



Li Pingqian 李萍倩 (1902–1984.11.18)

Director

Born Li Chunshou in Hangzhou, Zhejiang, Li Pingqian was a native of the former county of Tongcheng, Anhui Province. He once studied at the University of Shanghai. In 1920, he was admitted to the film school under Star Motion Picture Co., Ltd. He later worked as a camera assistant while translating and compiling lecture notes for Wang Xuchang's Changming Film Correspondence School. In 1924, he co-founded with Wang et al. Shenzhou Film Company and played the male lead in its inaugural production, *Unbearable Memories* (1925). *Embarrassing Sister* (1926) was his debut work as a director. In 1927, Shenzhou went bankrupt and Li started working for Unique Film Productions, where he directed a vast body of works over his six-year tenure, including *Romance of the Opera* (1931), one of China's earliest sound films, and *Two Daughters of the Northeast* (1932), an overtly anti-Japanese film. He left Unique Film and joined Star Motion Picture in 1932, directing such films as *A Year of Harvest* (1933), *Children of the Times* (1934), *Human Being* (1935) and *Rivals in Love* (1936), etc.

Star Motion Picture suffered irreversible damage soon after the outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese War. During the Orphan Island period, Li directed some famous titles for multiple studios in Shanghai, such as Yi Hwa, Hsin Hwa, and Guotai. Examples include *The Imperial Maid Fei Zhen'e* (1939), a war-effort historical drama, and *The Young Mistress' Fan* (1939), an adaptation of Oscar Wilde's play. In 1941 after the International Settlement was seized by Japan, Li followed Hsin Hwa's owner Zhang Shankun and joined China United Film Company Limited/China United Film Holdings Company Ltd. His directorial works include *Struggle for Spring* (1943), which starred renowned actresses Nancy Chan and Bai Guang, and *Laughter and Tear* (1945), which featured the young actor Yan Jun. After China's victory over Japan, Li directed *Mother and Son* (1947) in Shanghai.

By the end of 1947, he joined Yung Hwa Motion Picture Industries Ltd in Hong Kong where he completed *Our Husband* (1949), a remake of *Struggle for Spring*. In 1949, he entered Great Wall Pictures Corporation founded by Zhang Shankun, where he directed Bai Guang's signature piece *A Strange Woman* (1950) and *Awful Truth* (1950), a dark comedy satirising the 'money-oriented' behaviour of common masses. After Zhang's departure, Li continued to serve and direct for the company which had been restructured as The Great Wall Movie Enterprises Ltd. His famous Great Wall productions include *The Peerless Beauty* (1953), which was written by Lin Huan (aka Jin Yong) and played by Hsia Moon; *Laugh, Clown, Laugh* (1960), a remake of *Laughter and Tear* and actor Bow Fong's tour de force; Yue opera film *Princess Falls in Love* (1962); and Great Wall's first full-colour widescreen musical *Three Charming Smiles* (1964). He directed over 90 films throughout his illustrious career. In 1965 after completing his swansong *A Heroic Romance*, Li took a backseat and became Great Wall's artistic consultant. The veteran passed away on 18 November 1984 in Hong Kong.
