



King HU 胡金銓 (1931.4.29–1997.1.14)

Director, Actor

Hu was born in Beijing to a family from Yongnian, Hebei. His paternal grandfather was an imperial official of the Qing dynasty. His father studied in Japan and his mother excelled in traditional Chinese paintings. He received secondary education at the Peking Academy. Hu arrived in Hong Kong in 1949 and worked as a proofreader and painter for posters and billboards. He later joined The Great Wall Movie Enterprises Ltd and worked at the art department headed by the Wan brothers. He soon switched to Yung Hwa Motion Picture Industries Ltd. Apart from taking on the art direction work for *Humiliation for Sale* (1958), directed by Yan Jun, he made his acting debut in the film and later acted in *Golden Phoenix* (1956). During his time at Yung Hwa, Hu worked in different departments and became an assistant director. After Yung Hwa closed down in 1956, he worked as a producer for the *Voice of America* and appeared in several films, including *The Long Lane* (1956), his personal favourite. Upon the recommendation of his good friend Li Han-hsiang, Hu signed a contract with Shaw Brothers (Hong Kong) Ltd in 1958 and took part in *The Kingdom and the Beauty* (1959); and played the leading role in *The Deformed* (1960) and *When the Peach Blossoms Bloom* (1960). His first screenplay was Yan Jun's *The Bride Napping* (1962). Hu was also the assistant director to Li for *The Enchanting Shadow* (1960) and the executive director for *The Love Eterne* (1963). His directorial debut was a *huangmei diao* feature, *The Story of Sue San* (1964). He later scripted and directed *Sons of Good Earth* (1965), which won Best Screenplay at the 4th Golden Horse Awards in Taiwan. Hu later directed Shaw's *Come Drink with Me* (1966), a box-office success that was billed as 'the pioneering work of the Chinese new *wuxia* era'.

In 1967, upon the invitation of Taiwan's Union Film Company Ltd, he went to Taiwan to set up its production department and studio. *Dragon Inn* (1968), Union's inaugural production which Hu directed, was a box-office smash in both Hong Kong and Taiwan. It also won Best Screenplay at the 6th Golden Horse Awards. He then directed *A Touch of Zen* (1971), which featured sophisticated cinematic artistry; the film was awarded the Technical Grand Prize at the Cannes Film Festival in 1975. *The International Film Guide* further heralded him as one of the world's top five directors in 1978. In 1970, Hu returned to Hong Kong to set up King Hu Film Productions and shot *The Fate of Lee Khan* (1973), funded by Golden Harvest (HK) Limited, and *The Valiant Ones* (1975). Hu later travelled to Korea and made *Raining in the Mountain* (1979) and *Legend of the Mountain* (1979), both masterpieces of the *wuxia* genre; he further bagged Best Director with the latter at the 16th Golden Horse Awards. In the 1980s, he directed a number of titles such as *The Juvenizer* (1981) and *All the King's Men* (1983) in Taiwan. Hu was credited as director for *Swordsman* (1990), but he only filmed part of the work and resulted in producer Tsui Hark finishing it. He last took part as director for *Painted Skin* (1993) that was shot on location in the Mainland. Hu died in 1997 while undergoing surgery in Taiwan, when he was about to embark on the production of *The Battle of Ono*. He was honoured with the Lifetime Achievement Award at the 34th Golden Horse Awards in Taiwan the same year.
