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《忠烈圖》的 4K 數碼修復

A Conservation Story:
The 4K Digital Restoration of
The Valiant Ones

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國際電影資料館聯盟成員
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封面： 胡金銓編導的《忠烈圖》(1975)在香港的西貢果洲群島取景，將地貌詭譎的島礁化作倭寇藏身的秘境，更是忠義俠士捨身殲賊之地。

Cover: Both directed and written by King Hu, *The Valiant Ones* (1975) was shot on location in the Ninepin Group (Kwo Chau Islands) in Sai Kung, Hong Kong. Making use of the mysterious allure of the location, the director transformed the quirky and rugged islands into a hiding place for Japanese pirates, and also a sacrificing ground for chivalrous martyrs.

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The views put forward in all the written materials are those of the authors themselves and do not represent the views of the Hong Kong Film Archive.

從修復到研究

From Conservation to Research

今年1月3日是香港電影資料館開館二十周年的大日子，詎料遇上世紀疫情，多項誌慶節目要延期舉行。新年伊始，期望資料館邁步向前，各項節目順利推出。

武俠電影大師胡金銓導演於1996年，將其旗下的金銓電影公司出品、由他編導的《忠烈圖》（1975）送交資料館永久保存，承蒙美國胡金銓基金會授權，資料館終將此部經典武俠片進行4K數碼修復，新修復版本並將為誌慶節目之一「尋·珍·記」揭開序幕。今期《通訊》請來修復組同事登場，細說修復歷程。

屹立香江七十多年，於八十年代初結業的太平戲院，歷經戰火洗禮，猶能保存逾六千件珍貴文物，全賴幾代院主珍視及著力保護。乘籌備誌慶展覽「故紙堆中覓『太平』盛世」之機，周荔嫻專訪太平戲院第三代院主源碧福小姐，記下她幼承庭訓、接管太平戲院及將文物悉數捐予博物館的經過。六、七十年代見證「太平」歲月的史文鴻教授則分享他對太平戲院的童年及少年記憶，惹人共鳴。

資料館的工作，既以搜集與分享為重任，亦以修復與研究為支點，環環相扣，生生不息。今年1月9至10日，本館以視像形式舉行「從無聲到有聲——1930至1940年代香港電影」研討會，多位專家及學者發表論文，當中不乏引用資料館近十年從海外搜集得來的早期電影拷貝及送檢檔案資料，與會者的不吝交流，為研究開闢新徑，更為文化傳承播下種籽。[mkyung@lcsd.gov.hk]

The third of January this year marked the 20th anniversary of the Hong Kong Film Archive. In the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, however, we had little choice but to postpone many of our celebratory plans. Here's to wishing that the new year will bring the Archive to greater heights and that our upcoming programmes can be held smoothly.

In 1996, King Hu, maestro of the *wuxia* genre, entrusted the Archive with film negative of *The Valiant Ones* (1975), which he had directed, written and produced under his own company, King Hu Film Productions. Thanks to the authorisation granted by the King Hu Foundation USA, the Archive was able to begin 4K digital restoration work on this martial arts masterpiece. The fully restored version of the film will serve as the opening film for 'Treasure Hunt Stories', a programme to be held in celebration of the Archive's 20th anniversary. In this issue, our cover story features colleagues from the Conservation Unit who recount the details of the restoration process.

The Tai Ping Theatre finally closed down in the 1980s, after weathering many a storm for some seven decades, including the war. Yet the theatre was still able to preserve over 6,000 valuable artefacts, a testament to the dedication of three generations of theatre owners. Owing to the exhibition 'Out of the Past — From the Tai Ping Treasure Trove', Janice Chow had the opportunity to interview Ms Beryl Yuen, third generation owner of the Tai Ping Theatre, as she recalled her late father, her taking over of the theatre, and how she donated its artefacts to various museums. At the same time, Prof Stephen Sze Man-hung writes a nostalgic piece about his boyhood memories of the theatre in the 1960s and 70s.

The key part of the Archive's mission is to collect and share, but conservation and research are also important tasks. These kinds of work are intricately linked to each other. From 9 to 10 January this year, the Archive hosted the online 'From Silent to Sound — Hong Kong Films of the 1930s and 1940s' symposium, whereby many experts and scholars of film submitted theses on the topic. A large portion of their research was based on the Archive's collection which we newly acquired in the past decade, including a stash of early Hong Kong film copies and documents submitted to the US censors. The participants of the symposium displayed a remarkable generosity and openness in their exchange of ideas, helping to break new ground in research into early Hong Kong cinema, and also aiding to promote film culture for future generations. [mkyung@lcsd.gov.hk]

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《忠烈圖》的 4K 數碼修復

A Conservation Story: The 4K Digital Restoration of *The Valiant Ones*

蔡俊昇 Kevin Choi

連月來，香港電影資料館的修復組忙於修復胡金銓導演的武俠電影名作《忠烈圖》（1975），這是資料館首個4K數碼修復項目。這次我們訪問了修復組的同事，包括一級助理館長勞啟明、二級助理館長盧佩琦及實驗室技術員黃俊賢、葉嘉謙，細談修復的歷程。

《忠烈圖》是七十年代初胡金銓導演在香港成立的金銓電影公司所出品，並由他編導的其中一部電影。早於1996年，胡導便將《忠烈圖》的原35毫米底、聲及字片交予資料館作永久保存，對資料館意義重大。《忠烈圖》由徐楓、白鷹、喬宏主演，劇本布局精妙，動作場面別出心裁，運鏡、剪接及音樂緊密配合，以歷史故事表現忠義精神，是一部難得的武俠經典，多年來我們都希望能夠修復這部電影，以傳後世。承蒙美國胡金銓基金會授權，資料館在去年正式展開《忠烈圖》的4K數碼修復工作。

從保存開始： 以 4K 解析度掃描《忠烈圖》

早在2017年，資料館便展開了將《忠烈圖》電影菲林數碼化的工作。當時修復組評估館藏的《忠烈圖》菲林素材，認為館藏中由胡金銓導演交



館藏的一套《忠烈圖》（1975）原版拷貝的印片光號表

This set of timing sheets used during the printing of the original film print of *The Valiant Ones* (1975) is in our collection.

予資料館保存的原35毫米底片雖有多處破損及部分輕微褪色等問題，但大部分畫面質素保持良好，適合數碼化。為保留原底片細緻度高、色彩層次豐富的優點，當時以4K解析度掃描原底片，並掃描及轉換聲片成高解析度音訊檔案。勞啟明表示，不論之後是採用2K還是4K數碼修復，若過程開始時是以4K解析度數碼檔案為影像素材，效果會比用2K解析度數碼檔案



《忠烈圖》的印片光號表上記錄了片中不同鏡頭的光號，是今次數碼修復的參考材料之一。

The timing sheets of *The Valiant Ones* contain the colour values assigned to each shot. It was one of the references in this digital restoration.

較好。

由於資料館當時尚未可以獨立完成4K數碼掃描，於是委聘了博亞電影修復所進行相關工作。在交付菲林素材進行掃描前，修復組同事先徹底檢查及記錄菲林片的狀況，並在有需要的部分進行加固及修補。以原底片為例，由於《忠烈圖》以大量快速剪接營造緊湊的武打場面，故整套片菲林駁口相當多，數目逾千個；技術員在

修補破損處如崩邊、損壞齒孔之餘，也要為這些駁口進行加固，確保菲林可以承受掃描時的拉力及壓力，盡量減少損傷。

完成掃描後，館內的技術員再次檢查有關菲林片，確保損耗維持在可以接受的範圍內。至於掃描所得的數碼影像及聲音檔案，則由修復人員目測及在不同儀器輔助下檢驗各項細節，例如畫面色彩是否正常、曝光是否恰當、有沒有訊號錯誤或破音等。黃俊賢表示，有些畫面可能在掃描過程中會因過度曝光而失去細節，遇上這情況，他們會將畫面與原底片影像作比較，有需要便會作調整，以期忠實地保留了菲林素材的細節。

讓瑰寶重綻光芒： 展開 4K 數碼修復

在為影片作數碼修復之前，修復組再次比較館內菲林素材，確認《忠烈圖》的數碼檔案內容完整，便聚焦於數碼版本未處理的問題，當中以色彩的調校最為關鍵。葉嘉謙指出，當年在後期製作中以光學方法調色的做法很常見，而《忠烈圖》的數碼檔案來自原底片，色彩有別於當年正式上映的拷貝。最明顯的例子是《忠烈圖》中就有幾場夜景戲估計是在日間拍攝，後來才運用黑房技術調成夜景，故在數碼檔案中仍未見到夜景的色彩。因此為了還原影片公映時的面貌，必須另覓資料，以供校正色彩時作參考。

修復組注意到館藏中有一套《忠烈圖》的原版拷貝印片光號表，上面記錄了不同鏡頭的光號。這些光號決定了以底片沖印的正片的色彩平衡，而釐定光號的過程往往會徵詢導演和



調色是這次修復工作的重點之一，修復團隊致力令影像重現當年的原貌。

Colour timing was one of the focal points of this restoration project. The restoration team worked hard to restore each image to its original look when the film was first released.

攝影師的意見。雖然傳統的光號難以直接應用於數碼修復，幸好資料館曾於1997年委聘本地沖印公司參照此光號表沖印一套《忠烈圖》拷貝。修復組認為該套拷貝保存狀況良好，其影像色彩較接近當年公映版本，有助於校正數碼版本的色彩。

盧佩琦表示，去年8月底，修復組與這次修復項目的合作夥伴意大利博亞電影修復所開會，交付早前數碼化所得的影像及聲音檔案，開始就修復工作進行緊密聯繫。修復組亦將1997年沖印的《忠烈圖》拷貝掃描所得的數碼檔案傳給對方參考。勞啟明指出，在《忠烈圖》的修復中，由於校正色彩是這個修復項目的重點，而色彩的感覺相對主觀，加上彼此所用器材不同，所以比起去除刮痕、斑點等問題，更需要耐心及充分溝通，這亦是修復彩色片較黑白片困難之處。

畫面調色方面，修復團隊一絲不苟地比對參考素材與修復影像的差異，致力令場景及鏡頭重現當年影片的質感。如有發現未修正的瑕疵如刮痕、斑點、畫面晃動及背景噪音等，修復組亦仔細標示位置，要求意大利

修復團隊逐一矯正。在未來數月，修復組會在資料館的電影院放映修復版本的DCP數碼檔，確認沒有問題後，再陸續驗收修復版的菲林及其他數碼媒體，作長期保存及放映用途。

每一次的電影修復，事前都需要進行詳盡深入的資料搜集，並有賴專業、富經驗的修復團隊的努力方可完成。這是資料館首度進行4K數碼修復，對館內器材及工作人員的要求無疑是一次考驗和新嘗試。感謝胡金銓導演、美國胡金銓基金會及各界人士一直以來的支持，令《忠烈圖》的數碼修復工作得以順利完成。由於4K數碼修復已是大勢所趨，這次寶貴經驗將有助修復組應付未來的各種挑戰，讓資料館可以與市民分享更多重綻光芒的館藏瑰寶。

《忠烈圖》4K數碼修復版將於今年4月30日在香港文化中心大劇院隆重首映，為資料館二十周年誌慶節目之一「尋·珍·記」放映系列掀開序幕，喜愛武俠片及胡金銓電影的觀眾，萬勿錯過！■

蔡俊昇為香港電影資料館研究及編輯組二級助理館長。

「尋·珍·記」節目詳情參見本館網頁。

For months, the staff at the Conservation Unit have been occupied with restoring the King Hu masterpiece *The Valiant Ones* (1975). This is the first 4K digital restoration project carried out by the Hong Kong Film Archive. We have interviewed colleagues at the Conservation Unit, including Assistant Curator I Koven Lo, Assistant Curator II Becky Lo, and Laboratory Technicians Penny Wong and Ip Ka-him to talk about the conservation process.

The Valiant Ones is one of the films directed, written and produced by King Hu when he first established King Hu Film Productions in Hong Kong in the early 1970s. Back in 1996, Hu entrusted the Archive with the original 35mm negative, soundtrack negative and subtitles film of *The Valiant Ones*, in the hopes that the film would be preserved for posterity. The title is therefore of great significance to the Archive. A historical tale that embodies the spirit of chivalric loyalty, *The Valiant Ones*, featuring Hsu Feng, Bai Ying and Roy Chiao, is masterfully intricate in its plot and memorably original in its action choreography. Coupled with its confident use of cinematography, editing, and music, it is an indisputable masterpiece of the *wuxia* genre. For many years, the Archive has wished to restore the picture so that it could continue to be enjoyed by future generations. Thanks to authorisation from King Hu Foundation USA, we officially began work on the 4K digital restoration of *The Valiant Ones* last year.

