MAKING DREAMS WITH THE ENEMY:
CHINESE COLLABORATIONIST FILMMAKERS IN
MANCHUKUO, 1937-1945

by

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Abstract

This thesis examines how Chinese and Japanese film history intersected during WWII. Focusing on the Manchurian Motion Picture Association (Man’ei), the national film company of Manchukuo, it reveals the effects of ideological and aesthetic negotiations in a Sino-Japanese cinematic organization based in Japanese-occupied Manchuria. Chapter 1 reviews existing scholarship on Man’ei. Chapter 2 traces Man’ei’s policy shift from being an extension of Japanese filmmaking to “making films for the Manchurians,” highlighting the role of Chinese filmmakers at Man’ei. I argue that a policy change that emphasized their ethnic Chinese identity actually enhanced their sense of being Manchukuo citizens. I go on to analyze the aesthetics and ideology of Man’ei productions staffed primarily by Chinese filmmakers. Chapter 3 compares the 1944 Man’ei film *Tuberose (Wanxiangyu)* with two Shanghai melodramas from which it drew inspiration: the spoken drama *The Death of a Famous Actor (Mingyou zhi si, 1929)* and the film blockbuster *Begonia (Qiuhaitang, 1943).* I argue that *Tuberose*’s conflicting aesthetics of melodramatic narration and documentary-like film language were in part a product of Man’ei’s new policy, and contributed to the film’s poor reception.
Lay Summary

This thesis offers a case history of how Chinese and Japanese filmmakers cooperated during war between China and Japan (1937-1945). At the behest of a former Japanese military officer, the Manchurian Motion Picture Association (Man’ei) undertook a surprising policy shift from having Japanese staff direct films to educate the Manchurians to allowing Chinese staff to take the lead in “making films for the Manchurians.” I examine the results of this change, which enabled Chinese filmmakers to script and shoot films independently. I show that though they obtain a certain degree of artistic freedom, a comparison of one of their productions, *Tuberose* (1944), with a Shanghai blockbuster *Begonia* (1943), reveals that ideological pressures resulted in a cinematic style that failed to please critics or moviegoers.
Preface
This thesis is an original, unpublished, independent work by the author, Ying Guo.
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1. Introduction

Manchurian filmmakers are in a position akin to the ugly daughter of a big family. Not only is she expensive to raise, but she looks so hideous that she is scorned and ridiculed to her face, to say nothing of how she is abused behind her back. This money-losing ugly girl consequently has no recourse but to slap on as much cosmetics as she can to cover up her specks and pockmarks, despite the danger of lead poisoning.

“滿洲電影製作工作者的立場，如同大家庭中的丑姑娘，不僅是賠錢貨，由於面目可憎，當面受到的是冷嘲笑罵，背後更是苛責不已，因此賠錢的醜女不得不拼命地用化妝品來掩飾黑斑和麻點，顧不上化妝品中的鉛中毒了…”

—— Wang Ze, 1943

Writing for Manzhou Yinghua (滿洲映畫, Manchurian Film), a popular film magazine circulated in Manchukuo, a puppet state established by Japanese in northeast China in 1932, Chinese director Wang Ze 王則 (1916-1945) harshly criticized the productions of his colleagues. Wang claimed that Manchurian films are born repellent and that all efforts to correct them are ineffective camouflage. Indeed, little proof exists that the “ugly girl” of Manchurian cinema received a more positive appraisal from other critics. Yet despite the unwelcome assessment of critics, Manchurian films found a mass audience from Shanghai to Japan and from Taiwan to Korea, as Japan promoted its Greater East Asia

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2 About the history and government of Manchukuo, see Jiang Niandong 姜念東, Weimanzhouguo shi 偽滿洲國史 (History of Illegitimate Manchukuo) (Changchun: Jilin renmin chubanshe, 1980); Xie Xueshi 解學詩, Weimanzhouguo shi xinbian 偽滿洲國史新編 (New History of the Illegitimate Manchukuo) (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 2015).
policy. Along with enlarging distribution, cross-region cinematic collaborations flourished by means of co-produced films, bilingual films (with subtitles or dialogue in two or more languages), and film machine importation. In this context of active cinematic communications, what lies behind the negative evaluation of Manchurian films is the ever-changing political and aesthetical clashes and negotiations on the Manchurian screen. Through whose lens and based on what standards were Manchurian films considered “ugly”?

The place that bore these disputed films had a complicated history. In 1937, five years after the foundation of Manchukuo, the Manchurian Motion Picture Association 滿洲映畫協會 (J. Manshū eiga kyōkai, C. Manzhou yinghua xiehui) (hereafter, Man’ei) was established in the capital of Manchukuo, Hsinking (新京 J. Shinkyō, C. Xinjing), now Changchun, the capital of Jilin province. Acclaimed as the biggest film production studio in East Asia, between 1937 and 1945 it produced 189 documentaries and 108 feature films, which were distributed in Manchukuo, in other Japanese-occupied regions of China, and in Japan, Korea and Taiwan. During that time, Man’ei assembled a staff whose races, cultures and beliefs differed, including disappointed Japanese leftists who

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3 For example, China Nights (Shina no yoru 支那の夜, Fushimizu Osamu 伏水修, dir., 1940), Vow in the Desert (Nessa no chikai 熱砂の誓ひ, Watanabe Kunio 渡辺邦男, dir., 1940) and Soochow Night (蘇州の夜 soshyū no yoku, Nomura Hiromasa 野村浩将, dir., 1941) are all joint-productions of Manchurian and Japanese film companies; Eternal Renown (Wanshi liufang 萬世流芳, Maxu Weibang 馬徐維邦, Zhu Shilin 朱石麟, and Bu Wangcang 卜萬蒼, dirs., 1944) resembles filmmakers from Shanghai, Manchuria and Japan; Miles Away from Happiness (Fudi wanli 福地萬里, Jeon Chang-geun 全昌根, dir., 1941) was a Manchurian- Korean co-production.

4 Hu Chang 胡昶 and Gu Quan 古泉, Manying: guoce dianying mianmianguan 滿映: 國策電影面目觀 (Man’ei: A Study on National Policy Films From Various Perspectives) (Beijing: zhonghua shuju, 1990), 80.

left Japan for Manchuria, diligent servers of the Manchukuo government including Qing loyalists, Japanese and Chinese ingénues trained to be actors, and Chinese filmmakers, some of whom became spies for either the Chinese National Party (KMT) or the Chinese Communist Party (CCP).

When Japan surrendered in 1945, Man’ei collapsed overnight. Hundreds of films disappeared and their whereabouts remain unknown. The Russian army arrived first and took away some equipment and film. Thereafter the KMT and CCP sent representatives to work with their agents at Man’ei to fight for control of what remained of the studio. This series of competition over the physical assets of Man’ei ended with the foundation of Changchun Film Studio (Changchun dianying zhipianchang 長春電影製片廠), the “cradle of the film of New China,” which produced several primary films for PRC in the 1950s and 1960s, including the first feature film of the “New China,” The Bridge (Qiao 橋, Wang Bin 王濱, dir., 1949). Ideological debates over Man’ei reappeared in the postwar era. In particular, scholars in China and Japan have debated whether Man’ei was Chinese or Japanese and whether its productions are Chinese films or Japanese films. With the borders between China and Japan being re-drawn and consolidated after 1945, Man’ei and its productions became a colonial legacy that has proven time-consuming for both China and Japan to digest.

When film historians like Du Yunzhi 杜雲之 in Taiwan and Cheng Jihua 程季華 in mainland China started to compile classics of Chinese national films in the 1960s and

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6 About the history of taking over Man’ei, see Su Yun 蘇雲 ed., Yidongying 憶東影 (Remembering Northeast Studio) (Changchun: Jilin wenshi chubanshe,1986), 1-41.
7 Hu Chang 胡昶, Xinzhongguo dianying de yaolan 新中國電影的搖籃 (The Cradle of New China Cinema) (Changchun: Jilin wenshi chubanshe, 1986).
1970s, they mentioned Man’ei briefly as being a Japanese propaganda tool to poison Chinese people’s minds. Du insisted that the films produced in Japanese occupied regions were not Chinese films, even though Japanese propagandists and Chinese traitors intentionally made them appear Chinese. Similarly, Cheng called films produced in the Japanese-occupied regions, including in Manchukuo, “films made by the illegitimate Japanese regime” (riwei dianying 日偽電影). In the 1960s, differing from Du and Cheng’s negative and cursory appraisal of Man’ei, Japanese filmmakers who had worked at Man’ei and then repatriated to Japan provided detailed and nostalgic accounts of Man’ei film production. They recounted their endeavors and unfinished works in a series of memoirs. Man’ei, however, is excluded from mainstream Japanese film history, as a part of the colonial past that happened outside of the Japanese archipelago.

The afterlife of Man’ei turned around in the 1970s, along with the resumption of diplomatic relations between the People’s Republic of China and Japan resuming. Although memories of former Japanese Man’ei employees continued to appear, the autobiography of Yamaguchi Yoshiko 山口淑子 (1920-2014), also known as Shirley

8 Du Yunzhi 杜雲之, Zhongguo dianying shi 中國電影史 (Chinese Film History) (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1972), 58.
11 For example, Reiko Ikegawa 池田玲子, Teikoku no eiga kantoku Sakane Tazuko: kaitaku no hanayome, 1943nen, Man’ei 帝国の映画監督坂根田鶴子:開拓の花嫁・一九四三年・満映 (Sakane Tazuko, Film Director of the Empire: The Bride of Reclamation, Man’ei in the year of 1943) (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 2011); Fumiko Kishi and Taeko Ishii 岸富美子, 石井妙子, Man’ei to watashi 満映とわたし (Man’ei and Me) (Tokyo: Bungei shunju, 2015).
Yamaguchi and as 李香蘭 (J. Ri Kōran, C. Li Xianglan) who was the biggest star of Man’ei, achieved transnational popularity from the 1980s until now. Yamaguchi not only published three memoirs in Japan, namely Ri Kōran: The First Half of My Life, War, Peace and Song: Ri Kōran’s Spiritual Path, and Living as Ri Kōran: My Resumé, but also had several Chinese translations of all these biographies and an English translation named as Fragrant Orchid: The Story of My Early Life.¹² In the nostalgic recollections of Yamaguchi and of other Japanese Man’ei employees, Man’ei is a fantasy place that crystallizes their youth, diligence, and dreams.

In addition to memoirs, new historiographies appeared. Hu Chang 胡昶 and Gu Quan’s 古泉 book Manying: A Study of National Policy Films from Various Perspectives (Manying——guoce dianying mianmianguan 滿映——國策電影面面觀, 1990) was the first systematic monograph about Man’ei in Chinese. As a part of PRC’s movement of rewriting the history of the Northeast Anti-Japanese Alliance (dongbei kanglian 東北抗聯), initiated in 1986, Hu and Gu provide a comprehensive and detailed introduction of the organization and productions of Man’ei.¹³ For the first time, Chinese scholars treated

Man’ei as a part of Chinese film history.\textsuperscript{14} Although Hu and Gu’s book, as well as other mainstream Chinese film histories, such as a study by Li Daoxin 李道新, still brand Man’ei as “illegitimate” (wei 偽), it has drawn much greater scholarly attention.\textsuperscript{15} Almost as the same time as Hu and Gu’s book, Yamaguchi Takeshi 山口猛 published the first Japanese-language study that incorporated Japanese sources on Man’ei, \textit{Phantasmagoric Cinema: Amakasu Masahiko and the Filmmakers of Man’ei} (maboroshi no kinema man’ei, Amakasu Masahiko to katsudōya gunzō 幻のキネマ満映、甘粕正彦と活動屋群像). Yamaguchi’s book drew on the memoirs of the main Japanese staff at Man’ei. Centered on the second chief of Man’ei, Amakasu Masahiko 甘粕正彦 (1891-1945), Yamaguchi Takeshi represents the life and working traces of Japanese filmmakers in Manchuria. In addition, Man’ei began to appear in the writing of Japanese national film histories. For example, Satō Tadao 佐藤忠男 characterizes Man’ei as a propaganda organization for convincing people that Manchukuo is an ideal land.\textsuperscript{16} He also provides synopses of several Man’ei films without conspicuous propaganda contents, such as \textit{Journey to the East} (Dongyouji 東游記, Otani Toshio 大谷俊夫, dir., 1939), \textit{Rouge} (Yanzhi 胭脂, Chinese dialogue, Otani Toshio 大谷俊夫, dir., 1942) and \textit{My Nightingale} (Yanzhi 胭脂, Chinese dialogue, Otani Toshio 大谷俊夫, dir., 1942).

