

CHAPTER 3

INSIDE THE FILMMAKING: AN ETHNOGRAPHIC ACCOUNT

Accesses

The title of this section is plural, "accesses," in order to express the difficulties I went through finding fieldwork locations for research on the media industry (TV program or feature film) in Korea over a period of two and half years. The story of access will help provide an understanding of my field experience studying the "Cultural Same" as a native anthropologist which would be different from that of a foreign anthropologist studying the "Cultural Other."

My original plan for the project was to spend about one year engaged in fieldwork on a feature filmmaking project after I arrived in Seoul, Korea in March, 1996. However, against all expectations, it was not until September, 1998 when I was finally able to get involved in research on the filming of *Chimhyang* with which this dissertation is concerned. The two and half years I spent locating a fieldwork site were filled with frustration and disappointments.

The first thing on my mind when looking back on that period of seeking a fieldwork location for my dissertation is that I should have realized that field research on a media production, especially in the feature film industry, is far more unpredictable and risky than any traditional anthropological study on a village or community. Using an analogy, I have attempted fieldwork in four different "villages" that have subsequently vanished due to a variety of reasons, all of which resulted in my reluctant but inevitable departure. In the traditional fieldwork situations, there would be a slim chance that a village or a community with which an anthropologist is concerned would vanish during the course of field research. However, in my case of research on filmmaking or TV program production, it happened that the villages for anthropological study went, irrespective of the anthropologist's intention. I do not intend to detail the nitty-gritty account of the futile and painful experiences I went through, but I should briefly summarize how I gained access to field research locations since the story of access illuminates an important aspect of Korean culture: the senior-junior (*seonbae-hubae*) relationship.

As a native anthropologist working "at home," I decided to take advantage of the university senior

(*seonbae*)-junior (*hubae*) connections to locate a fieldwork site. Here, there is a need to elaborate on the general characteristics of social network (*yeonjul*) and the cultural significance of the *seonbae-hubae* relationship as a form of social network in Korean society.

School ties (*hakyeon*), and the *seonbae* (senior) and *hubae* (junior) relationship in school are forms of the strongest networks in Korea, and they represent the specific features of social networks (*yeonjul*). Before focusing on the networks in school, I first need to explain the cultural meaning of *yeonjul* in Korean society. In a recent study on social networks in Korea, Jaeyeol Yee succinctly delineated the meaning of *yeonjul* as follows:

English word "network" corresponds to two different Korean words, *yonkyol* and *yonjul* [*yeonjul*]. *Yonkyol* is a neutral word, meaning the open relations among objects or people connected by universal rule. *Yonjul*, on the other hand, means particularistic relations maintained by kin, school and regional ties. The strength of *yonjul* ties characterizes the Korean society. As the strong bond is built upon a close and personal trust relationship, it usually transcends the institutionalized rules and formal prescriptions. (Yee 2000: 1-2)

According to Jaehyuck Lee, who referred to the exclusive network orientation in Korean society as "*yonjul* society" (Lee 2000: 2), *yeonjul* "is built in most cases upon some preexisting primary group as a base (*yongo*)" (Lee 2000: 5) and it can be interpreted "as a mutual patron-client network with a strong paternalistic tone" (Lee 2000: 5). He maintained that *yeonjul*, as a peculiar type of social network in Korean society, is distinguished from other social networks or the mutual patron-client relations, not in terms of composition or form, but in terms of its extreme degree of exclusiveness among members (Lee 2000: 5).

In Korea, it is generally accepted that there are three kinds of *yeonjul* in society: blood ties (*hyeolyeon*), regional ties (*jiyeon*) and school ties (*hakyeon*). In particular, in modern society, school ties (high school and university) are considered more important among them and feature the high mutual-but-exclusive nature of *yeonjul* in Korean society.

Jaeyeol Yee argued, as I did in my fieldwork, that there still exists "a strong tendency for (the same) people to use regional, school, and families as a means of doing business, getting information, and making important decisions" (Yee 2000: 1).

Having described the significance of *yeonjul* with special reference to *hakyeon*, I will briefly outline the *seonbae-hubae* relationship as a form of *hakyeon*. The *seonbae* ("predecessor" or "senior")-*hubae* ("follower" or "junior"), better known as *sempai* (senior)-*kohai* (junior) relationship in Japanese society, can be interpreted as one of ranking processes among group members or social mechanisms for creating vertical relations in a social group based on the seniority system. *Seonbae* and *hubae*, for example, are often used in general reference to all members in the same group or organization, such as the same company, army, school or club, who entered into it either earlier or later than oneself, or who either have more or less experience than oneself. *Seonbae* and *hubae* may also be used to refer to the specific vertical and dyadic links between a senior (*seonbae*) and a junior (*hubae*), as Nakane (1970) has stressed in the analysis of Japanese social relationships.

The result of the *seonbae* and *hubae* relationship is a society of vertically organized institutions which remain internally stable through the efficient application of hierarchical principles and practices. This characterizes universities, companies, military, government and other institutions in Korea. It is important to note that

this ranking hierarchy between *seonbae* and *hubae*, once established in a given stage of a man's life or career, will last over the rest of his life even though there will be ups and downs in his relationships in actual situations.

The ranking of *seonbae* and *hubae* in the university is created and determined by the year of entry into the same university. Playing the role of *seonbae* and *hubae*, which is cultivated alongside vertical structures of inequality and unequivalent exchange, not only places one inside a hierarchical order in an institution, but it also provides one with a stepping stone for the development of meaningful relationships of respect and loyalty (from the *hubae*'s side) and protection and patronage (from the *seonbae*'s side).

In the following section, I will demonstrate how the social network (*yeonjul*), especially school ties (*hakyeon*), and the *seonbae-hubae* relationship in the university played a crucial role in locating my fieldwork site.

As soon as I arrived in Seoul, Korea (03/96), I contacted one of my Korean university seniors (*seonbae*) whom I had met and studied with as a graduate student at Temple University, USA, in 1990. He was a professor at the Department of Journalism and Broadcasting in S University in Seoul. Whenever I had a chance to visit Korea, I saw

him in order not to lose contact with him. He was also one of the few people who actually understood my major (visual anthropology) and the nature of my field research plan as well. As I expected, he introduced to me a director at a cable broadcasting company which specializes in television documentary programs. I found that the director was an adult student of my senior (*seonbae*) in the graduate program at the university. The director told me that he was planning to make a television documentary series on Japanese and Korean relationships. The access to the first project was thus surprisingly easy because two of the strongest social relationships in Korea influenced it: the *seonbae-hubae* relationship between my *seonbae* (senior) and me, and the teacher-student relationship between my *seonbae* as a university professor and the director as a graduate student. Besides, my identity as a visual anthropology major and Ph.D student in an American university and my knowledge of Japanese and Korean culture seemed to aid in the process of my acceptance. However, despite my successful access to the project, filming ceased after a paltry two months of research due to a lack of funds.

In July of 1996, I made a second attempt to conduct field research on the feature filmmaking industry as originally planned in my dissertation proposal. I visited

another *seonbae* (senior) whom I met for the first time at Temple University in 1990 when he was an MFA student and I was a 1st year student in the graduate program in visual anthropology. This means that he is my *seonbae* in the US university (Temple University), but not in the Korean university. In general, the *seonbae* (senior)-*hubae* (junior) relationship in the Korean universities is much stronger than that in the US universities (or universities outside Korea). I have kept a good tie with him since I met him at Temple University. He became a professor in the Department of Film at the University of Arts in Seoul. I dropped by his office in the university to ask him to introduce me to a film director or producer with whom he had a connection. It was a coincidence that he was preparing to produce his first film as a director at that time. After hearing my research plan, he suggested that I do fieldwork on his own film. He seemed to be attracted by the fact that I planned to participate in every aspect of the filmmaking process and would make precise records of it. At first, everything seemed to go very well. The contract between the original novelist and production company was done in a proper and expedient fashion. Main staff consisting of a cinematographer, an assistant producer and assistant directors were appointed and a main

actor was decided. However, it failed to reach the shooting stage due to a difference of opinion between my *seonbae* (senior) and the producer about the script of the film a few months after I joined the project. I had to wait another couple of months for the completion of the script which was supposed to take place by the end of the year only to see the project postponed again. At that point, I quit. If I had had the chance to research the project to the end, I might have conducted a field study in a more secure way in terms of psychological, financial and practical supports thanks to the relationship between the director as *seonbae* (senior) and me as his *hubae* (junior).

In the spring of 1997, frustrated with the unexpected delay in field research, I was contacted by another *seonbae* (senior) from my Korean university. He told me he could introduce me to a program director in a cable broadcasting company which targeted foreigners living in Korea. The director planned to start a new program on Korean culture for foreigners, which interested me as a research topic in the beginning stages, but I later dropped it because the program did not meet my expectations after a short period of involvement.

