

## 2 Mochinaga Tadahito and Animated Filmmaking in Early Socialist China

Mochinaga Tadahito (1919–1999) was a Japanese animator who flourished in wartime Tokyo and lived in China from 1945 to 1953, where he was prominent among the group of animators who established the industry in early socialist China. His role in the history of China is ignored or downplayed, however, because of a prevailing scholastic preoccupation about national identity and pure Chineseness. Mochinaga is obscure in histories of Japanese animation simply because he is considered less influential than Tezuka Osamu and Miyazaki Hayao but also because of the relative belittling of puppet animation. This chapter discusses hidden histories associated with Mochinaga and tracks the movements across the borders of Japan and China that constituted his career, and in so doing demonstrates that from the beginning of socialist China, the Chineseness of Chinese animation was tinged by Japanese animation, which was an indispensable stage for the development of Chinese animation at the time of regime change in the late 1940s and early 1950s.

### From Fantasy to Propaganda: Wartime Japanese Animation

Mochinaga was born in Tokyo on March 3, 1919, and spent his childhood in Manchuria, where his father worked for the South Manchuria Railway Company, or Mantetsu, which ran from 1906 to 1945.<sup>1</sup> Mochinaga and his family traveled back and forth between Japan and Manchuria during his childhood. After the Manchurian Incident (a staged event engineered by the Japanese military as a pretext for invasion) on September 18, 1931, he returned to Japan and finished middle school in Tokyo. Inspired and moved by Western animated films such as Disney's *Water Babies* (1935), Mochinaga decided to become an animator. He learned how to make animated films during his three years at the Applied Arts Department of Japan Art School (Nippon bijutsu gakkō ōyō bijutsu-ka) in Tokyo. His final art school project was the short film *Until an Animated Film Is Made* (*Manga eiga no dekiru made*, 1938).

Mochinaga's career as an animator was launched when Seo Mitsuyo hired him to work at the Art Film Company (GES) in 1939. Seo and Mochinaga worked primarily on animated films for children. Their first film, *The Marine Corps of Ducks* (*Ahiru rikusentai*, 1940) was commissioned by the Ministry of Education. Seo and Mochinaga later produced *Ant Boy* (*Ari-chan*, 1941) for which Mochinaga built a four-level multiplanar camera, the first to be used in Japan.<sup>2</sup> *The Marine Corps of Ducks* and *Ant Boy* are fairy tales that feature anthropomorphic animals and evoke a lyrical tranquility.

As World War II broke out in the Pacific, Mochinaga began to produce animated propaganda films for the Japanese Navy. As discussed earlier, Mochinaga and Seo Mitsuyo at the Art Film Company produced *Momotarō's Sea Eagles* (*Momotarō no umiwashi*, 1943) in response to the Chinese animated feature film *Princess Iron Fan* (*Tieshan gongzhu*, 1941), a preview of which they had seen, and which they then watched repeatedly in theaters to learn from (see chapter 1).<sup>3</sup> In *Momotarō's Sea Eagles*, Mochinaga was responsible for backgrounds, special effects, and photography. The goal of the film was to propagate militarist ideals and encourage young Japanese men to join the Japanese Air Force. According to his memoir, Mochinaga later was filled with remorse by the fact that many young men who watched it identified with Momotarō, joined the Japanese Air Force, and died.<sup>4</sup>

In 1943, the Art Film Company dissolved and was reincorporated into Asahi Film Company (Asahi eigasha). Seo left for Shōchiku Production Company and later produced *Momotarō's Divine Sea Warriors* (*Momotarō umi no shinpei*) in 1945.<sup>5</sup> Mochinaga stayed at Asahi Film and produced *Fuku-chan's Submarine* (*Fuku-chan no sensuikan*, 1944), his first solo effort. A propaganda film sponsored by the Japanese Navy, *Fuku-chan's Submarine* tells the story of a Japanese submarine attacking an enemy ship. To make the film, Mochinaga visited the naval base in Kure and was permitted as a passenger on a submarine (No. 157). Mochinaga drew on this experience when he animated *Fuku-chan's Submarine*.<sup>6</sup>

### Man'ei, Northeast Film Studio, and Shanghai Animation Film Studio

Japan exerted its colonial control over northeast China from the beginning of the twentieth century through the South Manchuria Railway Company, which was founded in Japan in 1906 and relocated to Dalian in Liaoning province of China in 1907. Given its monopoly over railways, coal mines, and the industrial sector, the company controlled much of Manchuria's formal economy. In 1923, it established a film unit to produce travel films to advertise Manchuria to potential

vs.  
propaganda  
film in  
russia  
in class,

passengers, investors, and businessmen. After Akutagawa Kōzō became the unit's head in 1928, the unit expanded and produced numerous propaganda documentaries supporting Japanese imperialism in Manchuria. After the Manchurian Incident, Japan quickly occupied northeast China. The puppet state of Manchukuo was established in 1932 with the aim of advancing Japan's imperialist agenda in China. Puyi, the last emperor of China, was invited by the Japanese to become emperor of Manchukuo. Its capital was today's Changchun (named Xinjing, new capital, by the Japanese), and the areas under Manchukuo rule were commonly called Manchuria.

To better disseminate Manchukuo's "national policy" and advocate the ideology of the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperty Sphere, the Manchukuo Film Association (Man'ei/Manying) was established in Changchun in 1937. Given its large scale of film production, Man'ei assimilated the film unit of Mantetsu in the early 1940s. Its primary purpose was to educate "uncultured" local Manchurians rather than Japanese people. It produced documentaries, live-action feature films, and newsreels, which were categorized into enlightenment films (*keimin eiga*), entertainment films (*gomin eiga*), and newsreels (*jiji eiga*). To better disseminate its film culture, Man'ei began publishing Japanese and Chinese versions of the magazine *Manchuria Film* (*Manshū eiga*) in December 1937 and renamed it *Film Pictorial* (*Dianying huabao*) in June 1941. Amakasu Masahiko ruled Man'ei with an iron fist from 1939 until it was closed in 1945.<sup>7</sup>

After Mochinaga finished *Fuku-chan's Submarine* in Tokyo in 1944, he suffered not only from overwork and physical exhaustion, but also from malnutrition due to food shortages in Japan. The production of animated film halted during the war, making it difficult for Mochinaga and other filmmakers to find employment in Japan.<sup>8</sup> Mochinaga's house was destroyed in Allied bombings. Having endured enough from what he described as a refugee-like lifestyle, Mochinaga migrated to Manchuria in June 1945.<sup>9</sup> This decision proved right. His wartime colleague Seo Mitsuyo, who co-created the propaganda films for the Japanese Navy, stayed in Japan, saw his career decline, and was forced to leave animation altogether.

Mochinaga's move had a reasonable basis, in part his personal connection with Manchuria, having lived there as a child. Furthermore, in Japanese popular imagination, Manchuria was a peaceful haven with abundant food and jobs at a time when Japan was besieged by war and food shortages. Man'ei films had popularized an image of Manchuria as prosperous, idyllic, and democratic. As Michael Baskett points out, "Man'ei's representation of self-sufficiency, relatively stable food supplies, and high salaries, tapped into the Taishō era (1912–1926) fantasies of a romantic Manchuria that was a haven for film personnel seeking to escape widespread industry downsizing and massive food rationing in Japan."<sup>10</sup>

Manchuria and Man'ei thus attracted Japanese filmmakers who felt economically and politically displaced in wartime Japan.

After Mochinaga settled in Manchuria, a former colleague at the Art Film Company who was working for Man'ei in Changchun introduced him to Man'ei director Kimura Sotoji. Kimura then invited Mochinaga to join the Man'ei art department. At the time, Kimura was working on *Little Sister Su* (*Su shaomei*, 1945), which combined live action with animation, and Kimura hoped that Mochinaga could contribute to its production. Mochinaga was officially put on the Man'ei payroll on July 15, 1945. He anticipated working on *Little Sister Su*, but received no further news from Kimura. Instead, he was assigned to produce *The Agriculture of Northern Manchuria* (*Kita Man no nōgyō*), using animation as a special effect to portray the growth of beans, sorghum, sweet potatoes, and other crops. However, as World War II came to an end the following month, Man'ei underwent a radical transformation and Mochinaga ended up producing no animated films during his stay.<sup>11</sup>

On August 15, 1945, Japan surrendered, and by August 19 the Soviet army controlled Changchun. Man'ei's head, Amakasu Masahiko, committed suicide on August 20. Without their charismatic leader, Man'ei was rudderless.<sup>12</sup> The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) capitalized on the city's turmoil and endeavored to take control of Man'ei. It wanted to develop its own film industry in Communist-controlled areas but had neither advanced filmmaking equipment nor skilled technicians. Man'ei was the largest film studio in East Asia and had the most advanced technological facilities, leading technicians, plentiful celluloid, and talented filmmakers.<sup>13</sup> The CCP thus felt that taking control of Man'ei was an important step for establishing its own film industry.

The Party kept a close eye on a Chinese man by the name of Zhang Xinshi. In 1936, Zhang had gone to Japan to earn a degree in film studies. While in Japan, he helped establish the magazine *Friends of Film and Literature* (*Yingyi zhi you*), modeled on Guo Moruo's *Creative Society* (*Chuangzao she*) in China. This left-leaning magazine attracted the attention of the Japanese government, and many of those associated with it were arrested and Zhang was blacklisted. When Zhang returned to China in 1939, he joined Man'ei as a script writer. Frequently investigated by the Japanese authorities, he was imprisoned in 1944 on the basis of a progressive left-leaning film script he had written. He was released shortly before the end of the war.<sup>14</sup> In late August 1945, Liu Jianmin, a CCP representative, approached Zhang and persuaded him to work for the Party to take over Man'ei. Through its informant Zhang, the CCP organized several of Man'ei's more progressive left-leaning staff, including Chinese and Japanese personnel, and launched its mobilization campaign. With the support of the CCP, progressive left-leaning Man'ei staff members transformed Man'ei into the Northeast Film Company (Dongbei dianying

gongsi) in Changchun on October 1, 1945.<sup>15</sup> The company mainly worked on Chinese, Japanese, and Korean versions of Soviet films, and Mochinaga was responsible for adding animation sequences to these Asian versions and for supplying handwritten subtitles.<sup>16</sup>

The CCP's rival, the Nationalist Party, also attempted to control Man'ei. As an agent of the Nationalist Party, Jiang Xueqian studied in Japan before joining Man'ei. When Amakasu became the head of Man'ei, he felt obliged to hire Chinese people to supervise Chinese employees. Jiang was the first of these he hired.<sup>17</sup> In late November 1945, Jiang collaborated with the Nationalist Party, arrested Zhang Xinshi and other pro-Communist members, and imprisoned them in the Public Security Bureau. They planned to replace Zhang with their own agents.<sup>18</sup> Although the Soviet Union's official position was neutral, it covertly supported the CCP and, as early as November 11, had transferred the Public Security Bureau to it.<sup>19</sup> Zhang and others were then released. Jiang Xueqian committed suicide.

To avoid further antagonism with the Nationalist Party, the Soviet Union appointed a Soviet whose Chinese name was Guo Xizhen as director of Northeast Film and Zhang Xinshi as vice director. In sum, the Nationalist Party did not want to offend the Soviet Union and made every effort to avoid a hostile takeover of the company.<sup>20</sup> On April 14, 1946, the Soviet army withdrew from Changchun. The Eighth Route Army led by the CCP soon launched an attack on Nationalist Party troops and took control of the entire Changchun region for the first time. Several days later, the Soviet Union transferred the Northeast Film Company to the CCP with Shu Qun as its director and Zhang Xinshi as vice director.<sup>21</sup>

During the following month, however, the Nationalist armies, equipped with advanced American weapons, launched a large-scale attack on Changchun. To prevent the annihilation of Northeast Film, the CCP ordered that the company's staff and equipment be moved to Harbin as soon as possible.<sup>22</sup> It wanted the Japanese filmmakers and technicians to go with them, so it sent its representative Shu Qun to mobilize the Japanese. Shu's humble uniform and his mild, friendly demeanor impressed Mochinaga. Other renowned Japanese filmmakers, such as Kimura Sotoji and Uchida Tomu, agreed to the move.<sup>23</sup> This encouraged Mochinaga and other Japanese members to move as well.<sup>24</sup> On May 13, 1946, almost all of the machinery, costumes, and other equipment were loaded onto thirty trucks and moved north to Harbin. According to Mochinaga's memoir, on May 18, when Mochinaga learned that the animation stand was not loaded with the other equipment, he anxiously inquired about its absence. No one, he discovered, knew how to dismantle and reassemble it. Because Mochinaga had some experience from working at the Art Film Company when he was in Tokyo, he was able to dismantle it himself and have it moved; it was going to be the only animation stand available at the Northeast Film Company.<sup>25</sup> On May 18, four hundred staff

members boarded trains and traveled north. On May 23, as the Nationalist Air Force bombed Changchun, Shu Qun and Zhang Xinshi caught the last train heading north, while some Japanese staff members missed the train and were arrested by the Nationalist Party.<sup>26</sup>

The staff of Northeast Film Company traveled to Harbin with the intention of settling there. However, because of the political instability in Harbin, the CCP ordered them to continue to move northward to Jiamusi. When the staff arrived in Jiamusi, they discovered that Japanese armies had burned numerous homes, and therefore no housing was available for them. They traveled farther north until they arrived at Xingshan (renamed Hegang in 1951), which they reached on June 1, 1946, ending their exodus. On October 1, the company celebrated its first anniversary and changed its name to Northeast Film Studio (Dongbei dianying zhipi-anchang), appointing Shu Qun as its director and Zhang Xinshi as vice director.<sup>27</sup> Soon thereafter it established its animation group (*katong zu*), with Mochinaga Tadahito as its head. In the beginning, the staff numbered only three and none were Chinese: Mochinaga Tadahito and Sei Mitsuo (Shi Manxiong) were Japanese, and Jo Ming (Zhao Ming) was Korean. In June 1948, the animation group expanded and became the animation branch (*katong gu*), Mochinaga again serving as head. Other members included Sei Mitsuo, Jo Ming, Li Lianqing, Lu Xipeng, Shu Chang, Cui Yongquan, and Ma Yanqiu.<sup>28</sup> They worked on animated war maps, animated shorts, and credits for live-action films.

