



NORTH KOREA

Shikoku  
Kyushu

# CINEMA

AND THE

# CULTURAL COLD WAR

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Hong Kong  
Hainan Dao  
Paracel Islands

OPERATED  
OF MICRON

PALAU

anao

Sulawesi

US DIPLOMACY AND THE ORIGINS OF  
THE ASIAN CINEMA NETWORK

## **Cinema and the Cultural Cold War: US Diplomacy and the Origins of the Asian Cinema Network**

*Cinema and the Cultural Cold War* explores the ways in which postwar Asian cinema was shaped by transnational collaborations and competitions between newly independent and colonial states at the height of Cold War politics. I adopt a simultaneously global and regional approach when analyzing the region's film cultures and industries. New economic conditions in the Asian region and shared postwar experiences among the early cinema entrepreneurs were influenced by Cold War politics, US cultural diplomacy, and intensified cultural flows during the 1950s and 1960s. By taking a closer look at the cultural realities of this tumultuous period, this book comprehensively reconstructs Asian film history in light of the international relationships forged, broken, and re-established as the influence of the non-aligned movement grew across the Cold War. *Cinema and the Cultural Cold War* elucidates how motion picture executives, creative personnel, policy makers, and intellectuals in East and Southeast Asia aspired to industrialize their Hollywood-inspired system in order to expand the market and raise the competitiveness of their cultural products. They did this by forming the Federation of Motion Picture Producers in Asia, co-hosting the Asian Film Festival, and co-producing films. *Cinema and the Cultural Cold War* demonstrates that the emergence of the first intensive postwar film producers' network in Asia was, in large part, the offspring of Cold War cultural politics and the product of American hegemony. Film festivals that took place in cities as diverse as Tokyo, Singapore, Hong Kong, and Kuala Lumpur were annual showcases of cinematic talent as well as opportunities for the Central Intelligence Agency to establish and maintain cultural, political, and institutional linkages between the United States and Asia during the Cold War. *Cinema and the Cultural Cold War* reanimates this almost-forgotten history of cinema and the film industry in Asia.

**Sangjoon Lee** is a historian of Asian cinema whose interests span the cultural Cold War and Asian cinema, South Korean cinema and popular culture, international film festivals, and the film industries in contemporary Asia. He is an Assistant Professor in the Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information at Nanyang Technological University. Lee is the author of *Cinema and the Cultural Cold War: US Diplomacy and the Origins of the Asian Cinema Network* (Cornell University Press, 2020), the editor of *Hallyu 2.0: The Korean Wave in the Age of Social Media* (University of Michigan Press, 2015) and *Rediscovering Korean Cinema* (University of Michigan Press, 2019), and the guest editor of “Reorienting Asian Cinema in the Age of the Chinese Film Market” (*Screen*, 2019), “The Chinese Film Industry: Emerging Debates” (*Journal of Chinese Cinemas*, 2019), and “Transmedia and Asian Cinema” (*Asian Cinema*, 2020). Lee is currently writing a new monograph *Border Crossings in Celluloid Asia: South Korea's Encounter with Sinophone Cinemas* and editing two books - *Asian Cinema and the Cultural Cold War* and *The South Korean Film Industry*.