My anxiety grew toward the end of 1997 and I began to regret my commitment to do fieldwork in the unpredictable

business of filmmaking and television broadcasting. I decided to concentrate on feature filmmaking from then on as I had originally planned and to make a more comprehensive survey of production schedules of fiction films in Korea. At this time, I planned to contact one of the reporters from a popular film magazine in the hope that he would have some information on production schedules of feature films in Korea. A university *hubae* (junior) who was a lecturer in my institution told me that he could introduce to me a reporter on staff at one of the most popular film magazines in Korea. The reporter, who had a Masters degree in film studies, understood my plan very well and showed interest in my work. In addition to my *hubae*'s introduction, the status I gained through my position in one of the most prestigious universities possibly affected his decision to become a mediator between myself and a director or producer in the feature film industry. He informed me that at that time his company was holding a film competition, which included an award for the best film-to-be in the pre-production stage. The selected filmmaker would be awarded a monetary prize which would cover the cost of filmmaking. It was sponsored by one of the oldest movie theaters and production companies in Korea. The reporter suggested that I conduct research on

the selected film. It seemed perfect to me. First of all, I would not have to worry about an unexpected delay or stop midway because the film would be fully supported by the prize. Secondly, I anticipated a film of superior quality due to its selection from more than 50 film projects submitted for competition. With much delight, I participated in the award ceremony in February of 1998 and joined the reception party in order to meet the award winner who was to direct the film and the producer-to-be, both introduced to me by the reporter. The award winner seemed to grasp the concept of my project well and was eager to include me in the filmmaking process. However, after one month, I received news from the producer and reporter that the owner of the production company that had promised to fund the awarded film had abandoned the original plan. My suspicion that filmmaking in Korea was an unpredictable and unstable business was once again confirmed. I found myself yet again regretting my choice of research topics.

In May of 1998, three months after experiencing the fourth failure in my pursuit of a research vehicle, I finally succeeded in launching my study on the making of *Chimhyang* with the help of the reporter. One of the primary reasons I decided to involve myself in the film was

that it would be produced by three well-known key figures in Korea (a director, cinematographer and screenwriter) and it would hopefully be one of the more qualified projects in Korean film history. I desperately tried to stick to the film through all stages of production. When, at last, the filming started, it once again was below my expectation. First-hand experience in the filmmaking process was a far cry from what I had imagined it would be as the powerful symbolic world of the feature film industry in Korea. However, it gave me a chance to see at least a fragment of the reality of feature filmmaking in Korea and some aspects of Korean culture.

Ethnography of the Production

The following is the description of my ethnographic activity inside the making of *Chimhyang*. It will provide an over-all picture of the production of the film. However, the ethnography did not make a full description of every process of filmmaking; it is selective in order to give the ethnographer's interpretation of the production activities and the producers. In selecting the specific days of shooting or production activities, I drew on Geertz's idea of "thick description" and intentionally excluded several shooting days and the nitty-gritty of the

production process, which could be considered repetitions of routine production activities. I rather attempted to provide a cultural map of the filmmaking community of *Chimhyang* and their activities and to highlight organization, work process, social relationships, hierarchy and generational conflicts between staff members in the field of filmmaking of *Chimhyang*. This will be dealt with in more detail in the sections following the ethnographic description of the production.

At the end of May, 1998, I met the director of *Chimhyang* for the first time at a bakery near his house. He wore sunglasses and had on a round hat. I greeted the director and introduced myself by showing my business card to him. I explained that I planned to write a dissertation on the production of a Korean feature film through a participant observation of the filmmaking process. He did not hesitate to accept my idea on the spot because he had already been informed of my project by the reporter from the film magazine.

He explained to me that three older filmmakers (the director, cinematographer and screenwriter) had established KJK Production Company (named using the initials of the three founders) for the production of *Chimhyang*. He handed

over to me a copy of a brief statement of the object of setting up the company, which seemed to have been disclosed to the press. Its gist read that "three leading figures from the Golden Age of Korean Cinema in the 1960s have founded KJK Production Company to demonstrate the spirit of true authorship and a genuine picture of Korean national cinema." It also pointed out that "the Korean cinema has recently lost its cultural identity and has degraded into a genre of entertainment for teens."

The director also gave me a draft of the screenplay of the film and told me that he would let me know the exact schedule of the production when the script was completed. The screenplay was an adaptation of a medium-length story titled *The Wife of a Wood Cutter*, which was written by a middle-aged novelist a few years ago. In an interview with a film magazine and the Daily Newspaper, the director explained the main reason for selecting the novel for the picture as follows:

I was attracted to the image of *Chimhyang* in the novel. (It literally means "sunken incense." It is a kind of "incense made from sunken oak.") The story in the novel says that, in the past, our ancestors used to have oak sunk under the stream so that descendents could make aromatic burning incense after a few hundred years. I was impressed with the story in particular since *Chimhyang* does not exist any more. I also like the Buddhist temple and village near the temple as background in the novel. In the movie, using those images, I would like to express

what really makes human nature pure by reflecting on what we have lost in contemporary society. (an interview with *Win* and *Hankuk Daily Newspaper* 1998; author's translation from Korean citation)

On July 28th, I first visited KJK Production Company, which is located in a small building near one of the oldest movie theaters in Seoul. A small paper with "KJK FILM Production Company" written on it was temporarily attached to the door of the building. Inside the office, there were two rooms, one of which was used by the screen writer and director, and the other by the younger staff. The owner of the building and the movie theater neighboring it had partially invested in the making of the film and was responsible for its distribution. He is in his late 60s and has been one of the most powerful persons in the distribution of the motion picture in Korea.

On the way to the KJK company, the street (called *Jongno* 3rd Street) was crowded with young film-goers and passers-by. The street is near the *Chungmuro* (*Chungmu* Street) which has represented the filmmaking community at large in Korea since the end of the 1980s. People still use the name *Chungmuro* to refer to the motion picture industry in Korea, but it has gradually lost its symbolic power since it has failed to sustain its central position as a place for film production and cinematic activities.

Several old movie theaters (some movie theaters have been recently renovated) within a mile radius of the street still bear the marks of its glorious past when the three older filmmakers (the director, cinematographer and screen writer) were in their best days. In short, the street (*Jongno*) where KJK Production Company is located and the neighboring street (*Chungmuro*) are two of Seoul's oldest and most historic streets and they symbolize the old days of the Korean cinema.

The director introduced the screen writer to me when I entered the company. I again explained my research briefly to the screen writer. Then, he gave me two collections of his screenplays and told me that the director and cinematographer have been two of his oldest friends since the 1960s and that they have produced many films together. I also met the first assistant producer and two assistant directors (the first and second) there. I found that all three assistants had been students of the director when he was a professor at C University a few years ago.

I carefully asked the director if I could bring my assistant camera persons in to videotape the whole process of the production. He rather seemed to welcome this because it would be a good record of his filmmaking activity. He told me that he would submit the film to the

world film festivals, including the Tokyo Film Festival, in the following year. On hearing that, I hit upon the idea that I might be able to conduct research on the reception of the film in Japan and make a comparative study on audience reactions to the picture in Korea and Japan. However due to the failure in distribution, this idea proved to be futile.

I dropped in on the director for the second time on August 6th, and I had a long talk with him about Korean cinema. He assured me that his film would appeal to a younger audience and he mentioned that he would make a movie for teens next time. He criticized recent Korean films for their orientation to entertainment for teens. He remarked that "movies nowadays are full of violence, sex and abusive language" and "the younger generation of filmmakers are only trying to flatter the younger audiences for popularity." He was especially annoyed by the recent change in the motion picture industry. He was critical of the fact that a large enterprise had entered the film industry and had begun to dominate it. He also pointed out that the recent making of a film relied too much on the stardom of a few celebrated actors and actresses. However, it seemed to me while I was conversing with him that he was

trying to go against the current trend in filmmaking in Korea.

After the director left the office, I had the chance to talk with the younger staff members. All of them complained that the director did not realize the change in the film industry. Instead, he stuck to his opinion without considering current patterns of production. The first assistant director went further to add that the production might stop midway, but he hesitated to provide more details for me.

These and other talks with the director and the younger staff members led me to consider the idea of a "generation gap" in production activity as a research frame for my dissertation.

On September 12th, I received a phone call from the first assistant producer telling me that the making of the picture would commence in the screening room of Korean Film Commission (KOFIC). There would be a screen test for actors and actresses and a brief public announcement about the production of the film on September 14th.

On September 14th, I went to KOFIC to participate in the first official meeting for the making of the film. I

was partly relieved and partly nervous about launching an anthropological observation of the production and about seeing the film crew and an actor (cast for *Chanu* in the picture) and actresses (cast for *Jingyeong* and *Yura* in the movie. Another main actress did not show up at that time).

Before the screen test, the director greeted the film crew and made some brief remarks about the film. The screen test started at 1 o'clock and continued until 4 o'clock. The screen test focused on the two actresses because they had been stage actresses and were cast in a film for the first time. The director, cinematographer and screenwriter kept watching the actor and actresses through the monitor at the back of the screening room, and they frequently exchanged opinions. During the screen test, the TV production crew from Korean Broadcasting System (KBS) conducted interviews with each of the three older filmmakers by turn. The video production staff from KOFIC also recorded the screen test and conducted interviews with the older filmmakers.

After the screen test was over, the whole staff went to have dinner together. In the restaurant, the director, cinematographer, screenwriter and main actor and actresses took their seats together. Other tables were occupied separately by respective groups of staff members (a group

of assistant producers, a group of assistant directors, a group of assistant cameramen, a group of assistant lighting engineers and a group of female staff members such as make-up artists and costume coordinators). They had broiled pork with distilled wine (*soju*). It was sultry inside due to the temperature and the heat from the broilers. Members of the groups kept drinking while exchanging glasses of *soju* with each other, but they seemed hesitant to communicate with other members of different groups or to drink with the others beyond the boundaries of their team. This was because they had just met each other for the first time.

