



WONG Cheuk-hon 黃卓漢 (1920.1.25–2004.10.8)

Producer, Distributor, Director

A born native of Chaozhou, Guangdong, Wong Cheuk-hon received a Bachelor of Laws degree from Koumin University. He was a teacher before becoming a deputy editor-in-chief of a newspaper. He came to Hong Kong in 1949. With his passion towards film, he first became the manager of China Theatre and subsequently established a company to distribute Cantonese films. Wong founded Liberty Film Co. in 1952 and was focused on making Mandarin films. The company first presented *The Secret Life of Lady So Lee* (1953) that featured newcomer Helen Li Mei. Having achieved great results with the film, he established actor training classes to cultivate new talents. Jeanette Lin Tsui, one of the students, was chosen as the lead of *Sweet Seventeen* (1954) and leapt to stardom. Wong was the first filmmaker from Hong Kong to film in Taiwan; such works include *Princess of Sun Moon Lake* (1956) and *Remote Love* (1956). He also made *Miss Chow Shun* (1958) which was filmed at the local sugarcane plantation. The film suffered heavy losses, however, due to issues in overseas distribution. In 1959, Lan Kwong Film Company was established to mainly shoot Cantonese films, featuring such new actors as Ting Ying, Paul Chu, and Cheung Yee. Having an eye for talents, Wong chose Alan Tang who was still a student then to take the lead in *The Student Prince* (1964). Lan Kwong released a total of 53 films, most of which were modern satires that touched on all walks of life in the city. Notable examples included boarding girls in *Ten Schoolgirls* (1960), grassroots workers in *Three Love Affairs* (1963), modern females in *Two City Girls* (1963), and the new-era small family in *Beware of the Husband* (1964).

In 1967, Wong established First Film Organisation Limited and moved his base to Taiwan with a focus of making martial arts films. After its first feature *Crazy Swordsman* (1968), actors including Jimmy Wang Yu, Chen Sing, Polly Shang-kuan Ling-feng and Kurata Yasuaki were recruited to star in films such as *Furious Slaughter* (1972) and *A Gathering of Heroes* (1973). The films he produced spanned different genres, including sing-song film *The King and Queen* (1970) and *wenyi* films such as *The Marriage* (1974) and *Fantasies Behind the Pearly Curtain* (1975). He also teamed up with King Hu in co-presenting and co-producing *Legend of the Mountain* (1979). During the period, Wong continued to invest in Hong Kong films including *Thunder Cops II* (1989) and *Red Rose White Rose* (1994). Tens of Hong Kong and Taiwan film stars were invited to participate in *The Story of Dr Sun Yet Sen* (1986). He started to take the director's chair in 1958 and directed a total of 14 films including *The Imp* (1958) and *A Grounded Romance* (1963). Besides, he invited a Japanese cinematographer to participate in the shooting of *The Mermaid Princess* (1957), and collaborated with Korean filmmakers in *Love for You* (1959). Featuring original special effects, *The Flaming Mountain* (1962) was the first Hong Kong Cantonese film shot in Eastmancolor and widescreen format. It was followed by *The International Secret Agents* (1967), the large-scale war film *The Brave Tanks* (1967), etc. He started operating cinemas in the 1970s and 1980s, including cinema circuits in Taiwan and theatres featuring Chinese films in six cities in the US and Canada. He received the Lifetime Achievement Award at the 30th Golden Horse Awards in 1993. Wong passed away in Hong Kong on 8 October 2004.