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Special Focus: 'Time After Time'

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# 通訊

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08.2020



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## 《通訊》

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## Newsletter

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國際電影資料館聯盟成員  
A member of the  
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封面：《父之過》（1953）描繪細膩的兒童關係，不乏深度和思考空間。

Cover: *Blame It on Father* (1953) pays meticulous attention to peer relationships among children, making for a meaningful and thought-provoking film.

時光飛逝，香港電影資料館明年初便開館二十周年了，正密鑼緊鼓籌辦的一連串誌慶活動，先推出「瑰寶情尋——聲影『留』傳」。這批過往因菲林狀況問題多年來未能放映的四十至六十年代珍貴電影，在數碼化計劃下重現光芒。在開幕節目的座談會上，有觀眾將《父之過》（1953）視為她的「紀錄片」——片中場景、人倫，正正是她兒時的親身經歷！今天回看大半世紀前的作品，觀賞層次越顯豐富。

至於「瑰寶情尋——光影雙城」節目，何思穎寫本館在美國發現的上海片《掙扎》（1933），喬奕思寫香港片《宋家皇朝》（1997）和《半生緣》（1997）。從電影看藝術、看時代，當中的得著，期待在接下來進一步探索和正在安排的研討會中，與更多的同好分享。

疫情籠罩，原定今年的重頭回顧展「創意搖籃——德寶的童話」，推出了展覽和專書，放映環節卻無奈取消。「德寶源起」座談中，岑建勳、陳翹英、張婉婷、羅啟銳妙語如珠，哄堂不由得不時大笑，他們你一言我一語的默契，令人深深感受到這群熱愛創作的電影工作者，心意互通，一拍即合，才能成就傳世佳作。[clkwok@lcsd.gov.hk]

The Hong Kong Film Archive will be marking its 20th anniversary at the beginning of next year—how time flies! In celebration of this special occasion, a series of events are being planned and organised; the first of which is ‘Archival Gems—Time After Time’. This batch of invaluable films from the 1940s to 60s had not been screened for decades, due to their deteriorating condition. However, they have been given new life, thanks to the Archive’s new digitisation project. The programme started out with the opening screening of *Blame It on Father* (1953); during its seminar, an audience member praised the film as a ‘personal documentary’ for her, as its settings and character relationships were so true-to-life to her childhood experiences. Indeed, revisiting works from over half a century ago today can be particularly fascinating, as so many additional layers of meaning can be uncovered.

As for ‘Archival Gems—One Tale, Two Cinemas’, Sam Ho recounts the Archive’s discovery of the Shanghai film *Struggle* (1933) in the US; while Joyce Yang writes about the Hong Kong films *The Soong Sisters* (1997) and *Eighteen Springs* (1997). Cinema is a window to contemporary times and its art. We look forward to sharing further insights about such matters in our upcoming work and symposiums.

‘A Different Brilliance—The D & B Story’ was meant to be one of our headlining events of the year. Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the screening programme had to be cancelled, even though the accompanying exhibition and monograph have been released. Only one of the planned seminars, ‘How It Got Started’, has been held, and the others postponed. On this occasion, speakers John Sham, Chan Kiu-ying, Mabel Cheung and Alex Law delighted the room with their witticisms and insights. Their amusing banter hints at a level of chemistry and trust shared between these former teammates, and one cannot help but feel that these filmmakers’ passion for creative work, their camaraderie and shared vision, were key to the timeless classics that they created together. [clkwok@lcsd.gov.hk]

鳴謝：只令發行有限公司、邵氏影城香港有限公司、星空華文傳媒電影有限公司、動感電影有限公司、港僑影業公司、電視廣播有限公司、雷鳴（國際）電影貿易公司、嘉樂影片發行有限公司、橙天嘉禾娛樂（集團）有限公司、方創傑先生、岑建勳先生、何思穎先生、張婉婷女士、陳冠中先生、陳翹英先生、舒琪先生、喬奕思女士、登徒先生、馮秉仲先生、黃家禧先生、潘潔汶女士、羅啟銳先生

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本刊所載文章內容為個別作者的觀點，並不代表香港電影資料館的立場。

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.

# 《父之過》及《雷雨》的聲影藝

## ——舒琪、何思穎對談

Critics' Dialogue:

Shu Kei and Sam Ho on  
*Blame It on Father and Thunderstorm*

日期：2020年7月5日

Date: 5 July 2020

地點：香港電影資料館電影院

Venue: Cinema, Hong Kong Film Archive

講者：舒琪（舒）、何思穎（何）

Speakers: Shu Kei (Shu), Sam Ho (Ho)

整理：劉綽穎

Collated by Christie Lau



香港電影資料館的館藏數碼化計劃，不但將一些只存孤本或菲林狀況欠佳的電影重現觀眾眼前，更成就了本館二十周年第一項誌慶節目——「瑰寶情尋——聲影『留』傳」。節目分為多個系列放映，適逢今年為功夫巨星李小龍誕辰八十周年，遂以「李小龍系列」打響頭炮，率先放映《父之過》（1953）和《雷雨》（1957），並邀來電影研究者舒琪和何思穎於放映後對談，分析這兩部作品的藝術成就和時代意義。

### 從李小龍看香港發展

何：李小龍在香港以至世界影壇的位置舉足輕重，改寫了全世界的表演藝術方式。他在七十年代拍的功夫片很原始，擁有如野獸的活力。當我們回顧李小龍此前的電影演出，更會發現他演技出色。看過《父之過》和《雷雨》的觀眾，相信會覺得他在這兩部片中的演繹方式非常不同，但他仍然輕鬆駕馭，可見其演戲造詣。出自畢卡索的西方諺語謂：「Learn the rules to break the rules」，對絕大部分藝術創作者而言，要打破成規，必先學習和掌握成規。李小龍在七十年代拍的功夫片，為世界電影的表演方式帶來革命性的改變。其實他早於五、六十年代拍的多部電影中，已掌握了表演藝術的基礎。這在《父之過》和《雷雨》完全能看到。《雷雨》的他是個十多歲的少年，家境富裕，穿「中山裝」，梳「蛋撻頭」，眉清目秀，在優越環境下成長，但僅僅四年前的《父之過》，他演的卻是「爛仔」、「小惡霸」。兩部片中的角色，完全捕捉到香港兒童和少年的兩種極端。

舒：李小龍的演藝生涯富象徵意義，是香港身份不斷發展和成長的縮影，當中包含中國傳統及西方的影響，並分別 embody（體現）在他對武術和舞蹈的熱衷。李小龍自小習武，接受詠春訓練，早期多演街頭少年或低下階層人物，除了《父之過》外，還有《危樓春曉》（1953）、《孤星血淚》（1955）等。他穿的戲服都是破破爛爛的，卻喜歡在胸口開個大破洞，讓觀眾看到他雖然年輕，卻已有胸肌！這是 embodiment（體現），對形體藝術的追求。此外，李小龍熱愛跳 cha-cha（恰恰舞），他在《人海孤鴻》（1960）中的反叛少年形象更有著占士甸的影子。後來，他離港放洋，成為武術家，將哲學融會貫通，悟出一套獨當一面的截拳道，並於回港後將這套武術哲學在電影中宣揚和實踐。李小龍可說是第一位得到全球認可和認識的華人演員，他的經歷與香港十分相似。香港擁有一段光榮的歷史，在西方文化的影響下，試圖擺脫自身血液上的中國文化傳統，慢慢摸索如何體現自我，並不斷向世界宣告，我們並不渺小，能夠在文化、影像和創

意方面，引領世界。這種香港的驕傲，套回李小龍身上，確是個有趣的現象。

### 《父之過》反映的兒童教育與童星形象

何：雖然《父之過》的說教意味濃厚，但對社會及人倫關係有非常精彩的觀察，反映了培育孩子要在多方面配合。第一，父母。戲中的「父之過」明確地指向「父母之過」。父母要在家中為孩子樹立榜樣，讓他們於待人處事上有正確發展。另一方面是學校教育。學校除了教授知識，更要灌輸



何思穎（左）與舒琪（右）  
Sam Ho (left) and Shu Kei (right)

## 《父之過》(1953)

Blame It on Father (1953)



對社會及人倫關係有非常精彩的觀察。

The film is a brilliant observation of society and human relationships.



歌頌童心和兒童的生命力，是個無拘無束的「另類烏托邦」。

It also celebrates the innocence, vitality and care-free spirits of children, which represent an alternative utopian vision.



那種個體與群體的複雜關係，從母親的角色表達了出來，但她在片中是被醜化、被妖魔化的角色。

The film demonises the mother character, and through her, explores the complex relationships between an individual and society.

道德和價值觀，與父母裡應外合。再者是宗教。片中華仔（蔣桂林飾）與阿啤（小麒麟飾）受高僧啟發，道出宗教的意義是導人向善，對兒童有教化作用。此外，電影也提及文學與普及文化的影響，前者以《西遊記》作代表，後者則是「公仔書」，兩者形成有趣的對比，發人深省。為甚麼《西遊記》是經典文學，但「公仔書」卻被視為無益的消遣呢？如果我們將這種心態套用於今天的科幻電影或是八十年代的《倩女幽魂》（1987），這些同樣神怪的題材又有益與否？然後就是法律，李小龍飾演的大眼狗最終被警察拘捕，要他上法庭接受審判。他的遭遇正好說明忽視兒童教育的後果——賠上兒童前途以及受到法律制裁。

舒：《父之過》是一部兒童電影，主要角色都是小孩，更網羅了不少重要的童星，這正是它最大的特色。它可能受到美國在1922至1944年十分流行的電視劇集《The Little Rascals》——也全部由童星擔演——的影響。除李小龍外，片中經常跟他打架的小麒麟正是他在香港時最要好的朋友。後來李小龍從美國回港後拍的功夫片，小麒麟更不時擔當重要角色，同樣獨當一面。在同期粵語片經常出現、表演能力亦相當高的童星，還有在片中飾演華仔的蔣桂林。他是粵語片綠葉女演員梁淑卿的兒子。至於飾演大姐的龐碧雲，之後則成為麗的電視的當家花旦，亦是十分出色的新聞報道員。

何：《父之過》是繼戰前的《小英雄》

（1940）後，第二部以兒童擔綱主演的香港電影。你提及兒童演員這回事，我覺得很有趣。比較五十年代的蔣桂林和六十年代的馮寶寶，兩者的可愛之處可謂截然不同。被譽為「東方莎莉譚寶」的馮寶寶，以乖巧活潑的造型吸引觀眾，是個與世無爭而不受社會問題影響的兒童。至於蔣桂林的可愛則來自他模仿大人時的戲劇效果。從童星的形象發展，我們也可窺看香港社會對兒童期望的改變。

