

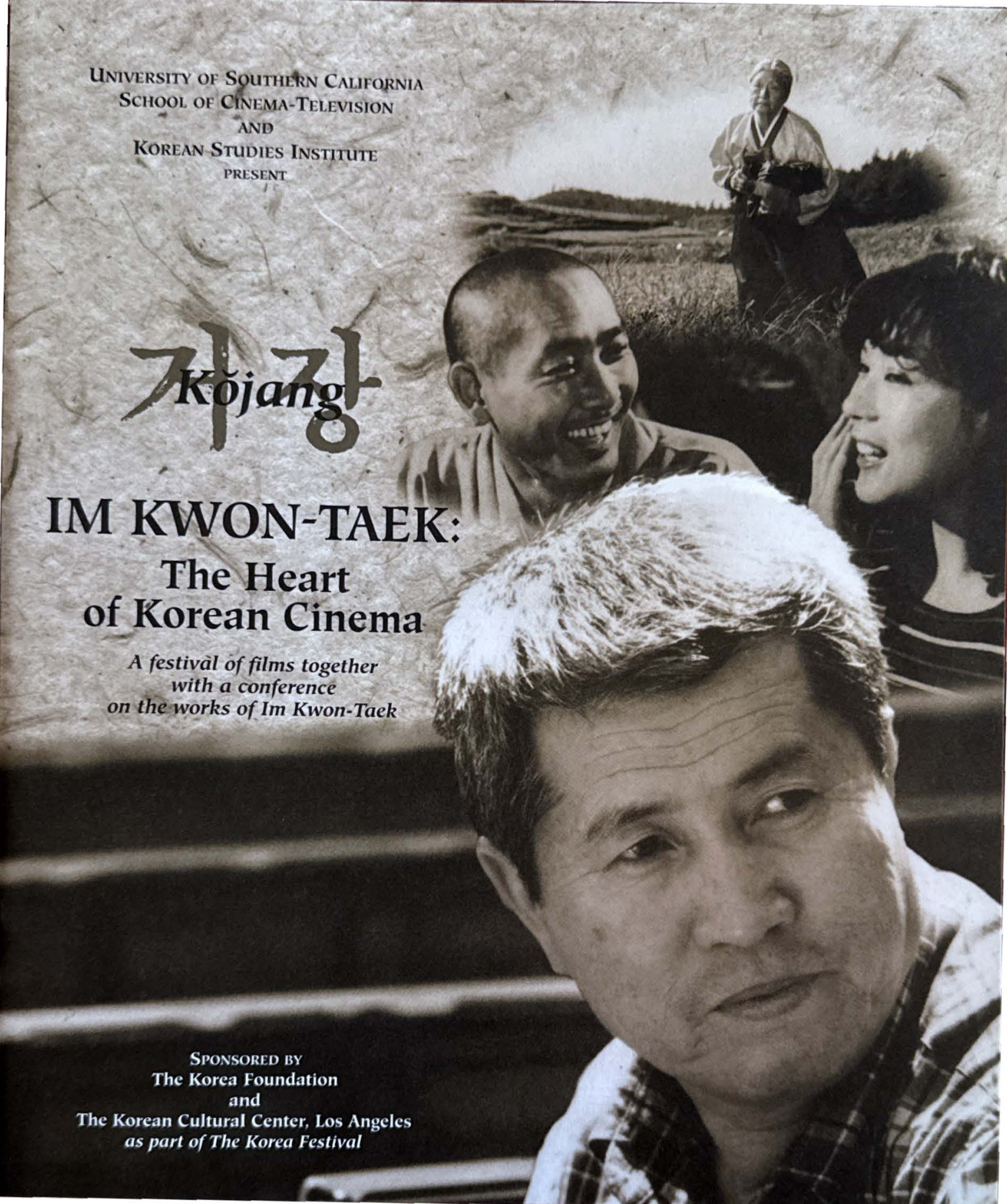
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
SCHOOL OF CINEMA-TELEVISION
AND
KOREAN STUDIES INSTITUTE
PRESENT

자강 Kōjang

IM KWON-TAEK: The Heart of Korean Cinema

*A festival of films together
with a conference
on the works of Im Kwon-Taek*

SPONSORED BY
The Korea Foundation
and
The Korean Cultural Center, Los Angeles
as part of The Korea Festival



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**DIRECTED AND COORDINATED BY
David E. James
Hyun-Ock Im**

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**WITH ADDITIONAL SPONSORSHIP FROM
Asia-Pacific Media Center
Korean Air
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Asian Pacific Americans in Cinema-Television, USC Chapter
Korean American Museum**

STATEMENT FROM ELIZABETH M. DALEY PROFESSOR AND DEAN, USC SCHOOL OF CINEMA-TELEVISION

It is my privilege and pleasure to welcome you to the University of Southern California, School of Cinema-Television. We are extremely honored to host this festival of the films of Im Kwon-Taek and the accompanying scholarly conference. Director Im has long been celebrated in Korea as the outstanding film artist of the post-war era. As we in the United States have come to discover the nature of his magisterial oeuvre, we greet him as one of the great directors of world cinema.

At U.S.C., we are proud to be leading the way in giving scholarly attention to the New Korean Cinema. At the 1991 meeting of the Society for Cinema Studies, we hosted the first American scholarly discussion of Korean cinema; our library was selected by the Korea Foundation to be the American depository for materials related to Korean film culture; and our graduate students are already writing the articles and dissertations that will establish Korean cinema and television in their rightful place at the forefront of our attention. Appropriately, then, this retrospective of Im Kwon-Taek's films is the first of its kind in the Americas, and the scholarly conference is the first anywhere in the world.

For making these events possible, I thank our friends and colleagues at the Korea Foundation; the Korean Cultural Center; and U.S.C.'s Korean Studies Institute, the East Asian Studies Center, and the Annenberg Center's Asia-Pacific Media Center. I also thank Professor David James and Ms. Hyun-Ock Im; without their vision and commitment, this event could not have come about.

And finally I would like to thank the Director himself, Im Kwon-Taek, for coming to the United States personally to be with us for the American premiere of his new film, *Festival*.

Elizabeth M. Daley
Steven J. Ross/Time Warner Professor and Dean of School Cinema-Television
Executive Director, Annenberg Center for Communication

STATEMENT FROM NAM-KIL KIM DIRECTOR, KOREAN STUDIES INSTITUTE

On behalf of the community of Korean Studies faculty and students at USC, I wish to welcome *Im Kwon-Taek: The Heart of Korean Cinema*. I am very pleased that the Korean Studies Institute (KSI) is a co-sponsor of this landmark event and I believe that the dedication and efforts of those involved in the event's organization reflect the depth and quality of USC's commitment to Korean Studies. Through this important program, USC will undoubtedly emerge as a national leader in Korean film studies.

The Korean Studies Institute serves as USC's principle organization for promoting education and research about Korea and Koreans. The *Im Kwon-Taek: The Heart of Korean Cinema* is prominent among KSI's events for 1996-97. Other programs planned in 1996 and 1997 include a conference on Gender and Korean Literature (October 1996), a conference on Civil Society and the State in South Korea (Spring 1997) and a major symposium on APEC co-sponsored with the Korea Economic Institute (KEI) (September 1997).

These programs are made possible through the support of foundations and other external agencies. I especially wish to recognize the generous financial support for *Im Kwon-Taek: The Heart of Korean Cinema* provided by the Korea Foundation and the Korean Cultural Center of the Consulate General of the Republic of Korea in Los Angeles.

I wish to acknowledge the initiative and the efforts of Professor David E. James and Ms. Hyun-Ock Im in organizing *Im Kwon-Taek: The Heart of Korean Cinema* at USC.

