

**Commerce and Culture: The Manchukuo Film Industry
from 1937 to 1945**

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Summary

This thesis centers on the Manchuria film industry from the 1930s to 1940s. The Manchukuo Film Production and Exhibition Company (Man'ei) was established in 1937 under the sponsorship of the Kwangtung Army and Japanese businessmen. As a state-sponsored company, the development of Man'ei shaped the history of Manchukuo film industry. In order to be the first-class filmmaking center of the Far East commercially and culturally, the management and operations of Man'ei was simultaneously directed along two trajectories, combining the Hollywood-style commercial model with a cultural project similar to the European national film industry. Three periods of Man'ei history: Foundation, High Return and "Beautiful Propaganda" arose under different political environments. The commercial product and cultural project built the life of Man'ei. Even as Man'ei aimed to profit commercially through the production and distribution of entertainment films, it also had to serve an official function in shaping perceptions and images of Manchukuo and its sponsor, Japan. The breakout of the Pacific War in 1941 however entailed the transformation of Man'ei into an agency largely concerned with producing and disseminating cultural and political propaganda until the end of the War. This paper analyzes how the Man'ei negotiated the commercial product and cultural project in response to the multifaceted demands and pressures engendered by its evolving geopolitical environment.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Film, not only an invention but also an industry, was one of the most attractive industries in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. By the 1930s, although the film industry in different areas had its own distinguishing features, there were two leading purposes: earning money and spreading culture. With these two purposes, film was made into a commercial product and a cultural project. Firstly, a pioneer in U.S, Thomas Edison, made the new film making machine into a profitable business, which later became a successful business commercial model.¹ Edison's model was to control all the processing of films, production, delivery and exhibition as a vertical integration under a film production studio Black Maria in 1893.² Later on, this model was perfected by the famous Hollywood studios. Wealthy studios also trained and promoted their own film stars and dominated the industry especially after WWII. At the same time, the most advanced expression of the film as a cultural project was in Europe. The Lumière brothers from France made the first film in order to record people's real lives around the same year of Edison.³ During WWI, the cultural aspect of film was used for propaganda, especially in Germany. It was continued after the war and the system got more complete and smooth. Germany set up a film vehicle of the whole country in order to propagandize its national policies. Although the two projects had different purposes, both of the two tendencies established vertical integration with different goals and circumstances. Basically, by the 1930s, there were

¹ Douglas Gomery: *Movie History: A Survey*. Wadsworth Publishing Company Press, California. 1991. P. 7.

² Ibid.

³ Jack C. Ellis, *A History of Film* (New Jersey: Englewood Cliffs Press, 1985), P. 15.

two very similar models with similar structure but different goals.

China was not a later comer of film industry in the early twentieth. During the developing of Chinese film industry, there were three film centers in China: Shanghai, northeast China, and Hong Kong.⁴ Each area rose up its own distinguishing feature under different powers and political circumstances. In northeast China, the first film was brought in by Russia and shown in Dalian in 1902, which was only six years later than China's first film exhibition in Shanghai in 1896.⁵ After the Russo-Japanese War in 1904-1905, Japanese took the Russians' place in northeast China as a dominating power and began to extent its power on the film industry. The South Manchuria Railway Co. (SMR) set up the first cinema in Dalian as *Electric Park (Dianqi Gongyuan)* in 1909, which was only one year after China's first cinema.⁶ People in northeast China embraced the new recreational activity quickly. By the 1920s, there were 36 theaters in northeast China, where both films and traditional dramas were shown.⁷ In 1935, there were 69 cinemas, including 42 controlled by Japanese enterprises, 13 belonging to Chinese local elites, and 14 Russian or American productions.⁸ Clearly, the film industry in northeast China developed very quickly. It was strongly controlled by Japanese-owned cinemas although they co-existed with Chinese, Russian and American-owned cinemas as well. This provided a competitive market and compelled Japan to find a way to enter the film market in northeast China.

⁴ Taiwan was another film center, which also had its own film production and exhibition industry in the twentieth century under the controlling of Japanese colonial powers. Because Taiwan became the colony of Japan in 1895 after the Sino-Japanese war, my thesis does not include Taiwan film industry in the early twentieth century in Chinese film industry.

⁵ Hu Chang, *Man Ying—Guoce dianying mianmian guan* [Many Perspectives on Manchuria Motion Picture Production and Distribution Co.], 满映—国策电影面面观. (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1990), p. 2.

⁶ Ibid. , p. 3.

⁷ Ibid. , p. 4.

⁸ Ibid. , p.7.

The creation of Man'ei in 1937 was one of its solutions.

However, comparing with research on other Chinese film centers such as Shanghai and Hong Kong, the research or records on northeast China film industry is underdeveloped because of complicated political reasons. Cheng Jihua, the chief editor of *The History of Chinese Cinemas (Zhongguo Dianying Fazhan Shi)*, explained that he considers such puppet films (Manchukuo films) were only the products of Japanese imperialist aggression with a small group of traitors who had gone over to the enemy.⁹ He considers such films absolutely contrary to the consistently patriotic spirit of the Chinese people.¹⁰ They were the opposite of the Chinese national film, an object to be condemned in a history of Chinese films, and cannot occupy a place in that history. He thought this is a matter of principle.¹¹ As Cheng said, most of the research on the Chinese film industry, especially on northeast China film industry, was based on Marxist-Leninist methodology and the conceptions of Chinese society.¹²

But, after my abundant reading on the primary and secondary sources, I noticed that doing the academic research on northeast China film industry was not only an academic responsibility of finding the truth, but also the first time trying to know how to combine economic profits and cultural assimilation together via a cultural industry in northeast China.

⁹ Cheng Jihua, *Zhongguo Dianying Fazhan Shi* [The History of Chinese Cinemas], 中国电影发展史, Zhongguo: China Film Press, 1963.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Jay Leyda, *Dianying: An Account of Film and Film Audience in China*, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1972), pp. 139—140.

¹² Ibid.

1.1 Northeast China and its Meanings to Japan

Geographically, northeast China ranges from eighty to one hundred and thirty-five degrees east longitude and from thirty-six to fifty-three degrees north latitude.¹³ Approximately 4,200 kilometers from east to west and 1,650 kilometers from north to south, the region's area is approximately 1.2 million square kilometers.¹⁴ The region was also called the Three Eastern Provinces, which includes Liaoning, Jilin, Heilongjiang and the northeast part of the inner Mongolia. Ethnically, it is the birthplace of conquerors, together with the adjacent Mongolia. It is the motherland of Liao, Jin, Mongol and especially Manchu. Manchuria was still the throne in Beijing (Peking) when Russia and Japan became engaged in northeast China in the 1890s and 1900s. At the same time, Han peasants continually immigrated from the north China to Manchu because of the rich land in northeast China.¹⁵

Meanwhile, northeast China, also called Manchuria, later became Manchukuo from 1932 to 1945. It was a dreamland for Japan Empire from both commercial and cultural aspects. Geographically, northeast China was three times larger than Japan proper. Economically, it is one of the richest parts of Mainland China. The abundant agricultural products, such as soybean, and mineral resources, bring a self-balancing life to people there in the 1900s. Based on the rich economic resources, Japan began to expand into northeast China in the late 1890s. Since Russo-Japanese War from 1904-1905, Japanese took the leadership in Northeast China step by step. On political

¹³ Hirano, Kenichiro, *The Japanese in Manchuria 1906—1931: A Study of The Historical Background of Manchukuo*, (Harvard University, Ph.D. 1983), p. 15.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

perspective, northeast China also has two definitions accompanied with the engaging of Japanese powers in this area. It was divided at the time spot of 1931. Since the Russo-Japanese War from 1904-1905, Japan began to take the leadership in northeast China. From 1906 to 1931, Japanese tried to control northeast China via the military expansion. As Hirano Kenichiro points out, this period began with a military action, the Japanese victory in the Russo-Japanese War, and ended with a military action, the Japanese army's coup of the Manchurian Incident.¹⁶ The second period since 1932 was a history of Manchukuo. Although Manchukuo was considered as a puppet state sponsored by Japan, however, the foundation of Manchukuo stands for the changing of Japanese Manchuria policy from military to non-military. Japanese economic and cultural activities brought the birth of Manchukuo film industry, which tried to combine the commercial and the cultural.

In 1932, Manchukuo was founded, sponsored by Japan. The Manchukuo government took charge of the administrative affairs, the Japanese Kwantung Army controlled military and political issues, and the South Manchuria Railway Company (SMR) took the leadership in the economic field. The film industry, as a profitable business and a cultural project, was unavoidably handled by those three powers.

1.2 The Significance of Studying Man'ei

Manchukuo Film Production and Exhibition Company (Man'ei) was established in

¹⁶ Ibid. , p. 2.

1937 under the sponsorship of the Kwantung Army and Japanese businessmen. As a state-sponsored company, the development of Man'ei shaped the history of the Manchukuo film industry. In order to serve Japanese policy changing from military to non-military, Manchukuo film industry tried to put commercial product and cultural project into one business. This thesis examines how the two factors interact with each other in this film industry.

Different from the separately commercial and cultural projects we mentioned before, Man'ei tried to put the commercial business and cultural project together during its whole life. In order to be the premier filmmaking center of the Far East commercially and culturally, the management and operations of Man'ei were simultaneously directed along two trajectories, combining the Hollywood-style commercial model with a cultural project similar to the European national film industry. Three periods of Man'ei history: Foundation, High Return and "Beautiful Propaganda" arose under different political environments.¹⁷ The commercial product and cultural project built the life of Man'ei. Even as Man'ei aimed to profit commercially through the production and distribution of entertainment films, it also had to serve an official function in shaping perceptions and images of Manchukuo and its sponsor, Japan. The outbreak of the Pacific War in 1941 however entailed the transformation of Man'ei into an agency largely concerned with producing and disseminating cultural and political propaganda until the end of the War. This paper analyzes how the Man'ei negotiated the commercial product and cultural project in

¹⁷ Beautiful Propaganda stands for the films made in the third period of Man'ei as beautiful actresses leading the propaganda films with entertainment factors, especially romantic factors.

response to the multifaceted demands and pressures engendered by its evolving geopolitical environment.

Scholars from China, Japan and western countries, look at Manchukuo film industry in the context of Japanese colonialism studies, Japanese empire studies and film history studies, which all emphasize the cultural significance of this film industry. However, as a business empire, Manchukuo was created to earn money. Sources such as *Shengjing Times*, which was the most important newspaper, *Manchukuo Yearbooks* made by Manchuria Cultural Association, transcripts of interviews with Man'ei and Changying actors and directors, biographies of Li Xianglan, the most famous film star of Man'ei, Puyi, last emperor of Qing Dynasty and Manchukuo, Japanese officers, provide the sources to support my research on commercial and cultural projects of Man'ei.

Compared with other scholars' research on Man'ei or Manchukuo film industry, the significance of my research was not only provide a description of the cultural project and profitable business, but also discuss the relationship of the two factors. The commercial, military and civil powers combined commercial product and cultural project into one business model.

1.3 Chinese Scholarship on Man'ei

As we discussed before, most of the Chinese scholars doing Chinese film history or history of Manchukuo considered Manchukuo film industry as a puppet political

industry under the Marxist-Leninist principles and the conception of Chinese society. The only Chinese research on Man'ei and Manchukuo film industry was *Many Perspectives on Manchuria Motion Picture Production and Distribution Co.* by Hu Chang, who was the former leader of Changchun Film Production Company.¹⁸ His book provides a historiography of Man'ei since it founded. However, as a historiography, which discourses lots of details of Man'ei and its films, this book focuses on the political propaganda significance of Man'ei, and excludes a discussion on commercial development of this film industry. Other Chinese scholars' researches mentioned Man'ei as *The Chinese Film History 1937-1945* by Li Daoxin, discussed the meaning of research northeast China film industry is a sensitive but important topic of Chinese film history without detailed discussions.¹⁹ In my opinion, because Japanese occupied northeast China and sponsored the foundation of Manchukuo, the Manchukuo film industry could not avoid the political propaganda function. However, the research on the economic function and art function of Manchukuo film industry still need to be explored and discussed.

1.4 Japanese Scholarship on Man'ei

Research on Man'ei is also avoided by Japanese scholars because of its low artistic value. As Michael Baskett states in his article, Japanese film critics were generally

¹⁸ Hu Chang, *Man Ying—Guoce dianying mianmian guan* [Many Perspectives on Manchuria Motion Picture Production and Distribution Co.], 满映—国策电影面面观, Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1990.

¹⁹ Li Daoxin, *Zhongguo Dianying Shi 1937—1945* [The Chinese Film History 1937—1945], 中国电影史 1937—1945, Beijing: Beijing Capital Normal University Press, 2000.

critical of what they saw as a low artistic value in films produced throughout Japan's imperial film markets—and especially by Man'ei—but most approved of the genre's ideological goal to promote goodwill and mutual understanding.²⁰ Until relatively recently, few postwar film historians in Japan or abroad found goodwill films a worthy topic of serious study, citing similar reasons as their prewar counterparts.²¹

Most Japanese research on the Manchukuo film industry focus on the topics of Man'ei's leader Amakasu Masahiko, in the context of Japanese colonial studies such as *Amakasu Masahiko to Katsudoya Gunzo* by Yamaguchi Takeshi.²² This research focuses on the activities of Amakasu, the leader of Man'ei's two reorganizations and represents the conception of combining commercial and cultural together in Man'ei. This research provides information on Man'ei through its leadership, but still in the frame of Japanese imperialism, which focuses on Man'ei's political function. Although Amakasu is the representative of Man'ei, the research on Man'ei still needs a discussion that could provide the whole industry beyond the high level executives and discuss the real market.

1.5 Western Scholarship on Man'ei

Although there are western scholars' researches present the history of Manchukuo, the research on Man'ei in terms of cultural and commercial industry needs to be

²⁰ Michael Baskett, Goodwill Hunting: Rediscovering and Remembering Manchukuo in Japanese "Goodwill Films". in *Crossed Histories: Manchuria in the Age of Empire*, Mariko Asano Tamanoi eds, Honolulu: Association for Asian Studies and University of Hawai'i Press, pp. 120-149.

²¹ Ibid. P. 121.

²² Yamaguchi Takeshi, *Amakasu Masahiko to Katsudoya Gunzo*, Toyko, Heibonsha Library, 2006.

improved. The only western research on Man'ei and Manchukuo film industry is *The Attractive Empire: Colonial Asia in Japanese Imperial Film Culture, 1931—1953* by Michael Baskett.²³ His research focuses on the Japanese political and cultural influences on the Manchukuo film industry in the studies. In his book, he introduces the background of Manchukuo film industry and emphasizes the relationship between Manchukuo film industry and Japan empire policy. Although his research was the first general work on Man'ei in western countries, the investigation on Man'ei's business goals and its practice still need to be explored.

Japan's Total Empire by Louise Young also mentions Manchukuo film industry.²⁴ This book focuses on providing a whole picture of Manchukuo through Japanese empire and its citizens. The book draws an imperial relationship between military conquest, economic development and mass migration in Manchukuo under the policy of Japan total empire. It firstly combines the cultural and commercial together on researching Manchukuo from the perspective of Japanese total empire. However, in her book, she discusses the relationship between Manchukuo film industry and its Japan Empire mostly from the cultural perspective.

1.6 Man'ei: a Commercial and Cultural Industry

The theme of my thesis is researching Manchukuo film industry from 1937 to 1945 from commercial and cultural projects into one business. During my thesis, I will

²³ Michael Baskett, *The Attractive Empire: Colonial Asia in Japanese Imperial Film Cultural 1931—1953*, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008.

²⁴ Louise Young, *Japan's Total Empire: Manchuria and the Culture of Wartime Imperialism*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998.

examine how the two factors interact with each other in the film industry.

Northeast China, also named as Manchu, later became Manchukuo from 1932 to 1945, was a dreamland for Japan from both commercial and cultural aspects. Geographically, northeast China was three times larger than Japan proper, which was nearby. Economically, it is one of the richest places of Mainland China. The abundant of agricultural productions as soybean and mineral resources make a self-balancing life-style to people there in the 1900s. Since Russo-Japanese War from 1904-1905, Japanese took the leadership in northeast China step by step. In 1932, Manchukuo was founded sponsored by Japan. The division of powers in northeast China constructed as Manchukuo government took charge of the administrative affairs, Japanese Kwantung Army controlled military and political issues, and the South Manchuria Railway Company took the leadership in economic field. Film industry, as a profitable business and a cultural project, was unavoidably handled by those three powers.

In order to provide clearly tendencies of the two projects, I will divide this thesis into five chapters. The first chapter is introduction, and the second chapter will introduce the northeast China Film Market before 1937. Following the development of Man'ei, the next three chapters will examine the Foundation period from 1937 to 1939, the High Return Period from 1939 to 1942, and the “Beautiful propaganda” and the Struggling Period from 1943 to 1945. In the body part of the thesis, I will mainly explore the development of commercial product and cultural project, and their interactions in Manchukuo film industry.

The second chapter will examine the pioneers of commercial and cultural projects in world film industry, which later became the samples of Man'ei business, and the northeast China film market before 1937. By the 1930s, world film industry was already very advanced and had two different business models, later became the samples to Man'ei. In the U.S, Thomas Edison was a pioneer who not only invented film but also invented the first successful business commercial model. Edison's model was to control production, delivery and exhibition of films as a vertical integration. Later on, it was perfected by Hollywood big studios in the 1910s. Wealthy studios also trained and promoted their own films stars and dominated the industry especially after the WWII. Meanwhile, the most advanced expression of the film as a cultural project was in Europe. The French Lumière brothers made the first film in order to record people's real lives. During WWI, the cultural aspect of film was used for propaganda, especially in Germany. It was continued after the war and the system got more complete and smooth. Germany set up a film vehicle of the whole country in order to propaganda its national policies. Both of the two tendencies established vertical integration with different goals and circumstances. Basically, by the 1930s, there were two very similar models with same structure but different goals.

In the 1930s, films were already very popular in northeast China. But even after 1932, when Manchukuo was founded, there was no structure or direction of the film industry here. From the Japanese perspective, there were two problems. One of the problems was most of the cinemas were owned by Chinese and showed Chinese and American films. In order to solve the problem, they established a censorship in

1933,²⁵ but it was not an effective solution for the problems. Commercially, there were many movie theaters in big cities, but Japanese films could not get into the market. They tried to use censored, tried to build more cinemas, but in 1937, they had a plan to build Man'ei, which was supposed to satisfy both Japanese commercial and cultural requirements in film industry.

The third chapter will examine the foundation of Man'ei, its two basic goals and its practices from 1937 to 1939. The Manchukuo Motion Picture Production and Distribution Company (Man'ei) founded on 2nd August 1937.²⁶ As a collaborative effort between Manchukuo government and Japanese powers, especially the SMR, Man'ei was built as a stock company, in which each participator invested 2,500,000 Yen.²⁷ Both the Manchukuo government and Japanese powers jointly managed and directed Man'ei in both its commercial and political dimensions.

During this first two years, Man'ei was building its foundation for its two goals: commercial success and cultural control.

Jin Bidong, the first managing-director, organized Man'ei from 1937 to 1939.²⁸ The first and most important thing he did was organize the whole industry into a vertically integrated system. Three main departments were set up: general office, filmmaking department and distribution department. The aim of the filmmaking department was the production of high quality professional films to reap both commercial and cultural benefits for Manchukuo and Japan. So they had film productions teams to make two

²⁵ *Shengjing Times*, 25th, November, 1933.

²⁶ *Shengjing Times*. 2nd August 1937.

²⁷ Muto Tomio, *My Manchukuo* (Tokyo: Bungei Shunju press, 1991), p. 245.

²⁸ *Shengjing Times*, 25th August 1937.

types of films: entertainment and what they called “enlightened” films (Qimin Yinghua). Qi Min or enlightened films basically means propaganda. In order to make attractive films, they invited professional Japanese filmmakers to Man’ei and enrolled local students into its training school.

Expanding the market was the second goal during this period. For the film production section, they made ten entertainment films, and six enlightened films. Although not all films earned money, they helped Man’ei films break into the film market. For film broadcasting, Man’ei built new cinemas not only in big cities, but also in small cities and county towns. It increased 20 cinemas in two years, from 42 in 1937 to 62 in 1939.²⁹ But they still did not completely control the film industry. Even after 1937, they owned less than half of cinemas by Japanese capital as 62 of 139.³⁰ At the same time, Man’ei sent traveling teams to remote villages and schools for free broadcastings on enlightened films with political purpose. As we discussed, by 1939, Man’ei expanded its power in film industry by making its films break into market, building basically cinema networks and sending traveling teams. But they still did not have complete control.

The fourth chapter will examine the high return period of Man’ei from 1940 to 1942. This period is the harvest stage of Man’ei. With the effective works in first period, commercial and cultural projects were both deeply developed in this period. In the end of 1939, Jin Bidong was replaced by Amakasu Masahiko, a Japanese officer

²⁹ Manshu bunka kyo-kai [Manchuria culture association] 满洲文化协会, *Manshu-nenkan* [Manchuria Yearbook] 满洲年鉴, Vol. 6, originally published Dairen: Manshu-bunka kyo-kai, 1935, republished (Tokyo: Nihon to-sho-sentaa, 1999), pp. 424-426.

³⁰ Ibid.

from the Kwantung Army.³¹ Amakasu reformed the organization of Man'ei and clarified the goals of the commercial product and cultural project. To address propaganda requirements, while still generating profits, Amakasu divided entertainment filmmaking section and enlightened filmmaking section into two separate departments, which would help each department make professional films on different purposes.

The most successful achievement in this period was the localization of Man'ei on both filmmakers and film content. In order to make attractive entertainment films to local people, they trained Chinese film assistants into individual film makers as directors, screenwriters and cameramen. Man'ei even sponsored a Chinese director, Wang Xinzhai, to go to Japan for one year to study film directing courses.³² The production made by Chinese filmmakers, which focused on romantic stories, and stories on social and family issues, were very attractive to local people. The new leader localized not only the film making employees but also the type of films. Man'ei began to produce ancient costume dramas. Through 1942, they already made 45 entertainment films in the second period.³³

For the localization of cultural project, Man'ei made national policy films with entertainment factor as national propaganda films, documentaries and newsreels. All types increased in quantity and improved in quality. To serve audiences of different

³¹ Manshu bunka kyo-kai [Manchuria culture association] 满洲文化协会, *Manshu-nenkan* [Manchuria Yearbook] 满洲年鉴, Vol. 8, originally published Dairen: Manshu- bunka kyo-kai, 1935, republished (Tokyo: Nihon to-sho- sentaa, 1999), p. 364.

³² Hu Chang, *Man Ying—Guoce dianying mianmian guan* [Many Perspectives on Manchuria Motion Picture Production and Distribution Co.], 满映—国策电影面面观. (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1990), pp. 116-117.