Starting from Conservation: Scanning *The Valiant Ones* in 4K

As early as 2017, the Archive had started the project of digitising the film *The Valiant Ones*. At the time, our Conservation Unit found that the original 35mm negative of *The Valiant Ones*, which was acquired from director King Hu, was deemed to be suitable. It is a worthwhile effort to digitise the original negative as the general picture quality was in good condition despite numerous damages and some slight fading. In

order to preserve the features of the film including the incredibly fine details and the rich colours and textures, we scanned the original negative with 4K resolution, and scanned and transferred the soundtrack negative into high resolution audio files. Koven Lo indicated that whether the digitally restored version would be processed in 2K or 4K resolution later, converting the film elements into 4K resolution digital files would provide a better result than if they were converted into 2K resolution.

The Archive was not capable of completing the 4K digital scan on its own back then, so we hired the services of L'Immagine Ritrovata Asia to carry out the related work. Before sending out the film elements for scanning, the colleagues of the Conservation Unit first thoroughly examined and recorded the condition of the film, and where necessary reinforced and repaired the elements. A good example involves the original negative. Because *The Valiant Ones* contains numerous combat scenes that used fast cutting, there were more than the usual number of splices in the film. The whole film contained over one thousand splices. In addition to the repair of such things as damaged edges and torn sprocket holes, our technicians had to reinforce each splice to ensure the film would be able to withstand the tension and pressure of the scanning procedure with minimal damage.

After the completion of the scan, our technicians once again examined the film, to ensure the wear and tear would remain in the acceptable

range. The resulting audio and visual digital files from the scan would be examined by the technicians, both visually and with the help of various equipment, for details such as whether the colour of the picture was normal, whether the exposure was appropriate, whether there were signal errors or distorted audio notes. Penny Wong added that image in a particular frame of picture could have been overexposed during the course of the scan, therefore losing detail. In the hope that the digital version of *The Valiant Ones* would faithfully retain all the details in the film elements, the Conservation Unit would compare the frame with the corresponding frame in the original negative and made necessary adjustment.

A Glimpse of Past Glory: Starting the 4K Digital Restoration

To commence the restoration process, the Conservation Unit once again compared the film elements vaulted at the Archive, to ensure the corresponding digital files were complete. The emphases of this restoration exercise are the unresolved issues in the digitised version. Key among those issues is that of colour. Ip Ka-him pointed out that during post-production in those days, it would often be necessary to use optical equipment in a film laboratory to adjust the colours. Since the digital file of *The Valiant Ones* came from the original negative, the colours are different from the version as seen on public screening. For example, it is estimated that several night scenes in the film were filmed in the daytime, and colour-timed in the lab

to imitate a night scene. Thus, in the digitised files it was not seen as a night scene. In order to bring back the look of the original premiere screening version, other materials must be sought as a reference during colour timing.

The Conservation Unit observed that, stored among the Archive's collection is a set of timing sheets that are used in film developing and printing. Listed on the sheets are the different light codes used in each shot. These codes determined the colour balance of the positive film as printed from the negative. And in the process of deciding on the colour codes, the advice of the director and cinematographer would have been sought. While traditional light codes are difficult to directly transpose onto digital restoration, it is fortunate that the Archive once commissioned a local film laboratory to produce a copy of *The Valiant Ones* in 1997, using the same timing sheets. Since the 1997-produced print is in good condition, the colours and tones would have been similar to the screening version of the day. Those images would be very helpful in correcting the colours of the digitised version.

Becky Lo said, the Conservation Unit and the partners on this project, Italy's L'Immagine Ritrovata Asia, met at the end of last August, to hand over to them the digitised audio and visual files from 2017, and started very close communication regarding the project. The Conservation Unit also provided them a digital file made from the 1997-produced print. As Koven Lo pointed out, during the restoration of *The Valiant Ones*, the main focus was the issue of colour timing. However, colour is a relatively subjective issue, and due to the use of different equipment between the two parties, more patient and open communication was required than when dealing simply with issues



除了調色外，影像上的瑕疵，如刮痕、斑點等，亦在修復過程中逐一修補。
In addition to refining the colour tones, the conservators repaired each and every flaw in the image track, including scratches and spots.

like scratches and spots. This is another factor which makes conservation of colour footage much more complicated and difficult than black and white.

In terms of colour tone, the restoration team made detailed comparisons between the reference materials and the restored images, noting the most minute of differences, doing their best to replicate the feeling and texture of each scene and shot of the original film from back in the day. If they discovered imperfections such as scratches, spots, flickers and background noise, the Conservation Unit would mark the exact location to facilitate the Italian team to make every correction. In the foreseeable months ahead, our Conservation Unit will screen the DCP of the digital restored version at the Archive's cinema. When everything is confirmed to be right, they will examine the film elements and then the other digital media of the restored version before vaulting them for long-term preservation and screening.

To be sure, film restoration requires detailed preparatory research, as well as the necessary expertise, experience and perseverance from the whole restoration team. This was the Archive's first effort at 4K digital restoration. It was doubtless a new attempt, and the staff

and equipment at the Conservation Unit were truly put to the test. Thanks to the generous support from director King Hu, the King Hu Foundation USA and our peers in the industry, without them we would not have been possible to acquire sufficient varieties of film elements and other materials for *The Valiant Ones* which were in good condition, ensuring a smooth finish to the job. Because digital restoration at 4K resolution is becoming a standard in film industry, this precious experience helped the Conservation Unit to handle any film restoration issue in the future, so that even more treasures in the Archive's collection might shine on the screen as brightly as they did in their moments of glory.

As the opening film of 'Treasure Hunt Stories' which is part of the celebratory programmes of the Archive's 20th anniversary, *The Valiant Ones* (4K digital restored version) will be premiered at the Grand Theatre, Hong Kong Cultural Centre on 30 April 2021. This is a feast for those who love King Hu and *wuxia* films. Don't miss the chance! [Translated by Roberta Chin] ■

Kevin Choi is Assistant Curator II of the HKFA's Research and Editorial Unit.

For details of 'Treasure Hunt Stories', please refer to the HKFA's website.

念舊是種美麗的執著

——訪問太平戲院 第三代院主源碧福女士

Nostalgia, the Beauty of Persistence:
On Talking to Ms Beryl Yuen,
Third-Generation Heiress of Tai Ping Theatre

周荔嬌 Janice Chow



即將舉行的「故紙堆中覓『太平』盛世」展覽中有「回望太平」一節錄像，由第三代院主源碧福女士帶領觀眾重遊舊地，追憶往事。她於戲院結業後把太平的所有文物珍藏，2006年慷慨捐贈康樂及文化事務署。戲院經歷的幾許風雨，父女間的溫馨點滴，就讓她來細說從頭。

源碧福是個瀟灑的女子。

和她見面的次數不多，但伊每次的打扮都叫人難忘。有時是一身的白——白外套、白西褲、白鞋、白帽子，配戴指環和手鐲相連的飾物；有時是一身深灰，內穿圓領白汗衫，手上一枚低調奢華的腕錶。

訪問那天，她駕著跑車呼嘯而至。車門打開，先見頭上一頂橙綠格子報童帽，襯以深啡暗花西裝，以鮮橙色袋巾勾勒出全身焦點，和受訪地點（即資料館電影院觀眾席）背景的顏色配合得和諧又優雅。

爽朗的她無需熱身，一坐下便先由太平戲院始創人——她的祖父源杏翹說起。「他單身來香港，眼光也頗準。那時他結交洋人，雖不懂英文，但他能『埋西人堆』。他做過很多的行業，包括銀舖、戲班、酒樓和影樓。」

祖父的傳奇往事，發生於源碧福未出生之前。除了由父親源詹勳口述，靠的就是在家族文物中點點滴滴找出來的蛛絲馬跡。

父親的掌上明珠

「源碧福」是個特別的名字，用於女孩子身上，更是少有。「怎麼會有個『福』字呢？因為我是在日本人打完仗之後，1947年在香港出生的。爸爸覺得我有福，所以叫我做『阿福』。」

「阿福」是含著金鑰匙出世的。她是家中的孺女，三位姐姐加一對孿生哥哥，年齡和她相距很遠，令生性頑皮的小碧福十分嬌縱，「五姐縱容我，姐姐怕了我。」五姐是帶大她的傭人，對源家非常忠心。「日治時代，太平戲院被日本仔徵用作『宿泊所』，沒有甚麼錢，只有糧票，領很少米。五姐徒步走上廣州賣故衣。『故衣』就是二手衣服，她拿到錢就回來交給我們。有一段時期，她去了替西人打工，宴客之後就把食物帶回來給我們吃。」阿福的母親死後，父親不想睹物思人，搬離太平戲院，舉家遷往跑馬地。

源小姐（我們都愛這樣稱呼

她）六歲喪母，對她只有零碎的印象。「我的媽咪就是典型一個中國女人嫁入一個環境不俗的家庭的太太。那時我們有汽車，有司機，瑪麗醫院對出的下面全是草地，她就帶我到那草地跑跑，這是很難得了。」對於父母相處的往事，她的記憶模糊。「他倆怎樣認識我不清楚。聽傭人說，媽咪跟爹地的嗜好等各樣，根本都很極端，但他倆是很要好的，這是事實。」

源詹勳喜愛觀看粵劇，曾經有一段時間，常與馬師曾「度橋」。那時戲班（指太平劇團）晚晚演新劇，他們在餐廳研究，「我見那些餐巾寫了幾段東西在上面，有時還寫上幾段小曲。媽咪打揚琴很出色的，父親忽然間想到一段曲子，就叫媽咪打琴，他就聽出那一段行不行了。」或許這就是夫妻間的情趣和默契吧。妻子於1952年病逝，源詹勳晚年交託碧福將來要把父母合葬，女兒幾經艱難都做到了。

成了鰥夫的源詹勳獨力把兒女帶大，「我很小的時候，除了上

學，一有空，他就帶我到處去，或去看戲；他沒有空，就帶我回戲院，坐在那裡看著他工作，所以我很小已經跟電影行業或戲班行業有很大的接觸。」源詹勳父兼母職，甜酸苦辣，五味紛陳，最小的女兒成為他傾訴的對象。「他是很疼惜我的。我跟他兩張床並排，每晚他都摸住我的小手，摸著摸著我就睡了。我跟他很親密，和他的關係是很好的。」源詹勳是位怎樣的爸爸呢？「一個不罵人，而且有求必應的爸爸。現在我經常說，如果像佛教那樣有輪迴的話，我下一世只要兩個人，就是爹哋和五姐。」

許是遺傳的關係，亦可能是相處久了，父女的性格十分相像。「認識他、見過他的人都說他跟我一樣，自負而已，不會開罪人。心裡喜歡或不喜歡是一回事，但待人接物有義氣，能幫就幫。我跟他都是黑白兩道都能應付，尤其是做這一行，是要應付這些人的。」商人一般都長袖善舞，面面俱圓。「我跟父親都很容易接近，但是心裡明白，你是否『搵我老襯』（佔我便宜），為甚麼你要結交我，是真正的朋友或者只不過想利用我。」

負笈英國

阿福做錯事，父親不會厲聲責罵，但會找到辦法讓她知錯。在聖士提反女子中學讀書時成績不佳，校長要她寄宿，她那班住在般含道和堅道的死黨竟又要求寄宿，當然變得更胡鬧了，結果爸爸惟有著她去英國讀書。「校長叫我去蘭開夏郡，連火車也不能到達的一間學校，真是紀律嚴謹得要命！父親對我說：『我讓你去撞板（碰壁）、去捱苦，才是愛惜你；因為你在香港那樣胡混，將來是完全不行的。』那幾年我學了很多東西，至今是畢生受用的。」



源碧福童年照
A childhood photograph of Beryl Yuen.

香港文化博物館藏品 源碧福女士捐贈
The Collection of the Hong Kong Heritage Museum
Donated by Ms. Yuen Bik-fook, Beryl



源碧福與家人及太平戲院職員合照：（前排左起）三姐源碧梅、父親源詹勳、二姐源碧翠；（後排左起）二哥源衍藩、戲院司理梁日洩、二姐夫黃光、源碧福、戲院員工蘇其生、大哥源錫藩
Beryl Yuen and her family with the Tai Ping Theatre staff: (front row from left) third sister Yuen Bik-mui, father Yuen Jim-fan, second sister Yuen Bik-chui; (back row from left) second brother Yuen Hin-fan, theatre manager Leung Yat-yu, second brother-in-law Wong Kwong, Beryl Yuen, theatre staff So Kei-sang, eldest brother Yuen Sik-fan

在蘭開夏郡讀了一星期，受不了，就南下倫敦。「有一天我經過一間學校，叫做London School of Computers，我立即走進去。那時電腦是甚麼，沒有人認識的。」校長給她做一份邏輯測驗，她全答對了，由是修讀了電腦程式的編寫課程。

回港接管太平戲院業務

畢業後回港，卻發現所讀的和香港銀行所用的是兩套不同的系統。「羅兵咸會計師樓」想建立一個電腦部門，請她做實習生，怎料上班前一天身體卻出現狀況，她在家養病，一年多便過去。她整天躺在沙發無所事事，父親看不過眼。「你天天這樣躺著，回戲院跟頭跟尾吧。」就這樣，阿福才進了太平戲院工作，倒茶遞水，幹些雜務，因不懂打字，連娛樂稅的報告也做不出來。她從來沒有想過父親會把戲院交給「胸無大志」的自己，兜兜轉轉還是回到太平的家族生意，交棒玄機原來早在留學前已暗中埋下。「我赴英前，世伯一定會餞行。席上爹哋說了一句話：『就算她只是英文合格回來，我都把這檔東西給了她。』全場的人都以為他

說笑，怎會（將生意）交給一個玩世不恭的人？怎料回港後他叫我回去戲院跟頭跟尾，就這樣入了行。」

因為愛車，寵愛她的父親於女兒18歲時送贈一輛小跑車。入太平後，駕駛成為她的技能。「最初我在太平做他的近身司機，直至75年左右。那時戲院很破落，沒甚麼生意，他就說要進行大裝修。裝修後把我的名字寫在牆上的牌上。我說好呀，你給我一個甚麼職位呢？『你做秘書吧。』」那時源詹勳請來「老行尊」胡戎做經理（按：胡戎又名胡藝星，早於三十年代創辦國聯影片公司，曾是大觀片廠廠長，亦管理過荔園遊樂場），並向他說：「我教她沒有用，她不會聽我的，你教她吧。」從此，阿福便跟著「胡伯」學習，倒也必恭必敬的。「那時我是秘書嘛，我跟著胡伯，他有事就叫我做。那些戲院夥計從小看著我長大，（對我的態度）當作『死飛女又回來了』那樣而已。但胡伯令我真的出到去對人對事都有個『款』（氣度）。」

在胡戎的教導下，阿福對於生意的管理漸上軌道。此外，還有一位在後面支援、讓她獲益良多的



經歷幾代變遷的太平戲院
The Tai Ping Theatre bore witness to generations of memories.