Nam-Kil Kim
Associate Professor of East Asian Languages and Cultures
Director, Korean Studies Institute

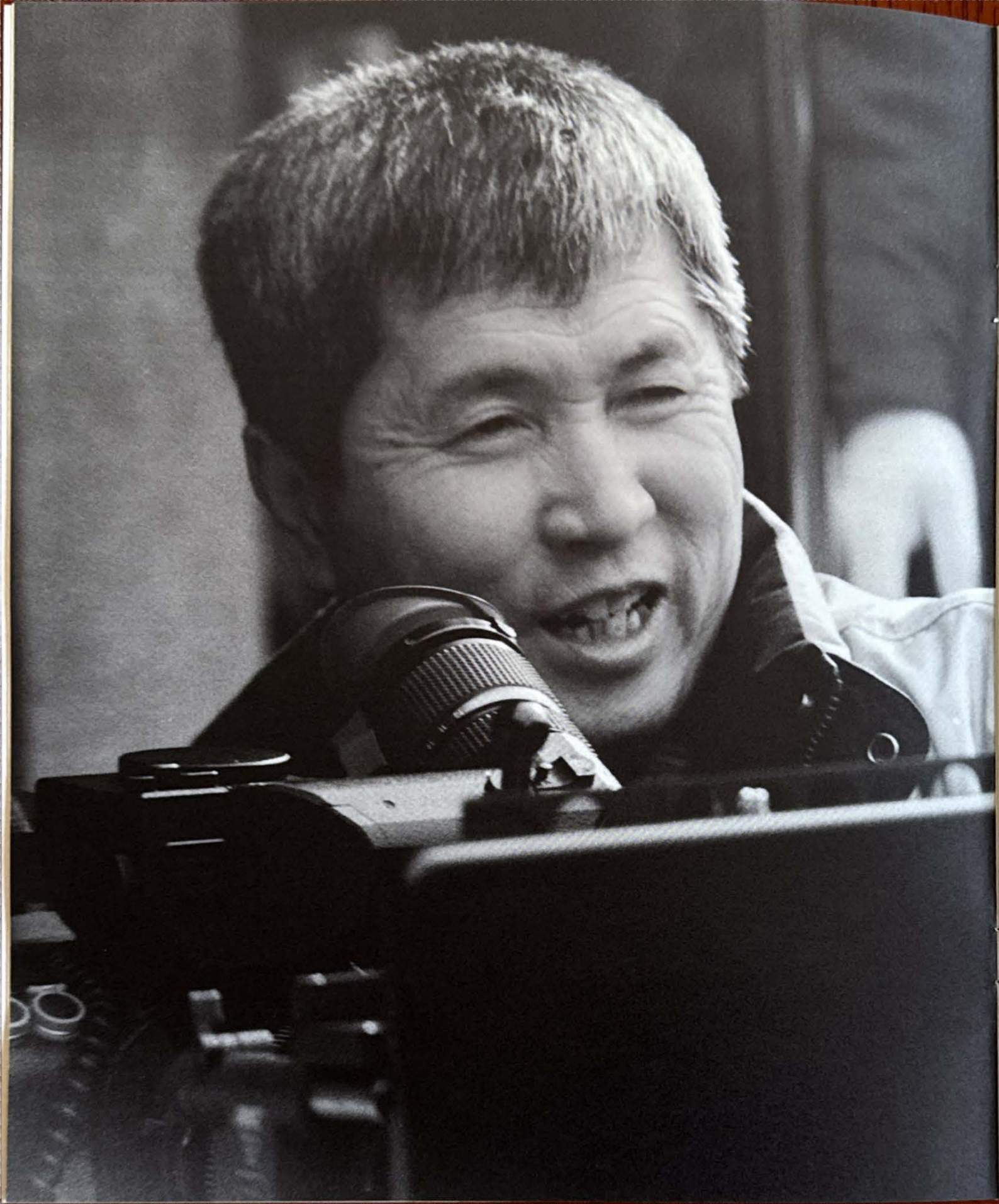
CONGRATULATIONS FROM HONG SOK LEE DIRECTOR, KOREAN CULTURAL CENTER, LOS ANGELES

It is a great privilege to welcome everyone — honored guests and cinemaphiles — to what can only be described as a coming-of-age celebration for Korean film in Los Angeles. We are very proud to honor one of Korea's leading film directors, Im Kwon-Tack. For many in the audience this will be a first opportunity to acquire an overview of his life-long oeuvre. And we all look forward to the Los Angeles premiere of Im's latest film, *Ch'ukje*.

As a co-sponsor of this event, the Korean Cultural Center would also like to thank all of the people at USC whose diligent efforts have made this film retrospective possible. In particular, Professor David James has generously given his own free time and his considerable expertise to bring a forefront critical focus to the program. Ms. Hyun-Ock Im worked closely with Dr. James on all aspects of the program; her initiative in creating the overall focus of the event and her care in overseeing all its manifold details and arrangements were intrinsic to its success. We want to extend a special welcome to the invited speakers from Korea: Mr. Chung Sung-Il, Mr. Yi Hyo-In, and Ms. Kim Soyoung.

For more than three-quarters of a century, Korean filmmakers have been striving to bring to the screen the tremendous changes occurring in Korea. Through times of tragedy and despair, their visions of hope and of the joy of hard-won freedoms and fresh tomorrows have lifted the hearts of Korea's peoples. In Korea, film is more than a cultural pastime, it provides a chronicle for a land where modern life has brought so many challenges, concerns and opportunities. We offer this cinema for the world to see us at our best, even in the worst of times. We hope that our cinema can bring laughter and understanding, not just about Korea, but about the life and times we all share.

*Hong Sok Lee, Director
Korean Cultural Center, Los Angeles*



IM KWON-TAEK: THE HEART OF KOREAN CINEMA

A Profile of the Director

"Yes, foreigners sometimes find the themes of my films strange, but I think they'd find them less strange if they knew more about Korean culture."

IM KWON-TAEK
INTERVIEW (1993) WITH TONY RAYNS

Im Kwon-Taek is a director known for his plumbing of the Korean national psyche. While some directors place their sights outward in this age of globalization, Im Kwon-Taek continues to look inward to the heart, downward to the earth, and upward to the Korean hills and skies for visual and thematic inspiration. The director has said, "I feel very conscious of my Koreanness, and it has very much been my intention to deal with aspects of Korean tradition and culture." To this end, Im speaks to the condition of *chŏngsŏ*, the deep sentiment of a collective Korean spirit, woven with complex emotion and years of common culture and history. Non-Koreans find the films both exotic (the "strange") and familiar for Im's stories touch the human heart in ways that go beyond a Korean *chŏngsŏ*. These universal themes address the rhythms of life, as well as the unfair system of a world sometimes determined by the strictures of gender and class, and the devastation of war.

With over 100 films spanning four decades to his credit, Im Kwon-Taek's career mirrors the history of the industry's development since the early 1960s. Within the last several years the Korean film industry has experienced a boom unparalleled in Korean history. Corporate investment has changed the structure of the industry, and has augmented the general trend towards internationalization. In the social sphere, the activist film movement of the 1980s contributed to defining a generation of cinephiles enthusiastic to develop a comprehensive film culture. This torrent of interest is reflected in the establishment of several new film schools. In addition, more directors than ever are making their debuts with works that display the thematic and stylistic diversity that only recently has characterized Korean cinema. The Korean film industry has always been a complicated one, situated within the vicissitudes of a tumultuous history, government censorship, and an uneven economy. When it comes to a single note of consistency, the steady and prolific career of Im Kwon-Taek rises to the top.