### 《父之過》中的女性形象

何：《父之過》的第一個鏡頭，龐碧雲已出現。她當年已是個有點名氣的童星，在片中唱了一首歌，亦有不少戲分。可是，她的角色在電影敘事中並不重要，因為片中的重要角色都由男孩扮演。我們可從她的角色看到中國傳統文化對女性的不公平對待。她飾演的大姐要照顧家中的大小事務，每逢有事故發生，她都要受罰。她還只是個小女孩啊！當大家都在玩捉迷藏時，她也會問：「可讓我加入一起玩嗎？」片末，當小麒麟說想唸書，她也附和道：「我也想讀書呀。」這句對白充滿辛酸。原來她一直想讀書，但沒法在照顧所有人的同時分暇做到，她簡直當上了母親的角色。但另一方面，片中的母親卻很不負責任，她好像只會打牌而不照顧小孩，又隨便打兒女，忽略家庭。我覺得這種人物塑造帶有性別歧視的目光，將女性醜化。

舒：龐碧雲的角色完全反映了中國一直以來重男輕女的傳統意識形態。片

中的孩子雖然已是戰後一代，但也無法逃脫舊社會的制肘。龐碧雲的「大姐姐」形象相當突出，也充分說明當時的女性不論作為姊妹，還是排行中間的女兒，都要擔當第二個母親的角色，要照顧弟弟，甚至要服侍大哥，destined to（注定）要為家庭作出無止境的犧牲。片中的龐碧雲擔當了許多責任，既要 baby-sit 小孩們（當保姆），又要掃地、幫媽媽買東西，買不到又會捱罵。五、六十年代的粵語片中，這種含辛茹苦的「大姐姐」角色比比皆是，直至今日仍未完全擺脫。重男輕女真可謂傳統華人社會文化中很不幸的意識形態。即使在經濟環境許可下，母親可以擺脫家務，但當她追求個人物質或官能上的歡愉時，她就會被妖魔化成放棄教導兒女的責任、脾氣惡劣而不稱職的母親。片中的母親正好反映了中國傳統對女性歧視和輕視的心理，而這種對女性要擔當賢妻良母的期望，時至今日仍保留著。到了八十年代，方育平導演的《父子情》（1981）裡也有這樣的描寫。

何：看《父之過》時，我不禁想起「媳婦熬成婆」這句話。你剛進門時當媳婦，被婆婆欺負，到你終於熬完，你就會變成當日的婆婆了。這會否演變成「女兒熬成母」？龐碧雲的長女角色被媽媽如此對待，當她成為媽媽時，會否也一樣？這是值得思考的問題。

### 《雷雨》中的戲劇衝突

舒：《雷雨》說的是上一代摧殘下一代造成的惡果，從中突出下一代的情

慾，包括雙重的亂倫關係，例如周萍與繁漪道德上的亂倫，以及周萍與四鳳肉體上真正的亂倫。片中只有李小龍切合他角色（周冲）的年齡，而在一班演技老練的演員中，由他成為最終犧牲者的角色，可說是最具說服力的選角，觀眾完全體會到周冲那種青澀和無辜——入世未深卻承受了上一代的罪孽，最終觸電而死，令人惋惜和痛心。

何：也有人說繁漪是《雷雨》中最有力和最複雜的角色。我認為她代表了很多東西，除了女性對性和愛的追求，還有所謂的傳統家庭觀念。她和周萍沒有血緣關係，所以發生感情其實是沒問題的，不過因為她是母親，周萍是兒子，即使血緣上沒亂倫，也是名份上的亂倫，挑戰和反思由人訂立的道德規範。此片雖表達了對傳統和封建思想的反感，但對文明進步也有入木三分的批判。四鳳和周冲致命的原因正是雷雨和電。雷雨是自然的，電力則是現代科技的發明。那種致命的破壞是天然與人造的配合。我不知道這是否劇作者曹禺的刻意設計，但作為藝術家，他對文明和科技發展必有銳利的觸覺，早已看到當中的殺傷力。

## 兩片的藝術成就

舒：《雷雨》是華僑電影企業公司的創業作，起用的班底經歷過中聯時期的發展，幾乎已到了最高峰，因此台前幕後的組合可說是到了最成熟的層次，非常了不起。此片改編自曹禺的原著，而曹禺雖是具野心的戲

劇家，但他的藝術層次仍是有爭議的，例如這套劇沿用了典型的通俗劇（melodrama）形式，但他明顯想將其提升至希臘悲劇的形式。不過，他是否真的成功呢？這點值得商榷，我個人覺得還是差一點。吳回的演繹和改編十分忠於原著，反而限制了劇情的潛力，他無疑也企圖將通俗劇這種形式推到更高的層次，這方面，影片的影像、場面調度、美術、佈景設計、演員表現等，確實把結局提升到一個很高的爆炸點，看得人心如刀割。

何：至於《父之過》一眾演員的演出或許誇張了一點。但我必須一提，許多香港電影的表演方式是由粵劇承傳下來的，那種功架式的演出會稍為誇張。李小龍是李海泉的兒子，剛出道拍戲時被人稱作「新李海泉」或是「小李海泉」。片中李小龍飾演的大眼狗與其他小孩打架後，除了做出拇指摸鼻的招牌手勢，更會哼唱數句〈打劫陰司路〉，那是他爸爸李海泉的首本戲，而我猜這甚至是他的即興表演。他承傳的粵劇元素包含京劇的「打北派」，影響及至香港往後的武俠片發展，體現中西、新舊和南北的磨合。

舒：粵劇是香港早期的主要娛樂，特別是在五、六十年代，因此當時的粵語片，不論在表演形式，或是台前幕後的工作人員，很多都來自粵劇界。大眼狗欺負別人後，竟以老氣橫秋的腔調哼唱幾句粵劇戲曲，看似有點突兀，但當你知他在模仿他爸爸時，你便能理解了。這種藝術承傳是香港十分本土的一部分。■



《雷雨》（1957）：台前幕後的組合，可說是達到最成熟的表現，結尾的那份衝擊力，教人心如刀割。  
*Thunderstorm* (1957): The film is a mature work which gathers the best cast and crew available. Its emotionally impactful ending cuts like a knife.

The digitisation project of the HKFA collection brings films with sole existing copies or prints in unsatisfactory conditions once more to an audience. The project also paves the way for the first event of the Archive's 20th Anniversary celebration: 'Archival Gems—Time After Time'. The event is made up of numerous film series. Since this year is also the 80th anniversary of Bruce Lee's birth, two early Bruce Lee films *Blame It on Father* (1953) and *Thunderstorm* (1957) kicked off the event. Film critics Shu Kei and Sam Ho conducted a post-screening talk to analyse the artistic achievements of the two works as well as their significance in the period.

## Embodying Hong Kong's Continuous Development

Ho: Bruce Lee holds a special place in Hong Kong as well as world cinema. Emanating a primitive, beast-like energy that went against established modes, his acting in those kung fu films in the 1970s redefined the art of film performance. Yet, looking at his films of the 1950s and early 60s, it is obvious that he was a good actor in the conventional sense. We had just watched *Blame It on Father* and *Thunderstorm*. I believe most of the audience will find his acting styles in the two films very different. But he managed to maintain control over both, putting the range of his acting skills on display. There is a saying that originated from the painter Picasso, 'learn the rules to break the rules', which can be applied to most artists. Bruce Lee's kung fu films of the 1970s might have revolutionised performance styles on an international scale, but in the many films of his child-actor days, we can see that he already had a firm grasp of basic acting techniques, which is apparent in both *Blame It on Father* and *Thunderstorm*. In *Thunderstorm* he played a teenager from a rich family, wearing a Chinese-style *Zhongshan* suit, with slicked-back hair and looking quite handsome, a tender-hearted lad of gentle disposition. But four years earlier, in *Blame It on Father*, he



片中李小龍(右)情竇初開,開始有了性的啟蒙,衝動得要娶這個女子(左:梅綺),但是傳統父權的壓抑,使他承受了上一代的罪孽成為犧牲者。

The character played by Bruce Lee (right) has an awakened interest in the opposite gender, and out of impulse, wants to marry the girl (left: played by Mui Yee) of his choice. A victim of the traditional patriarchal society, he bears the sins of his father's generation.



導演吳回充分利用空間設計,安排得十分有張力。

Director Ng Wui uses set design to enhance the narrative and manipulates the tension in his film skilfully.

played a street thug, a bully. Those roles capture the two extremes of Hong Kong's juvenile condition.

**Shu:** Bruce Lee's acting career is full of symbolic meaning. It is a microcosm of the continuous development and growth of Hong Kong's identity. Chinese tradition and western influences are embodied in his passions for martial arts and dance. Bruce Lee had received martial arts training in wing chun since childhood. In his early days he often portrayed street kids or people of the lower social classes. In addition to *Blame It on Father*, other films include *In the Face of Demolition* (1953) and *An Orphan's Tragedy* (1955). His costumes for those roles were rags, but they always had a big hole in the chest area, so the audience could see that although he was a child, he had a muscular chest! This is the pursuit of embodiment, the art of physical shape. In terms of western influences, Bruce Lee loved to dance the cha-cha. In *The Orphan* (1960), his image of the rebellious young man resembled that of James Dean. He later went overseas to the west, where he became a martial artist. Combining martial arts with his mastery of philosophy, he developed the unique art of Jeet Kune Do. After

his return to Hong Kong, he practiced and promoted this school of martial arts philosophy in his films. It can be said that Bruce Lee is the first actor of Chinese descent to be known and accepted globally. His experience is very similar to that of Hong Kong. Hong Kong has a glorious history. Under western influences, it tried to rise above the shackles of traditional Chinese culture flowing in its blood, slowly exploring the way to self-embodiment, while always telling the world that it is not small, and can lead the world in culture, images and creativity. This kind of Hong Kong pride, when applied to Bruce Lee's career, definitely provides an interesting parallel.

### **Blame It on Father Reflects Children's Education and the Phenomenon of Child Stars**

**Ho:** *Blame It on Father* is rather preachy in its eagerness to promote better education for children. Yet its observations on society and human relationships are very perceptive, even sophisticated, illustrating the complexities of child rearing. First, the parents. The film's title clearly puts the burden on the father and the mother, expanding the scope of the 'father' in the Confucian teaching to include both parents. They must

set good examples to foster proper development of their children. Next comes education. Schools, in addition to imparting knowledge, must also include the teaching of morals and values in their agenda, working in conjunction with the parents. Another factor is religion. The kids Wah and Ah B are inspired by a monk, underscoring the role of spiritual beliefs in guiding children towards goodness. The film also calls attention to the effects of literature and popular culture, the former represented by the classic novel *Journey to the West* and the latter comic books. This is interesting. Why is *Journey to the West* considered a classic but comic books are dismissed as mindless or even harmful entertainment? Not unlike today's sci-fi films or the Hong Kong classic *A Chinese Ghost Story* (1987), those comic books are stories of supernatural adventures that can promote or even cultivate imagination. Then there is the law. Big-eyed Dog, Bruce Lee's character, is eventually arrested by the police and will be tried in court. His is a cautionary example of neglecting children's education, futures compromised, perhaps even getting on the wrong side of the law.