香港文化博物館藏品 源碧福女士捐贈
The Collection of the Hong Kong Heritage Museum
Donated by Ms. Yuen Bik-fook, Beryl

前輩，就是人稱「袁伯」的袁耀鴻。「袁伯這個人很了不起，也很念舊，做事有層次。後來香港仔中心那間戲院（香港仔戲院）也是袁伯爭取回來做的。剛才我說過，太平在日本仔時代被徵用作『宿泊所』，椅子呀甚麼都拆掉，再開的時候，父親是很頭痛的。打仗時，財盡了，五姐要劈家裡的酸枝作柴用，你說多麼浪費啊！（戰後）爹哋上廣州，看看有甚麼可為，就碰到袁伯，他們以前已經認識的。袁伯一見到他就說：『太平交給我吧！』太平能夠很快復業，袁伯幫了很大的忙。那時他替利家（利希慎家族）做事的，拉攏到利家組織一間民樂公司來管理太平，把戲院重新裝修，還裝了冷氣。袁伯對我們很好的，他不在也只是近年的事。」（按：袁耀鴻於2003年3月3日離世。）

太平戲院到源碧福接手的時候，已到低潮時期，終於1981年的農曆新年結業。「我們做完初七（1981年2月11日）就不做了。父親知道戲院將會消失，那大半年就沒有再回去。到真正初七交收完畢，他很不開心，覺得自己帶大的兒子沒有了一樣。」看著親手經營大半生的生意結束，源詹勳按捺住悲慟的心情，把結業的事好好交託女兒接辦。「那時他開始病了，如

果不是因為他病，我不會那麼快辦妥太平那些交易的，因為遺產稅很厲害。那時很少用公司名的，全部用個人的名字。要知道假如他一倒下，所有財產全部都會被凍結，那就變成人人都動彈不得了。」阿福找袁伯商量，很快把事情辦妥。「他上律師樓簽字的那天，的確很不開心，但爸爸是個公私分明的人，應做的他就會做。他覺得應該要全部搞妥，否則逝世的話，就留一個爛攤子給這一堆人，尤其是給我。」

太平戲院結業後，改建成華明中心。源詹勳於1983年離世，源碧福於1985年搬回去，留了一層作寫字樓。「我是很相信冥冥中注定的。在太平的時候，爹哋的寫字樓在二樓，到我去跟那個發展商說要回全層的時候，也只有二樓，也是面向『聖類斯（中學）』那邊。我在寫字樓擺回他那張寫字枱，對正那個景觀。」

盡力保存戲院文物

面對堆積如山的資料，怎樣處理實在是令人頭痛的問題。「爺爺和父親都是不會執拾東西的人，也不會找尋物品，找不到的東西買過就算。我要把戲院交給人的時候，要清理執拾，我只有一個人，怎樣

執？」於是她找來西環兩位苦力，初時是每樣東西都看看要否留下，但數量實在太多，結果她買了數十個鐵櫥，把所有東西全放進去。「我在薄扶林道買了一間房子，把這些文件櫃和父親的寫字枱等東西搬了過去，他喜歡就去那裡翻看自己的東西。」

是怎樣的機緣令源小姐把太平的寶物捐贈給康文署呢？喜歡品嚐中國茶的她有天和茶莊的人品茶，閒談間，說到一個關於茶的展覽，他表示已把一些東西捐給香港文化博物館，「你也有很多東西可以捐呢。」源小姐說：「好呀，有人來執拾我就捐啦。」就這樣，經過不同人脈的多番努力和磋商後，在2006年的情人節，三間博物館（香港文化博物館、香港歷史博物館、香港電影資料館）及香港中央圖書館的工作人員齊集源小姐的辦公室，進行了大規模的文物分配和整理工程。

源小姐與電影和戲院的因緣，精彩而奇妙，由她和身邊的人共同編織。憑著她一份美麗的執著，太平的寶藏得以完好保存，全數捐出更是瀟灑的壯舉。回望以往，一路走來，每步都伴隨著美好的人所付出無私的愛。懂得珍惜和念舊的她，就如父親所起的名字，滿是修來的福份。■

周荔嬌，筆名珍妮絲，自由電影文化工作者，並為香港電影資料館項目研究員

作者按：寫作期間蒙黃夏柏先生、鄭泳雄先生和陳彩玉小姐協助提供資料，特此致謝！

編按：本文由源碧福女士兩次訪問整合寫成。一訪：2008年7月16日，由黃愛玲、吳雪君主訪；二訪：2020年11月13日，由周荔嬌主訪。第一訪曾整理成〈太古衣冠 平臺歌舞：源碧福談太平戲院歲月〉，見《通訊》第46期（2008年11月），香港電影資料館，頁3-9。

「故紙堆中覓『太平』盛世」展覽將於2021年5月28日至10月17日在香港電影資料館展覽廳舉行，詳情請參見本館節目網頁。

In the upcoming exhibition 'Out of the Past—From the Tai Ping Treasure Trove', there will be a video segment 'Looking Back', featuring Tai Ping's third-generation owner Beryl Yuen leading us on a walk through the former location of the theatre and its environs, reminiscing on memories of the glory days. After the theatre closed for business, she collected all the artefacts and in 2006, generously donated the entire lot to the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD). Here, she talks with us about the various challenges encountered in running the theatre, as well as the anecdotes of life with her father.

Beryl Yuen is a dashing woman.

I have not met with her many times, but on every occasion, I have been impressed by her style. Sometimes she is a vision in white: jacket, trousers, shoes and hat, set off by a Panja bracelet; sometimes she sports a dark grey suit over a white tee shirt, highlighted by the understated elegance of her wristwatch.

On the day of our interview, she roared up in her sports car. The door opened to reveal first an orange and green plaid newsboy cap, then her dark brown jacquard suit, an orange pocket square providing the focal point: a colour scheme which, perfectly and exquisitely harmonises with that of our interview venue, the HKFA Cinema.

Open and no-nonsense, she requires no warm-up: she starts telling her story, starting with the founder of Tai Ping Theatre, her paternal grandfather Yuen Hang-kiu. 'He came alone to Hong Kong. His insight was quite sharp. Although he didn't know English, he befriended a lot of westerners and "hung out" with them. He dabbled in numerous businesses including a silversmith shop, a theatre troupe, a restaurant and a photography studio.

These all happened well before Beryl Yuen's birth. She has fleshed out her father's oral recounting of these tales with clues discovered from sifting through the family relics.

The Apple in Her Father's Eye

Beryl's Chinese name, Bik-fook (literally, Jade Fortune) is an unusual name. 'Why does my name contain the word "fook" (fortune, a character usually used in male names)? It is because Father felt that since I had the good fortune of being born in Hong Kong in 1947, just after the

war against the Japanese, he called me "Ah Fook".'

'Fook' was born with a silver spoon in her mouth. The youngest child in the family, she had three elder sisters and a pair of twin elder brothers who were all much older. Naturally active and playful, she was very spoiled. 'Ng Jie indulged me; my siblings gave in to me.' Ng Jie was her nanny who was extremely loyal to the Yuen family. 'During Hong Kong's occupation by the Japanese, Tai Ping Theatre was requisitioned by the Japanese to be an army lodging facility. We had little money, and only some food coupons for which we could redeem for very little rice. Ng Jie walked all the way to Guangdong to sell second-hand clothing, and gave us all the money. There was a time when she went to work for some westerners. After their banquets she would bring back the leftovers for us.' After Beryl's mother passed away, her father couldn't bear to live in a place with so many memories. He moved the whole family out of Tai Ping Theatre and to Happy Valley.

Miss Yuen (as we like to call her) lost her mother at age six, and only has vague memories of her. 'My mother was a typical Chinese woman who married into a rather wealthy family. At that time, we had a car and a driver. The land outside of Queen Mary Hospital was all grassy. She would take me to run around on the grass. That was actually a very rare occurrence.' She only has vague memories of the interaction between her father and mother. 'I don't know how they met. I heard from the servants that my parents were extremely different from each other in their likes and dislikes, but they were very close to each other and that is undeniable.'

Yuen Jim-fan loved Cantonese

opera. For a time, he often 'brainstormed' with Ma Si-tsang. In those days the troupe (Tai Ping Troupe) performed new plays every evening, so a lot of writing and composing were done at the restaurant. 'I saw those napkins that had a few verses written on them, and sometimes even lines of songs. Mother was a brilliant *yangqin* player. Father would suddenly think of a tune and would ask Mother to play it on the *yangqin*. He would listen and know whether it would work.' Perhaps this was the romance and rapport between the couple. Beryl's mother died in 1952. In his twilight years, Yuen Jim-fan entrusted Beryl to have them buried together at his death. After a lot of difficulty, she finally succeeded in her task.

The widower Yuen Jim-fan single-handedly raised his children. 'When I was very little, whenever I wasn't in school, he would take me everywhere, for example to watch movies. If he was busy, he would bring me to the theatre, where I would sit and watch him work. So from a very young age I had a lot of contact with the film and opera industries.' As a single parent, Yuen Jim-fan was father and mother. It was a bittersweet experience, and with everything else going on in his life, his youngest daughter became his confidante. 'He really loved me. My bed and his were side by side. Every night he would stroke my hand, and I would fall asleep to his touch. He and I were very close. We had a wonderful relationship.' What kind of father was Yuen Jim-fan? 'A father who never yelled, and a father who did whatever I wanted. I often say now, if there really is reincarnation like the Buddhists say, in my next life I only want two people: Father and Ng Jie.'

Perhaps it is due to heredity, and also probably because they had been together for so long, father and daughter

have very similar personalities. 'Everyone who knew him or met him would say we are alike. We may be arrogant, but we would never offend anyone. We may have our likes or dislikes, but we always treat people with righteousness, and will help whenever we can. We're both good at handling people on either side of the law. That's especially important because in our business, we must deal with all kinds of people.' Social adaptability is definitely a characteristic of business people. 'We're both very approachable, but in our hearts, we can tell if you're going to take advantage of us: Why do you want to befriend me? Do you really want to be my friend, or do you just want to use me?'

Studying in the UK

When Beryl made mistakes, her father would not tell her off, but would find a way to let her know she was wrong. When she was studying at St. Stephen's Girls' College, her report card was not good. The principal demanded that she become a boarding student. But her best friends who lived on Bonham Road and Caine Road also requested to board at the school. Of course, the situation only became more out of control. In the end, her father had to send her to the UK to study. 'The principal sent me to a school in Lancashire that wasn't even accessible by train. Discipline was incredibly strict there! Father told me, "I'm letting you get into trouble on your own and to suffer hardship to show that I love you; because if you continue to live that out-of-control lifestyle in Hong Kong, you will never amount to anything." In those years, I learned a lot of life-long lessons.'

After one week of studying in Lancashire, she couldn't take it anymore and went south to London. 'One day I passed by a school called London School of Computers. I went in immediately. At that time, no one knew what a computer was.' The principal gave her a logic test. She answered everything correctly. That's how she

began to study computer programming.