Im Kwon-Taek was born in Jangsung, Cholla Province in 1936, and grew up in the city of Kwangju. Many of Im's films take place in Cholla Province, the most "provincial" of South Korea's provinces, where traditions remain despite their decline elsewhere. In Im's latest film, *Festival*, we see the meticulous detail and symbolism of ancient funerary practices. Cholla Province's landscape is a prominent element in films such as *Mandala* and *Sopyonje*. Another feature of the region has been its reputation for political dissidents. Im Kwon-Taek has spoken frankly about the difficulty of coming from a family of leftists, of whom many were persecuted and killed in the 1950s, and of its influence on his works and personal philosophy. Early in his career, Im rejected all ideologies, and chose humanism as the foundation for his films.

As a teenager, Im Kwon-Taek left Kwangju for Pusan where he worked as a manual laborer before being hired as a general hand by action film director Chung Chang-Wha. Obtaining work in the film industry was fortuitous as the movie set seemed to be the only place where Im's family background was not a liability. Im has said that in these first few years, filmmaking was solely a means of survival and that he had no thoughts of being a director. However, the best education is on the set and after working on eight productions Im made his debut film, *Farewell to the Duman River* in 1962 at age 25. Early on Im became known for his sensitivity with actors. By the 1970s, in the era of the "quota quickie" and propaganda films, Im's reputation surfaced as a director of the "quality film." Beginning with the critical success of 1981's *Mandala*, Im Kwon-Taek became established as Korea's foremost auteur. His international reputation has grown over the years with awards and acclaim for films such as *Surrogate Mother*; *Adada*; *Come, Come, Come Upward*; *Sopyonje* and *The Taebaek Mountains*.

We offer this film program and conference, **Im Kwon-Taek: The Heart of Korean Cinema** as a study of the most representative of Korean directors. Moreover, we present this event as a tribute to the warmest vision Korean cinema has ever seen.

Hyun-Ock Im
Event Organizer and Programmer

FESTIVAL SCHEDULE

OCTOBER 25 - NOVEMBER 3, 1996

DATE	SHOWTIME	PROGRAM	LOCATION
FRIDAY, OCTOBER 25	7:00 p.m.	THE GENEALOGY <i>Chokpo</i>	USC, George Lucas Bldg., Room 108
	9:00 p.m.	THE HIDDEN HERO <i>Kippal ömnün kisu</i>	
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 26	7:00 p.m.	MANDALA <i>Mandara</i>	USC, Norris Theater
	9:00 p.m.	GILSOTTUM <i>Kilsottüm</i>	
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 27	7:00 p.m.	TICKET <i>Tik'et</i>	USC, Norris Theater
	9:00 p.m.	THE GENERAL'S SON <i>Changun üi adül</i>	
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 1	7:00 p.m.	FLY HIGH, RUN FAR: KAE BYOK <i>Kaebyoök</i>	USC, George Lucas Bldg., Room 108
	9:30 p.m.	SOPYONJE <i>Söp'yönje</i>	
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 2	1:00 p.m.	THE CINEMA ON THE ROAD <i>Kil üi Yöngghwa</i>	USC, Norris Theater
	7:00 p.m.	SURROGATE MOTHER <i>Ssibaji</i>	Korean Cultural Center
	9:00 p.m.	ADADA <i>Adada</i>	
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 3	1:00 p.m.	THE TAEBAEK MOUNTAINS <i>T'aebaek sanmaek</i>	USC, Norris Theater
	7:00 p.m.	CLOSING NIGHT: FESTIVAL <i>Ch'ukje</i>	

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 2

8:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

USC, Norris Theater

CONFERENCE PARTICIPANTS

CHUNGMOO CHOI, *University of California, Irvine*

**"NATION, GENDER AND ENCHANTMENT
IN IM KWON-T'AEK'S FILMS"**

CHUNG SUNG-ILL, *Editor-in-Chief, KINO*

**"THE OVERDETERMINATION AND CONTRADICTIONS
OF KOREA'S MODERNITY IN IM KWON-TAEK'S
AESTHETIC IMAGERY"**

DAVID E. JAMES, *University of Southern California*

CONFERENCE MODERATOR

KYUNG HYUN KIM, *University of Southern California*

**"RECONCILING KOREAN WAR HISTORIOGRAPHY:
THE PANOPTICON OF NATION, THE DISCOURSE OF MINJOK,
AND THE "UNHOMELY" IN THE TAEPAEK MOUNTAINS"**

KIM SOYOUNG, *The Korean National University of Arts*

**"NARRATIVIZING AND VISUALIZING FEMALE BONDING
IN IM KWON-TAEK'S FILMS"**

IN YOUNG NAM, *New York University*

**"NARRATING HISTORY: FLASHBACK AS COLLECTIVE
MEMORY IN IM KWON-TAEK'S FILMS"**

ROB WILSON, *University of Hawaii at Manoa*

**"KOREAN CINEMA ON THE ROAD TO GLOBALIZATION:
TRACKING GLOBAL/LOCAL DYNAMICS, OR,
WHY IM KWON-TAEK IS NO ANG LEE"**

YI HYO-IN, *Kyungsung University*

"TONGHAK IDEOLOGY AND KAE BYOK"

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 25

7:00 p.m.
THE GENEALOGY
9:00 p.m.
THE HIDDEN HERO



THE GENEALOGY

1978

PRODUCER: Park Jong-Chan, Hwa Chun Trading Co., Ltd. **SCREENPLAY:** Han Un-Sa. Based on the novel by Keiji Kajiyama. **CINEMATOGRAPHY:** Lee Seok-Ki. **EDITOR:** Kim Hui-Su. **LIGHTING:** Jung Duk-Kyu. **ART DIRECTOR:** Kim Yu-Joon. **MUSIC:** Jung Min-Sup. **WITH:** Joo Sun-Tae, Ha Myoung-Joong, Han Hye-Sook. 35mm, 106 min., color, in Korean with English subtitles

Set in the early 1940s Korea during the Japanese occupation, *The Genealogy* is the story of a Sul Jin-Young, a local landowner who protests the Japanese edict to change his name to a Japanese one. Since he is the oldest son of a strict Confucian *yangban* family, the responsibility to continue the 700-year-old family tree is powerful. Dani is a Japanese who is in charge of the town's "name change task." Unlike the typical Japanese colonizer, Dani respects Sul's tenacious efforts to maintain the family tree, and consequently tries to help. But high Japanese officials try to pressure Sul into surrendering by imprisoning his daughter's fiancée on false charges, drafting the town girls into factory work, and conscripting men to hard labor.

Dani appears as a sympathetic character, marginalized in his own Japan for his preference for art and his lack of military skills. He sympathizes with Sul and the colonized Korea he lives in. Although the protagonist of *The Genealogy* is Sul, the film's perspective is Dani's. The film demonstrates a foreigner's view of Korea's traditional beauty, despite the changes Im Kwon-Taek made from the original short story by Kajiyama Keiji. Dani observes the peaceful landscape of Sul's town, appreciates Korean architecture, enjoys traditional music, and even tries to capture Korea's beauty in his paintings. In one sequence, Sul quotes Yanaki Soetz's interpretation of the Korean aesthetic as being rooted in sorrow, while the camera pans over Korean porcelains. Sul wonders what Yanaki would think of Sul being forced to sever his family tree, and decides to commit suicide. Dani watches Sul's funeral from a hilltop, seeming to confirm the aesthetic of sorrow propounded by Yanaki.