When the Northeast Film Company had moved out of Changchun, among the four hundred employees were approximately one hundred Japanese and their ten family members. When the company arrived in Harbin, nearly one hundred Chinese employees stayed there, leaving more than three hundred staff to travel on to Xingshan. Some Japanese employees joined the company but later did not relocate to Xingshan; other Japanese joined just as the company was about to move northward. In June 1946, Wang Yang, the leader of the North China Film Team (Huabei dianyingdui) came to the Northeast Film Company and asked for personnel and infrastructural support. The company dispatched seventeen technicians, including three Japanese. In August 1946, many Japanese refugees in Northeast China returned to Japan, including some of the Japanese staff at Northeast Film.

By the end of 1946, eighty-four Japanese experts (sixty-one men and twenty-three women), not including their family members, were working at Northeast Film (see figures 2.1 and 2.2). These included nineteen in the art department, thirty-nine in the technology department, and twenty-six in the administrative department.<sup>29</sup> By the end of May 1949, only fifty-three remained. Morikawa Kazuyo and Mochinaga Tadahito returned to Japan in May and August of 1953 respectively. By October 1953, almost all remaining Japanese at the studio had returned to Japan, including Uchida Tomu.<sup>30</sup>



Figure 2.1.  
Japanese staff at  
Northeast Film  
Studio, 1947,  
courtesy of  
Mochinaga Noriko.



Figure 2.2.  
Japanese families  
at Northeast Film  
Studio, 1948,  
courtesy of  
Mochinaga Noriko.

Approximately thirty thousand Japanese doctors, nurses, railway technicians, film technicians, coal workers, and soldiers remained in China after the end of World War II. They made important contributions to the construction of early socialist China, filling a role similar to that of foreign experts during the Meiji Restoration in Japan. For instance, the fourth Air Force branch of the Japanese Kwantung Army in Manchuria helped the People's Liberation Army (PLA) establish its own air force. Kimura Sotoji helped the CCP design postage stamps to commemorate the liberation of the Northeast and Mochinaga Tadahito, together with other Japanese and Chinese animators, contributed to the establishment of the animation industry in early socialist China.<sup>31</sup>



Northeast Film was reorganized when filmmakers from the Yan'an Film Troupe (Yan'an dianyingtuan), which was officially established in Yan'an in 1938 to mark the beginning of the communist film industry, and the Northwest Film Team (Xibei dianyingdui) came to Xingshan under the command of the CCP.<sup>32</sup> Shortly after returning from the Soviet Union, the Yan'an Film Troupe's founder, Yuan Muzhi, became the director in the spring of 1947, Zhang Xinshi and Wu Yinxian became vice directors, and Chen Bo'er (from the Yan'an Film Troupe) became Party secretary of the studio.<sup>33</sup>

In April 1949, shortly after the Communist takeover of the city, Northeast Film Studio moved back to Changchun and changed its name to Changchun Film Studio in 1955. In the autumn of 1949, it established its animation group (*meishu-pian zu*), naming Te Wei as its new director, succeeding Mochinaga Tadahito. Te Wei stayed in Hong Kong between 1947 and March 1949 and arrived in Changchun in July 1949. Jin Xi was appointed as vice director and Mochinaga as technical supervisor. Jin Jing, a well-known children's author, also joined the animation group. The number of animation staff increased from eight to twenty-two. To further develop the animation industry in socialist China, Te Wei appealed to top Communist Party leaders and expressed the hope of moving the animation group to Shanghai. Ultimately, the Cultural Bureau under the leadership of Xia Yan and the Film Bureau under the leadership of Yuan Muzhi supported his proposal. In late March 1950, the animation group of Northeast Film Studio moved its staff of twenty-two to Shanghai and became a division of Shanghai Film Studio, which was founded in Shanghai in November 1949 immediately after the Communist takeover of the city in May 1949. Mochinaga and other Japanese animators moved to Shanghai with the division. Morikawa Kazuyo, a young Japanese woman whose Chinese name was He Dai, soon became the director of the inking and painting department in 1950 at the age of twenty-one, leading more than thirty staff.<sup>34</sup> On April 1, 1957, Shanghai Film Studio was divided into several studios, including the Shanghai Animation Film Studio, the only state-owned animation studio in socialist China.<sup>35</sup> Te Wei served as its first president until 1984 and continued working for the studio as a consultant until 1988.<sup>36</sup>

## Plasmatic Empire: Animated Filmmaking in Man'ei

Although Mochinaga produced no animated films during his stay in Man'ei, animated films were being produced there before his arrival. Little research has been done on this topic, however, given inadequate primary sources and limited access to Man'ei films, which were long considered as lost. However, in 1989, Yamaguchi Takeshi and other Japanese researchers discovered the Man'ei films



in Moscow at the Russian State Film Archive. When the Soviet army left Changchun after the war, they learned, it had taken many Man'ei films to Moscow. Yamaguchi and others brought the prints back to Japan in 1994 and converted selected films to VHS in 1995. With the good will of "giving the people in China who helped make these films a second chance to see them," Yamaguchi Takeshi presented the videos to the Chinese government, who reluctantly accepted them in 1995, declaring the films to be solid evidence of Japanese imperialism.<sup>37</sup> The Chinese government regarded them as pure Japanese propaganda films. Although Man'ei films were indeed produced by Japanese filmmakers, many Chinese had played important roles in Man'ei. The films were made within Chinese territory, and for this reason, Chinese scholars such as Hu Chang and Gu Quan regarded them as Chinese films.<sup>38</sup> Rather than viewing them as either Chinese or Japanese products, I approach Man'ei films, and animation in particular, as an interstitial product that ensued from the animated encounter between wartime China and Japan.

Recent studies demonstrate that the puppet state of Manchukuo existed more like an imagined rather than a material and sociohistorical country. Even historians such as Louise Young and Prasenjit Duara noted the role of imagination in constructing Manchukuo.<sup>39</sup> Highlighting the essential role films played in constructing the imagined empire of Manchukuo, Jie Li uses the term "phantasmagoric" to describe the illusionary and ephemeral nature of Manchukuo and argues that, rather than being imagined retrospectively à la Benedict Anderson, Manchukuo was imagined prospectively and invented beforehand through the documentary films produced by the South Manchuria Railway Company.<sup>40</sup> Manchukuo and Manchuria were imagined into being, retrospectively and prospectively, films functioning as centripetal forces. Different from the documentaries, animation, renowned for its wild imagination, demonstrated a more centrifugal force that diverted the imagination away from Manchukuo and Manchuria, creating an interstitial, plasmatic, fluid, and fantastic empire located in another space and another time—distanced, if not completely detached from wartime Manchuria, China, and Japan. Manchukuo and animation thus share a fundamental connection in that both of them can be regarded as imagined constructs.

The film unit of the South Manchuria Railway Company produced many documentaries, in which animation was used as special effects for what live-action film was unable to achieve in the 1930s. Since the mid-1930s, the term "culture film" (*bunka eiga*) was used to refer to nonfictional documentaries that were not blatantly political, such as travel, science, and ethnographic films.<sup>41</sup> Many of these documentaries were an introduction to Manchuria and its geography. A map of China appears first, and then animated outlines demarcating and foregrounding the territory of Manchuria. A male voiceover describes a particular location in

Manchuria as a map of Manchuria appears, an animated arrow pointing to it on the map. In some travel films, the movement of people on trains, which sometimes was suggested merely by the noise of wheels and whistles, are accompanied by the movement of animated lines or arrows across a hand-drawn map. The physical experience of Manchuria was transcribed into a fantastic spectacle in which Manchukuo and Manchuria were composed of fluid and permeable outlines, dots, arrows, and shapes. As a hand-drawn plasmatic empire, Manchukuo had the potential of expanding and contracting, a fantasy land par excellence.

In addition to its use for plasmatic maps, animation was used for charts, tables, and diagrams. In the documentary *The Construction of a Model Village* (*Mofan xiang zhi jianshe*, 1935), animation depicts the idea of collaboration between peasants and the government. Two semicircles, one containing the Chinese character for peasants (*nongmin*) and the other for government (*zhengfu*), appear on the left and right side of the screen. They move toward each other until they merge into a single circle, with the Chinese characters for agricultural cooperative (*nongshi hezuoshe*) inside. Animation was also used for special effects to explain scientific information. In the science documentary *The Expressions of Water* (*Mizu no hyōjō*, 1941), animation portrays snowfall in winter and evaporation of water in spring in Manchuria, creating a vaporous world that could not be represented by live-action film.

Rather than being rooted in the concrete political realities of Manchuria, animated segments transported the audience to a plasmatic world distanced from the geographical territory of Manchuria. Animation and documentary films typically are regarded as opposites, animation being highly fantastic and documentary highly realistic. The juxtaposition of documentary and animation within these films reflect the Janus-faced nature of Manchuria: a highly politicized entity on the one side and a fantasyland on the other. Animation and documentary films continued to have such a kinship at the Northeast Film Studio in the late 1940s.

Man'ei went beyond merely using animation for special effects in documentaries. Its animation equipment was more advanced than that at the film unit of the South Manchuria Railway Company. Man'ei had several Bell & Howell sound animation machines.<sup>42</sup> Its animation stand was the same as the one Mochinaga Tadahito had used at the Art Film Company in Tokyo.<sup>43</sup> Man'ei even offered courses teaching the art of animation to its specialized staff.<sup>44</sup> In the late 1930s and early 1940s, discussions of animated filmmaking frequently appeared in *Manchuria Film*, a Japanese and Chinese film magazine affiliated with Man'ei. In the article "The Secret of Animated Film" ("Manhua dianying de mimi/Manga eiga wa dōshite dekiruka"), Asada Isamu describes in detail the process of animated filmmaking in Man'ei and illustrates it with a series of cartoons (see figure 2.3).<sup>45</sup>

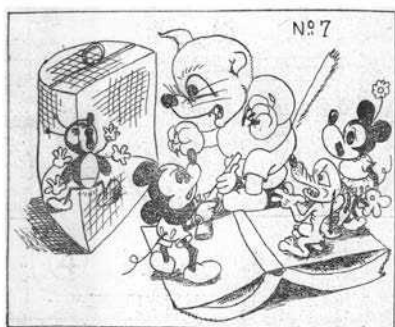
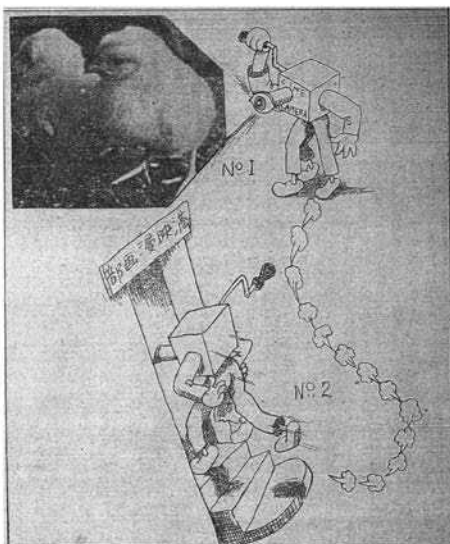


Figure 2.3. "The Secret of Animated Film," *Manchuria Film*, 1939, courtesy of Yumani Shobo Publishers Inc.

These illustrations show that the cartoon department (*manhua bu*) of Man'ei was responsible for animated filmmaking, in addition to its role of producing illustrations and cartoons for *Manchuria Film*. According to Asada, "photography" was the first step in animated filmmaking at Man'ei. Animators needed a special "camera" to "photograph" the objects to be animated. He jokingly wrote that this special camera was the eyes of the animator. The animator needed to use his "eyes" to observe and "record" the movements of the objects to be animated, such as the two chickens illustrated in Cartoon No. 1. Although Asada highlighted the importance of the animator's eyes, the reference might also pertain to a live-action camera, which records the movements of objects to be rotoscoped or partially referenced by the animator. The animator in Cartoon No. 1 is a cyborg creature with a camera head, two human hands, and three human legs, which looks like a tripod. The camera is labeled "cine camera," which refers to a live-action film camera that can take sequential photos with slight variations. It is possible that the animator uses both a real camera and his eyes to make an animated film that partially draws on, if not solely depends on, the method of rotoscoping.

