of view. There is also the possibility that their voices and singing style might not have been a good fit for *chaejŭ-song*. In any case, considering that both *yuhaengga* and *sinminyo* were the top two most-produced popular music genres in colonial Korea, the position of *kisaeng kasu* in the Korean recording industry was solid even without including *chaejŭ-song*.

Table 4.1

Name	*Yuhaengga*	*Sinminyo*	Total	Debut Year	Note
Wang Su-bok	63	9	75	1933	
Sŏnu Ilsŏn	15	74	99	1934	four traditional folk songs
Kim Pok-hŭi	59	23	97	1934	
Yi Ŭn-p'a	45	43	100	1934	one *nŏnsensŭ*, one play
Yi Hwa-ja	40	75	125	1936	
Kim Insuk	20	3	24	1936	one *chaejŭ-song*

Representative *Kisaeng Kasu* and their Recorded Songs
(created by the author based on information
in Zhang Yu-jeong, "1930-nyŏndae *Kisaeng* Ŭmak Hwaldong," 483-495)

Wang Su-bok and Sŏnu Ilsŏn, exclusive singers for Nippon Polydor, are the best examples of how *kisaeng kasu* stars successfully performed songs in genres that highlighted their voices and vocal techniques. Known as the first *kisaeng kasu*, Wang Su-bok debuted in 1933 and was promoted as "The Queen of *Yuhaengga*" by Nippon Polydor. As noted in a Japanese weekly magazine, *Shūkan asahi*, [262] Wang's ability to sing Japanese popular music was acknowledged even among Japanese, so it is not surprising that the company chose a Japan-influenced

[262] "Birei! Chōsen Onbankai no Doruhako Ki-sen." November 1934, 34. Requoted from Sin, "Shūkan Asahi(1934)ga Chumokhan Kisaeng Wang Su-bok Chaechomyŏng," 501–2.

yuhaengga song for her first release, called "Kodo ŭi Chŏnghan" (Longing on a Lonely Island, lyrics by Ch'ŏng Hae, music by Chŏn Ki-hyŏn, Polydor X511-A, 1933).[263] Snapping up Wang, who had recently made records for Nippon Columbia, Nippon Polydor was known to have worked harder than usual to compose a song that was a good fit for her. The company most likely intended to strongly impress upon its customers that Wang was Nippon Polydor's artist and not Nippon Columbia's, since her records would be released by Nippon Columbia as well. Wang met the expectations of the *munyebu* since the song's composer, Chŏn Ki-hyŏn (1909-?) enthusiastically praised Wang's rising falsetto for "Kodo ŭi Chŏnghan," which was similar to the technique used to sing Japanese *kouta*.[264] Chŏn's understanding of Wang's musical talent as well as her strong performing ability must have been the main factors behind the success of the song, but there was one more significant reason that "Kodo ŭi Chŏnghan" became a hit. As Wang P'yŏng, the *munye-pujang* of Nippon Polydor, mentioned in a roundtable discussion, the popularity of "Shima no Musume" (The Island Girl), released the previous year in Japan, also influenced the production of "Kodo ŭi Chŏnghan."[265] In other words, the theme of the song must have reminded consumers of the earlier Japanese hit. Through its careful production and skillful execution, "Kodo ŭi Chŏnghan" become the most-sold record among all those released by Nippon Polydor in 1933 and Wang Su-bok likewise was the best-loved female singer that year.[266]

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[263] Park Ch'an-ho clarifies that the name "Chŏnghae" printed on the record label was a penname of Yi Un-bang (Park, *Han'guk kayosa*, 228.) The lyrics and audio file of "Kodo ŭi Chŏnghan" are available at http://blog.daum.net/_blog/BlogTypeView.do?blogid=0TqT0&articleno=4521&categoryId=1&regdt=20160406123__642. accessed March 14, 2018.

[264] "'Kŏriŭi Kkoekkori'in Siptaegasu rŭl Naebonaen Chaksa Chakkokka ŭi Kosimgi," 153–54. This was a special report in which a songwriter wrote about how one of his songs came to be sung by a top-ten singer that year. The composer Chŏn Ki-hyŏn also contributed a section on "Kodo ŭi Chŏnghan." *Kouta* is a ditty-like Japanese song style usually sung by geisha.

[265] "Recodŭgye ŭi Naemak ŭl Tŭnnŭn Chwadamhoe," 317.

[266] "Hyŏndaein ŭi Chŏngsŏrŭl Kaechwihan Yuhaenggagok ŭi Pŏmnam."

In contrast, Sŏnu Ilsŏn was known as "The Princess of *Minyo*." Motivated by Wang Su-bok's popularity, Nippon Polydor recruited Sŏnu within a year of signing Wang, who belonged to the same *kisaeng* guild as Sŏnu. She became a star instantly with her first song, "Kkoch'ŭl Chapko" (Holding Flowers, lyrics by Kim An-sŏ, music by Yi Myŏn-sang, Polydor X511-B, 1934),[267] which was categorized as *sinminyo*, newly produced *minyo*-like songs. In an article in the magazine *Sinsegi*, a contributor with the pen-name Inwangsanin evaluates her very highly, writing that "Sŏnu Ilsŏn is a singer loved by a broad spectrum of fans because her voice carries a strain of Korean sentiment and her fans can empathize with the sad feelings her singing conveys. This is because Sŏnu Ilsŏn is clever in the way she sings *minyo*."[268] As seen in Table 4.1, she only recorded four traditional folk songs, so the author here must mean *sinminyo*. This also means that most of songs written for her were also *sinminyo* rather than *yuhaengga*. Both Wang Su-bok and Sŏnu Ilsŏn were so popular in the mid-1930s that their radio performances on KBC were even broadcast in Japan.[269] Understanding and performing in genres that were most appropriate for their individual skills, they became stars in *yuhaengga* and *sinminyo* respectively and drew an increasing number of *kisaeng kasu* into the recording industry in the 1930s.

Aside from their musical abilities, Wang and Sŏnu presented themselves in ways that fit popular images of *yuhaengga* and *sinminyo* singers. *Yuhaengga* was perceived as urban and modern, but *sinminyo*, which drew on Korean *chapka* and *minyo*, evoked pastoral and national sentiments among Koreans. In the case of Wang, the reporter from *Samch'ŏlli* who visited her

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[267] "Kkoch'ŭl Chapko" is available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g2dG2MXclng, accessed June 15, 2018.

[268] Inwangsanin, "Rekodŭ Kasu Inmullon," 76.

[269] Wang Su-bok's concert along with Korean court music was broadcast on January 8, 1934. The performance by Sŏnu Ilsŏn was broadcast on March 28, 1935 (Park, *Han'guk kayosa*, 266; Sin, *Sŏlle'nŭn pada, Wang Su-bok*, 40–41.)

home for an interview compared her well-adorned room to that of Cleopatra. On top of this, Wang told him that she practiced piano every day, would like to open an instrument shop and a bookstore if she had ten million yen, and wanted to marry a man of letters who made at least two hundred yen per month.[270] Wang's modern and urban lifestyle and attitude contrasted greatly with those of Sŏnu, who portrayed herself as an ideal Confucian woman. In her own interview with *Samch'ŏlli,* Sŏnu expressed her discontent at being both a *kisaeng* and a recording artist, and that her wish was to live quietly and take care of her mother at a remote place in the countryside. At the end of the article, the reporter in admiration stated that Sŏnu's facial expression was "purity itself."[271] Another reporter also praised Sŏnu as "indeed a daughter of Chosŏn," being humble, simple, and reserved.[272] In other words, each *kisaeng kasu* possessed the characteristics that Koreans associated with their chosen genres or at least performed them effectively.

Kisaeng kasu were still *kisaeng*. That is, they not only made money as singers but also through their ongoing activities as *kisaeng*. Wang Su-bok continued to serve clients like other *kisaeng* at first-grade restaurants, and due to her busy schedule, such clients often had to be on a waiting list for her service. In her *Samch'ŏlli* interview, Wang revealed that her income was between 300 and 800 yen per month, which caused the interviewer to ask, "What do you do with so much money?"[273] Similarly, Wang's high income was often mentioned in publications, but Sŏnu did not attract as much attention. Soon after completing her records with Nippon Polydor, Sŏnu moved from P'yŏngyang to Kyŏngsŏng. A person pen-named Hosŏngsaeng (lit. music-

[270] Kim, "Kahŭi ŭi Yesul, Yŏnae, Saenghwal – Munsa Puin ŭl Kkumkkunŭn Wang Su-bok," 141, 143–44.

[271] Kim, "Kahŭi ŭi Yesul, Yŏnae, Saenghwal – Nongch'on Saenghwal ŭl Tongkyŏnghanŭn Sŏnu Ilsŏn," 148.

[272] "Sŏnu Ilsŏn kwaŭi Chwadamnok," 136.

[273] Kim, "Kahŭi ŭi Yesul, Yŏnae, Saenghwal – Munsa Puin ŭl Kkumkkunŭn Wang Su-bok," 143.

loving scholar) wrote about his experience being served by Sŏnu at Kugilgwan, one of the representative *kisaeng* restaurants in Kyŏngsŏng. The article was titled "ChoSŏn U-il-son' ŭi Ch'ing'innŭn Sŏnu Ilsŏn kwa Kugilgwan" (underline added by the author). The underlined "U-il-son" means "Wilson" as in Woodrow Wilson, the 28th president of the United States, by which Hosŏngsaeng attempted to highlight that Sŏnu was like the president of Chosŏn in the Korean music industry. One can therefore easily imagine how much he praised her talent as a singer as well as her beauty in the article. What makes this article interesting, however, is that unlike other *kisaeng* including Wang, who had to travel to restaurants where their clients were, Sŏnu only worked at Kugilgwan at that time. Anyone who wanted to see her perform and enjoy her services had to go there, and if they additionally wanted to spend time with her in private, they had to wait until her work for the day was over. That is exactly what Hosŏngsaeng did. In this way, neither Sŏnu nor the Kugilgwan had to share their profits with a *kisaeng* guild. Moreover, Sŏnu did not have to waste time travelling. Since *kisaeng* were paid by the amount of time they served their clients, this arrangement was highly beneficial for her. In addition, the income from her extra work outside Kugilgwan must have been all hers. Judging from Hosŏngsaeng's story, Sŏnu used her popularity as a recording artist to make the most out of her career as a *kisaeng* by contracting directly with the restaurant and thereby bypassing a *kisaeng* guild. In other words, Sŏnu was not just a talented singer, as her composer observed, but she was also clever in her career as a *kisaeng*.

Both Wang and Sŏnu's cases demonstrate that *kisaeng kasu* were not marginalized in the recording industry, but this does not necessarily mean that they were welcomed wholeheartedly. The December 1936 issue of the magazine *Sahaegongnon* published a special article under the title "To Reconstruct Chosŏn Culture" (Chosŏn Munhwa ŭi Chaegŏn ŭl Wihaya) based on a discussion among twenty-five invited Korean cultural leaders. In the record culture section of the

article, one of the main topics discussed was how long *kisaeng* would last in the recording industry and if it would ever be possible to separate them from it. The sound professionals participating in the discussion acknowledged the contributions of *kisaeng kasu* in the Korean recording industry, but some also revealed their preference for non-*kisaeng* singers, specifically music school graduates.[274] The reason they discussed the issue was most likely due to their discomfort with the identity of *kisaeng*. The fact that their status dropped significantly in the 1930s, such that even café girls and waitresses were included in the category of so-called "*modŏn kisaeng*" (modern *kisaeng*) did not help the situation.[275] As elites in Korean society, recording industry professionals were concerned about the reputation of Korean popular music as well as the recording industry, and they might have thought that *kisaeng*, as remnants of premodern Korea, were not suitable transmitters of modern Korean music culture. Even in these discriminatory circumstances, the high position of *kisaeng kasu* in the recording industry continued because of their solid popularity and distinctive performing skills.

Compared to *kisaeng kasu*, the position of *yŏryu myŏngch'ang* in the recording and performing industries seemed to be more secure. The title *myŏngch'ang* itself signified their musical ability and guaranteed them a solid fanbase in the performing industry of colonial Korea. *Yŏryu myŏngch'ang* Pak Rok-ju described how carefully she and other *myŏngch'ang*, both male and female, were treated during their recording trip to Osaka. Before beginning each day's recording, Pak was asked how she felt. If she was not in good condition, the recording session would not start. Pak could even be mischievous and lie about her condition if something was

[274] "Chosŏn Munhwa ŭi Chaegŏnŭl Wihaya," 58–59.

[275] Zhang, "1930-nyŏndae Kisaeng Ŭmak Hwaldong ŭi Il Koch'al," 89–90.

bothering her. Finally, each performer got paid one thousand yen for recording 10 pieces.[276] Pak's recollection is interesting for a few reasons. First of all, according to Zhang Yu-jeong, the payment per song for top *kisaeng* traditional music performers in the middle of the 1930s was seventy yen, while the most famous popular music singers were paid one hundred yen. Second and third level singers showed similar differences in what they were paid. Zhang attributes this unequal treatment to their social status as *kisaeng*. At the same time, she assumes that such discrimination only applied to *kisaeng* who performed traditional music rather than *kisaeng kasu*, taking Wang Su-bok's high income as evidence.[277] Though *kisaeng* were clearly subjects of discrimination in colonial Korea, I have some doubts about Zhang's explanation since it does not explain why *kisaeng* who performed traditional music should have been the only targets of such discrimination. If their social status was the reason, the record companies should have paid *kisaeng kasu* at similarly low rates.