After the official dinner was over, the director, an actor, the group of assistant producers, the assistant directors and the assistant cameramen went for a second round of drinking. The story of the staff members' interactions in the bar and the significance of drinking in Korean society will be explored in detail later in this chapter.

I joined a trip to the shooting locations from September 19th to the 21st. It was a short trip to check out the future shooting locations. The trip team was composed of the director, cinematographer, lighting

engineer, first assistant director, first assistant cameraman, first assistant producer and second assistant producer. I brought an assistant video cameraman along who was a student in the educational institution where I was teaching and working as an educational coordinator. We traveled around the southern part of Korea, which was about 250 miles distant from Seoul.

Before the trip, I was a little worried about being a member of the team since I was an outsider conducting research. However, by coincidence I drove with the director and cinematographer in my car. This gave me a good chance to initiate a relationship with them because we remained together in the car throughout the trip. They first asked me a few personal questions such as my age and educational background. They then talked about interesting episodes in the making of motion pictures which they had experienced in the past. The director repeatedly told the cinematographer that they would make "a great picture."

Meanwhile, the younger crew thanked me for bringing the older filmmakers in my car. They told me that they could talk, smoke and sleep freely inside their van without them. In particular, the first assistant director, first assistant producer and second assistant producer expressed

special thanks to me for taking care of the director and cinematographer so that they did not have to.

On September 22nd, one week before I was to participate in the production, I gathered three assistant camera persons of mine to tell them the methodology of videotaping. I planned to accompany an assistant in the field by turns because I could not find a person who could concentrate on videotaping in the field. Two of the assistants were former students in my educational institution and had learned the fundamentals of TV production. One was a student at that time in the same institution. All of them possessed a basic knowledge of videography, but videotaping from the anthropological perspective was new to them. I myself attempted to minimize my involvement in videotaping in the field because I thought that I might lose the chance to thoroughly observe the making of the film more or fail to interact with subjects in the proper way if I was concentrating on videotaping.

Before we undertook videotaping in the field, I set up my own principles for recording the filmmaking activities and taught my assistants to follow them accordingly:

- (1) Bear in mind that the purpose of videotaping is not to

make an artistic video, but to keep a record of anthropological data on the making of a film for future reference in my research.

- (2) Make an attempt to include as much anthropologically relevant contents as possible in the picture. (I told them to do so even though I knew that the assistant camera persons were not well-informed from an anthropological perspective. In the field, I let them know more details about selecting anthropological topics.)
- (3) Do not abuse close-ups. Instead, try to use long shots more frequently in order to obtain the contexts of the field and filmmaking activities. If necessary, use the wide-angle lens. (In particular, the use of the wide-angle lens was necessary for the videotaping indoors.)
- (4) Every time you videotape the production activities, make sure to start by portraying the environment of the field first and then try to record the whole process of the making if possible.

- (5) Do not switch the camera off but rather keep recording the activities of the crew and the actors and actresses even after the actual shooting is over in order not to lose data on what may happen or what may be said after each shot.

- (6) Keep alert to sound-recording and make sure that important dialogues and sound are being properly picked up by the video camera.

- (7) Be careful about interactions with the film crew and do not interfere with them while they are working.

I finally took part in the first shooting on September 28th. After having an early breakfast with the staff at 6:30, I and two camera assistants arrived at the location. The shooting started at 8:30 in the morning inside and outside a large studio apartment. All of the scenes for *Yura* (the first female actress among the three main female characters) and *Chanu* (the main male character) were scheduled to be shot that day. After observing the production activities for a few hours, my expectation turned into disappointment.

First of all, I found that the process of making a motion picture was full of the repetition of routine laborious tasks. I had to wait a few hours while watching the boring processes of preparation for shooting, including set-ups of props and lighting facilities and installations of the camera or crane. Rehearsals for the acting were also repeated. The actual shooting lasted only for half an hour. (I will explore the work process in detail later in this chapter.)

On the first day, the shooting continued until 7 o'clock the following morning. We did 6 hours of videotape, but I realized that it was wasteful to record the whole process of filmmaking. I changed my plan to keep the camera on all the time and instead decided to be more selective in recording. Aside from wasting our energy, I had to watch my budget because I had promised the director that I would make up the research expenses, including meals, lodging, transportation, videotaping and so on.

Secondly, from the beginning, I was very annoyed by the cinematographer's overbearing behavior and highly nervous temperament. He always shouted at the staff members. The younger crew were all flushed with tension. It made the atmosphere of the field oppressive, and it made me feel uncomfortable observing them. Moreover, he often

meddled in directing the acting far beyond the boundary of his job. Strangely enough, the director did not care about the cinematographer's interruptions. In fact, he rather tried to adapt himself to it. The following episode will demonstrate how the cinematographer dominated the field.

There was a scene in the movie in which *Chanu*, a male character (a former car racer and novelist), talked about "Mustang" with his junior. Before shooting the scene, the younger staff members seriously discussed how "Mustang" should be pronounced in Korean. They could not decide whether they had better follow the American way of pronunciation or the Korean pronunciation. However, the serious discussion of "Mustang" was suddenly interrupted by the cinematographer. He shouted to them, "What are you talking about? It is "meoston,"" which was neither the American way nor the Korean way of pronouncing "Mustang." The staff members were dumbstruck, but they avoided confronting him over the matter because they knew that it was useless.

Thirdly, I was disappointed at the way the director and cinematographer directed the actors and actress. I was curious about how the younger audience would react to the movie, and I myself was anxious that the film might turn out to be a failure in terms of audience appeal. My

assistants, who are in their mid-20s, fully agreed with my opinion on that point.

After one day's observation of the making of the movie in the field, I decided to expand my research beyond the study of the production side of the filmmaking to include the younger audience's reaction to the film.

The third day's shooting (on October 12th) will be described in detail in the "Work Process" of this chapter.

After researching the making of *Chimhyang* for a few weeks, I considered observing the production of another film for the purpose of making a comparison. However, I dropped the idea after a few attempts due to the overlapping shooting schedules of the two films. Moreover, I wanted to concentrate on the *Chimhyang* as originally planned. Still, a brief comparison of the two films will help to illuminate the unique characteristics of the making of *Chimhyang*.

Another film I have taken part in could be considered as an exemplary model of filmmaking in Korea, not in the sense that it was one of the most superb works, but in that it reflected one of the most recent patterns in the making of a picture in Korea.

First of all, another film titled *Jagimo (Suicide Ghost Association)* was based on an award-winning screenplay created by a young screen writer. The film was based on the love story of a female ghost and a mortal man. It was a Korean manipulation of *Ghost* (1990, directed by Jerry Zucker) with a comedic flavor and the addition of splendid special effects utilizing computer graphics. From the beginning, the film was aimed at and marketed for a younger audience.

Secondly, the film was funded by a major production company. 2 million dollars were invested in the film. It was targeted to be a so-called "Korean Blockbuster," a recent coinage to refer to a film with a big-budget production on the Korean standard.

Thirdly, the major staff members, including the director, cinematographer, sound engineer, lighting engineer and computer graphic designer, were all in their 30s and early 40s. Furthermore, the director, cinematographer and computer graphic designer held MFA degrees from US universities in their respective fields. In short, the key filmmakers in the film represented a recent change in manpower in the film industry in Korea.

Fourthly, the picture had a wonderful cast, including three of the most celebrated actors and actresses in Korean TV and motion pictures.

Fifthly, the film was shown to audiences during the high season for the exhibition, and it gathered 300,000 audience members in Seoul (It was a success on the Korean standard).

Drawing on my observation of the film industry and cinematic environments at large in Korea during my fieldwork (I had watched every Korean film and read every important newspaper and magazine on the Korean cinema from 03/96 to 08/99), I would conclude that the latter film (*Jagimo*) exemplified one of the more typical, recent patterns in the making of films, more so than *Chimhyang*, from the aspects of funding, casting and composition of the film crew, to the aspects of production and exhibition.

On the 6th day of shooting (10/29/98), the second assistant producer told me that the plan for the shooting was a fiasco because the financing from the Korean Film Commission had not yet been completely settled. He also added that the following week's schedules might be postponed due to the same reason.

The work schedule for the 6th day was to shoot the main character's (*Chanu*, a former car-racer and novelist in the film) car racing scene, which was the same scene as that of the 5th day of shooting (10/25/98). After having an early breakfast at 6:30 in Seoul (they had breakfast at the same restaurant), the whole film crew moved to a car racing stadium located one hour from Seoul.

Originally, the car racing was not included in the first draft of the screenplay, but it was added later by the director after he found that the male actor was a real race car driver. He thought that the inclusion of the car racing scene might attract a younger audience. However, the film's characterization of the hero as a car racer and novelist at the age of 27 was not praised by the audience (the university student audience in my reception study). Contrary to the director's expectation, it was severely criticized as "unrealistic." To make matters worse, the frequent alteration of the script by the director, including the above scene, made the screen writer very upset. In the final stage of production, the screen writer was unable to hold back anymore and finally decided to drop his name from the credits. He told me that the picture had turned out to be worse than he had expected due to the director's inconsistent modification of the original

screenplay. He also said that this was the second time his name had been eliminated from the credits at his request.

