



Moon KWAN Man-ching 關文清 (1894–1995.6.17)

Director, Screenwriter, Producer

Moon Kwan Man-ching's family hailed from Kaiping, Guangdong, and he also went by the name Shan-yuet. He received private education at a young age, and also studied English in Hong Kong. In 1911, he went to the US for further studies, where he took film production courses. He worked in Hollywood studios as an extra and later as technical consultant in D. W. Griffith's *Broken Blossom* (1919).

Kwan returned to China in 1920 to develop his film career but was met with setbacks. He later joined China Sun Motion Picture Co., Ltd. and worked as a makeup artist in the first feature film in Hong Kong on record, *Love Is Dangerous* (1925). Hired as a director/writer in 1931 for the Hong Kong branch of United Photoplay Service Limited, Kwan directed silent films such as *The Flame of Love* (1931) and taught at its training school, nurturing talents as Lee Tit and Wong Toi, who both went on to become key figures in the local film industry.

While promoting his films and raising funds for United Photoplay in San Francisco in 1933, Kwan met Joseph Sunn Jue, and steered Jue towards establishing Grandview Film Company. He also assisted Jue in directing the earliest Cantonese sound film, *Blossom Time* (1933), and arranged for United Photoplay to distribute the film in Hong Kong. Kwan filmed the Cantonese opera *Saam Neung Gau Dzee* (1935) in preparation for future filmmaking in the US. The plan ultimately fell through, but he did later help Jue establish Grandview Film Company Limited in Hong Kong.

Kwan directed the patriotic *Life Lines* (1935) for Grandview, which was banned by the Hong Kong government. He successfully fought for it to be screened in its original form. He wrote and directed *Resistant* (1936), and directed *They'll Have Their Day* (1936) and *Girl from West Lake* (1937). In 1936, Kwan petitioned against the Nationalist government's ban on dialect films on behalf of the local film industry. He formed Hillmoon Film Co. with Kwong Shan-siu and, carrying on the patriotic spirit of *Resistant*, directed *For Duty's Sake* (1937) and *Enemy of Humanity* (1938). The three films were together named Kwan's *War of Resistance Trilogy*. Later, in the US, he co-directed *Golden Gate Girl* (1941) with overseas Chinese director Esther Eng, starring Tso Yee-man.

Kwan returned to his hometown to teach during the Japanese occupation of Hong Kong and rejoined Hong Kong's film industry after the war. With a continued interest in social issues, Kwan directed *The War Ended* (1947) and *Spring's Flight* (1954); and co-directed with Joseph Sunn Jue *Kwan-Ti, God of War* (1956), which was shot on Eastmancolour stock. His final film released was *Charlie Catches the Cat* (1969). He gave a lecture in 1964 on 'The Evolution of the World Cinema' at Hong Kong City Hall. He also published various works, including a 1932 English poetry and drama collection, *A Chinese Mirror: Poems and Plays*, a Chinese poetry anthology *Zi Ming Ji* (My Own Voice) and a memoir, *Zhongguo Yintan Waishi* (*An Unofficial History of Chinese Cinema*), released in 1976. Kwan immigrated to the US in the late 1980s and died there in 1995.
