

From the Editor

Because of changes in the political situation, for a while, postwar Hong Kong was the destination of southbound migrants from various provinces of China. They came from different classes and professional backgrounds. Some regarded Hong Kong as a halfway station where they waited for the opportunity to move on to other places. Others ended up staying and taking roots in Hong Kong. They brought with them expertise, knowledge and visions, all of which contributed to the growth of various professions in Hong Kong, film among them.

The influence of southbound film workers on Hong Kong Mandarin and Cantonese cinemas is one of the key topics for local film researchers. In the 1950s, the Amoy-dialect film came to being to meet the demands of Fujian emigrants living in Southeast Asia. While the quality of these films leaves a lot to be desired, they bore traces of the Fujian culture, which, as a product of the special historical, spatial and temporal circumstances, are imbued with profound cultural meanings that deserve to be studied. Probably because of shortage of materials, however, local researchers have seldom paid attention to this page of Hong Kong film history. Of the 200-plus Amoy films produced in the decade or so after World War II, only an extreme minority was shown in Hong Kong. Accordingly, relatively scant documentation of these films exists locally. Moreover, with the passage of time, these films and materials are deeply buried under the sediments of history like a dinosaur, and are slowly fading from our memory.

The Hong Kong Film Archive has never forgotten this dinosaur. Long before the establishment of the Film Archive, Mr Yu Mo-wan, our first Research Officer, had already been collecting tirelessly materials on Hong Kong Amoy-dialect films and conducting extensive analyses of them. The results of his work are now collected in Volumes III and IV of his *Anecdotes of Hong Kong Cinema*. After the establishment of the Film Archive, he donated a large amount of the materials that he collected over the years, which laid the foundation for the section on Amoy film in Volumes III (2000) and IV (2003) of *The Hong Kong Filmography* published by the Film Archive. In 2007, Wong Ain-ling, then Research Officer, commissioned Mr Su Zhangkai, a researcher on Chaozhou- and Amoy-dialect films in Singapore, to collect data for future research and publications. Almost 10 years have now passed since the publication of Volume IV of *The Hong Kong Filmography*. The Film Archive has expanded its collection of related materials, including audiovisual items, special brochures, handbills and newspaper clippings.

However, all these are not sufficient for the publication of a relatively complete treatment of Amoy film. On the advice of Po Fung, the current Research Officer, we

decided to turn our gaze to Taiwan and the Philippines when we started this project. Thereupon, I went to the libraries of various universities in Hong Kong where I searched through *United Daily News* of Taiwan and *Chinese Commercial News* of the Philippines in storage. I obtained a large amount of information about the premieres of these films, and newspaper reports on Amoy cinema in general. With the newly acquired data, we were able to build upon the foundation of *The Hong Kong Filmography* and compile an Amoy-dialect filmography, which appears in the appendix in this book.

In commemoration of Mr Yu Mo-wan's pioneering contribution as a trailblazer in the study of Amoy film, we have reproduced his works on Amoy cinema here.

As for the articles, we have invited Professor Jeremy E. Taylor, whose *Rethinking Transnational Chinese Cinemas: The Amoy-dialect Film Industry in Cold War Asia* has recently come off the press, to write about the political and economic situations of Japanese-occupied Philippines, as well as the influence the policies of subsequent governments of that country had on the development of Amoy films produced in Hong Kong. From the perspective of 'community consciousness', Professor Yung Sai-shing investigates the collective experience and the question of identity in a number of 'New Amoy-dialect Films'. Mr Huang Jen writes about the interplay between Amoy- and Taiwanese-dialect films. Mr Su Zhangkai introduces a Singaporean–Malaysian angle in examining the 'South Seas Sentiments' in Amoy film materials. Mr Po Fung explores the transformations of Amoy-dialect film and its cinematic characteristics in the context of the development of Hong Kong cinema. Music being an indispensable element in Amoy film, we have invited Professor Wang Ying-fen, an expert of *nanguan* music in Taiwan, and Professor Yu Siu-wah to contribute to this volume. On the basis of available data, Professor Wang analyses the *nanguan* music in Amoy period dramas, while Professor Yu studies the interplay between music from different regions in contemporary Amoy films.

In addition, we have included the oral history interviews of four artists: Ms Lu Hong, known as 'The First Female Star' of Amoy-dialect film; Mr Wong Ching-ho, active both on and off screen; Ms Chong Sit Fong, famous for her musical and dancing skills; and Ms Ivy Ling Bo, who made more than 80 Amoy films in her early career. (Ms Ling Bo graciously granted us two interviews.) Furthermore, even though we had lost the chance to interview the deceased Ms Xiao Wen, we were able to get a glimpse of her experience through her pictures, which her son, Mr Wu Ende, donated to the Archive. Some of these capture scenes of *nanguan* musicians during demonstration sessions and film artists on their performing tours to the Philippines. They are now inserted in different sections of the book to allow readers to visualise the life in those bygone days. We are very grateful for the support of these artists and

their families.

We would hereby like to acknowledge Professors Jeremy E. Taylor and Yung Sai-shing for their valuable advice throughout the preparation of the book. Finally, we have to thank our colleagues at the Film Archive, especially Ms Vinci To. Our heartfelt gratitude to all of you.

May Ng

(Translated by Tam King-fai)