With the "recorded" materials in hand, the animator then goes back to the cartoon department of Man'ei and uses cels to make an animated film (Cartoon No. 2). When the film is made, it will be screened and tested in the Trial Writing Room (Shixieshi) of the cartoon department. In a joking manner, Asada said that an ape named Chen Wanqi was in charge of the trial screening of animated films that have animal protagonists (Cartoon No. 3). His facial expressions indicate whether the animated film is good or bad. Chen Wanqi might be one of the many Chinese staff working in Man'ei and he was caricatured as an ape here. The two chickens were animated and talking in human language: "I love you." "Oh, really?" Chen Wanqi lavished his praises on the film: "Good! Really good!"

Cartoon No. 4 shows a photograph of a man driving a donkey cart away from a gate in a city wall. An animated film was made based on this, with a clothed donkey pulling the cart and a pig whipping the donkey (Cartoon No. 5). The next photo shows a cat playing around a cage and several books. This scenario was animated, the cat trying to grab and eat a firefly in the cage. With a gun in hand, Mickey Mouse, together with several other Disney characters such as Minnie and Goofy, appear to stop the vicious cat (Cartoon No. 7). The appearance of Disney characters here is intriguing, given that they were banned in wartime Japan. Also, these Disney characters were represented as positive heroes in line with the Hollywood gangster film style, in sharp contrast to the negative representations of American cartoon characters (such as Betty Boop, Popeye, and Bluto) in *Momotarō's Sea Eagles* and its posters. Man'ei was often regarded as a Japanese propaganda machine for its "national policy" films, but these positive Disney characters as well as the humorous and depoliticized animated films suggest that

Man'ei was more fluid than previously thought. The plasmatic empire constructed by Man'ei animation seemed to have a life of its own, distanced if not completely detached from wartime realities.

Because only a small portion of Man'ei films can be accessed by researchers today, I was unable to view most of the animated films mentioned in Asada's essay and cartoons. However, experimental, if not active, animated filmmaking certainly took place at Man'ei. In another essay, Asada declared that the cartoon department at Man'ei was working around the clock to produce animated films, which would be released soon. He warned readers that they would laugh convulsively from watching the animated films produced by Man'ei. He suggested that to protect oneself from possible bodily harm from laughing too violently, the reader should acquire the skill of not laughing and practice it diligently until the release of Man'ei's animated films.<sup>46</sup> In this plasmatic world of humor and laughter, politics was pushed to the background.

Man'ei emphasized the importance and urgency of animated filmmaking because it symbolized a country's advanced development of film art. An author named Li Lei published "The Process of Making an Animated Film" ("Manhua yingpian zhizuo guocheng") in the April 1940 issue of *Manchuria Film*. He cited Lin Yutang, a well-known Chinese writer and intellectual, as evidence that animation was extremely important. A staunch supporter of humorous literature, Lin Yutang said, "When a country's literature attained a very high level, humorous literature will appear." Li Lei borrowed Lin Yutang's words and claimed that "when a country's film art advanced to a very high level, animation will surely appear." In this sense, animation was not an inferior successor of live-action film, but rather a higher level of a country's achievement in film art. Because Manchukuo had only recently been established, the rapid appearance of animation by Man'ei would not only lead to pride in higher artistic achievements, but also signal the new country's maturity, solidarity, and steadfast development. The implication was that animation was not a minor or lightweight art form, but instead a crucial product of—and also a defining agent—in empire building and the historical and artistic development of Manchukuo.<sup>47</sup>

*Manchuria Film* mentioned the "sound cartoon" (*yousheng manhua*) *Purchasing Oil* (*Maiyou*, 1940) in the same issue in which Li Lei's article appeared. This sound cartoon was probably an animated film, given that the Man'ei cartoon department was working hard to produce animated films at that time, as Asada Isamu mentioned in December 1939. In a short essay written in the 1930s, the term "sound moving cartoon" (*yousheng huodong manhua*) was used to refer to animated films with sound.<sup>48</sup> Although the middle word "moving" (*huodong*) was missing in the term "sound cartoon," it is probable that *Purchasing Oil* was an animated film with sound. Or at a minimum, it might be situated between an



Figure 2.4. "Purchasing Oil," from *Manchuria Film*, 1940, courtesy of Yumani Shobo Publishers Inc.

animated film and still cartoons, which were screened in theaters like a film with sound, but with less or without the movement typical of an animated film, rendering it a cinematic version of “paper play” (*kamishibai*), a traditional form of storytelling accompanied by illustrated cards.<sup>49</sup>

In *Purchasing Oil*, the drawings of characters are simplistic and the background is almost empty, except a few lines suggesting a door at home or a grassland outside (see figure 2.4). The hairstyle and the clothes of the mother and the boy, as well as the Chinese in the mother’s speech bubble connote the characters are native Chinese (or Manchurians) living in northeast China. The film’s protagonist is a little boy whose mother gives him an empty bottle and asks him to go to the market to purchase oil. The boy sets off with the empty bottle in hand. A dog wants to go with him, and the boy agrees when the dog promises not to break the bottle. Then a pig and rooster ask to go with him, and the boy says that they too can follow him as long as they do not break the bottle. On their way to the market, the boy accidentally drops the bottle and breaks it. Crying “mother,” the boy runs back home, leaving the three companion animals dumfounded.<sup>50</sup>

The boy is an antihero to Momotarō. *Purchasing Oil* has similarities with the Japanese films *Momotarō’s Sea Eagles* and *Momotarō’s Divine Sea Warriors* in terms of the quest motif, boy protagonist, and three animal followers. Unlike the highly motivated Momotarō, who volunteers to embark on a divine journey on behalf of the village-nation to conquer the demons, the boy in this Man’ei film is asked by his mother to run a mundane errand for his family. Unlike Momotarō, who is brave, heroic, independent, determined, and above all militaristic, the boy in *Purchasing Oil* is passive, dependent, incompetent, and vulnerable. If Momotarō is a superman and winner, the boy is a weak child who cannot complete an insignificant task. The three animals are domestic animals, in contrast to the wild animals in Momotarō films, thus further reinforcing the boy’s docility. The Momotarō films deal with momentous matters such as Japanese nationalism and patriotism; *Purchasing Oil* is lightweight, humorous, and detached from national politics.

These differences might be explained by the nationality of the protagonist: Momotarō is a Japanese wartime hero, and the boy in the potential Man’ei film is a local Manchurian assigned to an inferior status in the Japanese-led Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere. These differences could also be read as a reflection of the gap between Man’ei and the national policy film studios in Japan. Rather than being a slavish propaganda machine of Japan producing jingoist films like the Momotarō features, Man’ei’s seemingly apolitical animated films constructed a plasmatic empire that kept its distance from wartime Japan.

This plasmatic empire seemed to be distanced from wartime China as well. Chinese films made by the Wan brothers in Chongqing were highly nationalistic and patriotic, like the Momotarō films. Despite its Japanese connections, *Princess*



*Iron Fan* had hidden anti-Japanese messages and thus remained ambiguous. *Purchasing Oil* and other potential films at Man'ei did not include any hidden messages or ambiguity. They were apolitical, humorous, and entertaining, thus differentiating themselves from Chinese animation in Chongqing and Shanghai.

Man'ei was experimenting with puppet animation and produced the puppet performance film *The Legend of the Luminous Pearl* (*Yemingzhu zhuan*) in 1942. The film opens with a shot from a high angle showing a woman dancing gracefully. She is attired in ancient Chinese costume. A dragon appears and eats a large luminous pearl. A marionette performance comes next. Although it is not stop-motion puppet animation, it is a precursor to puppet animation. The marionettes are roughly made, and their strings are visible on-screen.

Although the setting suggests ancient northeast China, it is an imaginary place and shows a fascination for Arabian culture. The story is about a village couple and their sick child. The husband goes to the mountain in search of ginseng to cure the child. He helps a wounded tiger, and to show its appreciation, the tiger gives him a luminous pearl. The pearl has the power to replicate whatever it sees. The husband shows the pearl a drawing of ginseng, but the pearl makes a tree in their yard, which resembles the ginseng in the picture. Two Arabian merchants pass by and witness the pearl's magic power. They offer their treasure and camels in exchange for the pearl, but the husband is reluctant. However, when the Arabians give him the ginseng that cures his child, the husband happily gives the pearl to them. The couple and their recovered child bid farewell to the Arabians, who ride away on their camels and into the desert. Like the films discussed, *The Legend of the Luminous Pearl*, set in ancient times with exotic content, had little connection with wartime Japan and China.

However, another Man'ei film, *Terrible Lice* (*Kepa de shizi*, 1943), was indeed set in the context of wartime politics. It originally had Chinese and Japanese versions, but only the Chinese version survives. *Terrible Lice* is a live-action film in which animation is used for special effects to portray the actions of lice on human bodies. At that time, such actions could not be represented by live-action filmmaking because of the limitations of film technology. It was one of Man'ei's many "enlightenment" films to educate and civilize the local Manchurians. Katō Taitsū (1916–1985) directed the film, Sasaya Iwao and Morikawa Nobuhide did the animations, Yoshida Sadaji was the cameraman, and Imai Shin was the scriptwriter. The film takes place in a residential area for coolies working at the Fushun coal mines, which were developed by the South Manchuria Railway Company. Most of the coolies were from Shandong province.<sup>51</sup>

The beginning of the film shows a Japanese man with glasses who wears a doctor's white gown and an army cap and boots. He runs through the neighborhood, his voice booming through a handheld loudspeaker, "Typhus is spreading!

We must kill the lice that carry the germs. Let's do a deep cleaning now!" His message meets the resistance of the local Chinese residents, who were played by coolies living there. A man wearing a hat, the human protagonist of the film, complains that he would rather sleep more in the morning than waste his time on deep cleaning. He says to his friends, "Typhus? I've never experienced it. Without lice, I'll feel lonely!" When he is speaking, an animated louse, who claims himself to be from Shandong, lands on his pants and replies, "You are right! Without you I will be very lonely. You are our good friends and our blood supply. Other people say that you are dirty men, but for us, you are our ideal home, a good place for us to multiply our descendants." This newcomer louse, the animal protagonist of the film, climbs up the man's pants until he arrives at his waist and joins the lice already there. The subsequent animation sequence shows the lice's activities on the man's body. They bite, drink blood, excrete, multiply, and spread germs on the man's skin. The man in the hat falls sick with typhus and dies; other dirty workers die after him. Shocked by the deaths, the local residents finally realize the importance of deep cleaning. They launch a campaign to boil, steam, and wash their dirty clothes, to shower, and to do a deep cleaning. Their efforts kill the lice and the residents come to appear healthy, clean, and happy.

*Terrible Lice* seems to be a national policy film that portrays how the Japanese colonizers, equipped with more advanced medical knowledge and technology, care for the Chinese, educate them, and protect them from disease, as is the duty of the elder brother in Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere's family. Although highlighting the fraternity between China and Japan, the film also hints at the enemy of East Asia. In the middle of the film, a poster of a Fushun coal mine appears quickly with the text, "The lice are just like the United States and the UK, and we must kill them." In this way, the lice are symbols following the rhetoric of wartime speciesism to refer to the biggest enemy of the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere. This poster aligns the film with national policy films made in Japan.

The film claims that lice is the cause of typhus. In fact, lice and germs might have been spread among the Chinese by Unit 731, a secret biological and chemical warfare research unit of the Japanese Army. A cameraman from Man'ei was assigned to record human experiments carried out by Unit 731 in a bungalow in the suburbs of Harbin. The experiment's Chinese subjects were infected by germs planted by Unit 731 and were vivisected to examine the medical effects of the germs on human bodies. The appearance of germs, masked military doctors, stretchers, and the panic of the suffering Chinese in the film *Terrible Lice* were reminiscent of the human atrocities caused by Unit 731. When making the film *Terrible Lice*, the cameraman Yoshida Sadaji failed in attempts to shoot a close-up of a louse. He asked Imai Hiroshi, another cameraman, to help him because at that time Imai Hiroshi and other Man'ei filmmakers were shooting a film about the

spread of germs among humans and animals in Nong'an, Changchun. In Man'ei, rumor had it that the infection there was caused by Unit 731. When Imai was shooting a close-up of a louse in Nong'an for Yoshida, he was infected with typhus and almost died. His personal experience provided evidence supporting the claim that Unit 731 spread germs and typhus among the Chinese in Nong'an.<sup>52</sup> Taking these historical facts into account, *Terrible Lice* can be seen as glossing over the brutalities of Japanese imperialism and thus functioned as a piece of propaganda. This view was shared by scholars such as Choe Kilsung and Jie Li, the latter of whom interprets the film as an embodiment of the Janus-faced colonial policies, "a government that constructs with one hand and destroys with the other, that heals and infects and that has both a benevolent and monstrous side."<sup>53</sup>

No matter how serious, bloody, grotesque, and heavy-hearted these topics are, the animation sequence in *Terrible Lice* takes the audience away from the violent wartime reality and brings them to a plasmatic world full of humor and fantasy. The aesthetics of cuteness present the animated lice as fat silkworms. They wear white gloves on their four-fingered hands like Mickey Mouse. In their gloves and white boots, the anthropomorphic lice look like gentlemanly businessmen, similar to the well-dressed mosquito in Winsor McCay's *How a Mosquito Operates* (1912). Plasmaticness is still the most prominent feature of this film. When the protagonist newcomer louse meets the other lice, who have been living off the man for a while, he immediately asserts his leadership by demonstrating his physical prowess. He uses two hands to keep pulling out his mouth, until his mouth, originally flat and rounded, becomes sharp and elongated, like the end of a drinking straw. He then plants his mouth into the man's skin and starts to suck blood voraciously. The plasmatic style of this sequence is reminiscent of Disney animated shorts. The animated sequence is juxtaposed with a live-action close-up of a real lice drinking blood from human body, shot by the Man'ei cameraman Imai Hiroshi, who almost died from it. In this case animation and live-action evoke strikingly different emotions. The use of animation here significantly downplays the gravity of the subject matter with its inherent levity. When the coolies start to boil their clothes and take hot showers, animation was used again to portray how the lice suffer and die. They jump and bounce in the air until their bodies suddenly flatten and are lifeless. The humorous twists and comical effects of these animated sequences temporarily dispelled grotesque wartime realities. The plasmaticness and diplomacy of animation made it possible to play with and temporarily suspend wartime politics in both Japan and China.