\textsuperscript{14} Hu and Gu 1990, preface.
(Watashi no uguisu, 私の鶯, Japanese and Russian dialogue, Japanese subtitles, Shimazu Yasujirō 島津保次郎, dir., 1943), which had Japanese and Russian dialogue.¹⁷

In the 21st century, building on these rediscovered histories, both Chinese and Japanese Man’ei scholarship developed into diversified and detailed approaches. Jiang Lei 蒋蕾 sketches out the group of Chinese scriptwriters working at Man’ei.¹⁸ Li Daoxin, for the first time, points out the continuity between Man’ei and the Northeast Film Studio (Dongbei dianying zhipian chang 東北電影製片廠), which was a main film production base for P.R.C. in the 1950s.¹⁹ In Japanese academia, the transnational charms of Li Kōran attracted further research on stardom and colonialism.²⁰ Besides the case study of this biggest star of Man’ei, studies on the after-war influence of Man’ei also appear. For example, Yomota Inuhiko 四方田犬彦 and Yan Ni 晏妮 provide the Sino-Japanese cinematic communications after 1945, including the striking case of making The White-haired Girl 白毛女 (Baimaonv, Wang Bin 王濱, Shui Hua 水華, dir., 1950).²¹ Likewise, Pang Tao 龐濤 traces the art activities of three Chinese Man’ei staff members after

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¹⁸ Jiang, Lei, “Manying zuojia qunluo kao” 滿映作家群落考 (A Textual Research of the Group of Man’ei Scriptwriters), Shehuikexue zhanxian 社會科學戰線, May, 2008), 138-147.
¹⁹ Li Daoxin 李道新, “Cong zhengzhi de dianying zouxiang dianying de zhengzhi: xinzhongguo jianli yilai de dianying gongye jiqi wenhua zhengzhixue” 從政治的電影走向電影的政治：新中國建立以來的電影工業及其文化政治學 (From the Film of Politics to the Politics of Film: The Film Industry after the Establishment of the New China and its Cultural Politics), Contemporary Cinema 當代電影, 2009 (No.12): 32.
²⁰ For example, Yomota, Inuhiko 四方田犬彦 ed., Ri Kōran to tōajia 李香蘭と東アジア (Ri Kōran and the East Asia) (nihondaigaku shyuppankai, 2001).
²¹ Yomota Inuhiko 四方田犬彦, Yan Ni 晏妮, Posuto man’ei eigaron: nicchyū eiga ōkan ポスト満映映画論：日中映画往還 (The Discussion on the post-Man’ei film: Communications between Japanese and Chinese Films) (jinbun shyoin, 2010).
In both Chinese and Japanese historiographies, Man’ei productions have experienced a shift from being categorized as “films of others” to “films of ours,” suggesting a greater degree of acceptance or at least recognition. However, Chinese and Japanese studies lead to divergent conclusions. Chinese studies cite Man’ei as proof of Japanese colonization; Japanese scholars consider Man’ei a part of the Japanese film industry established in colonies; Japanese memoirs recall how diligently Japanese filmmakers constructed this dream factory. These different narratives about Man’ei, either “an illegitimate organization” or “nostalgic phantom,” both attest to the significance of Man’ei as an organization that stands at the intersection of Chinese and Japanese wartime cinema history and lives on as a colonial legacy in the intertwined public memories of China and Japan, especially as a tool for the reconstruction of the postwar nationalism.

In the English-speaking world, Man’ei started to gain the academia attention along with the boom of studies on Manchurian frontiers. The region of Manchuria gained unprecedented public visibility with the release of Bernardo Bertolucci’s sensational film *The Last Emperor* in 1987. In academia, Manchukuo historiographies began flourishing. Focusing on Manchukuo as an important extension of Japanese colonialism, Louis Young’s 1998 study centers on Manchukuo’s impact on Japan and demonstrates how

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individuals as well as social institutions were engaged in Japanese imperialism in Manchuria. 23 Prasenjit Duara’s pioneering study, Sovereignty and Authenticity: Manchukuo and the East Asian Modern (2003), was the first to position Manchukuo on a global scale. He argues that this fabricated regime intended to cultivate the Manchurians’ loyalty through making global modernity local.24

These two approaches of Manchukuo historical writing, namely taking Manchukuo as either an independent and “imagined” community or an extension of imperial Japan, inform most Man’ei scholarship in English.25 Applying the latter approach, Michael Baskett juxtaposes Man’ei with other colonial film industries managed by Japanese in Korea and Taiwan and argues that the Japanese fabricated images of an attractive fantasy of the Japanese empire to the audience in Japanese colonies as well as in the metropole.26 He also highlights Masahiko Amakasu’s policy of self-sufficiency for film, which set the target audience as Manchurians rather than those of the Japanese islands.

New archival materials available since 2005 have facilitated the former approach of Man’ei scholarship, enabling scholars to move from contextual studies to textual

23 Louis Young, Japan's Total Empire: Manchuria and the Culture of Wartime Imperialism (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 13.
26 Michael Baskett, The Attractive Empire: Transnational Film Culture in Imperial Japan (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2008), 9.
examination of Man’ei films. DVDs of a series of Manchukuo films released in Japan in 2005 included three Man’ei feature films: Winter Jasmine (迎春花, C. Yingchunhua, J. geshyunka, Chinese and Japanese dialogue and subtitles, Sasaki Yasushi 佐佐木康, dir., 1942), Everybody Is Happy (Jiedahuanxi 皆大歡喜, Chinese dialogue, Wang Xinzhai 王心齋, dir., 1942) and Tuberose (Wangxiangyu 晚香玉, Chinese dialogue, Zhou Xiaobo 周曉波, dir., 1944). Additionally, Manchurian Film (滿洲映畫 C. Manzhou yinghua; H. Manshū eiga) (Dec. 1937-May 1941), a popular film magazine produced in Manchukuo, was also reprinted and made available to the public in 2012. Edited by Man’ei staff, the magazine provides a valuable view from filmmakers and film critics in Manchukuo about what they expected Manchukuo film and what they thought it should be. It originally had separate Japanese and Chinese editions, but in August 1939, they merged into one bilingual magazine with the majority of contents in Chinese and followed by Japanese articles. These primary sources made more details about Man’ei visible. Jie Li’s 2013 book chapter offers a comprehensive introduction of Man’ei in English to date. She applies the nation-and-identity approach similar to Duara’s and argues that the unpopularity of Man’ei films exemplifies the failure of a modern state fabricating national identity through cinema. Sookyeong Hong shares the same pattern. Focusing on ethnic representation in Manchurian Film, she argues that the key Manchukuo ideology of “ethnic concord” (民族協和 J.minzoku kyōwa, C.minzu xiehe) widely

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28 Ibid, 80.
promoted in print, was bankrupt at the level of cinematic representation.\textsuperscript{29} Focusing on the woman images in the accessible Man’ei feature films, Yue Chen argues that, departing from the image of modern woman as consumers, these films create an image of Manchurian women who are mobile and autonomous producers in public sphere. This type of intelligent and economical-independent working women actually helps to facilitate the establishment of Manchukuo.\textsuperscript{30}

One major obstacle in Man’ei studies has been, and remains, the shortage of extant films. Trying to overcome this obstruction, Baskett, Li and Song study the traces that Man’ei left on newspapers and film magazines to blueprint its whole body. However, the cinematic style and the translinguistic production situation of Man’ei film still await further examination. One scholarly work-around has been to seek clues in the documentaries produced by Man’ei’s predecessor, the motion picture division of Mantetsu, a semiofficial company operated by the Japanese in Dalian from the 1900s to the 1930s. Its motion picture division supplied Man’ei equipment as well as staff and finally emerged with Man’ei in 1944.\textsuperscript{31} Therefore, there may be aesthetic continuity between the films produced by Mantetsu and those by Man’ei based on their shared cameras and staff. Jie Li and Hanae Kurihara Kramer both offer incisive observations on that. Li argues that Mantetsu documentaries represent Japan’s romanticized utopian fantasies of Manchuria as a primordial yet modernized virgin land, rather than just


\textsuperscript{30} Chen, Yue, “Women’s Mobility and Autonomy on Manchukuo’s Film Screens”, \textit{Jump Cut}, No.58, spring, 2018. \url{https://www.ejumpcut.org/currentissue/ChenManchukuo/index.html}, June 24, 2018

document its physical realities. Kramer focuses on the aesthetic creativity of the second head of Mantestu’s motion film division, Akutagawa Kōzō 芥川光蔵 (1884-1941). She demonstrates the pioneering role of Mantestu in cinematography exemplified by applying zoom lens and montages to capture Manchurian landscapes and customs.

Compared with Chinese and Japanese scholarship, which have grappled to define the “evil” or “goodwill” of the colonial cinema enterprise, Man’ei studies in English have contributed a transnational perspective locates Man’ei in the field of nation-state and identity issues. They focus on the propaganda utility of Man’ei that helped cultivate the audience the identity of Manchukuo citizen. They also offer more details about Man’ei, for example, about the cinematic styles of Japanese filmmakers working in Manchukuo.

One impression left by existing research on Man’ei in Chinese, Japanese and English is that they all deal with the relationship between nation and cinema through focusing on the educational function of the latter. For example, these studies discuss Man’ei’s propaganda policies and its documentaries more widely than its feature film productions, which picked up rapidly in 1939. Moreover, fragmentary materials have kept Man’ei studies away from deeper textual analysis. The greater volume of available sources in Japanese than in Chinese has led to a one-sided outcome that Louis Young calls “looking at Japanese imperialism through Japanese eyes.”

My thesis contributes to this literature by providing a close analysis of one feature film produced by Man’ei. In doing so, it introduces a new perspective on Man’ei: that of

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33 Kramer, 101.
34 See Louis Young, Japan's Total Empire: Manchuria and the Culture of Wartime Imperialism (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 15.
the studio’s Chinese filmmakers, who were indispensable agents interpreting, adapting, and executing Man’ei’s film policies. I show how the studio’s film policy shift, namely “Making films for Manchurians” promoted by Amakasu, was formed through negotiation between the Japanese managers and the filmmakers, including Chinese staff, by means of examining their writings appearing on periodicals of Shanghai, Manchukuo and Japan and the postwar memoirs of the Chinese staff at Man’ei. Moreover, through a comprehensive textual and contextual analysis of the extant feature film *Tuberose* (*Wanxiangyu* 晚香玉, Zhou Xiaobo 周曉波, dir., 1944), I detail how the film policy shift influenced movie production. I argue that this localization policy lead to the clash in *Tuberose* between its Shanghai-style melodramatic plots and documentary film language, which proved unsatisfying to critics and audiences alike. *Tuberose* may not have been born “ugly,” but it ended up unloved, I argue, because of clashing aesthetic and ideological visions in Manchurian filmdom.
2. To Make a Cinema for the Manchurians: The Rise of Chinese Filmmakers in Manchukuo

2.1 The Establishment of Man’ei

When the Manchukuo government was established in 1932, only about thirty cinemas dotted the vast land of Manchuria, which comprised a population of almost thirty million spread over the provinces of Fengtian, Jilin and Heilongjiang.\(^{35}\) Most were located in a few major cities, such as Dalian in the south, Harbin in the north, and Fengtian in the center. According to Hu and Gu, most cinemas in Manchuria were owned by Japanese; four years later, in 1936, the total of cinemas in Manchuria rose to seventy-six, of which Japanese owned fifty, Chinese owned eighteen, Russian ran seven and Americans managed one.\(^{36}\) Manchurian audiences liked Hollywood films the best, followed by Shanghai films.\(^{37}\) Most locally-made films were documentaries produced by Japanese filmmakers who had been working in the film division of Mantetsu since the 1920s.\(^{38}\) Unlike Shanghai, then the center of the Chinese film industry, which produced mostly Mandarin-language films, Manchuria’s cinematic sphere was heterogeneous, divided by language (Chinese, Japanese, Russian and English) and race (Chinese, Japanese and Russian immigrants). While Han Chinese dominated the Shanghai film industry, in Manchuria Japanese were the major producers and cinema owners, despite

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\(^{35}\) Hu and Gu 1990, 7. According to statistics of the Manchukuo government, in 1933 the total population of Manchukuo was 29,606,000. See *Manzhouguo nianbao diyici* 滿洲國年報第一次 (The First Annual of Manchukuo) (*Manzhouguo tongjichu* 滿洲國統計處 (The Statistics Office of Manchukuo, 1933), 45.

\(^{36}\) Ibid, 11.

\(^{37}\) Ibid, 12.

percent of its population being Chinese.\textsuperscript{39} Moviegoers tended to watch films at cinemas owned by their ethnic compatriots. Although audiences of all ethnicities in Manchuria favored Hollywood films, they would watch them subtitled in different languages.

