



LING Wan 凌雲 (1925.11.11–2007.1.5)

Director, Screenwriter

Born Ling Kwok-so in Panyu, Guangdong, Ling Wan graduated from primary school in Guangzhou and fled the war to Hong Kong on his own at the age of 16. He co-founded a small news agency with some friends and sold stories to papers. In 1947, Ling joined the film industry as an extra in *My Love Comes Too Late*, the first Cantonese movie produced after the war. He switched to behind-the-scenes work after, and gradually worked his way up from production assistant to continuity, and later assistant director and screenwriter, mostly acting as Chu Kea's right-hand man. Ling made his directorial debut in 1952 with *The Heroine with Invincible Legs* (aka *The Heroine Mok Ching-kiu*). Yet feeling inadequate, Ling chose to work under Yeung Kung-leong and Wong Tin-lam, with whom he co-directed *The Story of Yim Shui-sang* (1954) and *Escorting King-neung on a Thousand-Mile Journey* (1957) respectively.

In the 1960s, Ling took charge in directing and followed the trend to produce *wuxia* films abundantly, including *Ingenious Sword* (Part 1-4, 1962-63), *Musketeers in Qing Palace* (Part 1 & 2, 1963), *Revenge* (Part 1-3, 1966), and *Seven Princesses* (Part 1 & 2, 1966). Among his *wuxia* productions, the *Buddhist Spiritual Palm* tetralogy made between 1964 and 1965 were the most popular, giving rise to further titles in the series—*The Furious Buddhist's Palm* (1965), *Buddhist Spiritual Palm Returned* (1968), and *Buddhist Spiritual Palm* (1968). His *wuxia* films often present carefully constructed fighting sequences, with action directed by Simon Yuen Siu-tin, Tong Kai and Lau Kar-leung; he also made use of explosives and photographic special effects.

Besides being creative with his mise-en-scène, Ling also tried to fuel new ideas into his characters and plots. *The One-Eyed Jack* (1968) and *The Dragon Fortress* (1968) were exemplars, which were also shot on coloured panoramic format. However, Cantonese production had continued to shrink; *The Naked Runner* premiered in 1970 was the last Cantonese film Ling directed, before he switched to produce Mandarin films, such as *The Undefeated Sword* (1970) and *The Ghost* (1972), both co-directed with Yuan Qiufeng. Not until the mid-1980s did Ling resume as planning director for director Tong Kai in *Shaolin Prince* (1983) and *Opium and the Kung-fu Master* (1984)—those were Ling's last directorial works.

Having directed over 110 titles, Ling specialised in costumed *wuxia* films; the two sister productions, *The Secret Agent 303* (aka *The Secret Agent and the Mysterious Gang*) and *The Secret Agent 303* (aka *Spy vs Spy*) (both 1966), were singulars. He co-directed *Good Wife* (1967) with Shek Chee-bun, which was produced under Ling's film company Beautiful Cloud Film Co. He also directed numerous Amoy-dialect films such as *Choosing a Son-in-Law* (1958) and *The Maiden Catches the Culprit* (1959), as well as Chaozhou-dialect features such as *The Virtuous Woman Qin Xuemei* (1963). Ling passed away in Hong Kong on 5 January 2007. His wife Yam Man-lei was a Cantonese opera and film actress.