At 4:30, the shooting was over earlier than usual and the actor proposed to treat the whole staff to dinner. The director went home without joining the dinner party due to illness. Before dinner, the cinematographer loudly announced to the staff that the dinner was on the actor and tried to speak highly of his decision to buy dinner for them. The cinematographer's public announcement of the actor's gesture meant that the staff members should treat the actor better in the future, and that he deserved this treatment for showing good manners to the staff. I thought that it was a wise decision for the actor to host dinner at that early stage of the production and to attempt to be on good terms with the staff members.

The cinematographer wittily took advantage of the dinner to gather the staff members and offer each one a glass of distilled wine (*soju*). He called every staff member one by one to his table in the order of age. Then he poured *soju* into each member's glass and spoke a few words of encouragement. A person called by him had to politely take the glass with both hands and empty the glass immediately. (Everybody had to drink it whether one liked it or not.) He also offered me a glass of *soju* and I drank

it up in front of him. He called me "Professor Lee" in public for the first time. At that point, I was a little relieved at being referred to as "Professor Lee" because this could be translated as his intention to treat me better in the future. After offering a glass of *soju* to the whole crew, the cinematographer requested that a few of the youngest staff members sing a song by turns and add to the amusement. However, the drinking could not continue for long due to the following day's shooting schedule.

On the 8th day of shooting (on November 11th), the publicity woman brought in TV broadcasting crews from MBC and DCN and a reporter from the *East Asian Daily* in order to promote the picture. She set up the TV and newspaper interviews with the director, cinematographer, actor and actresses because it was the final shooting in Seoul. The next shootings would be done while traveling around areas located 250 miles away from Seoul.

I also had a chance to have interviews with DCN and the *East Asian Daily*. The reporter from the *East Asian Daily* was especially interested in my research. She brought a section of the PR materials for the press that had been sent to her by the publicity woman. It contained a description of my research on the film. The PR woman made

use of my participation in the production to promote the movie by emphasizing that the film was worthy of scholarly notice by me as a researcher in the university. The reporter cited a description of my involvement in the making of the film and reported it in the article as if I were doing anthropological research on apprenticeship in the team of cameramen with special reference to the master (the cinematographer)-student (the first assistant cameraman) relationship. (In fact, I was doing research on the whole process of the production of the film) The article's mention of my research on the cinematographer and his assistant cameramen served to develop a better relationship between the cinematographer and me because he believed that I was interested in him and his filmmaking activity. I will elaborate on this later in this chapter.

In the evening, the crew moved to a suburban location about one hour away to shoot a scene about a prostitution quarter. During the shooting, I again observed conflicts between the two older filmmakers (the director and cinematographer) and the junior assistants (assistant directors and assistant producers).

They were supposed to film an insert shot of a train going up to Seoul from behind the alley in the prostitution quarter. Unfortunately, however, they were unable to

observe any train running up to Seoul for an hour. The director and cinematographer lost their tempers and shouted to the assistants to cancel the plan to film the scene without discussing it with them. All of the assistants gazed at each other in blank dismay. They really got upset with the two older filmmakers' overbearing attitudes toward them. The first assistant director and first assistant producer refused to participate in the next shooting and remained outside talking angrily with each other. Nevertheless, the shooting continued until 5 o'clock the following morning despite the very oppressive and chilly atmosphere. I later learned that the first assistant director made his mind up to resign his position and left the team that day.

We traveled around the southern parts of Korea to shoot scenes of Buddhist temples and a mountain for 9 days (11/19/98-11/27/98).

The staff members left Seoul for the *Tongdo* Buddhist Temple (*Tongdo-Sa*) early in the morning on November 19th. I drove my car to the location in the afternoon, and I brought the PR woman with me. It took about five hours to get to the shooting location from Seoul. As soon as I got there, I received a phone call from the second assistant

director saying that the PR woman and I needed to come to the bar near the motel. When we got to the bar, I found that the director was pretty drunk. The lighting engineer, the sound engineer and a few junior assistants were also there drinking beer. I heard from the second assistant director that the director got drunk after hearing about the first assistant director's resignation. He seemed to suffer from his maltreatment at the hands of the first assistant director and from the loss of respect from the man who was one of his university students when he was a professor at the university. The second director brought me and the PR woman to the bar because he thought that we might be helpful in mollifying the director's sad mind. The second director told me that he had respected the director as a teacher in the university and that the director had also taken special care of him as a student. Even though he lost much of his respect toward the director while participating in the making of the film, he still felt obliged to take care of the director as a former teacher, especially after the first director left the team.

On the morning of November 21st (the 11th day of shooting), the Buddhist ceremony to ease the soul of a female character (*Seonhi*) in the movie was shot. A

Buddhist dance was performed by a professional Buddhist dancer and the ritual was carried out by two monks in the *Tongdo-Sa*. After filming the ritual, staff members wrapped up the shooting before noon, which was much earlier than usual, in order to drive a few hours to the next location. There was no shooting scheduled for the next day due to the actor's and actress's appearance on a television program. I planned to go back to Seoul to pick up an assistant cameraman (he was in Seoul to take a class) and return to the next location the following day.

During my fieldwork, I found that driving with subjects in my car played an important role in many respects.

First, it helped me to establish a good relationship with the subject because I, as the owner of the car, did them favors by giving them a ride when necessary. I have already demonstrated in this chapter how driving with the two older filmmakers during the trip to the location helped to form a good relationship between us. The same applied to the actress to whom I gave a ride. Thanks to driving together in my car, I had a chance to initiate an informal relationship with her and to ask her a few personal questions for an hour. In particular, driving to Seoul

with the PR woman for more than 8 hours that day (It usually takes about five hours from the temple to Seoul, but it took over 8 hours due to the traffic) offered us the chance to get to know each other better and to exchange opinions about the production of the film. After that, she continued to play a crucial role as an informant by providing me with necessary information during the filmmaking as well as after the production had been completed. It was also she who later helped me to get permission to hold a special screening of the film for the reception study, as I mentioned in Chapter 5.

Secondly, when moving from one location to another in the car, either by myself or with my assistant, I was able to relax and ease the stress from my fieldwork. While driving, I could also sit back to ponder what I had done in the previous location and consider what I should do in the next location.

Upon returning from Seoul to the new location with my assistant (11/23), I found that the younger staff members had had a drinking party the previous night. I will explicate in more detail how the drinking that night affected the relationships among the staff members later in this chapter.

The location for the 12th day of shooting (11/23) was a road covered with bamboo trees. One of the scenes shot there portrayed a female character (*Jingyeong*) running naked through the bamboo trees, and this was intended to express her freedom from herself in the movie. I did not participate in the scene because I thought that it was not ethically right to do so. An assistant producer also politely requested that no videotaping be done.

After shooting a few more short scenes around the area, the staff members moved again to the next location, which was about four hours distant from there. On the way to the next location, I was again asked to drive two assistant cameramen (the third and fifth assistant cameraman) in my car because the fifth assistant cameraman had fallen sick. (All of the staff members rode in a bus altogether.) In my car, while talking over the organization of the team of cameramen with the third assistant cameraman, I discovered an interesting fact about the hierarchical order in the team. The third assistant cameraman explained to me that he was a second assistant cameraman before enlisting in the army. Upon returning from the army after three years, however, he was ranked third in the group even though he had entered the team before the second assistant cameraman and was older than

the second assistant. The story demonstrated how the hierarchical order was set up in the organization of the camera team. Usually, the hierarchical order and age go together because nobody would work under an assistant who was younger than himself. However, the above case explains the importance of the level of experience and the number of movies one has participated in in determining the hierarchical order of the organization. I will explore the organization and the hierarchical order in the technical crew, including the cameramen, later in this chapter.

The final stage of shooting in the local areas drew near. Most of the filming was done in the *Daeheung* Buddhist Temple (*Daeheung-Sa*) which was located in the southernmost part of the Korean Peninsula. The director selected the temple for the shooting location because one of his oldest friends, an owner of the local daily newspaper, was acquainted with the head priest of the temple. Thanks to his friend, the director was allowed to use the temple freely for the making of the picture.

The director and cinematographer looked exhausted from the 8 days of continuous shootings in the local areas. However, they tried to exert the final energy needed for shooting the scenes in the Buddhist temple because it

played a significant role in the movie as depicted in Chapter 4. The scenes filmed in this temple were pieced together with those shot in another Buddhist temple on November 21st. The screenwriter also joined in the final stage of production in the temple and observed the shooting all day long.

After returning from the shooting in the local areas, I reviewed the videotape and tried to put my recollections of the fieldwork into my computer. I realized that videotaping the making of the movie was significant in several aspects.

First, it helped me to retrieve my memory of the field, especially when I had difficulty remembering exactly what happened in the shooting, because many crew members were always working together at the same place at the same time. In particular, in the case of filming at various local areas and traveling around the southern parts of Korea over a short period, the videotapes helped me to classify the filmmaking activities day by day and to get them organized on the computer.

Second, the video camera filled a note-taking role in the field because I could not record my observations due to the lack of time and the need to socialize with people

after work. Especially, the function of recording day and time in the video camera provided me with exact temporal information on the fieldwork.

I originally intended to make a video of the making of the movie in addition to using the video camera as a research tool. For this reason, I made every effort to keep track of the whole process of the filmmaking. However, I later gave up that idea after realizing that the picture would not be distributed in due time and that the original film copy of the film would not be available to me.