Taking Over Tai Ping Theatre

After graduation, she returned to Hong Kong, only to discover that banks in Hong Kong used a completely different computer system than the one she had studied. Accounting firm Price Waterhouse wanted to establish a computer department. They hired her to be an intern. However, one day before she started, she became ill. She stayed home to recuperate, and soon more than a year had passed. She had been laying on the sofa all day, doing nothing. Her father was not pleased. 'You're just laying here all day. Why don't you get back to the theatre and help by doing odd jobs.' And that's how Beryl started working at Tai Ping Theatre, serving tea and running various errands. She didn't know how to type, so she couldn't even do the entertainment tax reports. She never imagined that her father would pass the theatre to her, the unambitious one; nor that, after a long and circuitous route, she would return to Tai Ping Theatre and the family business. Turns out her father's plan had been announced long ago, before she went to the UK to study. 'Before I went to the UK, Father's friends threw me a banquet. At the table, Father said, "Even if English is the only subject she passes, when she comes back, I will give her this whole thing." Everyone present thought he was joking. How can you give your business to someone who doesn't take anything seriously? But after I came back to Hong Kong and he told me to go to the theatre to do odd jobs, that's how I got into the business.'

She has always loved cars. Her doting father gave her a sporty compact car when she turned 18. At Tai Ping, driving became her special job. 'When I started at Tai Ping, I was his personal chauffeur, until around 1975. At that time, the theatre was very run-down and business was very slow. He said that we should undergo a major renovation,

after which he would put my name on the plaque on the wall. I said fine, what position will you give me? "You can be Secretary." At that time, Yuen Jim-fan hired 'old pro' Wu Yung to manage the theatre (Note: also known as Wu Ngai-sing, he had founded Guolian Film Company in the 1930s, was the head of The Grandview Studios, and had also managed the Lai Chi Kok Amusement Park). He told Wu, 'I cannot teach her; she won't listen to me. You teach her.' From then on, Fook started to be mentored by 'Uncle Wu'. She was very respectful to him. 'At the time, I was the secretary. I worked under Uncle Wu. He would tell me to do things.' The Tai Ping staff had watched me grow up. Their attitude was just, "that cheeky girl is back again". But Uncle Wu made sure I interacted with others with grace and style, in a proper and presentable way.'

Under Wu Yung's tutelage, Fook gradually got a handle on the finer points of business management. In addition, she had strong backup support from another of her father's friends Yuen Yiu-hung, 'Uncle Yuen', from whom she learned much. 'Uncle Yuen was brilliant. He always repaid past favours, and made good business sense. In much later days, he even fought to include the theatre in Aberdeen Centre (Aberdeen Theatre) into our management system. I had just told you that during the Occupation Tai Ping was requisitioned by the Japanese as a lodging facility. All the seats in the stalls had been ripped out. When it came time to reopen, Father had a real dilemma. During the war, all his money was gone. Ng Jie had to chop up our mahogany furniture for firewood. What a waste that was! After the war, Father went to Guangzhou to see what opportunities he might find. He ran into Uncle Yuen, whom he had known from before. Almost right away Uncle Yuen said, "Let me handle Tai Ping!" Uncle Yuen played a big part in enabling Tai Ping to reopen very quickly. At the time he was working for the Lee family (tycoon Hysan Lee's extended family). He convinced the

Lee family to form a company to manage Tai Ping, renovating the entire theatre and even installing air conditioning. Uncle Yuen was very good to us. His passing was not so long ago.’ (Note: Yuen Yiu-hung passed away on 3 March 2003.)

By the time Beryl took over Tai Ping, its business was already in steep decline. Finally, it closed its doors during Chinese New Year in 1981. ‘We closed down after the seventh day of the Chinese New Year (11 February 1981). When Father knew that the theatre would soon be gone, he didn’t go back for the final several months. When the handover was completed, he was very unhappy, as if a beloved child was taken from him.’ But although he was sad to watch the end of the business that he had run for most of his life, Yuen Jim-fan controlled his emotions and did all the proper procedures to facilitate Beryl’s takeover. ‘By that time, he was beginning to get sick. If it weren’t for his sickness, I would never have completed all of Tai Ping’s transactions so quickly, because inheritance tax was very steep. At that time, people seldom used companies to hold assets. Rather, they usually used their own personal names. But you know if that person becomes incapacitated, all his assets would be frozen, and no one can do anything.’ After discussing with Uncle Yuen, everything was very quickly handled. ‘The day he went to the lawyer’s office to sign the papers, he really was very upset. But Father kept personal and business matters separate, and would always do what he needed to do. He felt that everything had to be handled properly, otherwise when he passed away, he would leave a mess for everyone, especially me.’

After Tai Ping Theatre was closed, it was torn down and multi-storey commercial building Wah Ming Centre was built in its place. Yuen Jim-fan passed away in 1983. Beryl Yuen moved back in 1985, keeping one floor to use as her office. ‘I really believe it was destiny. With Tai Ping Theatre, Father’s office was

on the second floor. When I approached the developer and told him I wanted to keep a whole floor to myself, the only one available was the second floor, and also only on the side facing St. Louis School. I set up his desk in my office, facing the same view.’

A Heritage Devotee

It was a real headache to deal with the mountainous piles of old materials. ‘Grandpa and Father simply did not know how to put things away. They also didn’t know how to find anything. And what they couldn’t find, they just bought new. When I had to hand over the theatre property, I had to clean up the whole place by myself. I had no idea where to start.’ So she hired two coolies from Sai Wan to help her. In the beginning she looked through everything to see if it should be kept, but there was simply too much stuff. In the end, she bought dozens of metal trunks and put everything inside. ‘I bought a place on Pok Fu Lam Road and moved all the file cabinets, Father’s desk and other things in there. Whenever he felt like it, he would go there and go through his own things.’

And what prompted Miss Yuen to donate the treasure trove that is Tai Ping Theatre to the LCSD? A tea aficionado, she was sampling tea with some friends from Tianhe Tea House. They mentioned a tea exhibition, telling her that they had donated some things to the Hong Kong Heritage Museum (HKHM), and said, ‘You must have many things you can donate to them.’ Miss Yuen replied, ‘Sure, if someone pack those things up, I will donate them.’ And so, through many different connections, and after much hard work and detailed negotiations, on Valentine’s Day 2006, staff from the Hong Kong Central Library and three museums — the HKHM, the Hong Kong Museum of History, and the HKFA — gathered at Miss Yuen’s office and began the massive tasks of sorting and cataloguing the relics.



源碧禧帶領展覽工作人員重遊舊地，細談太平戲院軼事。

Beryl Yuen leads the staff of the exhibition through some significant locations as she reminisces on anecdotes of Tai Ping Theatre.

Beryl Yuen’s destiny with film and cinemas is exciting and amazing, pieced together by herself and the people around her. Thanks to her beautiful persistence, the treasure trove that is Tai Ping Theatre has been impeccably preserved. The act of donating everything is in itself a dashing achievement. Looking back on her life’s journey, every step of the way is accompanied by good people who gave their selfless love. She knows all about nostalgia and how to cherish the past, thus living up to the name her father gave her, Fook — full of blessed fortune.

[Translated by Roberta Chin] ■

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Editor’s Note: This essay is a compilation of two interviews of Ms Beryl Yuen. First interview: 16 July 2008 by Wong Ain-ling, Ng Suet-kwan; and second interview: 13 November 2020 by Janice Chow. The first interview was compiled into the article ‘Lessons of the Past, Art on the Stage: Beryl Yuen on Tai Ping Theatre’, see *Newsletter* (Issue 46), November 2008, Hong Kong Film Archive, pp 3-9.

The exhibition ‘Out of the Past—From the Tai Ping Treasure Trove’ will run from 28 May to 17 October 2021 at the Exhibition Hall of the HKFA. Please see our website for details.

太平戲院雜憶 ——個人成長時期的電影文化體驗

Remembrances of Tai Ping Theatre:

A Young Man's Experience of Film Culture in His Formative Years

史文鴻 Stephen Sze Man-hung

香港文化博物館藏品 源碧福女士捐贈
The Collection of the Hong Kong Heritage Museum Donated by Ms. Yuen Bik-fook, Beryl

太古衣冠做出戲假情真藉此堪作人懲勸 平臺歌舞動謂曲高和寡無非欲駭俗見聞

這是在香港島西區（西環）成長年代最熟悉的長對聯，它是刻在陪伴我成長的太平戲院銀幕兩邊的彩色雙柱上。早於智能手機及電視成為流行文化媒體的時期，電影可說是很大程度上壟斷了那一區居民的娛樂及流行文化模式，而上述的一副對聯，更可說道出電影當時作為庶民的主要娛樂的寫照。

社區電影院的環境和特色

和太平戲院使我有同樣記憶的是利舞台，但可惜的是我在成長年代中從沒機會在這兩間戲院看過廣東大戲（粵劇）。

太平戲院是座落港島西環最有規模的戲院，儘管在香港掌故中，西區是「塘西」煙花之地，但西環在我成長的五十至七十年代已經是一個中下階層或庶民生活的地區。我是天津人，我最深記憶是大多數以「行船」（當海員）為生的天津人，都聚居西區，這區也住了不少潮汕人。由上環往西走依次是西營盤、石塘咀、堅尼地城（西環

尾），太平戲院在我就讀的聖類斯中學的下（北）面，橫隔的是皇后大道西。當時西環的太平戲院，與位於西邊街及第三街交界角的真光戲院，以及在大道西尾及卑路乍街之前，位於現時寶翠園口的金陵戲院，是西區三間主要的電影院，它們之間有明顯的庶民「電影文化分工」：太平戲院主要（正場）上映首輪高檔粵語片，真光主要（正場）放映首輪國語片，而金陵檔次較低，以放映質素較次等的首輪粵語片為主。附近還有上環的高陞戲院，它則是放映左派電影的。這區就是沒有首輪西片影院，也就說明這是庶民區，而這些都是服務本地中下階層的地區影院而已，很少西環以外的人會來這區看電影。

由於當時香港西區是較多中下階層聚居的區份，太平戲院即使放映首輪粵語片，電影票價也比其他市中心區大戲院的首輪西片及國語片票價較便宜，所以太平戲院在五、六十年代還是非常受西區勞苦大眾歡迎的，而且它也算是這地區

生活的熱點。最引人佇足的是太平戲院在皇后大道西的旁邊有條小巷，可容納到不少小販，夏天以銷售涼果、馬蹄及甘蔗，冬天以蒸花生、炒栗子及烤魷魚乾最具特色。每逢有受歡迎的電影上映，戲院內外總是人山人海，不少街坊排隊買戲票及等候入場，更少不了「炒飛」（非法炒賣門票）的黃牛黨的蹤影。

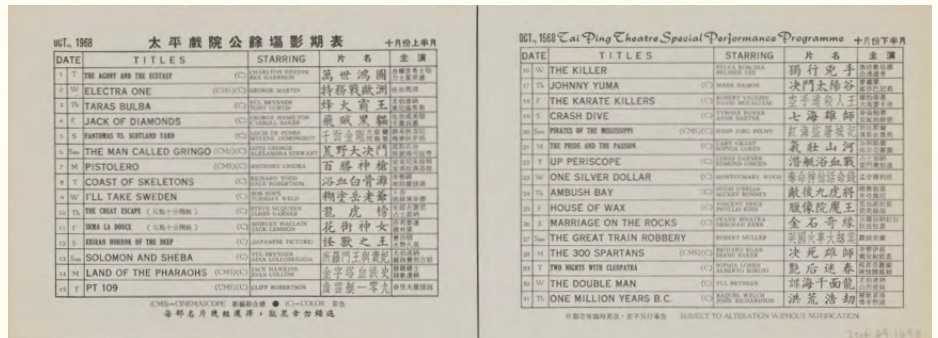
太平戲院的社區優勢及關係

由於我父母及親友都是北方人，所以我和家人看正場是以國語片為主，不過雖然我父親既不太懂英文，又目不識丁，但因為他不懂得講廣東話，所以除了看看國語片，還是最喜歡看「西片」中的西部片及戰爭片。因為父親以「行船」為業，在家時間不多，在他因船隻未開航而人要留在香港時，我就會提議他帶我去皇后、豪華及利舞台等大戲院，看一些首輪荷里活動作片。但當他不少時候失業在家，手頭不充裕，他反而就有更多機會帶我去看太平戲院下午五時半至七時半的多輪翻映舊西片的「工餘場」。當時工餘場票價（後座七

毫)比正場便宜一半,五、六十年代,成年人一張票更可帶一名小童免費入場。太平戲院後座通道旁的座位,有些更設有可放食物的鐵桌,買到那些座位的戲票的話,鐵桌便可當凳坐,不用「坐大髀」,若戲院客少則更無所謂了!當然父親「行船」不在家的日子,我也常獨自或和同學仔一起看工餘場。

太平戲院有一些優勢,它離我家近,處於西營盤及堅尼地城中間的石塘咀,算是西區中心點,離屈地街電車總站不遠,戲院門口就有五號巴士中途站,戲院較真光及金陵都大,更重要的是它比一般電影院多出一層叫「高等」的三樓,「高等」位置高出它樓下的「前、中、後座」及二樓的「超、特等」,但由於太高太斜,竟也是鐵製的,所以「高(人)等」的收費反而最便宜。一般西環電影院工餘場,前、中座只收四毫,太平戲院獨有的「高等」更只收三毫,可謂平通港九,能不受西環窮小子歡迎嗎?多年看工餘場的結果,是使我的英文可跟得上家境好及文化水平高的同學。太平戲院另一個較特別的設計,是二樓兩邊伸展至舞台邊也有一區區的座位,可充當包廂。記憶中我父親說太平戲院以前放映默片,還有「解畫人」在「廂座」作解說、配對白及聲效,可惜如今無跡可尋。

太平戲院和我的中、小學母校聖類斯也有一些密切的關係,就是學校差不多每年都會租用太平戲院一次,放映特別早場招待全校學生。我記憶中最清楚的,是我一定和全校同學看過《瑞士家庭魯賓遜》(Swiss Family Robinson, 1960)、《仙樂飄飄處處聞》(The Sound of Music, 1965)及《風雲英傑》(The Shoes of the Fisherman, 1968)。最特別的是



太平戲院早場片期表
Schedules of morning shows at the Tai Ping Theatre

香港文化博物館藏品 源碧瓊女士捐贈
The Collection of the Hong Kong Heritage Museum
Donated by Ms. Yuen Bik-fook, Beryl

看完《仙》一片後,我們校內(男校)都掀起一片唱電影中名曲的熱潮!