According to Yamaguchi Takeshi, the film's director, Katō Taitsū, deliberately kept a distance from the imperialist ideologies during his stay at Man'ei. He declined many requests for making overt military films, no matter how good the terms were. That was why he made only two films there, including *Terrible Lice*.

He decided to make *Terrible Lice* probably because the film was primarily for health education and hence less political. In choosing animation as a form, he further distanced himself from the subject matter. Yamaguchi concludes that *Terrible Lice* did not reflect the ideology of the state, and that Katō Taitsū did not become deeply involved in wartime politics and thus remained true to himself as an artist.<sup>54</sup> The poster that compares the lice with the United States and the UK might make the film guilty of jingoism, but it appeared so briefly that it was unnoticeable and could not achieve any propaganda function. It is entirely possible that Katō Taitsū strategically inserted this poster to get permission to shoot this film. In 1940, Man'ei formed mobile projection teams and built many new theaters. Its animated films and more politicized live-action films reached almost every corner of Manchuria, bringing laughter and fantasy together with propaganda and brutal realities to the local Manchurians.<sup>55</sup>

Man'ei extended its plasmatic empire to north China. In July 1937, Japan moved to fully occupy north China, using Peking (Beijing) as its center. In February 1938, Man'ei established its branch of the New People Film Association (Xinmin yinghua xiehui) in Beijing, which monopolized production, screening, distribution, importation, and exportation of films in north China. In December 1939, the New People Film Association established the North China Film Company (Huabei dianying gongsi), which was an extension of Man'ei. In 1943, the same year *Terrible Lice* was made, North China Film Company produced the silent animated short *The Kite* (*Fengzheng*, 1943). The animator was Liang Jin, a cartoonist and illustrator in Beijing. The villain of the film is a dragon. As the personification of winter, the dragon appears in the sky above a dormant earth covered with fallen leaves and snow. The protagonist is a Chinese boy, who is shown flying a kite. A boy god, aloft on the mythical Chinese creature Kirin, slides down the kite string and possesses the boy. Empowered by the spirit of the god, the boy and his kite battle the dragon and win. A goddess appears and places a flower garland on the kite and scatters flowers in the sky. Flowers begin to bloom with smiling faces, trees bud, and birds start singing. Spring has been restored to earth, and the boy happily returns to flying his kite. Set in a celestial and mythical world, *The Kite*, like other Man'ei animated films, was distanced from the reality of wartime politics.

The legacy of Man'ei split in China and Japan after the war. Many of its animators, such as Sasaya Iwao, returned to Japan and worked for Tokyo-Yokohama Films (Tōyoko eiga), which was founded in 1938 and later transformed into Tōei Company (Tōei kabushiki-gaisha) in 1951. In China, Man'ei had laid a solid technological and infrastructural foundation for Mochinaga Tadahito and other Japanese and Chinese pioneers to help establish the animation industry in postwar China.

## Mochinaga Tadahito and Transnational Leftism

In histories of Chinese animation, Mochinaga Tadahito is sometimes mentioned briefly as a “Japanese leftist and member of the Japanese Communist Party.”<sup>56</sup> These leftist connections can be traced to December 1939, when he joined the Art Film Company, which was founded in 1937 by Ōmura Einosuke, a Communist who later became head of culture for the Japanese Communist Party. While affiliated with the Art Film Company, Mochinaga worked closely with established animator Seo Mitsuyo. Seo was a leftist and member of the Proletarian Film League of Japan, or Purokino (Nippon puroretaria eiga dōmei), a communist documentary film movement that originated in 1927 and was suppressed by the government in 1934. Pressured by the Japanese government, many Purokino members submitted to political conversion or apostasy (*tenkō*) and officially denounced their communist beliefs. After denouncing their past, these filmmakers joined Photo Chemical Laboratories, or PCL (Shashin kagaku kenkyūjo), Man'ei, and other mainstream film studios. Seo and talented Purokino members joined the Art Film Company during this period. According to Peter High, “The very act of moving into the company . . . seemed to inspire a form of *tenkō*, causing them to renounce their old leftism and embrace progovernment positions.”<sup>57</sup> The Art Film Company produced films commissioned by government agencies. Accordingly, filmmakers had to work for the government once they joined the Art Film Company. Thus Seo and Mochinaga entered mainstream film production (a quiet *tenkō*) in the 1930s and produced animated films for the Ministry of Education and the Japanese Navy.

Mochinaga's exposure to leftism increased when he joined Man'ei, which was a haven for purged Japanese leftist filmmakers. In mainstream Chinese film history, Man'ei is usually portrayed as a mouthpiece of the Japanese government who disseminated imperialist ideology. However, as Michael Baskett points out, Man'ei was independent of Japan and comprised filmmakers from different political backgrounds:

Ironically, many left-wing filmmakers purged from the Japanese film industry after the anti-Communist crackdowns in the early 1930s not only found a home at Man'ei but by all accounts appeared to have a free hand in their work. Man'ei created an unlikely space where former Communists produced films side-by-side with right-wing ultranationalists.<sup>58</sup>

Uchida Tomu, for instance, was one of the many progressive Japanese filmmakers who fled to Manchuria and became a Communist there.

It was not until the CCP took over Man'ei in 1945 that Mochinaga was fully exposed to Chinese communism. Although he did not declare himself a

Communist at the time, he sympathized with the CCP. After the civil war broke out between the Communist Party and the Nationalist Party on April 14, 1946, Mochinaga was arrested twice by Nationalist Party agents. The CCP rescued him after both arrests. The first arrest occurred at his office. The CCP-controlled Public Security Bureau later had him released. The second arrest took place at Mochinaga's home. Nationalist Party soldiers searched the home, took him away, and hauled him into an underground bathroom, accusing him of possessing guns and espionage. He was later rescued by the Eighth Route Army and was escorted home by a teenaged soldier.<sup>59</sup>

Mochinaga went through the CCP's ideological campaign at Northeast Film Studio in Xingshan. He was in fact the first Japanese who made a public self-criticism there. He revealed that he listened to Japanese news on the radio and disseminated the news to his colleagues—a counterrevolutionary act according to CCP policy. He was also accused of being too bourgeois, because during a gathering at his home he used a Japanese hotpot and borrowed some tatami mats to add Japanese flavor to the party. He explained these things in the self-criticism meetings launched by the Party, but was criticized even more severely by others. Although Mochinaga did not reveal the identity of the people who criticized him, they were most likely hard-liners from Yan'an. According to Zhang Xinsi's memoir, conflict between the people from Man'ei and Yan'an was conspicuous during the early stages of the Northeast Film Studio. People from Man'ei had more advanced filmmaking technology, but not the political consciousness their counterparts from Yan'an. It was therefore imperative for the CCP to elevate the ideological consciousness of Man'ei employees while improving the technological proficiency of the Yan'an staff.<sup>60</sup> The criticism of Mochinaga was due, in part, to this conflict between Man'ei and Yan'an. In terms of his political ideals at the time, Mochinaga later explained in his memoir written in Japanese:

As a member of the team constructing a new China, undoubtedly I had great shortcomings in terms of ideological consciousness. Things that were taken for granted in capitalist Japan were regarded as politically incorrect in this society. The final conclusion they made about me was: I had heroic individualism.<sup>61</sup>

Despite its skepticism, the CCP still regarded Mochinaga as a progressive Japanese filmmaker during his stay in China. He came to bridge Chinese and Japanese filmmakers within the international community of communism. Mochinaga's role as the middleman was evident in two official letters published in March 1951. The first letter, "Let Us Clasp Hands and Fight against American imperialism" ("Women he nimen jinjin woshou, gongtong wei fandui meidi er

douzhenɡ ba”), was written in Chinese by the Animation Division of Shanghai Film Studio to Japanese progressive filmmakers during the Korean War. It criticized American imperialism and called for joint efforts by China and Japan to resist Hollywood films.<sup>62</sup> Japanese progressive filmmakers wrote their reply, “We Will Never Bend Our Knees” (“Women shi buhui quxi de”). Dated January 31, 1951, this letter was addressed to Mochinaga and other Shanghai filmmakers. It praised the theory of Mao Zedong, criticized the dominance of American films in postwar Japan, and condemned the Japanese government’s suppression of proletarian magazines and films. This letter’s alarmist message claimed that Japanese film was on the verge of extinction and called for a unified effort to “oust American films from Japan.”<sup>63</sup>

The suppression of proletarian workers and magazines by the Japanese government refers to the so-called Red Purge of the late 1940s and early 1950s. According to John Dower, this purge began with the firing of eleven thousand progressive union members in industrial circles from the end of 1949 to the beginning of the Korean War on June 25, 1950. After the Korean War broke out, the Red Purge was expanded to the private sector, paying particular attention to potentially subversive or left-leaning people working in mass media. Between ten thousand and eleven thousand leftists were fired by the end of the 1950s. The Japanese Communist Party leaders, such as Nosaka Sanzō and Tokuda Kyūichi, went underground or fled to China during the occupation era.<sup>64</sup>

Mochinaga continued to sympathize with communism after he returned to Japan in 1953. He lived in what was called the Red Residential Area, which was reserved for Japanese nationals who had returned from Communist China. Japanese Communists frequently visited Mochinaga’s home to convert him; during these visits, they showed him editions of their Party newspaper *Red Flag* (*Akahata*) and invited him to participate in distributing it.<sup>65</sup> Mochinaga, not a Japanese Communist Party member at that time, volunteered to distribute the paper in the Tanashi district of western Tokyo. He woke up at four o’clock every morning to deliver the papers using a German bicycle he acquired in Shanghai. Unlike when he distributed other newspapers, Mochinaga had to keep the readers’ identity secret. This was especially important because policemen were always following Mochinaga on the basis of his involvement with the Japanese Communist Party.<sup>66</sup>

Mochinaga had mixed feelings about his political commitments. As a result, he did not declare that he was a Communist in his autobiography. He did, however, officially join the Japanese Communist Party in the mid-1950s after he returned to Japan from China.<sup>67</sup> His case was not unique. Many Japanese filmmakers, such as Morikawa Kazuyo, who had worked at Northeast Film Studio joined the Communist Party when they returned to Japan.<sup>68</sup> In a letter addressed to the Cultural Bureau of China in November 1978, Mochinaga and other Japanese filmmakers



who had worked at Northeast Film acknowledged the role of Chinese communism in shaping their political thinking and commitments:

In the past, Japanese militarism manipulated our view of life, albeit it was not our intention. It was China, Marxism, Leninism, and Maoism that changed our view of life and directed us on the right track. It was a result of the efforts of our Chinese comrades . . . Because of this connection, we call China, which changed our mindset, our second motherland.<sup>69</sup>

However, in 1966, when the Cultural Revolution was launched in China, Mochinaga became disillusioned and withdrew from the Japanese Communist Party, probably because he abhorred the atrocities caused by ultra-leftists in China. Despite his ambivalence, he was invited to visit China and was received as a representative of Japan by Chairman Mao on October 1, 1967, which was the source of great pride for him. After Mochinaga died in 1999, the *Red Flag Newspaper* identified Mochinaga in his obituary as a Communist Party member.<sup>70</sup>

Mochinaga's involvement with the CCP took place in the larger context of the flow of leftism and communism between China and Japan in the postwar era. The Japanese Communist Party had a close and long-standing relationship with its Chinese counterpart. Nosaka Sanzō, a founder of the Japanese Communist Party, left the Soviet Union for Yan'an and stayed there from 1940 to 1945. While in Yan'an, he developed a close relationship with Mao. During the war, the two parties had similar guerrilla statuses, and both looked to the Soviet Union for guidance. After the People's Republic of China was established after the war, the relationship between the parties changed. Now the Japanese Communist Party turned to the CCP for inspiration and leadership. As Rodger Swearingen and Paul Langer point out, "What was once a relation between equals has developed in the postwar period into one of master and disciple."<sup>71</sup> Nosaka hoped to establish a similar "people's government" in postwar Japan, believing that Japan's defeat in the war would create many opportunities for the Party. Thus, in January 1946, he returned to Japan to pursue his political goals. Nosaka's predictions rang true. During the US occupation, it promoted ideals such as democratization and freedom of speech, which, ironically, gave rise to communist movements. In John Dower's words, the communists and socialists "became the country's most articulate critics of acquiescence in U.S. Cold War policy—and (no small irony) the staunchest defenders, for decades to come, of the initial occupation ideals of demilitarization and democratization."<sup>72</sup> However, as the movements intensified, the US and Japanese governments regressed to conservatism and launched the Red Purge to crack down on communists.

