

## COMPLETION REPORT

Eiga: Cinema in The Philippines during World War II

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### ***EIGA: CINEMA IN THE PHILIPPINES DURING WORLD WAR II***

My research project produced significant results regarding the role that cinema played in the conduct of the Japanese occupation of the Philippines (1942-1945). The Sumitomo research grant immensely helped in the task of gathering and translating Japanese-language texts about cinema during World War II; traveling and researching in Tokyo to acquire copies of primary documents available only in Japanese libraries, film museums, and archives; photocopying printed documents and reproducing copies of WWII fiction films and documentaries; interviewing Japanese and Filipino historians and scholars; and in writing a book and making a video documentary on the subject of the research.

Results from my researches went beyond my expectations. I discovered primary documents that opened new perspectives regarding the use of motion pictures for propaganda purposes. Personalities never given fitting attention before have surfaced to reclaim the significant roles they played in waging film propaganda. The most important contribution this research makes is the re-discovery of critic and filmmaker Tsutomu Sawamura, whose dream of an “ideal” cinema for the Philippines becomes the standard upon which one might want to look at the Japanese aspirations of a “national” cinema for Filipinos. As high priest and prophet of the “spiritist” cinema that led to the formation of the *kokumin eiga* (people’s cinema) during the New Order under the wartime military rule, Sawamura was in a position to critique and re-position local cinema to its “national” stature. This is where his “idealist” cinema comes to play as it defines for the Filipino what a “nationalist” cinema would be. Sawamura was not alone in dreaming of a “new” Philippine cinema. I also found out that writer and intellectual Hidemi Kon had his own notion of “cultural construction” to reconfigure film to become more “native” in its expression. Both intellectuals strongly reacted to the excessive dominance of Hollywood that turned local movies into mere imitations of foreign films.

With the financial grant, I was able to visit Toho and Shochiku studio libraries, Japan National Film Center and the National Diet library. Important documents were reproduced that helped in my research. I was also able to interview key films scholars, historians and researchers in those centers. From the researches, the wartime cinema in the Philippines finally gets written. The new information I gathered has enriched the book I’m writing containing the same title as this research. In a 12-chapter volume, I am able to extensively cover the history of film exhibition, distribution through the Eiga Haikyusha, production and propaganda use of movies under the Japanese military control as well as the reception of propaganda films by Filipinos. Cultural policies used to govern film activities have also been written about. In addition to the book, I am also producing a video documentary that

will visualize in motion pictures the researches I have made. The simultaneous release of the book and the documentary will be fitting contributions to the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of World War II commemorated this year. I hope that with the newfound knowledge I gathered through this grant, I will be able to disseminate it to those with interest and concern in the use of media and how it shapes history and historical consciousness.

Publication of the Results of Research Project:

Verbal Presentation (Date, Venue, Name of Conference, Title of Presentation, Presenter, etc.)

- (1) February 29, 2015, Filipinas Heritage Library, Ayala Museum, Makati City, Conference on “Manila, My City at War!” in Commemoration of the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the end of World War II, “Cinema in the Philippines during World War II,” Paper and Slide Lecture/Presentation delivered by Nick Deocampo.
- (2) August 15, 2015, Cultural Center of the Philippines, Cinemalaya Independent Film Festival, Book Launching, Lecture and Film Premiere of “Eiga: Cinema in the Philippines during World War II” to celebrate 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of NETPAC (Network for the Promotion of Asian Cinema) presented by Nick Deocampo.
- (3) October 18, 2015, Hawaii International Film Festival, Book Launching and Film Premiere “Eiga: Cinema in the Philippines during World War II” presented by Nick Deocampo.

Thesis (Name of Journal and its Date, Title and Author of Thesis, etc.)

N/A

Book (Publisher and Date of the Book, Title and Author of the Book, etc.)

Anvil Publishing Inc., August 2015, “Eiga: Cinema in the Philippines during World War II,” Nick Deocampo.

Video Production:

Center for New Cinema and National Commission for Culture and the Arts, June 2015, “Eiga: Cinema in the Philippines during World War II,” Directed by Nick Deocampo.