



## NISHIMOTO Tadashi (HE Lanshan) 西本正 (賀蘭山) (1921–1997)

### Cinematographer

Born in Chikushino City, Fukuoka Prefecture, Kyushu, Nishimoto was orphaned at young age and followed his sister and brother-in-law to live in Manchuria. In 1941, he became an apprentice cinematographer at the Manchurian Film Cooperative. He was sent to Japan for further studies, along with Ma Shouqing, a Chinese cinematographer. His teachers included famous cinematographers Midorikawa Michio and Tanigawa Tetsuzo. Nishimoto decided to return to Manchuria when the Second Sino-Japanese War ended, but Ma, a member of the Chinese Communist Party, advised him to stay in Japan. In 1948, he joined Shintohto (New Toho) and worked as an assistant to Mimura Akira, Watanabe Takashi, Kawasaki Kikuzo and Yasumoto Jun. It was rumoured that he had handled the last scenes of the stampede on the sand in Taniguchi Senkichi's anti-war film *Desertion at Dawn* (1950) and the standard version of the widescreen colour feature, *Emperor Meiji and the Great Russo-Japanese War* (1957). In 1956, Nishimoto was promoted to cinematographer for *The Soul of Blood And Iron*, directed by Taguchi Tetsu. In the following year, referred by Hattori Chisho, the chairman of Shintohto (New Toho), he shot the Eastmancolor film, *Love with an Alien* (1958) and the black-and-white title, *The Lady of Mystery* (1957) for Shaw & Sons Ltd. He once had a Chinese stage name Ni Mengdong. Gaining the recognition of Nakagawa Nobuo, 'the master of horror', after returning to his home country, he filmed the critically acclaimed *Black Cat Mansion* (1958) and *The Ghost of Yotsuya* (1959).

At the peak of his career, Nishimoto was again invited by Shaw Brothers (Hong Kong) Ltd to shoot Li Han-hsiang's historical epics *Yang Kwei-Fei, the Magnificent Concubine* (1962) and *Empress Wu Tse-tien* (1963), under the Chinese name He Lanshan. The former won a technical award at the 15th Cannes Film Festival for its colour cinematography; while the latter, which he shot with two Toho widescreen cameras he brought from Japan, was regarded as the summit of achievement among the studio films from Shaws. He also won Best Colour Cinematography at the Asian Film Festival with *The Love Eterne* (1963) and *The Blue and the Black* (1966). Before leaving Shaws in 1970, Nishimoto filmed *The Last Woman of Shang* (1964), *The Lotus Lamp* (1965), *Come Drink with Me* (1966), etc. In 1965, at the request of Run Run Shaw and Raymond Chow, he introduced director Inoue Umetsugu to come to work in Hong Kong. He set up East Central Company in the early 1970s, with productions such as *Underworld Beauty* (1974), for which Shohei Imamura wrote the script. He also founded a company that provided special effect shooting services. Meanwhile, he worked as a cinematographer for *The Way of the Dragon* (1972) and *Games Gamblers Play* (1974), both produced by Golden Harvest (HK) Limited. His last film was Shaws' *The Super Inframan* (1975). He had shot over 40 titles in Hong Kong, with 30-plus of them produced by Shaws. Nishimoto also trained many filmmakers, including Hua Shan, Lau Koon-wai, Nam Nai-choi and Pao Hsueh-li. In 1977, he was awarded the Masutani Sho by the Motion Picture and Television Engineering Society of Japan for his contribution to the development of film technology in Hong Kong.

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