Without any strong local competitor in the industry, Man’ei monopolized film production and distribution in Manchuria when it was established in 1937. In contrast to Shanghai, where three major companies run by Chinese businessmen—Lianhua, Guohua and Mingxing—competed for dominance, Man’ei remained the only significant filmmaking organization in Manchuria from 1937 to 1945. With funding of five million Manchukuo yuan from the Manchukuo government and Mantetsu, Man’ei pursued its ambition to become a global, first-class film company.\textsuperscript{40} The brand new film studio in the capital of Hsinking, acclaimed as the “biggest studio in East Asia” (dongya diyi sheyingchang 東亞第一攝影場), \textsuperscript{41} enabled Man’ei staff to shoot six films simultaneously. Besides money, Mantetsu supplied Man’ei with advanced film equipment and experienced Japanese filmmakers.\textsuperscript{42} In addition, Man’ei gradually gained control of film distribution in Manchuria through the regulation of film imports and exports.\textsuperscript{43} As a consequence, Japanese films gradually displaced Hollywood films as the

\textsuperscript{40} Hu and Gu 1990, 29. Data about the funding of Man’ei comes from \textit{Shengjing shibao} 盛京時報 (Shengjing Times), August 14\textsuperscript{th}, 1937.
\textsuperscript{41} \textit{Manzhou yinghua} 滿洲映畫 (Manchurian Film), Chinese edition, December (1937): 65.
\textsuperscript{42} Kramer, 105.
\textsuperscript{43} Hu and Gu 1990, 223.
majority of films imported into Manchuria; the number of Shanghai films also shrank.\textsuperscript{44}

In June 1939, for example, only two Shanghai films, one French film, and one English films were released in Manchukuo, which is in sharp comparison with forty imported Japanese film projected at the same time.\textsuperscript{45}

Flush with capital and official support, from late 1939, Man’ei initiated a process of molding a film market and growing an audience. The film magazine edited by Man’ei staff, \textit{Manchurian Film}, was one part of this undertaking. The periodical not only promoted Man’ei film and stars but also served as a platform for reviewing Japanese and Chinese films. \textit{Manchurian Film}’s inaugural issue, published in February 1937, led with an article by the pseudonymous writer “Promote Japan” (\textit{rixuan} 日宜) called “What I Expect of the Film of Our Country” (“Wo suowang yu woguo zhi yinghua” 我所望於我国之映畫), which prescribes five standards for Manchukuo’s “national-produced films”:

National-produced films should convey the spirit of national construction, as well as the principle of Japan and Manchukuo united in heart and mind. Besides this, there are some points that we should pay attention to. We must not act without attending to the following points:

1. We must have a specific faith when making a film. Film, indeed, is a method of societal education…. We must have a specific ideology and an appropriate goal for things to proceed without problem. Should a film merely pander to the public for profit, it will lose its integrity, and even if it attracts

\textsuperscript{44} Ibid, Form 10, “Weimanzhouguo 1936-1939 nian jiancha dianying qingkuang yilanbiao” 偽滿洲國 1936-1939 年檢查電影情況一覽表 (The form of Manchukuo film Censorship from 1936 to 1939).

\textsuperscript{45} See the column “\textit{Man’ei eigyō gaikyō}” 滿映営業概況 (The Business Situation of Man’ei), \textit{Manchurian Film}, Japanese edition, (June 1939): 86.
an audience, they will be puzzled as to its main idea…

1. 影片之製作，須有一定之信念也。電影本為社會教育之一… 其影片之製作，須有一定之主義、適當之目標，方能進行而無誤、否則徒為迎合社會之心理，以遂其牟利之企圖、以致失其中心之信念、雖觀者亦不識其主義何在也…

2. We must exterminate supernatural and martial arts films… which have no educational value and only negative effects on society… [such as encouraging people to act like bandits (feikou 匪寇, a term the used to denigrate communists) while thinking themselves to be valiant heroes stealing from the rich to give to the poor.] The Chinese film The Big Road (Dalu 大路, Sun Yu 孫瑜, dir., 1934) is tainted with Communist ideology. In the film, a mob beats up a rich man, builds a road, and sings, “Bang! Bang! Bang! We are the road-building pioneers!” but just what kind of road are they building? If this kind of film is released, social unrest will grow…

2. 須剷除神怪武俠之影片也…亦無教育之價值，而其足使社會蒙不良之影響…(試思殺富濟貧、乃紊亂社會秩序之事、無論富者之仁與不仁、自應由法律治裁、今乃任於匪寇、豈非為共產之濫觴乎…)中國影片「大路」之作，頗厚共產色彩、其中群眾毆擊富翁、共同修路、其歌詞曰「轟轟轟、我們是開路的先鋒」試思所開者、何路耶、此等影片亦可放映、則社會將日陷於不安矣。…

3. Those films made for Manchurians must accord with Manchurian customs… Screenwriters should be familiar with Manchurian customs.

3. 為滿人所作之影片，須適合於滿人之風俗習慣也…應由熟通滿洲情形者、執筆編製。

4. We must make films appropriate to different regions. Big cities have more middle-class and upper-class people who prefer romance, detective and social genres. In remote places, people are not well educated. They prefer only

martial art films, supernatural tales and comedies.

4. 須因地域之不同而分別製作也。大都市中、上中等階級之民眾較多、其所嗜之影片、多關於愛情偵探社會諸方面、偏僻之地、人民程度較低、所好者、惟武俠神怪滑稽而已。

5. We must sacrifice a great amount of capital. Chinese films neglect this practical consideration: since their funding is inadequate, most of their films are made perfunctorily and lack true spirit… Our country, as a newly established nation, should avoid following the wrong path of the Chinese film industry at all costs. We must invest substantial sums to develop original scripts and hire good actors in order to create excellent films…

5. 須有大資本之犧牲也。中國影片、以資本過少、乃多敷衍代用、缺乏實在精神…我國以新興之國家、其作品萬勿蹈中國之覆轍、關係編製原稿、延聘演員、亦宜不惜巨金、求其優秀… 47

For the author, Manchukuo film should display the superiority of Manchukuo by differentiating itself from a Shanghai cinema of inferior quality and corrupted by lowly genres and suspect political ideology. The author emphasizes that the primary goal of Manchukuo cinema should be education rather than entertainment or profit. Further, Man’ei must pursue a localized aesthetic that accords with Manchurian customs. This proposal for a national cinema of Manchukuo represents a utilitarian attitude towards cinema. For the author, film is a vessel from which to pour healthy ideas into the audience’s mind. Just how a film is to persuade the audience to absorb its ideas is never mentioned.

Man’ei’s documentary production division pursued this goal of making films that represented the superiority of Manchukuo through “healthy” content. From 1923, when


In contrast to documentaries, which were produced for a specific purpose and at lower cost, feature films required actors and artificial settings. Few were produced during Man’ei’s first two years. To create a pipeline of talent, in 1937, Man’ei founded a training school for actors and filmmakers (養成所, C. yangchengsuo J. yōsei). Its entrance examination was open to all Chinese people in Manchuria. Most of the people

48 Kramer, 98.
who passed the exam were amateurs in their teens or twenties, and the first batch of trainees was put in the spotlight after only a few months of training. Production was also rushed, with a feature film being produced in an average of only twenty days. The film division of Mantetsu, in contrast, took half a year to finish one film.50 Man’ei released nine feature films in 1938 and eight in 1939.51 Some of these praised the police or the army, such as Life’s Ambition Illuminates the Sky (Zhuangzhi zhutian 壯志燭天, Chinese dialogue, Tsuboi Atae 坪井與 dir., 1938) and Iron Blood, Wise Heart (Tiexue Huixin 鐵血慧心, Chinese dialogue, Yamauchi Eizo 山內英三, dir., 1939).52 These propagandistic “National Policy Films” (guocepian 國策片) broadcast the superiority of Manchukuo.

In 1938 and 1939 Man’ei also produced adaptations of Japanese feature films. Ri Kōran, who performed Chinese girls on the screen during the Sino-Japanese war period, recalled in her memoir that Man’ei’s Honeymoon Express (Miyue kuaiche 蜜月快車, Ueno Shinji 上野真嗣, dir., 1938) was adapted from a popular Japanese film The Bride being Peeped (Nozokareta hanayome のぞかれた花嫁, Otani Toshio 大谷俊夫, 1935), and that its script was even a direct translation.53 Honeymoon Express related the misadventures of a newly married couple on the train to from Hsinking to Beijing. Although The Bride Being Peeped was popular in Japan, the popularity didn’t translate. Chinese critics and film businessmen opined that elements of the Japanese original did not fit Manchurian customs after the film was shown. For example, in a symposium of representatives of Harbin cinemas held in September 1938, one manager of a cinema in

50 Manzhou yinghua 滿洲映畫 (Manchurian Film), August, (1939): 229.
52 Ibid, 44,47.
53 Yamaguchi and Fujiwara, 69.
Harbin suggested changing the title *Honeymoon Express* 蜜月快車 to *Newlywed Express* 新婚快車 because the former was not appropriate in Manchurian circumstances.  

*Honeymoon*, a new and imported term, was hard for the ordinary Chinese audience in Manchuria to understand. The manager also described Man’ei films as “immature” and bluntly stated that “the contents are too simple. Some films resemble Shanghai films released ten years ago.” In a similar symposium held in Fengtian in January 1939, a Chinese playwright named Anxi 安犀 (1916-1972) also pointed out that because of the customs and living habits distinct from Japanese audiences, Manchurian audiences barely laughed when watching *Honeymoon Express*. Japanese dancing (*buyō* 舞踊) critic Mitsukichi Kaya 光吉夏彌 (1904-1989) recalled his experiences of watching this film in a “suffocatingly dirty and dusty” cinema in Hsinking and reported he “never felt the slightest inclination to laugh.”

Cultural barriers also sprung up during collaborations between Japanese directors and Chinese actors. From 1937 to 1939, nearly all filmmakers at Man’ei were Japanese who had worked in Japanese film companies and later immigrated to Manchuria. Negishi Kanichi 根岸寛一 (1894-1962) and Makino Mitsuo 牧野満男 (1909-1957), for example, left Nikkatsu company famous for producing Japanese historical films (*jidai*...
$geki$ 時代劇) and for advanced filming equipment in Japan to take up the positions of chief and associate chief of the Department of Production of Man’ei, respectively, in 1938. Some of their Nikkatsu colleagues followed them to Manchuria. Cinematographers and other members of production staff moved to Man’ei from major Japanese film companies Toho and Shochiku. During film production, the translator would orally render the Japanese directors’ instructions into Chinese and the greenhorn Chinese actors had to follow these translated orders to come up with movements and expressions. The affect, according to some viewers, was mechanical rather than spontaneous acting. One Japanese critic, Nakamura Yoshiyuki 中村能行 (aka Zhou Guoqing 周國慶) claimed that the performance of Man’ei actors lacked coherent emotion and was puppet-like. Ri Kōran recalled a joke about translation when she was having acting class with other Chinese actors at the training school of Man’ei. Because the pronunciation of tiger ($tora$) and trachoma ($torakōmu$) is similar in Japanese, the translator translated “she has trachoma” as “she turns into a tiger.” Even though she herself could speak and understand Japanese, Ri Kōran described the shooting experience of Honeymoon Express as “difficult to forget even now” because of how frequently she was scolded by the impatient director.

The early development of Man’ei, from 1937 to 1939, in sum, shows a few basic patterns. In terms of film policy, Man’ei’s mission was to represent the superiority of the Manchukuo nation. Manchukuo cinema aimed to be educational, rather than commercial or entertaining like Shanghai films. In terms of film production, the cultural film, namely

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58 Hu and Gu 1990, 38.
59 Manzhou yinghua 滿洲映畫 (Manchurian Film), Chinese edition, June, (1939): 121.
60 Yamaguchi and Fujiwara, 72.
61 Ibid, 70.
documentaries portraying an idealized Manchuria, outnumbered feature films, and the few feature films produced were unsatisfactory to Chinese and Japanese film critics alike. National policy films, with their blatantly propagandistic content, were too artificial, and feature films adapted from Japanese models were criticized for not fitting Manchurian customs. Additionally, the performance in these films came across as unnatural due to poor communication between the Japanese filmmakers and the Chinese actors. In short, Man’ei’s initial efforts to create and promote a national cinema were poorly received. Didactic content and linguistic difficulties hindered the spread of Man’ei films in Manchuria. Facing a Chinese moviegoing audience with a taste for Hollywood and Shanghai films, what kind of film should Man’ei make to attract and then educate them? This was a crucial challenge, which Man’ei eventually managed to solve.

2.2 “Make Films for Manjin!”: The New Politics of Ethnicity in Manchurian Film Production

At the end of 1939, a rudderless Man’ei found its second leader.62 This man, to put it mildly, was notorious. As early as the 1920s, the name Amakasu Masahiko was already connected with terror. After the Kantō earthquake of 1923, Amakasu, while serving as an officer in the Imperial Japanese Army, reportedly killed the famous anarchist Osugi Sakae 大杉栄 (1885-1923), along with Osugi’s lover and seven-year-old nephew.63 This event, known in Japan as the Amakasu Incident, incurred a great deal of criticism and leaded to Amakasu being sentenced to ten years in jail. Probably due to the manipulation of the army, Amakasu spent only two years in prison before being released.

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to go study in France. His next stop was Manchuria, where he participated in preparations for the founding of Manchukuo, even accompanying Aisin Gioro Puyi (1906-1967), the last emperor of the Qing Dynasty, as he was installed as puppet emperor of Manchukuo in 1932.\(^64\) Amakasu also served the General Duties Officer of the Concordia Association.\(^65\)

His close connection with the Kwantung Army, which was affiliated with the Japanese Imperial Army in Manchuria from the 1920s to 1945, and his earlier assassin scandal shocked and terrified Man’ei staff. On the day of his arrival, he showed up five minutes before working hours began and heard that Man’ei’s Japanese managers were in the habit of not arriving at work until ten in the morning. “Drive them all here!” Amakasu demanded. When those managers finally arrived, Amakasu ordered, “From tomorrow, everyone starts work at nine.”\(^66\)

Amakasu instituted a series of reforms, which quickly changed Man’ei’s organization and atmosphere. The most conspicuous was a raise in the status of the Chinese staff. Firstly, the salary of Chinese staff was raised to be comparable to Japanese staff. For example, actress Li Ming (1918-?) got a salary raise from 45 Manchukuo yuan to 200 yuan, bringing it closer to Yamaguchi’s salary of 250 yuan.\(^67\) He also hired Chinese filmmakers, including directors, scriptwriters and cinematographers. Chinese directors, usually called “directors of Manchurian descent” (滿系導演, C.manxi daoyan, J. mankei kantoku) or “Manchurian director” (滿人導演, C. manren daoyan, J. manjin

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\(^{65}\) Duara 2003, 73.