**Shu:** *Blame It on Father* is a children's film. All the main characters are children. They cast a lot of important

child stars of the day. That is its greatest characteristic. It may have been influenced by an extremely popular American television series *The Little Rascals* (1922-1944), in which all the main characters were also played by child actors. In addition to Bruce Lee, there was Siu Kei Lun (aka Little Unicorn), who always fought with him in the film and was Lee's best friend in Hong Kong. When Bruce Lee returned to Hong Kong to make his kung fu films, Siu Kei Lun was often cast in key roles and did an outstanding job. Another in the cast who had also acted in numerous other films of the time and whose acting ability was tremendous was Chiang Kwai-lam, who played Wah in the film. He was the son of Leung Suk-hing, a Cantonese film supporting actress. As for Pong Bik-wan, who played Big Sister, she became the main female star of Rediffusion Television (RTV). She was also an outstanding news anchorwoman.

**Ho:** *Blame It on Father* is the second Hong Kong film—after the pre-war *The Little Hero* (1940)—where children play the lead roles. It's interesting that you mentioned child actors. When we compare Chiang Kwai-lam of the 1950s to Fung Bo-bo of the 1960s, the cuteness that define them are so different. Fung, nicknamed 'Oriental Shirley Temple', captured the audience with sparkling charm and bubbly vigour: an innocent child unspoiled by the world, free of societal problems. But Chiang's charm comes from the dramatic effect of imitating adults, a cute version of grownups. From the differences in images projected by child stars, we can have some idea of the changes in social expectations of children.

### Women's Images in *Blame It on Father*

**Ho:** Pong Bik-wan was already quite famous at the time. She is in the very first shot of *Blame It on Father*, appearing throughout the film with lots of screen time. She is even featured

in a singing scene, a sign of her stardom. Yet her role is not important in the narrative context, because all the key roles are played by boys. Her role is in fact a vivid demonstration of gender inequality in traditional Chinese culture. The Big Sister she plays has to take care of all things major and minor in the household. She is blamed and punished for anything that goes wrong. And she is just a little girl! When the other children are playing hide-and-seek, she asks of the younger kids: 'can I play?' And at the end of the film, when Siu Kei Lun's character said he wants to go to school, she chimes in: 'I want to go to school, too.' That line of dialogue is loaded heavy with heartache. She had always wanted to study in school but couldn't, because she had to take care of everyone and everything. She had taken on a mother's duties. On the other hand, the mother in the film is very irresponsible, devoted only to playing mahjong, never assuming a mother's responsibility. She beats her children for no reason and neglects the needs of her family. This character design is quite sexist.

**Shu:** Pong Bik-wan's role completely reflects the traditional Chinese ideology that males are important and females are not, a way of thought that still exists today. Although the children in the film are in the post-war era, they have yet to escape the shackles of the old society. The image of Pong Bik-wan's Big Sister is very striking, and makes it very clear that women of the day, whether they are eldest sisters or middle daughters, would have to take on the role of a second mother, taking care of their younger brothers and even serving their elder brothers. They are destined to make boundless sacrifices for their families. The character played by Pong Bik-wan shoulders many responsibilities: she must baby-sit the siblings, sweep the floors, do the mother's shopping and be told off when she failed to buy those things. In the Cantonese films of the 1950s and 60s, those 'Big Sister' roles were

everywhere. To this day, they still exist. The ideology that males are superior to females is a very unfortunate part of traditional Chinese societal culture. Even when the economic conditions allow a mother to be freed from housework, whenever she indulges in personal, material or sensory pleasure, she would be demonised as an incompetent mother, a short-tempered shrew who abandons the responsibility of teaching her children. The mother character in the film reflects the traditional Chinese psychology of discrimination against and disdain towards women. This expectation that all women must take on the duty of a good wife and mother still exists today. Even in the 1980s, Allen Fong's film *Father and Son* (1981) contains that same description.

**Ho:** Watching *Blame It on Father*, a Chinese saying pops into my mind: 'After enduring hardship, daughter-in-law becomes mother-in-law'. When you first marry into the family as a daughter-in-law, you are bullied by your mother-in-law; after years of hardship, you become a mother-in-law and you repeat the bullying. A vicious cycle. Would this situation become 'After enduring hardship, daughter becomes mother'? Pong Bik-wan's character is mistreated by her mother; when she herself becomes a mother, would she break up the circle? This is worthy of contemplation.

### Dramatic Conflict in *Thunderstorm*

**Shu:** *Thunderstorm* is about what happens when the previous generation destroys the next generation, highlighting the next generation's lust, including double incest. For example, the morally incestuous relationship between Chow Ping and Fan-ye, and the physical, real incest between Chow Ping and Sei-fung. In the film, only Bruce Lee is in the same age range as his character (Chow Chung), and among the cast of veteran actors, it can be said that the fact that his



《父之過》（1953）：龐碧雲（左一）的角色完全反映了中國歷代固有，甚至是香港五十年代初期仍盛行的重男輕女意識形態。

*Blame It on Father* (1953): The character played by Pong Bik-wan (1st left) represents the long-standing Chinese feudal idea of regarding men as superior to women, which still prevailed in the early 1950s Hong Kong.

character became the ultimate victim is the most convincing casting choice. The audience can completely relate to Chow Chung's innocence and youthful haplessness. Though just a child, he is burdened with the sins of the previous generation. In the end he is electrocuted to death, evoking the audience's pity and heartache.

**Ho:** Some say Fan-ye is *Thunderstorm's* strongest and most complex character. I think she represents a lot of things: not only a woman's pursuit of sex and love, but also the issue of traditional family concept. She is not related to Chow Ping by blood, so it is actually alright if they have feelings for each other. But because she is the mother and Chow Ping the son, their affair is considered—incest in name though not in physical terms. It is a challenge to man-made moral boundaries. Also, though the film is known for its questioning of traditions and feudalistic practices, it also packs powerful but subtle criticism of progress in modern civilisation. The death of Sei-fung and Chow Chung are caused by thunderstorm and electricity. Thunderstorm is a natural phenomenon but the electricity is man-made, an invention of modern technology. That lethal destruction to the family is a combination of natural and man-made undertakings. I don't

know if this is playwright Cao Yu's intention, but as an artist he at the very least had an acute awareness of the damages that can be wrought by civilisation and technological development; he might have sensed the mortal dangers of progress.

### The Artistic Achievements of Both Films

**Shu:** *Thunderstorm* is the first film of Overseas Chinese Films. The cast and crew had worked together at, and had their skills honed by, The Union Film Enterprise Ltd and was considered to be in peak condition. It can be said that the collaboration between those in front of and behind the cameras was at its most mature possible—an amazing feat. This film was adapted from Cao Yu's original play. As a playwright, Cao is ambitious, but his artistic merit is a subject of debate. For example, the play is in the typical, more colloquial melodrama style, yet it is obvious that he was trying to elevate it to the level of a Greek tragedy. But was he really successful? This is a point worth discussing. I personally think it is somewhat lacking. Ng Wui's interpretation and adaptation is very faithful to the original, which turns out to limit its plot development potential. Doubtlessly, he also wanted to elevate this melodramatic style to a higher

level. To this end, various elements such as the cinematographic images, mise en scène, art direction, set design and actor performances worked to push the ending to a very high climactic explosion point that is heart-wrenching to watch.

**Ho:** The performances in *Blame It on Father* may be a little too theatrical, but I must bring up a point. In Hong Kong cinema, the performance style is largely passed down from Cantonese opera. That acting style emphasises *gongjia* (feats) and can come across as exaggerated on film. We must not evaluate Hong Kong film acting with western cinematic notions. Bruce Lee is the son of Cantonese opera star Lee Hoi-chuen and was nicknamed 'New Lee Hoi-chuen' or 'Little Lee Hoi-chuen' when he first started acting. In this film, after Bruce Lee's character Big-eyed Dog fights with the other kids, not only would he make his signature move of rubbing his nose with his thumb, which comes from *The Kid* (1950), he would also hum a few measures of 'Robbing the Road to the Afterlife'. That was his father's signature aria, and I like to think it's a spontaneous improvisation! He had inherited Cantonese opera's 'northern acrobatics' tradition—so named because it came from Peking opera up north—which went on to inform the development of Hong Kong martial arts films. Lee's 1970s kung fu films take off from that. His art is an embodiment of east and west, new and old, south and north.

**Shu:** Cantonese opera was a main form of entertainment in Hong Kong in the 1950s and 60s. Therefore, Cantonese films of the time, whether in performance style or cast and crew, were mostly drawn from the world of Cantonese opera. After Big-eyed Dog bullied other kids, he would hum a Cantonese opera song. This seems a bit incongruous and too mature for his age, but when you realise he is imitating his father, you can understand why. This kind of passing on of art has become a part of very local Hong Kong tradition. [Translated by Roberta Chin] ■



# 從菲林到數碼： 「瑰寶情尋——聲影『留』傳」策展分享

## From Film to Digital: 'Archival Gems — Time After Time' to Celebrate Work of Preservation

潘潔汶 Poon Kit-man

從默片到有聲，從黑白到彩色，從菲林到數碼，電影產業一直隨科技發展改變生態。菲林不再是電影攝製、放映的主流，昔日流光飛舞的拷貝只能靜默在倉庫。然而數碼科技並非全然汰舊換新，近年菲林數碼化成為電影保育的重要途徑，讓膠片上的動態影像再度躍動起來，以新形態保存我們珍貴的歷史、藝術、文化。

香港電影資料館致力搜集、保存、推廣香港電影，在 2019 至 20 年度財政預算案獲撥款二千萬元，冀於五年內數碼化 150 部館藏電影。資料館設置恆溫恆濕的冷藏倉庫保存電影菲林，為何仍須數碼化？修復組二級助理館長羅宇青解釋，香港位於亞熱帶地區，氣候炎熱潮濕，電影菲林在本館搜集得來之前已逐漸變壞，一旦變質便不能逆轉，即使之後妥善保存，只能減慢變壞速度。再者，世界各地戲院陸續改用數碼放映器材，菲林放映機經已停產，終有一天本館亦可能無法播放菲林電影。菲林數碼化實在分秒必爭，好讓影像與聲音轉換至另一載體記錄及保存下來，有助本館繼續推廣香港電影予本地及海外觀眾，亦能為日後電影修復工作鋪路。

館藏電影逾四千部，如何釐定選片和排列次序的準則？逼切性和稀有性是兩大先決條件。本館當務之急，是拯救瀕危的早期電影，越久遠的菲林大多變壞變質越嚴重，如《孟麗

君》(1949)、《玉龍癡鳳》(又名《怪錯有情郎》，1951)和《龍舟祥》(1952)都列入首批處理的電影。是次數碼化計劃亦以孤本為先；過往為減低菲林因放映而耗損的風險，館內只存孤本的經典佳作無緣與觀眾見面。李小龍童星作品《父之過》(1953)便是因菲林收縮度過高，多年來未能在過往回顧展中放映，現在終於重現銀幕。



《黃飛鴻戲棚伏虎》(1959)：黃飛鴻(中：關德興)與徒弟們的互動，趣事多羅雜。

*How Wong Fei-hung Defeated the Tiger on the Opera Stage (1959): Many comic moments are created out of Wong Fei-hung's (middle; played by Kwan Tak-hing) interactions with his mischievous disciples.*



《龍舟祥》（1952）：社會仍百廢待舉，貧苦大眾相濡以沫，「只望一歌龍舟，將叻世人心改」，悲而不苦，祥哥（前：新馬師曾）唱得感人肺腑。

*Cheung, the Dragon Boatman (1952):* Bad times have fallen, but the downtrodden still strive to help and support each other: 'Only hoping that this Dragon Boat song / Will help transform the heart of humanity.' Sad but not bitter, Brother Cheung's (front: Sun Ma Si-tsang) rendition is absolutely moving.