³³ Ibid.

nationalities, Man'ei made both Chinese languages and Japanese languages documentaries and educational films. The content of documentaries covered various local topics. In the new period, they still had the contents on Army activities, building of industries, travelling and royal activities, but also Manchukuo political events, royal ceremonies, national boundary and geography, law, youth, schools, travelling and hygiene. The newsreel making, which became an individual section in the enlightened filmmaking department, was made chronologically beginning in 1939.³⁴ They made both *Man'ei News (Manying Xinwen)* in Chinese and *Man'ei Communications (Manying Tongxun)* in Japanese. By the end of 1942, Man'ei produced 193 volumes in both languages.³⁵ In order to localize the travelling teams and make it into a national project, Man'ei cooperated with the Manchuria Concordia Association (Manzhou Xiehe Hui) and divided travelling teams into regular travelling team, special travelling team and independent traveling team each with different responsibilities in 1941.³⁶

During this period, Man'ei got high returns from both commercial products on money and cultural project on political benefits. The two projects were deeply developed and enhanced each other. Commercially, Man'ei reaped financial profits through its film producing and broadcasting. Culturally, Man'ei reaped political benefits and ideological support. In practice, the commercial product ensured the

³⁴ Manshu bunka kyo-kai [Manchuria culture association] 满洲文化协会, *Manshu-nenkan* [Manchuria Yearbook] 满洲年鉴, Vol. 9, originally published Dairen: Manshu-bunka kyo-kai, 1935, republished (Tokyo: Nihon to-sho-sentaa, 1999), p. 334.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Manshu bunka kyo-kai [Manchuria culture association] 满洲文化协会, *Manshu-nenkan* [Manchuria Yearbook] 满洲年鉴, Vol. 11, originally published Dairen: Manshu-bunka kyo-kai, 1935, republished (Tokyo: Nihon to-sho-sentaa, 1999), pp. 433-434.

development of the cultural project. But the cultural project guided the development of the commercial model. From the perspective of profit, the cultural project's political benefits provided the commercial product's material profits. During my thesis, the two projects were regarded as inter-dependent.

The final chapter will examine the last period as “beautiful propaganda” and struggling from 1943 to 1945. During this time, all of Man'ei served the war effort, and commercialism became less important. Man'ei closely connected with the ambition of Japan in WWII. In the second period, Man'ei made progress in terms of both economic gain and cultural influence. The breakout of the Pacific War in 1941, however, entailed the transformation of Man'ei into an agency largely concerned with producing and disseminating cultural and political propaganda until the end of the war.

In 1943, the first year of this period, the commercial products still effectively worked and helped Man'ei earn money. Because Japanese staff joined the Army, well-trained Chinese filmmakers played more important roles. As a matter of fact, their participation successfully adjusted films to meet local audience taste, and hence improved profits. They made 12 entertainment films in 1943, 11 in 1944 and 4 in 1945.³⁷ Although the amount was only a half of its regular productivity, it still helped Man'ei earn profits by localized filmmaking. The categories of films were reduced into two as romantic stories and ancient stories.

Man'ei made beautiful propaganda during this period, which combined commercial

³⁷ Hu Chang, *Man Ying—Guoce dianying mianmian guan* [Many Perspectives on Manchuria Motion Picture Production and Distribution Co.], 满映—国策电影面面观, (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1990), p. 181.

and cultural into one film. Man'ei cooperated with big Japanese film producing companies as Tōhō and Shochiko, to make national policy films. In order to make the propaganda films attractive, they invited the most famous Man'ei actress and singer, Li Xianglan to be the leading role in all the joint-made films. In her films, *My Golden Oriole* (*Yeying Zhige*) in 1943 and *The Greatest Ever Told* (*Wanshi Liufang*) in 1944 were two representatives in joint-made films.

Ironically, all the films were welcomed in Manchukuo and Japan even though all of the films had propaganda content. According to the biography of Li Xianglan, Man'ei combined her commercial value with the national political purpose and made successfully beautiful propaganda during her visiting to Manchukuo and Japan.³⁸ From another perspective, the welcoming of beautiful propaganda reflects people's life during the war. Although the war destroyed some people's lives and brought the unstable situation to the society, people were more ready to accept certain things and continue their life during the war.

The only outstanding increasing of production was in the newsreel making. Man'ei considered the newsreels as the best tool of war propaganda. It started shooting the *Man'ei Communications* and *Man'ei News* from 1939. By the collapse of Manchukuo, they had produced 307 volumes of *Man'ei Communications* and 313 volumes of *Man'ei News* in total.³⁹ Compared with other two periods, the number of newsreel making increased steady at 4 volumes per month.

³⁸ Yamaguchi Yoshikou, *Zai Zhongguo de Rizhi: Li Xianglan, Wo de Qianban Sheng*, [The Days In China: Li Xianglan, My Early Life], 在中国的日子: 李香兰, 我的前半生, Hong Kong: Public Cultural Plant Press, 1992.

³⁹ Manshu bunka Kyo-kai [Manchuria Cultural Association] 满洲文化协会, *Manshu-nenkan* [Manchuria Yearbook] 满洲年鉴, Vol. 11, originally published Dairen: Manshu-bunka kyo-kai, 1935, republished (Tokyo: Nihon to-sho-sentaa, 1999), p. 433.

The defeat of Japan led Man'ei to its end. Man'ei leader Amakasu sensed the collapse of Japanese military empire when the Soviet Union announced war against Japan in northern China on 8 August 1945. He required Japanese staff and Chinese employees to stay at Man'ei for final resistance. However, Japan is surrender seven days later destroyed his last hope. On 19 August, the Soviet Red Army controlled Xinjing. Amakasu ended his life with desperation in the morning of the next day. Follow him, the once powerful Manchukuo film company, Man'ei, met its doom too.

Chapter 2: Film Industry in Manchukuo before 1937: A Commercial and Cultural Market

The film industry in Manchukuo, targeted both a commercial market and a cultural mission. Before the foundation of the whole Manchukuo film industry in the 1930s, there were clear tendencies for marketing film as a commercial product and as a cultural project worldwide. Film, which was an accidental invention at the end of the 19th century, provided a new way for making profits and spreading cultural and political ideologies even beyond national boundaries as soon as it appeared. The commercial market and cultural mission also existed in northeast China since the 1910s. In order to reap the various commercial and cultural benefits here, Japan, who took advanced in this area since the 1900s, planned to break into the existing film market in northeast China. However, the existing commercial and cultural markets here were dominated by the Chinese local elites and American, Russian capitalists around the 1920s and 1930s, which perturbed the Japanese on how to assert control over these to serve the interests of Manchukuo and Japan.

In order to discuss the film commercial market and cultural mission in northeast China before 1937, this chapter will not only show a picture of commercial integration and cultural project worldwide, but also discuss the existing commercial and cultural markets in northeast China in the 1930s and how Japanese got into the existing film market before 1937.

2.1 The Establishment and Development of the Studio System

The American film industry evolved from a small individual activity to an entire vertically integrated enterprise that handled the processes of film production, film distribution and film exhibition from start to finish. The whole industry centered on the commercial Hollywood studios and celebrities, tightly connected with capital interests since its beginnings. During the early period, Edison was a pioneer, who not only invented films but also made the invention to a profitable business by making indoor comedies.⁴⁰

Edison developed film from an invention to a business, which not only an individual activity on earning profits but also a pioneer of making commercial model to film industry. His invention, Kinetograph camera and Kinetoscope viewer, gave a popular peep-show attraction during the 1870s.⁴¹ With the camera and viewers, Edison built the world's first film studio *Black Maria* and started shooting film in 1893.⁴² Short films, such as *The Gaiety Girls Dancing*, *Trained Bears*, and *Highland Dance* were mostly comedies, and were soon welcomed throughout America.⁴³ Almost at the same time, a small cafeteria was set up by Andrew Holland in New York City in April 1894.⁴⁴ It provided a place for showing and discussing Edison's short films. Edison peep-show viewers were charged twenty-five cents.⁴⁵ In the sense of making profits through a certain movie broadcasting place, this was the world's

⁴⁰ Jack C. Ellis, *A History of Film* (New Jersey: Englewood cliffs press, 1985), p. 9.

⁴¹ Douglas Gomery, *Movie History: A Survey* (California: Wadsworth publishing company press, 1991), p. 7.

⁴² *Ibid.* , p. 7.

⁴³ *Ibid.* , p. 7.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.* , p. 8.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.* , p. 8.

first cinema. Later, Edison set up his own studio in 1894 in order to make profits with a vertical integrated system, which controlled the whole process from film production to exhibition.⁴⁶ By that time, the basic commercial system of film was set up as film production– film delivery – film exhibition.

Edison’s basic commercial model is a vertical organization, which focused on getting profits through film industry. As in a trade, film production is the producing of motion pictures; distribution is the delivering of the products; the exhibition is the trade’s retail department, or showing the motion pictures.⁴⁷ The most powerful part is film production by studios, because it controlled huge capitals and film stars. The most importantly part is exhibition, which directly face the audience.

Hollywood perfected Edison’s small scale business into a national vertical integration with huge amount of capital, which was controlled by a few big companies in free competition. At the beginning of 1900s, Hollywood’s scenic landscapes attracted a number of studios, including many big names, such as Culver City for MGM, Universal City for Universal Studios, Burbank for Warner Bros and an actual Hollywood address for Paramount.⁴⁸ WWI offered an opportunity for Hollywood to grow into a powerful industry. The war occupied Europe for a long time, which helped Hollywood to get rid of its European competitor. In comparison with European competitors trapped by the war, Hollywood got stable political and social circumstances, plenty of film offering and enthusiastic audiences for the new

⁴⁶ Ibid. , p. 8.

⁴⁷ See Stephanie Chung Pl-yin, “A Southeast Asian Tycoon and His Movie Dream: Loke Wan Tho and MP&GI” in Hong Kong Film Archive ed., *The Cathay Story*. (Hongkong: Hong Kong Film Archive, 2002), pp. 36—59.

⁴⁸ Douglas Gomery, *Movie History: A Survey* (California: Wadsworth publishing company press, 1991), p. 31.

recreation activity.

The big scale of organized studios and completely vertical business system in a free competitive circumstance had been formed since 1924, which formed today's Hollywood. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer was put together by Marcus Loew, who owned large theater holdings.⁴⁹ Universal, Warner Brothers, Paramount, Columbia, United Artists and the Fox Film Corporation were settled down and been greatly developed during that period.⁵⁰ Because of the strongly competition, the big studios increased their investment, which was used to sign up stars, to expand distribution and exhibition outlets and to buy out rivals.⁵¹ In the context of the American economic expansion around the 1920s, Hollywood business, especially big studios, got into Wall Street as public stocks. The huge amount of money involved in the film business provided a road for the voice of Hollywood film industry to the world audience. The perfected Hollywood industry gives a special position to the studios, especially big ones, who control huge amount of capitals.

One unique aspect of the studio system was the investment in film stars. It benefited both parts of the commercial system. For the studios, they could get back more money than they invested on the film stars through the films and relevant products. For the film stars, they found an opportunity in Hollywood from ordinary to famous, which could bring them money and honors. Who could be the stars? It included handsome actors, pretty actress and excellent directors. The studios invested

⁴⁹ Ibid. , p. 101.

⁵⁰ Ibid. , p. 101.

⁵¹ Ibid. , p. 101.

a lot of money on training directors and actors. The most famous were Charles Chaplin and director David Llewelyn Wark Griffith. Chaplin was a famous comedian trained by Mack Sennett Studio.⁵² Griffith was a star director who made lots of popular films and brought the culmination of earlier film form. His masterpiece *The Birth of a Nation* in 1915 was the milestone of modern film directing.⁵³ Those two stars both helped their company earn lots of profits while they gained honors to themselves.

All in all, the commercial studio system was attractive to everyone. The firstly consideration to everyone on this issue was how to make profitable movies. The vertical commercial model was invented by the pioneer Edison and perfected by the Hollywood big studios. The whole processing was from a small scale individual profitable activity to a huge scale worldwide business, which involving the Wall Street money and voice. The film stars, invested and trained by their studios, were a unique aspect of the commercial model. The studio system, symbolized by the Hollywood industry, was boned as the vertical system and huge amount of money to earn vast more money.

2.2 The Establishment and Development of Cultural project

Not all the people put earn money firstly in film and its industry, somebody consider film as a kind of art constructing first, which means film industry could be a cultural

⁵² Jack C. Ellis, *A History of Film* (New Jersey: Englewood Cliffs, 1985), P. 27.

⁵³ *Ibid.* , pp. 43—46.

project besides the commercial production. Compared with commercial products, film as a cultural project originally focused on the communication of cultures and arts, which was the same as literatures and music. Later, it was used for educational and political purposes as a propaganda tool. All in all, audiences would be influenced and educated through watching films.

The original expression of cultural tendency came from another pioneer in film invention, the French Lumière brothers. They did not only invent the film machines, but also made the real life recording for art's sake in film industry. Their easy carrying projector, *Cinematographe*, helped them record the real social life outdoors. Their early famous films, *Arrival of a Train at a Station*, *Baby's Lunch* and *Workers Leaving the Factory*, were shown at the downtown cafeterias.⁵⁴ Unlike Edison's comedies, Lumière's recordings were less popular and earned less money. However, these films provided a new way of watching news instead of reading news, which revealed the possibility of film art as a cultural project.

The development of the German film industry after the WWI was a procession on perfecting the cultural project, which was assumed to be a national cultural building. The defeat in the war, the depression of post-war economy, desperately unstable domestic politics provided an opportunity to the German film industry. In this tendency, Germany government organized the film industry as a vehicle of the whole nation. In contrast with Hollywood's free competition, the vertical industry as film production, delivery and exhibition, was strictly controlled by the state. And all the

⁵⁴ Ibid. , p. 10.

relevant policies on the film industry were created around nation building. The whole industry, as a cultural project, was political. In 1917, the Universim Film A.G. (Ufa) was founded by General Erich Ludendorff.⁵⁵ Over a third of its fundamental capital was provided by the Reich.⁵⁶ Meanwhile, the Germany film industry, included the theaters, was dominant by a few producers, who had close connections with the government.⁵⁷ In the 1930s, film industry as a nation building project, was much more controlled than before from both film technical and content. Its films focused on the psychological aspects and wanted to merit other arts' expressions as painting, dancing, within the cultural project, which united various arts' expressions.⁵⁸ For the contents of Germany films, it paid more attention to spiritual construction than profits.

2.3 The Similarities of the Two Tendencies

Although the two tendencies in film industry were different in operation and purpose, they did have something in common. First, both were vertical integrated, although the commercial system was under a free enterprise circumstance, while the cultural project was strictly led by the government. Second, one of the purposes of each film industry was to use film for social engineering, which would improve the commercial and cultural development of each society. Third, both projects used the new technologies, which improved the making of films. They both pursued technical improvement and enhanced each other. Hollywood's realism and naturalism deeply

⁵⁵ Ibid. , p. 52.

⁵⁶ Ibid. , p. 52.

⁵⁷ Ibid. , P. 52.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

influenced Germany cultural expressionism. Meanwhile, Germany advanced camera technology, which probed character to follow and bore into protagonists and let the world to be seen from subjective points of view, improved Hollywood filmmaking technology.⁵⁹ In sum, the two projects had similar structures as vertical integration with different goals in different competitive circumstances. As both of their building of cinemas and cinemas broadcasting networks would help profit making, audience communication and propaganda spreading, we could not purely divide them as two separately system. The two projects focused on different aspects of film and its industry under different circumstances.

2.4 Film in Northeast China before 1937

Northeast China, which later became Manchukuo from 1932 to 1945, was not a late comer in film exhibition and had cinemas belonging to Chinese, Russian and Japanese interests. The first film was brought in by Russia and shown in Dalian in 1902, which was only six years later than China's first film exhibition in Shanghai in 1896.⁶⁰ After the Russo-Japanese War in 1904-1905, the Japanese took the Russians' place in northeast China as a dominating power and began to make its power get into the film industry. South Manchuria Railway Co. set up the first cinema in Dalian as *Electric Park (dianqi gongyuan)* in 1909, which was only one year after China's first

⁵⁹ Jack C. Ellis, *A History of Film* (New Jersey: Englewood Cliffs, 1985), P. 52.

⁶⁰ Hu Chang, *Man Ying—Guoce dianying mianmian guan* [Many Perspectives on Manchuria Motion Picture Production and Distribution Co.], 满映—国策电影面面观. (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1990), p. 2.

cinema.⁶¹ The comparison shows that people in northeast China embraced the new recreational activity quickly. It is also evinced by the rapid increase in the number of cinemas. By the 1920s, there were 36 theaters in northeast China, where both films and traditional dramas were shown.⁶² In 1935, there were 69 cinemas, including 42 ones controlled by Japanese enterprises, 13 belonging to Chinese local elites, and the remaining 14 Russian or American productions.⁶³ Clearly, the film industry in northeast China developed very quickly. It was strongly controlled by Japanese-owned cinemas although they co-existed with Chinese, Russian and American-owned cinemas as well. This provided a competitive market and compelled Japan to find a way to enter the film market in northeastern China. The creation of Man'ei was one of its solutions.

Shanghai films played an important role in the importation of films into the northeastern China film market before 1937. Shanghai was the center of the Chinese film industry. Both Chinese-owned and Japanese-owned cinemas sought to import Shanghai films. Table 1 lists the films screened between 22 March and 29 April 1935 by two large cinemas, the Chinese-owned Shenyang Cinema and Japanese Tianguang Cinema, taken from *Shengjing Times*. It reveals the dominance of Shanghai films in the northeastern film consumption market at that time.

⁶¹ Ibid. , p. 3.

⁶² Hu Chang, *Man Ying—Guoce dianying mianmian guan* [Many Perspectives on Manchuria Motion Picture Production and Distribution Co.], 满映—国策电影面面观. (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1990), p. 4.

⁶³ Ibid. , p.7

Table 1 Films in Shengyang Cinema and Tianguang Cinema from 22 March to 29 April, 1935

Cinema	Title of the movie	Period	Days	Place of Production
Tianguang	<i>Fairy Maidens</i>	22 to 26 th , March	5 days	Shanghai
	<i>Miss Shanghai</i>	27 th to 30 th , March	4 days	Shanghai
	<i>The Dream Lady</i>	30 th , March to 2 nd , April	4 days	U.S.
	<i>Bible for girls</i>	3 rd to 6 th , April	4 days	Shanghai
	<i>The Gay Divorcee</i>	7 th to 10 th , April	4 days	U.S.
	<i>Story of Three Loves</i>	11 th to 14 th , April	4 days	Shanghai
	<i>Tiger Devil</i>	15 th to 16 th , April	2 days	Shanghai
	<i>Navy Battle of the World</i>	17 th to 20 th , April	4 days	Unsure
	<i>Story of Three Loves</i>	21 st to 29 th , April	9 days	Shanghai
	Shenyang	<i>The Scarlet Empress</i>	22 nd to 29 th , March	8 days
<i>Two to one</i>		30 th to 31 st , March	2 days	Shanghai
<i>Passion of Love</i>		1 st to 2 nd , April	2 days	Unsure
<i>Return</i>		3 rd to 5 th , April	3 days	Shanghai
<i>Spring</i>		6 th to 9 th , April	4 days	Shanghai

silkworms

<i>The Shadow of Red Tears</i>	10 th to 12 th , 3 days April	Shanghai
<i>The Blood and Sand(1920s)</i>	13 th to 15 th , 3 days April	U.S.
<i>Daddy loves Mommy</i>	16 th to 17 th , 2 days April	Shanghai
<i>Goddess</i>	18 th to 20 th , 3 days April	Shanghai
<i>Beautiful Night</i>	21 st to 24 th , 4 days April	Shanghai
<i>Just One Night</i>	25 th to 27 th , 3 days April	Shanghai
<i>Three Sisters</i>	28 th to 29 th , 2 days April	Shanghai

The statistics demonstrate that Shanghai films were much more popular than American films in the northeastern film market, and that there were no Japanese films screened in the mid-1930s even in Japanese-owned cinemas. Firstly, the imported Shanghai films suited the northeast film market very well, as the demand for film in the northeast provided development opportunities for Shanghai films. The exhibitions changed so frequently that each film was on screen only for about three days. However, the Shanghai films were much more popular than Hollywood ones. There were 16 films from Shanghai and only 4 films from Hollywood among the 20 films shown in the above-mentioned period. It was because Shanghai films appealed more

to Chinese tastes than foreign ones. For instance, the most popular *Story of Three Loves (Tixiao Yinyuan)*, which was re-screened twice in one month was adapted from a novel by famous Chinese novelist Zhang Henshui. Zhang was a specialist in examining the ethical issues within Chinese traditional romance and marriage. Many Shanghai films attracted audiences by focusing on romantic stories and family ethical issues. Shanghai-made Chinese films satisfied northeast customers' interest.

Secondly, the wide range of imported films in the film market required a distribution system to organize the business. In the 1930s, the cinemas, belonging to different enterprises, were in individual competition for profits in the existing film market. In order to ensure the entry of Japanese films into the film market in northeast China, the Japan-sponsored Manchukuo state imposed a nation-wide uniform censorship on films and its own networks of cinemas. Later, the Japanese utilized its other business as making advertisements of films through candy-making industry, which had already taken the northeast China market, to help introduce Japanese films. The final step for Japan was the setting up of Man'ei.

In order to facilitate the entry of Japanese films into the existing film market in northeast China market and control other countries' imported films here, Manchukuo imposed film censorship before they found its own film industry. The censorship of print media first appeared in the 1930s by the Kwantung Army.⁶⁴ In November 1933, the military controller of Manchukuo, Kwangtung Ting, imposed complete censorship

⁶⁴ Thomas David DuBois, "Japanese Print Media and Manchurian Cultural Community: Religion in the Pages of the Shengjing Times, 1907-1944" in ed. Idem, *Casting Faiths: Imperialism and the Transformation of Religion in East and Southeast Asia* (Basingstoke, U.K.: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009): pp. 215-238.

on imported films. According to *Shengjing Times*, they would send censors to the cinemas in order to check the enforcement of censorship in Dalian, Fengtian, Xinjing, and Andong. On the one hand, the new regulations set up guidelines on film importation and exhibition.⁶⁵ On the other, it was a way for Japan to control the importation of American and Shanghai Chinese films, which would provide space for producing and broadcasting Japanese films.

Japanese companies also utilized other Japanese businesses, which were already thriving in northeast China, to promote Japanese films in northeast China. The Japanese-owned Morinaga Candy Co., invited customers who had purchased its milk or coffee candy to exchange two empty candy boxes to watch Japanese-made films for free in September 1935 through the *Shengjing Times*.⁶⁶ The eight films were: *The Candy King*, *Japanese Big Tokyo*, *Good Treasure Island*, *The Manchukuo Emperor's Japan Visit*, *Funny Comics*, *Manchukuo Playing*, *Heartbroken Flower* and *Western Comedy Report*.⁶⁷ The films introduced the history of Japan and the ideology of new Manchukuo to audiences. The result of the advertisement was good marketing for the candy, where the offer of free film-watching attracted candy customers. Meanwhile, Japanese films were introduced and broadcast in northeast China through this method of promotion.

