



LUNG To 龍圖 (1910.1.24–1986.10.17)

Director, Screenwriter, Production Manager, Librettist, Actor

Born in Guangzhou and a native of Panyu with the original name Poon Wai-lam, Lung is also known as Poon Lung-to. Lung's father is the older artist Poon Hon-chi whose students included famous opera artists such as Kwai Ming-yeung and Wu Tip-ying. Lung's sister is famed Cantonese opera artists Ngan Kim-ying; she was given the accolade of 'The Living Red Maid' after she gained fame for her role in the opera, *Red Maid*, written by Lung. Both of Lung's daughters were trained for *huadan* (prime female lead) roles. The elder daughter, Poon Yim-chu, is known as both Hung Yim Hung and Lam Yim, her name as actress under the Shaw Brothers Studio. Lung's second daughter, Poon Lai-chu is also known as Pak Lai Pak. Apart from writing lecture notes on Cantonese opera for an official drama research institute in Guangdong, he had also arranged numerous Cantonese opera pieces.

Lung started his film career in 1938 when he became composer and assistant director for *A Night of Romance, A Lifetime of Regret*. He started writing screenplays in 1939 with his first screenplay being *Farewell on a Winter Night* (co-written with Fung Fung-kor). His first film as a director/writer was *The Blooming Flower* (1947). During the Japanese occupation, he was engaged as a playwright and production assistant for Cantonese operas in Guangxi and other regions. He returned to Hong Kong and continued his film career after the war, with his first work being *No More Retreat* (1949), which he both directed and wrote. From 1947 to 1969, Lung directed more than 110 films, around one-third of which was also written by him. He specialised in Cantonese opera films and musicals with notable works including *The Random Harvest* (1960) and *A Half-Moon Night* (1964). Notable contemporary titles by Lung include *The True Story of Siu Yuet-pak* (Part 1 & 2, 1955) and *Two Families* (1964). He also directed Chaozhou-dialect and Mandarin films.

Lung was a pioneering figure in special effects for Hong Kong films; he created many rudimentary yet fascinating visual effects on screen. The flying head in the supernatural feature *The Headless Empress Bears a Son* (1957) as well as the freeze-frame, rotating shot and double role in *The Happy Wedding* (1959) were film innovations that awed the audience. In 1963, Lung co-directed with Taiwanese director Shen Chiang on *Family of Four Seas*, a trilingual film involving Mandarin, Cantonese and the Amoy dialect. His last work as a solo director was *Flying Cat* (1967). To honour the memory of director Mok Hong-si, one of the 'Top Ten Directors' in Hong Kong cinema, Lung collaborated with his other 'sworn brothers' to direct *Let's Build a Family* in 1969, and subsequently stepped away from the film industry. During his retirement years, he worked mainly for the church until he passed away in 1986.