In *The Genealogy*, Im's early approaches to defining a traditional Korean aesthetic in cinema are evident. The country landscape, the emphasis on the lines of tiled roofs, the manners and gestures of characters, and the subtle movement of eyes are elements found in Im's later works. The film also shows a major concern of Im — that of the contrast between the beauty of nature and of the human suffering caused by political situations.

Youn-Jeong Chae

THE HIDDEN HERO

1979

PRODUCER: Park Jong-Chan, Hwa Chun Trading Co., Ltd. **SCREENPLAY:** Rah Han-Bong. Based on the novel by Sonu Hwi. **CINEMATOGRAPHY:** Chung Kyoung-Hee. **EDITOR:** Kim Hui-Su. **LIGHTING:** Chung Kyoung-Hee. **ART DIRECTOR:** Kim Yu-Joon. **MUSIC:** Kang Suk-Hui. **WITH:** Ha Myoung-Joong, Kim Young-Ae, Chu Hyon. 35mm, 96 min., color, in Korean (with simultaneous English translation)

Set during the turbulent interregnum period between Korea's liberation from Japan (1945) and the outbreak of the Korean War (1950), *The Hidden Hero* investigates the life of a liberal intellectual, Ho Yun, who has a disdain for Communism, yet cannot completely embrace the alternative U.S. import, "liberal democracy." By working as a journalist, Ho hopes to resolve the conflicted identity of post-liberation Korea, wrapped up in the ideological battle between the left and the right. He is increasingly alone as his close friends leave him one by one via betrayal, suicide, and murder. Realizing that his passivity cannot do much to change matters, Ho chooses to be a terrorist in the end, shooting a Communist leader who had lied to the masses.

Although Ho's intellectual agony is carefully constructed throughout the narrative, many visual inconsistencies can be found in the film. Inappropriate costumes, irrelevant landscapes and awkward lighting can hardly signal the inefficiencies of the filmmaker. Instead, it is the low-budget status and ideological constraints of Korean cinema at the time of production that must be interrogated. Produced only a few months before the assassination of President Park Chung Hee, *The Hidden Hero* suggests that liberal humanism is an impossible pursuit not only in the post-liberation space, but also under a military dictatorship.

Kyung Hyun Kim



MANDALA

1981

PRODUCER: Park Jong-Chan, Hwa Chun Trading Co., Ltd. **SCREENPLAY:** Lee Sang-Hyon, Song Kil-Han. Based on the novel by Kim Song-Dong. **CINEMATOGRAPHY:** Jong Il-Song. **SOUND:** Lee Jae-Ung. **EDITOR:** Lee Do-Won. **LIGHTING:** Cha Jung-Nam. **ART DIRECTOR:** Kim Yu-Joon. **MUSIC:** Kim Chong-Gil. **WITH:** Chun Mu-Song, Ahn Sung-Kee, Pang Hui, Ki Jong-Su. *Scope 35mm, 117 min., color, in Korean with German subtitles (with simultaneous English Translation)*

After completing his winter meditation practice, former college student Pobun takes to the road as an itinerant monk. Pobun meets the older monk Jisan on a bus and ends up pulling Jisan out of the trouble he gets into with the police for travelling without an ID card. While the two travel together, Pobun gets an unexpected lesson in the possibilities of an iconoclastic mode of practice. Jisan's character comes from the tradition of the "crazy monk" found in Buddhist lore where "staggering is another way of living." Jisan's way to enlightenment contrasts with Pobun's reflective and more orthodox style of practice. One night Jisan takes Pobun to a brothel where Jisan knows one of the women. The karmic repercussions of a past sexual assault on his former girlfriend appears as dream imagery to Pobun as he is himself sexually attacked by a woman while asleep. Later, Pobun and Jisan meet again in the chill of winter. Their reunion is short-lived when Pobun finds Jisan frozen to death on a mountain path the next morning, his hands joined in prayer. Pobun takes Jisan's body to a hut and sets it on fire before resuming his journey.

Mandala begins with a montage of monastic practice: Space and time are sanctified by the routine rhythms of meditation and prayer in the details of daily life. Many of the significant sequences, however, take place outside the temple in the wide open spaces of the countryside. Road scenes of the monks in dialogue are shot in real time. We see "the road" in all its manifestations — railroad tracks, stacks of rice fields, plush trails lined with trees. This love of the land is a hallmark of Im Kwon-Taek's cinematic style and adds to *Mandala's* enduring appeal.

Mandala continues to be the most referred to film of Im Kwon-Taek. Immediately upon reading the controversial novel written by a former monk, Im knew he had to make this picture, and it became the first film he fought for. *Mandala* not only reveals the all-too-human struggle of those who lead monastic lives, but its themes resonate to the level of society at large and the quest for truth and meaning that we all share.

Hyun-Ock Im

GILSOTTUM

1985

PRODUCER: Park Jong-Chan, Hwa Chun Trading Co., Ltd. **SCREENPLAY:** Song Kil-Han. **CINEMATOGRAPHY:** Jong Il-Song. **EDITOR:** Kim Chang-Sun. **LIGHTING:** Kang Kwang-Ho. **ART DIRECTOR:** Kim Yu-Joon. **MUSIC:** Kim Chong-Gil. **WITH:** Kim Ji-Mi, Shin Sung-II, Han So-Ryong. *35mm, 105 min., color, in Korean with English subtitles*

Now located north of the 38th Parallel dividing Korea, *Gilsottum* can be no longer visited by people living in South Korea. Hwayong, an ex-resident of *Gilsottum*, goes to the site of "The Circle of Reunion," a summer-long televised event broadcast to reunite family members separated by the Korean War. Hwayong's hope of finding the son she lost thirty years earlier is not fulfilled. Instead, Hwayong accidentally runs into the ex-lover whom she believed had been killed during the war. The dramatic reunions, first with Tongjin and later with their son, cannot easily reconcile the barriers produced by class differences and thirty years of separation. Hwayong's stable middle-class life contrasts with Tongjin's working-class existence, and even further with the desperately unstable son.

Veteran actors, Kim Ji-Mi and Shin Sung-II, are probably at their finest in their roles as two people brought together to mend their fractured pasts. The cinematography of long-time collaborator Jong Il-Song brilliantly captures their pain as Hwayong and Tongjin travel from the city to the country to find their son. *Gilsottum* unpacks the dilemma of a divided country through the story of a broken family. Despite its anti-climatic ending, *Gilsottum* fared well in the 1986 box office, immediately released following the first civilian exchange between the two Koreas, and based on the actual KBS (Korean Broadcasting System) campaign to reunite separated families. Ironically, *Gilsottum* also won the best picture award at the 1986 Taejong Film Festival in the anti-communist category, despite its humanistic theme and the anti-sentimental handling of emotionally potent material.

Kyung Hyun Kim and
Hyun-Ock Im

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 26

7:00 p.m.

MANDALA

9:00 p.m.

GILSOTTUM



SUNDAY, OCTOBER 27

7:00 p.m.

TICKET

9:00 p.m.

THE GENERAL'S SON



TICKET

1986

PRODUCER: Jin Sung-Man, Jimi Films Co., Ltd. **SCREENPLAY:** Song Kil-Han.
CINEMATOGRAPHY: Gu Jung-Mo. **EDITOR:** Park Sun-Dok. **LIGHTING:** Choi Ui-Ok.
ART DIRECTOR: Won Ki-Joo. **MUSIC:** Shin Pyung-Ha. **WITH:** Kim Ji-Mi, Jun Seiyong,
Ahn Soyoung, Lee Hye-Young, Myoung Hee, Park Kunhyoung, Choi Dong-Joon.
35mm, 100 min., color, in Korean with English subtitles

The shift of political power in the early 1980s brought forth a surge of films with socially realistic themes. Among the various areas of Korean society that these films covered, prostitution was ironically among the few themes to be commercially successful while still functioning as social critique. Moreover, these films passed government censorship. While the idea of coffee delivery girls doubling as prostitutes was not a new concept to Koreans, the portrayal of this on the silver screen was shocking at the time of *Ticket's* release. In this evocative story of trust and betrayal, Im once again presents his favorite subject — the underdog — only this time it is the coffee delivery girl.

