



## TONG Yuejuan 童月娟 (1914.8.7–2003.1.6)

### Actress, Production Manager, Producer, Executive Producer

Born Wan Xiuying, alias Liang Ruiying. Tong was a native of Hangzhou, Zhejiang. She began to train in Peking opera at 16, and adopted the stage name Tong Yuejuan. She soon began performing on stage, during which she met Zhang Shankun and accepted his invitation to perform in the hit show *The Legend of Taiping Heavenly Kingdom* in Shanghai. In 1933, she married Zhang and together they founded Hsin Hwa Motion Picture Company. She made her film debut with the inaugural production *The Legend of Taiping Heavenly Kingdom* (1935).

Hsin Hwa's business evolved rapidly. At that time, Tong played in many of the company's budding productions: *Spring Dream in the Peach Garden*, *Soaring Aspiration* (both 1936) and *Youth on the March* (1937), etc. The couple also founded Huaxin Film Company, with which she performed in *The White Snake* (1939), *The Dreamer in the Spring Wind* (1941) among others. Before the War of Resistance against Japan, Tong had already begun filming in Hong Kong, starring in productions such as *My Son is a Woman* and *Sable Cicada* (both 1938). She remained in Shanghai during the Japanese Occupation. At the time, some companies were integrated into the China United Film Company Limited by the Japanese regime, and Zhang Shankun was appointed its general manager. Tong participated in *Fraternity* (1942) and other films during this period. However, the couple were regarded as traitors for a time. Tong moved to Hong Kong after the war, where her husband co-founded Yung Hwa Motion Picture Industries Ltd with Li Zuyong before establishing Great Wall Pictures Corporation on his own. Tong showed support alongside Zhang. In 1950 and 1952, Zhang founded Far East Motion Picture Company and Hsin Hwa Motion Picture Company respectively. Tong supported her husband's endeavours and served as production manager on *Beauty Contest* (1954), *Camellia* (1955), *Songs of the Peach Blossom River*, *Flash and Flame* and *Madame Butterfly* (all 1956), as well as China's first Eastmancolor film, *Blood Will Tell* (1955).

Zhang became ill and passed away in 1957. Tong subsequently took over Hsin Hwa, fulfilling her husband's unfulfilled dream of producing musical films in colour, such as *Her Spring Breeze* (1957). As producer and executive producer, Tong continued to make movies until the mid-1980s. She shot more than 30 films in that time, these include *The Blazing Charming* (1959), *Bloodbath in Emerald Valley* (1960), *Flying over Grass* (1970), *Six Directions of Boxing* (1980), and *Prohibited Area* (1981). After wrapping *Dress Off for Life* (1984), Tong retired from her duties as executive producer. Since the mid-1950s, she had also been involved in the formation of the Hong Kong and Kowloon Filmmakers Free General Association Limited (later renamed as Hong Kong and Kowloon Cinema & Theatrical Enterprise Free General Association Limited), which is now known as Hong Kong & Macau Cinema & Theatrical Enterprise Association Limited. Tong was elected as chairman in 1973 and retired in the early 1990s before moving to Canada. She was honoured with a Special Award at the Golden Horse Awards in 1969, and was honoured again with a Lifetime Achievement Award in 1994. She passed away on 6 January 2003 in Shanghai.