《黑蝴蝶》（1960）：俠盜鳳姑娘（劉亮華）屢屢偏向虎山行，與導演羅維兼演的狡詐惡霸，誓不兩立，編劇張徹巧妙地藉著鳳父誓保英名做成的心理關口，將單純的正邪對決添上突變。

*Black Butterfly (1960):* Fung (played by Lau Leung-wah), a fearless Chinese Robin Hood, engages time and again in clashes with her sly and overbearing opponent played by director Lo Wei. Screenwriter Chang Cheh adroitly portrays Fung's father as a righteous veteran detective, and this complex relationship elevates the film above a simple conflict between good and evil.



《孟麗君》（1949）：孟麗君（周坤玲）才貌雙全，足智多謀，兼且無懼風流天子（薛覺先）糾纏，全片撲朔於「君是男是女」，到底顯真我本色。

*The Ancient Beauty, Mang Lai-kwun (1949):* Witty, talented and beautiful, Mang Lai-kwun's (played by Chow Kwun-ling) mysterious, androgynous charms are perplexing as they are beguiling. She defies the emperor's (played by Sit Kok-sin) romantic overtures, boldly revealing her true self.

者填補缺失內容。另外，16 毫米拷貝通常從 35 毫米素材縮印而成，麟點、刮痕會在放映時更為明顯，加上首批數碼化的 16 毫米拷貝從前放映遺留下的耗損較為嚴重，有賴修復組人員花費大量時間和工夫修補才能掃瞄。

是次數碼化計劃成就了資料館二十周年第一項誌慶節目「瑰寶情尋——聲影『留』傳」，選映 16 部橫跨四十至六十年代國、粵語片，全部經數碼化得以「保留」、「傳揚」下去。本節目分為八個主題，拼湊出多彩多姿的香港電影文化。李小龍系列正好紀念這位國際功夫巨星誕辰八十周年，展現他年少時的演員魅力。兩部由關德興主演的黃飛鴻電影呈現定型期的模式，《黃飛鴻大鬧鳳凰崗》（1958）以伊士曼七彩拍攝醒獅會金龍一幕尤其精彩。新馬師曾系列均是五十年代初的時裝歌唱喜劇，可見他在「兩傻」之前已發揮伶人和笑匠的才能。坤生乾旦系列兩片均是彌足珍貴的粵劇電影，無論是周坤玲首次穿

起男裝，抑或陳非儂展現幾近絕跡的男花旦風采，都彰顯粵劇世界的性別流動性。楊工良系列印證這位鬼才導演的《夜半歌聲》（1937）情意結，亦反映其自編自導自演的天賦。艷星劉亮華在當時丈夫羅維執導的兩部作品中飾演間諜和女賊，一改從前的肉彈形象。曹達華系列正好說明先後在五、六十年代的武俠片和間諜片風潮下，鐵漢本色不變。珍姐邦系列是結合玉女與占士邦的粵語片獨有片種，《玉女金剛》（1967）更記錄陳寶珠殺人的少有場面。

節目組一級助理館長陳彩玉表示，策劃本節目時遇上的新挑戰，在於過往籌備節目通常是先定主題後選影片，今次則是從首批數碼化的 30 部影片，嘗試歸納主題，讓觀眾較有系統地認識香港電影。每部電影的語言、類型、幕前幕後班底不同，大大增加設定主題的難度。再者，部分影片具備粵劇元素，策劃過程中必須加倍認識此另一藝術媒介。如李小龍在

《父之過》模仿父親李海泉的豆沙喉，感謝阮兆輝教授指點曲詞出自這位名丑生的首本戲《打劫陰司路》；而《龍舟祥》則引領大家瞭解「龍舟」這一嶺南曲藝。《血戰摩天嶺》（上、下集，1953）上映年份成謎，直至影片數碼化後獲得更多影片資料，節目組再翻查報章廣告核對，才能確定該片於 1953 年首映，而非網上流傳的 1962 年（此為重映年份）。

本節目為了加深觀眾對菲林及數碼化的瞭解，在第 98 期《展影》的影片介紹中加入原片資料，修復組和節目組人員亦會在放映前淺談影片來源、片質及特別之處。有別於過往「瑰寶情尋」節目安排，映後談由放映當日兩片之間舉行，改為兩片之後，希望觀眾看罷每個系列與我們一同分享、討論。■

#### 註釋

- 1 菲林數碼化並不等於數碼修復，前者是把菲林上的影像和聲音轉為數碼檔案，並存放在現代數碼媒體，作長期保存及放映用途；後者是使用高端數碼影音工作站把已經數碼化的電影作改善影音質量處理。菲林數碼化後的初步修復，畫面經除塵、除污漬，能改善較明顯的瑕疵。而全面的數碼修復則需時約一年，資料館的修復方針是去除所有因菲林變壞或損壞導致的影音問題，如刮痕、污漬、灰塵、影像閃爍等，把原有的內容忠實還原，盡量呈現當年公映的模樣，但畫面上原有的瑕疵，例如因打燈不足導致影像太暗等，則不會被修正，因此經修復的舊電影並不會看似全新拍攝版。

潘潔汶為香港電影資料館節目組項目研究員

「瑰寶情尋——聲影『留』傳」節目詳情參見《展影》（第 98 期）或本館網頁。



修復組和節目組人員在放映前淺談影片特別之處。（左起）勞啟明、蔡漫虹、陳彩玉。

Conservation and Programming staff introducing the characteristics of the films before screening. (From left) Koven Lo, Carmen Tsoi, Priscilla Chan.

The ecology of the film industry has always been heavily influenced by developments in technology, as we move from silent pictures to talkies, black-and-white to colour, film to digital. Since celluloid is no longer the dominant format for film production or screening, reels and reels of cinematic memory have been consigned to sit quietly in warehouses all over the world. Yet the use of digital technology does not mean that films of the past will no longer be seen, as digitisation has become an important practice of film conservation in recent years, allowing the moving images on film to shine and sparkle again, preserving our history, art and culture in a new and invaluable dimension.



《勇特務大戰神秘黨》(1966)：「小型電子麻醉機」不就是隔空點穴？凌雲×司徒安×曹達華，披上占士邦外衣的303（曹達華），一夫當關，憑的倒是鐵漢功夫。

*The Secret Agent 303* (1966): A 'micro-electronic anaesthetic device'—does it attack a person's pressure points, much like martial arts films of old? Ling Wan, Szeto On and Tso Tat-wah are a formidable trio. Donned in his James Bond-like outfit, Agent 303 (played by Tso Tat-wah) faces off against numerous villains alone with riveting kung fu stunts.

The Hong Kong Film Archive is committed to its mission of collecting, preserving and promoting Hong Kong films. In the government's 2019/2020 Budget, the Archive was allocated HK\$20 million to digitise 150 of the films in its collection within five years. One might ask, why the need to digitise the Archive's films, when it keeps all its film reels in a temperature- and humidity-controlled refrigerated vault? According to Grace Lo, Assistant Curator II of the Archive's Conservation Unit, Hong Kong is a subtropical city characterised by hot, humid summers, and the films have started to deteriorate even before being acquired. It is impossible to reverse the deterioration, and even proper storage can only go so far in deferring the process. Furthermore, as cinemas around the world switch to digital screening equipment, manufacturers have stopped producing film projectors, meaning that the Archive may one day be unable to screen its celluloid films. It is essential therefore to expedite the digitisation process, preserving the audio and visual components of the films on a different medium. Digitalisation would

allow the Archive to further its mission to promote Hong Kong cinema locally and worldwide, as well as paving the way for future restoration work.

With over 4,000 titles in our collection, how should we define the criteria for selection and prioritisation? Urgency and rarity were two of the factors that weighed heavily in our consideration. Our most pressing mission is to save the early films that are in danger of permanent damage. The older the film materials, the higher the risk of damage and deterioration. Examples of works in the list of the highest priority include *The Ancient Beauty*, *Mang Lai-kwun* (1949), *The Wrongly Accused Lover* (1951), and *Cheung, the Dragon Boatman* (1952). Our digitisation project also targets films with sole prints. In the past, the Archive had never screened such films for fear of wearing out these one-and-only prints. An example is *Blame It on Father* (1953), starring Bruce Lee as a child actor; the film has shrunk so much it has not been screened at any programmes or repertoires in the past, but has received a new lease of life with digitisation.

Film digitisation is at once

complex and minute, as each title requires several months to process. From examining the original material, confirming the selected film and the appropriate film materials, cleaning and repairing the film, conducting scanning, syncing the audio and visual, handling digital compositing, checking the digital files and re-checking the original materials, to the initial digital restoration<sup>1</sup>, each step is essential to the process. There is often a myriad of unique challenges to digitising films. For example, the Archive's version of *How Wong Fei-hung Defeated the Tiger on the Opera Stage* (1959) is an incomplete 35mm print. To present the film as complete as we could, we compared it with the film's 16mm print and missing scenes were added from the latter. Furthermore, since 16mm prints are usually copied from 35mm films, their spots and scratches will become apparent during screening. As the first batch of 16mm films to be digitised had been severely worn out from past screenings, they had to be extensively and painstakingly repaired by the Conservation Unit before scanning.

This digitisation project gave rise to 'Archival Gems—Time After Time', the first of a host of events in celebration of the Archive's 20th anniversary. Sixteen iconic Mandarin and Cantonese films from the 1940s to 60s have been selected as examples of how the digitisation effort helps in the 'preservation' and 'promotion' of Hong Kong cinema. The programme comprises eight themes, which together present a colourful, multifaceted picture of Hong Kong cinematic culture. The Bruce Lee Series comes at an opportune time, in commemoration of the 80th anniversary of the international kung fu superstar's birth, and showcasing his charms as a child actor. Two quintessential works starring Kwan Tak-hing and representing the tried, perfected formula of the Wong Fei-hung films have been also chosen, and the dragon-and-lion dance sequence in *How Wong Fei-hung Stormed Phoenix Hill* (1958), shot in Eastmancolor, is a showstopper. The Sun Ma Si-tsang Series features



《第一號女探員之死亡通行証》(1967)：編劇司徒安筆下，懸疑迫人；從大宅雕塑林立的佈置，到鏡頭角度及場面調度，導演楚原設計出「第一號」（左三：陳寶珠）強敵環伺的心理境況。  
*A Death Pass* (1967): Through screenwriter Szeto On's creative efforts, the plot is intriguing and full of suspense. From his deployment of the many sculptures in the mansion to his use of camera angles and mise-en-scène, director Chor Yuen meticulously portrays the psychological state of Detective 001 (3rd left; played by Connie Chan Po-chu), alone and surrounded by opponents.