Jee-Sook is the madam of a coffee shop in small port town where men come and go. Carrying an attitude that is as tough as nails, she takes care of her "girls" in exchange for their "services" to customers. Although they live meagerly, each girl dreams of escaping her miserable life. When the youngest girl, Sei-Young, (who resembles a younger Jee-Sook) is dumped by her college student boyfriend after going into prostitution to support him, Jee-Sook tries to kill him. While the young lovers reconcile, Jee-Sook is driven into insanity.

Korea's leading veteran actress, Kim Ji-Mi gives a powerful performance as a woman hardened by a life full of betrayal. But it is perhaps the wide-eyed Sei-Young who best represents the director's humanistic approach towards hardship brought on by existing social structures.

Hanna Lee

THE GENERAL'S SON

1990

PRODUCER: Lee Tae-Won, Taehung Pictures. **SCREENPLAY:** Yoon Sam-Yuk.
Based on the novel by Hong Song-Yu. **CINEMATOGRAPHY:** Jong Il-Song. **SOUND:** Kim Pyong-Su.
EDITOR: Pak Sun-Dok. **LIGHTING:** Cha Jong-Nam. **ART DIRECTOR:** To Yon-Gu. **MUSIC:** Shin Pyung-Ha.
WITH: Park Sang-Min, Lee Il-Jae, Park Un-Hui.
35mm, 108 min., color, in Korean with English subtitles

The General's Son was released in the summer of 1990 after U.S. economic pressure consolidated the presence of American distribution companies in Korea, forcing domestic studios to compete with big Hollywood blockbuster films. Surprisingly, the film not only registered the biggest box-office results in the history of Korean cinema up to that point, but it also surpassed ticket sales of the foreign pictures released that same year with the exception only of *Ghost*. With the commercial success of *The General's Son*, Im Kwon-Taek demonstrated that he could be a money-maker without losing the respect he enjoyed as an "art director."

In *The General's Son*, the oppression of Korea by Japanese imperialism is escalating in the streets of Seoul. Many Koreans agree that the Chongro District is the heart of Seoul. Chongro cannot be run over by the Japanese yakuza since all else, including commerce, politics and culture have been saturated with Japanese interests. Doo-Han is a teenaged orphan simply looking for a steady job in a movie theater when he is discovered by the student gang leader, Sin Man-Ch'ok. After learning that Doo-Han is actually the son of the legendary independence leader, Kim Jwa-Jin, Sin places Doo-Han under his tutelage, eventually allowing Doo-Han to replace him as the official leader of Chongro's street gang. Fast paced action scenes are juxtaposed against the detailed mise-en-scène of colonial Korea and the heroic depiction of Kim Doo-Han. Shot on an open set specifically constructed for *The General's Son*, the film demands Koreans to protect themselves from foreign influences, perhaps "by any means necessary" in the era of free trade and multinational capitalism.

Kyung Hyun Kim

FLY HIGH, RUN FAR: KAE BYOK

1991

PRODUCER: Han Yong-Soo, Chunwoo Film. **SCREENPLAY:** Kim Yong-Ok.
CINEMATOGRAPHY: Jong Il-Song. **EDITOR:** Park Sun-Dok. **LIGHTING:** Cha Jung-Nam.
MUSIC: Shin Pyung-Ha. **ART DIRECTOR:** Do Yong-Woo.
WITH: Lee Duk-Wha, Lee Hye-Young, Kim Myung-Gon.
35mm, 146 min., color, in Korean with English subtitles

Kae Byok is a chronological illustration (1864 to 1898) of the life of Choi Hae-Wol, the second founder of the Tonghak religion, while attempting to recreate the turbulent socio-political history of the late Choson Period. Tonghak was established by Choi Soo-Wun in the 1860s, when a feudalistic Korea was fraught with internal problems and in danger of foreign invasion. Tonghak precepts stressed equality among men, and incorporated religious beliefs into a grassroots movement against the feudal system and imperialism. Im brings together historical data and various characters to depict the individual in a broader social context. The film's dialogue conveys the philosophy of Tonghak while historical notes appear on the bottom of the screen. The time and place of historical events and Chinese prose written by the founders appear in the right corner of the frame. While Im again demonstrates his mastery of the epic scale, this ambitious chronicle makes the narrative so complicated that it sometimes loses focus.

The film deals with two major conflicts: the opposition of Tonghak believers to government officials, and the difference in methodologies among the Tonghak group. The first is personalized by a low police official, Pan-Ok who pursues Choi Hae-Wol to elevate his career, only to pass on his obsession to his son. The Tonghak leaders are torn between Choi Hae-Wol's peaceful solutions and the other members' revolutionary aims. Considering the time of the film's production, this conflict parallels the student demonstrations in South Korea of the late 1980s and early 1990s.

Like many other protagonists in Im's films (*Mandala; Come, Come, Come Upward* and *Sopyonje*), Hae-Wol is often depicted travelling on the road. The cyclic changes of nature are beautifully captured, providing lyrical moments between dramatic scenes while complimenting Hae-Wol's nature-based philosophy.

Youn-Jeong Chae

SOPYONJE

1993

PRODUCER: Lee Tae-Won, Taehung Pictures. **SCREENPLAY:** Kim Myung-Gon.
Based on the novel by Lee Chung-Joon. **CINEMATOGRAPHY:** Jong Il-Song. **SOUND:** Kang Dae-Song.
EDITOR: Park Sun-Dok. **LIGHTING:** Cha Jung-Nam. **ART DIRECTOR:** Kim Yu-Joon, Kim Pum-Su.
MUSIC: Kim Soo-Chul. **WITH:** Kim Myung-Gon, Oh Jung-Hae, Kim Kyu-Chul.
35mm, 112 min., color, in Korean with English subtitles

Im Kwon-Taek returns in this film to the themes of humanism, national identity and native Korean culture that have always been his preoccupation. *Sopyonje* is the story of an intense devotion to the musical art of *p'ansori*, the Korean folk opera traditionally practiced by itinerant singers. "Sopyonje," which translates as "the Western system," refers to a particular style of *p'ansori* developed in the western part of Cholla Province, Im's home district. In the film, Im uses major *p'ansori* pieces, exploiting to the fullest the opera's exquisite range of expressions, such as regional dialects, folk songs, proverbs, and quotations from classical literature.

One day in the early 1960s, a young man, Dongho arrives at a village inn. He recalls his childhood when the *p'ansori* singer Yubong came to Dongho's village with his adopted daughter, Songwha. When Dongho is himself orphaned, Yubong takes him in, training the boy to be a *p'ansori* performer like Songwha. With the changing seasons, the family travels through the countryside, enduring the hardships of poverty as well as the public's increasing indifference to *p'ansori*.

The film's apparently seamless narrative is actually a complex interweaving of multiple narrators, with the bulk of the story told in flashback. At its heart, *Sopyonje* is about *han*, the deeply buried pain that is for Koreans a marker of cultural identity. In the film, *han* is used to achieve artistic heights; it is sometimes transformed into joy, and finally plays a crucial role in Dongho's reunion with Songwha. *Sopyonje* was a veritable cultural event in South Korea, breaking all box office records up to that point, and attracting a voluminous amount of media attention. Perhaps this was the response of a public eager to re-learn a deeply Korean aesthetic?