My understanding of this issue is that the seemingly unequal pay scale was based on the difference in musical characteristics between popular music and traditional music rather than a performer's *kisaeng* status. *Kisaeng kasu* seemed to be deeply stressed by having to record original songs. In a round-table discussion by eight popular music singers and six *munye-pujang* for *Samch'ŏlli* in 1936, Sŏnu Il-sŏn stated, "Once a newly composed song is given to me, I memorize it about one hundred times over ten days, even unconsciously on the street or while talking to my clients. All my attention always goes to the song." Kang Nam-hyang also confessed that she practiced new songs the same number of times.[278] Wang Su-bok even said that she often had to

[276] No, "Charyo: Kugak Yusŏnggiŭmban Kwallyŏn Myŏnginmyŏngch'ang Chuyo Chŭngŏnjaryo Haeje," 196.

[277] Zhang, *Oppa nŭn p'unggakchaengi ya: taejung kayo ro pon kŭndae ŭl p'unggyŏng*, 69.

[278] "Inggigasu Chwadamhoe," 132.

record the same song as many as five to six times. She felt like crying when her recording did not turn out well and needed to be done again. Both Wang and Sŏnu emphasized that it was not unusual to have to re-record the same song many times, taking a famous Japanese geisha singer Kouta Kastsutarō (1904-1974) as an example.[279] Moreover, since they had to record many new songs during each recording trip, which would be released over several months, their anxiety must have been multiplied. On the contrary, *kisaeng* who performed traditional music basically recorded their own repertoire, which they were already familiar with. Thus, recording itself did not seem to be a source of stress for traditional music performers, judging from the oral histories of almost thirty *myŏngch'ang* and distinguished traditional instrumentalists edited by No Chae-myŏng. For example, the *yŏryu myŏngch'ang* Park Rok-ju seemed to take her recording sessions as a simple matter. She casually mentioned that recording did not take much time since one side of a record lasted about three minutes.[280] This meant it was not necessary for her to do multiple takes for one song.

More importantly, *kisaeng* in general were vocal about any unfair treatment they received and were not reluctant to show their opinions through collective action. For example, the *Chosŏn ilbo* in 1927 reported that KBC payed only half as much to *kisaeng* compared to Japanese geisha for their performances, so *kisaeng* intended to stop performing on the radio to express their indignation at such discrimination.[281] If they were confident enough to demand equal treatment with their Japanese counterparts, they should not have had any trouble asking for equal compensation from the recording industry. However, I have not found any record that *kisaeng*

[279] "Inggigasu Chwadamhoe," 131.

[280] No, "Charyo: Kugak Yusŏnggiŭmban Kwallyŏn Myŏnginmyŏngch'ang Chuyo Chŭngŏnjaryo Haeje," 196.

[281] "Pangsonginedo Ch'abyŏl," *Chosŏn ilbo*, March 27, 1927.

traditional singers made any such demands. If *kisaeng* traditional vocal performers did not overtly complain about their lower pay scale, they must have understood the logic behind the system. Thus, I contend that the record companies used their graded payment system because they acknowledged the pressures popular music singers experienced and rewarded them accordingly. That must have been the reason that *kisaeng* traditional music performers did not openly oppose it. Another interesting point is that Pak and both her male and female colleagues, despite the formal pay-scale, received 100 yen per recorded song, which was as much as top popular music singers were supposed to receive. That is, the pay scale was not absolute, and the record companies must have given *yŏryu myŏngch'ang* special treatment due to their virtuosity as well as their dedicated fanbase. Therefore, it would be safe to say that *kisaeng* performers, in both traditional and popular music, were able to secure their position in the recording industry as long as they could successfully generate popular records.

Concluding Remarks

Both *yŏryu myŏngch'ang* and *kisaeng kasu* cannot simply be understood as *kisaeng.* Their given titles already connote the fact that they had achieved recognition and reputations as music professionals in the emerging new media of radio, records, and stage performance. Throughout the colonial era, *kisaeng* had to adapt to economic, political, cultural and technological changes while continually learning new music genres to maintain their status as recording artists and performers. However, not all *kisaeng* could successfully transform themselves into music professionals, which resulted in a significant income and status gap between *kisaeng* who were simultaneously recording artists and stage performers and other *kisaeng* who only served at designated restaurants in an ever more rapidly capitalizing colonial Korea. When the Korean music field was reconfigured

into traditional, classical, and popular music in colonial-era Korea, *yŏryu myŏngch'ang* and *kisaeng kasu* formed the spearhead of the changes as indispensable performers in the new media.

Chapter Five

Professional Creativity during the Total War Period

A special release of five records by Paul Whiteman (1890-1967) and his orchestra was advertised in the *Tong'a ilbo* on September 4, 1928 as seen in Figure 5.1.[282] As an American bandleader and composer, Whiteman popularized a musical style that helped introduce jazz to mainstream audiences during the 1920s and 30s in the U.S.[283] On the other side of the globe, including East as well as Southeast Asia, his fame grew to such a degree that it even exceeded that of many world-famous black jazz musicians.[284] More specifically, Taylor Atkins reaches the following conclusion about Whiteman's significance in Japan, "In sum, Whiteman's musical 'synthesis' and ideological pronouncements provided the foundation for Japanese conceptualizations of jazz in the 1920s."[285] Considering that an advertisement for his new releases appeared in a Korean newspaper only four months after Whiteman signed an exclusive contract with Columbia Records after leaving Victor, it is clear that he had substantial influence in the Korean music field. The *Tong'a ilbo* even featured his son conducting a children's band as seen in Figure 5.2, further reflecting Whiteman's popularity in colonial Korea. More often than not, foreign-produced records were advertised in Japanese catalogs rather than Korean ones, since Korean elites who were interested in and were

[282] According to Figure 5.1, two records of waltzes were numbered J-3060 ("La Paloma"/ "La Golondrina") and J-3061 ("The Merry Widow"/ "My Hero"). Three foxtrot records were released as J-3062 ("The Man I Love" / "My Melancholy Baby"), J-499 ("Last Night I Dreamed You Kissed Me"/ "Evening Star"), and J-500 ("Constantinople"/ "Get Out and Get Under the Moon"). The last two seem to have been re-released since they were priced at 1.50 yen while the other three were 2.50 yen and had a different numbering system. Considering that all the record numbers start with J, these records used the Japanese numbering system.

[283] "Whiteman, Paul." He was known for his recording of the original version of Rhapsody in Blue with George Gershwin on piano.

[284] Schenker, "Empire of Syncopation: Music, Race, and Labor in Colonial Asia's Jazz Age," Chap.5.

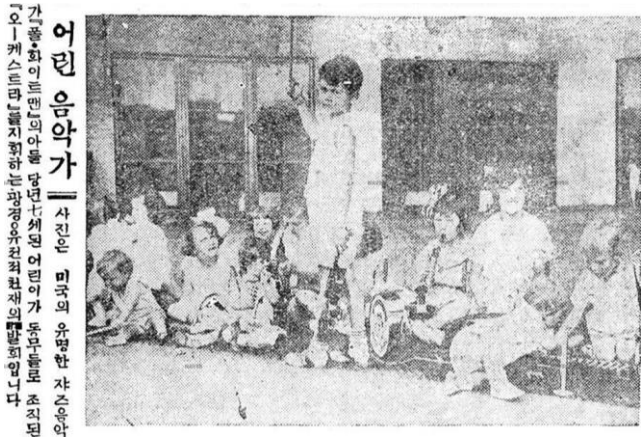
[285] Atkins, *Blue Nippon: Authenticating Jazz in Japan*, 99.

able to purchase expensive foreign-produced records would not have had much trouble reading either Japanese or English advertisements. Therefore, a record company would have placed special advertisements in a Korean newspaper only if it was confident that its records would generate substantial revenue. This in turn reveals the growing popularity of jazz among Koreans in the late 1920s.

Figure 5.1

Advertisement for Whiteman's releases
Tong'a ilbo Sept. 4, 1928. p5

Figure 5.2



Paul Whiteman's son conducting
Tong'a ilbo August 22, 1931. p5

Throughout the 1930s, the influence of Europe and the U.S. on Korean popular culture became more prominent, and this was true even during the total war period from the late 1930s. On top of Korean adaptations of works by both Japanese and Western composers, the number of songs in jazz and other foreign music styles written by Korean songwriters increased greatly from the second half of the 1930s.[286] These kinds of songs were known as *chaejŭ-song* or *chyajŭ-song*.

[286] Lee, "1930-nyŏndae Han'guk Taejung Kayo ŭi Changrŭ Honyong Yangsang," 197.

Chaejŭ-song was not jazz as such, but was similar to the Japanese style of *jazu-songu*, which loosely referred not only to music that was recognizably jazz, but also to other genres such as chanson and Latin music.[287] This is precisely why I avoid using the term jazz. That is, *chaejŭ-song*, as a Korean popular music genre, sounded more foreign and exotic than localized hybrid music genres like *yuhaengga* or *sinminyo*, in its rhythms, lyrics, and musical structures. The main differences between *chaejŭ-song* and *jazu-songu* were their respective main audiences, countries of production, and primary language. The production of Korean *chaejŭ-song* continued to increase due to the popularity of this new style of music among young urbanites.

Interestingly, the production of songs in the category of *chaejŭ-song* suddenly stopped at the beginning of the 1940s. Zhang Yu-jeong states, "*Chaejŭ-song* almost completely disappeared from the 1940s on, as Japan entered a state of war and banned Western music from the U.S., England, and France as music of the enemy."[288] Zhang's perspective is generally shared by scholars because it is true that popular music categorized as *chaejŭ-song* disappeared abruptly. In other words, the production of Korean *chaejŭ-song* took off entering the second half of the 1930s, but Korean sound professionals had to stop producing it soon after it became popular. Japanese censorship seems to have been extremely effective.

My question is whether the disappearance of *chaejŭ-song* was merely ostensible rather than actual. I believe that Korean sound professionals, whose first goal was to produce profitable records, would have tried to counter or at least navigate through the political restrictions on *chaejŭ-song*. By utilizing what I call "creative self-censorship," I argue that Korean sound professionals

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[287] Lee, 195; Zhang, *Oppa nŭn p'unggakchaengi ya: taejung kayo ro pon kŭndae ŭl p'unggyŏng*, 96–99; Park, *Han'guk kayosa*, 251.

[288] Zhang, "The Impact of Western Popular Music in Korea: The Development of 'Jazz Song'in the First Half of the Twentieth Century," 651.

mixed substantial elements from Japanese *jazu-songu* and other trendy foreign genres with those of conventional Korean popular music genres and then marketed this hybrid form of music under genres other the *chaejŭ-song*. This strategy allowed them to produce music with recognizable influences from jazz and other Western popular music forms, which still made it attractive to consumers in Korea. At the same time, their music featured sufficient characteristics of conventional Korean popular music genres that it could be categorized as such, which was acceptable to the colonial government. The focus of Korean sound professionals was on making localized variants utilizing Japanese and other variegated foreign influences that could be popular and profitable. By demonstrating the ways in which they negotiated the conflicting demands of Japanese authority and the East Asian market, I contend that, rather than giving in entirely to Japan's total mobilization efforts, Korean sound professionals retained individual agency in their work, in the sense that they still experimented with their musical preferences and market trends even while censoring themselves to evade attention from the government in the late colonial period.

The Origins of Korean Jazz History

Pak Sŏng-gŏn, in his book *Korean Jazz: 100 Years of History* (*Han'guk chaejŭ 100-yŏnsa*), asserts that Korean jazz history did not start with Koreans performing for the U.S. army after Korea's liberation, but should be extended back to the colonial period, more specifically to 1926. This was the year that the Korean Jazz Band, the first jazz band in Korean history, performed in Kyŏngsŏng.[289] Paek Myŏng-gon, from one of the wealthiest families in colonial Korea[290] and with

[289] "Chongno Chŏngnyŏn Hoegwan esŏ Kŭraendŭ K'onsŏt'ŭ" *Chosŏn ilbo*. February 12, 1926.

[290] Paek's father, Paek In-gi, and grandfather, Paek Nam-sin, were landlords and moneylenders who contributed to the founding and management of the notorious Oriental Development Company in Korea. Both were included in a government-compiled list of 106 "Pro-Japanese and Anti-National Collaborators" for the purposes of a law to confiscate the assets held by their descendants in 2006. For more information see "Kŭndae Han'gug ŭi

experience studying in Germany, brought musical instruments and sheet music back from a trip to Shanghai. Paek played a key role in forming the band along with Hong Nan-p'a, who was a prominent composer, violinist, and conductor during the colonial period. The band seems to have been popular in the late 1920s, since it performed for KBC two to three times a month.[291] In his column in the magazine *Pyŏlgŏn'gon*, Yi Sŏ-ku even commented, "Whenever there was a concert by the Korean Jazz Band, which consisted of the best dandies of the music world, it received hearty cheers from hot-blooded men and women."[292] Reflecting its popularity, after the band performed in Kyŏngsŏng in the summer of 1928, it went on to tour eight cities in the southern part of the Korean peninsula, including Pusan, Taegu, Kunsan, and Chŏnju, supported by the *Chungwoe ilbo* newspaper.[293] Unfortunately, the band did not release any records, so it is hard to tell whether all the music the Korean Jazz Band performed was actually jazz. Since no dance halls were allowed in the Korean peninsula then, the band's stage performances, as seen in Figure 5.3, resembled sit-in concerts, and its intended audiences were most likely young urban elites, students, and *kisaeng*, who embraced the new style of popular music earlier than most Koreans.

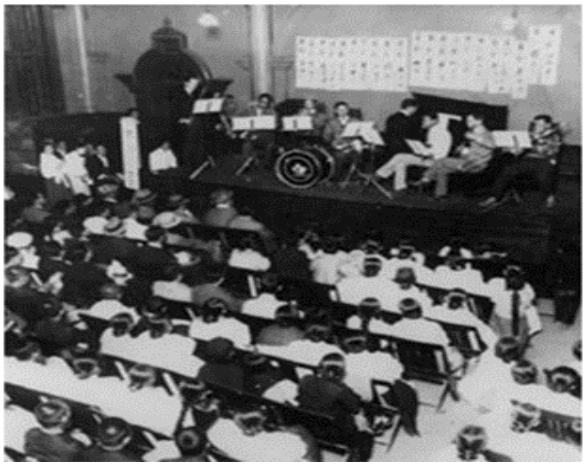
Chabon'gadŭl: Paek Nam-sin Paek In-gi Puja," *Iryo Seoul*, Feburary 4, 2016, accessed May 30, 2018, http://www.ilyoseoul.co.kr/news/articleView.html?idxno=127044.

