

Document Citation

Title	The last Emperor
Author(s)	
Source	<i>Swank Motion Pictures, Inc.</i>
Date	
Type	distributor materials
Language	English
Pagination	
No. of Pages	4
Subjects	
Film Subjects	The last Emperor, Bertolucci, Bernardo, 1987

**THE MOST
HONORED FILM IN 25 YEARS!!**

9 ACADEMY AWARDS
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**THE
LAST EMPEROR**

 **SWANK**
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THE LAST EMPEROR

ABOUT THE FILM

Peking, 1908. A 3-year-old boy is removed from his home and his mother and is carried through the night to the Forbidden City, the heart of China. His name is Pu Yi, and his abduction will alter China's history.

Directed by internationally acclaimed filmmaker Bernardo Bertolucci, "THE LAST EMPEROR" was filmed almost entirely on location in China in 1986, the first western production to be made about modern China with the full cooperation of the Chinese government. John Lone stars as Pu Yi. Joan Chen as the Empress Wan Jung and Peter O'Toole as Reginald Johnston, the Emperor's tutor.

As this traumatic period of Chinese history begins. Pu Yi is placed on the Dragon Throne and becomes "The Lord of Ten Thousand Years," "The Son of Heaven," ruler of more than half the world's population. Sadly, the Emperor of China becomes the loneliest boy on earth. But in 1912, China is transformed into a republic. The Qing dynasty is forced to abdicate and more than 3,000 years of imperial rule come to an end.

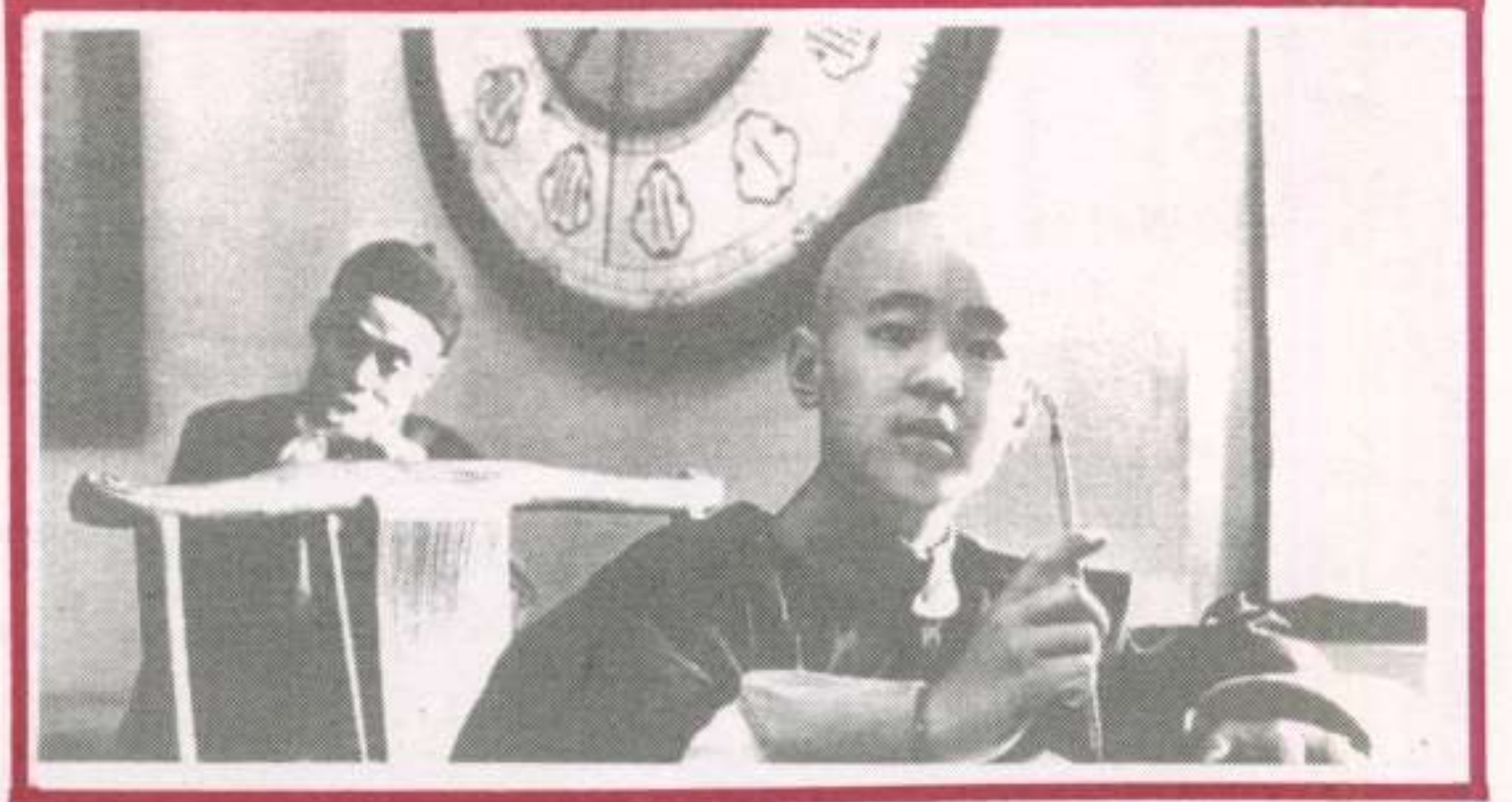
Yet the only person who does not understand this sweeping change is the boy emperor, who is cloistered in the strange medieval life of the Forbidden City. As Pu Yi grows up surrounded by high consorts, courtiers and more than 1500 eunuchs, he is still treated as a god, free to do anything he chooses except live in the present and set foot outside the palace. Unwittingly, Pu Yi has been cast as the leading actor in an elaborate scenario in which all conspire to hide the truth from him.