The shooting in the studio setting from 12/09 to 12/11 marked the final stage of the production. The film studio was located in mountainous suburbs about one hour distant from Seoul. The studio was recently built by the government and has been used for the majority of studio shootings for movies in Korea.

Two sets for the making of *Chimhyang* were built on the first floor inside one of the large studio buildings. Both of them were open sets made of wooden materials. For shooting purposes, they had no front or upper sides.

One set portrayed the entrance and stairs of the motel which, in the movie, is run by the female character (*Jingyeong*). The other resembled a room in a motel. The

room had a small window, and it was furnished with an old TV set, a side table, a Korean mattress and a blanket. Both sets looked like an old motel and room in the countryside. On the second floor in the studio building, there were rooms for costume and make-up.

All of the staff members and the actors and actresses remained in the building except for meals and sleeping during the shooting in the studio. It was boring and monotonous to watch the process of production in the studio all day long. When the actors and actresses were rehearsing with the director or cinematographer, the junior staff would gather together in the corner in front of a heater and kill time gossiping until the director or cinematographer shouted to the staff to get ready for shooting.

In the case of the studio shooting, the two boom men had to work harder than any other staff members. The lighting facilities were already in place around the sets and the lighting assistant did not need to change them very often. The assistant cameramen did not have to move the rail or crane often, either. However, the boom men had to remain standing on the roof with a long fish pole for the synchronous recording. The shooting progressed at a slow

pace, and it always continued far into the night for three days.

In January of 1999, I visited the editing room to observe the process of cutting. The cutting room was located in the *Chungmuro* which I already mentioned in the first part of this section. I was very disappointed with the old-fashioned editing room in an old small apartment. There was a single old Steinback editing machine in the small room. The cutter, in his late 50s, was assisted by a young girl. The director sat beside him and watched every step of the cutting. The editor would sometimes ask the director's opinion about cutting and then continue to cut the film. The second director also sat by watching the tedious work. In addition, the first and second assistant producers came in and out of the room because there was virtually nothing for them to do in the cutting room.

After a few weeks, I attended the first screening (02/10/99) at the screening room in the Korean Film Commission. It was not a screening for the public but for staff members and the main actors and actresses. However, a few acquaintances of the director, cinematographer and screenwriter were invited to see the finished film. In

addition, the reporter who introduced me to the director for the researcher had received a special invitation.

As soon as the showing ended, the director stood up and faced his guests. He seemed satisfied with the film and talked merrily with his friends. The cinematographer was also content with his job and confidently asked for my opinion. Later, on my way home, the reporter told me that he could not understand how the film was produced by the same director who had made such excellent films in the '60s and '70s. He continued to say that he was very worried about writing an article about the film for the magazine. In any case, I was very relieved to have observed the whole process of the making of the film and to have finally seen the finished work.

Having elaborated on the overall picture of the ethnography of production of the film, I will focus on the relationships with subjects in the following section because the ethnographic analysis of interactions with subjects in my fieldwork helps to understand how the relationship between a native anthropologist and native subjects was crafted and affected by age, status and other cultural factors.

Relationships with Subjects

After passing through the first stage of fieldwork, that is, access, I came up with some unexpected problems in the second stage of fieldwork, namely, making relationships with subjects. Unlike more traditional anthropological fieldwork where an anthropologist can meet anthropological subjects everyday if s/he wants to by being in the same village over a long period of time, I found it very difficult to create a rapport or deep relationships with people in a filmmaking community. First of all, the filming of *Chimhyang* was done over a short period of time (4 months) and the total of actual shooting days did not exceed one month (21 days of shooting). It was almost impossible to maintain relationships with subjects on a person-to-person basis in such a situation. Secondly, it was also difficult for me to find good informants in the case of *Chimhyang* under such limitations. Thirdly, a number of the staff worked together at the same place and at the same time which prevented me from focusing on particular subjects and forced me to observe them as a group.

In a cultural analysis of filmmaking, taking those circumstances and constraints into consideration, it will

be helpful to mention how I forged a relationship with a particular subject, what kind of relationship I made and how such a relationship was made possible.

From the beginning, a good relationship with the three key filmmakers (the director, screenwriter and cinematographer) was imperative since they were, to be sure, the most powerful figures in the filmmaking community of *Chimhyang*. I met the director first. It was he who allowed me to get in on the project. Several reasons seemed to influence his decision regarding my participation.

Firstly, his acceptance of me was due in part to his relationship with the reporter who referred me. At that time, the director had been writing a serial story on his past experience in movie production in the film magazine, *Cine 21*, which was made possible through his connection with the reporter.

Secondly, he showed interest in my educational background of visual anthropology at Temple University in the US. He himself had a background of higher education and had been a professor in the department of film at C University for a long time. As was often the case with Koreans, he placed great importance on positions of high academic standing.

Thirdly, he seemed to have confidence in me because I had a title as a researcher from the university. Whenever he introduced me to new people during fieldwork, he proudly explained my involvement in his project without forgetting to mention my educational background and title in the university.

The second elder, the cinematographer, was not an easy person to form a relationship with. He was paternalistic and used his authority as an elderly cinematographer in the field to intimidate others. He was not very kind to me, but in comparison with the harsh attitude he projected toward his staff, I was treated far better than most in the community. I believe this was due in part to the fact that I was the only person who was not caught up in the hierarchical relationships of the filmmaking community, but was instead an outsider. During fieldwork, however, he gradually warmed to me. This may have been due to two reasons. One was my use of a video camera to record the entire process of production, and the second was my role in getting a spotlight in the newspaper article.

I found that the video camera played an important role as a bridge between the subjects and anthropologist. For example, in the case of the cinematographer, my use of the

camera in every location seemed to impress him more than simply carrying a notepad and a pen. The video camera and the process of videotaping projected the image of "always being in the field" more thoroughly than had I used something else. This gave him gradual trust in me as an omni-observant, omnipresent field researcher who was participating in every process of filmmaking. People at large working in the filmmaking community, including the cinematographer, did not seem to mind being exposed to a video camera. They were used to being photographed or videotaped. I also observed that people usually initiated their first conversation with me by mentioning camera-related subjects before extending it to general topics. In this case, videotaping during fieldwork not only helped me to retrieve memories of the fieldwork which would be forgotten otherwise, but it also served to demonstrate a common interest between the subjects and myself.

During fieldwork, my research as well as myself was used as a promotion tool. A reporter in one of most famous daily newspapers quoted me when she wrote an article on the cinematographer and his apprenticeship system:

It would be the last chance to observe a traditional apprenticeship in the history of Korean cinema in which the strict apprentice system has almost disappeared because of the growing number of young cinematographers who have studied abroad. A master-

apprentice relationship between the cinematographer and his first assistant cameraman shows the vestige of apprenticeship in the filmmaking industry. It is the main reason why Ki-Jung Lee, a researcher in the Academy of Broadcasting in the *Sogang* University, has been keeping every record of the filmmaking of *Chimhyang* with his 6mm digital camera. Mr. Lee commented that "their relationship will be recorded as one of the last instances of apprenticeship in Korean film history" and "it could be compared to blood ties between a father and his eldest son." . . . The first assistant started his apprenticeship as soon as he graduated from high school and has been working together with the cinematographer for 13 years . . . (*Dong-a Ilbo (East Asian Daily)*, 12/04/98; author's translation from Korean citation)

Actually, the part of article on my project was misinformed because I was not just interested in the apprenticeship itself but in the whole system of the filmmaking process. Regardless, the cinematographer seemed to think that I was mainly interested in his work and his staff after reading the article. This affected the relationship between him and me in a positive way. He tried to communicate more openly and began to call me "Professor Lee" in front of the staff. (In fact, I was not a professor but a researcher in the university). Considering that professorship is one of most highly respected jobs in Korea, his addressing me as a "professor" demonstrated his acceptance of me in the filmmaking community.

The third elder, the screenwriter, was gentle and friendly from the beginning. As soon as he met me, he

spoke openly and treated me as a film-related scholar. At first, I thought that he was less powerful among the three older filmmakers, but later he turned out to be one of the most influential figures as far as the distribution of the film was concerned. Actually, it was he who made it possible for me to have a special screening for the reception study of the film, which will be explained in detail in Chapter 5.

As a native of Korea, I knew that one of the best strategies for making good relationships with elders is to be polite and show them respect. My relationship with the three older filmmakers was easier to keep in some respects as opposed to those I kept with the younger members of the production team. I was not involved in the tricky political negotiation of communications and power relationships with the older filmmakers. For example, whenever I met and communicated with them, I would greet them first, behave politely, use polite gestures, use honorific terms and be careful to not exceed my social standing. However, I needed to employ more sophisticated strategies when communicating with younger staff members.

Similar strategies as those I employed with the three older filmmakers were used in forming relationships with senior staff members. Among these were the sound and

lighting engineers. According to hierarchy, they would be second-ranked just below the three older filmmakers. I tried to show respect and politeness to them and they did the same to me. They called me "Professor Lee," and we all used honorific terms when communicating. However, our relationship did not go beyond the boundary of formality. Seemingly, my title in the university, educational background and age worked together to establish the formal relationship that developed between us.

Before describing my relationships with the junior staff, it is necessary to mention how my relationship with the assistant cameramen was formed in detail because it demonstrates how drinking plays a role in the building of relationships in Korea. In particular, the first assistant cameraman needs to be highlighted here.