[291] Pak, *Han'guk chaejŭ 100-yŏnsa*, 17–22, 26.

[292] Yi, "Kyŏngsŏng ŭi Chaezu," 32.

[293] "Ponbo Tokja Wian ūi Sunwoe Ŭmakdan Ch'ulbal" *Chungwoe ilbo*. August 3, 1928, p2. The *Chungwoe ilbo* was a daily newspaper which ran from 1926 to 1931.

Figure 5.3



Performance of the Korean Jazz Band
(source: Pak Sŏng-gŏn, *Han'guk chaejŭ 100-yŏnsa*, 20)

Meanwhile, Japanese *jazu songu* was growing more popular among younger Koreans. The following part of the text in Figure 5.4, a cartoon published in the *Chosŏn ilbo*,[294] describes how beloved the new style of Japanese popular songs were among Korean modern girls in 1930. The popularity of Japanese *jazu songu* among young urban Koreans must have motivated *munyebu* to start producing Korean *chaejŭ-song* entering the 1930s. Most female students might not have been record consumers, but they still showed high potential to soon become such consumers as they entered the workforce or got married. Unlike them, their male counterparts did not earn enough public attention to be featured in the cartoon, most likely due to the social acceptance of male consumption of modern music and other cultural products. This did not mean they were not enthusiastic about music with distinct foreign-influences.

[294] This style of newspaper cartoon was called *manmun manhwa*, developed by Okamoto Ippei, who published of *manmun manhwa* in the *Asahi sinbun* from the 1910s. It consisted of a one-frame cartoon and a long caption which expressed satirical social commentary. The cartoon I cite here was drawn by An Sŏk-ju, the most well-known Korean *manmun manhwa* cartoonist in colonial Korea.

> It is modern girls who sing "Tōkyō Kōshinkyoku" (Tokyo March) in the capital of Chosŏn, "Kimi Koishi" (I Love You) despite their marital status, and "Mon Paris" (My Paris) living in a thatched-roofed shack. Likewise, if only two modern girls gather together, they sing such songs until their voices are hoarse whether it is late at night or dawn…[295]

Figure 5.4

"If the Era of Female Propaganda Arrives"
Chosŏn ilbo, Jan. 19, 1930
Requoted from Sin Myŏng-jik, *Modŏn poi kyŏngsŏng ŭl kŏnilda*, 147

It is not clear how closely the production of *chaejŭ-song* was related with the preferences of Korean elites since they were known to favor Western art music and popular music produced in Europe and the U.S. Yi Ha-yun[296] in the *Chosŏn Art and Literature Almanac* of 1938 states that as Western art music records became cheaper, those by Korean musicians lost their market value, and even popular music fans with some education preferred light orchestral music, jazz, chanson, and Japanese popular music. He adds that the producers of Korean records had to take the group who had the most banal taste as their most consistent fans.[297] The musicologist Lee Kyung-boon

[295] Sin, *Modŏn Poi kyŏngsŏng ŭl kŏnilda: manmun manhwa ro ponŭn kŭndae ŭi Ŏlgul*, 147. The cartoon also mentions "Beniya no Musume" (The Girl in the Red House, 1925).

[296] Yi Ha-yun (1906-1974) studied English literature at Hosei University and was a member of the Overseas Literature school. He taught at several institutions including Dongguk University and Seoul National University. Yi served as the *munye-pujang* of Nippon Columbia between 1935 and 1937.

[297] Yi, "Rek'odŭgye," 54.

argues that appreciating Western classical music was almost a kind of "power" which any city dwelling educated intellectual should have had, since it symbolized being modern, elite, and affluent in colonial Korea. Lee refers to a 1938 report of Keijō (Kyŏngsŏng) Imperial University which found that 87% of its students preferred Western classical music and 8% of them favored Japanese music.[298] Elite Koreans who studied abroad should also be included in this group. For example, Yi Hyo-sŏk (1907-1942), a famous novelist and essayist who majored in English Literature at Keijō Imperial University, often incorporated music in his writing. In his 1936 short story "In'gan Sanmun" (Human Story), Yi describes a café owner playing a chanson, "J'ai deux amours" (I Have Two Loves), out of generosity for the downhearted main characters.[299] A member of Yi's literary coterie, Pak T'ae-wŏn (1909 -1986), in his 1934 short story "A Day in the Life of Kubo the Novelist," describes the ambiance of Kubo's favorite teahouses, including the song "Ahi Ahi Ahi" by Tito Schipa and Elman's performance of "Valse Sentimentale."[300] For these multilingual elite Koreans, *chaejŭ-song* produced for the Korean market may not have been so attractive since they, along with elite Japanese settlers, had direct access to Japanese catalogs in colonial Korea which had a greater selection of globally famous foreign-produced records. As discussed in Chapter two, the fact that Nangnang Parlor, a famous coffee shop frequented by elite intellectuals, only played records of foreign-produced Western music further reveals this tendency. Thus, both culturally and economically, the intended audiences for *chaejŭ-song* might not have neatly overlapped with those who consumed foreign art and popular music. *Munyebu* must have

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[298] Lee, "Ilche Sigi Sŏyang Ŭmak Munhwa wa Ilbonin Yŏngyang," 162–63. These statistics were drawn from the responses of both Japanese and Korean students.

[299] Yi, "In'gan sanmun," 320.

[300] Pak, "A Day in the Life of Kubo the Novelist," 167, 184.

been interested in making *chaejŭ-song* for a young Korean mass audience to expand the market share of their companies.

Experimental Transcultural Production of *Chaejŭ-song*

The first Korean record categorized as *chaejŭ-song* was released in April 1930, and it contained "Ae ŭi Kwang" (Light of Love, Columbia 40089-A) and "Mokchang ŭi Norae" (Song of the Ranch, Columbia 40089-B) with vocals by the famous actress Pok Hye-suk (1904-1982).[301] Pok in fact released another record of *chaejŭ-song* a few months earlier, but the songs on the record were Korean adaptations of the Japanese hits "Kimi Koishi" and "Dōtonbori Kōshinkyoku." Thus, the record with "Ae ŭi Kwang" and "Mokchang ŭi Norae" has been considered significant as the first Korean *chaejŭ-song* record in Korean popular music history.[302] As an actress who had received her postsecondary education in Japan, Pok must have well fit the image of emerging westernized *chaejŭ-song*. As discussed in the previous chapter, an educated woman from an established family would not usually have chosen to work in the entertainment industry due to the longstanding prejudice against performers, by which they were seen as low-born. Pok's career choice as an actress was therefore quite exceptional. When the record was released, within a month there were multiple advertisements for it and several other records in the two major colonial newspapers, the *Tong'a ilbo* and *Chosŏn ilbo.* The advertisement stated, "The Request of the Era, Jazz: Pok Hye-suk's "Ae ŭi Kwang" and "Mokchang ŭi Norae."[303] Even though Pok's singing and

[301] The record was numbered Columbia-40089. Information about who wrote each song has not been found.

[302] Since there is no known information regarding the songwriters, it is not clear to me whether it qualifies as the first Korean *chaejŭ-song* record.

[303] *Tong'a ilbo.* March 26, 1930, p1. Since then, the same advertisement was featured five more times from March to April 1930.

her accompaniment, performed by Japanese musicians, did not have the distinctive qualities of jazz, such as swing rhythms or syncopation, they do not sound like typical *yuhaengga* or *sinminyo* either.[304] There is a strong possibility that Pok's experiment with *chaejŭ-song* was not a market success since there is no known information regarding its re-release or related advertisements. Despite the lack of popularity of the first Korean *chaejŭ-song* record, the fact that it was produced still reveals growing interest among record companies in making more foreign-sounding music for Korean audiences, with Korean sound professionals taking it as "the request of the era" as mentioned above.

Korean scholars writing postcolonial history have tended to focus on works written and sung by Koreans rather than Japanese and others, but there were several attempts to make popular *chaejŭ-song* in cooperation with foreign artists in the genre's introductory period in the early 1930s. I assume that Korean sound professionals produced *chaejŭ-song* transnationally under instruction or with permission from their headquarters in Japan, since producing records with foreign performers must have been more costly and difficult than utilizing Korean performers with exclusive contracts. However, it was imperative for *munyebu* to provide more satisfying *chaejŭ-song* records for Korean audiences to compete against Japanese *jazu songu* and other foreign jazz records prevalent in the Korean market, so they attempted to compose syncopated music that fit the market's interests.

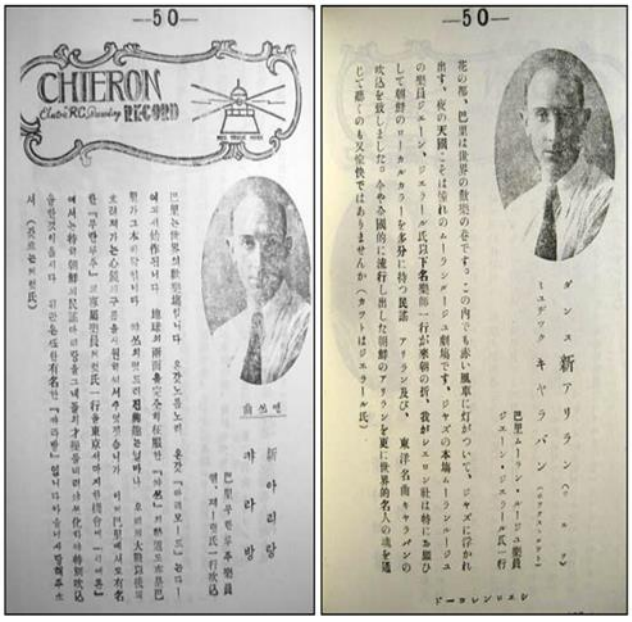
The instrumental recording of "Sin Arirang" (New Arirang, Chieron 50-A) and "Karabang" (Caravan, Cheiron 50-B) by Chieron Records[305] in 1932 is an early example of a transnational and

[304] "Ae ŭi Kwang" and "Mokchang ŭi Norae" are available on YouTube at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qfyrC4QQgT8 and https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pIyNT19D38s respectively, accessed June 2, 2018.

[305] Chieron Records operated for about four years in Korea, mostly in the first half of the 1930s. Its headquarters was Teikoku Hatsumei-sha in Nagoya (Nagoya Empire Invention Company). It was a smaller company without much

multicultural production. According to the Korean-language advertisement located on the left of Figure 5.5, an adaptation of the Korean folk song "Arirang" was on one side of the record and Rudy Wiedoeft and Abe Olman's "Caravan" was on the other. Arranging "Arirang" in the form of jazz involved further hybridizing the *sinminyo* song through the playing of the Paris Moulin Rouge Musicians working in Japan, mainly for distribution in Korea. Thus, without the ongoing transnational record business, producing such records would not have been possible.

Figure 5.5



Advertisements for "Sin Arirang" and "Karabang" (Chieron-50)
(source: Lee, "Embedded Voices In Between Empires, 72)

Figure 5.6

Partial image of the Chieron Monthly Catalog May 1935
(courtesy of the Korean Record Archive)

Reflecting the complex process of making the record mentioned above, Chieron's *munyebu* advertised its music using a variety of categories. This might also have been partially because most such categories were fluid and evolving rather than strictly fixed in the early 1930s. At the same

developed technology and made low-priced records with popular content. For more information, see Ŭmban Ak'aibŭ Yŏn'gudan and Bae, *Han'guk yusŏnggi ŭmban*, 5:113–16.

time, I suspect that the use of multiple categorizations could have been a deliberate choice by the *munyebu* as a way of attracting more listeners with diverse tastes and interests. For example, "Sin Arirang" and "Karabang" were both called *yuhaenggok* (popular music pieces), *yang'ak* (Western music), and *dansŭgok* (dance music), as well as *chyasŭ* (jazz) in the two advertisements in Japanese and Korean in Figure 5.5. The reason that the *munyebu* used the expression *yuhaenggok* was most likely to indicate that the record was for popular consumption and not art music. At the same time, by not calling them *yuhaengga*, the *munyebu* was successful in conveying that the pieces were instrumentals rather than songs. Another category, *yang'ak* was broadly used to indicate music from the West or in the Western art music tradition. This usually included Western classical music, children's songs, and hymns. Since many *yang'ak* records were produced and performed by foreign musicians in Europe and the U.S. or at least conservatory-trained Japanese and Korean musicians, Chieron's *munyebu*, by using the term *yang'ak*, must have wanted to give the record a high-quality or sophisticated image. The *munyebu* did not directly call it a jazz record, but the Korean advertisement identifies Paris as the center of the world's entertainment, where all kinds of fashions begin, while emphasizing the city's significance for jazz music. Specifically, the Japanese advertisement in the middle describes Paris using the expression, "home of jazz" (*jazu no honba*) before introducing the musicians of the Moulin Rouge. In doing so, the text encouraged consumers to assume that the record was actual jazz. At the same time, the purpose of not using the expression "*jazu songu*" must have been to demonstrate the lack of Japanese involvement in making the record. Both Japanese and Korean consumers understood by then that Japan was not a jazz hegemon, so the term "*jazu*" (jazz) would have given a more authentic impression than "*jazu songu*." In addition, the *munyebu* advertised the record under the separate category of *dansŭgok* (dance music), along with two other records, in Chieron's monthly catalog as seen in Figure 5.6.