The charade painfully collapses, however, when Pu Yi is 18 and married with two wives. In 1924, a republican warlord captures Peking and expels the ex-emperor from the Forbidden City. Aided by his friend and tutor, Reginald Johnston, Pu Yi flees to Tientsin. For a few years he enjoys the life of a western playboy, but in 1931 he makes the greatest mistake of his life: He accepts the Japanese invitation to return to the land of his ancestors and becomes the emperor of the new state of Manchukuo.

It is the beginning of a nightmare for him, for China and for the rest of the world, which is soon at war. After puppet rule by the Japanese, imprisonment in a Communist jail for 10 years, when his execution seems inevitable, and re-education to teach him about modern Chinese society, Pu Yi finally gains freedom in 1960 and is able to be with his people. He has become a changed man, living a life of leisure and contentment as a gardener in the Botanical Gardens until his death in 1967.

What is surely fascinating about this story is its wide scope. The life of Pu Yi embraces the whole century, from the end of the Ching Dynasty to the first republic of Sun Yat-sen; from the warlords of the '20s to the Kuomintang of Chiang Kai-shek; from the Japanese invasion of Manchukuo; from the Second World War to the foundation of the People's Republic; from a decade of Mao's re-education programs to the beginning of the Cultural Revolution.

Bertolucci says he was fascinated by the life of Pu Yi, particularly with the question, "Can a man change? Did Pu Yi change? If so, how much during the years of his re-education in prison?" Bertolucci explains, "Pu Yi's story can be described in many ways — as a journey from darkness to light or as the metamorphosis of a man who, as the Chinese say, changes from a dragon to a normal person, from the Emperor to a citizen."



In March 1984, Bertolucci first visited China with proposals for two films. One of them was "From Emperor to Citizen," the autobiography of Pu Yi, which Bertolucci has recently read. The Chinese response was warm and immediately — the notion of a western director filming the story of China's last Emperor was welcomed.

The filmmakers were pleasantly surprised by the lack of restraints imposed by the Chinese. Although the negotiations were complex and took two years to complete. "THE LAST EMPEROR" was given unlimited cooperation through the China Film Co-Production Corporation in exchange for the Chinese distribution rights to the film. The script was approved and only factual inaccuracies were corrected.

The logistics of the production were staggering. "THE LAST EMPEROR" incorporated people from six nations. Actors came from the United States, Great Britain, China, Hong Kong and Japan to play the 60 main characters. In addition, 100 technicians from Italy, 20 from Britain and 150 Chinese worked for six months, while 19,000 extras, including soldiers of the People's Liberation Army, appear in the immense crowd scenes.

James Acheson, the costume designer, gathered 9,000 costumes from all over the world. Imperial dragon robes, court dresses and costumes, tunics of the workers and peasants, Japanese army uniforms, Kuomintang uniforms and western dresses fashionable in the 1920s and 1930s were among the many that were bought or made in China and such cities as London, Brighton, Hong Kong, Tokyo, Rome and Spoleto, Italy.

The company obtained unprecedented permission to shoot in hitherto forbidden locations. Four months were spent in Beijing, Dalian and Changchun in Manchuria, with more than two months of interiors completed at Cinecitta Studios in Rome.

Many weeks were devoted to filming inside the Forbidden City, home for many years to the ruling dynasties of China. Bertolucci describes the Forbidden City as "the set Hollywood dare not build, the Disneyland of China." The Forbidden City stands in the heart of Peking, its 250 acres entirely enclosed by high red walls, some of them 50 feet thick. It has 9,999 rooms (the Chinese believed only heaven had 10,000 rooms) built around a bewildering jigsaw of courtyards, alleys and gardens.

Here Pu Yi spent 16 years of his life, unable to venture outside, surrounded by thousands of eunuchs and the ladies of the court. Forbidden no longer, it is now one of China's greatest tourist attractions, enticing more than 50,000 visitors a day. During filming, whole palaces and courtyards were closed off as thousand of curious tourists gathered to watch from a distance.