2.5 The Cultural and Propaganda Functions of Film in Manchukuo

As films could serve cultural and political communication or propaganda functions, a

⁶⁵ *Shengjing Times*. 25th, November, 1933.

⁶⁶ *Shengjing Times*. 15th September 1935.

⁶⁷ *Shengjing Times*. 15th September 1935.

film production industry was eagerly needed in Manchukuo, where Japan was strongly involved. Since her triumph in the First Sino-Japanese War in 1895, Japan took the leadership in Northeast China. After the Russo-Japanese War in 1905 and the building of South Manchuria Railway Company Ltd. (SMR) with huge Japanese enterprises in 1906, which gave Japan control of the economic conditions in northeast China. Japan gained fuller control over political, economic and military affairs in 1932, in which Japanese sponsored Manchukuo founded.⁶⁸ For different functions, the Manchukuo government took charge of the administrative issues while the Japanese Kwantung Army controlled military and political issues and the South Manchuria Railway Company dominated the economic sector. Because of its propaganda function, it was first controlled by the Kwantung Army in 1933. Later, as a profitable business and a cultural enterprise, the film industry in northeast China was unavoidable handled by the SMR and Kwantung Army.

The Japanese used films for political and ideological propaganda in Manchukuo. However, they did not advocate, but frequently referred to Chinese traditions, especially the adapted political Confucian ideas, such as the Kingly Way (*wangdao*). Because the Japanese did not control the northeast China film industry totally, they sent out travelling teams to remote villages to propagate their ideas. For instance, in 1935, a travelling team went to Chong Xian, Tieling and Kaiyuan county towns, under the order of the Fengtian provincial government. It aimed at rebuilding the social order and spreading the principle of the Kingly Way by showing newsreels on

⁶⁸ Louise Young, *Japan's Total Empire: Manchuria and the Culture of Wartime Imperialism* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 1998), p. 33.

the Kangde Emperor's visit to Japan.⁶⁹ Meanwhile, the Rehe provincial government made a provision on education and film broadcasting. In order to let the poor villages learn Japanese national slogans, the government planned to set up five educational centers to broadcast newsreels and educational films.⁷⁰ All the Japanese sponsored activities in film broadcasting were aimed at asserting total control of the northeast China film industry in both commercial and cultural aspects.

2.6 The Film Propaganda Project in Japan and its Colony Taiwan

Film had already been used as a tool for political propaganda in Japan by the 1930s. Among the Asian countries, Japan was the first one to develop a film industry and became a filmmaking and exhibition center in the Far East. Its first film was broadcast in 1896.⁷¹ Japan actively learnt film technology. This was realized and encouraged by the Japanese capitalist class which boomed after the First Sino-Japanese War. The Japanese victory in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905 was a turning point for Japanese film industry. Before the war, Japanese films were not controlled or managed in any way by the Meiji government.⁷² Its triumph however was the first proof that Japan could stand against Western powers. It heralded for the Japanese film industry the role of a national and political propaganda tool. Japan began to use film to spread ideology. For example, traveling teams were sent out to villages in Japan

⁶⁹ *Shengjing Times*. 20th February 1935.

⁷⁰ *Shengjing Times*. 20th February 1935.

⁷¹ Iwasaki, Akira, Zhong Li translate, *Riben dianying shi* [Japanese Film History], 日本电影史 (Beijing: China Film Press, 1981), p. 11.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 148.

after the Russo-Japanese War, a strategy copied in Manchukuo later.⁷³ Film was officially institutionalized as a national propaganda tool with the founding of the Japanese Empire Film Association in 1935 and the first publication of the *Japanese film* magazine in 1936.⁷⁴ From then on, the Japanese government was involved into every part of the film industry, from filmmaking to censorship. In 1939, the national film law came into effect, which stood for the constructor of film national building.⁷⁵ All these practices and policies deeply influenced the Manchukuo film industry, to be elaborated upon in chapters three and four.

Before the film propaganda project was founded in Manchukuo, the policy for the propagation of the national ideology, and cultural assimilation activities, had been carried out in Japan's first colony: Taiwan, which was a precedent for the setting up of Manchukuo film industry. Taiwan set up its film industry under Japanese sponsorship. The first film was shown in Taipei in November 1901.⁷⁶ The first film made in Taiwan was a news recording of local conditions, produced in the same year by Japanese.⁷⁷ The Japanese Contract News Agency founded the Taiwan Filmmaking Institution with Japanese artists in 1932.⁷⁸ They shot both newsreels and entertainment films under Japanese supervision.⁷⁹ However, the censorship on films

⁷³ N. Stalker, "Showing Faith: Exhibiting Omoto to Consumers in Early Twentieth Century Japan" in Thomas David DuBois ed. *Casting Faiths: Imperialism and the Transformation of Religion in East and Southeast Asia* (Basingstoke, U.K.; Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

⁷⁴ Iwasaki, Akira, Zhong Li translate, *Riben dianying shi* [Japanese Film History], 日本电影史 (Beijing: China Film Press, 1981), pp. 148-150.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Chen Feibao, *Taiwan dianying jianshi*, [A Short History of Taiwan Film], 台湾电影简史, (Xia Men: Taiwan Research Institution, Xia Men University Press, 1983), p.1.

⁷⁷ Ibid. , p.2.

⁷⁸ Ibid. , p.4.

⁷⁹ Misawa, Mamie, *Zhimin dixia de "Yinmu": Taiwan zongdu fu dianying zhengce zhi yanjiu (1895-1942)*, [The Screen under the Japanese occupation: A Study on The Film Policy of Taiwan Governors (1895—1942)], 殖民地下的“银幕”: 台湾总督府电影政策之研究 (1895-1942), (Taipei: Qian Wei Press, 2002), p. 60

broadcasted in Taiwan was consisted of three stages, which show the Japanese strictly control of film exhibition in Taiwan. A film would be first censored by the Japanese Minister of Home Affairs in Japan. When the film arrived in Taiwan, it would be censored again by the Taiwanese Governor. During its broadcast, a delegation would go to the cinemas to evaluate the film.⁸⁰ Later, the Governor of Taiwan founded the Taiwan Film Association, which was supposed to tightly control the Taiwan film industry and produce propaganda films for the war, in 1941.⁸¹ The film industry in Taiwan, which was strictly controlled by Japan, was seen to be a precedent for the building of Manchukuo film industry, which provided some experience to Japan on how to build a film industry under its total control.

2.7 Other Film Production Organizations in Manchukuo before Man'ei

Besides the traveling broadcasting teams and strict censorship, many governmental departments such as the South Manchuria Railway Company (SMR) already had small-scale filmmaking activities before the establishment of Man'ei in 1937. The SMR set up a newsreels making group, which belonged to the general manager office, in 1923.⁸² By 1928, the group already had 20 employees working at the general office, machinery and equipment office, editing office, and developing and printing office.⁸³

They made newsreels until the foundation of Man'ei. The newsreels included *Discard*

⁸⁰ Ibid. , pp. 60-70.

⁸¹ Chen Feibao, *Taiwan dianying jianshi*, [A Short History of Taiwan Film], 台湾电影简史, (Xia Men: Taiwan Research Institution, Xia Men University Press, 1983), pp. 7-11.

⁸² Hu Chang, *Man Ying—Guoce dianying mianmian guan* [Many Perspectives on Manchuria Motion Picture Production and Distribution Co.], 满映—国策电影面面观, (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1990), p. 15.

⁸³ Ibid. , pp. 15-16.

the Evils in Manchu and Mongolia which recorded the Manchurian Incident in 18 September 1931, *The Spring of Manchukuo* which documented the celebration of Pu Yi's enthronement as ruler of Manchukuo in 1932, and *The Manchuria Maiden Delegates* on the six elected Manchuria, Korean and Japanese maiden visiting Japan as Manchukuo's delegates.⁸⁴ From 1936 to 1937, they made 20 newsreels on politics, agricultural and tourism.⁸⁵ In order to improve Japanese understanding of Manchukuo and foster acceptance of Japanese ideologies in Manchukuo, the SMR broadcast its newsreels in both Japan and Manchukuo. The Manchukuo State Department, the Ministry of Education, the Military Administration also made their own newsreels or cooperated with the SMR's film production team. Their newsreels focused on different issues such as the construction of schools and traffic opening on railways.⁸⁶ However, their political agendas impeded their ability to earn profits for the film producing departments or companies. Japan needed to establish its own film industry in Manchukuo to produce films, which could serve both commercial and cultural functions for both Japan and Manchukuo.

2.8 Conclusion

This chapter has explained why Japan set up Man'ei. It demonstrated the establishment and development of two projects in world film industry as commercial production and cultural or propaganda project and how each project organized their sources to arrive their purposes. Within the purpose on making profits through films,

⁸⁴ Ibid. , p. 16.

⁸⁵ Ibid. , p. 19.

⁸⁶ Ibid. , p. 20.

Edison not only invented film but also made a simple vertical integration as a studio controls film production, delivery and exhibition. Later, it was perfected by the Hollywood studio system as wealthy studios control all processing and their own film star training system in a free competition. Cultural, more often means propaganda, as Germany national film industry, which was built after the WWI and deepening during the WWII, set up a film vehicle of the whole country in order to propaganda the war and its national policies. Japan, which had been making advances into China since the 1900s, actively learnt film technologies and reformed its film industry to serve both commercial and propaganda purposes. It had a precedent in the establishment of a film industry in Taiwan before sponsoring another in Manchukuo, which became a lab for setting up Manchukuo film industry in the 1930s.

Second, the chapter examined the existing film market and commercial and cultural requirements in northeast China before the setting up of Man'ei. Before the foundation of Man'ei, the consumer film market was dominated by Shanghai and American films, while the film broadcasting market was mostly led by Japanese capitalists. However, the importation of films was not determined by their dominant positions. In order to enter the market, Japan used a variety of methods, such as imposing censorship guidelines and promoting Japanese films through other businesses. By the end of 1936, the Japanese asserted a great amount of control over the film industry in northeast China.

In order to totally control the film market in northeast China for both commercial and cultural purposes, Japan sponsored the establishment of Man'ei in 1937. The

factors discussed in this chapter provided the origins and backgrounds for understanding the following chapters, which focus on the establishment, development and the high return of Man'ei in both the commercial and cultural aspects of its operations from 1937 to 1942.

Chapter 3: The Foundation of Manchukuo Film Production and Distribution Co. (Man'ei)

The primary objective of the foundation of Man'ei in 1937 was to have total control of the lucrative Northeast China film industry. Man'ei was based on two years of planning spearheaded by the Kwantung Army since 1935. Over the two years' social and academic discussion, Man'ei was founded with legal protection from relevant regulations and policies. As a collaborative effort between the Manchukuo government and Japanese authorities, especially the SMR, Man'ei was formed as a stock company, in which each shareholder invested 2,500,000 Yen. So the basic structure of Man'ei was a jointly management and directed by both the Manchukuo government and Japanese powers in both its commercial and political dimensions. Since its beginning, Man'ei had two specified business goals, based on commercial success and cultural control. Although they did not benefit instantaneously, Man'ei was established as a vertically integrated system comprising of entertainment film production, distribution and exhibition. Concurrently, Man'ei built a cultural foundation for national cultural project with enhanced film production, distribution, and exhibition sections. All Man'ei policies and activities were aimed expanding Man'ei's film market in its first two years. Man'ei in the early years was not only emphasizing a basic studio system structure, but also had two specific aims in mind, which were to have a profitable commercial product and to build a national cultural platform. Their expansion in film market promoted the development of Man'ei.

3.1 The Preparation of the Foundation of Man'ei

The Kwantung Army and Manchukuo government administered the formation and legal constitution of Man'ei through two years of elaborate planning. The national film law was complemented over the two years. In order to ensure Japanese sponsors and Manchukuo could reap both commercial and cultural benefits, an academic committee led by the Kwantung Army formulated national film law and relevant regulations. Given its importance, the Kwantung Army imposed national film censorship, regulations for Manchukuo films.⁸⁷ As Manchukuo did not possess a filmmaking industry then, their primary purpose was to regulate and manage the importation of films from Japan, Shanghai, Hollywood and Russia. Meanwhile, the law and regulations helped build the foundations of the Manchukuo film production and distribution industry that would be established later.

Building a sound censorship was the first stage in creating a Japanese controlled northeast China film industry. As discussed, the Kwantung Army, which was the military-based advocate of Manchukuo, initially billed a set of censorship guidelines on Manchukuo film exhibition in November 1932.⁸⁸ As a notice in *Shengjing Times* reported, relevant officers from the Kwantung Army would visit cinemas in Dalian, Fengtian, Xinjing and Andong in order to inspect the implementation of the censorship guidelines in each regional centers of Manchukuo.⁸⁹ The notice revealed that the cinemas in Manchukuo had been built in the big or medium-sized cities,

⁸⁷ *Shengjing Time*, 6th May 1936.

⁸⁸ *Shengjing Times*, 25th November 1932.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

which were situated near the railways. This was not only due to pecuniary reasons, but also to facilitate the control and management of the business. Under the censorship rules, the publicity office belonged to Manchukuo State Council directly enforced the film censorship.⁹⁰ Within a short period from July 1934 to June 1935, they screened 1,757,493 meters of film, mainly American and Chinese productions (Table 2).⁹¹

Table 2 Censored films from 1934 to 1935

Country	Japan	China	America	Russia	Europe	Others	Total
Numbers to be Censored	123	308	825	14	92	2	1364
Volumes	286	3743	3600	101	553	14	8288
Meters	67,260	632,457	875,799	26,386	150,737	4,854	1,757,493

The process of establishing national film laws and regulations involved not only the implementation of censorship but also a Kwantung Army led academic organization to research the specifics of the expected national film law and regulations. In August 1933, the Kwangtung Army and the Police Department of Manchukuo constituted the Film Policy Research Institution.⁹² The mission of the institution was focused on

⁹⁰ Hu Chang, *Man Ying—Guoce dianying mianmian guan* [Many Perspectives on Manchuria Motion Picture Production and Distribution Co.], 满映—国策电影面面观, (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1990), p. 13.

⁹¹ Manshu bunka kyo-kai [Manchuria culture association] 满洲文化协会, *Manshu-nenkan* [Manchuria Yearbook], 满洲年鉴, Vol. 4, originally published Dairen: Manshu- bunka kyo-kai, 1935, republished (Tokyo: Nihon to-sho- sentaa, 1999), p. 417.

⁹² Hu Chang, *Man Ying—Guoce dianying mianmian guan* [Many Perspectives on Manchuria Motion Picture Production and Distribution Co.], 满映—国策电影面面观, (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1990), p. 22.

making the films the basis of the Manchukuo cultural project.⁹³ After three years' of research and scrutiny on the concept of Manchukuo National Film Law, they initiated a conference on Manchukuo National Film Policy in 1936.⁹⁴ The conference involved all the Japanese and Manchukuo chief leaders from the Kwantung Army, the Kwantung Bureau, SMR, Intelligence Department, Department of Military, Department of Culture and Education, Ministry of Civil Affairs and Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Finally they reached a consensus on the promulgation of the Manchukuo National Film Law, and the establishment of a filmmaking company.⁹⁵ There were five reasons for the necessity of enforcing the Manchukuo National Film Law and formation of a filmmaking company: there was no existing educational film that could inculcate the people of Manchuria; the imported Hollywood, Shanghai and Japanese films did not reflect Manchurian lives, and would create a false impression and destabilize Manchurian society; there was no organization in Manchukuo which could systematically manage all the issues with regards to films; commercially, the disjointed filmmaking by the Manchukuo government and SMR was not cost-effective; funds were wasted to an extent that it was impossible for Japanese film companies to directly produce films in Manchukuo because of the high expenditure.⁹⁶ Subsequently, the institution's new aim was to account and to project establish a nation-wide filmmaking company, and draft a Manchukuo National Film Law. To analyze the content of the law and the budget of the film company, a committee was

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ *Shengjing Times*, 13th July 1936.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Hu Chang, *Man Ying—Guo ce dianying mianmian guan* [Many Perspectives on Manchuria Motion Picture Production and Distribution Co.], 满映—国策电影面面观, (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1990), p. 25.

formed by the institution. From a council of thirty persons, six were from the military, twelve were from the Manchukuo government, three were from the SMR, and the others were from relevant organizations such as the Japanese embassy and Manchuria Concordia Association.⁹⁷

A few days later, to reiterate the significance of establishing the Manchukuo film company, there were seven articles in *Shengjing Times*. Each article elaborated on the importance of film's cultural project and how could Manchukuo deal with relevant issues in its film industry. The first two discussed that film not only provided entertainment, but also enabled audiences to see their dreams fulfilled in the screen and directly encouraged the audience to pursue their goals in reality.⁹⁸ Because films exert a big influence to people's behaviors, the third and fourth articles debated the substantial importance of film and suggested to show cost-free performance publicly.⁹⁹ The fifth article highlighted film's influence to audience's mentality and suggested that Manchukuo should make constructive films.¹⁰⁰ The next article stated films' effects on improving quality of life and the author suggested make films as guidelines to the audience.¹⁰¹ The last article recognized the importance of emotional film dubbing to audience and suggested to have character-plot study for each films.¹⁰² In sum, all articles, which were published in *Shengjing Times* after the discussion of building Man'ei, debated the significance of films in the commercial and cultural aspects.

⁹⁷ Ibid. , pp. 27-28.

⁹⁸ *Shengjing Times*, 22nd July 1936 and 25th July 1936.

⁹⁹ *Shengjing Times*, 30th July 1936 and 2nd August 1936.

¹⁰⁰ *Shengjing Times*, 7th August 1936.

¹⁰¹ *Shengjing Times*, 12th August 1936.

¹⁰² *Shengjing Times*, 14th August 1936.

3.2 The Basic Structure of Man'ei

One of the crucial contributions made by the committee was an announcement on the foundation of Manchukuo Motion Picture Production and Distribution Co. (Man'ei) was made by the Manchukuo government on 2nd August 1937.¹⁰³ Eight days later, National Regulation Number 248 presented the details of Man'ei's establishment.¹⁰⁴ As a collaborative effort between the Manchukuo government and the Japanese sponsor, Man'ei was formed as a stock company, with an investment of 2,500,000 Yen by the Manchukuo government. The remaining half was sold publicly; SMR bought all at 2,500,000 Yen.¹⁰⁵ The Manchukuo government and the Japanese administration jointly managed and directed Man'ei in both its commercial and political dimensions. The two primary objectives of Man'ei were to earn commercial profits and build national cultural project through the studio system. Making Man'ei to be the premier film center in the Far East and pioneer of Asia were also the aims of Manchukuo and its Japanese investor.¹⁰⁶ It was situated in the political center of Manchukuo, Xinjing. In order to organize the company, Man'ei appointed one president, three directors and two supervisors at senior management level.¹⁰⁷ On 21st August 1937, Man'ei convened an opening conference in the Japanese military club at Xinjing.¹⁰⁸ In the conference, Jin Bidong, who was of royal Manchurian descent, was

¹⁰³ *Shengjing Times*, 2nd August 1937.

¹⁰⁴ Hu Chang, *Man Ying—Guoce dianying mianmian guan* [Many Perspectives on Manchuria Motion Picture Production and Distribution Co.], 满映—国策电影面面观, (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1990), p. 29.

¹⁰⁵ Muto Tomio, *My Manchukuo* (Tokyo: Bungei Shunju press, 1991), p. 245

¹⁰⁶ *Shengjing Times*, 25th August 1937.

¹⁰⁷ Hu Chang, *Man Ying—Guoce dianying mianmian guan* [Many Perspectives on Manchuria Motion Picture Production and Distribution Co.], 满映—国策电影面面观, (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1990), pp. 29-30.

¹⁰⁸ *Shengjing Times*, 21st August 1937.

appointed and nominated as the first president of Man'ei.¹⁰⁹ Of the three directors, one came from the Manchukuo government, and the other two were Japanese officers from Kwantung Army.¹¹⁰

In order to facilitate and safeguard the operation of Man'ei, the Manchukuo government announced the Manchukuo National Film Law as Royal Decree Number 290 on 7th October 1937.¹¹¹ The legislation's purpose was to ensure the Manchukuo government's monopoly in film production and distribution in Manchukuo. The prime minister of Manchukuo would be the primary leader.¹¹² Man'ei would serve to implement and enforce the national law by regulating and managing filmmaking and film distribution.

With the provisions of the National Film Law, Man'ei began to construct its own business apparatus as a vertical studio system. The first step was to give clearly identify roles for each department, as well as selecting suitable head-of-staff in each department. The studio was divided into general administration, film production and distribution offices.¹¹³ In the early years, there were one hundred employees, of which there were only two Chinese employees, which included department managers.

¹⁰⁹ Muto Tomio, *My Manchukuo* (Tokyo: Bungei Shunju press, 1991), p. 245

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ *Shengjing Times*, 8th October 1937.

¹¹² As shown in the law, all the film issues as filmmaking, importing, outputting and distribution should get the permission of Manchukuo prime minister. Hu Chang, *Man Ying—Guo ce dianying mianmian guan* [Many Perspectives on Manchuria Motion Picture Production and Distribution Co.], *满映—国策电影面面观*, (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1990), p. 26.

¹¹³ Manshu bunka kyo-kai [Manchuria culture association] *满洲文化协会, Manshu- nenkan* [Manchuria Yearbook] *满洲年鉴*, Vol. 3, originally published Dairen: Manshu- bunka kyo-kai, 1935, republished (Tokyo: Nihon to-sho- sentaa, 1999), pp. 416-417.

3.3 Vertical Commercial Organization in Man'ei

Man'ei framed a commercial vertical organization, similar to the Hollywood's vertical operation model. It had film production and distribution departments. As part of the process, Man'ei integrated the studio and its actor's academy within the filmmaking structure, replicating the Hollywood's commercial model. For its film distribution structure, Man'ei established a broadcasting network, included cinemas in cities and travelling teams to villages, which combined to serve the company's commercial and cultural goals. The smooth running of operations by Man'ei, were expedited by the Manchukuo National Film Law and its relevant regulations.