By this, the *munyebu* not only showed a strong intention to differentiate the record from the other popular music records, which were usually categorized as *yuhaengga*, *sinminyo*, or *manyo*,[306] but also led the audience to immediately understand that the purpose of the record was to accompany dance. Another reason that the record was placed in multiple categories might have been because the *munyebu* was not very concerned with providing clear categorizations, at least as preferred by most scholars. When they considered it useful, *munyebu* were more than willing to categorize records in as liberal a way as possible. As seen in the case above, the Chieron *munyebu* effectively portrayed a record as foreign, sophisticated, and trendy all at once.

Interestingly, the details for this Chieron record are not available in the online discography of the Historical Recordings Collection in the National Diet Library of Japan (*Rekion* hereafter). *Rekion* is a digital collection of sound recordings of SP records that were originally arranged and recorded by multiple major record companies from 1900 to the 1950s in Japan.[307] Thus, information about other records produced by the members of the Paris Moulin Rouge Musicians is available there, and their involvement with the Tokyo Florida Dance Hall also appears in the directory. The omission of the Korean record is not strange since, to be included in the collection, an SP record should have been produced and released in Japan. In other words, *Rekion* does not include records produced and released in Japan's colonies even if they all were pressed in Japan and many of them were arranged and accompanied by Japanese musicians. This is most likely because the record companies in Japan had catalogs with different numbering systems for each

[306] *Manyo* refer to songs with comedic content.

[307] Along with J. Gérard, C. Parknadel, M. Dufour, and G. Thomas are mentioned in connection with recordings by Polydor. In addition, Parknadel and Dufour are identified as arrangers for multiple records by Columbia, Teichiku, and Victor. Therefore, they could have performed on the two records I discuss here, but the precise information regarding performers is not available since the text on the labels and information sheets only indicates Gérard and his group (K: *ilhaeng*). Their records were in genres such as waltz, slow foxtrot, and tango.

colony separate from those for Japan proper. Moreover, the fact that the headquarters of Chieron, Teikoku Hatsumeisha,[308] produced records only for the Korean market with no separate label for Japan, must not have helped the situation either. Therefore, this case further reveals the significance of transnational approaches to properly address border-crossing record production in the Japanese empire.

Another example of transnational record-making involved a Korean-American, Richard Choi, in 1933. According to the *Tong'a ilbo*, Choi was born and raised in the U.S. where he was known as "The Banjo King." He had been performing in Shanghai, so the newspaper invited him to tour Korea in 1933. It then exclusively published almost all the news regarding the tour. This was also when Japanese-American musicians were playing a significant role in Japan's music industry, so the *Tong'a ilbo* might have expected the same situation to develop in colonial Korea. According to my research of two online data sources, [309] the newspaper promoted Choi extensively, publishing about forty-seven articles and advertisements on him during the four months of his tour. The *Tong'a ilbo* advertised Choi even while he was in Shanghai and generously allocated newspaper space to spread his reputation as a musician as well as his brotherly affection toward Korea. At the same time, his identity was represented with conflicting messages such as, "A World-class Banjoist from Korea, the Invitational Concert of Choi Richard: He Has Accepted the Company's Invitation to Visit His Homeland."[310] That is, Choi had never been to Korea before the

[308] Teikoku Hatsumeisha was a guitar manufacturing company based in Nagoya which released records in Korea from 1931 to 1935. The company is still in business and has been selling its original "Montano" guitar since 2010.

[309] I referred to two online historical archives for articles regarding Richard Choi. One is Han'guk Yŏksa Chŏngbo T'onghap Sisŭt'em available at http://www.koreanhistory.or.kr/, and the other is the Naver News Library available at http://newslibrary.naver.com, accessed March 16, 2018.

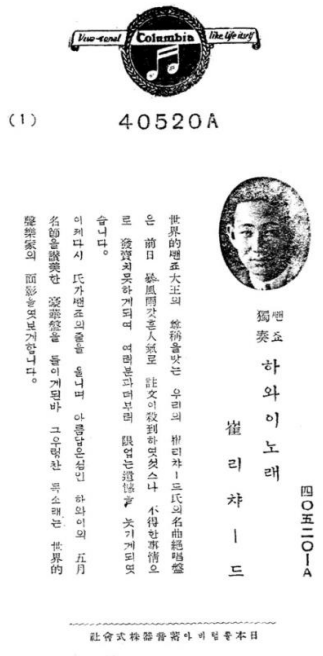
[310] *Tong'a ilbo*, May 4, 1933, p2.

publication of the article, but he was still advertised as a musician "from Korea" (*Chosŏn-i naŭn*) with Korea as his "homeland" (*koguk*).

Figure 5.7

Advertisement for Richard Choi's solo concert
(Source: *Tong'a ilbo*, May 7, 1933. p2.)

Figure 5.8



"Hawai'i Norae" advertisement leaflet
(courtesy of the Korea Record Archive)

The design of the article shown in Figure 5.7 further demonstrates how the *Tong'a ilbo* promoted Choi's tour by relying on the fact that he was not only born and raised but also recognized in the U.S, the birthplace of jazz. In the article, an image of an English piece on Choi, which introduced him as "America's Premier Banjo King," was added to prove that he was an important musician in the U.S. In addition, his Shanghai tour was used to convince Koreans that he was a true worldwide star whose reputation crossed East and West. He was even referred to as

"The Great King of the Banjo" (*baenjo taewang*). The next section emphasized that Choi's banjo was specially made, with only four strings and decorated with gold. The article ended with the introduction of the entire program of his upcoming concert. Similarly, extensive advertisements were published regularly by *Tong'a ilbo*.

Considering Choi's reputation, it is no wonder that Nippon Columbia produced his records. What makes this interesting is that the company only released two records in the middle of 1934, more than half a year after Choi left Korea. [311] When the *Tong'a ilbo* announced Choi's departure, it also mentioned that he would perform in Japan for about a month before returning to the U.S.[312] Therefore, Choi most likely participated in a recording session during his tour in Japan. The advertisement for "Hawai'i Norae" (Hawai'i Song, Columbia 40520-A) in Figure 5.8 states that there was surging demand for his records, but the company could not produce them owing to "circumstances beyond its control" (*pudŭgihan sajŏng*). It is reasonable to conjecture that Choi might have been under an exclusive contract with a record company in the U.S., so Nippon Columbia could not release his records during his stay in Korea. Unlike records produced by Japanese-Americans, Choi's records did not lead to further records from Korean-American musicians or generate significant interest in instrumental jazz records in colonial Korea.

Korean *chaejŭ-song* record production did not gain momentum despite such transnational efforts. Early transnational *chaejŭ-song* production could not have made much of an impact since the records were not much different from other foreign-produced ones. Since the aforementioned

[311] There are three available recordings by Choi. His first record was numbered Columbia 40511 and has "Chosŏn Chal Itkŏra" (Goodbye Chosŏn) on side A and "Yangsando" (a Korean folksong, the title of which has no clear meaning) on side B. His second record, numbered Columbia 40520, has "Hawai Norae" (Hawai'ian Song) on side A and the same version of "Yangsando" on side B.

[312] *Tong'a ilbo*, Sep. 27, 1933, p2.

musicians mainly produced instrumental records, whether they produced them specifically for the Korean market was not apparent to consumers. Renditions of Korean folk songs with a heavy jazz influence, which were included in such productions, did not seem to generate the positive responses that *munyebu* desired either. Such efforts mostly ended up as isolated cases. Though Nippon Columbia took the initiative to introduce *chaejŭ-song* as a genre, its actual record production was spotty. After releasing Pok Hye-suk's first two *chaejŭ-song* records in January 1930, Nippon Columbia released a new record in November 1931, almost two years later.[313] The company released its third *chaejŭ-song* record in August 1934. Nippon Polydor came out with its own in 1935, and Nippon Victor belatedly joined in, releasing its first *chaejŭ-song* records in 1936. After producing its record with the Paris Moulin Rouge Musicians, Chieron only released one other *chaejŭ-song* and then dropped completely out of the Korean market in late 1935. Thus, the number of *chaejŭ-song* records remained very limited in the first half of the 1930s. Only thirteen pieces categorized as *chaejŭ-song* or related cover genres were released by 1934.[314]

The dearth of *chaejŭ-song* production by the early 1930s might be related with the reluctance of *muyebu*. It is true that Korea did not have a developed dancehall culture like Japan in the 1920s,[315] so the number of musicians who could perform *chaejŭ-song* was most likely limited, and their technique in general might not have been so competitive in the early 30s. However, most records were recorded in Japan, so Japanese musicians often provided

[313] Except for Pok's first march song "Chongno Haengjingok," which was a cover of "Dōtonbori Koshinkyoku," the other similar marches were categorized as *yuhaengga* rather than *chaejŭ-song* in colonial Korea. They might not have evoked much of the Western or jazzy feelings that Korean consumers expected.

[314] Lee, "1930-nyŏndae Han'guk Taejung Kayo ŭi Changrŭ Honyong Yangsang," 227–33. Lee So-young also states that the number of recorded music identified as *chaejŭ-song* or related cover genres numbered 127.

[315] This does not necessarily mean that young Koreans did not dance. The *Chosŏn ilbo* published an article reporting that ten secret dance halls were raided by the police in January 28, 1933.

accompaniment for Korean singers. Therefore, producing Korean *chaejŭ-song* records itself should not have been a problem. The reason may then be found in *munyebu*'s business strategy. One possibility is that Koreans involved in the recording industry at the outset came mostly from the most privileged ranks of Korean society and at first approached the making of popular music as a means of public enlightenment and cultural reform, so most of them might not have felt comfortable producing *chaejŭ-song* records due to the genre's reputation for being decadent and corrupt. Another reason might be that *munyebu* might have concluded that Korean consumers, especially those who preferred jazz music, would prefer records of Japanese *jazu-songu*, not to mention other foreign-produced records over Korean ones. However, jazz had already been generating excitement among younger urban Koreans since the middle of the 1920s. As they became increasingly familiar with Western-style music through records and Hollywood films in the 1930s, *munyebu* needed to keep up with them by offering more foreign sounding products if they wanted to maintain their profits.

What triggered the increase of *chaejŭ-song* record production in the second half of the 1930s is still worth considering. It is probable that the Korean-language records by Dikkŭ (Dick) Mine (1908-1991)[316] helped accelerate the production and consumption of *chaejŭ-song* records. Why an established Japanese *jazu-songu* signer like him became involved in making Korean *chaejŭ-song* records is unclear. Popular Korean singers often released Japanese cover versions of their own Korean hit songs, but it was rare for Japanese singers to produce Korean records. Since there were far fewer record consumers in Korea than Japan, and Japanese records were prevalent in the Korean market, it might not have been so attractive for Japanese performers to produce records specifically for Korea. There are two possible explanations for Mine's Korean records. It

[316] In English, his name was written Dick Mine, but I use the romanization of the name's Japanese pronunciation.

may have been Okeh's general manager Yi Ch'ŏl, known for his extraordinary business skills, who was responsible for recruiting Mine. Okeh in general focused on producing popular music records, so *chaejŭ-song* might have been chosen as the genre with which Okeh could prevail in Korea's competitive record market. Additionally, as an in-house composer at Okeh's parent company, Teichiku Records, Koga Masao might have had some influence on Mine. Considering that it was Koga's advice that led Mine to initially record *jazu-songu*, which brought him fame, and that Koga had some affinity with Korea where he had grown up, Koga might have asked Mine to make Korean records to help Teichiku's business there. Whatever the case, Mine's *chaejŭ-song* records were successful in Korea. Along with his musical talent, the fact that his Korean singing was not awkward must have helped his popularity. Thus, Mine's adventure, compared with Richard Choi's, was the more consistent and successful one. He released Korean versions of "Dinah," "St. Louise Blues," "My Blue Heaven," and seven other songs starting in 1935. Mine even used a Korean pseudonym for these records, Sam U-yŏl, which was a Korean transliteration of "Samuel."

The frequency and duration of Mine's record releases in Korea reveal his popularity. Based on my research of one online and two published discographies,[317] his first such record was a Korean cover of "Daina" (Dinah, Okeh 1761-A), released in February 1935, followed by "Chipsi ŭi Tal" (Gypsy Moon, Okeh 1771-A) two months later. Pak Yŏn-wŏl's songs occupied the B-sides, but it is uncertain how much they contributed to the success of the records. Mine's Korean debut was inarguably successful, since his solo album was released soon after in September 1935 and was followed by two more records later that year. Figure 5.10 shows an enlarged part of Figure

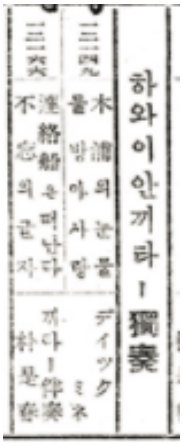
[317] The following information regarding Mine's records is taken from *Han'guk yusŏnggi ŭmban* (2011), *Han'guk yusŏnggi ŭmban ch'ongmorok* (1998) as well as the "Korea Record Archive" at http://www.78archive.co.kr/v2/.

5.9, which advertises the re-release of his records in February 1936. They were all once again re-released in April 1937, demonstrating how popular his records were. On top of these, Mine also released instrumental versions of four popular *yuhaengga* songs played on Hawai'ian guitar and accompanied by Pak Si-ch'un as seen in Figure 5.11. The records were to celebrate his Korean tour, and he used his Japanese stage name for them. Since the records did not have lyrics, Korean or otherwise, Mine's name alone must have helped attract both Japanese and Korean audiences due to his reputation. Starting with "Mokp'o ŭi Nunmul" (Tears of Mokp'o), all four *yuhaengga* songs had already been hits, and Mine's instrumental versions were also well-received. Since their first release in the second half of 1939, the records were advertised almost twenty times in all three major newspapers, the *Chosŏn ilbo*, *Maeil sinbo*, and *Tong'a ilbo*. Advertisements for the records even appeared in early 1943 in Okeh's monthly catalogs. Likewise, Mine had become a recognized musician throughout the Japanese Empire.[318] His Korean *chaejŭ-song* records must have encouraged Korean sound professionals to try making their own.