Hyun-Ock Im

(The Ninth Annual Los Angeles
Asian Pacific Film and Video Festival)

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 1

7:00 p.m.

FLY HIGH, RUN FAR: KAE BYOK

9:30 p.m.

SOPYONJE



SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 2

1:00 p.m.
CINEMA ON THE ROAD
7:00 p.m.
SURROGATE MOTHER

CINEMA ON THE ROAD

1995

DIRECTOR: Jang Sun-Woo. **PRODUCER:** Park Ki-Yong, BFI TV and Samsung Entertainment Group. **SCREENPLAY:** Lee Jung-Ha. **CINEMATOGRAPHY:** Yoo Young-Gil, Park Hyun-Chul. **SOUND:** Kim Suk-Won. **EDITOR:** Jang Sun-Woo. **MUSIC:** Won Il. **VHS, 52 min., color, Korean with English voiceover and subtitles**

The Cinema on the Road, Jang Sun-Woo's witty and mordant essay on Korean film history is the director's diaristic search for the core of Korean cinema. Jang starts his search in Seoul, where he is perplexed to find that footage of the city and its film industry are useless for his quest. This frustration leads him to embark on a trip that criss-crosses the country and its cinema. Incorporating archival footage and interviews conducted in different areas of the country and inserted with his own observations and reflections, Jang questions what Korean cinema was, is and could be. The film attempts to illuminate the many missing pages in Korean film history and most importantly, celebrates the individual films that have faced the circumscription of film censorship.

The interview with Director Im Kwon-Taek ties in with the main concern of the film. Recalling the days of repressive film censorship, Im says: "I tried in vain to run away from the painful memories of the ideological conflict. But I found myself lingering again at the verge of history. It's nothing to do with my will. It's almost as if karma assigns me to inscribe historical insights into my films."

The Cinema on the Road is not an "official" historiography but a provocative text that investigates the historical unconscious underlying Korean cinema. Jang Sun-Woo, who is of the younger generation of Korean cinema, does not complete this journey. Instead, Jang ends the film with *ssikim kut*, a traditional shamanist performance dedicated to the unspoken and yet unspeakable images of Korean cinema.

In Young Nam

SURROGATE MOTHER

1986

PRODUCER: Jung Do-Hwan, Shin Han Motion Picture Co., Ltd. **SCREENPLAY:** Song Kil-Han. **CINEMATOGRAPHY:** Gu Jung-Mo. **EDITOR:** Park Sun-Dok. **LIGHTING:** Kang Kwang-Ho. **ART DIRECTOR:** Won Ki-Joo. **MUSIC:** Shin Pyung-Ha. **WITH:** Kang Soo-Yeon, Kim Hyun-Ja, Lee Gu-Soon, Pang Hee. **35mm, 94 min., color, in Korean with English and French subtitles**

Ssibaji is the Korean translation for "surrogate mother." Its literal meaning however, means "seed recipient," connoting the suffering embodied in the Korean woman under patriarchy. In this bittersweet tale of a surrogate mother's demise towards the end of the Choson period (1392-1910), Im Kwon-Taek presents a meticulous portrait of individual sacrifice for the sake of patriarchal order.

When the mistress of a noble house is found unable to bear a son to carry on the family name, she is given no choice but to bring in a surrogate mother, Üllye, a young virgin from the lower class, herself the child of a "failed" surrogacy. Ritually secluded from the world of impurities in order to bear a son, Üllye soon falls in love with the master against her mother's warnings and stirs the jealousy of the mistress. Unfortunately, the reciprocated passion of the master and her fulfillment of a son cannot help Üllye from having everything taken away from her, even the desire to live.

The evocative cinematography and the superb performance of Kang Soo-Yeon earned her the Best Actress Award at the 44th Venice International Film Festival, suggesting Im's talent for creating an aesthetics of suffering. But if such objectification of suffering has been a criticism of *Surrogate Mother*, it is also true that Im makes a conscious attempt to critique the social institutions which generate such suffering. By interweaving binary oppositions (male/female, Confucianism/Shamanism, nobility/servility, collectivism/individualism) through the visual narrative, Im poses the question of what it means to live as a woman in Korean society and, moreover, what it means to live as a Korean.

Hanna Lee



ADADA

1988

PRODUCER: Park Jong-Chan, Hwa Chun Trading Co., Ltd. SCREENPLAY: Yoon Sam-Yuk.
Based on the novel by Kye Yong-Muk. CINEMATOGRAPHY: Jong Il-Song. EDITOR: Im Kwon-Taek.
LIGHTING: Kang Kwang-Ho. MUSIC: Kim Young-Dong. WITH: Shin Hye-Soo, Han Il-Il, Lee Kyung-Young.
35mm, 110 min., color, in Korean with English and French subtitles

From *The Surrogate Mother*, *Adada*, Ticket and to the most recent *Sopyonje*, Im Kwon-Taek has frequently dramatized the story of women situated in repressive social conditions. In an interview, Im discusses this thematic concern: "the history of Korean women has always been and still remains a tale of constant repression and victimization....In view of this situation I could not help but to offer my support to the women's cause, though I had no intention of creating cinematic works on the stories of unhappy women. Instead, what I found more of consequence was to expose and analyze the mechanisms of a society that favors the repression of women."

Adada is a vulnerable and beautiful mute girl from a rich yangban family. She is married with good farming land as dowry to Yong-Hwan, a yangban who has lost his money. Day and night, *Adada* works hard on the land. Yong-Hwan and his parents treat *Adada* as their benefactress. However, the accumulation of wealth changes the harmonious relationship between Yong-Hwan and *Adada*. The nouveau-riche Yong-Hwan grows restless and the physical abuse of *Adada* intensifies as the story unfolds.

What spectators encounter in this narrative development are the diverse social and historical forces that encourage female victimization: Confucianism and patriarchal social values. The film's historical setting of early 20th century Korea functions as a space that Im critically interrogates in terms of the process of modernization. Money and materialistic values symbolizing modernity destroy the harmonious relationship between *Adada* and Yong-Hwan, and force *Adada* to commit suicide. Living in a nation in which postmodernity has often fused with neo-colonialism, Im Kwon-Taek pursues his critique of modernity in this heartbreaking story.

Jinhee Cho Park

THE TAEBAEK MOUNTAINS

1994

PRODUCER: Lee Tae-Won, Taehung Pictures. SCREENPLAY: Song Neung-Han.
CINEMATOGRAPHY: Jong Il-Song. EDITOR: Park Sun-Dok. LIGHTING: Shin Hak-Sung.
ART DIRECTOR: Kim Yu-Joon. MUSIC: Kim Soo-Chul. WITH: Ahn Sung-Kee, Kim Myung-Gon,
Kim Kap-Su.
35mm, 168 min., color, in Korean with English subtitles

Im Kwon-Taek takes his spectators back again to a familiar setting, the southern region of Cholla Province during the years between the liberation of Korea (1945) and the outbreak of the Korean War (1950). Born and raised in a leftist family in Cholla Province himself, Im takes great advantage of the expansion of civil liberties and freedom of expression in the early part of the 1990s and presents a more detailed visual sketch of a period marked by intense ideological struggles than those of his earlier efforts (*The Hidden Hero*). Yet, his message has remained consistent. Much emphasis is again placed on the difficulty of maintaining liberal humanism and of searching for a corresponding national identity.