太平戲院與粵語片興衰

由六十年代到整個七十年代,香港電影出現了翻天覆地的變化,當中包括粵語文藝片,經歷了由丁瑩、南紅及嘉玲等形象較成熟的女演員(以嶺光及光藝出品為首)的時裝片,轉型至以陳寶珠及蕭芳芳為主導的(由1966年的《影迷公主》及《彩色青春》開始)青春片,迎合了戰後高出生率、到六十年代下半葉成長起來的大量工廠少女及書院女學生的需求。當年西區設有大量工廠,太平戲院正好趕上了這個潮流。清早及黃昏,這一區有很多活潑又樸素可愛的女工上、下班,到了晚上及假日,她們會穿得較花枝招展的到太平戲院看電影。由六十年代中至1970年陳寶珠息影前,這些「珠迷」(以就業

女工為主),加上「芳迷」(指喜愛蕭芳芳的觀眾,以中產家庭出身的書院女學生為主),常來太平戲院觀看青春歌舞、言情及武俠片,隨著香港經濟起飛,這些少女成為有消費力的港產庶民電影支持者。

到了七十年代初,隨著香港粵語片在外地市場的需求的萎縮,在本地亦受壓於新興電視媒介的競爭,粵語片在這幾年間生產數量大降。和不少地區的中小影院一樣,太平戲院開始失去明確的經營路線。儘管太平戲院於七十年代尾加入嘉樂院線,但最後亦在1981年結束營業,而隨著它的結業,港島西環以傳統庶民電影作為主導娛樂消費文化的生活模式也就式微了,不過這並不代表這個文化的湮沒,因為這個文化還會在沉澱後昇華,成為香港經典及美好社會文化記憶和資料檔案的一部分,使後世一代代可以有所嚮往。■

史文鴻,台灣崑山科技大學視訊傳播設計系退休教授。

The characters in ancient garb are fictional but the message of rewarding virtue and punishing vice is real. Song-and-dance performances may seem esoteric for they are meant to impact and impress.

Growing up in the Western District (Sai Wan), I knew this long couplet better than any other ones. It was hung on the colourful pillars flanking the screen at Tai Ping Theatre, in an era before smart phones and television became popular cultural media, and film more or less monopolised entertainment and pop culture. The said couplet captured how movies played centre stage in the entertainment of the common folk.

Setting and Features of a Community Theatre

I also have vivid memories of Lee Theatre, like I have of Tai Ping Theatre. Unfortunately I never got the chance to watch Cantonese opera at either in my growing up years.

Tai Ping Theatre was the largest theatre in Sai Wan. Although the Western District had a reputation for being the red-light district 'West of the pond', it became a residential area for the lower and the lower-middle classes from the 1950s to the 70s. I was a native of Tianjin. Something etched in the deepest recesses of my mind was how the majority of Hong Kong's seafaring Tianjin natives also resided in the Western District; many Chaoshan natives lived here too. Heading west from Sheung Wan, one passes, in order of appearance, Sai Ying Pun, Shek Tong Tsui, and Kennedy Town. Tai Ping Theatre was situated further down (north of) St. Louis School where I was a student; Queen's Road West ran between the theatre and my alma mater. Along with Ray Theatre at the conjunction of Western Street and Third Street, and Kam Ling, near the entrance to The Belcher's, located at the end of Queen's Road West just before Belcher's Street, Tai Ping Theatre was



太平戲院位於西環
Tai Ping Theatre was located in Sai Wan.

香港文化博物館藏品 源碧福女士捐贈
The Collection of the Hong Kong Heritage Museum
Donated by Ms. Yuen Bik-fook, Beryl

one of the three main theatres in the Western District. These theatres for the common folk had a clear 'division of labour' — in terms of regular screenings, Tai Ping specialised in first-run high-end Cantonese productions, Ray in first-run Mandarin titles, and the more relaxed Kam Ling in lesser quality first-run Mandarin films. Ko Shing Theatre showing leftist movies was in Sheung Wan nearby. First-run Western films were absent from these parts, which goes to show that they were where ordinary citizens lived and these were theatres that served locals of the middle and lower classes. Not many people outside Sai Wan would come here for a movie.

As this was the case, Tai Ping Theatre's ticket prices were cheaper than urban theatres screening first-run Western or Mandarin films, although it showed first-run Cantonese films. In the 1950s and 60s, Tai Ping was popular among the lower and working classes of the Western District, and a well-known hang-out of sorts in the area. One of its greatest attractions, however, was the small alley beside Queen's Road West, that accommodated many hawkers. In summer, they sold pickled fruits, water chestnuts and sugar canes; in winter, steamed peanuts, roasted chestnuts, and grilled cuttlefish. Whenever a

popular film came on, there would be crowds inside and outside the theatre. Lines of people from the neighbourhood waited for their turn to buy tickets or enter the theatre. There were scalpers too inevitably.

Tai Ping's Advantages and Connections

As my parents and relatives were Northern Chinese, most of the regular screenings we attended were of Mandarin films. My father was illiterate and didn't understand much spoken English; he also couldn't speak Cantonese. Apart from Mandarin productions, he preferred imported Western films, in particular, westerns and war films. My dad was a sailor and he didn't spend much time at home. When his ship was docked in the harbour and he had to stay put in Hong Kong, I would suggest he bring me to big theatres like Queen's, Hoover, and Lee Theatre to see first-run Hollywood action titles. But when he was unemployed at home and money was tight, which happened quite often, he would take me to Tai Ping's 5:30pm to 7:30pm 'after work' screening of Western film reruns. Tickets were half-price for 'after work' screenings (a back row seat was 70 cents for regular shows). In the 1950s

and 60s, an adult ticket allowed one to bring a child in for free. Some of the back row aisle seats came with iron food tables where children could sit instead of on one's lap. People didn't care, especially when the theatre wasn't full. When dad was away at sea, I would go to the 'after work' shows alone or with classmates quite frequently.

Tai Ping Theatre had certain advantages. Not only was it close to my home, it was located in Shek Tong Tsui, between Sai Ying Pun and Kennedy Town — the heart of the Western District. It was a stone's throw away from the Whitty Street tram depot; the No.5 bus makes a half-way stop here. Tai Ping Theatre was also larger in size than Ray and Kam Ling. Most importantly, it had an 'upper circle' on the third floor, above the 'front, middle and back rows' of the stalls and the 'premium and supreme seats' of the dress circle. But because the upper circle was way too high up and very steep, and the seats were made of iron, so they were the cheapest. For 'after work' screenings, most theatres in the Western District charged 40 cents for front and middle row seats, but Tai Ping's one-of-a-kind 'upper circle' was only 30 cents — the cheapest seats in all of Hong Kong. So not surprisingly they attracted poor school boys like myself. Watching these 'after work' shows for years brought my English up to par with classmates from more well-to-do and cultured families. Another of Tai Ping's special features were the separated seats running down the sides on the second floor, that served as booths. My father told me that during the screenings of silent films, 'narrators' would narrate from the booths back then, adding dialogue and sound effect to image. But no trace of this remains today unfortunately.

Tai Ping Theatre also had close ties with my primary and secondary school St. Louis. The school would rent the entire theatre once a year to



太平戲院座位數目達一千七百多個，是鄰近學校舉辦活動的理想地點，當年可說是擔當了社區會堂的角色。

Tai Ping Theatre accommodated more than 1,700 seats, making it an ideal event venue for nearby schools—one can imagine the importance it held as a local community hall.

treat all students to a matinee. I have vivid memories of watching *Swiss Family Robinson* (1960), *The Sound of Music* (1965), and *The Shoes of the Fisherman* (1968) with the whole school. After watching *The Sound of Music*, singing the songs on the soundtrack became a trend at our all-boys school.

Tai Ping and the Rise and Fall of Cantonese Films

Hong Kong cinema underwent drastic transformations in the 1960s and 70s. For one, Cantonese *wenyi* titles changed from modern films starring more mature-looking actresses like Ting Ying, Nam Hung, and Kar Ling (in what were mostly Lan Kwong and Kong Ngee productions), to youth films starring Connie Chan Po-chu and Josephine Siao Fong-fong (starting with the 1966 productions, *Movie Fans* and *Colourful Youth*) that catered to the baby boomers and later the many young female factory workers and high school students, who grew up in the second half of the 1960s. Factories sprang up in the Western District at the time, and Tai Ping Theatre caught up with the trend. Early morning and evening, many lively, plainly dressed, and lovely women would be seen making their way to and from work. Then at night and on holidays, they would dress up to catch a movie at Tai Ping Theatre. From the mid-1960s to the 1970s



二樓兩邊伸展至舞台邊設有一區區的座位，形似包廂。

On either side of the second level, box-like sections of seats extended to the edge of the stage

before Connie Chan Po-chu retired from the silver screen, these 'Connie fans' (mostly female workers) and also 'Josephine fans' (mostly students from middle-class families) would come to Tai Ping for the youth musical movies, melodramas and martial arts flicks. As Hong Kong's economy took off, these young women became local, non-elite film-goers with purchasing power.

Unfortunately by the 1970s, demand waned for Cantonese films in the overseas market, in addition to the fact that Cantonese films could not withstand the keen competition from the then-emerging television industry, their production plummeted. Like other small and medium theatres in the district, Tai Ping gradually lost its operational direction and a clear positioning. Although Tai Ping joined Gala Cinema Circuit in the late 1970s to give its business a boost, in 1981, the theatre finally closed its doors for the last time. With its closure, a way of life whereby films for ordinary people dominated the entertainment and consumption landscape also came to an end in the Western District. However this culture did not disappear completely. After a period of settling, it was sublimated, becoming an integral and wonderful part of Hong Kong's sociocultural memory and history, one that would mesmerise generation after generation. [Translated by Piera Chen] ■

Stephen Sze Man-hung, retired Professor of Motion Pictures and Video, Kun Shan University, Taiwan.



「從無聲到有聲——1930至1940年代香港電影」研討會一瞥

A Glance Back at the 'From Silent to Sound — Hong Kong Films of the 1930s and 1940s' Symposium

黃夏柏、劉子心 Wong Ha-pak, Kardia Lau

今年1月3日是香港電影資料館成立20周年的大日子，因疫情之故，連串誌慶節目延遲舉行，難得「從無聲到有聲——1930至1940年代香港電影」研討會則如期於1月9至10日展開，雖只可全以視像形式進行，但仍無礙三十多位海內外專家學者交流，分享研究所得，從影業進程、文本分析、歷史考據、文化軌跡等多元角度，剖析三、四十年代香港電影的面貌。

從聲片之初到戰後復員

本館於2012年從美國尋得的一批三、四十年代的香港電影拷貝，並陸續自美國紐約州檔案館複印及寄回的送檢檔案資料，是研究香港影業聲片發軔之初的寶庫，成為籌辦是次研討會的契機。程美寶教授（香港城市大學）及葉銳洪考證時人對聲默片的喜惡觀感，從而追溯聲片發展為影業主流的歷程；論文中更援引1931年，太平戲院東主源杏翹曾在日記寫下「啞片乎，抑響片乎？」的取捨困惑。

自1937年內地進入全面抗戰，資金及人才南移，港片出品數量於淪陷前幾年持續增加，羅卡指當時電影業界實面對重重困難，不但粵語片因本身是方言電影而遭受打壓，大批加進愛國意識的娛樂片亦備受批判，然在逆境中不少影人仍致力在不同類型的娛樂片中尋找傳揚抗敵意識的空間。趙傑鋒博士認為1939年香港出品的國

防電影，隨廣州淪陷而出現結構性轉變，以廣東家鄉的想像取代了歷史、傳統空間，創造自我群體意識。

蒲鋒檢視淪陷前南來導演的背景、人脈及工作模式，從而論證他們在上海的經歷對香港影業的影響，揭示香港影業中千絲萬縷的上海淵源。羅明佑於1930年在香港招股集資，實行聯營策略，一度把聯華影業製片公司推向業界龍頭；李培德教授（香港大學）從聯華的招股文件，追蹤這家電影企業的興衰歷程。傅葆石教授（美國伊利諾大學厄巴納—香檳分校）則探索大戰後港滬影業緊扣的紐帶，尤其戰後政經環境劇變，兩地互動更形深化，上海借助香港的特殊位置維持業務，影人為避開政治動蕩紛紛南下，以影言志。