Figure 5.9

Figure 5.10

Figure 5.11



Parts of the Okeh Monthly Catalog of 1937
(courtesy of the Korean Record Archive)

[318] Pak Ch'an-ho states that Dikkŭ Mine experienced discrimination from those who were suspicious that he had Korean origins, but provides no citations (*Han'guk kayosa*, 253).

Changed Conditions for Record Production

By the middle of the 1930s, Korean sound professionals who managed *munyebu* became fully aware that their value was judged according to the marketability of their records. A magazine called *Sahaegongnon* organized a roundtable discussion with Korean sound professionals from all the representative record companies in 1936, and its report reveals that they considered records to be products first and foremost.[319] Pak Yŏng-ho made a "frank confession" (*solchikhan kobaek*) that his priority in producing records was their commodity value and that consideration for their cultural role was limited. Min Hyo-sik stated that what he cared about in making records were three words: "trendiness, entertainment, and net profit." Yi Sŏ-gu's statement was the most straightforward, saying "I try to make marketable records." The other three gave more diplomatic and conventional responses, mentioning their intention to contribute to Korean culture using expressions like "Koreanized records" (*Chosŏnjŏk recodŭ*) or "wholesome entertainment" (*kŏnjŏnhan orak*).[320] Nonetheless, it seems clear that they no longer approached their audiences as masses to be enlightened but as consumers to be entertained, whose diverse and changing tastes they strove to meet. In other words, since Korean elites in colonial Korea tended to move across various fields, those who remained strong in the recording industry were the ones who successfully adapted to the industry's commercial purposes.

Munyebu were also reinforced with new musicians from the middle of the 1930s, many of whom started their careers as onstage popular music performers. The legendary instrumentalist

[319] "Chosŏn Munhwa ŭi Chaegŏnŭl Wihaya." Record culture was only one subject of the discussion. Other cultural subjects such as literature and art were also covered.

[320] "Chosŏn Munhwa ŭi Chaegŏnŭl Wihaya," 54–55.

and songwriter Pak Si-Chun, even before he became a teenager, spent every night in front of a café in his hometown of Milyang, a small city in the southeast part of Korea, listening to Japanese popular music from a gramophone. Pak was just eleven years old when he ran away from home to become a stage performer. He later travelled all over Korea, Manchuria, and even Japan, performing at theaters and clubs. It was at a theater where Yi Sŏ-gu recruited him for Chieron Records, and Pak eventually had the opportunity to release records of his own compositions in 1935.[321] Kim Hae-song is another such example. Having been a guitar enthusiast as a student in Pyŏngyang, Kim built his reputation performing for the Okeh Records show troupe. With no formal music training, he started as an instrumentalist, but he quickly exhibited exceptional talent in various fields including songwriting, performing, conducting, and producing. Based on their experiences onstage, these artists excelled in competition with other musicians and assumed the highest positions in the recording industry. They were quite different from the first generation of elite sound professionals in the sense that they built their reputations in the entertainment industry from the start. More importantly, most of them made their careers in the recording industry and show business, which continued in most cases past the colonial period.

The prevalence of *chazŭ-song* and other hybridized music production could not have been possible without a new generation of singers as well. In other words, the recruitment efforts of *munyebu* were no longer limited to special groups like music-school graduates, *kisaeng*, or intermission singers after the middle of the 1930s. This is because, among those who grew up listening to popular music from the late 1920s, talented individuals showed potential to be stars as long as they received adequate training and management by *munyebu*. The following cases demonstrate the new ways with which the record companies acquired fresh talent in late colonial

[321] Park, *Han'guk kayosa*, 334.

Korea. In the first case, would-be singers approached the record companies by themselves and demanded auditions. For example, Nam In-su (1918-1962) appeared at the offices of Chieron Records and requested to have a tryout in 1936. His beautiful voice convinced the *munyebu* on the spot to produce a trial record.[322] If Nam seemed brave, the persistence of Pak Hyang-rim (1921-1946) was quite astonishing. She was the teenage daughter of an innkeeper in Chuŭl, a small city at the northern tip of the Korean peninsula, where the Okeh Records revue troupe stayed during one of their tours. Pak persuaded Yi Chŏl, the head of the troupe, to listen to her sing. Yi was not satisfied, but promised to let her have another chance if she came to Kyŏngsŏng sometime in the future. Pak bravely traveled all the way to Kyŏngsŏng and requested another audition. Even then, she did not get an offer from Yi, but she was still not discouraged. After passing her tryout at T'aep'yŏng Records instead, Pak was finally given the chance to record a song called "Youth Theater" (Chŏngch'un Kŭkchang, Taihei 8326-A) in 1937,[323] which made her a star instantly.[324] A more systematic recruitment method was singing competitions held all over the peninsula, even in smaller cities and towns. Record companies in the 1930s regularly organized such competitions as means to recruit new artists as well as raise their revenues. Contestants had to pay a fee to apply, but winners had a chance to make their own records. Therefore, there was usually a rush of applicants for such events. Chin Pang-nam (1917-2012) was an example since he made his debut through T'aep'yŏng Records after winning a competition held in Kimchŏn, located in the south near Taegu, in 1939.[325] The last recruitment method was street scouting, and the example of

[322] Park, 381.

[323] Though she was more well-known as Pak Hyang-rim, she went by Pak Chŏng-rim when she worked for T'aep'yŏng Records. Taihei is the Japanese pronunciation of T'aep'yŏng.

[324] Park, *Han'guk kayosa*, 445.

[325] Park, 479.

Hwang Kŭm-sim (1921-2001) is well known. Hwang's voice, coming from her room at an inn where she stayed, drew the attention of passers-by every night. Approached by Okeh and Nippon Victor, she made contracts with both, which resulted in legal wrangling between them.[326] All these cases show that the idea of becoming a recording artist was attractive enough to pull many talented young people into the industry and the record companies acquired more and more top singers in these three ways as the late 1930s arrived.

The increasing prevalence of modern popular music in the Korean soundscape through records, radio, and stage shows turned young Koreans' interest toward Western-influenced popular music. Even in such favorable circumstances, future stars were still hard to acquire. The *munye-pujang* of Nippon Columbia, Ku Wŏn-hoe, even compared finding a good singer to spotting "a vein of gold" (*kŭmmaek*).[327] In this context, native Korean music, generally called "Chosŏn (Korean) sound" (*Chosŏn sori*), was increasingly referred to as "old music" (*ku-ŭmak*), and hybridized modern popular music gradually took the central position in the Korean music field.

Creative Self-Censorship: Genre-Mixing and Opaque Packaging

Pak Sŏng-gŏn, the author of the history of Korean jazz introduced earlier, identifies Son Mok-in, Pak Si-ch'un, Kim Hae-song, and Hong Nan-p'a as belonging to the first generation of Korean jazz musicians.[328] Pak most likely included Hong because of his leadership of the first Korean jazz band in 1926 and his introductory articles on jazz. Though he made almost seventy

[326] Park, 372–74.

[327] Ku, "Yuhanggasu Chimangsaeng ege Ponaenŭn Kŭl," 310.

[328] Pak, *Han'guk chaejŭ 100-yŏnsa*.

records, most of Hong's productions were children's songs and plays in addition to some classical and popular music records. None of these featured *chaejŭ-song*. Therefore, it is safe to say that the significance of the other three artists in *chaejŭ-song* was far larger than that of Hong since they were actively involved in recording and performing *chaejŭ-song* as well as jazz onstage. This further shows why it is necessary to pay attention to Okeh Records[329] since all of them maintained exclusive contracts with Okeh for most of their careers. Nippon Columbia, Nippon Victor, and Nippon Polydor also produced *chaejŭ-song* records, but they never exceeded the reputation of Okeh in the genre.

Chaejŭ-song was firmly established as a genre in Korea in the second half of the 1930s since the great majority of *chaejŭ-song* and related cover songs were produced from 1935 and after. As mentioned earlier, the sustained popularity of Dikkŭ Mine's *chaejŭ-song* records must have helped convince Okeh's artists that Korean audiences were willing to buy *chaejŭ-song* records if the music was performed well. Son Mok-in, Pak Si-ch'un, and Kim Hae-song were the leading members of the Okeh in-house orchestra organized in 1934. Due to its great reputation for jazz performances, the orchestra even worked independently under a separate name, the Chosŏn Musical Club (C.M.C. hereafter) from 1938.[330] Led by Son Mok-in as bandmaster, the C.M.C. (Figure 5.12) was known as the best big band in late colonial Korea. According to an advertisement in the *Tong'a ilbo* in 1938, the program of the C.M.C. included "Marinera," "Song of India," and

[329] There was a record label called OKeh in the U.S. It was written spelled OKeh rather than Okeh, from the initials of the founder of the company, Otto K. E. Heinemann. OKeh produced popular songs, dance music, and vaudeville skits. It was also known for producing ethnic recordings for immigrant communities as well as jazz records. In 1926, OKeh was sold to Columbia Records. Since Nippon Columbia was operating in Japan, it is logical to assume that the American OKeh label was not related with the Okeh in Korea and Taiwan.
[330] The band was assembled for Okeh Records in 1934 and began using the title "C.M.C." in 1938.

"Boston Tea Party," which were popular in the global jazz scene of the time.[331] By the late 1930s, *chaejŭ-song* had become a hot genre.

Figure 5.12

C.M.C Performance in 1939
(source: *T'ŭrŏmp'et yŏnjuja Hyŏn Kyŏng-sŏp*, photo 95)

The growing popularity of Korean-made *chaejŭ-song*, however, coincided with intensified political control over culture and cultural products in the late 1930s. As a result, Korean sound professionals might have felt that it was safer to camouflage their music if it had distinct Western influences. Thus, "creative self-censorship" became a strategy for Korean sound professionals to evade scrutiny and consequent censorship from the colonial authorities while providing music with the jazzy or bluesy sounds their audiences desired. This creative self-censorship was carried out in two main ways. One was by syncretizing various musical influences in composing *chaejŭ-song* rather than relying on the characteristics of each genre or musical style. Lee So-young describes such methods as "genre-mixing modes" (*changrŭ honyong yangsang*) and analyzes how Korean *chaejŭ-song* musicians achieved *blues* and *yuhaengga* or *chaejŭ-song* and *sinminyo*

[331] "Chaezu ŭi Sajazhwa," *Tong'a ilbo*, April 21, 1938. Requoted from *Tŭrŏmpet yŏnjuja Hyŏn Kyŏng-sŏp* (2014, 43-44).

crossovers.[332] Focusing on rhythm, a contemporary Korean jazz musician, poet, and professor, Sŏng Ki-wan, introduced what he called "Chosŏn swing *changdan*."[333] Sŏng coined the term to describe Kim Hae-song's creative combining of various swing patterns with Korean indigenous rhythms in 17 of Kim's compositions.[334] Sŏng further reveals how Kim successfully utilized the tension of incongruent pitches arising from Western and Korean instruments played together in his *sinminyo* songs.

The other method adopted by Korean sound professionals for creative self-censorship was marketing their strongly hybridized music within genres other than *chaejŭ-song*. This must have been the reason that *chaejŭ-song* ceased to be produced in the 1940s and that songs explicitly categorized as *chaejŭ-song* were surprisingly few.[335] Table 5.1, which contains the songs that Sŏng Ki-wan analyzed in his study of Kim Hae-song's music, demonstrates how this method worked.[336] Since Sŏng's intention was to reveal Kim's hybridizing skills in detail, all the songs in the table contain elements of jazz, such as the rhythm and instrumentation, in varying degrees. Interestingly, no songs in the table were released as *chaejŭ-song*. They were categorized as *yuhaengga*, *taejung-minyo* (popular *minyo*), or *manyo*.

[332] Lee, "1930-nyŏndae Han'guk Taejung Kayo ŭi Changrŭ Honyong Yangsang."

[333] Sŏng, "Kim Hae-song gwa Chosŏn Sŭwing Changdan."

[334] Kim Hae-song used Kim Song-kyu when he referred to himself as a songwriter.

[335] Lee, "1930-nyŏndae Han'guk Taejung Kayo ŭi Changrŭ Honyong Yangsang," 227-233. Lee So-young also states that the number of recorded songs classified as *chaejŭ-song* or related genres numbered 127.

[336] Sŏng, "Kim Hae-song gwa Chosŏn Sŭwing Changdan" Among the 17 songs that Sŏng examines, I use only the fifteen which were proven to be composed by Kim Hae-song.

Table 5.1

	Record Number	Title	Genre	Released Year
1	Columbia 40813-A	Ch'ŏngch'un Kyegŭp	*yuhaengga*	1938
2	Columbia 40824-A	Kaegogi Chusa[337]	*manyo*	1938
3	Columbia 40847-A	Namuamit'abul	*manyo*	1939
4	Okeh 1895	Ch'ŏngch'unŭn mulgyŏrin'ga	*yuhaengga*	1936
5	Okeh 1912-B	Sŏrum ŭi pŏlp'an	*yuhaengga*	1936
6	Okeh 1919	Pulmyŏl ŭi nun'gil (or nunmul)	*yuhaengga*	1936
7	Okeh 1925-A	Tanp'ungje	*taejung-minyo*	1936
8	Okeh 1928-A	Kamgyŏgŭi Kŭnal	*chaejŭ-song*	1936
9	Okeh 1959-B	Ch'ŏllich'unsaek	*taejung-minyo*	1937
10	Okeh 1963-A	Olp'anggalp'ang	*yuhaengga*	1937
11	Okeh 12054-A	Mirwŏl ŭi k'osŭ	*yuhaengga*	1937
12	Columbia 40803-B	Nae Ch'aetchig e Naega Majatso	*yuhaengga*	1938
13	Columbia40805-A	Ch'ŏngch'un Ppilting	*yuhaengga*	1938
14	Columbia 40805-B	P'ungch'a Tonŭn Kohyang	*yuhaengga*	1938
15	Okeh 12282-A	Tabang ŭi P'urŭn Kkum	*yuhaengga*	1939

List of compositions analyzed by Sŏng, "Kim Hae-song gwa Chosŏn Sŭwing Changdan"
(created by the author)

Even acknowledging that all the songs listed in the table have the mixed musical characteristics of two or more Korean, Japanese, or foreign music genres, one might think that the relatively minor jazz and other stylistic influences, compared to those from Korean and Japanese music, might have been the reason the songs were categorized as other than *chaejŭ-song*. However, some of the listed songs are considered exemplary works of *chaejŭ-song* by contemporary scholars. For example, "Ch'ŏngch'un Kyegŭp" (Youth Class, lyrics by Pak Yŏng-ho and arrangement by Niki Takio, 1938),[338] listed first in the table, is often cited as one of Kim Hae-song's most

[337] "Kaegogi Chusa" is available on YouTube at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s7nCtIT4LdY, accessed Mar 15, 2018.