\(^{66}\) Hu and Gu 1990, 87.

\(^{67}\) Yamaguchi and Fujiwara, 96.
kantoku), tended to be either Chinese born in Manchuria or immigrants from Taiwan. Having little or no professional training before joining Man’ei, they received cinematic education in its training school and first served as assistants of the Japanese director. In fact, assistant directors were basically Chinese translators for the Japanese directors. With Amakasu’s support, more and more Chinese directors started to shoot films independently.

Feature films were Amakasu’s next target for reform. In January 1941, he founded the Department of Feature Films (娯民映畫部 C. yumin yinghuabu, J. gomin eigabu), on par with the Department of Films for Popular Enlightenment (啟民映畫部 C. qimin yinghuabu, J. keimin eigabu), which specializing in documentaries. This professionalization greatly improved the production of feature films, whose number rocketed to twenty-six in 1941, more than triple the number in 1939. The development of the Department of Feature Films was closely connected with the elevation of Chinese scriptwriters and directors. Of twenty-six feature films produced in 1941, a majority—sixteen—were directed by Chinese filmmakers and based on scripts written by Chinese writers.

Amakasu’s policy of promoting Chinese staff and the genre of feature films helped the studio finally achieve its first financially successful film in 1941. The Battle between Dragon and Tiger (Longzhenghudou, 龍爭虎鬥, Mizugae Ryuichi 水江龍一, dir., 1941) broke a Man’ei box office record and is said to have matched the popularity as

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69 Ibid, 235-238.
Shanghai films—a first for Man’ei.70 The film was Man’ei’s first costume drama, a romance between a handsome scholar and a pretty girl, which included martial art fight scenes. The heroine, disguised as a man, follows her lover on his journey to take the civil examination. Along the way, she defeats bandits and finally meets her lover, who has won first place in the national civil service exam.71 Following this success, Man’ei continued to produce costume dramas based on Chinese tales and vernacular stories such as the ghost-themed Rouge (Yanzhi 膩脂, Otani Toshio 大谷俊夫, dir., 1942), adapted from Strange Stories from a Chinese Studio 聊齋誌異,72 Dandy Monk Lu Zhishen (Huaheshang Lu Zhishen 花和尚魯智深, Mizugae Ryuichi 水江龍一, dir., 1942), Panther Head Lin Chong (Baozitou Li Chong 豹子頭林沖, Zhu Wenshun 朱文順, dir., 1942) and Yan Qing and Li Shishi (Yan Qing yu Li Shishi 燕青與李師師, Zhang Tianci 張天賜, dir., 1943), all based on the classic novel The Water Margin 水滸傳.

Amakasu publicized the goals of his policy of promoting Chinese filmmakers in published interviews and writings. In a 1942 interview, “Making Films for Manjin” (“Manjin no tameni eiga wo tsukuru” 満人のために映画を作る), Amakasu told a Japanese reporter that the official mission of Man’ei was to create films that pleased manjin 満人, and that the subjects of its films should also be manjin.73 Man’ei’s biggest

71 Hu and Gu 1990, 118-119.
73 Amakasu Masahiko 甘粕正彦, “Manjin no tame ni eiga o tsukuru” 満人のために映画を作る (Make films for the Manchurians) Eiga junpo 映画旬報, August 1, 1942.
failure in the past, he said, was its neglect of this goal. He critiqued Japanese filmmakers and critics who lacked knowledge of an “*iminzoku*” (other ethnicity) were unwilling to understand them. His use of the term “other ethnicity” highlights the ambiguity of the word *manjin*, which could refer to all residents of Manchuria, Chinese and Japanese people alike. However, when Amakasu used it in this article, he referred to the Chinese, who constituted the majority of the Manchurian population. Although he never defines *manjin* explicitly, in his later argument, the division between Chinese and Japanese becomes more conspicuous:

It is fine if Man’ei produces films that please only *manjin*, and there is no need to produce films which *Japanese people* regard as unique. The Japanese made a mistake in the past in producing films that showed Manchurian peculiarities as unique. We must not forget that our target cinema audience is *manjin*. (emphasis added)

Thus, while *manjin* ostensibly refers to all residents of Manchuria, as Amakasu continued his elaboration of Man’ei’s new film policy, his use of *manjin* actually changed to denote only Chinese people, who should be treated as an “alien race” *vis-à-vis* Japanese people in Manchuria.

In an article published in March 1944 in *Manchurian News* (滿洲新聞, C. manzhou)

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74 Shao 2011, 142.
75 Amakasu Masahiko 甘粕正彦, “*Manjin no tame ni eiga o tsukuru*” (滿人のために映画を作る) *Eiga junpo* 映画旬報, August 1, 1942.
xinwen, J. manshū shinbun), a Japanese newspaper circulating in Manchuria, Amakasu detailed what should the films for manjin be like. He proposed that the effect of entertainment is to enhance the productivity of the Manchurians. Watching feature films could make the people of Manchukuo 国民 happy, ease their anxiety, and enhance their efforts in constructing the nation as well as fighting against the Western enemy in the Pacific War. Though Man’ei’s film policy now promoted “entertainment” over “education,” the perspective towards film remained utilitarian.

Man’ei’s turn from making “good” educational films to feature films catering manjin opened up opportunities for Chinese filmmakers at Man’ei to survive and thrive. Writing in 1940, manjin director Wang Ze wrote down his experiences of position changing from Japanese director’s assistant to a director who can shoot film independently.

When shooting The Journey of Love (Qinghai hangcheng 情海航程, Mizugae Ryuichi 水江龍一, dir., 1939) I was supposed to be the intern of Director Mizue Ryuichi. But the new reformist authorities, as part of an organizational overhaul, asked me to make myself into a “usable” man within a short period of time. I had interpreted “intern” to mean I’d be “taking a stroll”. (But) now I was supposed to dedicate more mental energy to myself, to the company (Man’ei), and to Manchurian film. So it looks like I am about to say goodbye to my “stroll-taking” intern days.

「情海航程」本来是我应该从水江先生見習, 但是機構改革函図ー新的当局要我在短期間内成為一個能「用」的人，見習兩個字被我解釋為

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In Wang’s narration, it is not hard to find his acknowledgement of his own value, though expressed in a self-mocking tone. More Chinese scriptwriters and directors soon appeared. Some of them already held a position in the Manchukuo government or at a government-owned company before transferring to Man’ei. These new recruits took Man’ei’s entrance exam and quit their former jobs after gaining admission to the training school. They wrote scripts and film critiques, worked as assistants for Japanese directors, and directed films independently. While titles and synopses of their films survive, details about their production as well as living experiences are hard to trace, much less evidence of to what degree they carried out Amakasu’s policy of “making films for manjin.”

However, postwar memoirs by these Chinese directors reveal how deeply they were influenced by the experience of having once lived in a land governed by a foreign race and worked in a semi-official company managed by Japanese. For example, a major Chinese writer in Manchukuo and a professional scriptwriter at Man’ei Li Min 李民 (1918-2014) recounted learning of the success of The Battle between Dragon and Tiger by eavesdropping on a conversation between two Japanese managers who happened to be sitting not far away from him. He was fluent in Japanese, which he had learned while studying in Japan from 1937 to 1939. Instead of joining the conversation, however, Li just enjoyed the quiet thrill, suggesting a division between him and the Japanese staff.

The sense of being different from Japanese nonetheless enhanced these Chinese employees’ self-identification as citizens of Manchukuo. In a “Cinema Symposium of Fengtian Intellectuals”, an unidentified intellectual writing as Chengxuan said of manjin directors and scriptwriters:

My understanding is that those so-called “manjin directors” are merely acting as translators for Japanese directors. This makes one sad. I hope that going forward instead of translating the language of others they will get to use their own language. And even then, their own language should not just provide the Japanese directors “Manchurian flavor” or “local flavor” that they could not discover on their own. They should honestly help the Japanese directors learn how “authentic” Manchurians “actually think.”

“據我知道的，現今掛了名的滿人導演，都是日人導演的翻譯，這很讓人難過，今後我希望他們除了翻譯別人語言之外，還要發揮一點自己的語言，不過這語言切不要只是為了給日人導演一點他們還不曾發掘出來的‘滿洲的，土產的趣味’而是要正直的幫助他們來了解‘真’的滿洲人的‘意識’”. 79

This short passage represents the multiple layers of identities that a Chinese person in Manchuria could possess under Japanese governance. Firstly, to the author, being a “manjin director” means being an ethnic Chinese, who are distinct from Japanese people and should not be merely adjunct to Japanese. Moreover, only Chinese directors can grasp, and thus convey, real understanding of the Manchurians. Chinese directors could represent the authentic Manchuria, which remained inaccessible to Japanese directors. In these comments, we see that Amakasu’s promotion of manjin actually succeeded in inculcating an imagined authentic Manchuria through emphasizing the Chinese ethnicity

of filmmakers and critics. Chinese ethnicity, to them, became the embodiment of “how Manchurians really think”. The conceptual fluidity between *manjin* 滿人 and Manchurian 滿洲人 became part of the mindset of Chinese staff at Man’ei. Wang Fuchung 王福春 (1921-2006), also known as Wang Qimin 王啟民, a Chinese employee, recalled a dialogue between him and Amakasu when he proposed to change his career from acting into cinematography:

“The Chief Director Amakasu, did you not say that you will let Manchurians have positions and rights, and will make Man’ei of the Manchurians?” Wang asked.
“Yes. I said so and I’ve followed through. If I didn’t mean it, I wouldn’t have said it.” Amakasu replied.
“Hou and I want to learn cinematography.”
“You really do?”
“Yes.”
“Cinematography is difficult and arduous to learn.”
“We are not afraid of that.”
“You are famous actors. But if you want to be cinematographers, you have to start as a third-class assistant, and then work your way up step by step.”
“干粕理事長，你不是說讓滿洲人有職有權，把‘滿映’辦成滿洲人的‘滿映’嗎？”王福春說。
“是的。我說了就做，否則我是不說的。”
“我和侯志昂想學攝影。”…
“你們真的想學攝影？”
“是的。”
“學攝影是很苦的也很累的。”
“我們不怕。”
“你們當演員也有名氣了。當攝影要從三助理當起，要一個台階一個台
As I have argued in this chapter, Man’ei worked—in more ways than one, including organization reformation, leveling up feature film production, raising the salaries of Chinese staff, initiating Chinese audience-oriented film policy and promoting Chinese scriptwriters and directors—to manipulate Chinese identity into the artificial identity of a Manchurian citizen. The ideological restructuring can be seen not just in its films, but also in the experiences of its employees. In contrast to the key ideology of Manchukuo “ethnic concord” 民族協和 (J. minzoku kyōwa, C. minzu xiehe), Man’ei’s cinematic promotion of Manchurian identity emphasized ethnic difference. Amakasu, Man’ei’s Chinese filmmakers, and film critics never questioned the premise that there existed absolute differences between the ethnicities. Amakasu’s policy of making films for manjin, namely promoting Chinese directors and feature films made by them, awaked and emphasized their ethnic Chinese identity and therefore enable them to accept Manchukuo ideology. For Chinese people in Manchuria, being manjin meant being Chinese representatives of authentic Manchurian culture. This helps to explain why director Wang Ze decided to dedicate more to film production when the company called upon him to be a “useful” man. This is also why actor Wang Fuchun felt confident enough to bargain for a career change with Amakasu using the slogan that Man’ei was supposed to be the business of the Manchurians. Finally, this is how the word manjin, interpreted as referring to ethnic

Chinese people, enhanced their feeling of being Manchurian, and of belonging to Manchukuo.
3. Old Wine in a New Bottle: The Divided Diegetic and Visual Spheres of *Tuberose*

3.1. All Unhappy Families are Alike: *Tuberose* and *The Death of A Famous Actor*

Supported by the policy of “making films for manjin,” Chinese staff at Man’ei got more chances to participate in film production. After the commercial success of *The Battle between Dragon and Tiger*, Man’ei started—despite having at first disdained superficial and martial art films that obey “the spirit of national construction,” Man’ei started to produce more films based on traditional Chinese folktales. As suggested in the title of this chapter, a Man’ei film and a Shanghai film represented in similar fashion the tragic story of an unhappy family.

The craze for traditional Chinese cultural elements likely spread to Manchuria from Shanghai, where Chinese audiences had been enchanted by nostalgic romance on the big screen, most recently the 1939 blockbuster, *Mulan Joins the Army (Mulan congjun 木蘭從軍, Bu Wangcang 卜萬蒼, dir., 1939).* 81 *Tuberose*, a black-and-white feature film with Chinese dialogue that Man’ei released in 1944, was one of the films produced by *manjin* that adapted this approach. All of its cast and crew, including director and scriptwriter were Chinese; only the cinematographer, Fujii Harumi 藤井春美 (?-?), was Japanese. 82 For this time, the staff of *Tuberose* tried to borrow a panacea for attracting the audience from a Chinese traditional art form, Peking Opera.