He was 32 years old and he had been working as an apprentice cameraman under the cinematographer for 13 years, since graduating from high school, as mentioned in the newspaper. I met him for the first time at the first official meeting among key filmmakers, actors, actresses and production staff. On that day, after the official events (including screen tests for actors and actresses and the director's greeting) were over, all staff went to a company dinner, which lasted about two hours. After the

meal, the director, the main actor, assistant cameramen, assistant producers and assistant directors went for a second round of drinks while the screenwriter and cinematographer, the older female staff members, assistant lighting engineers and assistant sound engineers left. The atmosphere proceeded to get more informal and intimate. The director introduced me to people there, but with the time approaching midnight, he, an actor and others from the staff left and approximately 10 or so people remained for more rounds. I stayed in order to observe what might happen in the bar even though I did not feel at home. People sat together around one table and kept talking while drinking beer. I happened to sit in front of the first assistant cameraman and we talked to each other for about 30 minutes. He talked to me especially about his relationship with the cinematographer and proudly told me that he had been assistant cameraman under the cinematographer for a long time. He then asked the reason why I was involved in filming of *Chimhyang*. He asked me about my educational background with special reference to film, then delightedly informed me that he had worked with my US university *seonbae* (senior) of the same major who became a director of feature film. He seemed to think that my major (visual anthropology) was closely related to

feature filmmaking since my *seonbae* (senior) of the same major went into the commercial film industry after returning to Korea, and here I was also doing field research on fiction film. We were drinking and talking when suddenly he asked about my age. After making sure that he was younger than I, he told me he would regard me as his senior and call me "elder brother."

Asking age in Korea is never considered rude even though it requires sophisticated communicative strategies to do so. It becomes a means of setting up the hierarchy between communicators.

The Koreans who have lived under the cultural influence of Confucianism for hundreds years are accustomed to figuring out age and setting up hierarchy accordingly. Whenever they meet for the first time, they try to detect their age first more than anything else . . . They do not inquire about age from the beginning of the communication, but they are certain to check up on age as communication advances. (Choe 1997: 169; author's translation from Korean citation)

Setting up hierarchy by age is especially important because it determines forms of language used (Jeon 1998: 248).

According to Korean "linguistic ideology" (Silverstein 1979), the first assistant cameraman's decision to address me as "elder brother" would express his willingness and wish to establish a more informal relationship with me. As Hyeyeong Jeon describes,

The features of appellation in the Korean language system reflect the Confucian culture of the society. More than anything else, it should be noted that people use kinship terminology to address others who do not belong to their kinship . . . For example, people easily apply such kinship terminology as 'uncle, grandfather, aunt, elder brother, elder sister' to others, which indicates that they intend to include others in the category of family, creating more informal relationships. (Jeon 1998: 243-244; author's translation from Korean citation)

I did not know the exact reason why he decided to address me as "elder brother" the first time we met. If it had happened after we had a chance to get closer, it would have been more understandable. Regardless, one thing is clear, he may have been one of the most difficult persons with whom to form a relationship among the junior staff without his initiating the relationship first because he was an influential person among the younger staff members due to his status as the oldest assistant (he was sometimes called "engineer" without a title of "assistant") as well as the fact of his intimacy with the cinematographer. Moreover, his decision to address me as "elder brother" did not just mean that the relationship between him and myself had been established. It meant more than that. Because he was the first assistant cameraman and the team of assistant cameramen were very hierarchically organized and very strict in the order of hierarchy, the establishment of close relationship between the head of assistant cameramen

and myself meant that my relationship with the other assistant cameramen was automatically secured.

The above-mentioned story is not unusual. Actually, I underwent the exact same experience during my first research attempt. It occurred between the first assistant director and myself on an evening of drinking. The only difference is that it happened after we had met several times already. It is important to note that drinking provided us with the chance to initiate informal relationships partly by revealing our ages and setting up the hierarchy by it. I will touch more on the role of drinking in the filmmaking community of *Chimhyang* later in this chapter.

The most difficult experiences I have had in forming relationships during this project occurred with the younger staff members between the ages of 30 and 33. These included the first assistant director, the first assistant producer, the second camera assistant and the first assistant lighting engineer. First of all, they were very sensitive to the hierarchical and power relationships inside the filmmaking community in general, and they had also learned sophisticated politics and strategies of communication through these experiences. Secondly, it seemed that they did not feel it necessary to form a

special relationship with me since I was an outsider to the film industry. The fact that they did not realize that they themselves might be my research subjects may have made them less interested in my project. They did not try to override me at all, but they did not try to establish any informal relationship beyond the formal and impersonal unlike the first assistant cameraman. Whatever the reason may be, my relationship with them was unstable. I tried to be kind and polite to them irrespective of their position and age mainly because anyone might emerge as an informant and a bad relationship with any person in the filmmaking community could affect my fieldwork negatively. Thus, as an anthropologist, I attempted to maintain polite relations with them, but as a Korean I felt uncomfortable interacting below my station.

In contrast to my experience with the older members of the junior staff, I had less difficulty sustaining relationships with younger staff members whose ages spanned from 20 to 25. In general, they were polite and kind to me. However, there was a distance between them and myself due to difference of age and status. They also seemed not to care about my research because they did not think that they would be included as part of my research interest.

The last group to be mentioned is a group of female staff members who worked independently of other teams or in small groups (public relations woman, make-up artists, hair-dressers, costume coordinator and other junior assistants). Unlike male staff members, they were far less hierarchy-oriented and did not try to show off hierarchical power, which made it easier for me to initiate a relationship and keep up with them throughout my fieldwork.

In the next section, I will briefly discuss the scale of filmmaking of *Chimhyang* with special reference to budget and funding and the work process.

The Scale of Filmmaking

The economic side of filmmaking should be fully explained in order to understand the scale of the film involved, but I decided not to include it in the dissertation for several reasons. The film failed in distribution and exhibition, which means that the film would give us only a limited view of the economic aspect of filmmaking in Korea. Secondly, from the funding to the budget, the whole process was usually controlled by the older filmmakers who would not disclose their decisions or process. Thirdly, as far as the economic aspects of filmmaking are concerned, this film would be one of worst

examples of filmmaking in Korea. Having said that, I will comment very briefly on budget and funding and explore the work process more fully. Both will demonstrate the scale and context of the production of *Chimhyang*.

Chimhyang is a very low-budget film and as an assistant producer explained to me, "the filmmaking business in Korea could be compared to a domestic industry."¹ Only a half million dollars was invested in *Chimhyang*, excluding the cost for distribution in which the film failed. Primary funding for the production came from a government fund which is set up to promote the art form of filmmaking. The director mentioned how he struggled to get financing for the production in an interview with a daily newspaper, which also explained how he managed to survive in the changing environment of film industry:

I had to face up to the reality of the recent film industry which crowded out the older filmmakers when large-sized enterprises had undertaken investments in film. Fortunately, the fund of the Korean Motion Picture Promotion Corporation as a form of a guarantee has brought our film to life. (*Choson Ilbo* (*Korea Times Daily*), 11/06/98; author's translation from Korean citation)

However, I heard from one of the staff members that he could earn money from the government fund due to his power as an elder and his networks in the film industry, which

indicated that some politics were involved in the selection of the film to be funded.

The film was made in a comparatively short period of time. Except for the pre-production, the actual shooting started on the 28th of September in 1998 and ended at the end of January, 1999 after only 21 days of actual shootings. It took an additional month for the postproduction such as editing and sound mixing. The first screening for the finished film was held on the 10th of February in 1999, and it was planned for release in the movie theaters around the end of February, 1999. However, this did not occur as the distributor dropped the project. I heard that the film had a chance to be screened for the public for the first time in the Fall 1999 *Pusan International Film Festival* in Korea and then to be released in movie theaters in July of 2000 while I was writing my dissertation back in US.

The Work Process

The following will demonstrate the work process and atmosphere of the working environment of the filmmaking as exemplified by a typical day, even though I would hasten to add that not every shooting day was the same.

10/12 (Monday)-10/13 (Tuesday)

The third day of shooting. Seoul.

6:30-7:30 AM -

Staff members gathered together for early breakfast. After exchanging brief greetings, they hurried to eat beef soup with rice. As soon as they finished their meals, they moved to the first location for the day's shooting, which was situated 15 minutes' driving distance from the restaurant.

08:00-12:00 AM -

Shooting for Scene # 4.

(The main actor, *Chanu*, and his friends are singing and drinking at the Karaoke bar after being discharged from military service.)

The location for the scene was the basement floor of a rented restaurant located in a crowded street. About 10 extras showed up on the scene as customers and waiters.

It took around two hours for the lighting set-up.

While assistant lighting engineers were setting up the equipment, assistant directors and assistant producers were preparing props such as tables, chairs, beer, side dishes, glasses, speakers and so on. The main actor was practicing the song that he was supposed to sing on stage.

The first assistant director and the first assistant producer looked exhausted from the early hour. They told me that they had slept for only two hours the night before because they got upset with the director and cinematographer's overbearing behaviors and bureaucratic self-righteousness, all of which made them drink in anger until 4'o'clock in the morning. I also overheard that one of the assistant lighting engineers was complaining about the cinematographer's attitude. It seemed to me that they could not confront the two old filmmakers face to face, but they were, to be sure, discontent with their way of a filmmaking.

The cinematographer always shouted at the staff and seemed to expect them to yield to his power. Upon his command, every staff member had to respond in a loud voice and react to his order immediately. This made the atmosphere on the shooting location rather repressive.

