



ZHU Shilin 朱石麟 (1899.9.1–1967.1.5)

Director, Screenwriter

Born in 1899 and a native of Taicang, Jiangsu, Zhu started working part-time at Chen Kwang Theatre in Beijing in 1922, where he was a translator and editor. The following year, he joined North China Amusement Company, owned by Lo Ming-yau who took charge of Chen Kwang Theatre, as head of the editorial and translation department. Around 1927, an illness caused permanent impairment on Zhu and, for the rest of his life, he could not bend his body again. Bedridden, Zhu wrote several film scripts while recuperating, including *Reminiscences of Peking* (1930) and *Love and Duty* (1931); and finally in 1930, he was able to stay out of bed and directed his debut short film *A Suicide Agreement* for actress Ruan Lingyu. That year, he joined United Photoplay Service Limited in Shanghai founded by Lo, as head of the translation department and acting manager. He was later installed at the helm of the 3rd Studio of United Photoplay, which marked the beginning of his long, illustrious career as film director. During his years at United Photoplay, Zhu directed the silent films *Home-Coming* (1934), *National Customs* (co-directed with Lo Ming-yau, 1935), and the talkie *Song of a Kind Mother* (co-directed with Lo Ming-yau, 1937), among others. During the Orphan Island period, he shot films for studios in Shanghai established by Wu Xingzai, one of the co-founders of United Photoplay. In 1942, Zhu joined the China United Film Company Limited/China United Film Holdings Company Ltd, which was managed by Zhang Shankun; he worked on some ten titles, including *Changing Hearts* (1942), *The Second Generation* (1943) and *The Modern Couple* (1945).

After China's victory over Japan in World War II, Zhu came to Hong Kong in May 1946 to direct Mandarin films for such companies as Nanyang Film Company and Great China Film Company. In 1948, he directed for Yung Hwa Motion Picture Industries Ltd the epic-scaled *Sorrows of the Forbidden City*. In 1950, Zhu signed for Dragon-Horse Films backed by Wu Xingzai and headed by Fei Mu, where he turned in three titles, namely *Flora* (1951), *Should They Marry?* (co-directed with Bai Chen, 1951), and *The Show Must Go On* (co-directed with Qi Wenshao, 1952). After Fei Mu's death in 1952, followed by Wu Xingzai's financial withdrawal from the venture, Zhu founded Feng Huang Motion Picture Co while shooting movies for Dragon-Horse. In 1954, Zhu merged Feng Huang with Dragon-Horse to form Feng Huang Motion Picture Co, with him writing and directing its founding production *Full House* (1955). Heading Feng Huang's artistic committee, Zhu was credited as Chief Director for most of its productions. In the 1950s, Zhu brought out a wealth of gems. *The Dividing Wall* (1952), *Festival Moon* (1953) and *Between Fire and Water* (1955), for instance, are some of the best realist films in Hong Kong cinema. In 1960, Zhu came up with another magnum opus, *The Eternal Love*. He later travelled to the Mainland and directed the Chaozhou opera film *Chen San and Fifth Madam* (aka *The Romance of Lychee and Mirror*, 1962) for Pearl River Film Studio. He directed over 90 films throughout his entire career. His last credit as director is *Garden of Repose* (1964). On 5 January 1967, the master director passed away due to brain haemorrhage in Hong Kong. His daughter Chu Fung and son Chu Am both assume the roles of director and screenwriter.