## **Animating China: From Propaganda in the Northeast to Fantasy in Shanghai**

Mochinaga bridged a crucial gap in the history of Chinese animation. It is likely that he was one of the few animators making animated films in mainland China in the late 1940s and early 1950s. At the time, from 1947 to 1956, Wan Laiming and Wan Guchan (the Wan brothers) were in Hong Kong after fleeing the mainland to avoid the civil war between the Chinese Communist Party and the Nationalist Party.<sup>73</sup> When World War II ended in 1945, Qian Jiajun left Chongqing and returned to Nanjing to continue working for the Nationalist Party. He made the animated short *The Kingdom of Bees* (*Mifeng guo*, 1947) and two educational shorts commissioned by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in 1947 and 1948. He helped establish the animation department in Suzhou Fine Arts Academy in October 1950 and taught there regularly until the department closed and his team joined the animation division of the Shanghai Film Studio in 1953.<sup>74</sup> Te Wei, a young illustrator and cartoonist, also went to Hong Kong in 1947 and did not enter the animation industry at Northeast Film Studio in Changchun until late 1949. Mochinaga was a key animator at Northeast, the first studio owned by the new socialist government.

The animation stand Mochinaga dismantled and loaded on the train before the exodus to Xingshan became the only one at Northeast. It was not shipped to Shanghai because Wan Chaochen had brought with him a more advanced model. Wan Chaochen worked at China Productions (*Zhongguo dianying zhipian chang*) in Chongqing and was sent by the Nationalist Party to the United States to learn animation technology in 1946. When he returned to China in 1948, he went to Shanghai. Wan had worked as an intern at United Productions and Disney, where he learned how to make color animated films in Technicolor. He purchased an animation camera during his stay in the United States and took it back to Shanghai when he returned.<sup>75</sup> Because the multiplane camera stand was too large and expensive, he drew a blueprint and took it home with him instead. He gave the drawing to Dashen Machinery Factory, which then produced the stand. The Nationalists tried to ship Wan's camera and stand to Taiwan during the regime change but were intercepted by the PLA. In the early 1950s, Wan's was the only animation equipment in Shanghai.<sup>76</sup>

In the late 1940s, Northeast Film Studio favored films such as documentaries and propaganda messages that addressed political realities. Live-action feature films were assigned a low priority as the civil war intensified and the studio's resources became more constrained. On February 20, 1947, numerous live-action feature filmmakers and other staff were laid off. A total of forty-three Japanese employees and their family members were sent to work in a remote coal mine

in Shuangyashan.<sup>77</sup> Among those laid off were Uchida Tomu, Kimura Sotoji, and Morikawa Kazuyo. They did not return to Northeast Film until October 1948. Mochinaga did not suffer this fate, however, because he was needed to draw portraits of Communist leaders such as Mao Zedong and Zhu De and to animate battlefield maps for documentary films such as *Democratic Northeast* (*Minzhu dongbei*, 1947–1949).<sup>78</sup> Made under the leadership of Chen Bo'er, *Democratic Northeast* is the first documentary film of socialist China and includes seventeen episodes. When Northeast Film was under Yan'an leadership, the only animated films it produced were propaganda pieces. The two animated shorts Mochinaga made were included in the fourth and ninth episode of *Democratic Northeast*. Their affinity with documentary films demonstrates the studio's preference for political and realistic films.

The first animated film Mochinaga made was *Dreaming to Be Emperor* (*Huangdi meng*, 20 minutes, November 1947), and it was the first puppet-animated film of socialist China.<sup>79</sup> It originated from a series of cartoons drawn by Hua Junwu, who worked on propaganda cartoons for CCP newspapers in Harbin. In the fall of 1947, Hua Junwu sent a cartoon to Northeast Film Studio. The cartoon was about how George Marshall, with the aid of an array of weapons, manipulates a puppet that turns out to be Jiang Jieshi (Chiang Kai-shek). The top leaders of the CCP ordered that this cartoon be animated and incorporated into documentary films to criticize the Marshall Plan.

In early 1947, prior to making *Dreaming to Be Emperor*, Mochinaga and his colleagues made trial shorts. One such film, the puppet-animated *The Year of Liberation* (*Fanshen nian*), revolves around the collaboration between Jiang Jieshi and Marshall. Included in the third episode of *Democratic Northeast*, this short paved the way for *Dreaming to Be Emperor*.<sup>80</sup> Chen Bo'er wrote the script for *Dreaming to Be Emperor*, and Mochinaga himself made the puppets of Marshall and Jiang Jieshi. A French puppet owned by Mochinaga's colleague Kimura Sotoji was the inspiration for the puppet of Jiang Jieshi. Mochinaga also drew on Jiří Trnka's puppet of the Chinese emperor, which had been given to a representative of Northeast Film Studio who attended the first World Festival of Youth and Students held in Prague in Czechoslovakia in 1947. Jiří Trnka, the most prominent puppet animator in Czechoslovakia, gave a puppet to the Chinese representative as a gift. Trnka used the puppet in *The Chinese Emperor's Nightingale* (1948), which was adapted from a fairy tale by Hans Christian Andersen. The representative brought this puppet to Northeast Film Studio and gave it to Mochinaga. Mochinaga carefully examined the puppet's joints and decided that it would be better to use silver wires. The puppets' heads were made from wet pulp of old newspapers. Because the puppets could not stand upright unsupported, nails were inserted into the bottom of their feet so that the puppets could be affixed to the ground.<sup>81</sup>

Mochinaga's interest in making three-dimensional puppets stemmed from work experience he had before entering the film industry at the Art Film Company in December 1939. As a high school student, Mochinaga experimented with puppets made from papier-mâché.<sup>82</sup> After graduating from the art school in March 1938, he received medical treatment for arthritis at East Asian Medical Institute (Tōa ikagaku kenkyūjo). The head of the institute invited him to work there while receiving medical treatment. During his stay, Mochinaga made artificial hands for wounded Japanese soldiers. He studied x-rays and anatomy, and learned how to use metalworking and leatherworking tools to make and seal artificial hands. Mochinaga also learned how to polish and color artificial hands with different pigments. After he recovered from arthritis, Mochinaga quit this job and lectured on leathersmith design and woodcarving at Tokyo Women's School of Art and Design (Tōkyō joshi bijutsu-kōgei gakkō). Mochinaga also was interested in stage lighting and color and later worked on stage design at Tokyo Takarazuka Theatre (Tōkyō takarazuka gekijō). His work at the theater involved the creation of pigments. Later he became responsible for the entire stage design, including lighting and sets.<sup>83</sup>

Mochinaga's experience working in the theater from March 1938 to December 1939 contributed to the creation of the puppet-animated film *Dreaming to Be Emperor* in November 1947. Chen Bo'er worked on the script and Yu Yanfu and Xu Wei were also involved in production. The foreigners working on this film included Mochinaga Tadahito (under the sinicized name Chi Yong), Sei Mitsuo, Murata Kōkichi, Oda Kenzaburō, Kiga Yasushiware, and the Korean Jo Ming (see figure 2.5). Chen Bo'er insisted that Chinese animation should have Chinese characteristics. Accordingly, Mochinaga and his colleagues decided to use the form of Peking opera for the film. Because Mochinaga was unfamiliar with the art form, they invited an expert to perform the acts for them (figure 2.6). This provided Mochinaga with a sense of character movement, personality, and aesthetic sensibility. They transcribed his performance into the puppet-animated film (figure 2.7). Later animators at the Shanghai Animation Film Studio continued with the practice of experiencing performances and sketching from life, even when making fantasy films featuring gods, spirits, and anthropomorphic animals. *Dreaming to Be Emperor* was officially proclaimed the first animated film in socialist China. Its Peking opera style made it the earliest attempt at exploring a national style, thus marking the beginning of a discourse of animation nationalism in socialist China. However, some Japanese audiences interpreted the Peking opera style in terms of Japanese Kabuki, thus attenuating the film's Chineseness.<sup>84</sup>

*Dreaming to Be Emperor* is a satire of Jiang Jieshi and George Marshall. Structured as a self-reflexive play within a play, it is set in a puppet theater. Its Peking



Figure 2.5. Mochinaga Tadahito (right) and a fellow animator, 1947, courtesy of Mochinaga Noriko.



Figure 2.6. Peking opera performer, 1947, courtesy of Mochinaga Noriko.



Figure 2.7. Still from *Dreaming to Be Emperor*, 1947, courtesy of Mochinaga Noriko.

opera style makes the characters appear more theatrical. Jiang Jieshi trades China's sovereignty for Marshall's planes and cannons. Thereafter, Jiang steps to the front stage and performs four acts. The first, "Dancing and Praying for Promotion" ("Tiaojiaguan"), takes the form of the prelude in traditional Chinese operas, which is associated with ritualized prayers for wealth and promotion. The performer usually wears a mask, dons the attire of a high official, holds a gigantic gold ingot, and displays banners with auspicious phrases such as "promotion and wealth" (*jiaguan jinlu*). Jiang's prayer is to become emperor of China. The second act, in traditional opera, "Beggar Picks Up a Gold Ingot" ("Huazi shi jin"), provides a way for the clown to express himself after he accidentally obtains a gold ingot. The film parallels this with Jiang Jieshi expressing himself and justifying the civil war. The third act, "Ascending the Throne" ("Da dun-dian"), is a Peking opera depicting a peasant named Xue Pinggui becoming an emperor in the later years of the Tang dynasty. At this point in the film, Jiang Jieshi is almost ready to ascend to the throne. His officials and relatives come to the court to extend their congratulations, but fight with each other over a bone for dogs. The last act, "Besieged from All Sides" ("Simian chuge"), alludes to the defeat of Xiang Yu in the Qin dynasty. Essentially, the people revolt against Jiang Jieshi. Albert Coady Wedemeyer, a US agent, comes to his rescue but his efforts are futile. Jiang Jieshi has become a cornered beast and fails to realize his dream of becoming an emperor.

Using the Chinese pseudonym Fang Ming, Mochinaga made his second animated short *Capturing the Turtle in the Jar* (*Wengzhong zhuobie*, 10 minutes, December 1948). It is the first hand-drawn cel-animated short made in socialist China. At the time, they used expensive cels imported from the Soviet Union because China was unable to produce them. They recycled the cels after use by erasing the existing paintings with water, drying them, and painting on them

again for the next use.<sup>85</sup> Zhu Dan wrote the script, and Hua Junwu participated in the production. Jiang Jieshi in this film is backed by the United States and wages civil war. He is defeated by the PLA, transformed into a turtle, and captured in a jar (figure 2.8). This cel-animation film was more plasmatic—with more squash and stretch techniques and fluid metamorphosis of body forms—than the puppet-animated film *Dreaming to Be Emperor*. When Jiang Jieshi and his army are about to be defeated, an American general in military uniform takes off a badge from his cap and throws it into the sky, which is soon transformed into a flying eagle and then a fighting airplane to drop military supplies to the Nationalist Army. The eagle looks quite similar to those in *Momotarō's Sea Eagles*. The two animated films were more politicized than Man'ei animation, demonstrating the plasmaticness or flexibility of animation, be it cel or puppet, in quickly fitting into a new political framework.

Northeast Film Studio established a mobile projection team and screened its animated films to mobilize peasants and PLA soldiers during the civil war.<sup>86</sup> Chen Bo'er allowed Mochinaga to join the projection team because she hoped that his observation of the audience's response would help him improve his animation techniques. The team would first convene the peasants and teach them revolutionary songs, with Mochinaga in charge, and then screen documentary and animated films. Peasants often felt joyful watching animated films because they had never seen anything like them.<sup>87</sup> The PLA soldiers were also inspired by watching these animated films. It is said that after they watched *Capturing the Turtle in the Jar*, they burst into laughter and loudly applauded. The soldiers asked to see the film again and again and saw it four times in a row.<sup>88</sup> To rally their fighting spirit

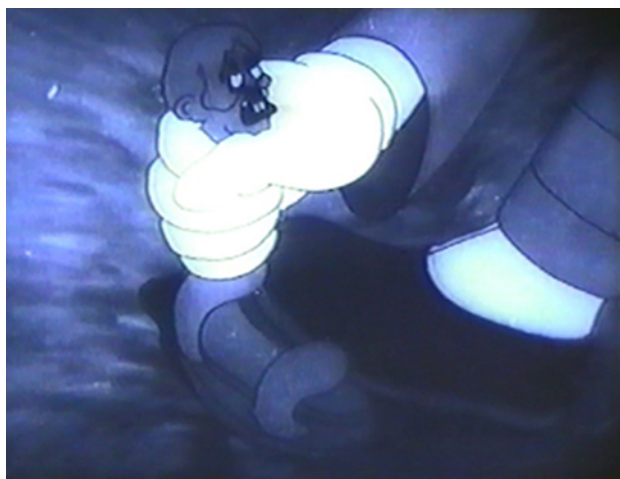


Figure 2.8. Jiang Jieshi captured alive as a turtle by a PLA soldier in *Capturing the Turtle in the Jar*, 1948.



against the Nationalist Army, the film was screened for PLA soldiers just before they crossed the Yangtze River and entered battle against Jiang Jieshi.<sup>89</sup>

On March 17, 1950, the Animation Division of Northeast Film Studio moved to Shanghai and joined the Shanghai Film Studio on March 24. This merger paralleled with a stylistic and thematic shift in Chinese animation. After the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949, Xia Yan, then minister of the Cultural Bureau, stated that animated films should serve children and reflect children's lives.<sup>90</sup> During his stay in Shanghai, Mochinaga and his colleagues produced four cel-animated films: *Thank You Kitty* (*Xiexie xiaohuamao*, 1950), *Little Iron Pillar* (*Xiao Tiezhu*, 1951), *Kitty Goes Fishing* (*Xiaomao diaoyu*, 1952), and *Picking Mushrooms* (*Cai mogu*, 1953). Unlike the previous films targeting adults, animated films in the early 1950s were children's entertainment. Although animated films in the northeast were concerned with the demonized Other, those in Shanghai were characterized by adorable animals in a fantastic world. In addition, the angular lines and shapes in previous animations became curvier lines and more rounded forms. Thus the relocation of animators from Changchun to Shanghai paralleled with the "cutification" and gradual depoliticization of Chinese animation in the early 1950s.