[338] "Ch'ŏngch'un Kyegŭp" available on YouTube at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CXgsA98krxA, accessed March 15, 2018.

representative *chaejŭ-song*, arranged in the form of Chicago-style jazz with an elaborate introduction and accentuating the second and fourth beats rather than the first and third. A *manyo* song, "Namuamit'abul" (Save Me, Amitabha Buddha, lyrics by Kim Ta-in, 1939),[339] has a four-beat swing rhythm with a Duke Ellington-influenced jungle drum sound, but the song's melody sounds like typical Korean *minyo*.[340] "Tabang ŭi P'urŭn Kkum" (Blue Dream in a Teahouse, lyrics by Cho Myŏng-am, 1939)[341] is generally known as the first Korean blues song, with its use of blue notes and sliding vocals, but it also features a familiar *yuhaengga* mode in its climax.[342] All these songs could have been easily categorized as *chaezu-song* if they were released in the first half of the 1930s. However, many of these de facto *chaezu-song* were classified as *yuhaengga* and other genres from the second half of the 1930s. In other words, music formally identified as *chaezu-song* was not being released, but this fact belies the reality of the Korean record production during the total war period.

Korean interest in westernized music remained strong after the Second Sino-Japanese War broke out in 1937, and this tendency did not seem to disappear in the 1940s either. An article in the magazine *Chokwang* titled "The State of the Wartime Recording Industry," published in April 1940, mentions the dilemma that pro-military (*kun'gukcho*) records did not sell well, but record companies could not make songs with "erotic" (*ero kibun*) or "sentimental" (*sench'i*) melodies in the current circumstances. Meanwhile, popular interest shifted to *yang'ak* (Western records), sales

[339] Both "Namuamit'abul" and "Rumba ŭi Tosŏng" are available on YouTube at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K7jNKpn7osA, accessed March 15, 2018.

[340] Sŏng, "Kim Hae-song gwa Chosŏn Sŭwing Changdan," 142.

[341] "Tabang ŭi P'urŭn Kkum" is available on YouTube at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iN-M3H4wcnA, accessed March 15, 2018.

[342] Lee, "1930-nyŏndae Han'guk Taejung Kayo ŭi Changrŭ Honyong Yangsang," 209.

of which rose very quickly.[343] Until the mid-1930s, *yang'ak* (J: *yōgaku*) records in colonial Korea usually featured Western classical music, regardless of where they were produced. However, *yang'ak* in the *Chokwang* article most likely meant *kyŏng'ŭmak* (J: *keiongaku*) since records of Western classical music were not often produced in late colonial Korea. The category therefore came to be used for jazzy instrumental records, a genre which was quite popular in Japan.[344] Hit *yuhaengga*, *sinminyo*, and *manyo* songs were often rearranged as big band style music and marketed as *kyŏng'ŭmak* records. Due to these songs' popularity as well as the era's desire for jazzy music, the records must have sold well, judging from the fact that sound professionals like Son Mok-in, Kim Hae-song, and Pak Si-Ch'un each released a series of such records in the late colonial period.[345]

Interestingly, instead of describing what was happening in the wartime Korean recording industry, the article mentions developments in the Japanese recording industry in a subsection titled "The Golden Age of Blues." It first addresses how increased sales of *yang'ak* records in Japan helped "jazzify" (*chaejŭhwa*) Japanese popular music by utilizing tango or passionate rumba rhythms, which also rekindled the popularity of "*burusu-mono*." The last sentence of the section states that blues ultimately consists of "nihilistic songs," with feelings that Asians could easily understand.[346] It is reasonable to think that this section's seemingly incongruent information is a creative way to show what kinds of music were or would be trendy in colonial Korea. Portraying themselves as correctly following government policies by releasing pro-military songs despite

[343] Ku, "Chŏnsiha ŭi Recodŭ-kye," 118–19.

[344] Atkins, *Blue Nippon: Authenticating Jazz in Japan*, 151–55.

[345] Sixty-two pieces were released as *kyŏng'ŭmak* records. These can be found in the Korean Record Archive at http://www.78archive.co.kr, accessed June 15, 2018.

[346] Ku, "Chŏnsiha ŭi Recodŭ-kye," 119–20.

their lack of popularity and refraining from producing *chaejŭ-song* records, the Korean sound professionals cited in the article still hinted at what their audiences should look for in discussing the circumstance of the Japanese recording industry. The article ended with the appropriate exhortations regarding what Korean professionals should do in their constrained era. Therefore, once again Korean sound professionals found a way to communicate with their audiences while performing as docile colonized subjects. As described by Taylor Atkins, the Japanese authorities, like other political powers, failed to control and regulate sound professionals and popular music consumers in the Japanese metropole.[347] The situation was not any different in its peripheries, including Korea.

Concluding Remarks

It is true that songs categorized as *chaejŭ-song* were no longer produced from the start of the 1940s, but this does not necessarily mean that music styles and musical elements from the countries of the Allied forces disappeared. Korean music professionals, facing the growing number of young urbanites who favored such music, creatively censored themselves. They incorporated foreign and indigenous musical elements in the music that they wrote and produced rather than adhering to the conventional musical elements of each genre. Not just jazz, but Latin music like tango and rumba, as well as Hawai'ian music, were often utilized in genre-mixing. This music, created through extensive genre-mixing, was marketed under genre names more readily acceptable to the colonial government such as *yuhaengga*, *sinminyo*, and *manyo*. In addition, Korean sound professionals also produced an increasing amount of jazzy instrumental music, but these records

[347] For more information about the wartime jazz music scene, see Atkins, *Blue Nippon: Authenticating Jazz in Japan*, chap. 4.

were categorized as benign-sounding *kyŏng'ŭmak*, as they were in Japan. This creative self-censoring process greatly helped Korean sound professionals to navigate through a precarious time while satisfying both the censoring authority and their audiences.

As record production was significantly reduced especially during total mobilization, Korean sound professionals focused more on revue performances rather than producing records themselves.[348] Their performances on stage were not any different. As the Japanese manager of the Okeh troupe Chosŏn Akkŭktan in 1943, Sato Kunino recalled that their most popular program was a performance by a female singing group called Chŏgori Sisŭtŏjŭ (Chŏgori Sisters). The group began their performances with familiar Korean rhythms played on a Korean drum called a *changgu*,[349] but once the rhythm increased, it changed smoothly into a swinging jazz beat.[350] Just as the group's name was constructed using the pure Korean word *chŏgori*, the upper garment of Korean traditional clothes, and the English term, "sisters," Korean sound professionals provided their multiethnic audiences with a creative mixture of native and foreign elements through revue performances throughout the Japanese Empire. The late colonial period is often known as the darkest time for the Korean recording industry, but this close study reveals how cleverly Koreans managed to deal with the various demands of the era as sound professionals. The popularity of their performances further demonstrates that the Japanese Empire was not successful in fully controlling sound professionals as well as mass audiences both at the center and in the peripheries.

[348] "Recodŭgye ŭi Naemak ŭl Tŭnnŭn Chwadamhoe," 316.

[349] *Changgu* is a double-headed drum with a narrow waist in the middle.

[350] Tateno, *Kŭ ttae kŭ Ilbonindŭl: Han'guk hyŏndaesa e kŭdŭl ŭn muŏt iŏnna*, 448–49.

Epilogue

In 2009, the Center for Historical Truth and Justice (K: Minjok Munje Yon'guso) published *Ch'inil inmyŏng sajŏn* (Biographical Dictionary of Pro-Japanese Collaborators),[351] a compilation of so-called "pro-Japanese and anti-national actors" and their activities during the colonial period.[352] Eighteen popular, twelve classical, and two traditional musicians were listed among 43 entries under the category of musicians and dancers.[353] The list contains most musicians representing classical music during the colonial period, such as An Ik-t'ae,[354] Hong Nan-p'a, and Hyŏn Che-myŏng.[355] The popular musicians included were all stars like Kim Hae-song, Nam In-su, Pak Si-ch'un, and Paek Nyŏn-sŏl. The dictionary caused Koreans to face the fact that famous and beloved musicians had collaborated during the colonial period. At the same time, it incited much controversy and argument in South Korean society across various political perspectives. A representative response was Ryu Chae-jun's refusal of the 46th Nanp'a Music Award in in 2013, in protest of (Hong) Nan-p'a's collaboration.[356] This was scandalous since it was the first time such

[351] Ch'inil Inmyŏng Sajŏn P'yŏnch'an Wiwŏnhoe, *Ch'inil inmyŏng sajŏn*.

[352] Since the center's foundation in 1991 after South Korea's democratic transition, it had focused on publication projects related to pro-Japanese collaborators and issues surrounding them, but financial difficulties interfered with the progress of the dictionary project. Thanks to the success of a campaign in 1999 to earn support from 10,000 professors both within South Korea and abroad as well as their commitment to establish a committee to support the project financially and technically, the Center for Historical Truth and Justice succeeded in publishing the dictionary. Chung, "Refracted Modernity and the Issue of Pro-Japanese Collaborators in Korea," 49–50.

[353] The entries are as follows. Traditional music: Ham Hwa-jin, Kim Ki-su; Classical music: Kye Ch'ŏng-sik, Kim Kwan, Kim Tong-jin, Kim Saeng-ryŏ, Kim Sŏng-tae, Kim Ch'ŏn-ae, An Ik-t'ae, Yi In-bŏm, Yi Hŭng-ryŏl, Cho Tu-nam, Hyŏn, Che-myŏng, Hong Nan-p'a; Popular Music: Kang Yŏng-ch'ŏl, Kim Yŏng-gil, Kim Chun-yŏng, Kim Hae-song, Nam In-su, Pak Si-ch'un, Paek Nyŏn-sŏl, Pan Ya-wŏl, Son Mok-in, Yi Kyu-nam, Yi Chae-ho, Yi Ch'ŏl, Chang Se-jŏng, Chŏn Ki-hyŏn, Cho Myŏng-am, Cho'e P'al-gŭn, Han Sang-gi.

[354] An Ik-t'ae (1906-1965) was a composer and conductor who led major orchestras across Europe. He composed the South Korean national anthem.

[355] Hyŏn Che-myŏng (1902-1960) was the first Korean to study theology and music in Chicago in the 1920s and later founded the Music Department at Seoul National University.

[356] Chung, Sang-young. "Chakkok-ga Ryujaejun "Nanp'a Ŭmaksang" Susang Kŏbu," *The Hankyoreh*, September

a thing had happened since the award was instituted in 1968, with such acclaimed past recipients as the pianist Paik Kun-woo, the conductor Chung Myung-hun, the soprano Jo Sumi, and the cellist and conductor Chang Han-na. Others took more cautious approaches. Min Ŭn-gi, a Seoul National University professor in musicology, argued, "Let's forgive (their wrongdoings), but let's not forget them."[357] Lee Dong-soon, a poet and scholar of Korean literature, expressed his "bewilderment and concern" (*tanghok kwa yŏmnyŏ*) about the listed musicians. According to Lee, Korean music history, especially popular music history, would not exist without them because they amounted to all the significant popular musicians from the colonial period. On top of their cultural significance, Lee argued that their songs are beloved by the Korean people and had been a source of comfort and encouragement throughout Korea's tumultuous twentieth-century history.[358] The head of the Music Critics Association of Korea (K: Han'guk Ŭmak P'yŏngnon'ga Hyŏbŭihoe),[359] Kim Hyŏng-ju boldly stated, "There were no collaborators, only patriots in the field of music" in a seminar organized by the association.[360] Likewise, among the South Korean public and intellectuals, attitudes ranged from uncompromising to conciliatory. If the first stressed the importance of bringing to light buried historical truth, the second emphasized the musicians' artistic and cultural contributions while diminishing their collaboration as something distinct from their music careers and the result of pressure from the colonial government.

11, 2013 http://www.hani.co.kr/arti/culture/music/603137.html, accessed May 5, 2018.

[357] Min Ŭn-gi, "Ch'inil Ŭmakka wa Ŭmakkye," *Kyunghyang sinmun*, October 24, 2013. http://news.khan.co.kr/kh_news/khan_art_view.html?artid=201310042100305&code=990100, accessed May 5, 2018).

[358] Lee, "Ilchemal Kun'gukkayo ŭi Palp'yo Hyŏnhwang gwa Silt'ae," 372.

[359] According to its website, Han'guk Ŭmak P'yŏngnon'ga Hyŏbŭihoe was established in 1990. Its main activities include publishing a journal called *Han'guk Ŭmak P'yŏngnon* and organizing workshops and seminars. http://komca.net/bbs/board.php?bo_table=m13_1&page=1, accessed May 5, 2018.

