



CHONG Suet-kuen 莊雪娟 (1943–2009)

Actress, Producer

A native of Guolong, Puning, Guangdong, Chong Suet-kuen showed great fondness for stage opera at a young age. Her father, Chong Ming-fung, was a producer at Tung Shan Film Co. At the age of 17, Chong joined Dongshan Chaozhou Music Company, appearing in *xiaosheng* (young civil male) roles in *A Pair of Carved Jade* (co-starring Fong Hau-yuk, 1960) and Bian Sing Motion Picture Co's *The Innocent* (co-starring Ting Chor-kiu, 1960). When Tung Shan Film Co. was formed, she became its principal *xiaosheng*, featuring in the same role type in over 30 Chaozhou-dialect films—including *Strange Visitor* (1960), *Birthday Ceremony* (1961), *Two Imperial Sons-in-Law* (aka *Double Imperial Sons-in-Law*, 1961), *The Story of Splashed Water* (1962), *Two Annulled Marriages* (1962), *The Prime Minister in Male Disguise* (1963), *The Perfumed Ball* (aka *Twin Charms*, 1963), *The Down-and-Out Zheng Yuanhe* (aka *The Crab's Song*, 1963), *Romance of the West Chamber* (1964), *The Jade Fish* (1964) and *Romance of the Military Treatise* (1965). She excelled in playing aspiring scholars who are suppressed by circumstances in life; her performances were also exemplary in *Birthday Ceremony* and *The Down-and-Out Zheng Yuanhe*. In 1963's *The Perfumed Ball*, the colour widescreen production co-produced by Tung Shan and Shaw Brothers (Hong Kong) Ltd, Chong even played dual roles as two brothers with distinctly different personalities.

Early in her career, Chong was often paired with Fong Hau-yuk and Ting Chor-kiu. Later, she paired up with Shek Ling—with Chong playing the *sheng* (male) roles and Shek playing the *dan* (female) roles. As a *xiaosheng*, Chong was physically attractive with a crisp voice and excellent acting skills, making her a favourite among film and Chinese opera buffs in Southeast Asia.

Thanks to the popularity of Chaozhou-dialect cinema in Southeast Asia, Chong performed in over 30 concerts in Thailand in 1964. When its popularity waned in the mid-1960s, Tung Shan's Tsang Mo-hei left and formed Pegasus Picture Production Co to produce Cantonese films. Both Chong and Shek joined the company as regular players, appearing in such films as *Double Weddings* (1965), *The Precious Butterfly* (1967), *The Imperial Warrant* (1968) and *Xiu Niang* (1970). Chong also served as producer on contemporary Cantonese films *Mad Dragon* (1969) and *The Handsome Killer* (1969). Chong made her final film appearance with *A Ghost's Moaning* (1971). After the 1970s, Chong performed on stage periodically before immigrating to Australia. She passed away in 2009.