The first film Mochinaga made in Shanghai was titled *Thank You Kitty*. It is also the first animated film based on a fairy tale in socialist China. Jin Jin, a children's novelist, wrote the script for this film. The story takes place in a rural village whose tranquility is disrupted by four mice that rob the villagers of their grain. Kitty is a peasant soldier tasked with protecting the village. With the help of Rooster, Kitty sets a trap for the thieving mice and captures them, restoring peace to the village.

The film's overt political message is diluted compared with earlier propaganda films produced by Northeast Film. However, it had a didactic message that targeted children. Because the animation for this film began at Northeast Film and was completed in Shanghai, it is not surprising that this film had traces of Northeast Film's propaganda films. The good and bad characters in this film are clearly distinguished. The virtuous animals include Kitty as protector of the village, and Rooster as the steward of agriculture. The villains are four mice who steal eggs and grain from the village's hardworking animals. The lyrics of the film's theme song convey an unambiguous message: "You help me, and I help you. Together we exterminate the reactionaries and guard against traitors and thieves." The four mice embody the reactionaries, traitors, and thieves who attempt to disrupt the established order. This message was meant to arouse sympathy for the CCP, which had recently founded the People's Republic of China and was on guard against saboteurs. Because Mochinaga was not familiar with the Chinese countryside, he and his animation team went to examine rural conditions outside Changchun to

help in preparing to make the film. This was a dangerous undertaking because saboteurs lurked in “newly liberated” areas recently won back from Nationalist control. The visiting animators carried guns for their protection.<sup>91</sup> These violent conditions were conveyed in *Thank You Kitty* by the good animals’ tireless pursuit and destruction of bad animals. Conversely, *Little Iron Pillar* shows a cruel leopard devouring weaker animals, a scene that was too shocking for children. These types of violent scenes were gradually watered down as the CCP consolidated its rule in rural China. From then on, it became standard practice for Chinese animators to visit real-life locations and make sketches on-site before making an animated film, even for fantastic films like fairy tales and legends.

*Kitty Goes Fishing* was another well-known animated film with Jin Jin again as the scriptwriter. In this film, Mother Cat, sister Miaomiao, and younger brother Mimi live in a village in the countryside. When they go fishing together, Miaomiao follows her mother’s instructions and catches a big fish. Mimi is restless and distracted. He does not catch anything. The family goes home for lunch. On their return, Mother Cat patiently tells Mimi that fishing requires concentration. Mimi realizes the error of his ways and is determined to redeem himself. When he goes fishing again in the afternoon, he catches a big fish. In the same scene the song’s repetitive lyrics, “labor is glorious,” extol one of the grand CCP narratives. The political message of this animated film is considerably weaker than *Thank You Kitty*. Yet its moral for children is unambiguous: concentration on one’s work is rewarded with success.

Mochinaga and his colleagues combine fantasy with the aesthetics of cuteness in *Kitty Goes Fishing*. Its cats are more attractive than the cat in *Thank You Kitty*. That is, in *Thank You Kitty*, Kitty is an adult male cat whose aggressive masculinity evokes a tiger. Of particular importance is the artist’s attention to physical characteristics. Some of Kitty’s facial features, such as his slanted eyes, flat nose, and fat lips, were modeled on the angular features of Jiang Jieshi in *Capturing the Turtle in the Jar*.<sup>92</sup> The three cats in *Kitty Goes Fishing* resemble Kitty the soldier but have a different emphasis. The three cats have white patches of beards just like Kitty. However, their eyes are larger, and their noses and mouths are minimally depicted with a few lines and dots. Their faces thus look smoother and more refined than Kitty’s. The hairstyles of the three cats also contribute to their cuteness. Mother Cat combs her hair into a bun at the back of her head—a typical hairstyle for married women in northern China. Miaomiao has two small braids, decorated with bows like a young girl. Mimi has the bowl-shaped haircut popular among young boys in northern China. In addition, unlike Kitty, who only wears a leather belt, the three cats are fully dressed and more humanlike. The absence of Father Cat or other adult masculine figures in the film further demonstrates the association between the aesthetics of cuteness and infantility and femininity.

Despite its success, viewers criticized the image of the cute cats in *Kitty Goes Fishing*. An article by the renowned writer and literary critic He Yi points out that the three cats look too much alike: their faces are basically the same; only their hairstyles and clothes set them apart. He contrasts them with Disney's seven dwarfs, each of which has distinctive physical features and personalities. He Yi also observes that the three cats have lost their feline quality and appear overly humanlike. If the white spots of beards on their faces were removed, the cats could be mistaken for a fisherman's family members. He criticizes this approach on the grounds that "we expect to see anthropomorphic animals, not humans mechanically wearing animal masks."<sup>93</sup>

He Yi further argues that the animators of *Kitty Goes Fishing* are unsuccessful in their use of the national style. According to him, the national style in films depends not on the physical environment, such as landscape, homes, clothing, hairstyle, but on the character's personality and the spirit of the society. *Kitty Goes Fishing* pays attention to the material dimension of the national style, but ignores the underlying spirit of Chinese people and society. He concludes that *Kitty Goes Fishing* smacks of Western animated film.<sup>94</sup> His criticism was not unfounded; these films were indeed made in the context of transnational flows of images and aesthetics. However, Japanese animators had more influence than He Yi describes. Given the involvement of Mochinaga and other Japanese in the film, it was not strictly speaking a "pure Chinese" film. So why was it expected to articulate the authentic national style of Chinese animation?

## Traveling Images and the Textual Unconscious

Once Mochinaga began to make animated films for socialist China, he was required to use a Chinese pseudonym in the credits so that the films appeared to be wholly Chinese. For example, in *Dreaming to Be Emperor*, the first propaganda short Mochinaga made at Northeast Film Studio, his pseudonym in the credit sequence was Chi Yong, a Chinese homophone for the first two characters of his Japanese name (Chi yong zhi ren). As party secretary of the studio, Chen Bo'er later gave Mochinaga the Chinese name Fang Ming (*ming* means bright; *fang* means direction). She also gave Mochinaga's wife Ayako, who was Mochinaga's animation assistant, the Chinese name Li Guang (*guang* means light). The couple's Chinese names read together create the word *guangming*, which means bright light. Chen Bo'er gave the couple these names to signify her hope that the future and direction of Chinese animation would be very bright. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, it was a common practice for Japanese filmmakers to adopt Chinese names because the memory of the Sino-Japanese war was still vivid and Chinese audiences might

feel offended if they saw these Japanese names on Chinese films. As a result, Japanese filmmakers either used their Chinese names in the credit sequence or did not display their names at all.<sup>95</sup>

Despite the apparent Chineseness achieved through pseudonyms, certain stylistic features in these films betray their Japanese connections. As the earliest animated films made in socialist China, Chinese audience would not associate them with the Momotarō-animated wartime propaganda films. However, some stylistic features from *Momotarō's Sea Eagles* appear in early socialist animated films. The eagle in *Capturing the Turtle in the Jar* resembles the eagles in *Momotarō's Sea Eagles*, although it was portrayed as fiercer and more sinister in the Chinese film. Some stylistic features from *Momotarō's Sea Eagles* also appeared in *Thank You Kitty*. For example, the most conspicuous feature of Kitty is his leather belt, which resembles those worn by Momotarō and the animals in *Momotarō's Sea Eagles*. Leather belts in *Momotarō's Sea Eagles* announce that the animals are Japanese soldiers. In *Thank You Kitty*, Kitty wears a similar leather belt because a village policeman is associated with the military. Rooster wears a knotted cotton waistband that resembles the dress of peasants in the northeast. Rooster's peasant identity is further evident in his wife's clothing. She wears the scarf and upper garment typical of peasant women in northeastern China. Kitty's leather belt denotes he has higher status and more authority than Rooster. The belt on an otherwise unclothed animal was taken from Japanese animation, but it resembled the currently fashionable belted Mao jacket, which symbolized elevated status at that time.<sup>96</sup> Kitty enacts the role of leader while trapping and killing the mice. Important characters wear clothes and have anthropomorphic qualities. In contrast, minor characters such as the mice are unclothed and mute. They are presented naturalistically rather than anthropomorphically. When the mice are stealing food from the hen house, one mouse tears down a curtain and wraps it around his body like a cloak. He admires himself in a mirror only to realize it makes him appear even less humanlike. He smashes the mirror in rage, revealing his longing for a humanlike appearance and the futility to hope that clothing could elevate him from his animal status.

Rotating objects are prominent in *Momotarō's Sea Eagles* and also appear in *Thank You Kitty*. The first rotating object is the airplane propeller. When Momotarō orders the animal soldiers to depart for Pearl Harbor, their airplane propellers start to spin. After a five-second close-up of a single rotating propeller, the camera cuts to six-second shot of a group of rotating propellers. In another scene, when the monkey swims to capture the torpedo, his two hands strike the water until they simulate propellers. The rotating propeller is the film's most prominent symbol, symbolizing militarism and war for general audiences.

The second rotating object in *Momotarō's Sea Eagles*, a windmill attached to a carp banner, reinforces the propeller's militarist associations. The tradition of the

Japanese carp banner originated in a Chinese legend in which a carp becomes a dragon after it jumps over the Dragon Gate. On the fifth day of May in the lunar calendar, Japanese families decorate their homes with carp banners in the hope that their sons grow up and become successful “dragons.” Another shot shows both rotating objects. A windmill rotates in the foreground in sharp focus as a propeller rotates in the background out of focus. This shot juxtaposes the national with the familial, emphasizing boyhood bravery and loyalty. Throughout the film, the fate of the windmill is linked to that of the propeller. According to Japanese film critic Mori Takuya, these rotating objects were animated independently by Mochinaga during his stay at the Art Film Company. Such animation became part of Mochinaga’s signature style.<sup>97</sup>

In *Thank You Kitty*, the rotating object is a spinning wheel. The militarist connotation is replaced with that of the domestic life of a peasant housewife. In *Thank You Kitty*, when the rooster goes to the field to attend to the crop, the hen stays at home to weave. This is followed by a shot of the hen with her spinning wheel’s shuttle rotating like a propeller. This shot lasts for nine seconds and the camera cuts to a close-up of the spinning wheel, which lasts for another nine seconds until the hen stops weaving. The revolving spinning wheel is the only inanimate object in the film that receives such significant attention. The transformation of the rotating object from *Momotarō’s Sea Eagles* to *Thank You Kitty* marked the sociohistorical transition from militarism in wartime Japan to rural life in postwar China.

*Kitty Goes Fishing* was considerably more popular than *Thank You Kitty*. Indeed, *Kitty Goes Fishing* was so popular that it was later incorporated into textbooks for elementary schoolchildren and circulated so widely that it approached becoming national lore for Chinese children. Its theme songs also became hits. In his autobiography, Mochinaga mentioned how Disney’s *Water Babies* had inspired him to become an animator. He especially noted the film’s use of sunlight: “The changing sunlight transforms the color of the natural environment. The beauty is beyond description.”<sup>98</sup> *Water Babies* begins with a still picture of a pond in the early morning. Everything is asleep, including the lilies in the pond and two birds perched symmetrically in a tree. When the sun rises, its light brightens the colors and awakens the scene. The birds wake up and the lilies begin to blossom.

Mochinaga’s fascination with Disney’s use of sunlight is evident in *Kitty Goes Fishing*, which also begins with an early morning sequence. The camera pans from right to left and presents a panoramic view of a rural village before dawn. Thereafter, the camera cuts to a pond. As sunlight gradually penetrates the pond, lilies blossom one by one. The shape and movement of the lilies are analogous to those in *Water Babies*. The two red birds in *Water Babies* are replaced by ducks in *Kitty Goes Fishing*. A mother duck and her three ducklings sleep near the edge of the pond. As the sunlight becomes brighter, the mother duck opens her eyes and

wakes her ducklings, just as the two red birds in *Water Babies* awaken the lilies and water babies. The mother duck leading her ducklings in *Kitty Goes Fishing* parallels the film's protagonists, Mother Cat and her two children. This reinforces the ties between femininity, infantility, and the aesthetics of cuteness.

Mochinaga's fascination with sunlight is also evident in *Thank You Kitty*. The film opens with a scene of a rural village before dawn. Stars twinkle in a dark sky. As the sun rises, the village is gradually illuminated and a new day begins. Rooster crows and village animals go about their day. Throughout the film, Mochinaga pays meticulous attention to light and shade. When Kitty hides in the dark at the hen's house and captures two mice, Rooster comes to his aid and opens the door. As the door opens, the sunlight floods in and transforms the tonality of Kitty. These stylistic traces disclose some of the connections between these Chinese films and the Japanese and Disney animated films that featured similar transitions.