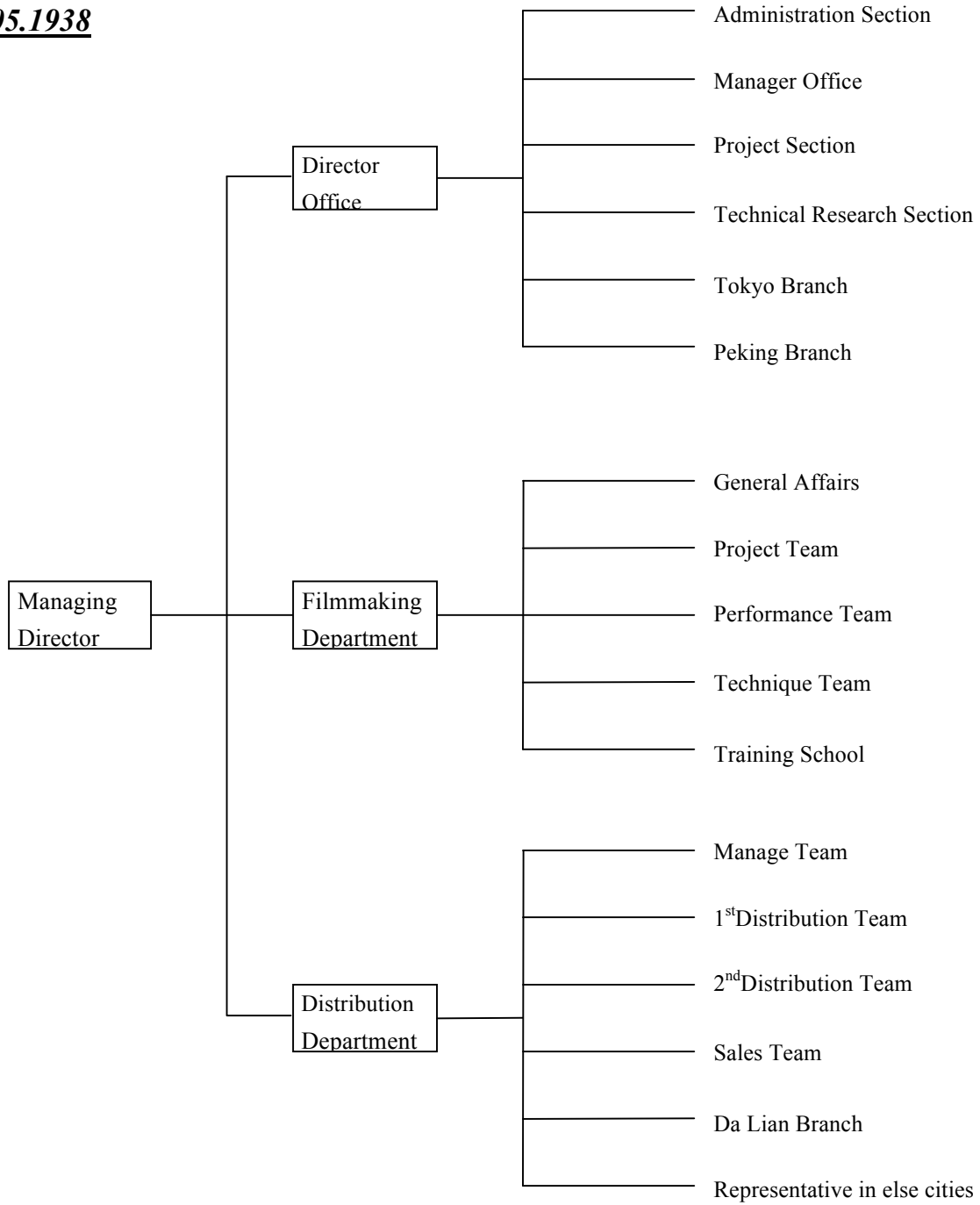
Armed with a basic commercial framework, Man'ei began to enrich its capacities for the production of professional-quality films. In May 1938, Man'ei began to tap film-making talents from Japan. They were mainly technical staff - film producers, directors, cameramen and screenwriters. Negishi Koichi, one of the most famous Japanese film producers, and head of the Nikkatsu Corporation, was employed to lead the filmmaking department.¹¹⁴ Due to Negishi Koichi's elite status within the Japanese film circle and his congenial personality, many Japanese professional filmmakers followed him to Man'ei, forming the spine of the Man'ei professional filmmaking team. Meanwhile, Man'ei reformed its structure to enhance management efficiency. (Diagram 3.1)¹¹⁵

¹¹⁴ Muto Tomio, *My Manchukuo* (Tokyo: Bungler Shunju press, 1991), p. 246.

¹¹⁵ Hu Chang, *Man Ying—Guo ce dianying mianmian guan* [Many Perspectives on Manchuria Motion Picture Production and Distribution Co.], *满映—国策电影面面观*, (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1990), p. 38.

Diagram 3.1 The first reformation of Man'ei in 1938

05.1938



This reformat specifically delineated the different branches within each department and their individual objectives and responsibilities. The distribution department was responsible for controlling the entire film distribution in Manchukuo. It consisted of the administration office, the first distribution office, the second distribution office, an operation office, a Dalian branch and representatives for the distribution offices of other regions. The aim of the filmmaking department was to produce films of high quality, to yield both financial and educational benefits for Manchukuo and Japan. The department contained an administration office, a film writing section, a performance section, a technology section and a training academy. The responsibility of the general office was to manage the internal affairs of Man'ei. It was divided into administration office, managerial office, institution of technology, and branches in Tokyo and Peking. The delineation of each department's structure and roles provided the blueprints for its work and made each department work effectively.

Upon re-structuring the company, training of actors was the next step. In order to have Man'ei's films' produced domestically, which was a commercial and cultural prerequisite to cater for the Manchurian audience, Man'ei needed local actors and actress in its films. Man'ei began by advertising a recruitment notice in *Shengjing Times*, titled as "Man'ei Needs Manchurian Actors and Actresses: Do Not Miss Your Opportunity on 26th October, 1937."¹¹⁶ This demonstrates that, in order to enhance its self-sufficiency in making excellent films, Man'ei decided to enroll new students in its own academy.¹¹⁷ All applicants had to be between 15 to 40 years old of age, and at

¹¹⁶ *Shengjing Times*, 26th October 1937.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

least completed primary school education.¹¹⁸ Once enrolled as students, they were classified as employees of Man'ei. Man'ei paid for their tuition fees during their training period, with their post-training salary based on their participation in films, which ranged from 50Yuan to 200Yuan per month. The first training program included a cohort of forty-three students as twenty-two males and twenty-one females.¹¹⁹

The training life of students exemplified the demands and circumstances of Manchukuo film industry. The tutelage lasted for one year from November 1937. They were trained in an old large garage near Man'ei Kuan Chengzi studio.¹²⁰ Kondo Iyo, who was a famous Japanese actor, and later became a film producer, took charge of the training. They studied film history, film theory, performance, dialogue performing and body language.¹²¹ Man'ei regimented the trainees in the academy, as it as discovered through their interviews. All the courses were coached by Japanese instructors, with the assistance of a translator.¹²² The academy soon enrolled a second batch of trainees in March 1938.¹²³ Nearly four hundred persons attended the audition, with fifty of these were eventually enrolled.¹²⁴ Due to the huge demand for film production, Man'ei enrolled a third batch of sixty-seven students only one month

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Hu Chang, *Man Ying—Guoce dianying mianmian guan* [Many Perspectives on Manchuria Motion Picture Production and Distribution Co.], 满映—国策电影面面观, (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1990), p. 42.

¹²⁰ Changchun Zhengxie Wenshi Ziliao, Cong MAN'EI dao Changying—Changying bufen dianying yishu jia xiaozhuan [From MAN'EI to Changying, the interviews with MAN'EI and Changying actors], 从“满映”到长影—长影部分电影艺术家小传专辑, (Changchun: Wenshi Ziliao press, 1987), p. 5.

¹²¹ Hu Chang, *Man Ying—Guoce dianying mianmian guan* [Many Perspectives on Manchuria Motion Picture Production and Distribution Co.], 满映—国策电影面面观, (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1990), p. 42.

¹²² Changchun Zhengxie Wenshi Ziliao, Cong MAN'EI dao Changying—Changying bufen dianying yishu jia xiaozhuan [From MAN'EI to Changying, the interviews with MAN'EI and Changying actors], 从“满映”到长影—长影部分电影艺术家小传专辑, (Changchun: Wenshi Ziliao press, 1987), p. 5.

¹²³ *Shengjing Times*, 18th March 1938

¹²⁴ Ibid.

later.¹²⁵ Including the trainees, there were six hundred and ninety employees in Man'ei: one hundred and forty-one employees in the general office, one hundred and sixty-eight employees in the distribution department, two hundred and thirty-one employees in the filmmaking department and one hundred and forty-two students in the training school.¹²⁶ Compared with its initial staff size of a hundred employees, the development of Man'ei greatly catalyzed the Manchukuo film industry.

3.4 Entertainment Film Production and Distribution

After placing the basic foundations and clarification of goals, Man'ei began to make its own entertainment films in 1938, which were targeted at earning profits. Its first film was *Great Aspiration (Zhuangzhi Xiongxin)* in 1938, a romantic short story based in Manchukuo. The film's plot addressed the issue that people were reluctant to join the army because of the risk of sacrificing their lives in the war. In response to the call of Manchukuo and Japanese military power, a young fiancée persuaded her fiancé to join the Manchukuo army and eliminate the bandits. With the encouragement and expectations of his fiancée, the fiancé emerged victorious on the battlefield. The film ended with the wedding ceremony of the young couple.¹²⁷

As the first locally produced Manchurian film, it was hugely acclaimed by the media and film critics. To increase the publicity for commercial gain, Man'ei

¹²⁵ *Shengjing Times*, 14th April 1938

¹²⁶ Hu Chang, *Man Ying—Guoce dianying mianmian guan* [Many Perspectives on Manchuria Motion Picture Production and Distribution Co.], *满映—国策电影面面观*, (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1990), p. 41.

¹²⁷ Changchun Zhengxie Wenshi Ziliao, *Cong MAN'EI dao Changying—Changying bufen dianying yishu jia xiaozhuan* [From MAN'EI to Changying, the interviews with MAN'EI and Changying actors], *从“满映”到长影—长影部分电影艺术家小传专辑*, (Changchun: Wenshi Ziliao press, 1987), p. 6.

organized meet-and-greets sessions as well as newspaper interviews for the actors and actresses. The lead actors and actresses would be alternating between big cities in Manchukuo to attend meet-and-greet sessions and they were welcomed by fans.¹²⁸ Culturally, the film emphasized the spirit of Manchukuo as the Kingly Way and the Promised Land for Manchurians, instilling faith and confidence to Manchurians and Japanese. The film thus fulfilled both its commercial and cultural purposes. Man'ei produced eight more films in 1938 such as *The Birth of a Film Star (Mingxing Dansheng)*, *Honeymoon Express (Miyue Kuaiche)* and *Selfless of National Law (Guofa Wusi)*.¹²⁹

In order to boost revenue, during the first two years of its operations, Man'ei made ten entertainment films. The most popular one was *Honeymoon Express* in 1938. It is a story about a young couple's travelling a train from Xinjing to Peking, where they planned to spend their honeymoon. The other passengers were a merchant with his young lover, an old couple and a thief who wanted to steal the other passengers' belongings. The incidents revolved around these people, and through these, the happiness and embarrassments of the young couple were shown.¹³⁰

The film was directly adapted from a Japanese film which was very popular in Japan. Man'ei planned to earn profits from this adaptation but its expectations were not attained. Li Xianglan, the leading lady in the movie, was quoted in her biography

¹²⁸ Ibid., p. 9.

¹²⁹ Hu Chang, *Man Ying—Guoce dianying mianmian guan* [Many Perspectives on Manchuria Motion Picture Production and Distribution Co.], 满映—国策电影面面观, (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1990), pp. 43-55.

¹³⁰ The original films could not be broadcasted and the content was found from Hu Chang's book. In his book, he provides the basic contents of MAN'EI films. Hu Chang, *Man Ying—Guoce dianying mianmian guan* [Many Perspectives on Manchuria Motion Picture Production and Distribution Co.], 满映—国策电影面面观, (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1990), pp. 47-48.

that *Honeymoon Express* was just a comedy for the audience, which was not generate revenue as compared to the Japanese original, and failed to meet Man'ei's high financial returns for it.¹³¹

Due to the explosion in entertainment filmmaking, Man'ei restructured its filmmaking organization again in 1938, in order to produce professional films and attain its commercial goal. According to film genres, it was divided into three sections: entertainment films, enlightened films, and newsreels and documentaries.¹³² The entertainment films were mainly dramatic stories, which were very popular, and thus profitable. For the enlightened films, Man'ei defined these as educational cultural films in which would effectively educate the audiences and serve its cultural and propaganda aspect. The newsreels were the recordings and reports of current affairs and documentaries, which would be broadcast before the entertainment films in the cinema.

In order to entertain audiences and acquire profits for Man'ei's development, the entertainment film production section made six more films in the first two years as *Tears of A Mother (Ci Mulei)*, *Song of Understanding (Zhi Xinqu)*, *Jigsaw Puzzle (Qi Qiaotu)*, *True and False Sisters (Zhengjia Jiemei)*, and *Looking For Mother (Wanli Xunmu)* in 1938.¹³³ All the entertainment films sought to explore social issues as remarriages, romances between the poor and rich, the relationships between a child and its step-mother. During this nascent period, another well-received film which

¹³¹ Yamaguchi Yoshikou, *Zai Zhongguo de rizi: Li Xianglan, wo de qian ban sheng* [The Days in China: Li Xianglan, My Early Life], 在中国的日子: 李香兰, 我的前半生 (Hong Kong: Public Cultural Plant press, 1992), p. 102.

¹³² Hu Chang, *Man Ying—Guoce dianying mianmian guan* [Many Perspectives on Manchuria Motion Picture Production and Distribution Co.], 满映—国策电影面面观. (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1990), p. 38.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, p. 43-55.

demonstrated the interest in similar debating taboo social issues was *Song of Orchid* (*Bailan Zhige*) in 1939.

It depicts a love story between a Manchurian girl named Xue Xiang and a young Japanese engineer, who are both working at SMR. They fell in love first sight. However, the girl's uncle, a prominent figure in anti-Japanese movements, strongly opposed their marriage. After numerous twists and turns, the girl's uncle finally accepts their relationship and the lovers are married.

The film was a joint production between Man'ei and Japanese Tōhō Company, Ltd., a large Japanese film studio. From one perspective, the film shows that love could surpass everything, whether nationality, political or educational background. The theme attracted many young viewers. From another perspective, the film emphasizes the goodwill between Japan and Manchukuo. The film was greatly welcomed in both Manchukuo and Japan. It was a successful archetype of the collaboration between two countries' film industries.

An overhaul in expanding Man'ei authority in the film industry, not only involves film production but also film distribution. The primary channel for film distribution is the establishment of cinemas and the assertion of direct control over these, which would give priority to local films. Man'ei, as a phenomenal film company at that period which combines film production, distribution, exhibition and supervision functions and capabilities, it distributes its films in two ways by building cinemas, and setting up travel teams to screen the films in remote parts of the country.

The first procedure for expanding the market in distribution section was

implementation of the distribution system was establishing and expanding Man'ei's network of cinemas in cities. The advantages for setting up the cinemas in cities were the expansion of Man'ei film broadcasting capacities and the generation of profits. In the early years, there were seventy-three cinemas in Manchukuo, which were controlled by the Russian, Chinese and Japanese, were in big cities as Dalian, Fengtian and Harbin.¹³⁴ In order to stretch its network and to increase revenue, Man'ei built its own cinemas in medium-sized cities and county towns. By 1939, there were already one hundred and thirty-nine cinemas in Manchukuo totally controlled by Man'ei.¹³⁵ The *Manchukuo Yearbook* reported that there were sixty-two cinemas owned by the Japanese administration among these.¹³⁶ The others belonged to Chinese or Russian capitalists. Man'ei placed emphasis on building cinemas in medium-sized cities and counties. Except for four Japanese-owned cinemas in Kwantung province, there were fifty-eight cinemas owned by Japanese capitalists.¹³⁷ The specific locations of the fifty-eight Japanese-owned cinemas, which expanded the film distribution and exhibition networks, were shown in the following table 3. From the cinemas' distribution, it could be seen that Man'ei's broadcasting network covered all regions in Manchukuo and greatly strengthen Man'ei's authority in the market.

¹³⁴ Manshu bunka kyo-kai [Manchuria culture association] 满洲文化协会, *Manshu- nenkan* [Manchuria Yearbook] 满洲年鉴, Vol. 2, originally published Dairen: Manshu- bunka kyo-kai, 1935, republished (Tokyo: Nihon to-sho- sentaa, 1999), pp. 561-562.

¹³⁵ Hu Chang, *Man Ying—Guoce dianying mianmian guan* [Many Perspectives on Manchuria Motion Picture Production and Distribution Co.], 满映—国策电影面面观, (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1990), p. 64.

¹³⁶ Manshu bunka kyo-kai [Manchuria culture association] 满洲文化协会, *Manshu- nenkan* [Manchuria Yearbook] 满洲年鉴, Vol. 6, originally published Dairen: Manshu- bunka kyo-kai, 1935, republished (Tokyo: Nihon to-sho- sentaa, 1999), pp. 423.

¹³⁷ Hu Chang, *Man Ying—Guoce dianying mianmian guan* [Many Perspectives on Manchuria Motion Picture Production and Distribution Co.], 满映—国策电影面面观, (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1990), p. 64.

Table 3 The location of fifty-eight Japanese owned cinemas in Manchukuo

Location	Number of Cinemas owned by Japanese
Dalian	8
Xinjing	6
Fengtian	6
Haerbin	6
Andong	3
Anshan	2
Fushun	2
Jilin City	2
Siping City	2
Qiqihaer	2
Tumen	2
Hailaer	2
Jin County	2
Benxihu	2
Princess County	1
Mudanjiang	1
Yanji	1
Longjing County	1
Shanghai guan	1

Lushun	1
Jiamusi	1
Chengde	1
Yingkou	1
Tonghua	1
Dunhua County	1

Furthermore, Man'ei not only centralized its cinema network within Manchukuo, but also extended its coverage to north and central China. The project was spearheaded by the Xinmin Film Association, a subsidiary of Man'ei in north and central China. The association set up twenty-eight Man'ei owned cinemas in north and central China as seven in Shanghai, four in Tianjin and three in Peking.¹³⁸ Man'ei films were given the priority for broadcasting in all these cinemas.

In order to totally dominate the northeast China film market and give precedence to Man'ei films in all the Japanese and Chinese cinemas, Man'ei tightened its grip in film censorship. For Hollywood films, which were its main competition, Man'ei stiffened the censorship criteria on dramas with sexual or political elements. This resulted in the reduction of the importation on Hollywood films. The import of Hollywood films declined from 2,939 meters in 1936 to 225 meters in 1939, a reduction of nearly 92.4%.¹³⁹ Initially, Japanese films could not enter the northeast

¹³⁸ Manshu bunka kyo-kai [Manchuria culture association] 满洲文化协会, *Manshu-nenkan* [Manchuria Yearbook] 满洲年鉴, Vol. 6, originally published Dairen: Manshu- bunka kyo-kai, 1935, republished (Tokyo: Nihon to-sho- sentaa, 1999), pp. 424-426.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.* , p. 423.

China market before the foundation of Man'ei. After the establishment of Man'ei Japanese films overtook and led the Manchukuo film market. The imported Japanese films rose up from 378 meters in 1936 to 6,273 meters in 1939, an increase of more than fifteen times.¹⁴⁰ The new Man'ei domestic films took the second place in the broadcasting market.

Man'ei expanded its power into the northeast China film market in the foundation period. In order to achieve its commercial ambitions, Man'ei remodeled cities' work frame for producing films. From an economy aspect, Man'ei's commercial model was a vertical integrated enterprise, which seeks to meet both demand and supply. The moviegoers and cinemas, which demanded the films acted as buyers. In contrast, Man'ei's film production and distribution groups, which supply these films as film merchants, together made up the northeast China film market. As Gregory Mankiw points out markets are usually a good way to organize economic activity.¹⁴¹ Although the commercial model in the Manchurian film industry was not purely focused on economic activity, it still bore commercial functions in the industry. Theoretically, there is interaction between buyers and sellers in a competitive film market. This will eventually reach an equilibrium point in the market, where the buyers and sellers will be brought into balance.¹⁴² All the commercial activities are orbiting around this equilibrium point in the market. Adhering to this effective supply-demand-equilibrium framework in economics research, the commercial model of Manchukuo film industry worked effectively. The main consumers were the audiences in

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Mankiw N. Gregory: *principles of economics*. (Fort Worth: Harcourt College, 2001), p. 9.

¹⁴² Ibid. , p. 80.

Manchukuo and Japan. The other prospectors were the audience in north and central China. The main retailers were the Man'ei entertainment filmmaking group, Man'ei film distribution department and its cinemas. The other factors, which would affect the supply, were the competition from imported films, censorship, and other cinemas owners in Manchukuo. Given the monopoly of Man'ei over the Manchukuo film industry, the market was a nonpartisan. Nevertheless, it provided much needed room for Man'ei to exploit and harvest profits.

3.5 The Cultural Construction for National Cultural Project

The cultural tendency for a film company, which regards the film industry as a national educational scheme, had existed since the beginning of Manchukuo. As Hu Jinbin points out in his book: “a national cinema means a national film industry; a national cinema refers to film content and style, and the reflection and construction of national character in the film; a national cinema counters the foreign domination of the domestic film market; and a national cinema is an art cinema.”¹⁴³ The cultural project or the Manchukuo film industry was a national development strategy to further national propaganda and education indoctrination. Similar to what Andrew Higson had commented the concept of a national cinema has almost invariably been mobilized as a strategy of cultural (and economic) resistance; a means of asserting national autonomy in the face of (usually) Hollywood's international domination.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴³ Jinbin Hu, *Projecting A Nation: Chinese National Cinemas Before 1949*, (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2003), pp. 7-8.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

The national cultural project of Manchukuo film industry, as Higson quoted, serves the national resistance and defense of the new country and its sponsor.

Following the notion of Man'ei as a national cultural project, one of Man'ei's missions was to use film to publicize Manchukuo and its sovereign investor Japan. The films were also used to educate the Manchurians. This specific intention could be found in relevant documentaries such as *Document of Man'ei*. "It shows that Man'ei was serving Manchukuo's national policies. It would devote itself to the spiritual strengthening of Manchukuo during peace times...Man'ei was to take on more responsibilities during wartime, merging with Japan to conduct ideological and propaganda war through its films."¹⁴⁵

In order to better the national film cultural project, Man'ei enhanced both the film production and distribution areas of its program. For filmmaking section, Man'ei organized an enlightened filmmaking section, which was led by the filmmaking department. The enlightened films could be categorized into two types. The first genre was films that praised the Japanese military or Japanese sponsors for their contributions in the establishment of Manchukuo. The latter tried to create a harmonious atmosphere between Manchukuo and Japan, or exhibited the achievements of Manchukuo in economic and social modernization.¹⁴⁶ Six enlightened films were made during the first two years. Two of them belonged to the first type, the above-mentioned *Great Aspiration* in 1938 (*Zhuangzhi Zhutian*,) and *A Woman Who Fights for the National Territory* in 1939 (*Guojing Zhihua*). In those

¹⁴⁵ Ibid. , p. 148.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid. , p. 148.

films, the Japanese military and Manchurian soldiers were credited as the founders and heroes of Manchukuo, while the Chinese, Russian and Mongolian troops were showed as bandits. Goodwill between Japan and Manchukuo was mostly promoted in the films, as *A Woman Who Fights for the National Territory*.