邱淑婷博士（香港中文大學）探尋港日的光影關聯，指出抗戰前有影人赴日本考察，圖借助當地技術推展

香港製片業，及至淪陷，日軍政府對港影業進行連番打壓，並按「一戰一映畫」政策，攝製《香港攻略戰》（1942）。韓燕麗教授（東京大學）發掘及梳理多種日文原始資料，包括日本人撰寫的觀影紀錄、在華製作及發行影片的文件，追蹤三、四十年代日本人在港的觀影及攝影活動。

戰後香港影業恢復，產量續增，蘇濤博士（中國人民大學）審視當時《大公報》（香港）的影評，歸納其左翼思潮的評論方針及抨擊粵語片流弊的要點，探討其引發的媒體動員效應，如何凝聚進步影人，推動粵語片革新。陳彩玉（香港電影資料館）從一批太平戲院的文物，釐清該院於1949年投資拍攝《孤兒救祖》時，由資金籌募、股權分配、製作開支到票房收益的實況，並揭示香港與海外影片市場的互動關係。李道明教授（香港浸會大學）則聚焦三、四十年代香

港的紀錄性影片，探討這時期香港紀錄片的特徵及背景因素。

影人與公司

香港影業於三十至四十年代經歷從無聲片發展到有聲片的歷程中，承載了無數影人的不懈努力，值得我們去探究。鍾寶賢教授（香港浸會大學）追蹤傳奇人物關文清的步伐，從其縱橫三藩市、荷里活、滬、粵，由引進電影及聲片技術，到促成大觀聲片公司在美國成立的經歷，道出香港早期電影的發展脈絡及轉折。由於外國聲片拍攝器材成本甚高，當年激發國人自行研發相關器材，吳月華博士集中評介的竺清賢便是其中佼佼者。竺早年在上海研發的聲片技術不被重視，其後來港成立南粵影片公司，不斷改良清賢式錄音機的發聲系統及技術，並對創作和製作採取開放態度，令南粵匯聚不少人才，成為當時數一數二的電影公司。

三、四十年代，隨著內地局勢不穩，資金南移，各大電影公司相繼在港成立，令香港影業逐步發展。吳君玉（香港電影資料館）追溯上海天一影片公司在港設立分公司，繼而易幟為南洋影片公司的發展進程，闡述了兩家公司的營運謀略的相異之處。郭靜寧（香港電影資料館）聚焦戰後在港成立的永華影業公司，透過文獻、影人訪問及自述等資料，探討永華在1948至49年間，自成立、片場落成以及一些業務營運上的細節，並探看其所製作的電影，在影史中產生的脈絡與特點。

類型與美學的探析

由1937年日本全面侵華至1941年香港淪陷前，抗戰及愛國題材一度成為香港電影的重要主題。史文鴻教授集中探討目前仍有影像留存下來的

「國防」電影，評析這些電影的不同表現手法及藝術價值，以及如何反映電影製作人其政治文化及社會身份認同。喬奕思以三、四十年代的古裝歷史片為對象，從類型片的題材、敘事策略和性別形象等面向，探討當中對舊有文本的顛覆與向傳統倫理秩序的回歸。

游靜博士追溯香港「武俠動作片」類型及「女俠片」亞類型如何繼承早期中國電影的淵源，同時借「第一代武俠片導演」任彭年，及其妻子、武打女星鄒麗珠從上海至香港的發展軌跡，以他們於四十年代在香港攝製的電影作案例，探索女俠片的特色及流變。

余少華教授從音樂角度切入，剖析《長相思》（1947）音樂運用如何巧妙點題，陳歌辛在歌曲鋪排上亦富心思，其創作的〈花樣的年華〉更主導整個故事，而周璇的演唱技巧亦歷經蛻變，更臻圓熟。陳智廷博士（香港浸會大學）集中討論胡心靈執導的國語歌舞片《四美圖》（1948），該片在滬港皆票房敗北，口碑亦遜，惟歌舞氛圍背後顯現靈肉分離，全片瀰漫著多重跨界焦慮。劉欽則提出探析戰後至五十年代初香港國語電影的框架，以電影藝術本體為焦點，梳理出不同的敘事體裁、藝術風格和類型建構等，並作出分類及統計。

跨文化尋源

三、四十年代的香港電影不乏改編世界文學作品的經典之作，從原著的挪用、情節的增刪及移植中，可窺探出東、西文化價值觀的不同。黃淑嫻博士（嶺南大學）以曾多次被改編成香港電影的托爾斯泰經典作品《復活》為探討對象，評析首兩部改編電影《再生緣》（1948）和《蕩婦心》（1949），藉以透視香港電影

與世界文學的對話。吳國坤博士（香港浸會大學）曾赴美國紐約州檔案館翻閱當年華語片進口時的審查紀錄，歸納其類型，除怪力亂神題材，個別具「西方現代化走向」的倫理文藝片如《天倫》（1935）、《人生曲》（1937），曾引起西方媒體注意。

研究方法的思考

研討會中，盧偉力博士特地提出要注意的是，基於早期影片的散佚及資料的缺乏，有需要借助電影考古學來建構香港電影文化脈絡的論述；他更從比較藝術學和結構主義角度出發，探析現存的十餘部三十年代香港電影的影像文本構成及當中呈現的文化身份意識。劉輝教授（深圳大學）從內地學者的視角，勾勒出長期以來三、四十年代香港電影研究的困境，而隨著香港電影資料館在海外尋得二十多部香港早期電影拷貝，困局有望覓得缺口，但仍需面對電影修復、典藏數碼化及推動新一波研究的挑戰。

後話

經過兩天共七節的研討環節後，康樂及文化事務署總經理（電影及文化交流）區玉芳作閉幕致辭，向各與會的專家及學者致謝，並發表對資料館未來工作的展望。其後由羅卡及何思穎主持的「圓桌會議」，讓一眾參與是次研討會的電影研究者和學者，交流對不同研究課題的看法和心得。研討會上的切磋砥礪是整個研究及出版計劃的交流平台，講者們接著會修訂論文，本館將會將之結集成書，敬請密切留意。

黃夏柏為「從無聲到有聲——1930至1940年代香港電影」研討會項目研究員。

劉子心為香港電影資料館研究及編輯組中文編輯。

The third of January this year marked the 20th anniversary of the Hong Kong Film Archive. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, a series of celebratory programmes had to be postponed. Despite that, the symposium 'From Silent to Sound—Hong Kong Films of the 1930s and 1940s' was held as scheduled via videoconference on 9-10 January. It was an occasion that allowed over 30 local and overseas film scholars to exchange ideas and insights freely, and share with each other the fruits of their latest research. Early Hong Kong cinema was discussed from a great variety of perspectives, including the development of the film industry, textual analysis, historical investigation, and cultural studies.

From the Origin of Talkies to Post-War Restoration

The origin of the symposium can be harked back to a stash of Hong Kong film prints from the 1930s to 40s which we acquired from the US in 2012, as well as archival documents that were reproduced and shipped in batches from the New York States Archive. These valuable primary sources are a treasure trove for investigating early Hong Kong cinema when talkies first emerged, and gave us the opportunity to host this symposium. Prof Ching May-bo (City University of Hong Kong) and Ye Ruihong investigated early public opinion, including excitement and concerns, about silent films and talkies; it serves as a fascinating jump-off point to trace the historical development of sound filmmaking in Hong Kong. Their paper also cited an anecdote that in 1931, Yuen Hang-kiu, owner of Tai Ping Theatre, pondered in his diary the challenging question: 'Silent or sound?'

When the full-out war in the Mainland came in 1937, the production of Cantonese films continued to steadily increase as there was a huge drain of capital and talent to the south. Law Kar suggested that the film industry of the time faced numerous challenges, such as the suppression of dialect cinema; in addition, Hong Kong mainstream pictures at the time, which tended to sugarcoat their patriotic messages



攝於研討會首天：（左起）本館館長曾焯樂；兩位開幕致辭嘉賓：何思穎、羅卡；康文署總經理（電影及文化交流）區玉芳

Taken on the first day of the symposium: (from left) Rowena Tsang, Head of HKFA; our two special guests, Sam Ho and Law Kar, who gave opening speeches; Betty Au, Chief Manager (Film and Cultural Exchange) of the LCSD.

with entertainment-based elements, were harshly criticised. Despite the obstacles, numerous filmmakers continued to find their voices in promoting resistance awareness through different entertainment genres. Dr Chiu Kit-fung opined that with the fall of Guangzhou to Japanese occupation, Hong Kong-produced national defence films in 1939 experienced structural transformations. Imaginings of Guangdong as the homeland began to overtake traditional, historical concepts of space, and the seeds of the awareness of the Cantonese community began to germinate.

Po Fung investigated the background, personal networks and work modes of directors who came south before the Japanese occupation of Hong Kong, revealing how their personal experiences in Shanghai impact the Hong Kong film industry as well as underscoring the intricate web of ties that link together

Hong Kong and Shanghai cinemas. In 1930, Lo Ming-yau announced the IPO of United Photoplay Service Limited and its affiliate strategy, which propelled the company to the forefront of the local film industry. By looking through its prospectus documents, Prof Lee Pui-tak (The University of Hong Kong) retraced the rise and fall of this film company.

Prof Poshek Fu (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, USA) also delved into this post-war bond between the Hong Kong and Shanghai film industries, which was in many ways strengthened and deepened thanks to dramatic economic changes after the war. Shanghai had to rely on Hong Kong's unique status to maintain its business, while its filmmakers and industry professionals migrated southwards in order to evade political turmoil and pursue their ambitions through film.

Dr Kinnia Yau Shuk-ting (The Chinese University of Hong Kong) investigated the relationship between the Hong Kong and Japanese cinema, pointing out that some filmmakers made trips to Japan before the war, in order to introduce local film technologies to Hong Kong; she also retraced the history of how the Japanese military government repeatedly cracked down the Hong Kong film industry, which in 1942, made *Hong Kong Conquered* in adherence with its policy of 'one film per battle'. Prof Han Yanli (The

University of Tokyo) collected and studied many newly discovered primary materials in Japanese, including film viewing records written by Japanese audiences, documents about films produced or distributed in Hong Kong, in the attempt to create a picture of the viewing and filmmaking activities of Japanese film professionals in 1930s and 40s Hong Kong.

Dr Su Tao (Renmin University of China) scrutinised contemporary film reviews in *Ta Kung Pao* (Hong Kong) to present a picture of contemporary leftist criticism, and its key points of attack on mainstream Cantonese films. Su further observed that such criticism led to mobilisation of the media, support and unity among the more progressive filmmakers, and eventually, a reform in Cantonese cinema. From a trove of archival material and relics from Tai Ping Theatre, Priscilla Chan (HKFA) reconstructed an account of the theatre's investment in the making of *The Orphan's Rescue*, from fundraising, share allocations, production costs to actual box-office returns. In doing so, she shed light on the interactive dynamic between Hong Kong and overseas film markets. Prof Lee Daw-ming (Hong Kong Baptist University) focused on Hong Kong documentaries from the 1930s and 40s, and investigated their characteristics and the historical context against which they emerged.

Filmmakers and Film Studios

In its transition from silent film to talkies from the 1930s to 40s, Hong Kong cinema benefitted from the unrelenting efforts of numerous industry professionals, whose careers are worthy of further scholarly

attention. Prof Stephanie Chung Poyin (HKBU) retraced the footsteps of the legendary Moon Kwan Man-ching, as he travelled from San Francisco to Hollywood, Shanghai to Guangdong, to import and introduce new film and talkie technology to Chinese cinema, up to the point when he helped found Grandview Film Company in the US. His story is also one of the development of early Hong Kong cinema in a key transitory period.

Since the filming equipment for sound films exported from abroad was rather expensive, Chinese film professionals were motivated to research and develop their own. A case in point is Chuk Ching-yin, subject of Dr Stephanie Ng Yuet-wah's research. Chuk's early attempt in developing sound film technology in Shanghai had not been taken seriously. However, after he moved to Hong Kong and established the Nanyue Film Company, concerted and continual efforts were made to improve sound film equipment under his own brand name. He was open-minded towards his in-house creative and production teams, thus attracting many talents to come work at Nanyue, making it one of the top film companies of the time.

In the 1930s to 40s, as the political situation deteriorated in the Mainland, investment in the film business started to flow southwards, and major film companies began to establish offices in Hong Kong. May Ng (HKFA) followed how Unique Film Productions (Shanghai), came to launch a branch in Hong Kong, before eventually changing and developing into Nanyang Film Company. Ng compared and contrasted the operational strategies

of the two companies. Kwok Ching-ling (HKFA) focused on Yung Hwa Motion Picture Industries Ltd, founded in post-war Hong Kong. Through archival documents, interviews with filmmakers and first-person accounts, Kwok investigated the details of how the film company and its studio were established as well as operated from 1948, the year of its establishment, to 1949. She also took an in-depth look at the films produced by Yung Hwa, including the historical context against which they were made and their characteristics.