Once the lighting set-up was over, the third and fourth assistant cameramen prepared a rail for moving shots. Then, the fifth assistant cameraman brought a huge Ariflex camera out of the case and set it up on the tripod. The second assistant cameraman was in charge of measuring light with a lighting meter and the distance between camera and subject. The first assistant cameraman took a seat on the chair of the crane and looked through the lens to see if everything was ready for shooting. It took about another hour for assistant cameramen to set up the camera and prepare for shooting. The main actor and extras took their positions and got ready for rehearsals. The atmosphere of rehearsals was also very oppressive due to the cinematographer. Actual shooting began at 11:00 o'clock followed by a few rehearsals and camera tests. It took only half an hour for the actual shooting with approximately 4 retakes.

After the shooting was over, the junior staff started to disassemble the camera and lighting equipment and clean the shooting location, while the older filmmakers, senior staff and actors left for lunch.

12:00-1:00 PM -

Lunch time.

As usual, the older filmmakers, senior staff and the main actor took seats at the same table and ate their meals together. The other staff took separate seating according to the teams. They seemed to be reluctant to take any table with staff of a different team when they were eating meals.

2:00-5:00 PM -

Shooting scene # 1-3 inside and outside the Seoul Rail Station.

(The main actor and his friends are getting out of the train shouting with delight at being discharged from military service.)

There was a hassle between the cinematographer and assistant directors again because the assistant directors forgot to prepare for the wireless phones. In comparison to the morning's shooting, the assistant cameramen seemed to be more busy than the assistant lighting engineers since shootings were done mostly outside the building and no special lighting set-up was necessary. The assistant directors and assistant

producers were also busy controlling on-lookers around the location.

7:00-9:00 PM -

Dinner.

Each team scattered to have dinner. I was accompanied by a group of assistant directors with whom I got friendly. During the dinner, the first and second assistant directors wondered whether I was disappointed with the filmmaking of *Chimhyang*. The first assistant director confessed to me that he was now having the worst experience in the 5 years he had been involved in filmmaking as an assistant director. He also asked me not to jump to the conclusion that other filmmaking in Korea would be the same. He went on to say that it was my misjudgment to get involved in the filming of *Chimhyang*. The second assistant director also spoke ill of the older filmmakers and other staff members and kept saying that he wanted to quit the job, but he could not because he was a student of the director when they were both at university. To be sure, they were very critical of the old style of filmmaking.

9:00-11:00 PM -

Shooting Scene # 5 & 37 at the so-called "University Street" crowded with the younger generation.

(The main actor is calling his female friend, *Yura*, from a telephone booth after drinking with friends (Scene # 5 shot in the morning)).

Midnight-3:00 AM (Next Day)-

Shooting Scene # 37 at a restaurant near the street.

(It is the night before the main actor enters the army and his university friend, university senior (*seonbae*) and junior (*hubae*) are holding a farewell party for him in a bar.)

Almost the same number of extras showed up in the scenes and the process was repeated in a similar way to the scene # 4 in the morning.

4:00-6:00 AM -

Shooting Scene # 20 inside a small private commercial videoroom.

(The main actor and one of the main actresses, *Seonhi*, were watching a video on car-racing.)

6:00 AM -

Breakfast.

Some staff left without having breakfast due to exhaustion and others had breakfast while drinking Korean distilled wine.

I have attempted to show what the shooting schedule and work process looked like, how long they worked in a day, how labor was divided according to hierarchy and what the atmosphere of the shooting location was like. I intentionally selected the third day not because it was a typical day in the sense that the same thing happened at every shooting location, but because it represented well enough the overall work process of film production on *Chimhyang*.

Several things came to mind after observing one day of shooting. First of all, my impression is that fiction filmmaking, from the aspect of routine activities, is composed of a process of repetition. The same things took place on any given day, including the installation of lighting equipment, set-up of a rail for shooting, set-up of the crane and camera, and camera tests and so on. It seemed to me that fiction filmmaking may be an artistic activity for the director or cinematographer, but it is surely a physical and laborious activity for the younger

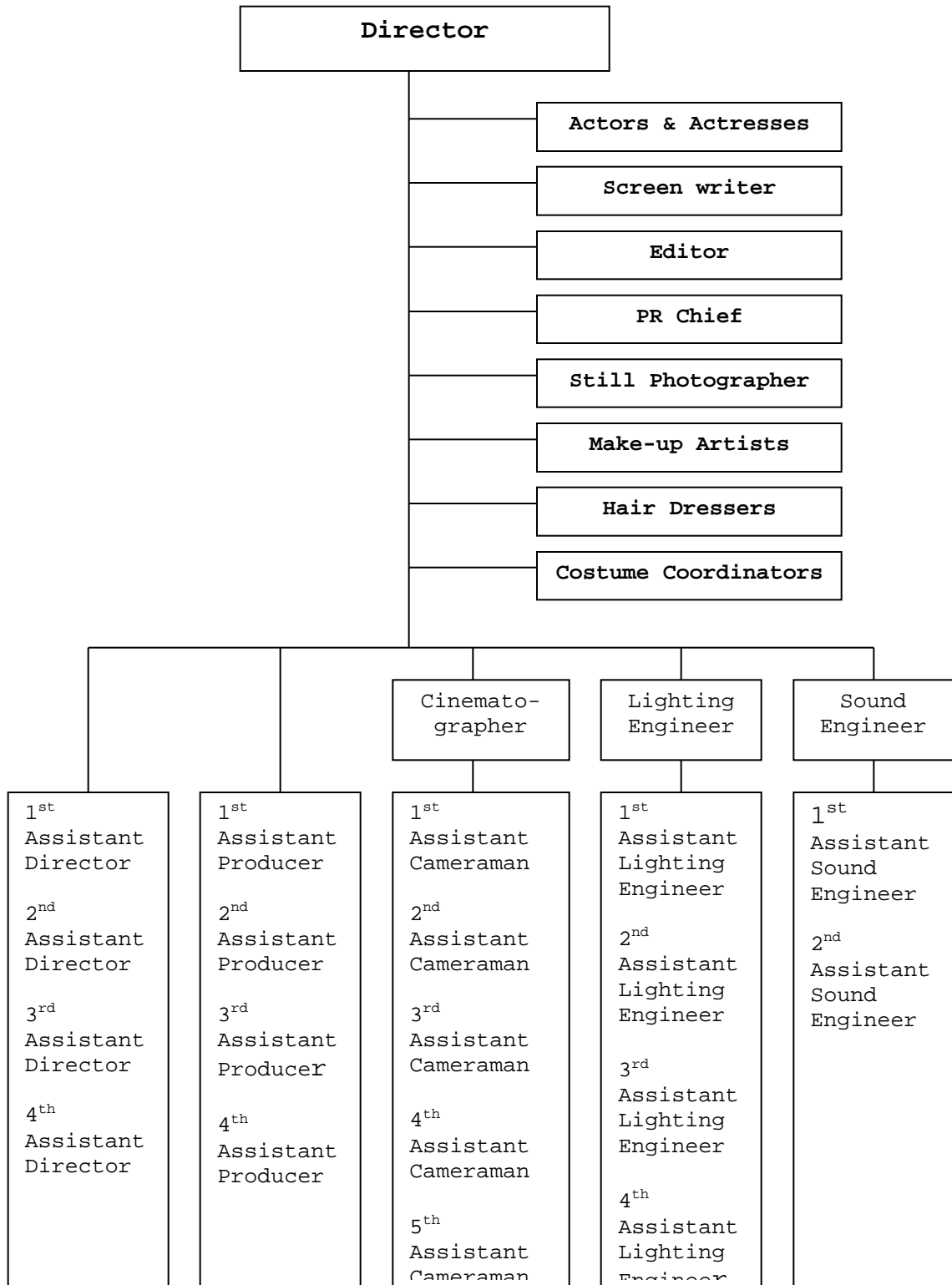
assistants. Secondly, the work day was extremely long. All involved were overloaded with work, but they seemed to take it for granted that this was the reality of filmmaking in Korea. Thirdly, the atmosphere was highly oppressive especially for the younger assistants, but they seemed to be used to it, too. They did not or could not express their complaints in front of the older filmmakers or senior staff members. The complaints were voiced instead when the older filmmakers were not with them. Fourthly, there seemed to be no actual direct communication between the older filmmakers and the younger staff members; there existed only order and obeisance at the shooting location.

In the following sections, attempts will be made to clarify the organizational aspect of the filmmaking and relationships between staff members in the filmmaking community of *Chimhyang*.

Organization and Hierarchy

The following diagram (Figure 1) shows the organizational structure of the film crew and a range of human resources in the filming of *Chimhyang*. This is what is called, "credits" in the film industry.

It illustrates the organization of staff and division of labor in a formal way. The whole filmmaking community is broadly divided into two types of groups: staff members



be a team of assistant directors (4 persons), a team of working as teams created by job divisions and staff members working independently or in a small group. The former will be a team of assistant directors (4 persons), a team of assistant producers (5 persons including one female), a team of assistant cameramen (5 persons), a team of assistant lighting engineers (4 persons) and a team of assistant sound engineers (2 persons). The latter type of staff includes the still photographer, the public relations woman, the make-up artist, the hair-dresser, the costume coordinator and their assistants.