[360] kim-tŏk-lyŏn. "Ŭmak-ga Chung Ch'ŏngsandwaeya Hal Ch'inilp'anŭn Ŏpta," OhmyNews, November 11, 2014. http://www.ohmynews.com/NWS_Web/view/at_pg.aspx?CNTN_CD=A0000292710, accessed May 5, 2018.

Whatever stance one takes regarding accusations of collaboration, most concerned parties assume that Koreans in the colonial music industry were initially patriotic and either retained their convictions or only collaborated with the Japanese significantly once total mobilization began. However, such an interpretation obscures the fact that even though they were colonized subjects of the Japanese empire, they were also, at the same time, working professionals in an age of Western cultural hegemony. In other words, they did not produce records for either the Japanese Empire or the Korean nation as such, but they worked to satisfy their diverse audiences—and to earn money—with records or on stage even in the total war period.

Performing Multiple Identities as Korean Sound Professionals

Koreans in the recording industry had to balance their imbricated yet often contentious identities as sound professionals, colonized individuals, and imperial subjects in the Japanese Empire. As the record companies in Japan were nationalized by the late 1930s[361] and closely monitored and controlled by the Japanese authorities, Korean sound professionals were forced into more complicated negotiations with the recording industry and the colonial government. The most representative example was their obligation to produce so-called *kun'guk kayo* (military popular songs), which promoted Japan's war mobilization. The production of such songs in Korea began after the Sino-Japanese War in 1937. Interestingly, far fewer *kun'guk kayo* were produced in Korea than in Japan.[362] Lee Jun-hee, a specialist in colonial Korean popular music, reveals that after the release of the first *kun'guk kayo* record in October 1937, each record company made only a few

[361] Yamauchi, "Ilche Sigi Han'guk Nogŭm Munhwa ŭi Yŏksa Minjokchi," 130. According to Yamauchi, as Nissan (Nihon Sangyo, Japan Industries or Nihon Industries) took over the company, a Japanese person became the president of Nippon Columbia in October 1935 for the first time in the company's history. The long-term general manager of the Korean branch, J. D. Handford, was also replaced a little earlier by a Japanese. By the end of 1937, both Columbia and Victor were bought by Tokyo Denki K.K., which became Toshiba after a few years.
[362] Zhang, *Oppa nŭn p'unggakchaengi ya: taejung kayo ro pon kŭndae ŭl p'unggyŏng*, 333.

more such songs before ceasing production. Between February 1938 and 1941, only one song was released in Korea expressing overt support of the war, which was a Korean version of a Japanese song, "Chiwŏnbyŏng ŭi Ŏmŏni" (The Mother of a Volunteer Soldier, Okeh 31052-A, 1941).[363] According to the *munye-pujang* of the representative record companies of the time, their companies were at first reluctant to produce *kun'guk kayo* simply because they were not popular.[364]

Even so, production of *kun'guk kayo* accelerated from 1942. There are two possible explanations for this transition. One is the issuance of artist identification cards (*kiyejŭng*) from late 1941, as Lee Jun-hee argues, since musicians were not allowed to perform without them.[365] Qualification screenings occurred twice a year and were carried out by the Chosŏn Music Association (K: Chosŏn Ŭmak Hyŏp'hoe). This government-sponsored organization was set up by Shiobara Tokisaburō, the Chief of the Education Bureau of the GGK, who served as its first president. The screening consisted of three parts: a test of Japanese language proficiency, a performance test, and an interview. The purpose of the interview was to verify applicants' political opinions.[366] In other words, not only their musicality but also their pro-Japanese inclinations or performability were tested. This tight political control over musicians must have made them more receptive to making *kun'guk kayo* as long as they stayed in the profession.

Taking a more macro-level approach than Lee, Zhang Yu-jeong explains the phenomenon in relation to a Japanese political movement called the New Structure Movement (*Shin Taisei*

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[363] The Japanese original was called "Gunkoku no Haha" (Mother of a Militant Nation, lyrics by Simada Kinya, music by Koga Masao, sung by Michiyakko, 1936). The Korean version was sung by Chang Se-jŏng with lyrics adapted by Cho Myŏng-am. The digitized original recording is available at http://blog.daum.net/_blog/BlogTypeView.do?blogid=0Li0k&articleno=7767515,accesed March 7, 2018.

[364] "Recodŭgye ŭi Naemak ŭl Tŭnnŭn Chwadamhoe," 137.

[365] Lee, "Ilche Sidae Kunguk Kayo Yŏn'gu," 149–52, 154.

[366] Mun, "Ilche Kangjŏmgi Ŭmak T'ongje e Kwanhan Yŏn-gu," 392.

Undō), led by Prince Konoe Fumimaro from 1940, which promoted a planned economy and a totalitarian, one-party state following the model of Nazi Germany. Zhang argues that, under the influence of this movement, the Japan Phonogram Record Cultural Association (J: Nihon Chikuonki Rekōdo Bunka Kyōkai)[367] was organized in 1942, which was followed by the consolidation of existing record manufacturing and distribution companies in Japan into five companies.[368] Meanwhile, the English names of record companies were required to be changed to Japanese.[369] Thus, Zhang considers that the "new structure" was fully implemented in the recording industry by 1942, and further speculates that each record company was required to produce a certain number of *kun'guk kayo* records.[370] The arguments of both Lee and Zhang seem highly plausible. If the necessity of an artist identification card influenced Korean sound professionals on a personal level, enforcing political control over the recording industry must have influenced the general direction of Korean record production.

Political influence over the recording industry seems to have been omnipresent from 1942 on. Nippon Columbia's newspaper had been called *Koromubia jihō* ever since its first issue in October 1939 as seen Figure E.1,[371] but the title of the 23rd issue, published on December 25, 1942, was changed to *Nitchiku jihō* as seen Figure E.2. The photo located to the right of the new title shows that the company held "The First Annual Commemoration Ceremony of the Great East Asia

[367] The Japan Phonogram Record Cultural Association adopted its current name, the Recording Industry Association of Japan (Nippon Rekōdo Kyōkai, abbreviated as RIAJ), in 1969.

[368] Zhang, *Oppa nŭn p'unggakchaengi ya: taejung kayo ro pon kŭndae ŭl p'unggyŏng*, 337.

[369] Pak, "Hwallak kwa Hwanmyŏl: 1930-nyŏndae Manyo wa Chaejŭsong e Nat'anan Toshi ŭi 'Natsŏn' Hyŏngsang," 148.

[370] Zhang, *Oppa nŭn p'unggakchaengi ya: taejung kayo ro pon kŭndae ŭl p'unggyŏng*, 337–38. 32

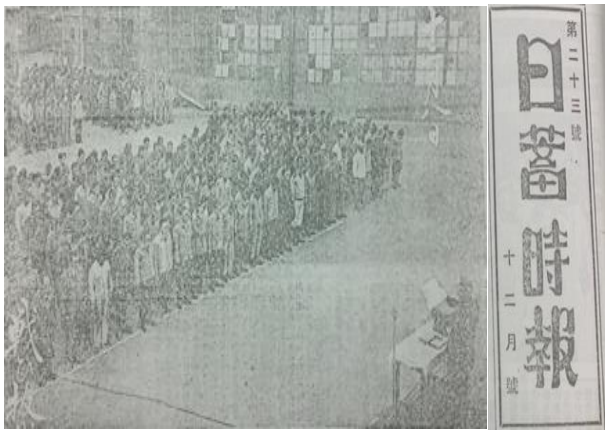
[371] The edge of the first issue was torn, so I could not identify the date when it was published.

War." Under the photo, which took more a third of the entire page, was a short report of the ceremony. It was followed by an exhortation from the company president, titled "The Cultivation of Willpower to Fight to the End" (*Kachinuku Seishin-ryoku no Kan'yō*). This reveals how the entire recording industry was mobilized to support the Pacific War. It is certain that if the previous American president had still been in the position, such an event would not have happened. On top of this, a list of banned American and British music was released in Japan in January 1943, which prompted the "Enemy Records Eradication Movement" in colonial Korea within a few months.[372] Against this political backdrop, it is no wonder that the majority of *kun'guk kayo* was made between 1942 and 1943.[373]

Figure E.1

First issue of *Koromubia jihō*
October ?, 1939, p1
(courtesy of Nippon Columbia Archive)

Figure E.2



Nitchiku jihō
December 25, 1942. p1
(courtesy of Nippon Columbia Archive)

As Lee Jun-hee observes, Korean sound professionals making *kun'guk kayo* was a structural consequence of the political situation rather than the outcome of their political allegiance,

[372] Lee, "Ilche Sidae Ŭmban Kŏmyŏl Yŏn'gu," 172.

[373] Zhang, *Oppa nŭn p'unggakchaengi ya: taejung kayo ro pon kŭndae ŭl p'unggyŏng*, 228.

since the colonial government had moved from simply banning objectionable songs to actively promoting those with approved messages.[374] Since Okeh produced the highest overall number of records in late colonial Korea, followed by Taep'yŏng Records (J: Taihei), it might not be surprising to find out that most *kun'guk kayo* records were made by Okeh as well. The company's own composers, such as Pak Si-Ch'un, Kim Hae-song, and Son Mok-in, were all known as top composers of *kun'guk kayo*, and the lyrics to most *kun'guk kayo* produced in colonial Korea were written by Okeh's exclusive lyricist, Cho Myŏng-am. Thus, Lee considers Cho to have been "the most pro-authority lyricist."[375] For them, making and performing *kun'guk kayo* must have been a kind of gesture to prove that they were disciplined politically, by which they were able to secure the right to be part of the entertainment industry.

Despite their expressed support for the war, Korean sound professionals knew how to appeal to Koreans at the same time. Lee Dong-soon in a magazine article describes the following episode.[376] The general manager of Okeh Records, Yi Ch'ŏl, jumped on the stage during a performance in February 1940, which was to celebrate the return of Chosŏn Akkŭktan, Okeh's music and theater troupe, from its successful tour of Japan. The tour had lasted about three months and included Tokyo, Kyoto, and Osaka. While on stage, Yi declared, "Those *geta* (Japanese wooden sandals, a pejorative name for Japanese) can't beat us!" The police were informed and he was detained at Chongno Police Station for twenty days. Lee thus portrays Yi as a heroic figure

[374] Lee, "Singminji Chosŏn Yuhaengga ŭi Ilbonŏ Kasa," 117.

[375] I have not provided the number of songs written by each composer. *Kun'guk kayo* were not actually categorized as such, so the precise number is uncertain. Lee Dong-soon tends to apply the term liberally and argues that over 110 *kun'guk kayo* songs were produced. Different numbers are suggested by other writers: Pak Si-ch'un (38 songs), Yi Chae-ho (23 songs), Kim Hae-song (21 songs), and Son Mok-in (13 songs). An in-house lyricist at Okeh Records, Cho Myŏng-am wrote the majority of *kun'guk kayo*, recording 67 song lyrics. For more information, see Lee, "Ilchemal Kun'gukkayo ŭi Palp'yo Hyŏnhwang gwa Silt'ae," 382.

[376] Lee, "Ilcheshidae Choguk ŭi Noraerŭl Chik'yŏ Naettŏn Yi ch'ŏl ŭi Sam kwa Yesul kŭrigo Choguk."

who defended "the song of the nation" (*choguk ŭi norae*) from Japanese imperial power. Victim-hero narratives like this regarding sound professionals still have currency among South Koreans, but the impact of this incident must have been far greater during the colonial period.

Yi Ch'ŏl's imprisonment may be indicative of the conundrum faced by talented colonial subjects who wanted to pursue success in the entertainment industry across the Japanese Empire. Considering that Chosŏn Akkŭktan's tour of Japan in 1940 had been sponsored by Shōchiku, one of the top promotion agencies in Japan—and that its reception was positive enough that it could perform in multiple cities over three months—Yi must have felt proud of the troupe's achievement. At the same time, Chosŏn Akkŭktan had to adjust each of its performances to satisfy the demands of local police for changes in content, costumes, settings, and even language.[377] However, Yi's action seems overdramatic, since Chosŏn Akkŭktan must have been accustomed to or at least expected such difficulties. One more aspect of this episode that has not so far been explored by scholars is that Yi's performance might have been highly calculated to appeal to or influence his Korean audience. That is, it could have been a conciliatory gesture for Koreans to diffuse negative perceptions caused by the groups' pro-Japanese activities, asserting that Chosŏn Akkŭktan belonged first of all to the Korean nation.

Another point that calls for attention is Yi's claim that Chosŏn Akkŭktan's performing skills were as good as its Japanese competitors, if not better. This might have been more than just a simple boast. Even considering that Yi was a showman who knew how to draw the attention of an audience, he still seems to have believed that it was possible to attain the skills involved in top Japanese theater performances, provided funding and opportunities were sufficient. As seen in

[377] Park, *Han'guk kayosa*, 546–47.

Figure E.3, Yi and the members of Chosŏn Akkŭktan were well-aware of the talents of Japanese entertainers. They not only listened to their records but also crossed paths with them often during their recording trips. Moreover, being successful enough to be funded by major Japanese promoters, such as Shōchiku and Yoshimoto, Chosŏn Akkŭktan collaborated at times with top Japanese performers to promote war mobilization as well as assimilation efforts. For example, when Shōchiku's all-female musical theater troupe, the Shōchiku Shōjo Kagekidan toured Korea, Chosŏn Akkŭktan performed with them.[378] Yi's statement at least reflected his confidence that the cultural products that Chosŏn Akkŭktan produced were competitive in Japan and East Asia.

Figure E.3

Okeh Records Troupe performing with the geisha singer Michiyakko and Dikkŭ Mine in 1936
(source: *T'ŭrŏmp'et yŏnjuja Hyŏn Kyŏng-sŏp,* photo 78)

On the contrary, Yi Ch'ŏl and other Korean sound professionals performed appropriately when they dealt with the Japanese side as well. A roundtable discussion for the July 1941 issue of the magazine *Sinsidae* shows how they performed their required roles.[379] In the article, using his

[378] Kim, "Chosŏn ŭl Yŏnch'ulhada: Chosŏn Akkŭkdan ŭi Ilbon Chinch'ul Kongyŏn kwa Kungminhwa ŭi (Pul)hyŏphwaŭm (1933-1944)," 181.