《午夜屍變》(1955)：楊工良（後排右）自編自導自演，藝人莊敬自強，大禍臨頭後化身復仇魅影；片中與梅綺（後排左）對演的《漁夫恨》，大顯撐船身段功架。  
*The Dead Comes Alive* (1955): Yeung Kung-leong (back row, right) stars in a picture he directed and wrote himself. In a defiant act to regain agency for himself, an actor becomes an avenging phantom after disaster strikes. In one particularly memorable scene, Yeung performs 'The Fisherman's Revenge' with Mui Yee (back row, left), in which they showcase the 'boat-rowing' feat and stage movements.

contemporary musical-comedies from the 1950s, demonstrating his superb musical and comedic talents before the advent of his *Two Fools* films. Two very rare and valuable Cantonese opera films are introduced in the Transgender Performance Series. Actress Chow Kwun-ling's first performance in male costumes and male *huadan* Chan Fei-nung's playing a character of the opposite gender (then already an almost-extinct form of artistic expression) exemplify the gender fluidity at the heart of Cantonese opera. The Yeung Kung-leong Series showcases the *Song of Midnight* (1937) complex in this maverick director, and vividly reflects his screenwriting, directing, and acting abilities. Bombshell Lau Leung-wah plays a spy in one film and a cat burglar in another in the Lau Leung-wah Series; both films were directed by her husband Lo Wei, reinventing her previous sexy image. On the other hand, the Tso Tat-wah Series highlights how Tso's hard-boiled masculinity remained unchanged through the wave of *wuxia* and spy movies of the 1950s and 60s. Lastly, the Jane Bond Series represents a unique genre in Cantonese cinema that melds together the innocent

'Jade Girl' trope with the excitement of James Bond. *The Female Chivalry* (1967) even features the rare instance where the Jane character, usually restrained in her administration of violence despite the genre's action orientation, actually kills.

Priscilla Chan, Assistant Curator I of the Archive's Programming Unit, states that the team encountered new challenges when planning and co-ordinating this programme. In the past, the team would usually settle on a theme before selecting the titles. The process is reversed this time, as themes needed to be defined from the first batch of 30 digitised films, so as to help audiences better understand Hong Kong cinema in a systematic manner. As the languages, genres, cast and crew of the films diverged widely from each other, it was no easy feat. Furthermore, as some of the films contained elements of Cantonese opera, additional knowledge of that medium was needed in the curating process. For example, in *Blame It on Father*, there is a scene where the pre-teen Bruce Lee playfully imitates the characteristic hoarse singing of his father, opera actor Lee Hoi-chuen. We are thankful to Professor Yuen Siu-fai for helping us to identify that the

song Lee sings is actually his father's signature tune 'Robbing the Road to the Afterlife'. On the other hand, *Cheung, the Dragon Boatman* offers a rare glimpse into the artistic world of Dragon Boat style of singing from Lingnan. Remarkably, the release date of *The Battle of the Peaks* (Part 1 & 2, 1953) was a mystery until this digitisation project prompted further research, uncovering more information about the title. After meticulous cross-checks by the Programming Unit, we were able to verify from newspaper adverts that the film indeed premiered in 1953, rather than 1962 as stated online (1962 was the year of the film's re-release).

To increase audiences' understanding of celluloid and digitisation, *ProFolio* (Issue 98) includes information about the original format of each digitised title. Colleagues from the Conservation and Programming Units will also briefly discuss prior to the screening the film sources, the conditions they were in and their characteristics. Unlike past 'Archival Gems' programmes, where post-screening talks were held between screenings, we will be holding the talks after both screenings, in the hopes that audiences would participate in the discussion and sharing after watching the entire series. [Translated by Rachel Ng]

#### Note

1 Film digitisation is not the same as digital restoration. The former process converts the images and sound on film into digital files and store them in modern digital media for long-term preservation and screening purposes. The latter utilises digital technology to process and improve on audiovisual quality for digitised films. Initial digital restoration is to restore areas blocked by dust and dirt, as well as to correct any obvious flaws in the visual image. However, full digital restoration takes around a year. The Archive's principle for restoration is to remove all the audiovisual problems caused by the damage or deterioration of film stock, such as scratches, stains, dust and flickers, and to restore the original content faithfully to its condition when it first premiered. Flaws that had existed already in the original picture, e.g. dark images due to insufficient lighting, would not be corrected. As such, the restored films would not look completely brand new.

Poon Kit-man is Project Researcher of the Programming Unit of the HKFA.

For details of 'Archival Gems—Time After Time', please refer to *ProFolio* (Issue 98) or the HKFA's website.

# 「聲影『留』傳」裡的數碼化影片

## Digitised Films in 'Time After Time'

勞啟明 Koven Lo

編按：「聲影『留』傳」開幕節目《父之過》（1953）放映前，本館一級助理館長（修復）勞啟明特地向觀眾講述進行這項電影數碼化計劃的歷程，以及觀賞時影像所見狀況背後的成因。明乎此，大家觀賞時仿似與菲林建立聯繫，多點理解它的經歷和所承載的故事。

我們的數碼化計劃，優先處理一些只有孤本或是菲林狀態較差、需要搶救的電影。過程中先由檢查開始，並作初步修補。影片菲林的狀態可以承受，就會進行電子掃描，成為數碼化電影。有很多人會將數碼化和修復混為一談，其實數碼化只是將影片作初步電子掃描，然後以此為基礎作數碼修復。修復工作甚為耗時，往往以年計算，大概一年才能完成一部。與世界各地的電影資料館做法相若，我們會揀選具價值或特別意義的影片，始進行全面修復工作。

首批經數碼化後在「聲影『留』傳」放映的電影中，頭炮《父之過》是一部黑白有聲電影，以單聲道記錄聲音。這部片的拷貝原為35毫米醋酸片，即影片的塑膠片基是用醋酸纖維塑膠製成。醋酸片要在乾而冷的環境才可以保存，否則會水解，遇到空氣的水分會產生變異，釋出醋酸，菲林並會因水解而慢慢收縮。收縮度是衡量影片狀況的指標之一，一部電影的收縮度超過0.78%已不能安全放映，而《父之過》的收縮度高於2%，要花費不少工夫作預備，才能進行數碼化。該片的拷貝上有不少接駁口、膠紙漬、破爛齒孔，也要先逐一修補。然而，大家觀看這部攝於六十多年前的電影時，可能仍會感到影像和聲音並不完美。

在影像清晰度方面，現存的版本並不是第一代的菲林，而且經過多次放映。當菲林每印一代，新印菲林就要承受每次大約5%的影音資訊損失，沖印多次損失更多，包括影像模糊、對比度增加、流失細節等。而影片上為甚麼會不時有點震動呢？菲林的收縮

並不是按比例縮小的。例如第一格縮小的程度比第二格多，或有時候於同一格內左右縮小的比例也會不同。由於格與格之間的影像出現不對位的情況，導致放映時影像會稍有移動，造成影像中可見的震動。

此外，菲林上會有為準備放映刻意留下的記號，也有因破損而造成的痕跡，例如多次放映會造成刮花。影片上的花痕，垂直的通常稱為「電車軌」；也有斜的，各種角度的都可能會出現；亦會出現斑駁的圓點，這些都是菲林變壞的痕跡。

還有，閃爍的問題，即是影像的光暗或顏色不穩定，主要成因是菲林被酸氣侵蝕令影像減退。若是彩色片便會變色或退色；若是黑白片則會於深色的位置變得淺色，而淺色的影像有時甚至會消失。這些變壞的情況不一，都會令影像不規則地變色，或出現時而深時而淺的情況。

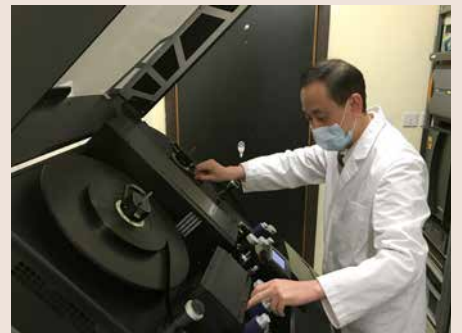
缺格是指菲林中一些連續的鏡頭可能被剪走。這是常見的現象，從前當有菲林損壞，工作人員會將整格受影響的菲林剪走，然後將前後兩端駁上。出現影像窒礙，大概是中間有格數缺失了；而因為菲林也載有聲軌，所以聲音也會不連貫。

為了改善這些瑕疵，館內設有電影修復工作站，我們會先以自動模式（auto mode）運行，用電腦辨認和減退影片上的花痕。輕微的花痕可以在這個過程中減去，但一些比較深的花痕仍然存在。再進一步的改善，需要全面修復才能達成。

舊電影的影音狀況有它的限制，不可與時下的新電影相比，但會感覺

到它像位老朋友般；歷史在它臉上留下痕跡，而它的限制和不完美，也是歷史的一部分。■

勞啟明為香港電影資料館修復組一級助理館長



工作人員要先檢查菲林、作初步修補，然後才能進行電子掃描，將之成為數碼化電影。

The technicians have to first check the film and make initial repairs; if the condition allows, the next step would be digital scanning, ultimately transforming the title into a digital film.

Editor's note: When the 'Time After Time' programme opened with a screening of *Blame It on Father* (1953), Koven Lo, Assistant Curator I of the Archive's Conservation Unit, shared with the audience the journey of the digitisation project, and the reasons behind why some of the images look the way they do onscreen. Gaining greater insight into the history and stories behind the film print helped build a special rapport between the audience and the celluloid film, and Lo's explanations enhance viewers' overall experience of the film.

Our digitisation project prioritises films with sole existing copies or prints in unsatisfactory conditions that urgent attention is required. The process begins with checking and initial repairs. If the celluloid film is in a physically good enough condition, we would move on to digital scanning, ultimately transforming the title into a digital film. Many people refer to film digitisation and digital restoration interchangeably, but in fact, digitisation is simply an initial digital scan of the film, which paves the way for future restoration. Digital restoration is a time-consuming process that often takes up to years, averaging around at least a year per film. Like other film archives around the world, we select films that are particularly significant or meaningful for full digital restoration.

Among the first batch of digitised films that have been chosen for screening as part of the 'Time After Time' programme, the opening film *Blame It on Father* is a black-and-white talkie, with a monoaural soundtrack. The original copy of the film was on 35mm acetate film, meaning that the celluloid film was made out of cellulose acetate. This material needs to be preserved in cool, dry conditions, or it would undergo hydrolysis. Exposing the film to a humid environment would release acetic acid and the hydrolysis process that results would shrink the film. Shrinkage is a criterion for measuring the condition of celluloid film, and if the shrinkage rate of a film is more than 0.78%, it cannot be screened safely. The shrinkage rate of *Blame It on Father* was more than 2%, meaning that we needed to put in a lot of preparation work before it could be digitised. There were many instances of splicing, tape stains, and damaged perforations that required individual attention. Despite our best efforts,

however, one may still experience image and audio imperfections when viewing this some six-decade-old film.