Film Genres and Aesthetics

From the outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese War in 1937 to 1941, just before the fall of Hong Kong, the war resistance effort and patriotism were two important themes in Hong Kong cinema. Prof Stephen Sze Man-hung focused on 'national defence' pictures of which there is still existing footage. He commented on the various narrative techniques used in the films and their artistic value, as well as how the pictures reflect the approaches the filmmakers perceived their political, cultural, and social identities. Joyce Yang studied the historical period dramas of the 1930s and 40s from the perspectives of subject matter, narrative strategies, and gender representation. She highlighted how the genre at the time was linked to a pattern of subversion towards the original texts, and signified a return to traditional ethics and social structure.

Dr Yau Ching traced the development of *wuxia* and action genres in Hong Kong cinema, in particular the sub-genre of *nüxia* (chivalric heroine), arguing that they inherit and build on elements from

early Chinese cinema. She also delved deeply into the careers of Yam Pang-nin (one of the first-generation *wuxia* film directors), as well as his wife Wu Lai-chu, as they moved from Shanghai to Hong Kong. Using a few of their 1940s Hong Kong pictures as case studies, Yau explored the characteristics and development within *nüxia* films.

Prof Yu Siu-wah gave an in-depth analysis of *Forever in My Heart* (1947) from a musical point of view, highlighting how the use of music in the film accentuates its key themes. Yu also praised Chen Gexin's meticulous arrangement of music in the film, and his composition, 'Huayang de Nianhua' (literally 'Age of Bloom'), drives the narrative forward. In the film, Zhou Xuan's singing techniques also mature and display an artist at the height of her talent. Dr Timmy Chen Chih-ting (HKBU) focused on the Mandarin musical *Portrait of Four Beauties* (1948), directed by Hu Xinling. Although it was poorly received commercially and critically both in Hong Kong and Shanghai, Chen argued that the film is worthy of critical appraisal for its depiction of body and soul in disunity, and its complex reflection of many layers of intercultural and intertextual anxieties. Lau Yam proposed a framework for analysing Hong Kong's Mandarin films from the post-war period to the early 1950s. Focusing on the ontology of film, Lau analysed the various categories of narrative mode, artistic style and genre construct, and tallied the number of films that fall under each category.

Transcultural Cinema

Many Hong Kong films from the 1930s and 40s were adapted from

world literary classics. The choices made in the process of adaptation, including the addition, removal or transplantation of plot details, can suggest differences in the values between the East and the West. Dr Mary Wong Shuk-han (Lingnan University) focused her research on Leo Tolstoy's *Resurrection*, which had been adapted for the silver screen in Hong Kong for multiple times. Two of these adaptations in particular were discussed at great length: *A Reborn Romantic* (1948) and *A Forgotten Woman* (1949), opening up room for further exploration into the conversations between Hong Kong cinema and world literature. Dr Kenny Ng (HKBU) visited the New York State Archives to study the censor records of contemporary Chinese film titles imported into the USA. He focused particularly on genre, and discovered that apart from supernatural fantasy films, certain family melodramas with the 'Occidental modern tendency', such as *Song of China* (1935) and *Song of Life* (1937) also received attention from the Western media.

Some Thoughts on Methodologies

Dr Lo Wai-luk also highlighted the gaps and challenges in studying early Hong Kong cinema, in particular, the loss of many film titles and the lack of historical material. He argued that there is a need for scholars to engage in film archaeology in order to construct a picture of the wider context that early Hong Kong cinematic culture was situated in. He also analysed around a dozen or so 1930s Hong Kong film texts from the perspectives of comparative art studies and structuralism, highlighting how they reveal an awareness of cultural identity. Prof

Liu Hui (Shenzhen University) used a perspective of a Mainland scholar to observe and outline the difficulties faced by film scholars researching Hong Kong cinema of the 1930s and 40s. However, with the Archive's discovery of a trove of overseas material on some 20 titles from early Hong Kong cinema, there is hope for a richer and more accessible research environment. Yet it is fair to say that we are still faced with a series of challenges, including restoration of the film titles, digitisation of the material, and promotion of a new wave of research.

Afterword

The two days of symposium presentations and discussion came to a conclusion with the closing remarks from Betty Au Yuk-fong, Chief Manager (Film & Cultural Exchange), Leisure and Cultural Services Department. She thanked the experts and scholars who participated in the symposium and also outlined the upcoming projects and work at the Archive. Afterwards, a 'roundtable discussion' was hosted by Law Kar and Sam Ho, facilitating an open exchange of ideas and insights from the film researchers and scholars in attendance. The fascinating back-and-forth conversations of the two days was an excellent exchange platform for a wider project and publishing plan. All the speakers were invited to revise and polish their theses, which will subsequently be collected and published in book form. Stay tuned. [Translated by Rachel Ng] ■

Wong Ha-pak is project researcher of the 'From Silent to Sound—Hong Kong Films of the 1930s and 1940s' symposium.

Kardia Lau is Chinese Editor of the HKFA's Research and Editorial Unit.

從《玉女金剛》和 《第一號女探員之死亡通行証》 看「珍姐邦」新女性的樂與夢

*The Female Chivalry and A Death Pass:
The Pleasures and Fantasies of
Modern Femininity in 'Jane Bond' Films*

登徒 Thomas Shin



被稱為「珍姐邦」的一股粵語片女俠風潮，六十年代短短幾年間崛起，又在1967年邁向高峰，後隨著粵片式微而消失。它的源起，主因首部占士邦電影《鐵金剛勇破神秘島》（*Dr. No*, 1962）面世，直接令香港粵語片吸收了新靈感，結合了中國傳統的女俠脈絡，變為自成一派的片種。¹

它的流行期非常短，來得快去也快。這短短數年，一批「珍姐」抬頭，她們既青春美麗又好打得，《黑玫瑰》（1965）自是重要里程碑，締造了一雙有型有款的黑玫瑰姊妹花，繼而有雪妮的《女黑俠木蘭花》（1966）、陳寶珠的《女殺手》（1966）、蕭芳芳的《玉女神偷》（1967），亦有將特務化成警察的《第一號女探員》（1966）。

它們挪用了占士邦的元素，卻把性別轉換了，融匯了科幻、間諜、警匪和動作的刺激，套用在玉女和俠女身上，形成一種新鮮的景觀。「珍姐邦」是時代產物，香港仍未晉身國際大城市，經濟仍未起飛，一心追趕西方的步伐和時髦，同時伸張正義，經歷二戰復原、中國內戰、難民潮、文革起始，生活艱難，她當起社會的道德和道義的守護者，識別偽君子 and 真壞蛋。她們的行動往往是自發地替天行道，而不像她們的占士邦般，只因執行上司命令。

她們往往被寫成家境富裕的上流人，住豪宅，巧妙地避開了俠盜的偷竊道德問題。這點在楚原的

《黑玫瑰》十分清晰，兩位女俠擁有好身手和智謀，有時甚至極為調皮，以「撚化」（作弄）對手為樂，那份相當突出的幽默和喜感，有時比她們的身手還厲害，故楚原挪用占士邦化成自己的新女性楷模時，便以「智取」取代了占士邦的力敵。

楚原設計下的黑玫瑰，無論壞蛋抑或警察在她們面前都變成蠢蛋，陳美如（南紅飾）、陳美玲（陳寶珠飾）談笑用兵，甚至解救自投羅網的張敏夫（謝賢飾）於虎穴中。

黑玫瑰姊妹花，從形象到性格，乃結合了女黑俠傳統的俠盜，技能和智商遠高於警方和保險偵探；它雖然不乏動作，選擇智取而非力敵，其主因相信是因女生主導，身手以嬌柔為主。

陳寶珠同年仍是《武林聖火令》（上集、大結局，1965）、《如來神掌怒碎萬劍門》（1965）中的少俠，因為「黑玫瑰」開闢了另一種戲路，青春、時髦具活力，同時好打得，當時只有19歲的她，名副其實是戰後嬰兒潮第一代，在

香港步入經濟繁榮的前期，自己亦踏入了青春期，真正與時代同步，面對著一個中西文化共融的香港，戲裡的陳美玲，有時精靈多計，有時像少不更事，相較南紅的成熟而溫柔賢淑的外表，更能捕捉現代青春少女的感覺。

事實證明楚原眼光獨到，品味也追上時代，一年後的1966年，陳寶珠走時裝打女／玉女／俠盜／警探路線的戲，數量倍升，除了楚原拍了《黑玫瑰與黑玫瑰》（1966）作為續篇，莫康時也趕拍了《女殺手》和《女殺手虎穴救孤兒》（1966），此外還有余河的《玉女追兇》（1966）、蔣偉光的《女賊黑野貓》（1966）及龍圖的《第一號女探員》；而呂奇自在《影迷公主》（1966）中與陳寶珠首次合作，慢慢成了她女俠片的最佳拍檔。

1967年，陳寶珠拍片數量逾三十部，上述的「女殺手」、「女賊黑野貓」系列都得以延續外，在盧雨岐的《玉女金剛》（1967）中，陳寶珠再次穿起緊身衣蒙面出動，她演富有人家的二小姐惠萍，



《玉女金剛》（1967）中的一對智勇姊妹花：陳寶珠飾演以高強武藝對付壞人的妹妹，外號「銀狐」（左）；方心飾演用美人計色迷大毒梟的姊姊（右）。

The smart and fearless sisters duo in *The Female Chivalry* (1967): Connie Chan Po-chu, known as Silver Fox, overpowers the villain who aims to eliminate her sister (left); Fong Sum, the elder sister, seduces and tricks the drug lord (right).

卻一直跟家中傭人銀狐學藝，練得一身好本領。她亦繼承銀狐外號，面對的敵人則是富商兼大毒梟鍾志宏（石堅飾），助她一臂之力的是記者高天任（呂奇飾），家姐惠敏（方心飾）不再打得，倒用美人計色迷大毒梟。

陳寶珠完全擔正，同時負起大部分動作打鬥，開首郊外的埋伏戲，唐佳和劉家良的動作設計，拳拳到肉打到飛起，與後來石堅在海灘打到落海的結局戲互相輝映。雖云動作更激烈，不再是花拳繡腿，但陳寶珠仍應付自如。

更重要的是，出身自中上家庭的養女惠萍，爸媽採取自由放任的教養方式，既享獨立又身處富裕環境，穿男裝騎著電單車出行，品味趨時，喬裝偵探，不斷轉換場景和裝扮，宛如特務無異，她待人處事面面俱圓，活躍於上流社交圈，以這種方式化成「珍姐邦」，同時滿足觀眾對千面玉女的憧憬。

另一方面，跟黑玫瑰如出一轍是，惠萍本身為棄嬰，身世坎坷，深藏不露亦不忘本，透過學藝和自身意志，活出精采，不啻是基層的夢幻，亦提醒了陳寶珠本人的真實際遇，被原生家庭送往名伶陳非儂宮粉紅家成為養女，再學習成材的經歷。

《玉女金剛》裡惠萍雖得天獨厚，身懷絕技，卻為父報仇，為社會鋤奸，在一身時髦下仍保存了孝德仁義，符合了中國俠義精神。來到楚原的《第一號女探員之死亡通行證》（1967），雖是龍圖《第一號女探員》姐妹作，楚原在《黑玫瑰與黑玫瑰》將「珍姐邦」推至極致後，倒另闢蹊徑。

楚原大玩鬼屋類型，四條人命的開篇，也證明楚原對西方推理懸疑的愛好，總要創出一個自己的版本。陳寶珠也三分二時間喬裝文靜的富家女馬淑儀，不獨沒打到飛起，也無穿上緊身衣晝伏夜出，大屋的疑神疑鬼成了重點。

楚原手法新穎，大屋的空間處理匠心獨運，機關重重，懸疑驚悚講求佈局，故佈疑陣由一隻鐵鉤殺人，一雙躲在窗簾下的皮鞋開始，一步步請君入甕。墳場被神秘人跟蹤，書房的怪屍等等，既涉及密室殺人的詭異，也以光影作掩眼法。除了光影，也大玩音樂和聲效，夜半音樂盒樂曲聲作引子，帶來舅母臥室獨處，具表現主義風格的燈光，與容玉意的誠惶誠恐的表現，甚具精神病患者的暗示，亦盡得心理驚悚精髓，至此，楚原從《觸目驚心》（*Psycho*, 1960）借來的靈感，實已表露無遺。

當然，富家女的豪宅，全西化的設計，為觀眾佈置了一個夢幻的時空。前半段，她演的玉女斯文矜持，在鬼屋中被機關玩弄，她看來是處於下風，被故弄玄虛的佈置，家人不得盡信的身份，弄得團團轉。但後段，她表露了第一號女探員身份，展示身手，瞬間扭轉弱勢。