The plot of *Tuberose* focuses on the tragic destiny of a family comprised of a father and two daughters who are all Peking opera performers. Jin Chuchen 金楚臣 is a famous

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Peking Opera artist in his old age. He educates his two daughters Yufang 玉芳 (Jade Fragrance) and Shufang 漱芳 (Purified Fragrance) on how to “become a real artist,” which requires abstaining from corporeal enjoyment. However, the daughters make different life choices. After she becomes famous, the elder sister Yufang becomes the mistress of a wealthy man, a chief manager of a business corporation who frequently patronizes her performances. In contrast, Shufang follows her father’s advice and turns down the temptation of money. The first part of the film is filled with protracted scenes of moral lectures by Jin, of the shameless behavior of the femme fatale Yufang, and of the ingénue Shufang being obedient to her father and refusing to drink wine with the chief manager and his friend. The film’s sole climax is the conflict between Jin and the chief manager. They first quarrel with each other when Jin is trying to stop the latter from meeting Yufang who is hiding in her bedroom. The chief manager gets impatient after a few attempts and hits Jin with his walking stick. Jin’s stage apprentice, Pusi 浦四, witnesses his master being bullied and forms a grudge against the chief manager. When Pusi sees the manager loudly applauding Yufang’s performance and flirting with her, he cannot withhold his anger and shoots him in the theatre. The assassination creates an uproar, and Pusi is thrown in jail. Jin’s old injury from having been beaten by the chief manager recurs because of worry about his disciple. He struggles to perform on the stage and faints while singing a high note. At that moment, Shufang steps into her father’s role. The film ends with Jin dying backstage while listening to the voice of Shufang’s singing her debut. Yufang watches her father passing away from behind the door but feels too ashamed to come forward and speak to him.
This was not the first time that the vicissitudes of theater performers were displayed on the big screen and drew tears from the Chinese public. Shanghai filmmakers has been applied the same tacit since the 1930s. In 1943, Maxu Weibang 马徐维邦 (1905-1961), a Shanghai actor-director famous for making thrillers and who had a fondness for disfigured heroes, shot Begonia (秋海棠 Qiuhaitang, Maxu Weibang 马徐维邦, dir., 1943) adapted from a popular romance novel of Mandarin Duck and the Butterfly School of the same title. Gaining reputation from a thriller called Song at the Midnight (Yeban gesheng 夜半歌聲, Maxu Weibang 马徐维邦, dir., 1937), in Begonia, Maxu dealt with the same theme of teaching the next generation how to sing in Song at the Midnight. However, similar to Tuberose, Begonia also featured the tragedy of a Peking Opera actor. Three features films, despite their different release dates and geography, adopted the same mode of tragedy.

Begonia is not the only text that shares with Tuberose the theme of suffering Peking Opera performers. Tuberose shares even more details in common with The Death of a Famous Actor (Mingyou zhi si 名優之死), a Chinese spoken drama written by a famous Chinese left-wing writer Tian Han 田汉 (1898-1968) in 1929. The similarity was noted by contemporary viewers. A film critic named Zheng Hong pointed out in a Shanghai film magazine that plot elements of Tuberose likely came from The Death of a Famous Actor. The play had been performed in Shanghai many times in the 1930s and the

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1940s. Its plot is almost identical to *Tuberose*: a famous and elderly Peking Opera performer gets bullied by a rich bad man and finally dies of humiliation and anger in the middle of his performance. The hero of them is a noble and ascetic artist keen on educating the young performers to abstain from corruption. Both the play and the film also contain scenes of live performance selected from traditional Peking Opera repertoire *Fisherman’s Revenge* (*Dayushajia* 打漁殺家), *A Meeting of Heroes* (*Qunyinghui* 群英會) and *Borrowing East Wind* (*Jie dongfeng* 借東風). Both Tian Han and the scriptwriter of *Tuberose* dedicate to use the plots and lyrics of these episodes to imply the destiny of the heroes, for example, the story of *Fisherman’s Revenge* is how a decrepit outlaw hero living a recluse life as a fisherman gets beaten by a local gentry and then takes revenge on him.

Although *Tuberose* resembles *The Death of a Famous Actor* in terms of plot, it seems not to have been satisfactory to the film critic Zheng Hong. Zheng vented his disappointment about the simplicity of *Tuberose*:

Jin Chuchen in *Tuberose* dies on the stage of extreme pain and sorrow. This kind of plots filled with the taste of life should be exaggeratedly represented to the extreme and to pluck the heartstrings of the audience. However, the scriptwriter caters the lower taste of the audience too much! He inserts the episodes of Peking Opera performance to gratify the viewers. In fact, they are superfluous. What the viewers need is deepening the plot, rather than listening to a few strains of Peking Opera.

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85 See “South Society Continued the Performance for Two Days” 南國社續演話劇兩天, *Shenbao* 申報, December 21, 1928; Advertisement of Performance, *Shenbao* 申報, November 28, 1939, sec.12; “Ping Mingyou zhi si de yanchu” 評名優之死的演出 (Critiques on the Performance of *The Death of a Famous Actor*), *Lewen shewen huiwenkan* 樂文社文會文刊 1(1941): 76-78.
“『晚香玉』里寫的金楚臣卻是悲痛交集，以至垂死於氍毹臺上的。本來這樣富有人生氣味的情節，應該極扣人心弦之能事。可惜編劇者太迎合低級趣味！戲中串戲來取媚觀眾，其實這些都是多餘的，觀眾需要不是幾句西皮二黃就了事，而是劇情的深入。”

Zheng was not wrong about the lack of climax in *Tuberose*. The only physical conflict happens between Jin and the chief manager and is over before it begins. The way the director depicts this confrontation is less than dramatic. When he is rebuffed from seeing Yufang, the chief manager says to Jin with a sniff:

Chief manager: I’m going to level with you now: You know the reason Yufang became a famous actress? (Sneers)... Don’t get worked up. I like this game, so we played it for a while and had a good time. What’s the big deal?
Jin Chuchen: Treating an actor’s daughter like a plaything! You wretch!
Manager: Bullshit!
Jin: Are we actors just playthings here for your amusement? Are we really that cheap in your eyes? You have a wife and daughter of your own at home...
C: Damn you!
J: You’re human—where’s your conscience!
總經理:我姓賈的說一句良心話，玉芳能成得起名伶(冷笑)...何必生氣呢，因為我喜歡這個玩意兒，所以大家在一起高高興興玩玩兒，這有什麼呢。
金楚臣：演戲的女兒你都高興玩玩兒，你們是什麼東西！
總經理：放屁！
金楚臣：我們做藝的就該是高興玩玩兒的嗎！我們在你的眼睛里就該是下賤的嗎！你家裡(頭)也有老婆少女啊！

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總經理：他媽的！
金楚臣：你們是人類，該有一點人類的心啊！

After several sentences of this exchange, mainly consisting of Jin’s moral accusation, the chief manager raises his walking stick and beats Jin down in one stroke.

In contrast with the sudden fight in *Tuberose*, in *The Death of a Famous Actor* the conflict between the actor Liu Zhensheng 劉振聲 and the rich Elder Master Yang 楊大爺 escalates through inflammatory language:

Liu: (striking the desk in anger) You wretch!
Yang: (provoked) Ha! Who are you cursing this time?
Liu: You!
Yang: Do you know who I am?
Liu: Yeah, I know you for the beast you are!
Yang: You have the nerve to curse me! I’ll… (brandishes his walking stick and is about to beat Liu.)
Liu: I’m not going to stop at cursing—I’m going to thump you! (Furious, he wrests the walking stick from Yang and expertly shoves him to the ground.)
Yang: How dare you hit me!… fine…

…
(He stands up and is about to fight back.) Fine… so you dare strike me… You rascal! You cur! We’ll see if you dare to perform in Shanghai again!

劉振聲：(擊桌) 什麼東西！
楊大爺：(勃然) 哈！你又罵誰？
劉振聲：我罵你！
楊大爺：你認得我罷？
劉振聲：我認得你，你是牛！
楊大爺：你敢罵我！我… (伸出手杖要打劉)

87 Quoted from dialogues in *Tuberose* (Wanxiangyu 晚香玉, Zhou Xiaobo 周曉波 dir., 1944).
劉振聲：不單止罵你，我還要揍你。（氣急了，搶過手杖，很熟練地給他一推，摔在地下了。）
楊大爺：好。你敢打我…好。…
...
楊大爺：（再起要打）好，你敢打我。…你這東西。好大的狗膽。看你還敢在上海唱戲。88

The repeated curses quickly escalate the conflict. In the spoken drama, the famous actor Liu does not lose his strength to fight back as Jin does in Tuberose. Liu grabs the walking stick and starts to beat the villain, enhancing the dramatic appeal. In Tuberose, the confrontation between the weak Jin and the unscrupulous chief manager accentuates Jin’s passive suffering as well as his moral rhetoric. Even as he is being beaten, Jin is still lecturing on performers being pure and not playthings of the rich.

Besides the extreme disparity between the weak and noble Jin and the privileged and evil chief manager, Tuberose exaggerates the contrast between another pair of characters: the bad woman Yufang and the good girl Shufang. In The Death of a Famous Actor, the heroine Liu Fengxian 劉風仙 who studies Peking Opera from Liu Zhensheng is seduced by the rich man Yang, however, she shows remorse immediately when her teacher passes away. In Tuberose, the scene of repentance is replaced with one dramatizing Yufang’s shamelessness. As a totally corrupted woman, she is too guilty to face see her dying father. The one who actually inherits both Jin’s art and virtue is the younger sister, Shufang. In The Death of a Famous Actor, the role of virtuous inheritor is a supporting female character who has only a few lines. However, in Tuberose, Shufang is a true

model who conforms to her father’s teachings without doubt. Even when Jin misunderstands that she has gone to the banquet of the chief manager, she sobs without further explanation, although in fact, she had been duped into going to the mansion of the chief manager. Between the absolute obedient Shufang and the incurable Yufang, a clear moral boundary is drawn.

More visual details embedded in _Tuberose_ also hint the division of purity and corruption in the female image. Shufang is a fifteen-year-old girl and always has two braids beside her chubby face. In contrast to her sister’s fabulous and shining western-styled gown, she wears a plain and dark-colored cheongsam, the type worn by ordinary women during the Republican era. Besides the homespun costume, the director uses the motif of flowers to represent Shufang’s virtue. When she is practicing singing Peking Opera or reading books, a vase of orchid-like flowers are juxtaposed with her elegant figure. Flowers reappear when the director changes the scene from the mansion of the chief manager where Yufang realizes she’s been abandoned to the Jin residence where Shufang resides. After the scene of a vase of faded flowers on the table fades out, a close-up of blooming chrysanthemum fades into view. Peking Opera music suddenly appears as a sound bridge to a scene of Shufang diligently rehearsing. The prop of the flower reappears before Shufang’s premiere. Most of the time, Shufang is willing to be confined in her room rehearsing Peking Opera. When Jin allows her to follow him to the theatre, she decorates her hair with a flower. She wears a flower again when kneeling down beside the dying Jin and listens to his final admonitions. The fully bloomed petals symbolize Shufang’s coming of age as well as the maturity of her performance.
Another major adjustment in the plot of *Tuberose* is the relationship between the noble elderly actor and the two female characters. It changes from the connection between teacher and pupils into kinship of father and daughters. Blood ties represent ethical didacticism. Reconfiguring the plot to emphasize the agency of family, *Tuberose* firstly popularized a tragedy of an artist and popularized it as a family drama: natural affection for one’s family makes the ascetic education easier to feel and understand. Family also justifies the absolute patriarchal power embodied in the image of Jin, who is cast as a moral and artistic authority education in the Confucian mold. Jin’s house, the place where family situated, visualizes the moral hierarchy. It resembles what Peter Brook calls, in summarizing of a common topos of melodramatic structure, “the space of innocence.”

In those settings of enclosed space, surrounded by walls, the villain usually appears as intruder and father shows up as guardian. The noble Jin and chaste Shufang are confined to the house. The one time the naïve good girl Shufang leaves her bedroom and goes out of the room she is swindled by the chief manager, provoking Jin’s fury. In contrast, Yufang lies to her father and sneaks to the chief manager’s mansion several times. Even the vehicle that enables her egress, the chief manager’s car, turns into a symbol of corruption whose jarring horn makes Pu, Jin’s disciple, covers his ears. The physical conflict between Jin and the chief manager is essentially over the intactness or loss of female chastity.

Let us now review the effects of the plot changes made in *Tuberose*. In contrast with *The Death of a Famous Actor*, which centers on the tragic death of the hero and his sacrifice for art, *Tuberose* creates a moral universe through exaggerating two pairs of

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contrasting characters, namely the weak but good Jin and the privileged villain, the chief manager; as well as the naïve Shufang and the corrupted Yufang. The contrasts underscore the theme that good people, and especially good women, should keep themselves away from the temptation of riches. A major innovation of Tuberose is to connect the fictional moral allegory on the screen to the daily life and ethics of the audience through a Chinese family whose patriarch is a bastion of traditional moral values. These alterations all lead to the message that young females should follow their father’s moral example.

