

weak compared to France. The programming quota for Korean films in the Broadcasting Law ranges from twenty five per cent to forty per cent. (Cable television is regulated separately.) However, in France a certain amount of broadcast income must be invested in film production. This system does not exist in Korea, so the broadcasting companies' contributions to the cost of film production are relatively low. Therefore, as of 2006, investment mainly comes from investment and distribution companies like Cinema Service, CJ Entertainment, Showbox, and Lotte Cinema. The unique investment entities called "audio visual investment funds" play a complementary role, working together with these investment and distribution companies. In addition, companies based on information and communication such as SKT and KT have begun to participate in film production with the goal of securing digital contents. (Kim Hyae-joon)

Advances in Visual Technology

Cinema is inherently dependent on technology and cannot be made without machinery like cameras, lighting, and editing equipment. Nevertheless, the first Korean film that actually utilized state-of-art digital technology such as CGI (computer generated images) was *The Fox with Nine Tails* (Park Hyun-soo), released in 1994. Although crudely made, *The Fox with Nine Tails* foreshadowed changes in the Korean film industry by pioneering the fantasy genre—hitherto confined to Hollywood and Hong Kong films—in Korea, using CGI technology, and deploying large conglomerate (or *chaebol*) funds from the Byucksan Group to cover the huge budget. This was the time when *chaebol*-like Samsung started to venture into the film business. If *The Fox with Nine Tails* set the direction, then *The Ginkgo Bed* (Kang Je-kyu, 1996) confirmed the possibility of making a commercial film using high-cost new technology even in Korea.

The foundations for the visual development of Korean cinema began to form slowly from the consumer patterns of popular culture in the 1980s. In the early 1980s, students were freed from restrictions and rules about their school uniforms or hair. Because of the prohibition of supplementary lessons in school or private education, for a while, many students had time on their hands and the opportunity to make early contact with popular culture. Consequently, the new term “*oppa* (elder brother) groupie” appeared and the music industry took off first, in the mid 1980s. The age of the primary consumers of popular culture dropped to the late teens and early twenties. The success of popular music accelerated the formation of a very high quality music video market. Even before that, the invigoration of the market improved the media production infrastructure, so that unprecedented energy was put into the production of advertisements. The only remaining question was whether to introduce the high-cost technological infrastructure trained to produce television commercials and programs in the 1980s into the film industry. The fact that the generation that spent their youth during the entertainment-oriented mass media age of the 1980s went on to develop the Korean film industry in the 1990s made this a natural trend.

The year of 1999 confirmed this shift. The fortunes of films like *Swiri* (Kang Je-kyu), *Phantom, the Submarine* (Min Byung-chun), and *Yonggary* (Shim Hyung-rae) varied at the box-office, but they certainly displayed their use of expensive visual technology. Today, there are hardly any films without the latest CGI, trick cinematography, or special effects. They only vary according to whether they use more or less effects. As seen in the debates about the status of the last scene in the 2001 box-office hit *Joint Security Area / JSA* (Park Chan-wook), digital technology is very commonly used now to enrich visual expression even in the scenes where it goes unnoticed.

Korean cinema is entering the era of blockbuster film production like that of Hollywood with the ability to deliver refined and ultramodern

visual expression in developments that have continued from the 1990s. The remaining task is to build a much more effective production system that suits Korean reality. If the spirit of making the effort to improve the quality of films is kept alive so that bright young filmmakers with a strong sense of purpose can keep coming onto the film scene, then I believe that Korean cinema will remain on the cutting edge. (Minn In-kee)

The “Nation” and “People” in Commercial “National and Popular” films

Since 1996, the Korean film system and its context have gone through sudden changes with the introduction of civilian government after the end of the long years of military dictatorship. The ruling that censorship of films in the form of cuts was unconstitutional, the civilian government’s globalization strategy, the introduction of *chaebol* funds into the film industry, and the establishment of various film festivals constituted a new structure demanding the rethinking of the production and consumption of Korean cinema. Accordingly, “national and popular” films (民族民衆映畫) need to be interpreted through a new structure consisting of the confrontation with globalization as opposed to the old confrontation between the state, people, and nation. The concepts of nation and people need to be understood as much more dynamic, being redefined and readjusted continuously according to the times.

The “national and popular” films that emerged in the 1980s constituted a non-institutional cinema movement independent from the state and the power of capital, and which considered films as part of a social reform movement. However, with the end of the military dictatorship, independent films also had to redefine themselves in the 1990s as they were no longer a force of resistance. The people’s history, such as the Gwangju Massacre, the division of the country, and military dic-