The image clarity of *Blame It on Father* leaves much to be desired. The existing copy of the film is not a first-generation copy, and has also been screened many times. Every time a film is copied, from one generation to the next, the latest copy suffers an approximately 5% loss in audio and visual information; so multiple rounds of copying could lead to significant loss in quality, resulting in problems that may include blurring, high contrast and loss of details. And why is there occasional jittering when we watch old movies? Film shrinkage does not occur proportionally. For example, the first frame could suffer from a higher degree of shrinkage than the second frame; sometimes within a single frame, the amount of shrinkage on the left and right sides differs. When there is a mismatch from frame to frame, the image may move slightly during screening, causing what appears to be 'jittering' to the human eye.

Furthermore, marks are often left behind on the film in preparation for screenings, as well as ones resulting from damage, such as the scratches caused by too many projections. Sometimes vertical scratches are left on the film, commonly called 'tramlines'; other scratches may be diagonal, from all sorts of different angles. Dappled round spots may also be found. These marks are signs of film deterioration.

Another problem is that of flickering, where the tone or colour of images are inconsistent. This is due to corrosion of the film caused by acidic gas, leading to decrease of image density. In colour films, this results in colour fading or discolouration, whereas in black-and-white films,

dark colours become light and light areas could even disappear. The level of deterioration could vary widely, meaning that the visual defect could occur irregularly and inconsistently.

Missing frames occurs when some of the consecutive frames in a film is cut and discarded. This is quite a common phenomenon, as in the past, technicians would cut out any damaged frames from a piece of film, and splice together the remaining pieces. When the images onscreen do not flow and move as they should, it is likely because some of the frames are missing, and because the soundtrack is also linked to the film, this means the audio experience is fragmented too.

There is a dedicated film restoration workstation at the Archive for repairing and enhancing some of the aforementioned flaws. First, we would let the film run on Auto Mode at the workstation, and let the computer identify and reduce any scratches. Minor scratches can be removed or diminished at this stage, but the more serious ones would remain. Further enhancement would require the full digital restoration procedure.

Audiovisual problems and limitations come with age, and naturally, one cannot expect older films to be in the same pristine condition as new releases. Yet there is a sense of familiarity that comes with old films, as though they are our old friends. Although time has left marks on them, their shortcomings and imperfections are part of their charm, part of the rich tapestry of cinematic history behind the film itself. [Translated by Rachel Ng] ■

**Koven Lo** is Assistant Curator I of the Conservation Unit of the HKFA.

# 《掙扎》： 中國電影史上 兩個重要空白的填補

*Struggle:*  
Filling in Two Important  
Blanks in Chinese  
Film History

何思穎 Sam Ho



《掙扎》（又名《九江血戰》，1933）的發現，可謂「重」中之「重」——重要的重。

香港電影資料館 2012 年在美国加州發現的一批三、四十年代作品，對香港電影的理解，提供了寶貴線索。這批片當中的《掙扎》，則對華語電影的理解，提供了極端寶貴的線索。

《掙扎》為抗戰時期的中國電影，有多方面重要性。首先，影片為早期中國電影一位著名創作者及一家重要公司的作品。導演裘芑香憑其創作在電影史上留名，但作品全部遺失，過往現代人只聞其名，不見其作。出品公司天一，為邵氏公司前身，亦為早期電影重要的商業機構，作品也全部遺失。《掙扎》的發現，為中

國電影史這兩個一藝術、一商業的空白，提供了初步但難能可貴的填補。

《掙扎》也是中國最早的片上發聲電影之一。上世紀二十年代中期，有聲電影在西方開始出現，天一公司負責人邵醉翁（邵逸夫長兄），頗具遠見，三十年代初引進美國錄音器材和技術，開始拍攝有聲電影。所以，《掙扎》不但是目前唯一能看到的天一電影，也是目前唯一能聽到的天一電影。

有改變，就有過渡。無聲變有聲的過渡期，世界各地電影業都要面對不同困難，亦各有不同應變。從《掙扎》中可見證到上海電影工業及導演

裘芑香的應變方法。在香港電影資料館公映這部影片的映後談中，節目組一級助理館長陳彩玉指出，電影的第一本，都在野外取景，但完全沒有對白，只有音樂。第一句對白，其實是室內錄音，但藉外景與內景對接，營造出在野外講話的效果，巧妙地迴避了繁複及昂貴的室外錄音步驟。

除了巧妙應變無聲到有聲的過渡外，《掙扎》也可見導演對電影語言的充分掌握。裘芑香出身上海美術學院，有一定的美學造詣，影片構圖與攝影水準都很高，部分畫面更具表現主義筆觸。他對場面調度頗有駕馭，在製作條件有限的情況下，仍經常採用搖鏡，偶爾更出動難度很高的推軌鏡，處理都很有分寸。這部早期有聲電影，音樂的應用比較粗糙，音效處理則較佳，並與出色的剪接及影像配合得很好。裘芑香當年能載譽上海電影界，絕非偶然。

電影開始時野外取景的一段，拍得很精彩。幾乎十分鐘的戲，完全沒有對白，自然的環境、人與自然的關係，均以畫面和音樂交代，當中的和諧，體現了中國人思想裡「天人合一」的狀態。電影對自然環境與人造環境



2019年10月6日《掙扎》（修復版）在香港電影資料館作世界首映，何思穎（左）和陳彩玉（右）在映後談分享發現。

The world premier of *Struggle* (restored version) was held at the HKFA on 6 October 2019. Sam Ho (left) and Priscilla Chan (right) each shared with the audience their own discoveries in the post-screening talk.

《掙扎》(1933)  
*Struggle* (1933)



「天人合一」：連續多個景觀鏡頭，展現自然生態；接著剪到河水水面漣漪——原來是踏水機弄出來的——是農民在與大自然同樂。  
'Human and nature as one': The sequence features a series of natural sceneries, which is followed by a cut to the river, with concentric ripples radiating across the surface. It is soon revealed that the ripples are generated by an irrigation machine. Farmers are seen harmonising with nature.

的對比，有頗含蓄而優秀的展現。例如開始時連續多個自然景觀鏡頭，樹與花等影像，展現了自然生態。接著剪到一個河水的鏡頭，水面泛出一串漣漪，畫面充滿詩意。但下一個鏡頭展示，那些漣漪，是用於耕種的踏水機器做成的，並非自然現象，反而是人在利用自然，一種人類利用自然以求生存的方式。然而，跟著出現的人類，卻並非剝削自然之輩，而是與大自然同樂的農民。

中國人以農立國，農業在中國文明及文化中有異常重要的地位。開首的這場戲，其後更出現牛、羊、魚等生物，以不同方式被農民利用，一種被正面描繪的利用。上世紀三十年代，中國正處於水深火熱的國難中，人利用自然的過程，在電影中與環境達到一種以人為本的平衡狀態。「天人合一」和「以農立國」這兩個觀念，在這段一句對白都沒有的戲裡，有時代意義的展現。這種平衡狀態，其後在片中徹底消失。故事發展下去，只見充滿階級不平等的社會及被戰火摧殘的國家。

去年11月，《掙扎》佚失多年後，首次在上海重映，為香港電影資料館與上海電影資料館、上海電影博物館合辦的「光影雙城」節目一部分。首場為滬方安排予中國電影學者的特別放映。映後座談，數名學者表示，看了《掙扎》，中國電影歷史需要重寫。■

何思穎，電影研究者，曾任香港電影資料館節目策劃。

鳴謝美國三藩市華宮戲院方創傑先生

The discovery of *Struggle* (1933) was one of great importance.

The Hong Kong Film Archive's 2012 discovery of a collection of 1930s and 40s Hong Kong films from California, USA, provided precious clues to the understanding Hong Kong cinema of that period. Among that collection, *Struggle* provided especially valuable information in the study of Chinese language films.

*Struggle* is a Chinese film made during WWII and is important in many aspects. First of all, it is a work by a renowned filmmaker and an important company. Qiu Qixiang, its helmer, was reputed to be a highly-creative director in early Chinese cinema but all his works have been lost. Students and lovers of film had only heard of his name but never seen his work. The film's production company, Unique Film Productions, which later became Shaw Brothers Studio, was also an important commercial establishment of its time. But its works have also been lost. The discovery of *Struggle* has provided preliminary but treasured information to fill in two blanks in Chinese film history, one artistic and one commercial.

*Struggle* is also one of the earliest sound films in China. In the mid-1920s, talkies began appearing in the west. Runje Shaw (elder brother of Run Run Shaw), founder of Unique Film, was a visionary. He started importing American recording equipment and technology in the

1930s to embark on the making of sound films. *Struggle* is therefore not just the only Unique film we can see, but also the only Unique film we can hear.

With change comes transitions. The shift from silent to sound created numerous problems for film industries all over the world, and each responded with its own solutions. In *Struggle*, we can see adjustments by the Shanghai film industry and director Qiu Qixiang. In the post-screening talk after the HKFA screening, Priscilla Chan of the Archive's Programming Unit pointed out that the entire first reel of the film was shot in the countryside, but with no dialogue, with only music accompaniment on the soundtrack. When the first utterance was delivered, it was recorded indoors but, with skilful editing between exterior and interior scenes, the effect of speaking outdoor was created. It was a clever way to avoid the complicated and expensive process of recording sound outdoors.

*Struggle* also evinces the director's command of film language. Qiu Qixiang graduated from the Shanghai Academy of Fine Arts and obviously had a solid foundation in visual presentation, with remarkable compositions and accomplished cinematography, sometimes with expressionistic touches. A deft animation of mise-en-scène is also





影片構圖與攝影水準都很高，部分畫面更具表現主義筆觸。

*Struggle* is a film with remarkable compositions and accomplished cinematography, occasionally throwing in some expressionistic touches.

on display. Despite production limitations of 1920s Chinese cinema, Qiu would often stage carefully-planned pan shots, with skilful orchestration between actors and sets, occasionally even launching into complicated camera movements, to explicating effect. This early talkie is rather crude in its use of music, but with better employ of sound effects, in turn coordinated with its outstanding editing and visual imageries. It is no coincidence that Qiu Qixiang enjoyed a sterling reputation in the early Shanghai film industry.

The opening segment, shot in the countryside, is outstanding. With no spoken dialogue for almost ten minutes, an organic relationship between human and nature is portrayed with images and music. In a manifestation of the Chinese notion *tian ren he yi*—human and nature as one—a subtle contrast between natural environment and man-made environment is presented. The sequence features a series of

natural sceneries, with lyrical images of trees and flowers. This is followed by a cut to the river, with concentric ripples radiating across the surface in a poetic moment. It is soon revealed that the ripples are generated not by nature but by an irrigation machine made of wood, part of the agricultural process with which humans exploit nature for survival. Yet, the human beings later introduced are not the ruthless, abusive kind, but farmers who live in harmony with the very nature they exploit.

This evokes the Chinese notion of *yi nong liguo*—agriculture is the foundation of the state—consistent with the tradition in Chinese cinema that depictions of farming procedures often take on special significance. Later in the opening sequence of *Struggle*, characters are seen ploughing the field with an ox, patting baby goats with affection, and trapping fish for food. Again, such interactions with living creatures, though exploitative in nature, are positively portrayed. In the 1930s, China was plunged into a national crisis, dragged into war by an invasion, but through

the process of exploiting nature, a human-centric balance is reached in the film. The concepts of ‘human and nature as one’ and ‘agriculture as the foundation of the state’ are manifested with contemporary context in this wordless segment that opens the film. However, this human-centric balance would soon vanish, the harmonious fields displaced by a social structure rent with class inequality and a nation devastated by war.