Why were the filmmakers of Tuberose so obsessed with delivering this homily? Remarks by the scriptwriter give some clues. Jiang Xueqian 姜學潛 (?-1946) was a Chinese employee of Man’ei who served as the chief of the Department of Feature Films.90 As a former colleague of Amakasu’s at the Concordia Association, Jiang joined Man’ei in the 1940s and served as the highest position that a Chinese achieved in the studio. The policy of making feature films he promoted was, consistent with Amakasu’s utilitarian views, to blend entertainment and education:

There is no long such thing as a pure feature film. People have no time to talk only about entertainment and are probably not satisfied with entertainment alone either. Whatever types of feature films we make, they must contain at least some guidance on how to live one’s life…

One example springs to mind. A film produced by Japan’s Toho company called Beat Down the Star-Spangled Banner has been screened all around Manchuria. People who have seen this film would better understand

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90 There are two opinions about the real identity of the scriptwriter of Tuberose, alias Jiang Xing 姜興. I adopt the one that indicates Jiang Xueqian is Jiang Xing. See Zhang Jin 張錦 “Manying bianju jiangyan shenfen kao” 滿映編劇姜衍身份考 (Research on the Identity of Manying’s Scriptwriter Jiang Yan), Movie Literature 電影文學 No.13 (2011): 158-160.
my clumsy explanations. The film is entertaining, enlightening, and has a
great story… No matter what, every film should be entertaining, since that’s a
basic function of film. However, entertainment is only the method;
enlightenment and education along with reporting the facts must be its
purpose.

“當今沒有絕對娛樂的電影，人們沒有工夫去專講娛樂人們也不滿足於專
用的娛樂了吧。無論怎樣的娛樂片，至少對於人生，也得有一個啟
示……

在這我想起來一個例子，比如最近日本東寶製作所所製作的「打倒
星條旗」的片子，已經在各地公映了，看到這個片子的人，我以上的說
明，雖然是很拙劣，不容易了解，可是這個片子比我的說明，更清楚明
晰了，在這片子里，又有娛樂，又有啟發，又有故事的成分……無論如
何，照電影的本質來說，各個片子，都須要娛樂性，可是娛樂永遠是他的
手段，而啟發性教育性，報道性，則必須是它的目的。”

Jiang opines that education is the true purpose of feature films, which should be offer
medicine for the soul coated in an icing of entertainment. He practices this idea in
*Tuberose* through exaggerating contrast of good and evil to deliver moral lessons rather
than to construct dramatic conflicts. Each event in the film is set not for engendering
emotional resonance but for demonstrating self-abstain as well as unconditional
obedience to patriarchy.

The “decisive battle” in the title of Jiang’s article indicates that the function of
feature films was to lead to triumph in the Pacific War. As Okada Hideki has shown, the
outbreak of the Pacific War ended the liberal trend of Manchurian art and ushered in the

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91 See Jiang Xueqian 姜學潛, “Juezhan yiwen zhong de yinghua bumen” 決戰藝文中的
映畫部門 (The film department in the decisive battle of art and literature), *Qingnian wenhua*
青年文化 (Youth Culture), August (1943): 7.
Manchukuo government’s total control of art.\(^9\) Jin’s advocacy of asceticism, his regulation of females, and his praise of thrift occurred at a time when resources were in short supply in Manchukuo. The theme of resisting money and a luxurious life is also an indictment of western ideology.

The above comparison of the diegesis of *Tuberose* with that of *The Death of a Famous Actor* show how the screenwriter borrowed a Chinese theme of the tragedy of the performers to fabricate a moral universe with a clear division of good and evil. To inculcate an ideology of asceticism—implicitly, an anti-Western ideology—the screenwriter blended family drama with a moral of self-restraint. The film’s limited reception, however, suggests that the Chinese audience were unmoved by the film. The film critic Zheng, for example, complained about its prolonged sequences of Peking Opera performance. In next section, I will examine the film language of *Tuberose* and explain why the filmmakers were keener on representing stage performance than on depicting melodramatic twists or evoking effusive emotions.

### 3.2. Chinese Tragedy through a Japanese Lens: Slowness and Rapidness in *Tuberose* and *Begonia*

To a viewer accustomed to contemporary films filled with dramatic conflicts and spectacle, *Tuberose*’s slow camera movements and prolonged scenes of didactic lecturing are almost hypnotic. Yet a contemporary viewer might also be puzzled by its unusual combination of mawkish plots and anti-climactic film language. The plot reminded me of

the clichéd mode of melodrama, conceptualized by Peter Brooks as a “mode of excess,” characterized by “moral polarization and schematizations; extreme states of being, situations, actions; overt villainy, persecution of the good, and final reward of the virtue.” In the context of China in the first half of the twentieth century, romantic fiction writers of the Mandarin Duck and Butterfly School and left-wing filmmakers had been masters of applying this sentimental mode of storytelling. Chinese feature films made in the 1930s and the 1940s based on a similar maudlin mode, such as Song of the Fishermen (Yuguangqu 渔光曲, Cai Chusheng 蔡楚生, dir., 1934) and Crossroads (Shizi jitou 十字街頭, Shen Xiling 沈西苓, dir., 1937), often visually exaggerated the hardship of the main characters to instigate sympathetic resonance of the audience.

The 1943 blockbuster Begonia, for example, reportedly packed theaters for days. This ambitious work of director Maxu Weibang is filled with melodramatic twists. The story begins with the forbidden love between a Peking Opera performer called Qiu Haitang (Begonia) and Luo Xiangqi, a warlord’s concubine. When the warlord discovers their affair, he beats Qiu mercilessly and cuts a cross on his face with a knife. With harmed body and disfigured face, Qiu flees and lives in exile, taking his baby daughter born by Luo. Qiu and his motherless daughter depend on each other, and survive flood as well as poverty, until the daughter comes of age and meets Luo by accident. Learning the news that his daughter and wife recognize each other, Qiu fears that his decrepitude and deteriorated health may cause them trouble. He commits suicide by jumping off a high

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building. The film ends with Luo and her daughter embracing each other and crying in front of a pool of blood.

The appeal of the film was profound. The dramatic representations of the tragic destiny of Qiu might echo what the Chinese audience had experienced during the turbulent wartime. Maxu Weibang confessed that the idea of this film was to present the “characters in Begonia and the destiny of Chinese young men in terms of the problem of love” rather than adultery.95 The original writer Qin Shou’ou 秦瘦鷗 (1908-1993) indicated in his novel that the geographical shape of China resembled the outline of begonia leaf.96 Other allegorical elements of the film Begonia include Qiu’s victimization, the absolute disparity between the public and privileged elites, and Qiu’s refugeedom in wartime.

Begonia’s appeal was not limited to Chinese viewers. Japanese filmmakers working in China United Production Ltd. 中華聯合製片有限公司 located in Shanghai, a joint venture initiated by the Shanghai film tycoon Zhang Shankun 張善琨 (1905-1957) and the cosmopolitan Japanese filmmaker Kawakita Nagasama 川喜多長政 (1903-1981) in 1942, “shouted for joy” after watching the film.97 Japanese filmmaker Tsuji Hisakazu 迁久一 (1914-1981) commented that although the story of Begonia was mawkish, the hero

96 Shao Yingjian 邵迎建, “Zhang Ailing kan Qiuhaitang ji qita: meiyou xiaoyan de zhanzheng” 張愛玲看《秋海棠》及其他: 沒有硝煙的戰爭 (Eileen Chang views Begonia and others: the war without gunpowder), Shucheng 書城, December (2005):38.
97 Sato Tadao 佐藤忠男, Qian Hang 錢杭 trans., Zhongguo dianying bainian 中國電影百年 (One hundred years of Chinese cinema) (Shanghai shudian chubanshe, 2005), 61.
Qiu “symbolized a kind of the characteristics of Chinese people” which transcended melodrama. 98 Japanese cinematographer Okazaki Kōzō 岡崎宏三 (1919-2005) remembered this “affection-instigating film” 嬌情片 in his eighties. 99 He explained that Japanese filmmakers’ fondness for Begonia was probably attributable to “a plot that twists like mountain roads” 峰迴路轉的劇情. Satō Tatao 佐藤忠男 compares Begonia with shin*pageki 新派劇 (Shimpa Drama), a “new style” Japanese theater form also known for its melodramatic plots. He argues that their major disparity is the degree of passion. Whereas a shin*pageki hero usually swallows insults when the villain takes away his lover, the passion of the suffering Qiu in Begonia springs out in the form of despair and sense of failure. 100 To Japanese filmmakers who watched Begonia at that time, the infectious sentiments contained in the dramatic plots struck a chord. In contrast with this tear-jerking style, Japanese filmdom had been regulated by the Japanese national government since the 1939 Japanese Film Law, which left little space for romantic dramas. 101

Begonia was acclaimed by both Chinese audience and Japanese filmmakers for its ability to “fan the flames of affection.” Tuberosé, in contrast, was accused of both lacking depth and having an excess of Peking Opera performance. Besides its didacticism and its

100 Satō Tatao 佐藤忠男, Qian Hang 錢杭 trans., Zhongguo dianying bainian 中國電影百年 (The one hundred years of Chinese film) (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian chubanshe, 2005), 63.
101 Details and effects of the Japanese Film Law, see Peter B. High, The Imperial Screen: Japanese Film Culture in the Fifteen Years’ War 1931-1945 (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2002): 70-76.
stereotyped melodrama, its visual representations alienate the audience. Below, I argue that the sense of too much/too little in Tuberose is symptomatic of an incompatibility between narration and visualization in manjin films. Instead of dismissing Man’ei feature films as poorly made or propagandistic, I demonstrate that it is the incompatibility between the melodramatic plots and the camerawork style that caused the negative reception of Tuberose. I will substantiate this argument through analyzing three significant sequences in Tuberose and comparing them with Begonia in terms of montage editing, zooms, and tracking shots.

Among the many slow-paced scenes in Tuberose, two montage sequences catch the eye for their use of high-speed of editing and superimposition, techniques more common in silent films. The first sequence occurs when Pusi, a male performer and Jin’s disciple, gets irritated seeing the chief manager teasing Yufang during her performance. Jin and Shufang are in the midst of performing a part of Fisherman’s Revenge in which the elderly fisherman informs his daughter that he got beaten by the county gentry and plans to take revenge. To foreshadow the homicide, the camera jumps between the performance on the stage, the smirking face of the chief manager and the resentful expression of Pusi. During the scene, two rapid horizontal panning shots of the audience occur one after the other. The first is a quick scan of the viewers sitting on the second floor, from right to left; the camera then pans from left to right at similar speed. After these two rapid pan shots, instead of depicting Pusi’s anger and revenge directly, the director inserts two montage sequences employing superimposition. We hear a gunshot and then see a long shot of Chinese opera audience rushing out the door, screaming. Another sequence of people escaping from a different direction then superimposes on the former shot. The two
overlapping montage sequences then gradually fade out, as does the screaming. A close-up of Pusi’s face comes into view, registering a complex mix of apprehension, dullness, and bewilderment. In this sequence, the director and cinematographer chose montage with superimposition to represent the chaotic scene and the homicide. This spectacle of rapid irritation is in sharp contrast with the slow tempo of the rest of the film.

The other unexpected montage sequence is the sequence of the “enlightenment moment” when Yufang discovers the chief manager’s new relationship and falls down from the stairs in despair. Learning that the chief manager has left for Qingdao, Yufang gradually realizes that he will not come back for her. The camera zooms in on her dulled face. Then a series of close-up shots of her face now, her face with make-up during the performance, the chief manager’s face with an exaggerated smile, and several clapping hands are edited together rapidly. Among them, there are several rapid zoom-in shots that display the sudden enlargement of Yufang’s or the chief manager’s face. Each shot ends with the face filling the whole frame. The rapid montage also includes irrelevant objects like faces and hands to convey a sense of unreality and vertigo.

In contrast with the rapid montage in Tuberose that portrays the external chaos of the opera audience shocked by the gun shot and mental unrest of Yufang realizing her abandonment, Begonia applies a slower approach to present similar dramatic scenes. In Begonia, when a rich man insults the male performer who plays the role of female, saying he should appreciate being kept as a “concubine,” a male performer called the Second Boss 二老闆 becomes so angry that he slaps the rich man’s face. Then the camera captures their fight scene carefully. A medium shot of their conflicts only gets interrupted with a few reverse shots of onlookers’ anxious faces. Instead of montage,
every shot emulates the actual sequence and speed of the event. The camera only pauses a little longer on Qiu’s worried facial expression. In contrast with Pusi’s bewildered expression, Second Boss shows a clear or even exaggerated look of astonishment. Through medium shots combined with close-ups of the faces of the characters, the camera provides the audience a view of the conflict as an intensive live experience. In the case of the similar “enlightenment moment” in Begonia, when Qiu figures out that the lady his daughter has encountered is his lost lover, he expresses incredibility and misery. A zoom-out shot is followed by a close-up of his miserable facial expression. Through this slow transition from close-up face to medium-shot gesture, the actor performs his bitterness slowly to the audience, fabricating a space in which viewers’ sympathetic emotion may accumulate.

