



ASIAN AND MIDDLE EASTERN STUDIES Tripos Part IB,

East Asian Studies

AMES 1 CINEMA EAST

*Candidates should answer **three** questions, **one** from Section A and **two** from Section B*

All questions are of equal value.

*Write your number **not** your name on the cover sheet of **each** Answer Book.*

STATIONERY REQUIREMENTS

*20 page Answer Book x 1
Rough Work Pad*

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS

none

**You may not start to read the questions
printed on the subsequent pages of this
question paper until instructed that you may
do so by the Invigilator.**

SECTION A

Answer ONE question.

All answers to questions in SECTION A should refer MAINLY (75%) to East Asian films studied during this year's course, although some use may be made of other films that offer important comparisons or contrasts or were made by directors included in the syllabus.

- 1 'The development of a specific genre . . . requires a consistently positive audience response to its style and content' (Mercer and Shingler). Discuss with regard to any genre common to TWO national cinemas studied this year.
- 2 Discuss the way in which narratives concerning history are shaped by TWO films from different East Asian nations.
- 3 'The social history of a nation can be written in terms of its film stars' (Durgnat). Discuss with regard to any TWO East Asian film stars.
- 4 French critic Alexandre Astruc famously claimed that the director-*auteur* 'writes with his camera as the writer writes with his pen'. Test this assertion on directors studied this year.
- 5 'The film image is bounded, limited. From an implicitly continuous world, the frame selects a slice to show us' (Bordwell and Thompson). Illustrate the significance of this observation with regard to THREE scenes from East Asian films..
- 6 Discuss the depiction and meanings of sexuality explored in East Asian cinema.

SECTION B

The questions below are grouped in three sub-sections matching the main national traditions studied in the course: China/Taiwan, Japan and South Korea. Answer TWO questions which must be from different subsections.

7 **China/Taiwan** Answer ONE of the following:

- a) In *The Goddess*, how are the personal qualities of the key protagonists conveyed cinematically and joined to the overall themes of the film?
- b) How does *The White-Haired Girl* try to express its political and social messages, and what difficulties may such messages pose for the contemporary viewer?
- c) What genre or combination of genres would you use to describe Chen Kaige's *Farewell, My Concubine*?
- d) 'The World is the first film that Jia Zhangke made with official approval and yet it is hard to imagine a more radical repudiation of the regime.' Discuss the pros and cons of such an assertion.
- e) How are autobiography, memory and history woven through Hou Hsiao-hsien's *A Time to Live and a Time to Die*?
- f) 'There are many different Chinas yet Chinese cinema seems to generate and repeat many common features and concerns.' Discuss.

8 **Japan** Answer ONE of the following:

- a) Critic Satō Tadao identifies many of Kurosawa's films as illustrating the theme that 'a lack of fear of death and an acute awareness of annihilation can make one act even more effectively for justice'. Can *Yōjimbō* be understood along such lines?
- b) 'Westerns have been made over and over again, and in the process a kind of grammar has evolved', claimed Kurosawa. What did he learn from it and what did he add to it?
- c) Bordwell has noted that 'Ozu tends to decenter narrative slightly; spatial and temporal structures come forward and create their own interest. Sometimes we learn of important events only indirectly'. Discuss with regard to *The End of Summer*.
- d) 'Even in a film as bizarre as *Vengeance is Mine* . . . our sympathies are intellectual – how and why did this man do this, and what was his life like? – rather than emotional' (Audie Bock). Would you support or challenge this assertion?

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- e) Is *When a Woman Ascends the Stairs* a melodrama, an anti-melodrama or something else?
- f) Give TWO detailed examples of a characteristically Japanese style of cinematography.

9 **South Korea** Answer ONE of the following:

- a) In what ways does the cinematic style of *The Housemaid* seem more appropriate to horror or mystery genres than home drama?
- b) In *Mandala*, how does Im Kwon-taek combine Buddhism with the road movie?
- c) How is *Taegukgi* constructed as a 'blockbuster', and how does that construction fit with its account of historical events and/or development of characters?
- d) Discuss the portrayal of the South Korean family in any TWO films studied this year.
- e) Concerning *Memories of Murder*, Jinhee Choi argues that 'by foregrounding mise-en-scène', a director like Bong Joon-ho 'seeks an alternate aesthetic to replace the spectacle-driven blockbuster style.' Discuss.
- f) 'South Korean cinema does not so much reflect the country's history as refract it through the lens of genre'. Discuss with regard to TWO films studied this year.

END OF PAPER