跟《黑玫瑰》不變的是，大反派最後才揭露真身，第一號女探員並非無敵，她只是旁觀者，看著大反派自作孽，走上不歸路的悲劇。它的主题，也由「珍姐邦」的夢幻和時髦，新女性的獨立堅強，轉為對大反派的同情和歎惜，潛伏著的罪與罰，復仇和寬恕等命題，最後隨一把火灰飛煙滅，構思和落墨都十分大膽。

無論《玉女金剛》的司馬華龍，或者《第一號女探員之死亡通行證》的梁醒波，皆是過去粵語片中不常見的角色，他倆都是被命運播弄，恨錯難返的悲劇人物，雖多行惡但本性良心未泯，可惡又可憐。

在西片移植過來的「珍姐邦」的正義、獨立、強悍、聰慧和美麗下，充滿西方中產富裕生活色彩裡，埋下了黑色、醜陋、人性幽暗和失衡的一面，也令俠盜劫富濟貧添上了反諷，人性和罪惡，道德抉擇是否那末簡單，「郁親手就聽打」可解決？隨著香港步入七十年代，現代人的煩惱和道德矛盾，盤根錯節，「珍姐邦」轉眼間消聲匿跡，並非無因。■

註釋

1 參看何思穎：〈珍姐邦：奉旨打男人的女人〉，載羅卡編：《躁動的一代：六十年代粵片新星》（第二十屆香港國際電影節特刊），香港：香港市政局，1996，頁34-46。

登徒，資深影評人，曾任香港電影評論學會副主席，文章見於香港電影評論學會網頁、《信報》、《明報周刊》及《HKinema》等。

「瑰寶情尋——聲影『留』傳」節目，以及由何思穎及登徒主講的《第一號女探員之死亡通行證》映後談詳情，參見本館網頁。

The 'Jane Bond' trend in Cantonese films emerged quickly within the span of a few years in the 1960s, and reached its peak in 1967. It later faded away along with the decline of Cantonese cinema. Jane Bond pictures took inspiration from *Dr. No* (1962), the first ever James Bond film, and melded it together with traditional Chinese literary and film tropes of *nüxia* (chivalric heroine) to form this unique genre of films.¹

The Jane Bond fad came and went in a flash. Within a few years' time, a number of young, beautiful and physically agile 'Jane Bonds' rose to stardom: the dynamic duo of *Black Rose* (1965), an important milestone in the genre; Suet Nei in *The Black Musketeer 'F'* (1966); Connie Chan Po-chu in *Lady Bond* (1966); Josephine Siao Fong-fong in *The Precious Mirror* (1967); and the special agent turned police officer in *Girl Detective 001* (1966).

Playing with gender reversal, Jane Bond films absorbed key elements from the James Bond franchise, together with the genre thrills of science fiction, spy, crime, and action, and built them around their *nüxia* protagonists, thus delivering a refreshing spin on these familiar tropes. Jane Bond films were very much a product of their time. In the 1960s, Hong Kong had yet to transform itself into the international metropolis that it is today. With its economy still in development, the city was keen to follow and imitate Western trends, but at the same time, wanted to see justice be done. Having gone through World War II, the Chinese Civil War, the refugee crisis and the Cultural Revolution, life was difficult for the general population. Jane Bonds were fantasy protectors and advocates of morality and justice, who could expose the hypocrites and the villains. And unlike their counterpart James Bond, who tended to follow the orders of his superiors, their actions were usually motivated by an innate sense of justice.

Jane Bonds were often portrayed as members of upper-class society who lived in big mansions, tactfully avoiding the ethical questions raised by their criminal acts of theft. This is especially apparent in Chor Yuen's *Black Rose*, where the two female protagonists are both formidable fighters and wily strategists who have a mischievous side. They take pleasure in playing tricks on their enemies, and in doing so, their sense of humour may seem to be even more significant than their martial prowess. In his adaptation of the James Bond character, Chor Yuen clearly preferred his modern heroines to outsmart, rather than overpower, their antagonists.

In the presence of Chor Yuen's *Black Rose* sisters, both villains and police alike become hapless idiots. The two heroines Chan Mei-yu (played by Nam Hung) and Chan Mei-ling (played by Connie Chan Po-chu) laugh and jest as they outwit their adversaries, even saving a self-sabotaging Cheung Man-fu (played by Patrick Tse Yin) from the claws of death.

The characters of the *Black Rose* sisters, from their physical image to their personalities, combine together various traditional elements of the *nüxia*, who is clad in black and steals from the rich to help the poor. Their skills and intelligence vastly outstrip the police and the insurance detectives. Although the film has no lack of action scenes, it chooses to focus on the protagonists' wits rather than physical chops, likely because of the less intense style of

fight choreography performed by its female stars.

The same year *Black Rose* was released, Chan also played a cross-dressing role as young, heroic characters in *Moslem Sacred Fire Decree* (Part I, Concluding Episode; 1965) and *The Furious Buddha's Palm* (1965). The character *Black Rose* opened up new opportunities for Chan, presenting her as a youthful, fashionable, and energetic lead with excellent physical skills. The 19-year-old was part of the first generation of post-war baby boomers who grew up as Hong Kong began to prosper economically. For viewers, she represented the vitality of the age and the exciting mix of Chinese and Western cultures in Hong Kong. In *Black Rose*, she possesses both an impish smartness and a childlike innocence, thereby embodying a truly youthful sense of maidenhood when contrasted against Nam Hung's relatively more mature and ladylike appearance.

Chor Yuen's eye for casting and his finger on the pulse of the times proved to be spot on. A year after, in 1966, Chan starred in a much greater number of films as a contemporary action heroine, a 'Jade Girl', a heroic thief or a detective. Apart from *Spy with My Face* (1966), Chor Yuen's follow-up to *Black Rose*, Chan also played the lead in Mok Hong-si's *Lady Bond* and *Return of Lady Bond* (1966), Law Chi's *The Big Chase* (1966), Cheung Wai-kwong's *The Wild Black Cat* (1966), and Lung To's *Girl Detective 001*. The same year, Chan also starred in *Movie Fans* (1966),

marking her first collaboration with Lui Kay, who would be her screen partner in multiple *nüxia* pictures.

The year 1967 was a prolific one for Chan, who went on to make some 30 pictures, including sequels to the aforementioned 'Lady Bond' and 'The Wild Black Cat' series. She donned her black skinsuit and mask once again in Lo Yu-kei's *The Female Chivalry* (1967), playing the second daughter of a wealthy family, Wai-ping. She learns her skills from a family servant, Silver Fox, and trains to be a superb martial artist. After inheriting the name of Silver Fox, she takes on a wealthy, villainous drug lord Chung Chi-wang (played by Sek Kin), aided by the journalist Ko Tin-yam (played by Lui Kay) and her sister Wai-man (played by Fong Sum). Although Fong's character is not a fighter, she plays a key part in seducing and tricking the drug lord.

Chan commands the screen as a leading lady and performs most of her action choreography. The ambush scene in the countryside at the beginning of the film is remarkably intense, with complicated choreography designed by Tong Kai and Lau Kar-leung. It is matched by the film's ending, as Chan fights and defeats Sek Kin at the beach, shoving him into the sea. Faced with more demanding action choreography that is no longer merely performative jabs and kicks, Chan rises to the occasion with grace.

Even more crucial to the film's success is the very character of Wai-ping herself. As the adopted daughter of an upper middle-class family, she is allowed a great deal of freedom by her parents and enjoys both

personal and financial independence. Wearing men's clothes, riding motorbikes, displaying stylish and fashionable taste, disguising herself as a detective... along with the ever-changing sets and disguises, Wai-ping is every bit as glamorous as a special agent. Furthermore, she is shown to be a tactful and well-liked member of upper-class society. Wai-ping is a 'Jane Bond' who also satisfies the audience's fantasies about the multi-faceted, multi-talented 'Jade Girl'.

Another important aspect of Wai-ping is her identity as an adopted daughter. Like the Black Rose sisters, she was tragically abandoned by her biological parents, and yet she emerges triumphant through her unassuming goodness, perseverance and dedication. Not only does this story fulfil certain working-class fantasies, it also reminds audiences of Chan's real-life story: as a child, she was sent by her family to the house of opera stars, Chan Fai-nung and Kung Fan-hung, to become their adopted daughter. She then practiced Cantonese opera studiously before eventually achieving superstardom.

In addition to her phenomenal talents and skills, Wai-ping is also devoted to seeking vengeance for her father and ridding society of its ills. Beneath her fashionable exterior is a traditionalist core of filial piety, virtue, and altruism, befitting Chinese ideals regarding heroism and justice. Yet Chor Yuen, who very much perfected Jane Bond ideal in *Spy with My Face*, seeks to break new ground in *A Death Pass* (1967), sister picture to Lung To's *Girl Detective 001*.

A Death Pass is set in a haunted mansion where four lives have been

taken at the beginning of the film. The set-up is Chor Yuen's homage to his beloved Western mystery genre, but also an example of his insistence on putting his own creative spin on familiar elements. For two-thirds of the film, Chan is undercover as Ma Suk-yi, the mild-mannered daughter of a wealthy family. Not only does she not engage in any action scenes, she also never skulks around in her skintight stealth suit. Instead, the focus of the film lies in the mysteries of the great mansion itself.

Chor Yuen employs a series of innovative techniques to depict the sense of space in the mansion that is filled with surprises and death traps. The narrative structure also contributes to the foreboding mystery and creepiness of the atmosphere. The story begins with a murder committed by someone with a metal hook and a shot of a pair of shoes underneath the curtain. It then gradually lures the viewer further into a web of uncertainty and mystery: an enigmatic stranger at the cemetery, a strange corpse in the study, etc. The thrills of the film stem from classic tropes such as a locked room mystery, as well as the cinematography and the play on light and shadows. Music and sound effects also play a key role, such as the music box melody that acts as the musical cue for showing the aunt alone in her bedroom, looking terrified under the expressionist-style lighting. The scene hints at the character's mental illness, and also effectively evokes tension and terror in the audience — no doubt, heavily inspired by *Psycho* (1960).

The Westernised interiors of the wealthy daughter's mansion

help create a dreamlike space for the audience. In the first half of the film, Chan is a gentle, almost placid, 'Jade Girl' who is seemingly outwitted by all the clever entrapments of the mansion, to the extent that she begins to harbour doubts about the identities of her family members. Yet finally, when she reveals her true identity as Girl Detective 001 and showcases her martial and detective skills, the tables are turned swiftly.

Certain similarities exist between *A Death Pass* and *Black Rose*, such as how the villain only reveals himself in the final act of the films. Chan's girl detective is by no means an invincible superhero; she is an observer who witnesses the villain's self-destruction and tragic downfall. *A Death Pass* no longer dwells on the trendy fantasy of the Jane Bond character, or the strength and independence of modern femininity. Instead, it transforms that celebratory mood into a more somber tone of rueful sympathy for its villain. The film explores themes of crime and punishment, vengeance and forgiveness, that eventually culminate and evaporate in a great engulfing fire at the end. There is considerable ambition in the film's storytelling and its execution.

Sima Wah-lung in *The Female Chivalry* and Leung Sing-por in *A Death Pass* both play atypical characters rarely seen in Cantonese cinema. Both are pawns of fate,



楚原於《第一號女探員之死亡通行証》（1967）中利用不同場景細節營造出懸疑驚悚的氛圍。
A Death Pass (1967): By emphasising significant details in the mise en scène, Chor Yuen successfully manages to create a creepy atmosphere and build suspense.

tragic characters who cannot undo their mistakes. Despite their villainous actions, there is a hint of good in their characters, making them both despicable and pitiable.

Largely transplanted from the West, Jane Bonds exemplify justice, independence, strength, intelligence and beauty. Although they were imbued with the colourful and glamorous fantasies of the Westernised middle-class, Jane Bond films were at the same time embedded with shades of noir, and the ugliness, darkness, and imbalance of human nature. Thus, Jane Bonds' heroic actions also contained elements of satire and questions about the nature of human folly and crime. Are moral choices indeed as simplistic as those seemingly depicted on screen? Can moral situations be

resolved through heroines 'kicking ass' and subduing their adversaries? As Hong Kong stepped into the 1970s, urbanites began experiencing even knottier moral problems and ethical dilemmas. It is perhaps no mystery therefore why Jane Bond films vanished as quickly as they first appeared. [Translated by Rachel Ng] ■

Note

- 1 See Sam Ho, 'Licensed to Kick Men: The Jane Bond Films', in *The Restless Breed: Cantonese Stars of the Sixties* (The 20th Hong Kong International Film Festival Catalogue), Law Kar (ed.), Hong Kong: Hong Kong Urban Council, 1996, pp 34-46.

Thomas Shin, a veteran film critic and former Vice Chairman of Hong Kong Film Critics Society. His articles can be found on the website of Hong Kong Film Critics Society as well as in *Hong Kong Economic Journal*, *Ming Pao Weekly* and *HKinema*, etc.

For details of 'Archival Gems—Time After Time' and the post-screening talk of *A Death Pass*, which will be conducted by Sam Ho and Thomas Shin, please refer to the HKFA's website.

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尋珍記

回味銀幕上的經典電影情節，細嚼背後的搜集故事。

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