## The Rise of Japanese Puppet Animation

Young animators in the early 1950s such as Te Wei successfully transitioned from drawing cartoons and illustrations to animated filmmaking. Veteran animators, including Qian Jiajun and his students, joined the animation division of Shanghai Film Studio in July 1953. Between 1950 and 1953, the division recruited approximately one hundred recent graduates from Suzhou Fine Arts Academy, the animation class of Beijing Film Academy, Central Academy of Fine Arts, Lu Xun Academy of Fine Arts, and others. It organized part-time animation and fine arts classes and other activities to educate the younger generation. Wan Laiming and Wan Guchan left Hong Kong and joined the animation division, in 1954 and 1956, respectively, shortly before the Shanghai Animation Film Studio was established in 1957.<sup>99</sup> By the end of 1956, the animation staff at the Shanghai Film Studio gradually increased from twenty-two to 208.<sup>100</sup> Meanwhile, Mochinaga had returned to Japan in mid-August 1953, shortly before the animation industry in socialist China began to flourish, because he felt that Chinese animators should produce their own animated films.<sup>101</sup> Separately, the Chinese and Japanese governments, after several rounds of negotiations, reached an agreement to transfer the diasporic Japanese back to Japan in January 1953. On March 22, 1953, Japan sent its first ship to China. The transfer involved rounds in all, returning 29,040 Japanese home to Japan in the early 1950s.<sup>102</sup> Mochinaga was one of them.

Mochinaga was the first major puppet animator in the history of Japanese cinema.<sup>103</sup> In 1950, Iizawa Tadashi, Hijikata Shigemi, Sumida Yūjirō, and Kawamoto Kihachirō established a Puppet Animation Company. On his return to Japan in August 1953, Mochinaga was invited by Iizawa Tadashi to join his

company. He and Kawamoto Kihachirō later made the puppet-animated advertisement *Mr. Bitter Beer's Magician* (*Horoniga-kun no majutsushi*, 1953) for Asahi Beer Company, which marked the birth of three-dimensional puppet animation in Japan (figure 2.9).<sup>104</sup> In August 1955 in Tokyo, Mochinaga and Inamura Yoshiyazu established the Puppet Animation Film Studio (Ningyō eiga seisakusho), which focused on independent puppet animation and used Dentsu Film Company (Dentsu eigasha) as its distributor. Films produced by Puppet Animation Film Studio were supported by the Ministry of Education and targeted elementary school children.

The Puppet Animation Film Studio produced nine independent puppet-animated films from 1955 to 1960. The first, *The Melon Princess and the Demon* (*Uriko-hime to amanojaku*, 1956), is based on a Japanese legend and regarded as the first of its kind. The studio spent two and a half months and JP¥780,000 in production costs on it. Upon completion, Ōmura Einosuke, then minister of culture of the Japanese Communist Party, brought the film to China during an official visit. Mochinaga continued to export his films to China to expand the market there until May 2, 1958, the day that right-wing Japanese groups in Nagasaki destroyed China's national flag and demonstrated their contempt for the newly established socialist China, which retaliated by suspending Sino-Japanese commercial and cultural exchanges.<sup>105</sup>

The release of the second puppet-animated film, *Five Little Monkeys* (*Gohiki no kozaru-tachi*, 1956), which draws on a Chinese legend, caught the attention of Tōei Animation (Tōei animēshon kabushiki-gaisha).<sup>106</sup> Interested in three-dimensional puppet animation, which was still nascent in Japan, the president of Tōei Animation asked Uchida Tomu to invite Mochinaga and his independent studio to join Tōei Animation. Mochinaga declined the invitation, claiming that



Figure 2.9. The making of *Mr. Bitter Beer's Magician*, 1953, courtesy of Mochinaga Noriko.

he wanted to preserve his artistic autonomy as an independent auteur. Given that Tōei Animation emphasized the strict division of labor and teamwork also characteristic of Disney, Mochinaga worried that he would lose creative control over his work.<sup>107</sup> In contrast, Tezuka Osamu and Miyazaki Hayao had worked at Tōei for some time and gained firsthand experience before they started their own studios.

The approach Mochinaga adopted for his puppet-animated filmmaking in the 1950s was similar to the national style at the Shanghai Animation Film Studio. Because children were the intended audience, most of Mochinaga's puppet-animated films drew on folklore and legends rooted in traditional Japanese culture. These films were released in Japan and occasionally won awards at international film festivals. Unlike the labor-intensive and individuality-erasing cel animation, puppet animation requires a less fragmented labor process and is more conducive to an auteur style. These films were essentially art and educational films for children, like the classic films produced by the Shanghai Animation Film Studio during the socialist decades.

Sympathetic to Chinese and Soviet filmmaking, Mochinaga was critical of American filmmaking. Hundreds of American films were imported to postwar Japan every year, and were very popular among Japanese audiences. For Mochinaga, most of the imported American films were about imperialism, war, police, crime, gangsters, and racism. They emphasized individual heroism and competitiveness, featuring lone individuals triumphing over their opponents to succeed. Full of irrationality, madness, killing, and sex, Mochinaga called American films "sugar-coated bullets and bombs," a term borrowed from Chairman Mao. He thought American films were exploding and harming people in Japan. Mochinaga advocated the erasure of American influence in postwar Japan, as in China after the Korean War. According to him, Japanese cinema would flourish only if progressive Soviet and Chinese films were introduced to Japan.<sup>108</sup>

Mochinaga specifically criticized Disney's global influence and advocated that any conscientious animator should produce work that reflected their national or ethnic style. For him, postwar Disney films no longer served children because they emphasized individual heroism and adventurism without teaching children to help others. He praised French animation for its stress on national characteristics and the collective power of the masses. Soviet animation was praiseworthy because it served children well. For instance, he advocated that Japanese children should learn from the boy protagonist in the Soviet animated film *The Golden Antelope* (1954), who selflessly helps others in need while remaining brave and intelligent.<sup>109</sup> For Mochinaga, national or ethnic style (which should be different from Disney) and the political or educational function of animation (for children) were the most important factors for conscientious animators anywhere in the world. Mochinaga's efforts to export his puppet-animated films to the commercial



markets of North America were unsuccessful partly because their Japanese ethnic flavor was too strong for international audiences.

Mochinaga's approach in the 1950s differed from Tōei Animation and Tezuka Osamu, who created a more de-Japanized world and successfully brought their products to lucrative international markets during the late 1950s and 1960s. They charted two courses for the future of Japanese animation: cel or two-dimensional animation follows the commercial and international approaches of Tōei Animation, Tezuka Osamu, and later Miyazaki Hayao; puppet animation largely remains a domestic art (sometimes popular at international film festivals) and continues to struggle for survival in Japan. Cel animation can be organized using a strict division of labor and mass production, whereas puppet animation calls for a smaller and tighter production team. Cel-animated film tends to erase the animator's individuality and represent a studio's particular style, whereas puppet animation tends to foster the auteur style of a specific animator.

Without financial support from the state, such as that received by the Shanghai Animation Film Studio, and international markets, such as enjoyed by Tezuka Osamu's Bug Productions, Mochinaga's Puppet Animation Film Studio gradually declined. Its major supporter was Inamura, who successfully secured funds for the studio until he died suddenly in 1960 shortly after the release of the ninth and last independent puppet-animated film, *The Fox That Became the King* (*Ōsama ni natta kitsune*, 1959). After his death, Puppet Animation Film Studio faced severe financial crises and closed within the year (1960).

The closure reflects the larger difficulties facing puppet-animated filmmaking in Japan. Mochinaga's work in puppet animation resulted in the conventional thinking that the form was for children's education and entertainment, and that cel animation was oriented to adults as well as children. Puppet animators and studios inspired by Mochinaga supported this thinking. In 1959, Gakken Film Bureau (Gakken eiga kyoku) officially established a puppet animation studio under the leadership of Jinbo Matsue, with Mochinaga as its technology supervisor. Following Mochinaga's approach, Gakken also focused on educational puppet animation films for children by drawing on folklore, legends, and fairy tales. Given high costs and the lack of a profitable market, Jinbo Matsue gave up puppet animation and began to work on two-dimensional animation for television in the 1980s. Another example is Kawamoto Kihachirō, who was Mochinaga Tadahito's student and probably the best-known Japanese puppet animator. His films targeted adults and were highly praised at international film festivals as art films, but there was no market for them in Japan and overseas and his studio struggled to recover production costs.<sup>110</sup>

The fate of Mochinaga's Puppet Animation Film Studio is not only a particular Japanese case, but also a window to understanding the puppet animation

industry around the world during the Cold War. Commenting on it in 1959, Iizawa Tadashi argued that puppet animation was labor intensive and time consuming. Because of its high production costs, puppet animation did not succeed in the United States because it was not profitable. It flourished in communist countries such as Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union, however, where it was a generously supported state-owned industry.<sup>111</sup> Ivo Caprino, a Norwegian puppet animator, lamented that in Norway they struggled every day for funding, whereas Czech puppet animators such as Jiří Trnka received the equivalent of approximately JP¥400 million from the state.<sup>112</sup> Without state support, Mochinaga had to raise funds to produce educational puppet-animated films for children that were not profitable in capitalist Japan. His studio had to make commercials to generate funds, yet they were not enough to support the studio.

## MOM and the Early Outsourcing Industry in 1960s Japan

Mochinaga's *Little Black Sambo Subdues the Tiger* (1956) won the Best Film award for the category of the Films for Children at the first Vancouver International Film Festival in 1958. Arthur Rankin, who founded Videocraft International in New York in 1960 (renamed Rankin/Bass Productions in 1968), was deeply impressed by this film. At that time, a Japanese delegation seeking to expand international trade visited Washington, DC. Delegation member Kawamoto Minoru met Rankin there and invited him to visit Japan. Rankin visited Tōei Animation, Bug Productions, and other small animation studios. Kawamoto Minoru asked Rankin about exporting Japanese animated films to the United States. During his visit to Mochinaga's Puppet Animation Film Studio, Rankin remarked, "the storylines and subjects were solely for Japan and not suitable for export but the technique, based on the Japanese puppet art of Bunraku, was good."<sup>113</sup> Rankin and his team then designed a character and storyline that would appeal to the international audience and later outsourced the project to MOM Productions (MOM purodakushon), established by Mochinaga, Ōmura, and others in 1960 after the disintegration of Puppet Animation Film Studio. The goal for MOM Productions was to produce animated commercials, the revenue from which would fund the revitalization of independent Japanese puppet animation. The first project outsourced by Videocraft International to MOM became *The New Adventures of Pinocchio* (1960).

Mochinaga Tadahito opposed taking this outsourced project. *The New Adventures of Pinocchio* was a puppet-animated TV series with 130 five-minute episodes. To finish the project on time, MOM's entire staff had to work around the clock. As a result, MOM had neither the means nor labor to produce its own creative works, forcing it to cut ties with its established audience of children in Japan.

This heavy workload also made it impossible for the studio to produce animated commercials. MOM's entire dependence on projects outsourced from the United States made the studio vulnerable. MOM's film producer, whose name remained anonymous in Mochinaga's autobiography, wanted to take outsourced projects to earn money and pay off the debts incurred from independent puppet-animated filmmaking. He argued that the profits from outsourced projects could revive their independent puppet animation. He even urged Mochinaga's wife to persuade her husband to take the project. Mochinaga agreed on the condition that he would take no more outsourced projects after finishing *The New Adventures of Pinocchio*. When the staff of MOM was working on the last ten episodes, the studio caught fire, damaging the facilities and destroying the negatives of twenty-eight episodes. With only two months left before the deadline, MOM had to complete the final episodes and remake those lost to the fire. Although they completed the work on time, the studio suffered a huge financial loss, which meant accepting more outsourced projects. MOM ended up only producing projects for Videocraft International.<sup>114</sup>

In addition to *The New Adventures of Pinocchio*, MOM produced five features and television series: *Willy McBean & His Magic Machine* (1963), *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer* (1964), *Andersen's Fairy Tales / The Daydreamer* (1966), *The Ballad of Smokey the Bear* (1966), and *Mad Monster Party* (1967). Most of these were specials made for Christmas, Halloween, Thanksgiving, Easter, and other holidays. Videocraft International named the stop-motion puppet animation technique Animagic. Mochinaga's name appeared as animation supervisor or Animagic Technician: Tad Mochinaga in the credits.<sup>115</sup> These films were well known in the United States and the English-speaking world, but scarcely known in Japan because officially they were not "Japanese" animation.

The most well-known Animagic film was probably *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer*. Videocraft International prepared the storyboards and pre-recorded voices and sounds and sent them to MOM animators, who made puppets and animated them in Tokyo. Rankin flew to Tokyo to supervise the production. Each puppet character cost approximately \$5,000. Mochinaga had used silver wire inside the puppets in China, but lead and copper wire for *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer*. The prop department made the costumes by hand and when it was difficult to find suitable fabric, they wove it themselves, as they did for the vest of Snowman Sam. Before they animated the reindeer puppets, they went to a park to observe the movements of deer. They also invited performers such as Danny Kaye, Jerry Lewis, and Romeo Muller to act out the scenes so that animators could observe their movements and personalities. Sometimes the performance was filmed to be referred to later during the animation process.<sup>116</sup> This practice of live

performance and sketching from it was popular in animated filmmaking during Mochinaga's stay in China.