In Beijing, production designer Ferdinando Scarfiotti designed and built a number of sets, including the Empress Dowager's bedchamber and the Emperor's living quarters. Exterior sets included a thronging ancient Peking street scene, the Emperor's father's house and the Fushun prison yard.

Despite its cast of thousands, its palatial and exotic locations and its sumptuous design, the film remains the intimate story of an extraordinary and unique man and his journey of self discovery, a man who started life as a ruler of half the world's population and ended up as a humble gardener of Peking.

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HE IS THE MOVIE EPIC'S LAST EMPEROR."**

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THE LAST EMPEROR

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Ivan Sharrock*

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Ferdinando Scarfiotti

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*Mark Peploe and
Bernardo Bertolucci*

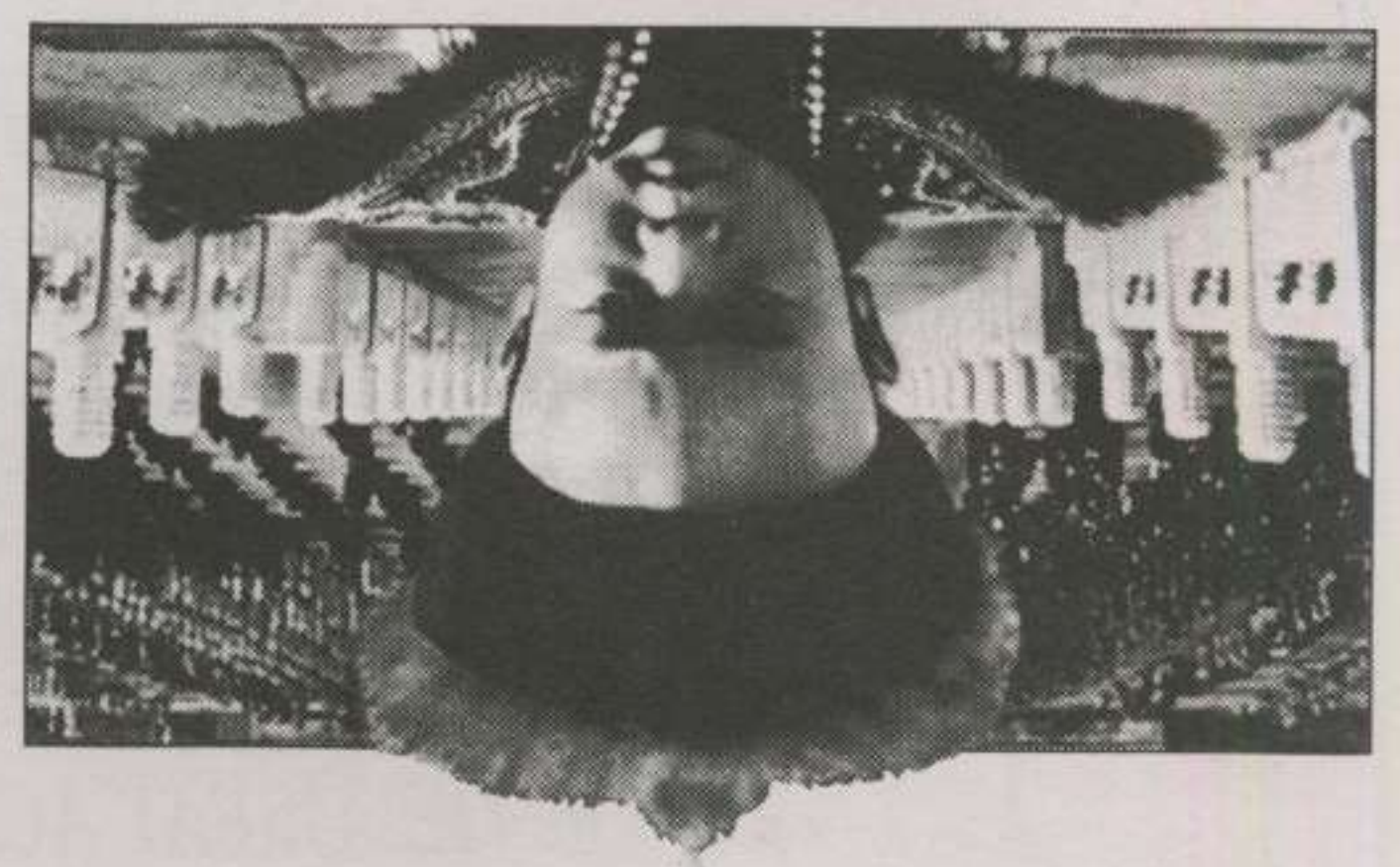
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UC BERKELEY
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SWANK
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