The story occurred during the Nomanhan event. A Mongolian girl, Xibao, was abducted by Russian spies because her lover was in the Manchukuo Army. Eventually the girl stole Russian classified documents and assassinated the spies' leader. She subsequently escaped and aided Manchukuo to win the war. The film was deemed as a national defense film, essentially a tool for the cultural project. It glorified the patriotism of the young couple, especially in helping to defend their country, and emphasizes that only the Manchukuo government and its Japanese allies are the legitimate leaders of Manchukuo.

The other four films, which belonged to the second type, highlighted mutual understanding, goodwill, and alliance between the Japanese and Chinese people. As discussed above, *Song of Orchid* is an example of how a Man'ei film succeeded in gaining commercial and cultural benefits cohesively for the government.

Some films sought to use a non-political approach to foster goodwill. *Journey to the East (Dong You Ji)* in 1939 is an example of how Man'ei tried to introduce Japan and its culture to Manchurians through films.

The tale is based on two Chinese peasants visiting Japan as their children would be graduating from a Japanese college and are to wed soon. The two fathers travelled together from Southern to Northern Japan. They found themselves embroiled in some

hilarious situations during their travel. They finally arrived in Tokyo and attended their children's wedding.

The film sought to introduce Japanese natural landscape, culture and history to the Manchurian audience. It was successful for specifically introducing Japan. As Hu Jinbin says, this kind of film strictly followed the mission of Man'ei to introduce and import Japanese culture [to Manchuria] in accordance with the state policy that "Japanese and Manchukuo are an organic whole."¹⁴⁷ However, it brought up a new complication that Man'ei had wanted to avoid since its establishment. Hu Jinbin points out that Manchurian audiences probably questioned the films' Chinese identity since Japanese filmmakers made them.¹⁴⁸ For the commercial films, the involvement of Manchurian actors and actresses helped to mask this issue. The wholly Japanese enlightened films, especially the documentary films, encountered this predicament. It was solved only through the second reformation in Man'ei developing period in 1941 by localization, which we will discuss in the next chapter.

In order to establish an integral and effective national cultural project, Man'ei merged the former travelling teams that belonged to SMR and expanded the travelling teams under the control of the distribution department in 1939. Their mission was to bring broadcasting machines and films to the villages, which was unavailable in cinemas. All the broadcasts were free. At the beginning, there were two groups, geographically divided into the Northern and Southern broadcasting groups. Each group would visit nearly twenty five villages for a time. Depending on the village's

¹⁴⁷ Jinbin Hu, *Projecting A Nation: Chinese National Cinemas Before 1949*, (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2003), p. 149.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 149.

status, the travelling team would choose different films. The northern travelling group began its first mission from 7th April to 21st June, a total of seventy-six days.¹⁴⁹ Their journey covered twenty-six counties and villages for one hundred and forty-five showings.¹⁵⁰ Six films were broadcast by the northern group – the entertainment film *Finding Mom*, the enlightened film *The Thread of Red*, a cartoon *Stories of Monkey*, a Japanese documentary film *Unusual Lines*, newsreels such as *Man'ei news* and *Asahi News*.¹⁵¹ Nearly 59,427 villagers viewed the films.¹⁵² The Southern group's tour lasted seventy-five days from 11th April to 24th June.¹⁵³ During the broadcasting, they visited twenty-five counties and villages for one hundred and two showings. Seven films were broadcast - the entertainment films *Great Aspiration* and *Hunt the Whale*, a cartoon *Animals' Hospital*, documentary film *Conscription for the Country* and newsreels *Man'ei News*, *Asahi News* and *Asahi Children Club*.¹⁵⁴ Because of the success of these tours, Man'ei added another travelling team to serve remote villages in 1939. The team visited twenty-one counties and villages in six months.¹⁵⁵

The national cultural project did not target only Manchurians but also Japanese who were living in Manchukuo, which could hence foster the relationship between Japanese and its motherland. Man'ei organized a travelling team to tour Japanese primary schools in Manchukuo in 1939.¹⁵⁶ The broadcasting group with cartoon films and newsreels visited one hundred and eight Japanese schools. In total, the

¹⁴⁹ Hu Chang, *Man Ying—Guo ce dianying mianmian guan* [Many Perspectives on Manchuria Motion Picture Production and Distribution Co.], 满映—国策电影面面观, (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1990), pp. 72-73.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 73.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵² *Ibid.*

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

broadcasting group made one hundred and thirty-seven broadcasts to 41,426 Japanese students and 12,203 parents.¹⁵⁷

In order to expand its national cultural ideology, Man'ei built an overseas broadcasting nexus with Germany, Korea and Taiwan with Japanese sponsored in 1938. It first imported Korean films in 1937. Later on, Man'ei and the Korean government made a consensus on monthly film exchanges in 1938.¹⁵⁸ Germany made a similar agreement with Man'ei within the same year when the German cultural delegation visited Manchukuo.¹⁵⁹ Due to the fact that Italy, German and Japan were in the Fascists' alliance, Italy and Man'ei also made an agreement on monthly newsreel exchanging in 1938.¹⁶⁰ A year later, Man'ei and Taiwan Film Company made an agreement to collaborate in film productions as well as to exchange films.¹⁶¹ All the agreements emphasized that enlightened films and newsreels were to have precedence in any film exchange program.

The merging and expansion of roving teams, the attention paid to the production of didactic films and newsreels, and the film exchange agreements with political allies constituted Man'ei's national cultural project through prospective cultural film market. Compared to the discussion in Chapter Two about the European national film vehicle industry, Man'ei built its cultural project by replicating the European cultural system

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ Manshu bunka kyo-kai [Manchuria culture association] 满洲文化协会, *Manshu-nenkan* [Manchuria Yearbook] 满洲年鉴, Vol. 6, originally published Dairen: Manshu- bunka kyo-kai, 1935, republished (Tokyo: Nihon to-sho- sentaa, 1999), pp. 420-421.

¹⁵⁹ *Shengjing Times*, 26th November 1938.

¹⁶⁰ Manshu bunka kyo-kai [Manchuria culture association] 满洲文化协会, *Manshu-nenkan* [Manchuria Yearbook] 满洲年鉴, Vol. 6, originally published Dairen: Manshu- bunka kyo-kai, 1935, republished (Tokyo: Nihon to-sho- sentaa, 1999), pp. 420.

¹⁶¹ Hu Chang, *Man Ying—Guo ce dianying mianmian guan* [Many Perspectives on Manchuria Motion Picture Production and Distribution Co.], 满映—国策电影面面观, (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1990), p. 73.

as a national control vertical integration. And Man'ei used the protection and support facilities by the national film policies and regulations to execute the national cultural project through film.

3.6 Conclusion

In conclusion, the foundation of Man'ei built a commercial studio system and a structure of cultural project in the first two years. At the same time, Man'ei clarified its two goals as a business entity and as building block in its national cultural blueprint. The amplification of Man'ei's power into a dominant force in the northeast China film market made Man'ei the front runner in the northeast China film industry, which could only help to strengthen to meet its two goals effectively. In order to serve for its two businesses, Man'ei had combined commercial system and cultural project together since its beginning. Like Hollywood, Man'ei built a vertical commercial system in its operation as the wealthy studio led film production, distribution and film stars training. Meanwhile, Man'ei served its function as a national propaganda vehicle, which followed its cultural project.

In order to develop Man'ei's influence, it not only built the basic studio system, but also made the two goals into practice during the two years. They made entertainment and enlightened films under the leadership of the film making department. They built the cinema broadcasting networks in big and middle-sized county towns and expanded the travelling teams under film distribution department's control. In

addition, Man'ei introduced exchange programs with its alliance with regards to enlightened films (Japan, Korea, German, Italy, Taiwan) during its early years. This also acted as a communication tool with its allies.

In fact, the two projects - cultural and commercial - built by Man'ei coexisted and interacted with each other since the beginning. The foundation period provided the two objectives, which directed Man'ei's pathway throughout its history. The expansion of Man'ei's power into commercial and cultural markets ensured Man'ei's development in both material and spiritual aspects. Although the birth of Man'ei was during the war, its two projects got their high-return period through a new leader and his reformations in the next three years. The following chapter will discuss the development of two projects and their interactions under Man'ei new leadership.

Chapter 4: The Development and High-Return Period of Man'ei

Man'ei as an up-and-coming business with commercial and cultural projects was greatly developed from 1940 to 1942, which was the high return period of Man'ei. As discussed above, Man'ei built the frame of its commercial and cultural system in the foundation period. In order to strengthen the management of Man'ei and make it work effectively, Amakasu Masahiko replaced Jin Bidong as the new CEO of Man'ei on 1 November 1939.¹⁶² Amakasu perfected the Man'ei system through his two reorganizations in the 1940s and localized Man'ei, which brought the prosperous to Man'ei from both commercial and cultural aspects. He clarified each department's purpose and separated entertainment films and enlightened films into two departments, which served for the commercial and cultural products under different guild lines. Localization for entertainment film productions and building of Manchurian Cinemas Company (MCC) were two features of Man'ei, which helped to achieve its commercial goal. For the cultural project, Man'ei increased the quantity and quality of enlightened films. In order to expand the enlightened film market, Man'ei built a political cooperated film companies' alliance and specified travelling teams, which helped to spread Man'ei enlightened films. During this period, Man'ei's two functions as commercial product and cultural project co-existed and interacted with each other. The localized commercial product, which helped Man'ei gain profits, ensured Man'ei's leadership in the northeast China film industry via material profits. The

¹⁶² Manshu bunka kyo-kai [Manchuria culture association] 满洲文化协会, *Manshu-nenkan* [Manchuria Yearbook] 满洲年鉴, Vol. 8, originally published Dairen: Manshu-bunka kyo-kai, 1935, republished (Tokyo: Nihon to-sho-sentaa, 1999), p. 364.

expanded cultural project, which built the national propaganda routine, ensured the propaganda goal of Man'ei business in terms of spiritual profits. These three years were the flourishing period in Man'ei history.

4.1 The new leader and his reorganizations

The changing of the CEO was a big event in Man'ei history, and Man'ei's success was partly due to Amakasu's unique personal history. Amakasu was an officer in the Empire of Japan Army. In the Amakasu Case in 1923, he killed a famous Japanese anarchist named Sakae Osugi.¹⁶³ He was consequently imprisoned for his actions. However, he was released after the amnesty proclaimed in celebration of Hirohito's ascension as Emperor of Japan. Due to his bravery displayed in this case, the Japanese Army sponsored his education in France. After the Manchurian incident in 1931, Amakasu led the smuggling of the last Qing emperor Puyi from foreign concessions in Tianjin to Manchuria, where Puyi was sponsored to become the head of state.¹⁶⁴ Amakasu's other contributions included founding the domestic police system in Xinjing. For his contributions and devotion to Japan, he was appointed as the new head of Man'ei in the end of 1939.¹⁶⁵ He became the new leader of the Manchukuo propaganda engine. In order to build Man'ei into the intended Oriental Hollywood and achieve its commercial and cultural requirements, Amakasu made great contributions, to the extent of sacrificing his life during his career in Man'ei.

¹⁶³ Hu Chang, *Man Ying—Guoce dianying mianmian guan* [Many Perspectives on Manchuria Motion Picture Production and Distribution Co.], 满映—国策电影面面观, (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1990), pp. 84-88.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

The first event under Amakasu's new leadership was the completion of Man'ei's new studio, which gave Man'ei the technical capacity to become a first-class studio in East Asia. The new studio, which was planned and built since 1937, went into service in 1939. The building cost 2,500,000 Yen.¹⁶⁶ The new studio had an administration building, six filmmaking studios, a recording room, and a property room, all located in the southwest of Xinjing. The six studios could provide indoor photography for various types of films concurrently, increasing the quantity of Man'ei filmmaking, and improving its quality as well. Man'ei also bought first-class facilities such as printers, cameras and recorders. In the meantime, Man'ei also increased its capital from 5,000,000 Yen to 9,000,000 Yen, which financially helped develop Man'ei.¹⁶⁷

In order to put Man'ei's two goals into practice and build Man'ei into a first-class filmmaking center, Amakasu carried out two successive reformations in February and December of 1940, which refreshed Man'ei structure and built the high return period.¹⁶⁸ His first reformation (Diagram 4-1) involved changes to Man'ei organization, as he ended the autonomy of the administration department, which now came under the direct control of the CEO office. Also, he created four new departments: the project committee, consultancy, managing department and marketing department. These departments had specific functions: the project committee took charge of critiquing films and domestic affairs of Man'ei; consultancy handled

¹⁶⁶ Manshu bunka kyo-kai [Manchuria culture association] 满洲文化协会, *Manshu-nenkan* [Manchuria Yearbook] 满洲年鉴, Vol. 7, originally published Dairen: Manshu-bunka kyo-kai, 1935, republished (Tokyo: Nihon to-sho-sentaa, 1999), p. 429. Because the source is not clear, I would assume the unit of the amount is Japanese Yen.

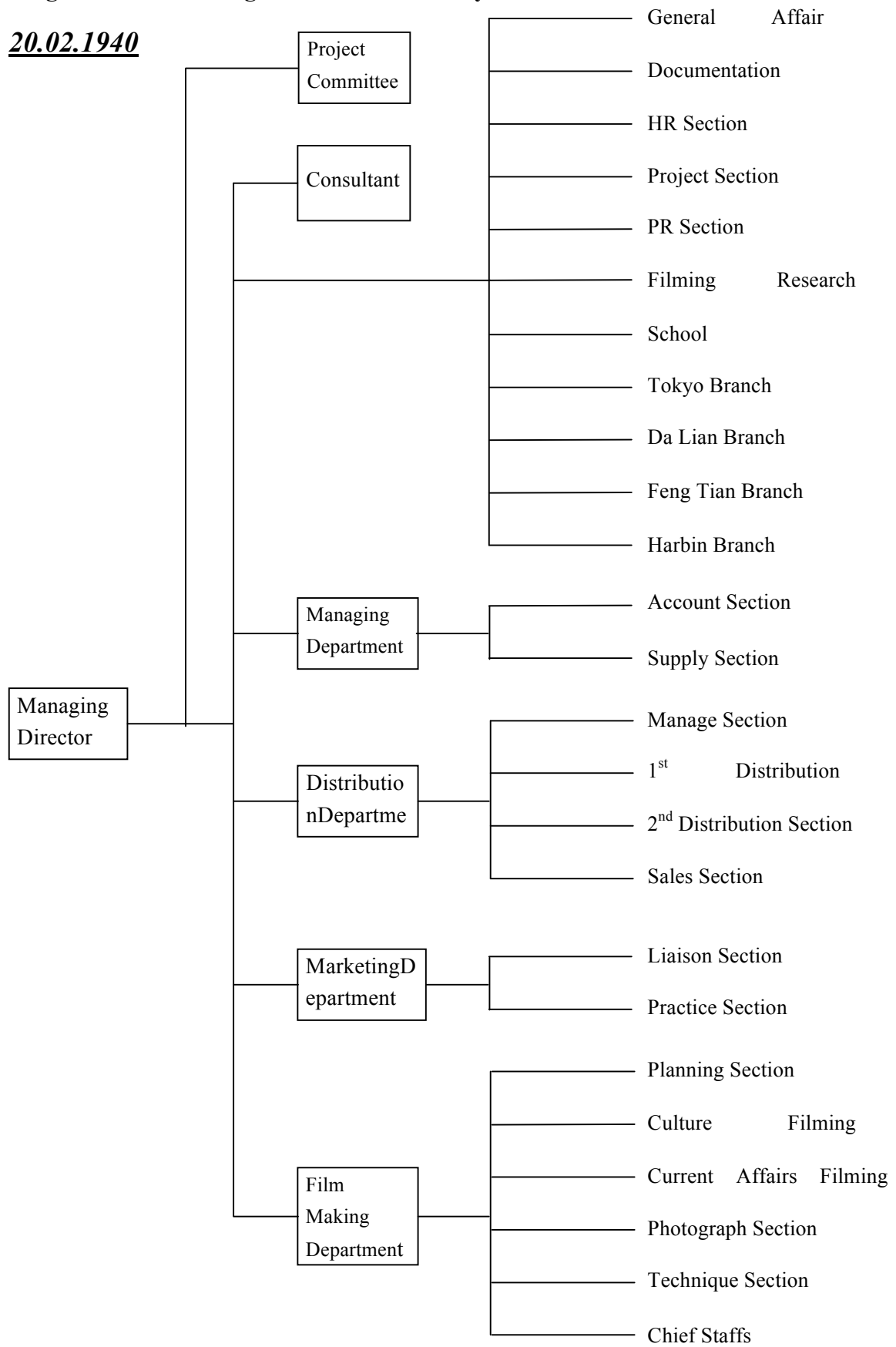
¹⁶⁷ Hu Chang, *Man Ying—Guoce dianying mianmian guan* [Many Perspectives on Manchuria Motion Picture Production and Distribution Co.], 满映—国策电影面面观. (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1990), p. 88.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

effective policy-making on Man'ei, while the marketing department organized travelling teams. Lastly, the managing department was set up to deal with financial issues.

Diagram 4.1 The Reorganization in February 1940

20.02.1940



Increasing employees and salaries were the other part of his first reformation. In order to increase its professional crew, Man'ei increased its payroll to include 919 employees in 1940, and it included jobs like professional filmmakers, actors, actresses and broadcasting crew. Of the 919 employees, 234 were in offices directly led by the CEO, 285 in the filmmaking department, 131 employees worked in the distribution department, another 110 were in the marketing and managing departments, while 105 were in the film training school.¹⁶⁹ Lastly, 52 experts worked in the project committee and consultancy.¹⁷⁰ Of these employees, half were Japanese, while the other half were Chinese. Most of the Japanese employees were leaders and professional filmmakers invited to Man'ei from Japanese film companies and studios, whereas most of the Chinese employees were actors or actresses in film training school. Up to that time, Japanese employees still took high status in Man'ei. But the increasing of Chinese employees showed the tendency of localization. In order to encourage these actors' work morale, Amakasu improved their welfare, and one aspect including pay rises. The most famous actress Li Xianglan, who was a Japanese born in China and can speak fluent Mandarin, received the highest salary at 250 Yuan per month. Another Chinese actress Li Ming's salary rose from 45 to 200 Yuan per month. All other employees also had their pays raised from 18 to 45 Yuan per month.¹⁷¹

Due to commercial and cultural needs, Man'ei began to train Chinese filmmaking experts like directors, screenwriters and cameramen, which was a process of

¹⁶⁹ Hu Chang, *Man Ying—Guoce dianying mianmian guan* [Many Perspectives on Manchuria Motion Picture Production and Distribution Co.], 满映—国策电影面面观, (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1990), p. 90

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 90.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., p. 90.

localization of film makers. As the primary audience was Manchurian, localized films would attract viewers to the cinema, and the rising up of ticket sales receipts would help Man'ei earn money. Also, local filmmaking experts were paid less than Japanese filmmakers, representing a cost-saving for Man'ei. From cultural perspectives, the training of Chinese filmmaking experts would also foster goodwill between Japan and Manchukuo, making the Chinese filmmaking experts programs a commercial endeavor with a cultural function. Zhou Xiaobo and Zhu Wenshun were the first two Chinese directors in Man'ei in 1940. Having previously worked as assistant directors, their basic knowledge of film directing was put to use. Later, there were six more Chinese directors in Man'ei history. Wang Xinzhai, a Man'ei director, even went to Japan to learn film directing, under Man'ei sponsorship in 1940. He later became a crucial entertainment film director in 1942.¹⁷² Man'ei also localized the type of films beyond the comedy and modern romantic stories at the beginning of the 1940s. In 1940, Man'ei made ancient costumes, giving it the capacity to produce costume dramas. The period costumes were well received by the audience. To produce more of these popular traditional Chinese adaptations, Man'ei began to hire Chinese screenwriters for answering the commercial needs.

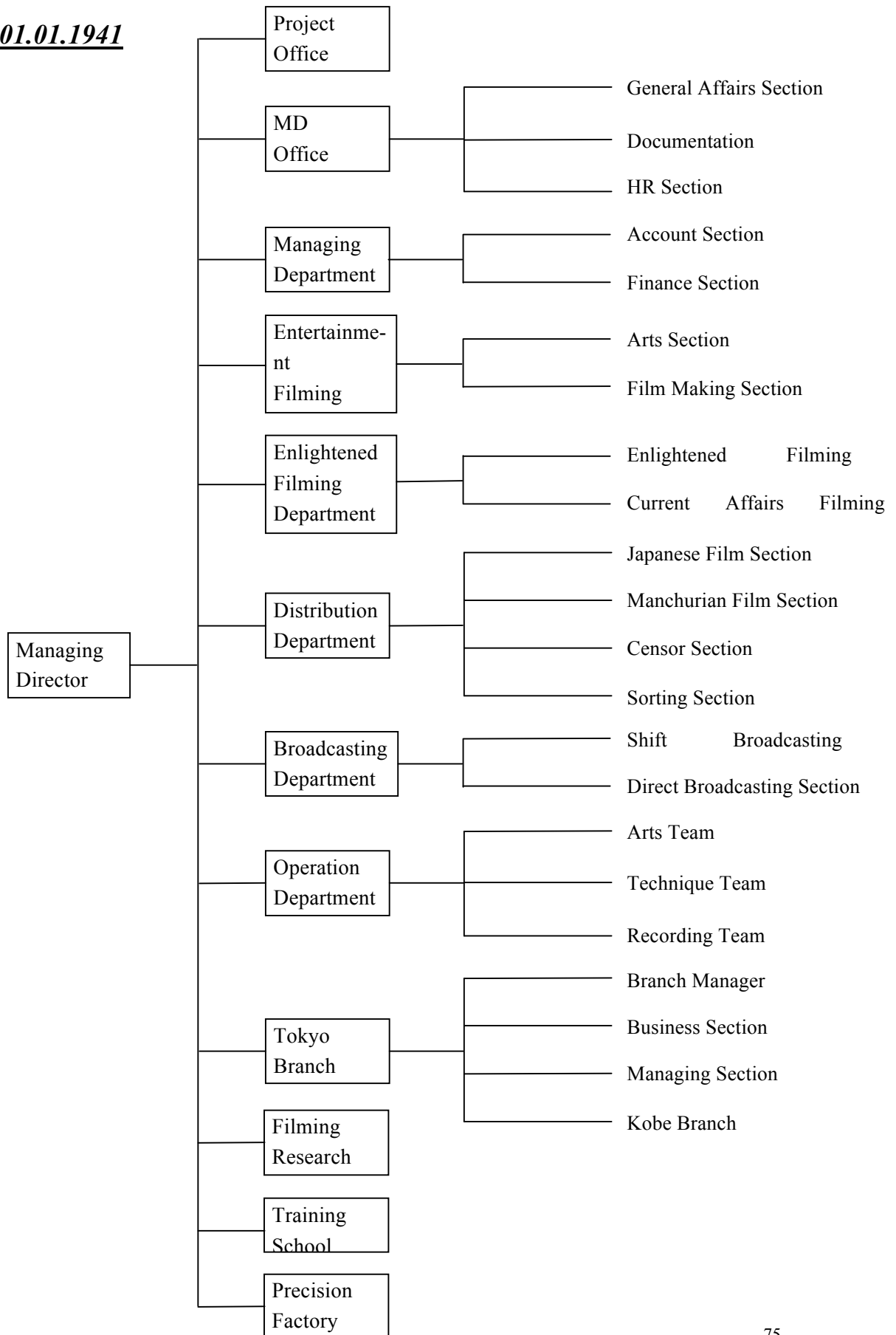
Amakasu's reforms lasted to the end of 1940, before Amakasu made another reformation to the Man'ei organization system (Diagram 4-2). To address cultural propaganda requirements, while still generating profits, Amakasu divided the big filmmaking department into the entertainment filmmaking department and

¹⁷² Ibid. , p. 95.

enlightened filmmaking department. The project committee was also renamed as the “project office”. In order to improve the marketing and the market ability of Man’ei films, some new offices or departments were created as broadcasting department, operation department, film research office, precision factory, and Tokyo branch. Meanwhile, Amakasu specified each department’s business sections, defining each department’s duties in detail.