Three principal characters are in conflicting positions. Yom Sang-Chin and his brother Sang-Ku are in ideological opposition to one another, despite coming from the same household. While Sang-Chin is an educated guerilla leader of the communist "partisan" army located in the mountains, his brother Sang-Ku is a vulgar right wing leader of the local Anti-Communist Youth League, collaborating with the police to quell the local socialist insurgency. The only common ground they share is signified through their nationalist friend, Kim Pom-Wu. The three characters — along with impressive supporting roles — are interwoven into Korea's turbulent history, often obfuscating the boundary between the two spaces of public and private. The ideological impulses, whether in the form of Communism, nationalism, or reactionary terror, break down the harmony of a pre-modern communal village. No longer can people rely on one another's benevolence or trust. The traditional divisions between the peasantry and the landowners, between the male and the female, and in general between the inner world and the outer world are radically subverted, instilling a new perception of change and fear in the village.

Made with the biggest budget in the history of Korean cinema at the time of its production, *The Taebaek Mountains* overwhelms the viewers at times with an endless list of historical events and a vast number of characters. However, this epic picture avoids a melodramatic ending or a sentimental love affair, opting instead to display a painful past and Korea's unresolved tension.

Kyung Hyun Kim

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 2

9:00 p.m.
ADADA



SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 3

1:00 p.m.
THE TAEBAEK MOUNTAINS



SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 3

7:00 p.m.
FESTIVAL

FESTIVAL

1996

PRODUCER: Lee Tae-Won, Taehung Pictures. SCREENPLAY: Yuk Sang-Hyo.

Based on the novel by Lee Chung-Joon. CINEMATOGRAPHY: Pak Seung-Bae. SOUND: Yang Hoo-Bo.

EDITOR: Park Sun-Dok. LIGHTING: Kim Kang-Il. ART DIRECTOR: Kim Yu-Joon. MUSIC: Kim Soo-Chul.

WITH: Ahn Sung-Kee, Oh Jung-Hae, Han Eun-Jin.

35mm, 106 min., color, in Korean with English subtitles

Narrating death allows us to re-examine our lives and speculations on life require us to investigate the questions of death. By closing the gap between life and death, Im Kwon-Taek's latest film *Festival* re-defines the asymmetrical relationship between the two. Perhaps no other film directed by Im Kwon-Taek has elaborated on such a critical issue. Im has already overcome the barriers imposed by the theme of *han*, found in many past Korean films, by breaking away from the tradition of national suffering and liberating his characters from such inundated formalities. Now, in 1996, he unexpectedly interrogates our place of departure as well as our destination. This simple yet heavy inquiry is burdensome for our light-hearted minds, but it also directly confronts the viewers, leaving us without time to turn away.

The novelist, Jun-Sub (played by Ahn Sung-Kee), receives a phone call one morning, informing him of his mother's death. The mother (Han Eun-Jin), who suffered from senile dementia, has finally passed away. Once dispersed across the nation, Jun-Sub's family members reunite in time for the funeral. Even Yong-Soon (Oh Jung-Hae), the ostracized niece of Jun-Sub returns. Im meticulously follows the funeral procedure from the beginning to the end while interweaving the fairy tale segments narrated by Jun-Sub's daughter, Eun-Ji. In the fairy tale, the grandmother, the father, the mother, and Eun-Ji live together. The grandmother physically shrinks, provoking the curiosity of Eun-Ji. The father explains to his daughter that this phenomenon occurs when the grandmother's wisdom and age is passed on to young ones. While Eun-Ji benefits from this occurrence, the grandmother shrivels, passing away in the end.

Im Kwon-Taek collaborated closely with the writer, Lee Chung-Joon on this film project. The film was first conceived in the fairy tale format by Lee, and after the production of the film the project was again adapted into a novel. Im takes a full advantage of the reciprocal relationship between the novel and the film, constructing a warm and friendly visual space.

The film shifts between the funeral ceremony in real life and the imaginary world of the fairy tale. The juxtaposition of the two narratives allows the film to posit the resemblance as well as the contrast between our self contained in cultural institutions and the self signified in the narrative discourse. Here, the world becomes entangled with the permeation of contempt and lies. The ones who are left on the other side of death refuse to accept one another. Just when the deceased is about to be forgotten, her wisdom purifies the contaminated ones. Somehow, death is experienced through our own lived lives.

The funeral process also allows us to discover that our perception of death is conceived through diverse philosophical and religious channels. Atheism replenishes the empty space between Confucianism and Buddhism. Im proposes that this collectivizing unit is naturally realized in the form of family. The reconciliation of the separated families then provides a new beginning by disentangling and revealing the thread of hope through the ritual of the funeral.

Chung Sung-Ill

Translated by Kyung Hyun Kim



FILMOGRAPHY

1962

Farewell to the Duman River
Tumangang a chal ikkôra
Old Man in the Combat Zone
Chônjaeng kwa noin

1963

Actors Disguised as Women
Namja nûn an p'allyô
A Wife Turned to Stone
Mangbusôk
The Throne Memorial Drum
Sinmungo

1964

The Prince's Revolt
Tanjangnok
The End of Desire
Yongmang ûi kyolsan
Father of Ten Daughters
Sipchamae sôn'saeng
The Latecomer
Tangol chigaksaeng
The Ten-Year Rule
Simnyôn sedo

Queen Yonghwa's Avenger
Yônghwa mama

1965

Death of an Informer
Pitsok e chida
A Bogus Nobleman
Wang kwa sangno

1966

Schoolmistress on the Battlefield
Chônjaeng kwa yôgyosa
Miss Ok and the Divided Court
Pôpch'ang ûl ullin ogi
I am a King
Na nûn wang ida
A Triangle in Noble Families
Nillili

1967

The Feudal Tenant
Ch'ôngsa ch'orong
Swordsmen
P'ungun ûl kôngaek
A Wife Retrieved
Manghyang ch'ôlli

1968

The Vamp Chang Huibin
Yohwa Chang Hûi bin
A Man Called the Wind
Param kwa kat'an sanai
The Walking Woman
Mongmyô

Return from the Sea
Toraon oensonjabl

1969

Escape from Shanghai
Sanghae t'aich'ul
Full Moon Night
Siboya

Three Generations of Men
Sanai Samtae
Thunder Sword
Noegôm

Eagle of the Wilderness
Hwangya ûl toksuri

Would You Help Me?
Sinse chom chijaguyo

Best Friends and Their Wives
Pinari nûn Komoryông

1970

Swords under the Moon
Wôrhwa ûi kôm
One-eyed Mr. Park
Aekkunun Pak

Unmarried Mother
Isûlmannûn paegilhong
A Vagabond's Story
Pinaerinnûn sônch'angga

A Woman Pursued
Kû yôja rûl tchoch'ara

Hidden Investigator
Pamch'a ro on sanai

The Flying Sword
Pigôm

A Snapshot and a Murder
Songnunssôp i kin yôja

1971

Snowing on Grudge Street
Wônhan ûl kôri e nun i naerinda

The 30-Year Showdown
Samsimnyônman ûl taegyôl

Revenge of Two Sons
Wônhan ûi tu kkopch'u

In Search of the Secret Agent
Na râl tû isang koerop'iji mara

Swordswoman
Yogôm

A Stepmother's Heartache
Tultchae ômdôn

Gangsters of Myongdong
Myôngdong Samgukchi

1972

Cruelty on the Streets of Myongdong
Myôngdong chanhoksa

Arrivals and Departures
Toraon cha wa ttônaya hal cha

Seize the Precious Sword
Samguktaehyôp

1973

Five Hostesses for the Resistance
Kisaeng O Paek'wa

Pursuit of the Bandits
Tae ch'ugyôk

The Deserted Widow
Chapch'o

The Testimony
Chûngôn

Wives on Parade
Anaedûl ûi haengjin

I'll Never Cry Again
Ulji anûri

The Hidden Princess
Yônhwa

The Hidden Princess Part II
(Sok) Yônhwa

Who and Why
Wae kûraettanka

Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow
Ôje onâl kârigo naeil

1976

A Bygone Romance
Wangsimni

Overcome by Misfortunes
Maenbal ai nûnkkil

Commando on the Nakdong River
Nakttonggan ûn hûrûnûnga

The Industrious Wife
Anae

1977
The Virtuous Woman
Ongnyegi

Madam Kye in the Imjin War
Imjinnan kwa Kyewôrhayang

1978

The Evergreen Tree
Sangnoku
The Little Adventurer
Chô p'ado wi e ômma ôlgûri
The Genealogy
Chokpo