Last November, *Struggle* was shown in Shanghai for the first time after having been lost for decades. The screening was part of the programme ‘One Tale, Two Cinemas’, a collaboration between the HKFA, the Shanghai Film Archive and the Shanghai Film Museum. At the post-screening talk, several Chinese scholars indicated that with the discovery of *Struggle*, the history of Chinese cinema will be re-written.

[Translated by Roberta Chin] ■

**Sam Ho** is a veteran film critic, researcher and former Programmer of the HKFA.

**Special thanks to Mr Jack Lee Fong of Palace Theatre, San Francisco, USA**



2019年11月2日《掙扎》(修復版)於上海放映，當天配合舉行的座談會上，何思穎(左)與內地電影學者石川(右)以「南上與南下：上海影人在香港」為題交流。

*Struggle* (restored version) was screened in Shanghai on 2 November 2019. Along with the screening, a seminar titled ‘Coming and Going: A Tale of Two Cinemas’ was held on the same day. Sam Ho (left) and Mainland film scholar Shi Chuan (right) took the opportunity to meet and exchange views.

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本館特此致謝！

Thank you!

# 念當時風月 ——《宋家皇朝》、《半生緣》的去政治化

## Reminiscing Past Romances — The Depoliticisation of *The Soong Sisters* and *Eighteen Springs*

喬奕思 Joyce Yang

如果局限在香港這個城市本身，是無法考察香港電影的多重文化身份特徵的。香港電影與許多地區的文化都有密切淵源，從中原文化的儒家傳統底色，到各地移民帶來的市井民俗特色，再經西方文化沖刷、更新和改造，香港電影從來都兼收並蓄，不斷演化發展，成為吸納他地文化、重構本土文化身份的重要藝術手段。

於香港而言，上世紀三、四十年代的上海，無論在電影發展史，還是現代都市文化的演變中，都是一脈相承的雙生花、並蒂蓮。十九世紀末，電影傳入內地，在上海落地生根。三十年代初上海電影產業已具相當規模。1937年日軍侵華，租界的和平局面結束，上海作為電影之都的黃金時期至此黯淡，影人紛紛南遷，香港承接了電影夢，順應時局，於五十年代末、六十年代初發展為東方荷里活。再看三十年代的上海——洋場之外，戰火綿延，亂世頹唐，從時代政治的夾縫之中偷來了一場繁華。這種曇花一現開到荼蘼終究不得不面對現實的悲喜交纏，引起不少八、九十年代香港電影與之共鳴。王家衛、徐克、關錦鵬、許鞍華、張婉婷等，各取用舊上海精魄神髓，投放於作品中，化腐朽為神奇。1997年《宋家皇朝》與《半生緣》作為合拍片<sup>1</sup>，在香港回歸這一時間節點，略寫風雲，詳寫風月，以去政治化的方式，讓香港女明星化身上海女人，講述上海發生的時代故事，展現了獨特的香港角度。

魯迅曾論及海派和京派，說道「北京是明清的帝都，上海乃各國之

租界，帝都多官，租界多商」<sup>2</sup>。海派遠離政治中心，所以有在商言商的從容。魯迅評的是文學，電影藝術卻也如此。「近商」的特性，一早存在於二十世紀早期上海最先發軔的影戲文化中，香港電影承續這一傳統，哪怕影以載道，也始終隨俗，關注流行審美趣味，重情理而非事理。《宋家皇朝》與《半生緣》，前者關於影響中國近現代史的宋家三姐妹，後者改編海上文學經典，原文本權威如高山聳峙，但張婉婷與許鞍華都作出了明確的取捨，平衡藝術與商業，不過多考量意識形態。

張婉婷面對與《宋家皇朝》相關的歷史事實，強調「沒有歷史的包袱」，「我嘗試從她們三姐妹的角度去看那段歷史。」<sup>3</sup>三姐妹生於上海，長於西方文化，又中又西，甚至西方的影響更大，其實與香港人有類似之處。《宋》由三姐妹的愛情婚姻傳奇開始鋪陳，後半段順著美齡、慶齡之爭，走向小家影響大國的高潮，用了不少篇幅去烘托三姐妹在一間屋子裡就能改寫國家命運的傳奇性。儘管題材迥異，《宋家皇朝》卻帶有如《秋天的童話》

(1987)般強烈的作者印記：人物四海漂泊的情意結，童話式處理人物關係，以明星魅力將故事浪漫化，坎坷際遇都帶有偶像色彩。因此，若以歷史正劇的標準去看《宋》，其中許多浪漫、煽情、娛樂的渲染



《宋家皇朝》(1997)：以明星魅力將故事浪漫化，坎坷際遇都帶有偶像色彩。

*The Soong Sisters* (1997): The film romanticises the story of the three sisters through star power, with a heroic touch in the depiction of hardship.

恐怕難符合預期，比如西安事變這場戲中，宋美齡憑一己之力扭轉了危機，被認為是過分美化了她，在內地公映的版本中，這場戲就被刪掉了。相較於慶齡和美齡所代表的政見黨派，導演張婉婷其實更在意她們既是姐妹又是競爭對手的情感衝突。《宋》營造的認同感不在於對政體的讚頌或撻伐，而是來自人物過盡千帆的感慨與蒼涼。

電影《半生緣》片頭出現的「上海·一九三零年」，如曖昧不明的浮標，只模糊地指了大概的時間和地點。曼楨與世鈞的愛情故事與家國歷史、政治意識形態等剝離，三十年代上海的時代背景和戰爭動亂幾近隱去，惟有愛別離苦、怨憎會苦、求不得苦浮凸顯現。在張愛玲的小說世界中，《十八春》是解放後她在上海發表的第一篇作品，1950年3月至1951年2月，以筆名「梁京」在《亦報》上連載，頗受歡迎，出過單行本。這也是她出版的第一部完整的長篇小說。張愛玲到了美國之後，於1968年將《十八春》改寫成《半生緣》，將當初她涉及國事、政事猶豫不決的政治因素重新整理了一番。《十》中叔惠告訴世鈞，他要去西北解放區，「真正為人民做點事」。在《半》中，叔惠則「弄了個獎學金」，「到美國

去」。更大的改動在小說結尾，整體的時間線往前提早了四年，叔惠原本是1949年解放之後回上海，變成他1945年回國，而世鈞與曼楨前往東北參加革命工作的結尾部分在《半》中被掐去了，兩人在上海偶遇是情緒的高潮，也是情節的終點。《半》相較於《十》，淡化了國族歷史表述。張愛玲「洗去了這大話，代之的是個人的歷史，漠然於國家歷史，一個國家的消沉、或一個城市的傾倒，只是人生舞台上背後的幻象天幕。」<sup>4</sup>許鞍華比改編《傾城之戀》（1984）之時，更準確地捉住了張愛玲的用神。《半》不著意拍攝大時代的場面，沒有那些把握不住的宏大時代符號，而是在日常瑣事、複雜家事中灌注深情，使曼楨與世鈞的浪漫緣分頓挫於曼璐與祝鴻才扭曲的家庭組合之中，不玄妙，樸素一如定情的紅手套。個人之悲，就是時代之痛。就這一點，《宋》與《半》異曲同工。儘管《宋》顯然更為華麗恢弘，有許多上海大家族的典型符號，如迷宮、郵輪、《聖經》、製作精良的旗袍，乃至飛機、軍隊、戰爭等等，人物遊走四方，立足點卻也還是家庭風波，是叫人唏噓的愛情故事，歷史只是浪漫化的裝點。

關於革命與愛情，《宋》和《半》都有態度。宋查理讓蔣介石把家中常

讀的那本《聖經》拿回去，其中一頁寫著「革命就是愛情，愛情也是革命」。張愛玲寫的都是亂世故事，她道：「我甚至只是寫些男女間的小事情，我的作品裡沒有戰爭，也沒有革命。我以為人在戀愛的時候，是比在戰爭與革命的時候更素樸，也更放恣的。」<sup>5</sup>這就是香港導演與上海文本之間的惺惺相惜處，不是愛情高攀了革命，而是在革命兩極化的是非對錯之下，個人性情的錯綜曲折、難分對錯才是藝術所追求的戲劇魅力。《宋》與《半》都是從主要人物的追憶開始，把時間翻回當初。老年時期的美齡與慶齡兩地相隔，不相往來；曼楨與世鈞以十九次畫外音旁述愛情的生發與泯滅。身在香港的八、九十年代，追憶三、四十年代的舊上海，自然與當時香港面對「回歸」的身份轉型相關。懷舊的意義正在於通過回憶逝去的美好來彌補現實的殘缺並尋找自我定位。在這一精神鄉愁的道路上，香港的女明星往往成為舊上海神髓的接續者、領路人，張曼玉、梅艷芳等演員身上更是帶著特定的氣質印記，與舊上海都市文化中的女性形象一樣，可觀、現代且傳奇，帶有中產趣味，體現了世俗化、消費化和國際化的特徵。■

#### 註釋

- 1 《宋家皇朝》由香港、內地、台灣等多地合拍。主要製作方是香港嘉禾電影有限公司，北京電影製片廠參與製作。《半生緣》是香港東方電影出品有限公司與內地天山電影製片廠等合拍。
- 2 魯迅以筆名「旅隼」發表於1935年5月5日《太白》半月刊第二卷第四期的文章〈「京派」和「海派」〉。
- 3 楊弋樞訪問，左幸寧錄音整理：〈空間、性別、愛情與歷史——張婉婷訪談〉，《電影藝術》，第323期，北京，2008年11月。
- 4 李小良：〈歷史的消退——《十八春》與《半生緣》的小說和電影〉，劉紹銘、梁秉鈞、許子東編：《再讀張愛玲》，濟南：山東畫報出版社，2004，頁91。
- 5 張愛玲：〈自己的文章〉，《張愛玲典藏全集——散文卷一：1939-1947年作品》，哈爾濱：哈爾濱出版社，2003，頁16。

喬奕思，影評人，為香港電影評論學會會員。

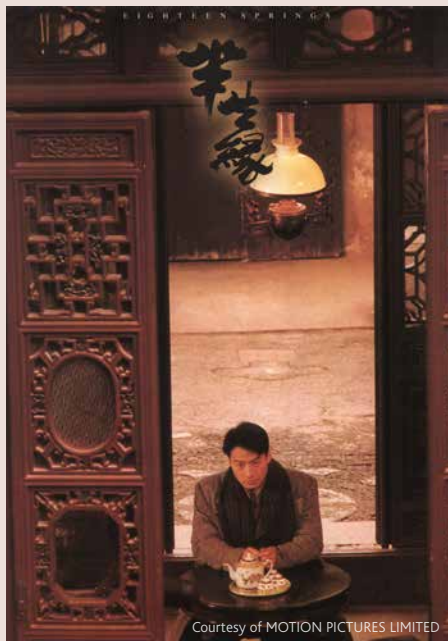
#### 《半生緣》（1997） Eighteen Springs (1997)



Courtesy of MOTION PICTURES LIMITED

導演準確地捉住了張愛玲的用神，在日常瑣事、複雜家事中灌注深情。

The director accurately captures Eileen Chang's essence in the film and shines a spotlight on the mundane life and complicated family affairs.