Diagram 4.2 The Reorganization in December 1940

01.01.1941



In order to answer the cultural and commercial needs, Amakasu made changes to the training school in the late 1940. First, he renamed the Man'ei training school (Manying Yangcheng Suo) as Man'ei cultivating school (Manying Peixun Xuexiao), which emphasized the target on training not only professional actors, actresses, but also professional filmmakers. Some initiatives included inviting famous filmmakers as professors and lecturers. Masaiyuni Kimura, a famous Japanese film director, was invited to be the head of cultivating school on 27 December 1940.¹⁷³ Under his leadership, the graduation standards were raised. For the third generation students, there were only thirteen graduated in the twenty-seven students in April 1940.¹⁷⁴ Later, Japanese students began to enroll in Man'ei school, increasing the communication between Japanese and Chinese. Five majors were created such as film management, film performance, film technology, film exhibition and skill acting.¹⁷⁵ All students were required to finish studying thirty courses within a year. Of these, fifteen were specialized courses in their majors, while ten were basic courses.¹⁷⁶ In contrast to the former Man'ei training school, the new cultivating school was a professional and international film training school, where Japanese-trained professional Chinese filmmakers were groomed. The training school fulfilled the commercial function, as Chinese directors' popular localization of Man'ei film raked profits through ticket receipts; from the cultural perspective, Japanese-trained Chinese filmmakers would follow the Japanese principles in the film industry.

¹⁷³ Ibid. , p. 96.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid. , pp. 96-98.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid. , pp. 96-97.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid. , p. 97.

Amakasu's reformations increased the quantity and quality of both Man'ei entertainment films and enlightened films. From a commercial perspective, the organization of Man'ei, especially the entertainment filmmaking and distribution departments, allowed for the production of profitable entertainment films. This was facilitated through the employment of Chinese directors, screenwriters and photographers who localized Man'ei entertainment films, attracting local audience, and hence, earning profits. In terms of culture, the new enlightened filmmaking department and travelling teams perfected cultural filmmaking and exhibition. The enrollment of Japanese students also facilitated the two countries' communication, fostering goodwill between Manchukuo and Japan.

4.2 Changes and Development in Man'ei's Commercial Production

Changes and development to the Man'ei commercial product was closely connected with the two reformations which Amakasu led. In Man'ei's vertical commercial system, entertainment filmmaking, which made profitable films, was upgraded from a section to a department. The new project office and consultancy departments would provide film reviews or critics and suggest what type of film would be profitable in entertainment film production and distributions. The quantity of entertainment films increased from nineteen films in 1940 to twenty-six films in 1941.¹⁷⁷

Distribution was another crucial part in the vertical integration. In order to expand

¹⁷⁷ Manshu bunka kyo-kai [Manchuria culture association] 满洲文化协会, *Manshu-nenkan* [Manchuria Yearbook] 满洲年鉴, Vol. 8, originally published Dairen: Manshu-bunka kyo-kai, 1935, republished (Tokyo: Nihon to-sho-sentaa, 1999), p. 364.

the reach of their broadcast, Man'ei continually built the commercial cinema broadcasting in domestic regions. A new organization, named Manchurian Cinemas Company was built in order to oversee all Manchurian cinemas in 1941.¹⁷⁸ All the reforms and changes in these two years helped develop and perfect Man'ei commercial product. From the actors to the filmmakers' system, the localization of Chinese filmmakers helped to localize the entertainment films, which consequently attracted local audiences and generated more revenue. At the same time, the training of Chinese filmmakers, actors and actresses improved the quality of Man'ei films. The localization during this period was not only focus on local filmmakers but also film content and types. The Man'ei welcomed entertainment films of this period focused on local romantic stories, and stories on social and family issues. They ranged from comedy to stage performances to costume dramas.

Entertainment filmmaking, as the profit-generating arm of Man'ei, made great progress in these two years, which featured as localization. To appeal to the local audience, Man'ei produced films that featured local lives. *A Man's World in Seventh Heaven (Tianshang Renjian)* in 1941 was representative of localized romantic films.¹⁷⁹

The above was a complicated love story of a Manchukuo football player named Zhang Tingyu. He fell in love with his sister's classmate, Zhao Yifang. However, Zhao's parents opposed their relationship and wanted to marry her to her rich cousin.

¹⁷⁸ Manshu bunka kyo-kai [Manchuria culture association] 满洲文化协会, *Manshu-nenkan* [Manchuria Yearbook] 满洲年鉴, Vol. 9, originally published Dairen: Manshu- bunka kyo-kai, 1935, republished (Tokyo: Nihon to-sho- sentaa, 1999), p. 334.

¹⁷⁹ Hu Chang, *Man Ying—Guoce dianying mianmian guan* [Many Perspectives on Manchuria Motion Picture Production and Distribution Co.], 满映—国策电影面面观, (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1990), p. 108.

Yifang escaped from home and lived with Tingyu. Her bravery displayed in her pursuit of love moved her parents. They finally agreed to wed her to Tingyu. However, Tingyu soon tired of family life. He frequently stayed out, and left his wife alone. He met Yanghong, who was a singer. In order to swindle Tingyu's money, Yanghong created a trap for her lover. She traveled to Haerbin with Tingyu. There, Yanghong swindled Tingyu of all his money and disappeared. After the incident, Tingyu repented the folly of his ways, and returned to his family.

A Man's World in Seventh Heaven reflected the new phenomenon of resisting arranged marriage. Arranged marriage was a part of traditional Chinese culture. In Manchukuo, youths embraced the modern conception of independent love and marriage. The film showed a young couple's pursuit of their true love. However, family life was different from courtship, and youth tiring of family life was also a phenomenon common in young couples' lives. This film reflected a new phenomenon of social life in Manchuria, which attracted local audiences. In contrast to former Man'ei films, which were written or adapted from Japanese writers, the film was adapted from a famous modern Chinese novelist, Zhang Henshui. His novels focused on modern Chinese social lives through romantic stories. His novels and adaptations were very popular with Chinese readers. This film was the first completely local production under the Amakasu reformations. Zhou Xiaobo, who was the first Chinese director in Man'ei, individually directed this film with the adaptation from Zhang Henshui.¹⁸⁰ The main actor, Du Zhuan, and actress, Ji Yanfen, were from the Man'ei

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

training school.¹⁸¹ The localization of Man'ei entertainment films from its storyline to its crew made it attractive to local audience.

The localization of film not only helped Man'ei earn money, but also provided a space for Chinese filmmakers to reflect on or discuss local social or ethical issues via films. As locals, they knew the preferences of Chinese audience. They wanted to use their films to reflect the lives and problems of destitute class. Of this genre, *Vagrant Singer (Liulang Genü)* in 1940 was representative.¹⁸² *Vagrant Singer* was about the life of two sisters who were poor street singers, Shu Ling and Shu Liang. They made their livelihood by singing songs. To avoid local ruffians' harassment and to find their lost mother, the sisters decided to go to Fengtian. On their way, a thief stole their money, leading the sisters to feel desperation. However, a warmhearted youth helped them to Fengtian, where the sisters finally found their mother. This film was written by a Chinese screenwriter, Yangye, in 1940. The film with a happy ending attracted a large local following and made the Chinese audience feel happy. The localized filmmakers can make films that local people would like to see because of the theme. Due to its localized content, it attracted a large local following.

In order to earn money, Man'ei also made comedies to attract viewers and to compete with profitable Hollywood comedies. Man'ei began to make comedies in 1940. And the first comedy was *Everything is Well (Renma Ping'an)* in 1940.¹⁸³ The above narrated the experience of a lazy groom. Fortunately, he won a prize in the lottery, and with his wife's help, he became a good husband. This short story was well

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² Ibid. pp. 111-112.

¹⁸³ Ibid. pp. 113-114.

received by audience and film critics alike. The main reason for its good review was the excellent performance by Man'ei actors and actresses. The audience also found its pleasant content comforting.

Another representative comedy is *All are Delighted (Jieda Huanxi)* made in 1942.¹⁸⁴ It was about funny stories revolving around a family in Xinjing during the Pan Asia Exhibition. An old lady who lived in a village had one daughter and three sons. All her children lived at Xinjing. They quarreled frequently. During the Pan Asia Exhibition, they invited their mother to stay with them in Xinjing. Youths mocked her as she pursued the modern lives of the youth, resulting in comical situations. However, the old lady persuaded her children to stop fighting with each other. Instead, they should live as a big family rather than as individuals. Finally, all were happy. The content of this comedy was very simple. But it reflected the stable of the whole family and promoting the family value. Wang Xinzhai—who was sponsored by Man'ei to go to Japan to learn director courses— directed this film.¹⁸⁵

In order to reach middle-aged audiences, Man'ei also produced costume dramas and operas. Nine costume dramas and operas were made in two years by Man'ei.¹⁸⁶ The first costume drama was *Brotherhood (Longzheng Hudou)* (two volumes) in 1941.¹⁸⁷ It was a love story between an impoverished writer who was talented, Huaiyu and a rich young lady, Wu Yueying. Huaiyu and Wu's family had arranged a marriage for their children when they were both very rich. However, Huaiyu's

¹⁸⁴ Ibid. pp. 116-117.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid. pp. 118-126.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid. pp. 118-119.

family's fortunes fell. Huaiyu went to Wu's family to borrow money for attending the national examinations in the capital. However, Wu's father wanted to kill Huaiyu in order to terminate the arranged marriage between Huaiyu and his daughter. Yueying, his fiancée, learnt of her father's nefarious plans. She then bravely saved her fiancé and gave him money for his expenses to the capital. Consequently, her family drove her out. Cast away, she first visited Huaiyu's mother and brother to leave them some money. Then, she went to the capital to look for Huaiyu. On the way, she met some ruffians and saved her fiancé again. However, after all the trials and tribulations, Huaiyu finally took first place in the national examination and became a government officer in the capital. The young lovers got married and lived happily with Huaiyu's family.

The content of this film was adapted from a Tang dynasty martial arts novel. It expressed love and loyalism in traditional Chinese culture. But the film was not social education. Like the three films we discussed before, they expressed different ideas or opinions, even though they all talked about family issues. Man'ei entertainment films were really just for entertainment. The main issue was to make money. The film was warmly received was due to its lively plot and elaborate costumes. Indeed, *Brotherhood* broke Man'ei box office records in 1942.¹⁸⁸

An effective distribution system was required to reap profits from these films. Through the Amakasu reformations, Man'ei set up a distribution system that developed commercial cinema broadcasting in the domestic region.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid. p. 118.

In order to develop commercial broadcasting, a new organization named Manchurian Cinemas Company (MCC) was founded on 21 November 1941, which reorganized the broadcasting system under Man'ei's total control.¹⁸⁹ It was a satellite company of Man'ei, whereby the Man'ei owned more than half of the company's primary stocks. All cinemas in Manchukuo, both Japanese and Chinese, and the travelling teams were led by MCC. To ensure Man'ei a majority in MCC and to obtain capital from other cinema owners, MCC publicly sold forty-nine percent of its stocks as secondary stocks to cinema owners. Ten secondary stocks equaled one primary stock, which ensured Man'ei leadership in MCC.¹⁹⁰ By May 1942, MCC owned and directly operated fifteen cinemas in big cities and county towns.¹⁹¹ In 1942, MCC invested in another eleven cinemas.¹⁹² Except the direct ownership, all the other seventy-six Japanese-owned cinemas and seventy-four Chinese-owned cinemas were publishing partners of Man'ei and MCC.

The building of MCC not only reorganized the distribution system under Man'ei total control, but it also increased cinemas' quantity and improved their quality. This in turn helped Man'ei earn more money. The number of cinemas increased quickly in these four years. During the foundation period, Manchukuo cinemas increased from 76 in 1935 to 121 in 1939.¹⁹³ However, there was a greater increase in the number of cinemas in the later three years than in the first three years. There were 156 cinemas

¹⁸⁹ Manshu bunka kyo-kai [Manchuria culture association] 满洲文化协会, *Manshu-nenkan* [Manchuria Yearbook] 满洲年鉴, Vol. 9, originally published Dairen: Manshu-bunka kyo-kai, 1935, republished (Tokyo: Nihon to-sho-sentaa, 1999), p. 334.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

¹⁹² Ibid. Vol. 10, p. 385.

¹⁹³ Ibid. Vol. 7, pp. 433-434

in 1940, 165 in 1941 and 201 in 1942.¹⁹⁴ The increased number of cinemas followed the needs of the exhibition market, which expanded from big cities to small county towns. The increasing quantity and quality of entertainment films attracted more audience, which stimulated a need for more cinemas. From October 1939 to February 1940, the amount of audience greatly increased month by month.¹⁹⁵

Table 4 Man'ei ticket receipts from 1939 to 1940¹⁹⁶

Cities	Ticket/ Income	1939.10	1939.11	1939.12	1940.01	1940.02	Sub total
Fengtian	Tickets	269,865	270,511	261,296	369,404	314,366	1,485,411
	Income (Yuan)	165,604	167,737	161,510	279,119	192,633	964,605
Xinjing	Tickets	181,096	196,215	185,961	276,451	234,000	1,063,724
	Income (Yuan)	126,176	155,985	178,677	211,071	163,214	765,126
Dalian	Tickets	239,815	251,981	247,850	323,578	269,169	1,333,397
	Income (Yuan)	130,511	140,017	122,846	203,335	145,812	752,522
Haerbin	Tickets	142,896	140,968	137,511	167,896	171,474	670,745
	Income (Yuan)	90,101	91,485	88,677	143,035	112,633	527,932
Other Cities	Tickets	209,865	211,964	214,961	367,211	279,374	1,283,379
	Income (Yuan)	138,695	145,012	148,514	256,839	199,833	888,783
Total	Tickets	1,043,537	1,071,639	1,047,579	1,504,540	1,268,383	
	Income	651,087	700,236	700,224	1,093,399	814,125	

The above figure not only shows the income of the cinema broadcasting business directly, but also shows the specific information of the audience market. The population in each city was 834,000 in Fengtian, 379,000 in Xinjing, 508,000 in Haerbin and 552,000 in Dalian in 1939. Taking into consideration the number of audience in each city, one can derive the number of times each person spent on

¹⁹⁴ Ibid. Vol. 10, p. 385.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid. Vol. 7, p. 434.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid. Vol. 7, p. 434.

watching films every month in each city (See table 5). The results are, 6.27 per person in Xinjing, 5.32 per person in Dalian, 4.27 per person in Fengtian and 3.16 per person in Haerbin. Xinjing took the first place in the amount of average film viewing because of its political status as capital of Manchukuo, and also its status as the birthplace of Man'ei. Furthermore, many Japanese lived in Xinjing, increasing the number of film audiences. Dalian took second place because it was the first northern city to import films.

Table 5 The Frequencies on Monthly Personal Watching Films

Cities	City population	Average audiences per month	Average watch times per person a year
Xinjing	379,000	212,745	6.74
Dalian	552,000	266,679	6.80
Fengtian	834,000	297,082	4.27
Harbin	508,000	134,149	3.17

Both the commercial entertainment film production and distribution in commercial cinema broadcasting helped Man'ei earn profits, which made its business goals into practice. Through an analysis of the Man'ei commercial system, which was reformed by Amakasu during this period via clarified each department and the localization of film producers and contents, reorganization of distribution system and emphasized the Japanese directly control of cinemas, changed Man'ei commercial films from deficit to profit. From the economic aspect, the interactions between Man'ei as suppliers and audience as buyers also developed the Manchukuo film market in free competition. Culturally the localization of entertainment films helped to attract more audience to the cinemas, which would make them to enjoy the movie and be educated. The

localization and increasing of films and cinemas helped Man'ei to arrive its two goals as earning profits and building cultural project.

4.3 Changes and Development in the Cultural Project

As previously discussed, the cultural project was another goal and a crucial aspect in the Manchukuo film industry, which was seen as a national cultural project for educating the audience and a propaganda tool. Amakasu led change and development of the Man'ei cultural project. He first set up enlightened filmmaking as an individual department, providing an individual space for enlightened film production in Man'ei. During the next four years, the enlightened filmmaking department made many enlightened films that served the national cultural project. In the film production section, Man'ei cooperated with Japanese film companies on national films, which appeared with entertainment factors and spread the goodwill between Japan and Manchukuo. For the film distribution section, Man'ei refreshed the system as MCC controlled Manchukuo cinemas broadcasting and travelling teams. To ensure that travelling teams would arrive at every corner of Manchukuo, MCC specified each routine for every travelling teams. Beyond domestic development, Man'ei expanded its distribution to north and middle China via building cooperated film companies with local Kuomintang (KMT) powers like the Nanjing Weixin Government and the North China Kuomintang (KMT) power.

Filmmaking was a direct expression of the Manchukuo national cultural project.

Amakasu changed enlightened filmmaking from a section to an individual department. It separated enlightened filmmaking from entertainment films due to their differing objectives. The enlightened film served the national cultural project, which used film as a propaganda and educational tool. These films could be categorically divided into national enlightened film, documentaries and newsreels. Each category faced to different group of audience and made different influence.

The national enlightened films, which combined entertainment factors, represented the quality of Man'ei enlightened films. *The Dawn (Liming Shuguang)* in 1940 was representative.¹⁹⁷ It was a story on bandit suppression in Andong province, which was located in southern Manchukuo. There were many bandits in this mountainous area. To eliminate these bandits, the Manchukuo Army, policemen and Japanese counselors went to this area. First, they negotiated with the bandit chief, by introducing ideals like the spirit of Manchukuo and Pan Asianism. The bandits finally agreed to surrender to Manchukuo. However, a small group of bandits disagreed with their head and continued their armed rebellion. This led to a pitched battle between the Manchukuo army and the bandits. In the fighting, a Japanese counselor and some policemen died. Finally, the Manchukuo and Japanese military troops succeeded in eradicating the bandits.

The film, as a representative of national enlightened films, fulfilled the requirement on propaganda the goodwill between Japan and Manchukuo and acknowledged the contribution of soldiers who sacrificed for the founding of Manchukuo. According to

¹⁹⁷ Hu Chang, *Man Ying—Guoce dianying mianmian guan* [Many Perspectives on Manchuria Motion Picture Production and Distribution Co.], 满映—国策电影面面观, (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1990), pp. 99-100.

the National Film Law in 1937, which states that the prime minister is the primary leader of Manchukuo film industry, this film was commissioned by Manchukuo Prime Minister, Zhang Jinghui.¹⁹⁸ Unlike the localized entertainment film making, all the filmmakers for enlightened films were Japanese, from director to screenwriter to cameraman. It took nearly half a year for completion, and had collaborations with the Kwantung Army and Ministry of Public Security. Nearly eighty percent of students in Man'ei training school acted in this film. The filmmaking group also invited other Japanese actors to participate in this film. The film garnered many film reviews from critics. A Japanese film critic pointed out that this film showed the professional and perfected filmmaking ability of Man'ei.¹⁹⁹ From the analysis of this film, it fulfilled the propaganda function of Man'ei film goal.

The enlightened films not only publicized Manchukuo and its national slogans, but it also introduced Japan and its goodwill with Manchukuo to its audience. It was another part of the national cultural project. *Journey to the East (Dongyou ji)* in 1940 was a representative work of these introduction films.²⁰⁰ The film was about two Chinese peasants' visiting Japan. It indirectly introduced the beautiful Japanese landscape, culture and history through their travels. Meanwhile, each character had its social meaning to audiences. The Japanese-educated young couple, who were the peasants' children, represented Japanese-educated youths in Manchukuo. The two peasants represented middle-aged Chinese or local elites in Manchukuo, who grew up with traditional Chinese education. Most of them considered the Japanese as invaders.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid. p. 100.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ Ibid. p. 102.

The film wanted to publicize that all Manchurians should love Japan via more understanding of Japanese culture and Pan Asian ideology.

Apart from national enlightened films, Man'ei also made documentaries, educational films and newsreels. In order to make professional documentaries and newsreels in both languages, Man'ei employed Japanese experts from Japan and SMR.²⁰¹ As a result, it was SMR that supported the propaganda project.

The making of documentaries and educational films increased in quantity and improved in quality, which greatly supported Man'ei's cultural project. To serve audiences of different nationalities, Man'ei made both Chinese language and Japanese language documentaries and educational films. The quantity increased from 60 documentaries in the first three years, to 110 films in this period.²⁰² The content of the documentaries covered various topics. In the new period, they still had the contents on Army activities, building of industries, travelling and royal activities, but also Manchukuo political events, royal ceremonies, national boundary and geography, law, youth, schools, travelling and hygiene.

Newsreel-making became an individual section in the enlightened filmmaking department. The newsreels were made chronologically, beginning in 1939.²⁰³ It made *Man'ei News* in Chinese and *Man'ei Communications* in Japanese. There were thirteen volumes in the first year.²⁰⁴ By the end of 1942, Man'ei produced 193

²⁰¹ Manshu bunka kyo-kai [Manchuria culture association] 满洲文化协会, *Manshu-nenkan* [Manchuria Yearbook] 满洲年鉴, Vol. 9, originally published Dairen: Manshu-bunka kyo-kai, 1935, republished (Tokyo: Nihon to-sho-sentaa, 1999), pp. 333-334.