Maxu Weibang, who was adroit at representing conflicts in a romanticized way, seldom applies rapid montage. The editing in Begonia only appears to indicate the change of space and time. More specifically, it hints the eclipse of time as well as the shift of setting, for example, to signify the migration of disfigured Qiu and his daughter from countryside to the cosmopolitan Shanghai, scenes of the street views of Shanghai are edited together. This kind of narrative montage is prevalent in Chinese black-and-white films, which secures the continuity of the story and indicates the shifts of settings. However, the filmmakers of Tuberose applied rapid editing of irrelevant scenes to bring forth visual irritation and alienation, which resembles “montage of attractions”, a kind of montage invented by Soviet Union filmmaker Eisensten that defamiliarizes norms of
space and time by emphasizing a collision of shots.¹⁰² When dealing with representing the conflict scenes, Maxu was more inclined to use consecutive shots but less montage that breaks spatial and time series. Therefore, Chinese and manjin audiences used to Maxu’s style of representing cinematic climax might well have found Tuberose’s unique approach to be unfamiliar and even detestable.

The disparity between the montage skills in Begonia and that in Tuberose suggests different aesthetic taste towards speed in Shanghai and Man’ei film cinematography. Maxu believed in the cathartic power of the prolonged gaze. The filmmakers of Tuberose preferred velocity that broke the spatial and time continuity and stimulated the senses. This kind of aesthetic disparity between Shanghai and Japanese filmmakers during the Second Sino-Japanese War reveals when they both claimed that each other’s feature films had a “slow tempo.” Kinnia Shuk-ting Yau argues the same judgment is due to their different definitions of “slow tempo.”¹⁰³ Yau claims that Chinese audience disliked the dawdling Japanese films lack of dramatic events or climatic moments. Japanese filmmakers, meanwhile, were not satisfied with Chinese films’ surplus long shots that represent every gesture of the characters, and excessive side plots. Okazaki Közō, the Japanese cinematographer who was deeply impressed by Begonia, also criticized Chinese films for often being slow and lacking editing skill.¹⁰⁴ However, the Chinese filmmakers did not ignore editing. Through analyzing works of Shanghai left-wing filmmakers, Jessica Ka Yee Chan demonstrates that they reinvented

¹⁰³ Kinnia Shuk-ting Yau, Japanese and Hong Kong Film Industries: Understanding the origins of East Asian Film Networks (London: Routledge, 2011), 36-37.
¹⁰⁴ Ibid, 143.
Pudovskin’s montage, which achieves narrative economy and diegetic continuity, in a more accessible way to attract the public audience. But in the case of Tuberose, the Japanese-trained filmmakers preferred Eisensteinian montage, which employs unrelated shots and edits them together rapidly. However, Maxu and Chinese left-wing filmmakers did not favor Eisensteinian montage because its effect of defamiliarizing the temporal-spatial norms can lead to narrative obscurity. In contrast, filmmakers of Tuberose who represented confrontation scenes, such as dramatic moments like Pusi’s revenge and Yufang’s corruption, look for stimulating astonishment and interrupting emotional accumulation, rather than catharsis.

Another defining visual feature of Tuberose is its meticulous representations of Peking Opera performance. These protracted episodes, which the Shanghai critic Zheng Hong lampooned, consist of a series of carefully framed long takes. Within those seemingly tedious shots the camera moves continually. When Jin and Yufang are performing Fisherman’s Revenge, the camera starts in front of the stage and slowly pans from right to left, rendering a panoramic view of the performance from many angles. In contrast, when Begonia shows the villain flirting with the hero, Qiu, dressed in female clothes during his performance, the camera remains stationary front of the stage.

The similar gaze of the stage also concludes the film. As Jin lies dying backstage, he hears Shufang’s singing and murmurs “My art… finally…”. Cut to the front stage where Shufang is cross-dressing performing Zhuge Liang, a resourceful military advisor of ancient China, in Empty City Bluff. The camera zooms out from a medium shot of

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106 Ibid, 210-211.
Shufang’s upper body to a broad view of the stage including the front rows of the audience. A montage sequence of the audience applauding ends the film. In contrast with Begonia, in which Peking Opera serves as a context, Tuberose carefully renders the theater and stage with long takes combined with zooms and reverse shots of the audience. It even visualizes the intertextuality between the opera script and the film diegesis, as the plots and dialogue of Fisherman’s Revenge mirror the decrepit Jin and his shame at being bullied. This kind of meticulous representation resembles an exotic gaze at traditional Chinese art and the vast landscape of Manchuria through the Japanese lens prevalent in documentaries of Mantetsu and Man’ei.

3.3. The Schizophrenia of Manjin Cinema: Misplaced Romanticization in Tuberose

In the previous section, I demonstrated how rapid montage sequences, panning and zoom render climactic scenes in Tuberose differently from the melodrama Begonia. Unlike their Shanghai counterparts, Man’ei filmmakers favored velocity causing spatial and temporal shifts to magnify dramatic tension. However, when dealing with Peking Opera performance, they projected an exotic gaze upon the stage through long shots and slow zoom-out. The sharp disparity between Tuberose and Begonia representing the similar melodramatic or static performance scenes reveals an aesthetic difference between Shanghai and Manchurian feature films and belies an innate paradox within the manjin cinema ideology.

The distinct cinematographic style of Tuberose is prevalent in some documentaries produced by Japanese filmmakers who worked at the film division of Mantetsu since the 1920s. Jie Li argues that these documentaries render an exotic Manchuria rather than a
realistic image. Hanae Kurihara Kramer also talks about how Mantetsu filmmakers practiced cinematic experiences when shot the Manchurian landscapes and cultures. I find similar usage of rapid montage sequence, panning, and zoom in these documentaries as appear in Tuberose. Both Li and Kramer mention an impressive zoom in a 1940 Mantetsu documentary called Niangniang Festival (Niangniangmiao 娘娘廟, Japanese, Akutagawa Kōzō 芥川光藏, dir., 1940). The film depicts a traditional ritual gathering of local Chinese people. That zoom sequence consists of “an overview of the crowd ascending the temple to a close-up of the local opera singers on stage.” The filmmakers of Tuberose applied the same approach in reverse, from close-up to panorama. Jie Li calls the foreign film techniques of depicting traditional rituals in an exotic way “reactionary modernism.” Mantetsu filmmakers showed the same fervid obsession with velocity in terms of camera movement. They used Eisenstein-styled rapid montage to represent diligently working youth in Manchuria, brave Kwantung Army soldiers, and the like. Kramer explains that they use rapid editing to display the rapid industrialization of Manchukuo.

However, when avant-garde cinematography meets melodrama, the outcome of this alchemy is not always gold. Unlike Shanghai filmmakers such as Maxu Weibang slowly captured the whole dramatic moment, and staff of Tuberose depict the same while through rapid montage sequences involving superimposition and pans. These film

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108 Jie Li 2014, 354.
techniques emphasizing disparate spatial and temporal orders differ from Shanghai film audiences’ taste for melodrama.

In contrast to the cinematographic style unfamiliar to the Chinese audience in Manchuria, the theme and narration of manjin films were all old acquaintances for them. Especially when the new film policy of Man’ei that recalled the Chinese ethnic identity of the Chinese filmmakers at Man’ei, they tended more frequently to find muses in Chinese art. Tuberose draws on three: The Death of a Famous Actor, Peking Opera performance, and a “play within a play,” such as Fisherman’s Revenge. Using these elements, the screenwriter and the manager of the feature film department, Jiang Xueqian, created an absolute moral universe in Tuberose. He exaggerated the absolute contrast between good and evil, for example the weak and old Jin has no resistance to the abusive chief manager and the distinct endings of the good daughter Shufang and the corrupted woman Yufang, to convey the didacticism of patriarchy that father’s lesson is always right.

Therefore the schism between the plot and visual language of Tuberose, and its style caught between aesthetic customs, reveals the trace of a manjin film aesthetic borne of a complicated collaboration between Chinese and Japanese filmmakers at Man’ei. Although Amakasu promoted Chinese filmmakers, the person behind the camera was always Japanese. Wang Fuchun, the secondary cinematographer of Tuberose, was the first Chinese cinematographer at Man’ei. Man’ei’s feature films made by manjin filmmakers were, in fact, a hybrid of Chinese-made story and Japanese-styled visualization.
**Tuberose** encapsulates the dilemma of *manjin* film. It was staffed by the most important Chinese filmmakers at Man’ei. Besides Jiang Xueqian, the only Chinese mid-level manager at Man’ei, the participants of *Tuberose* were all significant figures in the Manchurian film world, including director Zhou Xiaobo 周曉波, cinematographer Wang Fuchun, and the actors Xu Cong 徐聰 (1915-?), Bai Mei 白玫 (1921-1999), and Pu Ke 浦克 (1916-2004). All were local youth enthusiastic about film. Besides Bai Mei, who came from Beijing and joined Man’ei as an experienced Peking Opera performer, all had accepted the Japanese-styled film education in the Man’ei training school. Before that, most were employees of the local government or a national company.¹¹⁰ Zhou Xiaobo was one of the first two Chinese directors since 1940 who could have the autonomy in shooting. His first work, *The Tide* (*Fengchao* 風潮, Zhou Xiaobo 周曉波, dir., 1940) adapted from a Japanese film, was said to be the first work of a *manjin* director of Man’ei.¹¹¹ He was also the director of the propaganda film *Yellow River* (*Huanghe* 黃河, Zhou Xiaobo 周曉波, dir., 1942), an ambitious, high-budget Man’ei production.¹¹² Wang Fuchun, as mentioned earlier, was a well-known actor in Manchukuo before volunteered to learn cinematography. He played the hero of several Man’ei films, including the first

¹¹⁰ About the life of Zhou Xiaobo, see Hu and Gu, 191. About the biography of Wang Qimin, I refer to an article by Baren 芭人, “Dongdang suiyue shiqinian: zong sheyingshi wangqimin he yanyuan baimei” 動蕩歲月十七年——總攝影師王啟民和演員白玫 (Seventeen turbulent years: Chief cinematographer Wang Qimin and actress Bai Mei), *Changchun wenshi ziliao* 長春文史資料 (Changchun artistic and historical documents), Collection II, 1987.


¹¹² Hu and Gu, 100-101; Yamaguchi and Fujiwara, 173.
Man’ei feature film, Life’s Ambition Illuminates the Sky (Zhuanzhi zhutian 壮志燭天, Tsuboi Atae 坪井與, dir., 1938). The cast of Tuberose also consists of popular stars in Manchuria. Xu Cong and Pu Ke starred in several Man’ei films. The only Japanese crew member of Tuberose was Fujii Harumi. He had been the cinematographer of a series of feature films, of which several were manjin films. Fujii also shot three documentaries, Glorious Japan (Guanghui Riben 光輝日本, Chinese, Koga Shyōji 古賀正二, dir., 1940), Japanese Army and Nationals (Riben jundui yu guomin 日本軍隊與國民, Chinese, Mizugae Ryuichi 水江鼇一, dir., 1940), and The Tenth Anniversary of the Foundation of Manchukuo (Jianguo shinian 建國十年, Chinese, director unknown, 1942).113 As the Chinese staff strove to perform Chinese-ness, Japanese-trained photographers still applied a romanticized gaze to Peking Opera performance, Russian avant-garde montage, and Manchurian-style documentaries’ zoom to this Chinese-ness. Despite the collective diligence of its Chinese and Japanese filmmakers, Tuberose received little appraisal from Chinese film critics.

Besides artistic divisions, production factors also contributed to the unnatural appearance of Tuberose. Streamlined film production resulted in insufficient communication and collaboration between Japanese and Chinese staff. Each film produced by Man’ei had to pass a series of procedures prescribed by the company from preparation, production, to projection. Amakasu budgeted every facet of production, including how many films should be made each year, what amount of money should be

113 Hu and Gu 1990, 130-134.
allocated, what kind of scripts would be favored, which script could be brought onto the shooting schedule, and which director and staff were assigned to which film.\textsuperscript{114}

The first victim of this professional regulation might well have been the screenwriter. The procession of writing a screenplay at Man’ei was time-consuming and filled with contingency. At first, it might be a rough story, a few scenarios, or just a tentative idea. It could only proceed to the next step with the approval and support of upper managers. Then the endorsed story or plots were developed into a formal screenplay. Alterations and additions might happen at any time. Some screenplays by Japanese might be rewritten by Chinese scriptwriters to fit Manchurian customs.\textsuperscript{115} According to the scriptwriter Li Min, the screenplay consisted mainly of shooting instructions and lacked literary depth.\textsuperscript{116} They were just combinations of the explanation of some consecutive scenes with indications of the special effect or camera position. They were identical to Japanese \textit{kyakuhon} 脚本 (a script written for shooting) rather than Chinese \textit{juben} 劇本 (a script with dialogue and stage directions). Wang Ze also mentioned that he lost the right to alter his own script when it was adapted into another film.\textsuperscript{117}

The weak narrative and literary support from the screenplay led to heavy dependence on the director and cinematographer during film production. The director might focus more on how to display each scene through the camera, risking the

\textsuperscript{114} In \textit{Manchurian Film} magazine, there were fixed pages where notices of coming attractions or films in production were published.