At the outset, the studio had ten staff, that number growing to 130 at the peak of MOM's activity. Lighting supervisors received between JP¥50,000 to JP¥70,000 per month, ordinary staff between JP¥20,000 to JP¥30,000, and assistants around JP¥10,000. The working hours were so long that animators slept at night in the studio near the puppets. To save time and cost, each puppet character had several duplicates so that different animators could work on different scenes with the same characters simultaneously.<sup>117</sup> A single animator ideally would be in charge of a single character to ensure consistency of movement and style of puppet animation, as Mochinaga did for his independent animated films, an approach that is even more time consuming. MOM developed a style of "limited" puppet animation for American television productions in the 1960s, the same time that Tezuka Osamu introduced limited cel animation to television in Japan. Both artists hoped to earn profits from less expensive limited animation on television to support their experimental and independent animated filmmaking, which was not profitable.

When *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer* was finalized in New York and premiered on December 6, 1964, it attracted so much public attention that "the phone literally jumped off the hook," and within a few years Videocraft International "controlled that particular market."<sup>118</sup> General Electric provided the financial backing for the production of *Rudolph*, which was released as a segment of the program *General Electric Fantasy Hour*. When *Rudolph* was on air, many commercials for General Electric products featured characters from the series. MOM animators featured minor characters in these commercials, probably because the major protagonists had a lot of screen time and were occupied with making the series and thus unavailable for the commercials.<sup>119</sup>

The production of *Rudolph* as well as other Animagic works took place in a transnational network that went beyond New York and Tokyo. In early 1964, the cast at RCA Victor recording studios in Toronto, Canada, began to record the soundtrack. *Rudolph* was voiced by Billie Mae Richards and Hermey by Paul Soles. Burl Ives played the voice of Sam the Snowman and sang many songs that became hits. Videocraft International, always based in New York, outsourced so much of its early production work to Canada that books and magazines frequently misidentified it as a Canadian studio.<sup>120</sup>

MOM was probably the earliest Japanese studio working on projects outsourced from the United States, and it marked the beginning of the outsourcing industry in Japan. In 1966, Tōei Animation began to work on an outsourced television series, *The King Kong Show*, for Videocraft International. In 1969, Tezuka Osamu's Bug Productions also began to work on an outsourced TV movie, *Frosty*

*the Snowman*, for Rankin/Bass. During the 1960s, 1970s, and up to the 1980s, many Japanese animation studios worked on outsourced US projects.<sup>121</sup> It marked the beginning of animation as a global industry and suggested the relatively disadvantaged status of Japan in the global network of animated filmmaking. As Japan gradually became an animation power from the late 1970s onward, it began to outsource its animation projects to the Shanghai Animation Film Studio and other studios in mainland China, Taiwan, and South Korea.<sup>122</sup> These invisible studios and nameless animators contributed to the global success of Japanese animation since the late 1980s, much as MOM and other Japanese studios did in the success of American animation in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. Interestingly, Mochinaga's experience with MOM in the 1960s presaged the fate of the Shanghai Animation Film Studio in the 1980s. Both focused on art and educational films for children before they were forced to accept outsourced projects to generate the revenue necessary to keep the studios in operation.

MOM was criticized by some Japanese scholars for sapping the creativity and energy of Japanese animators and hampering the development of the creative industry locally, thus having a negative impact on Japanese animation.<sup>123</sup> Mochinaga felt guilty for being unable to produce original work at MOM.<sup>124</sup> When he visited China in October 1978, he warned Chinese animators interested in taking projects outsourced from abroad by listing the disadvantages he had experienced. First, working on outsourced projects cut off the animator's and studio's ties with Japanese children. Second, because the profits from outsourced projects tripled the creative work, animators' salaries working for outsourced projects were much higher than those working on creative animated films, putting tremendous financial pressure on domestic creative animated filmmaking. Third, working on projects outsourced from America led Japanese animators to imitate American gags and styles.<sup>125</sup> Fourth, no matter how hardworking local animators were and no matter how wonderful outsourced films might look, domestic audiences could not watch them.<sup>126</sup> However, from a longer-term and more positive perspective, working on outsourced projects trained many talented young Japanese animators and earned revenue that kept the studios and the entire animation industry alive, which contributed to the rise of Japanese animation on the global stage in the late 1980s and 1990s.

Mochinaga ended his animation career at MOM in April 1967 to work for the China News Service (*Chūgoku tsūshinsha*), a company endorsed by the Xinhua News Service and the Beijing TV Station. His job was to introduce Japanese newsreels to China and Chinese newsreels to Japan on topics related to Sino-Japanese friendship. To shoot newsreels, Mochinaga traveled to China several times. He worked for the China News Service until 1978.<sup>127</sup>

## The Return of Kitty/Mochinaga in Postsocialist Shanghai

In 1979, the Shanghai Animation Film Studio invited Mochinaga to make a puppet-animated film. The film *Who Meowed?* (*Miaowu shi shei jiao de*, 1979) is one of the last animated films he made for China. Mochinaga's Chinese name, Fang Ming, still appeared in the film's credits because his colleagues regarded him as half Chinese. Like the previous animated films made in the early 1950s, *Who Meowed?* takes place in a rural village. A small dog chained to a house is eager to see the outside world, so he breaks free and runs into the field for the first time. The dog hears a disembodied meow. Everything in the field is new and curious to him and he sets out to discover the source of the meow. On his way, he meets a rooster, a pig, two mice, a lamb, and other animals. The dog finally learns that the cat is the source of the meow at the end of the film.

Absent Kitty represents the origin of meaning, namely, the source of the mysterious meow, a revelation deferred until the end of the film. Kitty's absence leaves room for multiple narrative possibilities for the rooster, pig, mice, and others. The meow uttered by Kitty at the end of the film is a return to that original mysterious sound and a reassertion of its authorship after a long period of absence. Kitty can be seen as symbolizing Mochinaga's place in the history of Chinese animation. Mochinaga enjoyed animating adorable cats and made *Thank You Kitty* and *Kitty Goes Fishing* in early socialist China. After he returned to Japan, Chinese animators continued to animate cute animals, but films rarely featured a cat as protagonist.<sup>128</sup> Because Mochinaga was no longer in China, the protagonist Kitty was absent for two decades in the history of Chinese animated film. His departure gave rise to other animation possibilities, such as the rise of the national style in the late 1950s and early 1960s and the depiction of political heroes during the years of the Cultural Revolution. In this sense, Mochinaga is the returned Kitty who uttered the meow in Chinese animation.

*Who Meowed?* was probably inspired by a Soviet puppet-animated film under the same title *Who Meowed?* It was directed by Vladimir Degtyarev (1916–1974) and released in 1962. Degtyarev received his education at the Leningrad Art School. After he was wounded in World War II, he pursued further education at the All-Union State Institute of Cinematography, graduating in 1948, after which he began working at the Soiuzmultfilm Studio as an art director. From 1953 onward, he worked as a director of cel- and puppet-animated films that targeted children. The best-known of his films is *The Ugly Duckling* (1957). *Who Meowed?* won an international award at the IV International Film Festival in Annecy, France.<sup>129</sup> The protagonist, a puppy, hears a disembodied meow and tries to find the source of the sound. In his quest for an answer, he meets a rooster, a bee, a frog, and other animals. In the end, he discovers that a cat had made the meow sound.

Mochinaga's story closely resembles Degtyarev's *Who Meowed?* Even the images of the puppy, cat, and other animals look similar. It is possible that the Soviet film had influenced Mochinaga's version made in Shanghai in 1979. This Soviet influence is not surprising given his leftist tendency, his criticism of postwar Disney films, and his preference for films with their own national or ethnic style. In fact, during his stay in early socialist China, Mochinaga learned the art of puppet animation from Soviet and Czech films.<sup>130</sup> Soviet animation indeed had a profound impact on Mochinaga's puppet animation.

Mochinaga's bond with China was reinforced when he worked with Hu Jinqing and produced a fourteen-minute educational film using papercutting, *Twin Lotuses* (*Shuanglian*) in 1992. It was a coproduction of Shanghai Animation Film Studio and Sakura Motion Pictures (Sakura eiga-sha) in Tokyo. The film's production was sponsored by the Japanese Organization for International Cooperation in Family Planning (JOICFP), a nongovernmental organization active in family planning and maternal health since 1968. JOICFP began its collaboration with China in 1984. The film's goal is to educate women about healthful habits.<sup>131</sup> It was broadcast on television for collective viewing by peasants. The film's title is highly symbolic, the lotus flower representing virtue in Chinese culture because it emerges from the mud yet is pure and beautiful; Lian is a popular Chinese name for girls, giving the title a feminine connotation; and last, lotus seeds are a traditional herbal medicine for women and symbolize female fertility. The twin lotuses refer to the film's characters, an open-minded wife, who pursues a healthy and independent life, and her caring husband. More important, the title evokes the expression "even when the lotus root breaks, the fibers still hold together" (*ou duan si lian*), that referred to the friendship between China and Japan, two Asian countries separated by the sea yet connected by culture.<sup>132</sup>

Mochinaga's art of puppet animation spread in Japan through his students. The first and most talented of them, Kawamoto Kihachirō (1925–2010), participated in the production of the first puppet-animated advertisement, *Mr. Bitter Beer's Magician*.<sup>133</sup> Kawamoto went on to study puppet animation techniques from Jiří Trnka in Prague from 1963 to 1964. After Kawamoto returned from Prague, he launched his own career and became Japan's most influential puppet animator.<sup>134</sup>

Mochinaga's connections with Chinese animation continued through Kawamoto's career. In 1988, Kawamoto made the puppet-animated film *To Shoot without Shooting* (*Bu she zhi she*) for Shanghai Animation Film Studio. The original was adapted from the Chinese classic *Master Lie* (*Liezi*). Nakajima Atsushi (1909–1942), a Japanese writer and sinologist, rewrote this classical Chinese legend and titled it "The Story of a Celebrity" ("Meijinden," published on December 1, 1942). Kawamoto adapted "The Story of a Celebrity" for the puppet-animated film *To Shoot without Shooting* for China.

The journey of the story in *To Shoot without Shooting* parallels the travel of the artistic form of puppet animation. In 1947, Mochinaga made *Dreaming to Be Emperor*, the first puppet-animated film in socialist China. In 1953 he then brought the art of puppet animation to Japan and passed on his knowledge to Kawamoto. In 1988, Kawamoto brought the art back to China in the film *To Shoot without Shooting*. Unlike films in the late 1940s and early 1950s in China, *To Shoot without Shooting* directly acknowledged its complicated connections with Japan. The film's opening sequence celebrates the film as "a landmark in the time-honored history of Sino-Japanese friendship." Kawamoto's Japanese name appears in the credits. Thus the connections of Chinese animation with Japan resurfaced.

*To Shoot without Shooting* demonstrates the process of adaptation and supplementation in the cultural flows between China and Japan. In the original Chinese legend, Jichang learns archery from Feiwei, who passes on his knowledge to Jichang without reservation. Jichang wants to be the world's best archer. After learning everything Feiwei could teach him, Jichang sets out to kill his teacher. The two archers meet in the wilderness and stage a duel. Each time they shoot at each other, their arrows meet halfway and break into two halves. Feiwei runs out of arrows first, but he picks up a branch and uses it to fend off Jichang's last arrow shot. Jichang realizes that he cannot defeat his master, so he reconciles with Feiwei. The two men weep. The Chinese legend ends here, but the Japanese version, as demonstrated in the puppet-animated film, goes further. After their reconciliation, Feiwei tells Jichang that if he really wants to be the world's best archer, he needs to learn archery from a master in E'mei Mountain in Sichuan province. Jichang travels there, finds the mysterious Daoist master Ganying, and becomes Ganying's disciple. Ganying teaches Jichang the art of shooting without using bows and arrows. Jichang's aggressive nature is gradually tamed by learning a philosophy and form of archery that embrace humility, withdrawal, and solitude. By the time Jichang returns to the city as the world's best archer, he does not even remember what a bow is. As a result, people in the city abandon their bows and arrows. Peace and harmony are restored to the world.

*To Shoot without Shooting* thematizes the complicated love-hate relationship between China and Japan. Japan emulated China before the Meiji period, but tried to supplant China and become the most powerful nation in the world—or at least in East Asia. Japan's ambition culminated during World War II, a time when Japan considered China inferior. When *Princess Iron Fan* was released in wartime Tokyo, Japan developed a strong sense of competition with China in the field of animation. The protagonist Jichang in *To Shoot without Shooting* is portrayed as having exceptional perseverance, stamina, and ambition, the characteristics of a samurai (a figure often used to represent Japan). Jichang suffers from the anxiety of influence and tries to kill his master to prove that he is the better archer. Paradoxically,



Jichang becomes the best archer in the world only when he gives up competition. The film ends with a vision of utopian cosmopolitanism as everyone in the city abandons bows and arrows to ensure peace and harmony. This ending gestures toward the conclusion of the long-standing rivalry between China and Japan that began with the transnational reception of *Princess Iron Fan* during World War II. The film's ending also foreshadows the destiny of Japanese animation. After reconciling with China after the war, Japanese animation gradually became the most influential and popular in East Asia, if not the entire world.