In general, the latter staff members were far less hierarchical than the former. And the group of assistant directors and producers were less hierarchical than those of assistant cameramen and assistant engineers. This was because their groups were recruited only for the filmmaking of *Chimhyang* whereas the staff members of assistant cameramen and assistant lighting engineers had worked together for a long time and consequently had already established a strict hierarchy inside the team.

The team of assistant cameramen and assistant lighting engineers demonstrates how filmmaking crews have traditionally been organized in the filmmaking industry of Korea's past. Almost all the staff members in the team of assistant cameramen and lighting engineers were high school graduates. For them, the only way to be a cameraman or lighting engineer was to get through a strict apprenticeship program. In order to become an engineer, they have only to accumulate work experience in their fields. This would be counted by the number of the films they participated in. As Ellis said, therefore, it is very important that they be listed in the credits of the film.

. . . the name attached to a piece of work becomes important. The film industry attaches great importance to the notion of 'track record', since a person's most recent work is the only guarantee that she or he could perform the particular tasks that they might be called upon to perform. (Ellis 1982: 191)

As the term "the first, the second, the third assistant . . ." indicates, each team was very strictly stratified and hierarchically ordered according to the years of involvement in the team. The order of rank in the team tended to go along with age, which means that no one would try to work under a younger person of a higher rank than himself.

However, it appears that the traditional

apprenticeship program has been losing its power in the film industry of late because young directors and cinematographers-to-be received their education in the film schools of Korea or abroad and have chosen to directly enter the filmmaking industry without passing through a long and oppressive apprenticeship system.

It is not easy to make a clear-cut map of the hierarchical order of the filmmaking community of *Chimhyang*; however, it is possible to postulate that age and status influence the crafting of organizational relationships.

First of all, age is very important in understanding hierarchy and relationship interactions within the filmmaking community because age seemed to be a primary determinant of order inside the group.

Secondly, status in the field is clearly demarcated among key filmmakers, a group of chief engineers, actors, actresses, and junior assistant groups. The former group (key filmmakers, chief engineers, actors and actresses) possess the superior position and status inside the filmmaking field. Moreover, in regard to income, it is only the former group who can make a living by means of filmmaking production. In contrast to them, the junior assistants would represent the reality of filmmaking

activity in an adverse way, being that they hold lower social status and less power in the field. Even worse, their job is not secured at all because they cannot earn much money from their endeavors. In the case of technical crew (cameramen, lighting engineers and sound engineers), chief engineers were supposed to allocate a part of their incomes to their junior staff members which would be divided up by them according to the hierarchical order.

Thirdly, the filmmaking community was dominated by males. Out of 36 staff members, only 8 were females and their jobs were confined to make-up artist (2), costume coordinators (2), hairdresser (2), public relations (1), scriptor (1) and a junior assistant producer (1). As usual with the filmmaking community in general, there were no females in the area of assistant lighting engineers, assistant camera persons or assistant sound engineers. Generally speaking, it can be said that the structure of roles played by men and women in a filmmaking community of *Chimhyang* tends to reflect the division of the roles between men and women in Korean society. In short, jobs related to make-up, hair-dressing, costume and public relation are mostly occupied by women while fields of engineering are generally dominated by men.

Interrelationships among Teams

As demonstrated above, the vertical relationships between the older filmmakers and the younger members of the staff or senior staff members and junior assistants are rigidly defined. The hierarchical order inside the team is also strictly organized and no one would try to violate the boundary.

However, in contrast to the clear-cut vertical demarcations between the older filmmakers and younger crew members or between those inside the team, the relationships among peripheral teams are more complex and need additional explanation to understand the nature of their interactions. The relationships between peripheral teams seemed to be unstable from the beginning because no one allowed themselves to be subordinated to other staff members of other teams, and no one could yield power beyond his own team. Even if there were age differences between them (their age ranged from 25 to 32), their rank by age could not cut across the boundary of the team. The same theory applied to status. Even though there were status

differences among them, it could not go beyond the boundary of the same team. For example, the first assistant of team A could not order the third assistant of team B as he did inside his own team. Only the director, cinematographer, sound engineer and lighting engineer could order other staff members irrespective of the type of team they were in. All other crew members were careful in communicating with people beyond their own circle.

Here, it is important to note the cultural mechanism of drinking in Korean society at large as well as in the filmmaking community of *Chimhyang* in order to understand how the social drinking affected the relationships among the staff members. Indeed, it is not exaggerating to say that drinks in Korean society have a significant function for the creation of the group consciousness and set-up of relationships among group members. This was reflected in the drinking activity of the filmmaking community of *Chimhyang*.

In this vein, the following description from my fieldnotes written on 11/21/98-11/22/98 will show what actually happened in the production field and illuminate the significance of drinking in the filmmaking community of *Chimhyang* as well as in Korean society in general.

11/21, 22/98 (Saturday, Sunday)

It was the 11th shooting day. From 11/19/98, they shot continuously while traveling to various locations around Southern parts of Korea. They seemed exhausted due to the intense schedule and were beginning to complain. They were anxiously awaiting one day off. Today's shoot began in the early morning and was over around noon in order to move to the next shooting location. They left the location after lunch anticipating that they would finally get their break that evening.

I went back to Seoul to pick up my camera assistant and got back to the next shooting location the following day. When I got there, I was told that they had indulged in a great amount of drinking the night before and enjoyed a "night of orgiastic pleasure." They added that I should have joined them and videotaped the spectacle. People kept talking about the previous night's drinking all day long. They seemed satisfied with their adventure. With a greater sense of comradeship, they wished for the opportunity to

drink together more often and complained that the older filmmakers saved them no time for it.

They told me that the whole crew, including the older filmmakers and senior staff members, started the evening together but, after the older filmmakers and senior staff left, the younger staff kept drinking throughout the night. They proudly told me that they drank around 80 bottles of distilled wine (*soju*), certainly enough to make everyone drunk.

From a cultural perspective, the first thing that I noticed the next day was that their terms of appellation had changed completely. I observed that they began to address each other in terms of kinship instead of using formal titles. The younger staff called the older "elder brothers" or "elder sisters" and the older staff addressed the younger staff by their first name irrespective of the teams they belonged to.

Secondly, I also noticed that social relationships had changed remarkably. The hierarchical order among the entire staff had been reformulated according to age, which meant that age determined hierarchy across teams. People also started to hang around together when they had meals or free time. Their relationships became more informal and

the unstable atmosphere of previous times was rarely observed afterwards. It may be a surprise for those who are not familiar with the culture of drinking in Korea to observe that one night of drinking affected the relationship of the group members so drastically; however I, as a native anthropologist, would argue that it is not difficult to observe those phenomena in Korean society.

For them, drinking was a form of ritual in van Gennep and Victor Turner's terms, where rule-bounded and role-oriented structure is transformed to anti-structure, or "communitas" (Turner 1969; 1977). In this point, Joseph Gusfield rightly points out the cultural significance of drinking when he interprets drinking as a form of ritual:

The drinking occasion is a contrast to the rational and hierarchical attitudes of persons as dramatic actors and actresses; as players of roles. In the drinking arena first names are required and organizational placements tabooed. (Gusfield 1987: 82)

Hyung-Sook Yoon also commented on the cultural significance of drinking in his ethnographic study on the village called Koksan in Korea as follows:

Social drinking is more frequent among peers, and it provides a chance to lessen formality and allows neighbors and friends to open their "hearts" (maumul yold). Drinking is a mechanism to establish a relationship, and people are supposed to pour the wine into each others' glasses. If a person does not pour wine into a friend's empty glass, it is considered to be very impolite and even offensive . . .

. Social drinking has a varied range of significance, and the patterns of drinking signify social distance and closeness. In Koksan, drinking and offering a glass of distilled wine (soju) is part of everyday social life. Sharing a bottle of soju between friends and neighbors makes the everyday interaction smooth and friendly. (Yoon 1989: 164)

In his study of the village Sokpo, Brandt (1971) points out that Koreans follow two opposite interactional patterns; a very reserved formality and a spontaneous informality. He argues that the reserved formality is associated with the hierarchical kinship principles as shown in the formal relationships among teams in this chapter, and the spontaneous informality is associated with egalitarian communal principles as just demonstrated above in the informal relationships among teams.

Drinking in the filmmaking community seemed to play an important role in establishing solidarity and informality. Considering that they met each other as strangers and they did not have enough time to get to know each other, they still felt they needed to work together in a more stable environment, and they were clever to take advantage of the "rituality" of drinking together.

After drinking, the rigid formal horizontal relationships among different teams were lifted and only one line of informal vertical relationship was formed

according to age. It meant that age began to be a primary factor in their relationship.

In my own research within a motion picture production field in Korea, I found that Korean people are never free of the seniority system. Vertical relationships shown in the *seonbae-hubae* relationship, elder staff and junior staff, master-disciple relationship and even hierarchical order by age difference in the junior group demonstrated that ranking by age served as the common ideal of social group formation as well as the actuating principle in controlling the actions of individuals in the filmmaking group. The vertical dimension is an abstraction based on my experience in the field. I would argue, in spite of the danger of overgeneralization, that this ranking hierarchy could be found in every field in the Korean society and in the way people in Korea talk of their experiences in group life and society.

In the next chapter, I will focus on the film as a cultural text and explore the ideology and message of the older key filmmakers (the screen writer, director and cinematographer) through the textual analysis.