²⁰² Ibid.

²⁰³ Ibid. p. 334.

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

volumes in both languages.²⁰⁵ In 1940, Man'ei made *Manchurian Children*, targeting children and students in Manchukuo.²⁰⁶ On average, it made ten volumes each year. By the end of 1942, Man'ei made twenty-nine volumes of *Manchurian Children*.²⁰⁷ In order to help Japanese understand Manchukuo, Man'ei and Japan had monthly newsreel exchanges since 1942.²⁰⁸ This genre of enlightened films served to publicize patriotism and Japanese goodwill to Manchukuo. They were not only broadcasted in Manchukuo, but also in Japan, as well as its occupied territories: Taiwan and Korea. In order to publicize the national cultural project and educate the audience, the distribution system played an important role. MCC led not only commercial cinema broadcasting, but also travelling teams and film companies' alliance in Beijing and Shanghai, which served the national cultural project.

4.4 Film Alliance with Chinese Film Company and North China Film Company

To expand Manchukuo and Japanese cultural power into northern and middle China, Man'ei built film companies' alliance in Beijing and Shanghai in 1939 and 1940.²⁰⁹ The film companies' alliance, which was led by Man'ei, was a product of political cooperation. It was made up of three film companies, as Man'ei, Chinese Film Company (CFC) and North China Film Company (NCFC).²¹⁰ In order to keep the leadership in the politicalized film alliance, Man'ei kept nearly half stocks of the other

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

²⁰⁸ Ibid. Vol. 10, p. 385.

²⁰⁹ Ibid. Vol. 7, p. 434.

²¹⁰ Ibid.

two companies.

The Chinese Film Company, located in Nanjing, was a political cooperation between Japan and KMT Nanjing Government in 1939.²¹¹ CFC was officially founded in Nanjing on 27 June 1939.²¹² CFC had start-up capital of 1,000,000 Yuan. The KMT power contributed half of its capital of 500,000 Yuan. Man'ei and three other Japanese film companies, Tōhō, Shochiku and Fuji Photo Film were responsible for the other half of the capital in equal parts.²¹³ Later, the reconstruction of China's political powers reorganized CFC in 1940. The Nanjing Weixin Government headed by Wang Jingwei, took leadership of middle and southern China. CFC was reconstructed in 1940 to keep in times with the changing Chinese political situation. On 25 December 1940, CFC moved from Nanjing to Shanghai—the cultural, economic and Wang Jingwei political region of China.²¹⁴ Other reconstruction occurred in late December 1940. Finally, Man'ei kept forty-nine percent of CFC stocks and the Nanjing KMT government kept fifty-one percent of CFC stocks, giving the Nanjing KMT government leadership of CFC. Reconstruction was a collaborative effort between the Nanjing KMT government and Japan.

This film company, as a political cooperated production, would help Japanese power expand to southern China on both commercial and cultural requirements. The main businesses of CFC were film production, distribution and cultural film exchanging with other film companies. In the beginning, the basis structure for CFC

²¹¹ Ibid.

²¹² Ibid.

²¹³ Ibid.

²¹⁴ Hu Chang, *Man Ying—Guo ce dianying mianmian guan* [Many Perspectives on Manchuria Motion Picture Production and Distribution Co.], 满映—国策电影面面观, (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1990), p. 140.

was filmmaking, distribution, and administration. Later then, following Man'ei reformation, the structure of CFC was specified as five departments, namely administration, entertainment film department, enlightened film department, marketing department, filmmaking department and Nanjing branch.²¹⁵ Different from other studios starting with filmmaking, CFC established its business through the building of a film broadcasting system because Shanghai already had its own filmmaking industry. The CFC built twenty-six cinemas in middle China in 1941.²¹⁶ Also, the CFC had priority in screening new films and the CFC had cinemas specializing in imported films from one country. By the end of 1942, CFC had forty-one cinemas that specialized in showing Japanese films, fifty-two cinemas showing Chinese films and thirteen cinemas showing films from other countries.²¹⁷

In order to serve the propaganda goal, CFC built the travelling teams also. Their audiences were mainly Japanese soldiers, who took part in battles in middle China. Different from Man'ei broadcasts to local citizens, CFC broadcasts were intended to comfort Japanese soldiers.²¹⁸ In the beginning, there were only five teams. By the end of 1941, CFC travelling teams increased to seventeen, covering middle and southern China battlefields.

The main program in CFC was film exchange with Man'ei. CFC and Man'ei had month film exchanges since 1940.²¹⁹ CFC sent Shanghai entertainment films to

²¹⁵ Ibid.

²¹⁶ Ibid.

²¹⁷ Ibid., p. 142.

²¹⁸ Ibid.

²¹⁹ Manshu bunka kyo-kai [Manchuria culture association] 满洲文化协会, *Manshu-nenkan* [Manchuria Yearbook] 满洲年鉴, Vol. 9, originally published Dairen: Manshu-bunka kyo-kai, 1935, republished (Tokyo: Nihon to-sho-sentaa, 1999), p. 334. As the investments were done in North and Middle China, all the unit of investment amount were Chinese Yuan.

Man'ei, generating profits for both companies. Meanwhile, CFC imported Man'ei cultural films for cultural and political requirements and also for profit.

CFC was a successful example of a Man'ei satellite company in both commercial and cultural terms. The various businesses launched by CFC made the company profitable. Profits increased from 650,000 Yuan in 1939 to 3,500,000 Yuan in 1940.²²⁰ The cultural and political functions were the other crucial benefits of the CFC. The CFC, which was mainly a political undertaking, was strictly led by the Nanjing KMT government and Japanese powers. Although the CFC did not directly produce cultural films, it imported Man'ei cultural films on a monthly basis and sent travelling teams to Japanese soldiers in the central China battlefield. All its activities were directed by these two political powers. In April 1942, CFC merged twelve other Shanghai film companies, becoming the China United Film Company (CUFC), still under Japanese leadership.²²¹ The reorganization of CFC demonstrated total Japanese control of central China through the cultural industry.

North China Film Company (NCFC) was the other member in Man'ei film companies' alliance. NCFC was originally from Man'ei northern China branch, which was founded in Peking in the beginning of 1938.²²² One year later, NCFC was under the joint leadership of Man'ei and North China KMT power. In the beginning, the NCFC had a start-up capital of 600,000 Yuan, of which 250,000 was invested by Man'ei, 200,000 Yuan by Japanese military powers, 100,000 Yuan by Tōhō,

²²⁰ Hu Chang, *Man Ying—Guo ce dianying mianmian guan* [Many Perspectives on Manchuria Motion Picture Production and Distribution Co.], 满映—国策电影面面观, (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1990), p. 143.

²²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 145.

²²² Manshu bunka kyo-kai [Manchuria culture association] 满洲文化协会, *Manshu-nenkan* [Manchuria Yearbook] 满洲年鉴, Vol. 7, originally published Dairen: Manshu-bunka kyo-kai, 1935, republished (Tokyo: Nihon to-sho-sentaa, 1999), p. 434.

Shochiku, Fuji Photo Film and lastly, 250,000Yuan by Northern China KMT government.²²³ Different from CFC's profitable film distribution and exhibition market in Shanghai, NCFC's main businesses were enlightened film production and exchanges with Man'ei and CFC. The establishment of NCFC's enlightened film making business introduced middle China history and culture to Chinese and Japanese audience and perfected served the national cultural project.

Because of the film exchange business, NCFC became a node for northern and southern film markets. It exported its enlightened films to Manchukuo, Chongqing, Shanghai and Japan—political centers in the Sino-Japanese war. Meanwhile, NCFC imported mainly films from its alliance partners. For example, it imported all Man'ei films, 420 Japanese films and 60 Shanghai films in one year.²²⁴ NCFC profited immensely from this film exchange. In 1940, it had 1,952,000 Yuan in profits, of which film exchange accounted for 1,620,000 Yuan.²²⁵

The film companies' alliance, which was headed by Man'ei expanded Manchukuo national cultural project to the center of China. In terms of stock holding in these film companies, Japanese military power was the real leader of this alliance. The alliance was a political product, of both KMT government and Japanese military powers. Film exchange, as the main business of the alliance, brought both commercial and cultural profits to each company.

The expansion of Man'ei influence to central and southern China developed

²²³ Ibid.

²²⁴ Hu Chang, *Man Ying—Guoce dianying mianmian guan* [Many Perspectives on Manchuria Motion Picture Production and Distribution Co.], 满映—国策电影面面观. (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1990), p. 147.

²²⁵ Ibid. p. 148.

Man'ei's strength in both commercial and cultural goals. Meanwhile, Man'ei cooperated with Manchuria Concordia Association (Manzhou Xiehe Hui) in order to make travelling teams business into a nation-wide cultural project. Man'ei first upgraded its roaming film broadcast units from a group to an individual section under the film distribution department, which would increase the status of travelling teams' work. The travelling team project was divided into three parts: regular travelling team, special travelling team and independent travelling team in 1941.²²⁶ All broadcasting was directly led by Man'ei. The regular travelling team covered the duties of former shift broadcasting groups. Special travelling teams were sent to military powers, schools, and poor remote villages. Independent travelling team was led by local government and offices, which would choose the content of cultural films based on the local situation.

The specialization of travelling teams increased the number of cultural films broadcasting since 1941. The *Manchukuo Yearbook* records that Man'ei's regular travelling times increased from 20 times in 1939 to 94 times in 1940.²²⁷ They broadcasted 120 times in 1942, whereby eighteen groups covered 242 places.²²⁸ New special travelling teams broadcasted 1,280 times with seventy-two units in schools, poor remote villages and amongst military troops.²²⁹ Increased enlightened film broadcasting served the Manchukuo cultural project aimed at educating audiences.

In order to serve the national cultural project, Man'ei enlightened films were

²²⁶ Manshu bunka kyo-kai [Manchuria culture association] 满洲文化协会, *Manshu-nenkan* [Manchuria Yearbook] 满洲年鉴, Vol. 11, originally published Dairen: Manshu-bunka kyo-kai, 1935, republished (Tokyo: Nihon to-sho-sentaa, 1999), pp. 433-434.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 433.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 434.

²²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 434.

greatly developed and high returned from both film production and distribution. The independent of enlightened film making department, which only Japanese employees, made great amount of documentaries and newsreels in both language. The bilingual films made propaganda to Chinese, Japanese and its people in its colonies. The successful national propaganda films with entertainment factors not only attracted local citizens but were also welcomed by Japanese audiences. It made a beautiful miracle of Li Xianglan, who was the most famous Man'ei stars via the national propaganda films. The distribution of enlightened films was more efficient than the first period through the MCC, film alliance and the travelling teams. As a practice of cultural project goal, the building and strengthen of the film companies alliance, which was a political cooperated product, greatly helped the cultural film exchange and perfected the national cultural project.

4.5 Conclusion

During this high return period, Man'ei changed and developed greatly in both commercial and cultural aspects, which helped Man'ei totally control the Northeast China film industry. The development was led by Amakasu and his reformations. In the commercial aspect, Amakasu differentiated relevant departments' duties in two reformations. He made entertainment filmmaking an individual department and invited famous professional Japanese filmmakers as specialists. They made the bulk of entertainment films, which were welcomed by the audience. Meanwhile, Man'ei

expanded its cinema broadcasting to middle cities and county towns, which helped earn profits. Localization of films and filmmakers was another crucial section in the Man'ei commercial product, which greatly helped Man'ei earn profits. To attract local Chinese audiences and other audiences in central and southern China, Man'ei needed to make films preferred by Chinese audiences. So Man'ei trained Chinese assistants or students as film directors, screenwriters and cameramen in Man'ei training school. Man'ei even sponsored Wang Xinzhai to Japan to study film directing courses. Meanwhile, Man'ei raised Chinese actors and actresses' salaries, which made them stay at Man'ei and work hard in their jobs. Man'ei film content mainly consisted of audience-directed romantic or family stories. The most popular films were comedy and costume drama, most of which were made by Man'ei. For distribution, Man'ei built a new organization, Manchurian Cinemas Company (MCC), in order to publicize its films. MCC directly controlled all the cinemas in Manchukuo and give priority to Japanese and Man'ei films on exhibition. Through the MCC, Man'ei and Japanese films became popular.

During this period, the Man'ei cultural project developed and achieved its national cultural goal. Changes and development were made through the Amakasu reform. First, he changed the Man'ei structure. Amakasu made enlightened filmmaking an individual, at equal footing with entertainment filmmaking. It showed the crucial status of enlightened films. Enlightened films were divided into national films, educational films, documentaries and newsreels, intended for different audiences. To aid distribution, which was an important part in the cultural project, Man'ei changed

the frames and built a new organization in order to serve the national culture project. The Film Companies' Alliance was built in 1940 with Northern Chinese Film Company in Peking and Chinese Film Company in Shanghai. It was a political cooperated product between Japan and KMT powers in different areas, which was led by Man'ei. Cultural film exchange and exhibition was the main function of this alliance. Firstly, Man'ei films became popular beyond Northeast China. But much more important was letting Japanese powers expand to central and south China. It also supported Japanese military activities via the cultural project. Travelling teams also progressed in this period, which was divided into regular, special, and independent travelling teams. All changes in the distributions section not only served the national cultural project, but also greatly pushed the project and got the spiritual profits.

Beyond the two projects, there was an obvious interaction between commercial product and cultural project. The commercial product reaped financial profits through its cinemas. The cultural project reaped political benefits and ideological support for Man'ei. In practice, the commercial model ensured the development of the cultural project. The cultural project guided the development of the commercial model. From the perspective of profit, the cultural project's political benefits provided the commercial model's material profits. When we discuss Man'ei commercial product and cultural project, they must be regarded as inter-dependent.

Chapter 5: The Beautiful Propaganda and Struggling Period of

Man'ei

As a Propaganda engine of Manchukuo and its sponsor Japan, the destiny of Man'ei closely followed the ambition of Japan in World War II. At the beginning of the 1940s, Japan and its axis partners have not seen their doom and made Man'ei into a high return progress on both aspects of economical gain and national cultural project. The breakout of the Pacific War in 1941 however entailed the transformation of Man'ei into an agency largely concerned with producing and disseminating cultural and political propaganda until the end of the War.

The turning point of Man'ei was the Pearl Harbor Incident in December 1941, which was also the turning point of WWII. As an industry under Japanese sponsorship, all the Man'ei film policies and activities served Japan for supporting and eulogizing her in its last period. There were two stages in Man'ei's final struggling period. In the first year after the Pearl Harbor Incident, Man'ei was well encouraged from Japanese victories in the battle fields, which pushed Man'ei make a number of national films with entertainment factors. Later, Amakasu led his third reform from 1942 to 1943, which moved Man'ei's mission from two goals to one: cultural influence. Although the mission of Man'ei was moved to cultural function, there were still some entertainment films been produced in the beginning. However, Japanese continued defeats in the war from 1943 to 1945 made Man'ei crazily pursue its political propaganda project via film. On one hand, Man'ei made "beautiful propaganda" films

with the purpose of gathering audience supporting the war and decorating a peaceful society. On the other hand, they made hundreds of newsreels and documentaries in documenting Japanese victory and memorializing the dead soldiers. However, the destiny of Man'ei still could not get rid of the war. It was ended accompanied with the war and the sacrifice of Amakasu.

5.1 The Reformation of Man'ei

After the Pearl Harbor Incident, Man'ei fulfilled the propaganda function better than other business goals. In order to serve the war, even the targeted cultural project was stressed as a political propaganda engine. Man'ei positively supported Japanese cultural project through its national cultural project and put its emphasis on making new enlightened films, which were considered as beautiful propaganda films, documentaries and newsreels. Man'ei set up a new department on enlightened film production. This department specialized in shooting special subject newsreels and documenting the war.²³⁰ Immediately after the Pearl Harbor Incident, a documentary on the Pacific War called *News Special for the War* was produced by Man'ei.²³¹ This positive and cooperative attitude towards its sponsor-state brought Man'ei the dominant mission of concentrating on its cultural project to broadcasting Japan and her glories. Man'ei became a propaganda tool in every sense. For example, a journal

²³⁰ Manshu bunka kyo-kai [Manchuria culture association] 满洲文化协会, *Manshu-nenkan* [Manchuria Yearbook] 满洲年鉴, Vol. 8, originally published Dairen: Manshu-bunka kyo-kai, 1935, republished (Tokyo: Nihon to-sho-sentaa, 1999), p. 362.

²³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 363.

called the *Film Pictorial* was started issuing from the beginning of 1943.²³² This new publication served for reporting new Man'ei wartime films and film critics, with a strong responsibility of political propaganda

However, there are reasons other than voluntarily turning towards the choice of concentrating on cultural influence and political advocacy. It had no choice but to take this road under the situation that Japanese troops lost their advantages and turn advance strategy into defense strategy. First of all, in order to increase the number of soldiers, the Japanese army enrolled Japanese adults in Manchukuo into the army, which drafted the majority of staff from Man'ei. All Japanese employees under the age of 35 were required to join the army, according to relevant regulations.²³³ Hence, the number of the staff in Man'ei was reduced by 70%, related to 1941.²³⁴ The much smaller groups of filmmaking staff reduced the quantity and quality of films, especially the entertainment films.

Hit by these reasons, Man'ei had to change its filmmaking policy and Amakasu adjusted the Man'ei system in 1943 (Diagram 5-1).²³⁵ This new system aimed at keeping regular filmmaking and distribution, as well as at meeting the wartime requirements. This change was different from previous reforms on purpose. The previous ones were creative and promising from both commercial and cultural projects, while the new one only focused on settling contemporary political problems. In order to respond to the hardship of fewer staff and less funding, the departments on

²³² Ibid.

²³³ Hu Chang, *Man Ying—Guoce dianying mianmian guan* [Many Perspectives on Manchuria Motion Picture Production and Distribution Co.], 满映—国策电影面面观, (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1990), p. 163.

²³⁴ Ibid., p. 164.

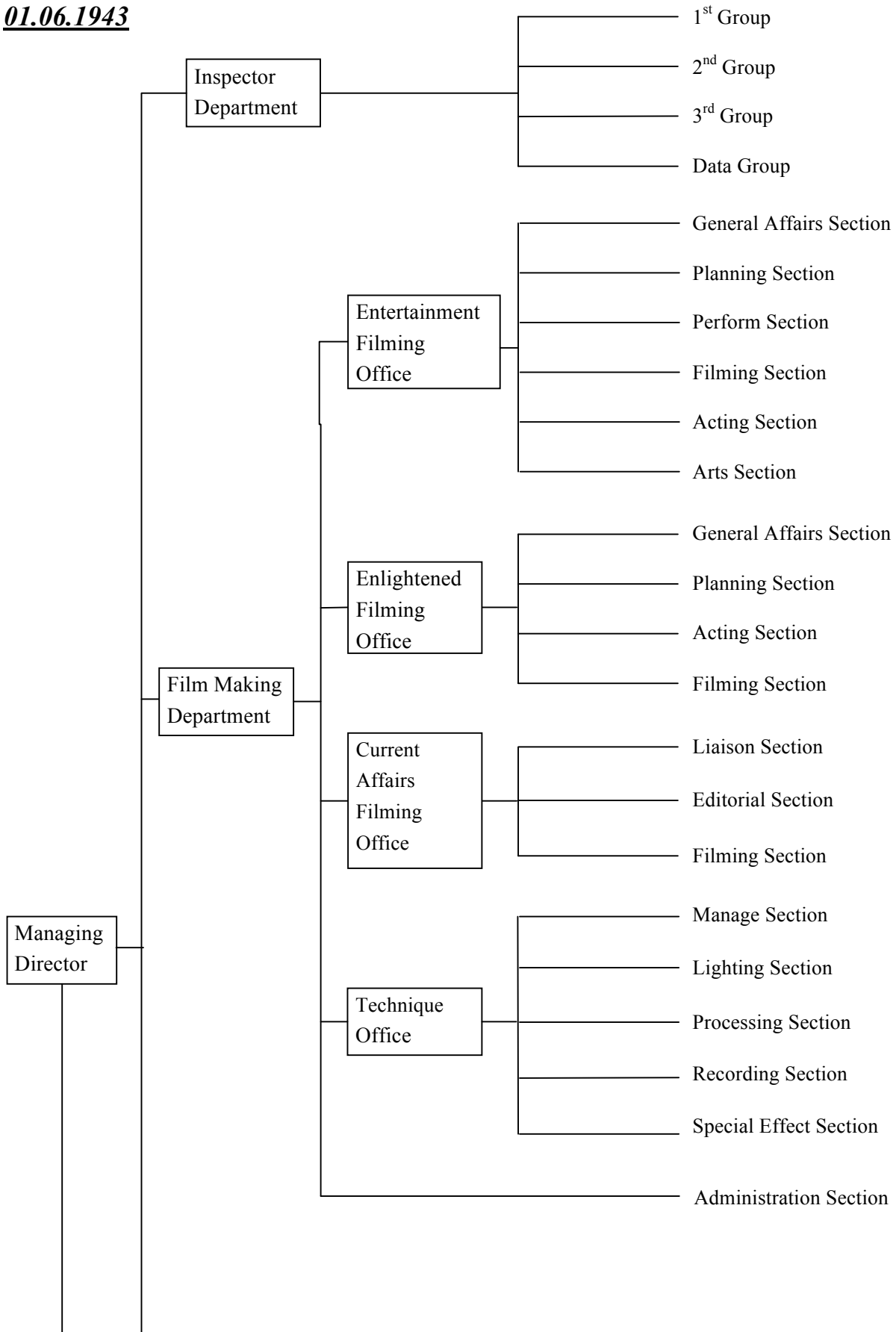
²³⁵ Ibid., pp. 168-170.