1979

Near Yet Far Away
Kakkapkkodo môngil

Again Tomorrow
Naeil tto naeil

The Divine Bow
Singung

The Hidden Hero
Kippal ômnûn kisu

1980

The Wealthy Woman
Pokppuin

Pursuit of Death
Tchakk'o

1981

High School Tears
Usang ûi nunmul

Mandala
Mandara

1982

Abenko Green Beret
Abengo kosugundan

The Polluted Ones
Oyômtoen chasiktûl

In the Bosom of a Butterfly
Nabip'um esô urôtta

Village in the Mist
Angae maâl

1983

Daughter of the Flames
Pul ai ttal

1984

The Eternal Flow
Hârûnûn kangmulâl ôtchi magûrya

1985

Gilsottum
Kilsottam

1986

Ticket
Tik'et

Surrogate Mother
Ssibaji

1987

Diary of King Yonsan
Yonsan ilgi

1988

Adada
Adada

1989

Come, Come, Come Upward
Ajeaje paraaje

1990

The General's Son
Changun ai adal

1991

The General's Son II
Changun ai adal II

1992

Fly High, Run Far: Kae Byok
Kaebiyôk

1993

The General's Son III
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Sôpyônje

1996

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Taebaek sanmaek

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PRINT AND TAPE SOURCES

ADADA
Korean Cultural Center
5505 Wilshire Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90036
Tel: (213) 936-7141, Fax: (213) 936-5712

THE CINEMA ON THE ROAD
Samsung Entertainment Group
6th Fl., Daechi Bldg
889-11, Daechi 4-Dong, Kangnam-Ku
Seoul, Korea 135-284
Tel: (822) 3458-1155, Fax: (822) 3458-1108

FESTIVAL
Taehung Pictures
3-1 Hannam-Dong, Yongsan-Gu
Seoul, Korea
Tel: (822) 797-5121, Fax: (822) 797-5125

FLY HIGH, RUN FAR: KAE BYOK
Korean Motion Picture Promotion Corp.
206-46 Chongnyangni-Dong
Tongdaemun-gu
Seoul, Korea
Tel: (822) 958-7586, Fax: (822) 958-7550

THE GENEALOGY
Korean Motion Picture Promotion Corp.
206-46 Chongnyangni-Dong
Tongdaemun-gu
Seoul, Korea
Tel: (822) 958-7586, Fax: (822) 958-7550

THE GENERAL'S SON
Taehung Pictures
3-1 Hannam-Dong, Yongsan-Gu
Seoul, Korea
Tel: (822) 797-5121, Fax: (822) 797-5125

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Seoul, Korea
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MANDALA
Korean Motion Picture Promotion Corp.
206-46 Chongnyangni-Dong
Tongdaemun-gu
Seoul, Korea
Tel: (822) 958-7586, Fax: (822) 958-7550

SOPYONJE
Taehung Pictures
3-1 Hannam-Dong, Yongsan-Gu
Seoul, Korea
Tel: (822) 797-5121, Fax: (822) 797-5125

SURROGATE MOTHER
Korean Cultural Center
5505 Wilshire Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90036
Tel: (213) 936-7141, Fax: (213) 936-5712

THE TAEBAEK MOUNTAINS
Taehung Pictures
3-1 Hannam-Dong, Yongsan-Gu
Seoul, Korea
Tel: (822) 797-5121, Fax: (822) 797-5125

TICKET
Korean Motion Picture Promotion Corp.
206-46 Chongnyangni-Dong
Tongdaemun-gu
Seoul, Korea
Tel: (822) 958-7586, Fax: (822) 958-7550

EVENT DIRECTOR
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EVENT ORGANIZER AND PROGRAMMER
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Typesetting & Services

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TRANSLATORS
Jinsoo An
Jin-yeop Kim
Kyung Hyun Kim
Hanna Lee

SPECIAL THANKS
*to the following individuals for
their invaluable assistance*

Jinsoo An
Grace Hong
Mickey Jeong Eun Hong
Kelly Jeong
Myong Hwa Jeong
Jin Sung-Man
Byung Kon Kim and Yeon-sup Lee
Byung-kyu Kim
Eleni Y. Kim
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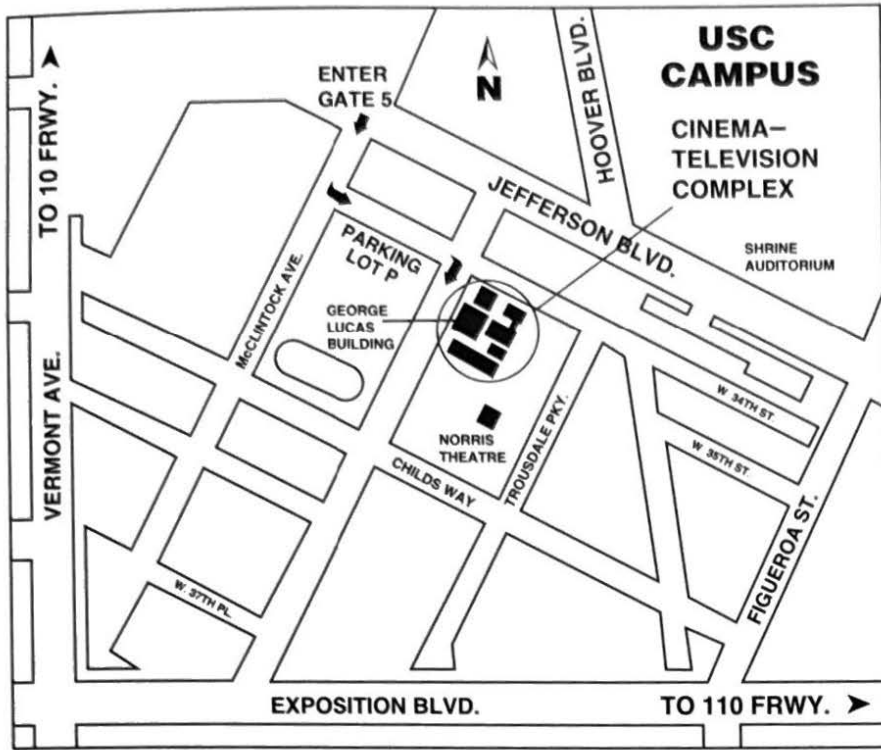
*and to the
Ministry of Culture and Sports,
Republic of Korea
for their generous assistance
with film print transportation.*

NAMES & TRANSLITERATIONS

For those living in Korea, Korean names are given in their Korean form: surname first, personal name second. The conventional Western system is used for those living in the United States. We have utilized the McCune-Reischauer system to romanize Korean whenever possible. Otherwise, we have opted to use transliterations found in previous English-language literature.

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**UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA**

**GEORGE LUCAS BUILDING
NORRIS THEATRE**
Jefferson Blvd. and McClintock Ave.
Los Angeles, CA 90089
Tel: (213) 740-9471



KOREAN CULTURAL CENTER
5505 Wilshire Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90036
Tel: 213/936-7141

