



LEE Tit 李鐵 (1913–1996.9.27)

Director, Screenwriter

A native of Zhongshan, Guangdong, Lee was born in Hong Kong with the original name Lee Yuk-ching. Interested in art and literature at a young age, Lee took part in dramas at school. At age 17, despite his family's objections, he enrolled in the 1st Actor Training Class of United Photoplay Service Limited. Director Lai Buk-hoi admired his talent and encouraged him to learn directing and screenwriting. Lee made his acting debut with *Midnight Thrill* (aka *Gunshot at Midnight*) (1932) upon graduation and later became assistant director to Kwan Man-ching in *Lifeline* (1935). He debuted as a director with *House Number Sixty-Six* (1936) the next year, followed by *Song of Life* (1937) which established his position as a major director and brought Ng Cho-fan to fame as the 'Movie King of South China'.

During Japanese occupation, he formed a theatre troupe and staged performances in Hong Kong. His film career resumed after the war. In 1952, he co-founded The Union Film Enterprise Ltd with other filmmakers, and directed all-time classics *In the Face of Demolition* (1953) and *Eternal Love* (1955). His other prominent work include *The House of Sorrows* (1956), *Butterfly and Red Pear Blossom* (1959), *Father is Back* (1961) and *Female Imperial Son-in-Law* (1962). A good friend with noted Cantonese opera playwright Tong Tik-sang, he served as technical advisor for Tong's directorial works *The Story of Tung Siu-yuen* (1950) and *Mysterious Murder* (in two parts, 1951). He also adapted seven of Tong's operas to the big screen, including *The Legend of Purple Hairpin* (1959) and *Butterfly and Red Pear Blossom*, which were produced by Hawks Film Company set up by Lee himself.

In addition to directing, Lee also penned the screenplays to many of his films, including *Belle in Penang* (1954), *The Love Thief* (1958), *Murderer in Town* (1958) and *Snow in June* (1959). Throughout his career that spanned almost five decades, Lee had over 80 directorial credits under his belt, most of them were Cantonese titles, except for a few that were in Mandarin or Chaozhou dialect.

Lee retired in 1980 when he finished directing Yu Opera film *Bao Zhen, the Judge*. He received the Lifetime Achievement Award presented by the Hong Kong Film Directors' Guild in 1994. Lee passed away of illness in Hong Kong on 27 September 1996.