Looking East

Images of Asians in American Film

1915–1958

John Migliore

December 13, 2007

Intro to MIAP
Program at a Glance

• 10 films
• 2 weeks
• Films set in China, Japan, The Philippines, and Vietnam
• Prints from MoMA, Eastman House, Warner Bros., Sony, & United Artists
• First successful Asian actor in Hollywood
• $5,000/week–1915
• Haworth Pictures–1918
• Produced 23 films examining Japanese culture
The Cheat (1915)
Dir. Cecil B. DeMille
A Dragon Painter (1919)
Dir. William Worthington
Broken Blossoms (1919)
Dir. D.W. Griffith
Anna May Wong
The Bitter Tea of General Yen (1933)
Dir. Frank Capra

They found a love they dared not touch!

Barbara Stanwyck in
"The Bitter Tea of General Yen"
with Nils Asther – Walter Connolly
A Columbia Picture
The Good Earth (1937)
Dir. Sidney Franklin
Daughter of Shanghai (1937)
Dir. Robert Florey
Behind the Rising Sun (1943)
Dir. Edward Dymytryk
*Dragon Seed* (1944)

Dir. Jack Conway & Harold S. Bucquet
Back to Bataan (1945)
Dir. Edward Dmytryk
Japanese War Bride (1952)
Dir. King Vidor
The Quiet American (1958)
Dir. Joseph L. Mankiewicz
Titus 1
DRAGON SEED. 1944. Directed by Jack Conway, Harold S. Bucquet. With Katharine Hepburn (Jade), Walter Huston (Ling Tan), Aline MacMahon (Ling Tan's Wife), Akim Tamiroff (Wu Lien). Another adaptation from a Pearl S. Buck epic, this time focusing on the heroic resistance of Chinese farmers in a small village to Japanese invasion during the Sino-Japanese War in the 1930s. Hepburn portrays the spirited daughter of a rural family whose privileged position as a housemaid for a Japanese general offers the perfect opportunity to undermine the hostile forces. The only major film from Hollywood to deal with this often-overlooked conflict, Dragon Seed captures a unique moment in time, celebrating an ally who would, within a few years of its release, become an implacable enemy. The film's greatest interest lies in the sincere attempts at Asian characterizations, particularly Hepburn's intriguing variation on her usual principled and independent woman. 148 min.
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