\textsuperscript{116} Ibid, 82-84.

continuity of the narration as well as between different scenes. Performance might also suffer from a tenuous script, as actors had to rely on the impromptu instructions of the director. Their wooden expressions and lack of spontaneity were the conspicuous flaws most often cited by film critics. For example, in 1939 Japanese critic Nakamura Kuno said that Man’ei actors were like puppets and that it was difficult for them to keep their emotion consistent as well as integral.\textsuperscript{118} Unnatural performing is also conspicuous in \textit{Tuberose}, especially when actors try to express intensive emotion at dramatic moments. For example, the actress playing Shufang shed no tears when she needed to show she was wronged. In contrast, Lü Yukun呂玉堃 (1921-2004) and Li Lihua 李麗華 (1924-2017), who used to be stage actors, combined exaggerated facial expressions and bodily gestures in \textit{Begonia} in order to evoke empathy.

External events also influenced \textit{Tuberose}’s appearance. On March 18\textsuperscript{th}, 1943, the government of Manchukuo promulgated the Safe Rectification Law (\textit{bao’an jiaozheng fa}保安矯正法) and the Thought Rectification Law (\textit{sixiang jiaozheng fa}思想矯正法),\textsuperscript{119} which authorized the special police to imprison any person suspicious of endangering national safety.\textsuperscript{120} Many Chinese intellectuals in Manchukuo were arrested or put on the wanted list, including screenwriter Jiang Xueqian, who reportedly spent half a year in

\textsuperscript{118} Zhou Guoqing 周國慶, “Yanyuan de kuileihua he kuilei yanyuan” 演員傀儡化和傀儡演員 (The fossilization of actor and the puppet-like actor), \textit{Manchurian Film}, Chinese edition, June (1939): 121.

\textsuperscript{119} Another saying of the releasing date is September 18\textsuperscript{th}, 1943. See Hu and Gu 1990, 164.

\textsuperscript{120} Xie Xueshi 解學詩, \textit{Weimanzhouguoshi xinbian} 偽滿洲國史新編 (The new edition of the illegitimate Manchukuo history) (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1995), 656-657.
prison before joining Man’ei.\textsuperscript{121} Actor Xu Cong also spent some time in prison for unknown reasons.\textsuperscript{122} Wang Fuchun and Bai Mei, a couple, were once jailed for walking too close together.\textsuperscript{123} Under such pressure, \textit{Tuberose} was a risky production. Indeed, the indirect representation of Pusi’s revenge, as well as the constricted performance style, may well have been an expression of staff anxiety and self-protection in a highly politicized environment. In addition, a filmstock and staff shortage after the outbreak of the Pacific War hindered film production. All scenes had to be shot indoors, unexpectedly suggesting a sense of confinement. The lack of outdoor location shooting harmed the film’s sense of realism. The film also lacked background music to enhance the drama and emotional register.\textsuperscript{124} Only a few melodies accompany the film. Except for one Chinese Opera-style number combined with the montage of Yufang’s fall, most scenes and dialogue have no musical accompaniment. Whereas \textit{Begonia} and other Shanghai films had orchestral accompaniment, the scarcity of music in \textit{Tuberose} greatly decreased its melodramatic appeal.

\textsuperscript{122} Ibid, 95.
\textsuperscript{123} Hu and Gu 1990, 164.
\textsuperscript{124} Peter Brooks, 48-49.
4. Conclusion

Through analyzing the text and context of *Tuberose*, I display its divided narrative and cinematic worlds. Whereas contemporary Chinese critics dismissed the film as “unpopular,” I reveal the production process that shaped it aesthetic appearance. In doing so, I first introduced the ethnic Chinese filmmakers of Man’ei, including Wang Ze and Li Min. They directly participated in both film production and critique. Through comparing their writings in *Manchurian Film* magazine with Amakasu’s film policy, I demonstrate that their enhanced sense of being ethnic Chinese also enhanced their sense of being a member of Manchukuo. To show the effects on film texts, I compared *Tuberose* and its Shanghai counterparts *The Death of a Famous Actor* and *Begonia*. I argued that *Tuberose* adapted a familiar Chinese plot involving a wronged but virtuous Peking Opera singer and the trope of downtrodden opera performers, which flourished in Shanghai spoken drama as well as features film in the 1930s and the 1940s. *Tuberose* also inherited and developed a cinematographic style emphasizing rapid montage and slow exotic representation from Mantetsu documentaries. The divergent narrative and cinematic style, I argued, that contributed to the unwelcomed acceptance of Man’ei feature films among contemporary critics. Behind the cold treatment of these films lies transcultural interactions between film policymakers in Manchukuo, Man’ei filmmakers, and Japanese and Chinese critics and the hybrid composition of Man’ei film that mixes Shanghai spoken drama, Peking Opera, Russian montage, Japanese-styled long takes, and the novel shooting technique of zoom lens.

The afterlife of *Tuberose*’s makers echoes what Wang Ze comment on Man’ei filmmakers as being “ugly” girls risking “lead poisoning”. Some of its staff died
unnatural deaths. Others disappeared without a trace. When the Russian army rushed into Hsinking in the summer of 1945, Amakasu reportedly committed suicide by swallowing cyanide.\textsuperscript{125} Man’ei, now without a leader, fell prey to competition for control of the studio between CCP and KMT agents. According to the memoirs of some Chinese staff, Jiang, the screenwriter of \textit{Tuberose} and a high-ranking administrator in the studio, was actually a KMT spy.\textsuperscript{126} Having failed to take over Man’ei for the KMT, he disappeared when CCP troops entered the city in 1946. Another saying is that he committed suicide when caught by a group of CCP soldiers beside the railway.\textsuperscript{127} Wang Fuchun changed his name into Wang Qimin and became the chief cinematographer of Changchun Film Studio, a primary filmmaking organization of the early P.R.C. His wife, Bai Mei, who played the role of the corrupt girl in \textit{Tuberose}, followed him and continued her acting career there. Pu Ke, who played the supporting role of Pusi, became a major actor in the same studio. His face can be found in several feature films produced during the Civil War and during the early period of the People’s Republic, including \textit{Along the Sungari River} (\textit{Songhuajiang shang} 松花江上, Jin Shan 金山, dir., 1947) and \textit{The Naval Battle of 1894} (\textit{Jiawu fengyun} 甲午風雲, Lin Nong 林農, dir., 1962).

Although some of these people remained in the public memory through films produced by Changchun Film Studio after 1945, \textit{Tuberose}, the film that they once

\textsuperscript{125} Hu and Gu 1990, 115.
co-worked was buried with the collapsed film company that produced it. In “replaying” this ignored film, my study demonstrates the complicated ideological and aesthetic clashes behind the negative reviews of Man’ei feature films in the 1930s and the 1940s. On one hand, the new film policy of Man’ei after Amakasu assumed the directorship enabled a group of local Chinese writers and filmmakers to produce films independently. This policy instilled in them the identity of a Manchukuo citizen by means of emphasizing their ethnic Chinese identity. On the other hand, this policy also led these Chinese filmmakers to adapt traditional Chinese culture like Peking Opera and Shanghai culture such as the spoken drama *The Death of a Famous Actor*. However, in the case of *Tuberose*, Man’ei filmmakers learning film language from Japanese photographers represented melodramatic scenes with rapid montages and Peking Opera performances with slowly panning as well as a zoom lens. I argue this visual style, which was distinct from Shanghai melodramatic films like *Begonia*, accounts for the unfamiliarity and indifference of the Chinese audience.

Through a case study of *Tuberose*, I offer a brief history of Man’ei that differs from Shanghai-centric and national Chinese film historiographies. In contrast with the film industry in Japanese-occupied Shanghai, Man’ei was born in between Chinese and Japanese aesthetic standards and strived to create its own authenticity. The Sino-Japanese ideological and aesthetic clashes shaped the narrative and visual styles of Man’ei feature films exemplified by *Tuberose*. I question the negative judgments of Man’ei productions on pure aesthetic grounds,
arguing that their look was a compound effect of aesthetics, technology, and ideologies.

A group of Chinese filmmakers of Man’ei, I showed, lived at the intersection of these confrontations. Compared with the piles of memoirs of Japanese staff of Man’ei, their voices have had fewer chances to be heard. By curating their articles on Manchukuo periodicals and postwar memoirs, I represent their artistic ideals and spiritual experiences, both of which evince transcultural tensions. Echoing former Man’ei scholarship from the perspective of Japanese imperialism and film as a media of nation-state construction, my study contributes an inner view of the local Chinese filmmakers in Manchuria and a textual analysis of one of their works.
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Filmography

Core Films of the Study

_Tuberose (Wanxiangyu 晚香玉), (Zhou Xiaobo 周曉波 dir., 1944)_
_Begonia (Qiuhaitang 秋海棠) (Maxu Weibang 馬徐維邦 dir., 1943)_

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_Honeymoon Express (Miyue kuaiche 蜜月快車) (Ueno Shinji 上野真嗣, dir., 1938)_
_Iron Blood, Wise Heart (Tiexue Huixin 鐵血慧心) (Yamauchi Eizo 山內英三, dir., 1939)_
_The Journey of Love (Qinghai hangcheng 情海航程) (Mizugae Ryuichi 水江龍一, dir., 1939)_
_Journey to the East (Dongyouji 東遊記) (Otani Toshio 大谷俊夫, dir., 1939)_
_The Tide (Fengchao 風潮) (Zhou Xiaobo 周曉波, dir., 1940)_
_The Battle between Dragon and Tiger (Longzhenghudou 龍爭虎鬥) (Mizugae Ryuichi 水江龍一, dir., 1941)_
_Dandy Monk Lu Zhishen (Huaheshang Lu Zhishen 花和尚魯智深) (Mizugae Ryuichi 水江龍一, dir., 1942)_
_Rouge (Yanzhi 腮脂) (Otani Toshio 大谷俊夫, dir., 1942)_
_Panther Head Lin Chong (Baozitou Li Chong 貓子頭林沖) (Zhu Wenshun 朱文順, dir., 1942)_
Yellow River (Huanghe 黃河) (Zhou Xiaobo 周曉波, dir., 1942)

Winter Jasmine (迎春花 C. Yingchunhua, J. geshyunka, Chinese and Japanese dialogue and subtitles) (Sasaki Yasushi 佐佐木康, dir., 1942)

Everybody Is Happy (Jiedahuanxi 皆大歡喜, Chinese dialogue, no subtitles) (Wang Xinzhai 王心齋, dir., 1942)

Yan Qing and Li Shishi (Yan Qing yu Li Shishi 燕青與李師師) (Zhang Tianci 張天賜, dir., 1943)

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Baptism on Ice (Bingshang xilijie 冰上洗禮節, Japanese and Russian) (Suzuki Shigeyoshi 鈴木重吉, dir., 1939)

The Progressive Electric Power Industry (Yuejin dianye 躍進電業, Japanese) (Takahara Fujirō 高原富士郎, dir., 1939)

The Glorious Japan (Guanghui Riben 光輝日本, Chinese) (Koga Shyōji 古賀正二, dir., 1940)

Japanese Army and Nationals (Riben jundui yu guomin 日本軍隊與國民, Chinese) (Mizugae Ryuichi 水江龍一, dir., 1940)

Niangniang Festival (Niangniangmiao 娘娘廟, Japanese) (Akutagawa Kōzō 芥川光藏, dir., 1940)
The Tenth Anniversary of the Foundation of Manchukuo (Jianguo shinian 建国十年, Chinese) (director unknown, 1942)

III. Other Feature Films in Chinese
The Big Road (Dalu 大路) (Sun Yu 孫瑜, dir., 1934)
Song at the Midnight (Yeban gesheng 夜半歌聲) (Maxu Weibang 马徐维邦, dir., 1937)
Mulan Joins the Army (Mulan Congjun 木兰从军) (Bu Wangcang 卜萬蒼, dir., 1939)
Towards Eternities (Wanshi liufang 萬世流芳) (Maxu Weibang 马徐维邦, Zhu Shilin 朱石麟, Bu Wangcang 卜萬蒼, dir., 1944)
Along the Sungari River (Songhuajiang shang 松花江上) (Jin Shan 金山, dir., 1947)
The Bridge (Qiao 桥) (Wang Bin 王滨, dir., 1949)
The White-haired Girl (Bai Maonü 白毛女) (Wang Bin 王滨, Shui Hua 水华, dir., 1950)
The Naval Battle of 1894 (Jiawu fengyun 甲午風雲) (Lin Nong 林農, dir., 1962)

III. Feature Films in Japanese
The Bride being Peeped (Nozokareta hanayome のぞかれた花嫁) (Otani Toshio 大谷俊夫, 1935)
China Nights (Shina no yoru 支那の夜) (Fushimizu Osamu 伏水修, dir., 1940)
Vow in the Dessert (Nessa no chikai 熱砂の誓ひ) (Watanabe Kunio 渡辺邦男, dir., 1940)
Soochow Night (Soshyū no yoku 蘇州の夜) (Nomura Hiromasa 野村浩將, dir., 1941)

IV. Feature Film in Korean
Miles Away from Happiness (Fudi wanli 福地萬里) (Jeon Chang-geun 全昌根, dir., 1941)

V. Feature Film in English
The Last Emperor (Bernardo Bertolucci, dir., 1987)