[379] "Chosŏn Akkŭktan Hwanggun Wimun Hoego Chwadamhoe."

Japanese name Aoyama Tetsu, Yi and eight other members of Chosŏn Akkŭktan spoke with a reporter and two lieutenant colonels. Naturally, given the presence of the two military officials, the article focused on mobilizing Korean sound professionals to participate in Japan's war efforts. The discussion therefore concerned the troupe's three-month tour of China in 1940, which had included Tianjin, Beijing, Jinan, and Nanjing, focusing specifically on their consolation performances for the imperial army (*hwanggun wimun*) among other activities. However, the troupe's two-month tour of Manchuria later that year was not even considered in the discussion. This is most likely because the Japanese army had moved deeper into mainland China by this time. In subsections titled "Happiness Performing in Front of the Imperial Army" and "Frequent Shows Necessary at Military Camps," the two lieutenant colonels encouraged Korean performers to pay consolation visits to soldiers on the battlefield more often, rather than performing in cities. Chosŏn Akkŭktan's performers were even asked to write replies to fan letters from soldiers themselves instead of leaving the job to Okeh's planning department. The troupe members responded with the expected answers, saying that they felt happier to perform for the military than for regular audiences and that they, with all their heart, would try to pay back the soldiers for their sacrifice with their humble art, while promising to develop more national language programs.[380] It is not possible to know how the discussion actually proceeded in this tightly circumscribed article, but the members of Chosŏn Akkŭktan seemed to be familiar with such situations and performed their roles appropriately, as far as can be determined.

At the same time, the Chosŏn Akkŭktan members mentioned in the article seem to have developed some genuine affinity with and sympathy for the Japanese army, including Korean

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[380] "Chosŏn Akkŭktan Hwanggun Wimun Hoego Chwadamhoe," 194.

volunteer soldiers. Not only did the military audiences, who were under extreme stress, appreciate their performances greatly, but the troupe members also shared some personal moments with the soldiers, such as eating and taking photos together and signing autographs. The fact that these performers had been protected by the army in some instances also contributed to the apparent comradeship that emerged between Chosŏn Akkŭktan and the Japanese Army.[381]

Yi Ch'ŏl and Kim Sang-jin, as the respective head and the chief producer of the troupe, did not just simply provide answers but also used the discussion to promote their activities. While repeatedly mentioning how much recognition Chosŏn Akkŭktan had earned through its overseas performances, they proudly stated that their performances had helped Japanese and others reconsider Korean culture. According to Yi, the Japanese soldiers in China did not have a chance to observe Korea's development since they went there directly by ship. These soldiers tended to assume that Korea was primitive, but the advanced performances of Chosŏn Akkŭktan gave them a chance to learn how modernized Korea had become. Yi also mentioned a story concerning audiences in Japan. The owner of the hotel in Kyoto where Chosŏn Akkŭktan stayed went to see their show following a recommendation from an employee. The owner was so impressed that she changed her attitude toward the troupe completely.[382] Kim, like Yi, emphasized the success of Chosŏn Akkŭktan's shows in Japan and China in the discussion. For example, Kim described the troupe's experience at the Osaka radio station. After the broadcast of their performance, a meeting followed in which the head of the station's A&R department expressed his willingness to reevaluate the art of Chosŏn Akkŭktan. In China as well, Japanese soldiers showed their appreciation after the performance, asserting that the members of the troupe were very good at

[381] "Chosŏn Akkŭktan Hwanggun Wimun Hoego Chwadamhoe." 192–203.

[382] "Chosŏn Akkŭktan Hwanggun Wimun Hoego Chwadamhoe." 200–201.

Japanese and their show was as good as those by performers from Japan.[383] Since these opinions were conveyed by members of Chosŏn Akkŭktan and drawn from their experience, they might not have been entirely factual. However, they also reveal that Japan's imperial consumption of Chosŏn Akkŭktan's productions did not necessarily result in an exoticization of Korean culture. It is worth mentioning that Kim and Yi tended to equate Chosŏn Akkŭktan's success with the representation of modernized Korean culture. That is, they took pride in challenging the stereotype of Korea's belated modernity in music and performance among Japanese and demonstrating the contemporaneity of their performances compared to those in Japan.

In the end, the well-choreographed roundtable discussion was successful in displaying how cooperative Korean sound professionals could be for the Japanese war effort. However, if the colonial authority wanted to go further and have Chosŏn Akkŭktan organize battlefield performances for the imperial army more regularly, the plan was not successful. In the months following the discussion and magazine article, the troupe mostly performed in Korea and Japan at top theaters including Shōchiku Meijiza, Tōkyō Gekijō and Kokusai Gekijō in Tokyo. It also toured Manchuria, but there is no record that they toured mainland China again.[384] Presenting themselves as disciplined performers of the Japanese Empire certainly helped the members of Chosŏn Akkŭktan to sustain their position in the colonial entertainment industry. However, it does not seem that they were motivated to put the troupe itself in danger by traveling to battlefields to console the imperial army.

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[383] "Chosŏn Akkŭktan Hwanggun Wimun Hoego Chwadamhoe." 196, 201.

[384] Kim, "Chosŏn ŭl Yŏnch'ulhada: Chosŏn Akkŭkdan ŭi Ilbon Chinch'ul Kongyŏn kwa Kungminhwa ŭi (Pul)hyŏphwaŭm (1933-1944)," 190–91; Lee, "Kim Hae-song Mudae Ŭmak Hwaldong Ch'ot'am," 97–107.

Figure E.4

Chosŏn Akkŭkdan in 1940
(source: *T'ŭrŏmp'et yŏnjuja Hyŏn Kyŏng-sŏp*. photo 100)

Chosŏn Akkŭktan instead complied with what the military officers wanted in terms of the content of their shows. Their roundtable discussion revealed that the troupe's usual programs included performances by the Arirang Boys and Chŏgori Sisters,[385] *kun'guk kayo*, other popular music styles, dance performances, and *kyŏngŭmak*. Other than the inclusion of *kun'guk kayo*, this list does not seem much different from the troupe's regular performances before it changed its name to Chosŏn Akkŭktan in 1939. Since the roundtable discussion, however, the programs seem to have become more propagandistic and many of them featured Japanese-language content such as "Supai Sensen wo Utsu" (Strike the Spy Front, March 1943), "Yamazakura" (Wild Cherry Blossoms, January 1943), and "Taiheiyō wa kimi o yobu" (The Pacific is Calling You, July 1943) and even included *naniwabushi* theater performances.[386] Chosŏn Akkŭktan's transnational tours

[385] The Arirang Boys and Chŏgori Sisters were organized as Okeh's all male and all female group respectively in 1939. The Arirang Boys consisted of four jazz musicians, while the Chŏgori Sisters was made up of six singers and dancers.

[386] Kim, "Chosŏn ŭl Yŏnch'ulhada: Chosŏn Akkŭkdan ŭi Ilbon Chinch'ul Kongyŏn kwa Kungminhwa ŭi

no longer focused on entertaining Korean residents in Japan and Manchuria, but included Japanese audiences, making it necessary to include more Japanese-language material in its programs in addition to its political concerns. At the least, such programs must have helped increase the opportunity for Chosŏn Akkŭktan to perform across the empire. In other words, the expansion of the Japanese Empire and its wartime mobilization became the conditions for the troupe's transnational success, under which the Korean performers and producers in Chosŏn Akkŭktan and other music and theater troupes[387] in colonial Korea sought to build empire-wide fame. With strong professional identities, they included identifiable "Korean flavor" or "local color" in their performances, which can be seen in Ch'oe Sŭng-hŭi's dance repertoire,[388] but they also performed as imperial subjects, with advanced transcultural content conveying politically required messages, which both the colonial authorities and multiethnic audiences appreciated.

By this point, how significant the ethnic identity of Korean sound professionals really was, especially among popular musicians, is not clear. The recording industry was inherently transcultural and its market, in contrast to the Korean literary market, grew throughout the 1930s since sound products could be enjoyed regardless of literacy, though consumers were divided by their tastes, ages, and ethnicities. More importantly, sound professionals in Japan and Korea engaged in a process of localizing the continually changing globalized sound culture and were simultaneously targets of war mobilization, so it became more and more difficult for Japanese to

(Pul)hyŏphwaŭm (1933-1944)," 190.

[387] Columbia Kagkŭktan, Taep'yŏng Yŏnjudan, Polydor Akkŭktan, Sŏngbo Akkŭktan, Sinhyang Aktan, Kŭmhŭi Akkŭktan, and Cheil Akkŭktan were known to perform outside of the Korean peninsula. For more information, see Park, *Han'guk kayosa*, 551–54.

[388] Yi Chin-a explains that Ch'oe Sŭng-hŭi, who learned Korean dance from Han Sŏng-jun for a short time, did not intend to inherit or revive traditional Korean dance. She constructed her Korean repertoire in relation with the gaze of others and reconfigured local elements in a globalized context. Yi, "Munhwabŏnyŏk ŭrosŏŭi Minjok Muyong: Ch'oe Sŭng-hŭi ŭi Kyŏngu," 167.

deny Korea's coevalness when it came to the popular music and performance fields. Moreover, despite wide-ranging political strictures and discrimination, Korean sound professionals still found unparalleled opportunities in the recording industry and other forms of mass media, in contrast to the majority of Koreans. According to Lee Jun-hee, Kim Hae-song and several other important members of Chosŏn Akkŭktan left the troupe around 1944, when the recording industry had practically ceased its original function, and joined its Japanese competitor in Korea, Yakch'o Kakŭktan (J: Wakakusa Kagekidan). This troupe was funded by a Japanese settler and mostly performed Japanese-language programs. After this move, Yakch'o Kakŭktan advanced to become one of the top such groups, whereas Chosŏn Akkŭktan suffered greatly.[389] Kim must have understood how their move would affect Chosŏn Akkŭktan, which did not keep him and the others from leaving it. What I intend to show here is that Korean sound professionals' career choices cannot be adequately explained by approaching them simply as colonized Koreans. They were certainly effective at performing and appropriating their ethnic identity as well as Japanese national identity when necessary, but among their overlapping identities, their professional identity still can explain their actions most logically.

Revisiting the Recording Industry in Colonial Korea

Performing within the system of the Japanese Empire had different implications when Korea was released from Japanese rule. Most popular Korean sound professionals must have felt threatened when the American military entered the Korean peninsula as a liberating force, since they had produced and performed music and narratives that encouraged pro-Japanese and anti-

[389] Lee, "Kim Hae-song Mudae Ŭmak Hwaldong Ch'ot'am," 109. Those who moved along with Kim Hae-song included Yi Nan-yŏng, Pak Hyang-rim, Hong Ch'ŏng-ja, and Ch'oe Pyŏng-ho. Yi Ch'ŏl died about half a year after Kim and the others' left.

American sentiments. However, Korean sound professionals were not targeted for punishment, but were utilized once again in the new era. One of their roles, which was not different from what they had done during the colonial period, was to provide entertainment for both American and Korean soldiers and promote the government policies of both Koreas. For example, the K.P.K. Band, led by Kim Hae-song after 1946, was popular at American military clubs. At the same time, they continued to perform theater shows for Koreans.[390] Likewise, what Kim Chung-kang pointed out with the expression, "the ways in which politics intersect with entertainment" (*yŏnye wa chŏngch'i ka chouhanŭn pangsik*) remained the same after the colonial era.[391] The situation was not any different in North Korea. Once again, maintaining their close relationship with political power, Korean sound professionals in the divided Koreas largely escaped censure for the compromises they had made working in the Japanese Empire. Cold War politics instead affected their lives and work far more directly than their past activities after the division of Korea.

South Korea's democratic transition of 1987 brought new opportunities and challenges to sound professionals. In the South, music and narratives by those who moved to the North had been either banned or were only available with this problematic fact concealed for most of the second half of the twentieth century. This situation changed and many of the sound professionals mentioned in this dissertation, including Kim Hae-song, only became known to the public around the turn of the twenty-first century. However, the opportunity to revisit and recall their obliterated histories and memories coincided with South Koreans' demand for historical truth and justice after the turn to democracy. This has meant that the effaced histories of sound professionals'

[390] Kim Hae-song even planned to tour Hawaii, but this never happened because of his alleged kidnapping by North Korea. However, Kim and Yi Nan-yŏng's two daughters formed the Kim Sisters along with Yi's niece. They became successful performers in the U.S. in the 1960s and 70s.

[391] Kim, "Chosŏn ŭl Yŏnch'ulhada: Chosŏn Akkŭkdan ŭi Ilbon Chinch'ul Kongyŏn kwa Kungminhwa ŭi (Pul)hyŏphwaŭm (1933-1944)," 198.

collaboration during the colonial period have also been reinvestigated. What I show in this dissertation is that Korean sound professionals performed multiple, even contentious identities and roles, but they were first and foremost professionals who could not effectively work outside of the entertainment industry. Due to their tenacity and talent, the recording industry and other related entertainment fields revived quickly after the colonial period ended.

Record companies in colonial Korea were not necessarily nationalistic or counterhegemonic spaces against imperial power, but transcultural spaces where various forms of global music and culture were experimented with, reconfigured, and reinvented. Korean sound professionals with strong professional identities produced globally informed vernacular records to satisfy their diverse audiences, the production of which was almost contemporaneous with Japan rather than being belated. Korean sound professionals pursued success in the Japanese Empire by marketing Korean records and performing across the borders of the empire, making cover versions in Japanese, and directly working for their Japanese headquarters. This was the way that talented sound professionals in the transnational recording industry, who were also colonial subjects, pursued success by working with and within the evolving opportunities and constraints of the Japanese Empire.

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