

Foreword

Amoy-dialect cinema is under-researched, if not absent altogether, in Hong Kong film studies. Since these dialect pictures were hardly ever released in Hong Kong, the fact that our city was once home to a prolific Amoy movie industry remains unknown to many. This unturned page of history however didn't escape the notice of the late Mr Yu Mo-wan, ex-Research Officer of the Hong Kong Film Archive, who gave an overview of Amoy cinema in his book, *Anecdotes of Hong Kong Cinema*. His continued call over the years for more attention to this subject has made him the vanguard in the study of this dialect cinema. Thanks to his painstaking efforts in gleaning relevant materials, first from all over Hong Kong, Guangzhou and finally from Singapore, the Film Archive has had in place a preliminary database of Amoy films.

Inspired by Mr Yu, Prof Yung Sai-shing from the National University of Singapore also called for more studies on Amoy cinema. Coincidentally, Su Zhangkai, a student of Prof Yung's, is a collector of Amoy film ephemera. The Film Archive thus invited Mr Su to gather related resources in Singapore, a task which Mr Su completed nicely. As well, he donated to us some precious collectables he had kept for years, which enriched our holdings and laid the groundwork for a more complete listing of Amoy films. At the same time, Prof Yung and Mr Su got hold of Chong Sit Fong, the Amoy star actress who had retired long ago. Our researcher Angel Shing went all the way to Singapore for an oral history interview with the veteran, which became a valuable piece of firsthand material for our work.

In Hong Kong, Amoy cinema has been little-studied but garnered more attention from scholars in other regions. Mr Huang Jen from Taiwan, for instance, has mentioned briefly some features about Amoy cinema in his volume on Taiwanese-dialect film, given the close ties between the two at one time. His focus, however, remains on Taiwanese-dialect cinema and his take on Amoy film cannot be considered thorough. Mr Hong Buren, an expert at Amoy literature and history, has also extended his interest to film and edited a book titled *A Century of Amoy Cinema*. Apart from visiting the Film Archive to look at our Amoy cinema collection, he has also interviewed many filmmakers concerned, such as Lu Hong, the female lead of Hong Kong's first ever Amoy film. His is an invaluable and insightful study regarding the birth of Amoy cinema. Dr Jeremy E. Taylor's *Rethinking Transnational Chinese Cinemas: The Amoy-dialect Film Industry in Cold War Asia* is the first volume in English dedicated to Amoy film. The author analyses how this regional cinema evolved into a collective cultural network for the Chinese diaspora in Southeast Asia in the broader context of the Cold War. His monograph provides some critical facts about Amoy cinema and a useful framework for further studies.

Ever since we started putting together this volume, *The Amoy-dialect Films of Hong Kong*, it has been our belief that a reliable filmography would be the basis for research efforts in the future. In the studies to date, mistakes were chiefly found in the release year of individual films. The newfound evidence we have on hand indicates that pre-existing filmographies call for revisions, especially the dates of theatrical release. Given that our data was still inadequate, May Ng, editor of this volume, sifted through old newspapers from Taiwan and the Philippines at several university libraries in Hong Kong. Although some unverifiable cases have rendered the filmography in the present volume not impeccable, it is safe to say that the information we have gathered is more detailed than ever.

By the time this volume was nearing completion and the Film Archive had announced screening details, we received a phone call from a lady, saying that actress Xiao Wen, as mentioned in the programme notes, is her boyfriend, Mr Wu's mother. We immediately contacted Mr Wu who brought us a huge cache of personal photos and movie stills, as well as other film items of his late mother. This came as a complete revelation.

But soon we were greeted by yet a bigger surprise. With Mr Hong Buren's kind assistance, we were finally put in touch with Ms Lu Hong when the editorial deadline was just a week away. After our interview with the veteran, we began to examine her film memorabilia piece by piece, ranging from newspaper clippings to publicity stills of her elder sister, fellow actress Lu Fen. We then alighted on the special brochure for the first Hong Kong-produced Amoy film, *A Belated Encounter*, a find so glorious as if there were a lustre on its surface! That moment, history unravelled right before our very eyes. Other than Ms Lu and Mr Hong, we must thank heavens for allowing this slice of history to be preserved on earth.

Film research is an ongoing process of discovery. Researchers take one step at a time and keep reviewing and revising what has been done. We hope that this volume would mark a new start, not the end, of the study of Amoy cinema. We also hope that more untapped resources would come to light following the release of this book, so that we may continue to forge ahead, bit by bit, with our future endeavours.

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(Translated by Elbe Lau)