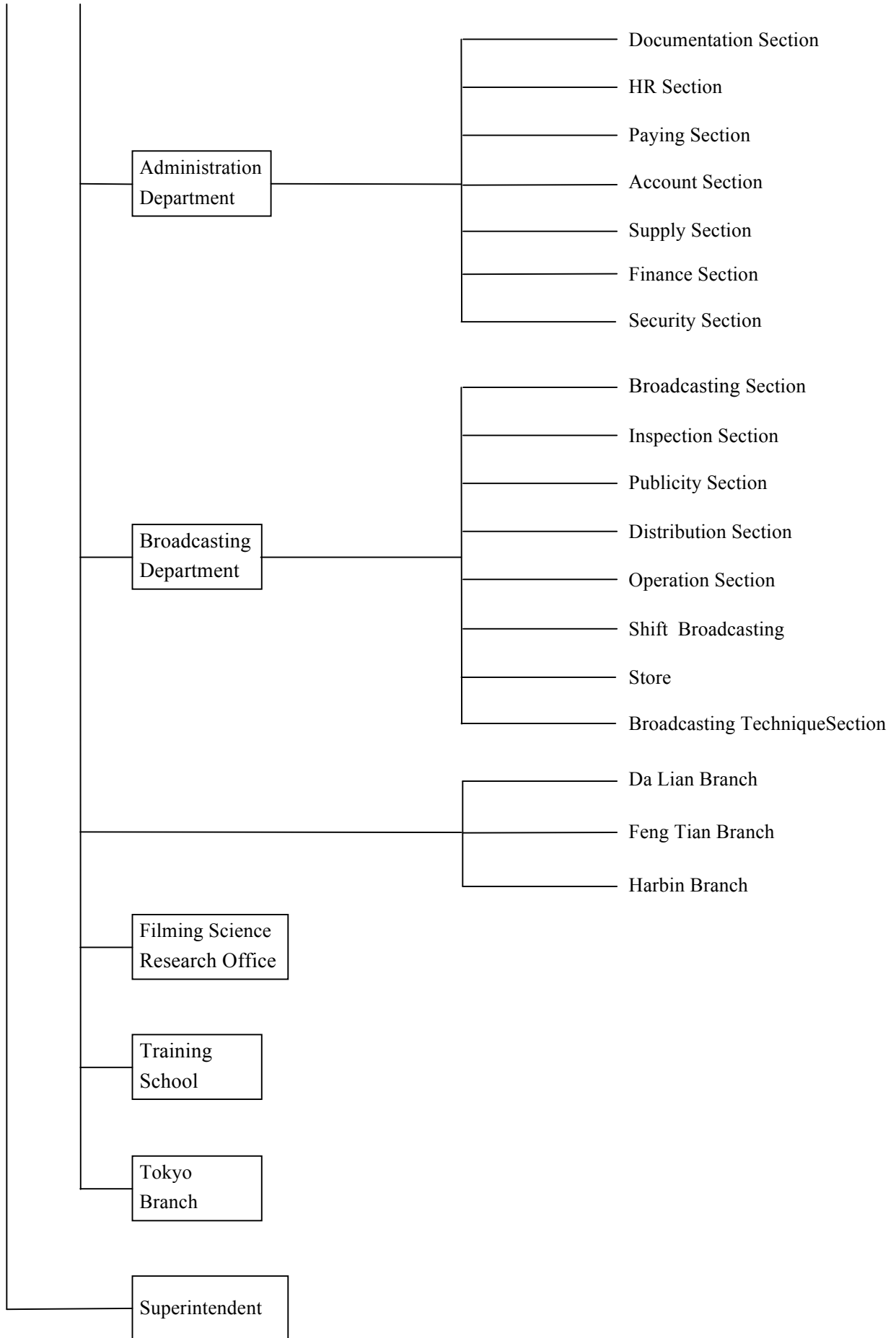
making entertainment films, enlightened films, and the film production management were merged tighter as a new films production department. It controlled four offices on entertainment filmmaking, enlightened filmmaking, newsreels and current affairs office, and even technique office.²³⁶ The company actually shrank hugely in the sense of film production. At the same time, other departments also readjusted their duties in order to reduce cost and to serve wartime political needs. However, a new department was created in the trend of reducing scale, the inspector department, which served the special needs of wartime political propaganda function. The inspector department specialized in checking whether the films contain any different voice from the Japanese policy.

²³⁶ Manshu bunka kyo-kai [Manchuria culture association] 满洲文化协会, *Manshu- nenkan* [Manchuria Yearbook] 满洲年鉴, Vol. 10, originally published Dairen: Manshu- bunka kyo-kai, 1935, republished (Tokyo: Nihon to-sho- sentaa, 1999), p. 384.

Diagram 5.1 The Structure of Man'ei in 1943

01.06.1943





5.2 Man'ei's Commercial Product

When cultural and political propaganda became the focus of Man'ei, its business of producing entertainment films developed toward its final struggling period. Due to staff budget reductions, Man'ei made fewer entertainment films of lower quality, than before. The result was decreasing profits, which made a vicious cycle. From 1943 to 1945, only 27 films were produced by Man'ei in total, including 12 films in 1943, 11 in 1944, and 4 in 1945.²³⁷ The amount was only a half of its regular productivity. The categories of films were reduced into only two: romances and ancient costume dramas. Most of the films still focused on the family issues or romantic stories. But comparing with the high return period, these films were low quality.

However, due to lack of Japanese filmmakers who were drafted to the Japanese Army, the well-trained Chinese filmmakers by Japanese played more important roles in entertainment film production now. As a matter of fact, their participation successfully adjusted taste of films to meet local audience, and hence made favorable profit for commercial mission. The *Enlightenment on Propose Marriage (Qiuhun Qishi)* in 1943 was a successful example of the entertainment films, which was made by Chinese film makers in this period.²³⁸

The film is about how a widower and her daughter find their true loves. The owner of a retail store, Wu Guoqin lost his wife for ten years, and lived with his daughter, Fang. Fang fell in love with a young man who worked in the store called Hua Pu.

²³⁷ Hu Chang, *Man Ying—Guoce dianying mianmian guan* [Many Perspectives on Manchuria Motion Picture Production and Distribution Co.], 满映—国策电影面面观. (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1990), p. 181.

²³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 185.

Meanwhile, Mr. Wu read an advertisement that Ms. Fang was looking for mate. He was very interested in and wrote to her. They fell in love through mails. However, Ms. Fang did not know the affair of the advertisement at all. Finally, they found out it was Miss Fang's idea to match her father and Hua Pu's mother. The two couples got married in the end.

The film was directed by Wang Xinzhai, who was supported by Man'ei and went to Japan to study directing for one year. He was one of the few Chinese directors who could individually direct films in Man'ei. The advantage for his film was putting his stories in local circumstance and reflecting local issues, which matched local audience's taste perfectly. The theme of this film, remarriage issue of the middle aged Chinese, was often against by their children in the reality. Wang brought this common issue on screen and made it as a comedy, therefore it was popular.

Although the wartime situation forced Man'ei to move its business mission to political propaganda, the entertainment films still attracted audiences and earned profits. The localized Chinese filmmakers helped Man'ei to make profitable entertainment films with social meanings in this struggling period. As we discussed, the commercial product keep earn money in the first year of this period via the 12 entertainment films, by which Chinese made. However, the continued failures of Japanese military activities in the war pushed the crash of Man'ei commercial product.

5.3 Cultural Project of Man'ei in the Last Period

In comparison with the commercial mission, cultural and political propaganda was more crucial in the last stage of Man'ei. Inheriting the basic structure on enlightened film production and exhibition, Man'ei put a lot of money on making beautiful propaganda films, newsreels and documentaries in the last several years, which made film's political propaganda function primary. Man'ei emphasized the cultural significance of films by three means. It produced national cultural films; short newsreels and documentaries of "enlightened films"; and made cooperative beautiful propaganda films with Japanese or Japanese sponsored studios. Although the making of the national cultural films was under the charge of entertainment filmmaking section, it did not really put the entertainment issue into these films. The five national cultural films, made from 1943 to 1945, all focused on publicizing righteousness and glories of Japanese troops and Manchukuo Army.²³⁹ Furthermore, the film distribution section was also adjusted to meet the propaganda purpose.

The political propaganda mission was firstly revealed in the reform of Man'ei organization. The development of enlightened film production and distribution closely connected with Japanese progress in the war. In order to save costs and increase efficiency, enlightened film production was downgraded from an individual department to a section led by the filmmaking department. Later, in order to fulfill the requirement on making front battle fields newsreels, the newsreels making was

²³⁹ Manshu bunka kyo-kai [Manchuria culture association] 满洲文化协会, *Manshu-nenkan* [Manchuria Yearbook] 满洲年鉴, Vol. 10, originally published Dairen: Manshu-bunka kyo-kai, 1935, republished (Tokyo: Nihon to-sho-sentaa, 1999), p. 384.

separated from enlightened filmmaking to be an individual section in filmmaking department. Although the enlightened filmmaking was downgraded, the national propaganda film making, later became beautiful propaganda, was the crucial section in enlightened filmmaking.

In order to serve political propaganda, the first stage of beautiful propaganda was the national cultural films with entertainment factors. Different from commercial entertainment films, the national cultural films were all made by Japanese filmmakers, who were working in entertainment filmmaking section. All the films emphasized patriotism. *Moonlighting (Yexi Feng)* in 1944 and *Orchid Special Service Team (Lanhua Tegongdui)* in 1945 were two representatives.²⁴⁰ *Moonlighting* was a detective film on captured American spies.²⁴¹ The spies were seeking information on the Manchukuo airplane industry so that they could destroy the manufacturing line. Manchukuo policemen detected the plot and captured the spies. The *Orchid Special Service Team* was stories about Pearl Harbor Incident.²⁴² It publicized the bravery and wisdom of Japanese soldiers. When this film was shooting, Japan almost reached its doom in the war. Therefore, the shooting was full of hardship. There were no airplanes for shooting, since all were gone to the battlefields. Its Japanese director was drafted into army. It finally finished up with the help of the pilot training school in Fengtian.²⁴³ Both films praise the Japanese brave activities and encourage people to support the war.

²⁴⁰ Hu Chang, *Man Ying—Guoce dianying mianmian guan* [Many Perspectives on Manchuria Motion Picture Production and Distribution Co.], 满映—国策电影面面观, (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1990), p. 184.

²⁴¹ Ibid.

²⁴² Ibid.

²⁴³ Ibid.

In order to serve the propaganda requirement better and make the national cultural films attractive, Man'ei began to make beautiful propaganda films, which cooperated with Japanese and its sponsored studios. This cooperation is different from previous ones during the high return period, which focused on entertainment film shooting. The new cooperation stressed on political propaganda function via beautiful actress' performance. The feature of the beautiful propaganda films was Li Xianglan, the most popular and famous Man'ei actress. She starred in all the joint-made film from 1942 to 1945. In her films, the *My Golden Oriole (Wo De Ying)* in 1943 and *The Greatest Story Ever Told (Wanshi Liufang)* in 1944 were two representatives of joint-made beautiful propaganda films.²⁴⁴

The film, *My Golden Oriole* was a joint production of Man'ei and the Tōhō Limited Company, a top Japanese filmmaking company. It was a story about a Japanese family in Manchukuo. The family lived in Harbin in the 1930s and the family members lost contact with each other in the Mukden Incident in 18 September 1931. The mother died and father went to Shanghai to make a living. The daughter, Man, was adopted by a Russian artist lived in Harbin and was trained to be a singer there. Few years later, the father went back to look for his daughter. They dramatically met each other in the theater when the daughter gave a performance. Unfortunately, her Russian step-father died soon at the same time. Man's Japanese father and Man's boyfriend helped her to bury the Russian foster father. The film displays a strong sense of Japanese loyalty, thankfulness, and love. It emphasized that

²⁴⁴ Manshu bunka kyo-kai [Manchuria culture association] 满洲文化协会, *Manshu-nenkan* [Manchuria Yearbook] 满洲年鉴, Vol. 11, originally published Dairen: Manshu-bunka kyo-kai, 1935, republished (Tokyo: Nihon to-sho-sentaa, 1999), p. 433.

the Japanese were actually the victims of the war, by hiding the truth that Japan was the one who started the war and made the Mukden Incident. Except the beauties, another special point of this film was using songs to achieve the political propaganda purpose. The audience was deeply influenced by terms of Man's singing, which was played by Li Xianglan.

The Greatest Story Ever (Wanshi Liufang) in 1944 was the other important representative of Man'ei joint beautiful propaganda films. The film was produced together with the Shanghai Chinese Film Company (CFC). The story happened during the Opium War in 1840. In order to ban opium smoking and trading in China, the Governor-General of Guangdong and Guangxi provinces, Lin Zexu, fought against the John Company sponsored by the British government. Lin's daughter, started by Li Xianglan, sold candies to people who smoked opium. She sang songs in order to encourage people to quit smoking. The story ended with the outbreak of the Opium War in 1840. In order to direct audiences far away from the contemporary Sino-Japanese battlefield, the film emphasizes the conflicts between China and the Western powers, and suggests the root of Chinese problems was the notorious exploitation of the Western powers.

Although the beautiful propaganda films, which belonged to the category of enlightened films, were greatly welcomed by Manchukuo and Japanese audience, the quantity and quality of enlightened film production still decreased because of the war. Man'ei made 19 enlightened films during the last three years of the war, including 13

films in 1943, 4 films in 1944, and 2 in 1945.²⁴⁵ This was much fewer than the 110 enlightenment films produced in the previous period. Unlike the entertainment films that were participated in by Chinese filmmakers, these enlightened films were completely made by Japanese filmmakers. All of these films concentrated on the war issues.

During the last period, the only significant increase of production was in the newsreel making. Man'ei considered the newsreel as the best tool for war propaganda. Man'ei started shooting the *Man'ei Communications (Manying Tongxun)* in Japanese language and the *Man'ei Times (Manying Shibao)* in Chinese from 1940. By the collapse of Manchukuo, they had produced 307 volumes of the *Man'ei Communications* and 313 volumes of the *Man'ei Times* in total.²⁴⁶ In order to shoot newsreels for children, Man'ei made *Man'ei child*, which was 55 volumes by the end of 1945.²⁴⁷ Comparing with last period, the making on newsreels increased steady at 4 volumes per month.

During the struggling period, not only film production, but also film distribution was adjusted towards the propaganda. Man'ei strengthened the political propaganda distribution into every corner of Manchukuo. On one hand, Man'ei strictly controlled the cinema network in cities and county towns; on the other hand, it reinforced the travelling teams in villages and remote areas. At the same time, Man'ei strengthened film censorship. As a result, Man'ei films took the first place in film broadcasting in

²⁴⁵ Manshu bunka kyo-kai [Manchuria culture association] 满洲文化协会, *Manshu- nenkan* [Manchuria Yearbook] 满洲年鉴, Vol. 10, originally published Dairen: Manshu- bunka kyo-kai, 1935, republished (Tokyo: Nihon to-sho- sentaa, 1999), p. 384.

²⁴⁶ Ibid. Vol.11, p. 433.

²⁴⁷ Ibid.

northeast China cinemas, followed by NCFC and CFC films. The number of Japanese, Korean and German films followed.²⁴⁸ The decreasing number of Japanese films shown in Manchukuo was due to the change of film policy in Japan. In order to coordinate with the war, Japan reorganized all of its own film companies into three big ones and majored in newsreels and documentaries of the war. From May 1942, two film distribution systems, Tōhō and Shochiko, took in charge of all film distributed in Japan.²⁴⁹ Each of the system exchanged two films with Man'ei every month. Every film showed for ten days. Because of the new Japanese film distribution policy, only thirty Japanese films were showed in Manchukuo.²⁵⁰

Following the changing of Japanese film policy, Man'ei strengthened the control on cinema networks in order to serve political propaganda. In the prosperous period, cinema networks were mainly used to earn money. But during the struggling wartime, it turned to serve cultural and political propaganda. Although the war gradually destroyed the economy of Manchukuo, the number of cinemas surprisingly increased at the same time. There were 176 cinemas in 1942, and 213 cinemas during 1943 to 1945 with an increase of 27.²⁵¹ Among the 213 cinemas, 91 belonged to Japanese businessmen and 79 were owned by Chinese.²⁵² The other 41 were controlled by both Japanese powers and Chinese businessmen.²⁵³ All cinemas gave priority to Man'ei and Japanese films. In order to totally use film to serve propaganda function, Man'ei

²⁴⁸ Ibid. Vol.10, p. 385.

²⁴⁹ Iwasaki, Akira, Zhong Li translate, *Riben Dianying Shi* [Japanese Film History], 日本电影史 (Beijing: China Film Press, 1981), p. 96.

²⁵⁰ Manshu bunka kyo-kai [Manchuria culture association] 满洲文化协会, *Manshu-nenkan* [Manchuria Yearbook] 满洲年鉴, Vol. 10, originally published Dairen: Manshu-bunka kyo-kai, 1935, republished (Tokyo: Nihon to-sho-sentaa, 1999), p. 385.

²⁵¹ Ibid. Vol.11, p. 433.

²⁵² Ibid.

²⁵³ Ibid.

News or Japanese News were shown before entertainment films as a compulsory section.

At the same time, travelling teams were largely exploited by Man'ei to spread propaganda to every corner of Manchukuo. Although the war made Man'ei lack funds and materials, travelling teams were continuously sent to villages to broadcast films without charging any fee. There were still three types of travelling teams as regular, special and independent travelling teams.²⁵⁴ The regular and independent travelling teams were once a month, like in the past. The special travelling teams changed their showing places from schools to barracks to encourage morale of soldiers. According to the *Manchukuo Yearbook*, the audiences of travelling teams were about 4,500,000 in 1943 and 5,000,000 in 1944.²⁵⁵ By showing political and military propaganda to the enlarged audience group, Man'ei fulfilled its political mission.

5.4 The Death of Amakasu and End of Man'ei

In its last few years, the purpose of Man'ei was so deeply connected with the Japanese military that its destiny was also tied with that of Japanese troops. In the beginning, Man'ei staffs, who were drafted into the Japanese army, were put in the relevant positions as reporters and photographers. With the continuance of the war, nearly all the Japanese staff of Man'ei was forced to join the Japanese Army and most of them were sent to fight at the frontier of the battlefield. Although the film distribution and

²⁵⁴ Ibid. , Vol.10, pp. 384-385. Vol.11, pp. 432-433.

²⁵⁵ Ibid.

propaganda project were still in process, the film production department reduced its productions because it was lacking of manpower and funds. All the sections in Man'ei served only one goal now: propaganda.

The defeat of the Japanese army in the war led Man'ei to its end. Man'ei leader Amakasu sensed the collapse of Japanese military empire when the Soviet Union announced war against Japanese in northern China on 8 August 1945.²⁵⁶ He required Japanese staff and Chinese employees to stay at Man'ei for final resistance. However, Japanese surrender seven days later destroyed his last hope. On 19 August, the Soviet Red Army controlled Xinjing. Amakasu ended his life with desperation in the morning of the next day.²⁵⁷ Following him, the once powerful Japanese sponsored Manchukuo film company, Man'ei, met its doom with the end of its sponsor's empire.

5.5 Conclusion

The destiny of Man'ei was closely tied with its sponsor Japan and the war. The growth of Man'ei went step by step with the development of Manchukuo and Japanese military power. Under the sponsorship of Japan, Manchukuo accumulated capital and established complete organizations. When the Japanese military government and its troops advanced on the battlefield, it was time for Man'ei to glorify. Despite the lack of funds, the war promised a good future. The national films, later became joint-made beautiful propaganda film was a successful production to

²⁵⁶ Hu Chang, *Man Ying—Guoce dianying mianmian guan* [Many Perspectives on Manchuria Motion Picture Production and Distribution Co.], 满映—国策电影面面观. (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1990), p. 208.

²⁵⁷ Ibid.

serve the political propaganda function and earn profits during the struggling period.

However, when the advantage turned against its sponsor and her troops, the problem of both political and financial pressures burdened Man'ei. Film shooting became harder and finally impossible. Profit for enlarging companies was less and less. During its whole life, Man'ei was trying to combine economic profit and cultural project together. In the time of peace, the two trajectories did not demonstrate such conflicts. However, when it came to wartime, one trajectory had to be sacrificed. The success of entertainment film made by Chinese filmmakers demonstrated that economic hardship in the society was not the crucial factor caused end of commercial trajectory. As a company patronized and controlled by the Japanese state, the commercial trajectory was one doomed to be rejected. At first, it seems the cultural model defeated commercial model. However, the superficial success of cultural model brought itself to the end.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

By the 1930s, the two clear tendencies in the world film industry – Hollywood’s commercial integration and the European cultural project-- encountered and interacted with each other in the Manchukuo film industry, which was one of the pioneers in this cultural industry.

As my discussion on the history of Man’ei shows its destiny was closely tied with its sponsor Japan and the war. Before the foundation of Man’ei in 1937, the film consumer market was dominated by Shanghai and American films, while the cinema market was mostly led by Japanese capitalists in northeast China market. As a state-sponsored industry, the whole life of Man’ei was trying to combine economic profit and cultural assimilation together with the purpose of total controlling of Manchukuo film industry. In the correspondingly peaceful time as the first and second period from 1937 to 1942, the two factors developed and enhanced each other. The first period as the foundation time from 1937 to 1939 clarified the two goals of Man’ei as earning profits via vertical commercial integration and building Man’ei to be a cultural project, which would serve for the development of Manchukuo and its Japanese sponsor. In order to put the two goals into practice, Man’ei expanded its power in the northeast China film market via film production, distribution, exhibition and strict censorship on both entertainment and enlightened films. The second period from 1940 to 1942, was the high return time for both goals. Man’ei got money from entertainment film production and exhibition while build its cultural project by enlightened film making

and broadcasting, the strength of traveling teams and the successful cultural film alliance in Shanghai and Beijing. However, when it came to wartime, one factor had to be sacrificed. The success of entertainment films made by Chinese filmmakers demonstrated that economic hardship in the society was not the crucial factor caused end of commercial model. As a company patronized and controlled by Japan, the commercial factor was one doomed to be rejected. At first, it seems the cultural project defeated commercial model. However, the superficial success of cultural project as beautiful propaganda brought itself to the end.

In sum, Man'ei was trying to combine commercial products and cultural projects into one business. It was among the pioneers of this business model. The two projects could not be purely separated. They could co-exist, even enhance each other. The business model of Man'ei works for every cultural industry, not only in Manchukuo.

Meanwhile, the research reflects the daily life of the Manchurian people during the war. Manchukuo, which was considered as a hell fulfill with wars actually even during the war, daily life was still daily life. Film, which already played an important role in daily life, could be used to examine ordinary people's life in the 1930s and 40s in northeast China.

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Glossary

Man'ei	满映
Changying	长影
Manchuria Concordia Association	满洲协和会
Shenyang	沈阳
Tianguang Cinema	天光电影院
Zhang Henshui	张恨水
Dalian	大连
Fengtian	奉天
Xinjing	新京
Andong	安东
Chong Xian	崇县
Tieling	铁岭
Kaiyuan	开元
Rehe	热河
Kuan Chengzi	宽城子
Qimin Yinghua	启民映画
Wang Xinzhai	王心斋
Manying Xinwen	满映新闻
Manying Tongxun	满映通讯
Harbin	哈尔滨
Anshan	鞍山

Fushun	抚顺
Jilin City	吉林市
Siping City	四平市
Qiqihaer	齐齐哈尔
Tumen	图门
Hailaer	海拉尔
Jin County	金县
Benxihu	本溪湖
Princess County	公主岭
Mudanjiang	牡丹江
Yanji	延吉
Longjing County	龙井村
Shanghai guan	山海关
Lushun	旅顺
Jiamusi	佳木斯
Chengde	承德
Yingkou	营口
Tonghua	通化
Dunhua County	敦化县