Geminate nature of [ŋ] in Japanese loanwords

Loanwords in Japanese have been phonologically investigated since early days of generative phonology through the current OT-based phonology (Lovins:1973, McCawley:1969, Katayama: 1998, Kubozono: 2006, to cite a few). The issues that still deserve to be discussed, I claim, are as follows: whether there is a phonological principle that can differentiate loanwords such as *Hong Kong* [hoN-koN] from those such as *King Kong*, [kiŋgu-koŋgu] and why [-ŋgu] is to be chosen over [-ŋu] in such loanwords as *"king," "song,"* and *"spring"*. Katayama (1998) proposes that *[kiŋu] should be ruled out by the constraint which prohibits [ŋ] in the onset position. However, we should notice that [ŋ] is allowed in word internal position in many Japanese dialects. Thus, instead of relying on a dubious constraint, I propose that the distributional properties of [ŋ] with the help of free input-output correspondence can lead to the optimal candidate. My proposal is based on the fact that [ŋ] is either a positional (word-internal) variant of /g/ or a realization of /N/ when /N/ is followed by a dorsal consonant (/k/, /g/, or /ŋ/). It is natural to suppose then that /ŋ/ in the source language is processed to correspond to one of these possibilities. For example, if *[kiŋu] is chosen as an output it naturally demands that its input be /kig/, in which speakers face a mismatch between the induced input /kig/ and the intended input /kiŋ/. Since *[kiŋku] also corresponds to an unwanted input /kiNk/, it will never be chosen as the correct counterpart of *"king."* The remaining form of [kiŋgu] is the only possibility, which reminds us of a classic argument for /Ng/ as the underlying representation of [ŋ] in English (Chomsky and Halle: 1968).

 Concerning the different phonological adaptation shown by *Hong Kong* [hoN-koN] and *King Kong* [kiŋgu-koŋgu], I claim that a simple morphophonological constraint should be introduced to account for the difference: Sino-Japanese morphemes should not contain more than two morae (for details of Sino-Japanese morphemes, see Ito and Mester:1996). Due to this constraint, *Hong Kong* will never be realized as *[hoŋgu-koŋgu], in which each Sino-Japanese morpheme contains three morae. The constraint proposed here can also account for the pattern shown by Korean personal names such as 朴/pak/ and 郭/kak/. They are realized as [paku] and [kaku], not undergoing gemination *[pakku] or *[kakku]. I conclude that they are processed in the same way as Sino-Japanese morphemes.

<Abbreviated References>
Chomsky, Noam and Morris Halle (1968).
Ito, Junko and Armin Mester (1996).
Kubozono, Haruo (2006).
Katayama, Motoko (1998).
Lovins, Julie Beth (1973).
McCawley, James D. (1969).