



WU Pang 胡鵬 (1909.12.21–2000.3.26)

Director

Born Wu Wei-pang in Shanghai, Wu's family was originally from Shunde, Guangdong. After graduating from college, Wu was further trained in radio communication, and became a telegraph operator on ships. He later worked in movie theatres in Shanghai and Nanking, where he found his interest in film production. During his times in Shanghai, Wu got to know Kwong Tsan, the founder of Kwokar Film Studio in Hong Kong. He joined the studio in 1936 and was given the chance to independently direct films, where he debuted with *Farewell on a Winter Night* (1939). During his tenure at Kwokar, Wu co-directed *Glory of Love* (1938) with Chiang Oi-man; co-directed *The Tolling Bell* with Leong Pak-man (1940) and directed *Three Maidens* (1941), before the world war hit. Wu travelled back to the Mainland during the occupation in Hong Kong and became a translator for the military. After the war, he returned to Hong Kong to direct *The Evil Mind* (1947), and subsequently directed films of various genres, such as the realistic *World of Fists* (1948) and *Fishing Village in the War* (1948); the melodramatic *Willow Valley* (1948) and *Romance Forever* (1949). To develop new film genres, Wu adapted stories from newspaper written by columnist Chu Yu-chai and shot *The Story of Wong Fei-hung, Part One* (1949). Starring Kwan Tak-hing and featuring real kung fu fist fights, the film was a success overseas and later turned into a long-time blockbuster series. 59 films out of the whole series were directed by Wu, including *Wong Fei-hung's Rival for the Fireworks* (1955), *Wong Fei-hung, King of Lion Dance* (1957), and many more. He also became an investor of the first coloured Wong Fei-hung film—*Wong Fei-hung on Rainbow Bridge* (1959). Wu was especially good at injecting new ideas into his *wuxia* films—he adapted *Story of the Vulture Conqueror*, a famous *wuxia* novel written by Jin Yong, as early as in 1958; and directed *The Five Heroes' Deadly Spears* (1951) that first married the Northern and Southern styles of martial arts on the silver screen. He also directed the comedy *Peace to Man and Wife* (1959) and Chinese opera drama *The Festive Lantern* (1960).

A director for almost half a decade with an oeuvre of around 200 films, Wu established Lai Sing Motion Picture Co in 1964, and produced the *The Blood-Smeared Sword of Honour* (Part 1 & 2, 1965) and *The Mysterious Swordswoman* (Part 1 & 2, 1965). In 1967, Wu directed *The Eight Bandits* (1968) and two other films in Taiwan. He was then approached by Wong Cheuk-hon to stay in Taiwan and direct *The Flying Swordsgirl* (1969) and *Tigress Is Coming* (1969). In 1972, Wu collaborated with Vietnamese filmmakers, and directed *Con Gi Cho Nhau*. *The Luckiest Trio* (1980) was Wu's last directed film, before he became the consultant for *The Mad-Cold Blooded Murder* (1981). He also directed a few educational shorts for the government and charity organisations.

Wu started a printing business when he retired from the film industry. He went on to edit a song book on popular Chinese opera films and publish a memoir to commemorate his 50 years of film career. Wu was the chairman of the Hong Kong Motion Picture Producers Association since 1983. He was the recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award at the 4th Hong Kong Golden Bauhinia Awards in 1999. Wu passed away in Hong Kong on 26 March 2000.