Courtesy of MOTION PICTURES LIMITED

浮凸顯現愛別離苦、怨憎會苦、求不得苦。

The film underscores the bitterness of being separated from loved ones, of encountering the detestable, and of hopelessness.

《宋家皇朝》(1997)  
*The Soong Sisters* (1997)



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儘管場面華麗恢弘，乃至有飛機、戰爭等場面，立足點卻也還是家庭風波，歷史只是浪漫化的裝點。Despite the film being glamorous and opulent, and is furnished with planes, troops, and warfare, it is still centred on family turmoil, with the historical factor serving only as romantic embellishment.



© Orange Sky Golden Harvest Entertainment

三姐妹在一間屋子裡就能改寫國家命運的傳奇。The sisters were known for their legendary feat of changing a country's destiny simply within the confines of a house.



© Orange Sky Golden Harvest Entertainment

順著慶齡（左：張曼玉）、美齡（右：鄔君梅）之爭，影片走向小家影響大國的高潮。

Following the feud between Ching-ling (left: Maggie Cheung) and May-ling (right: Vivian Wu), the film heads toward the climax in which one small family obtains the power to dictate the fate of a nation.

It is impossible to examine the multiple cultural identities of Hong Kong films when geographically confined to the city itself. Hong Kong cinema has close ties with the culture of many regions. From portraying the traditional Confucian roots of Chinese culture, Hong Kong films have gone on to embody the folk characteristics of immigrants, as well as undergo re-interpretation, renewal, and transformation by Western culture. Ever eclectic and continuously evolving, they have become an important artistic means of absorbing foreign cultures and reconstructing local cultural identity.

Hong Kong and Shanghai in the 1930s and 40s are like two twin sisters, or two peas in the same pod if you will, identical to one another be it in terms of cinematic development or the evolution of modern urban culture. In the late 19th century, filmmaking took root in Shanghai after being introduced to the Mainland, with the industry already reaching quite a significant scale in the early 1930s. The Japanese invasion of the Mainland in 1937 brought an end to peace in Shanghai's concessions as well as its golden age as the nation's film capital, causing filmmakers to move southward in droves. Hong Kong picked up the baton of sustaining the film dream, taking advantage of the situation to establish itself as the 'Hollywood of the East' in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Looking back at 1930s Shanghai, while war, chaos, and despair raged beyond the city's foreign concessions, scenes of prosperity were stolen through the cracks of the political landscape. The mixed emotions which arose from short-lived moments of beauty and the rude awakenings that

followed were echoed in numerous 1980s and 90s Hong Kong motion pictures. The likes of Wong Kar-wai, Tsui Hark, Stanley Kwan, Ann Hui and Mabel Cheung all infused their works with the essence of old Shanghai to turn decay into delight. As co-produced films<sup>1</sup> from 1997, the year which marked the handover of Hong Kong, *The Soong Sisters* and *Eighteen Springs* are light on the depiction of reality and detailed in the portrayal of romance, telling historic tales of Shanghai in a depoliticised fashion by transforming Hong Kong actresses into Shanghaiese women, demonstrating a perspective unique to the Pearl of the Orient.

Lu Xun once talked about the Beijing School and the Shanghai School. He stated that 'Beijing is the capital for both Ming and Qing dynasties while Shanghai is known for its foreign concessions; the capital city is a birthplace for government officials while Shanghai is all about business.'<sup>2</sup> Shanghai's distance from the Mainland's political centre facilitates the tolerance for its 'business-first' mindset. Lu Xun was commenting on

literature, but the same also applies to the art of film. This 'business-oriented' tendency already existed in early twentieth-century film culture which first developed in Shanghai. Hong Kong cinema continued this tradition. Even though the medium of film, to a certain extent, is for conveying truths, it adhered to the literary customs of focusing on popular aesthetic taste and emphasising emotion over facts. *The Soong Sisters* is about the three eponymous siblings who influenced contemporary Chinese history, while *Eighteen Springs* is an adaptation of a Shanghaiese literary classic. The blueprints upon which the two works are based hold authoritative prominence, but Mabel Cheung and Ann Hui made clear trade-offs to balance art and commerce without giving much thought to ideology.

Faced with the historical facts related to *The Soong Sisters*, Mabel Cheung emphasises that she is 'unburdened by the past' and 'I tried to look at the events from the perspective of the three sisters.'<sup>3</sup> The Soong sisters were born in Shanghai and grew up in the West. The mix

of Eastern and Western influences in their upbringing, perhaps with the latter having greater sway, actually makes them similar to the people of Hong Kong. The film begins with the three sisters' legendary romantic lives and marriages. Following the feud between May-ling and Ching-ling in the second half, it heads toward the climax in which one small family obtains the power to dictate the fate of a nation. Much of the feature's duration is dedicated to highlighting the three sisters' legendary feat of changing a country's destiny simply within the confines of a house. Although the subject matter is very different, *The Soong Sisters* bears an authorial trademark as distinct as that of *An Autumn's Tale* (1987): the characters' sentimental attachment to drifting from place to place, the fairy-tale style treatment of character relationships, the romanticisation of the story through star power, and the heroic touch in the depiction of hardship. Consequently, if the standards of historical drama are applied to the motion picture, the abundance of romantic, dramatic, and entertaining elements may cause it to fall short of expectations. In the scene depicting the Xi'an Incident, for example, Soong May-ling turned

the crisis around on her own, which some consider as excessive glamorisation. In the version of the film released in the Mainland, this part was edited out. As opposed to the political parties represented by Ching-ling and May-ling, director Mabel Cheung actually cares more about the emotional conflict between them as both siblings and rivals. The sense of identity which *The Soong Sisters* conveys does not stem from the acclamation or condemnation of the political system, but rather the lament and desolation of the characters after having gone through countless trials and tribulations.

The 'Shanghai 1930's' shown in the opening of *Eighteen Springs* is somewhat ambiguous, only vaguely pointing out an approximate time period and location. The love story between Manzhen and Shijun is stripped of national history and political ideology. The 1930s Shanghai setting, as well as the chaos and war which accompanies it, is almost hidden from sight. Only the bitterness of being separated from loved ones, of encountering the detestable, and of hopelessness is portrayed. In Eileen Chang's literary world, *Eighteen Springs* marks her first published work in Shanghai after

the Chinese Communist Revolution. It was originally serialised in the newspaper *The Yi Daily* from March 1950 to February 1951 under the pen name Liang Jing. It was quite popular and was eventually released as a standalone publication, which also became her first full-length novel. After arriving in the US, Chang rewrote the novel and republished it as *Half a Lifelong Romance* in 1968, editing the elements related to state and political affairs which she was initially hesitant about. In *Eighteen Springs*, Shuhui tells Shijun that he has to go to the Northwest Liberated Area and 'really do something for the people'. In *Half a Lifelong Romance*, however, Shuhui 'applies for a scholarship' and 'goes to the US'. An even bigger change is made at the end of the novel, with the entire timeline shifted four years forward. Shuhui originally returns to Shanghai in 1949 after the Chinese Communist Revolution, but now comes back to the Mainland in 1945. Meanwhile, Shijun and Manzhen's journey to the northeast to participate in the revolution at the end is removed in the republished novel, with the chance encounter between the two in Shanghai serving as the emotional climax and finale instead. Compared with *Eighteen Springs*, *Half a Lifelong Romance* downplays the expression of national history. Chang 'washed out the lies and replaced them with personal history, showing indifference to national history and rendering a country's despair or the fall of a city as a mere illusory backdrop to the stage of life.'<sup>4</sup> In comparison to her adaptation of *Love in a Fallen City* (1984), Ann Hui captures Chang's essence more accurately in *Eighteen Springs*. Void of allusions to the tumultuous times, *Eighteen Springs* shies away from historical events and instead shines a spotlight on the mundane life and complicated family affairs, making Manlu and Zhu Hongcai's twisted relationship the stumbling block to Manzhen and Shijun's romance. There are no sophisticated acrobatics of plot construction, and the story of their romance is as plain as their



《半生緣》（1997）：世鈞（左：黎明）與曼楨（右：吳倩蓮）在上海偶遇是情緒的高潮，也是情節的終點。

*Eighteen Springs* (1997): Shijun (left: Leon Lai) and Manzhen's (right: Jacklyn Wu) chance encounter in Shanghai serves as the emotional climax and finale.



香港導演與上海文本之間的惺惺相惜處——個人性情的錯綜曲折、難分對錯才是藝術所追求的戲劇魅力。

The dramatic allure sought after originates in the twists and turns experienced by the human condition and its inability to distinguish between right and wrong during polarised times. This is where the Hong Kong film and the Shanghainese literature resonate with each other.

在這一精神鄉愁的道路上，梅艷芳等香港的女明星往往成為舊上海神髓的接續者、領路人。

On this path of spiritual nostalgia, Hong Kong actresses, such as Anita Mui, often become the successors and pioneers of the quintessence of old Shanghai.

token of love: a pair of red gloves. Thus, personal sorrows become the griefs of the times. This is how *The Soong Sisters* achieves the same outcome as *Eighteen Springs*, albeit through different means. Despite the former appearing evidently more glamorous and opulent and showing many typical symbols of affluent Shanghainese families—such as labyrinths, cruise ships, the Bible, exquisitely made cheongsams, and even planes, troops, and warfare—it is still centred on family turmoil even though the characters are on the roam. It is a tear-jerking love story, with the historical factor serving only as romantic embellishment.

Both works take a stance on revolution and love. Charlie Soong allows Chiang Kai-shek to take the Bible that he often reads at home with him. One of the pages contains the line 'Revolution is love, and love is revolution.'<sup>5</sup> This is where the Hong Kong director and

the Shanghainese literature resonate with each other. The dramatic allure sought after by their creators does not originate in love claiming superiority over revolution, but the twists and turns experienced by the human condition and its inability to distinguish between right and wrong during those polarised times. *The Soong Sisters* and *Eighteen Springs* both open with the protagonists' recollection of the past, turning the clock back to the very beginning. The elderly May-ling and Ching-ling are geographically separated and out of touch with each other, while Manzhen and Shijun narrate the beginning and end of their romance through nineteen voice-overs. Reminiscing the old Shanghai of the 1930s and 40s in 1980s and 90s Hong Kong naturally conjures connections to the transformation of Hong Kong's identity in the face of the handover. The point of nostalgia is to make up for what is lacking in reality and to find one's place through the recollection of bygone beauty. On this path of spiritual nostalgia, Hong Kong actresses often become the successors and pioneers of the quintessence of old Shanghai. Stars such as Maggie Cheung and Anita Mui especially have an air about them which makes them synonymous with the female image in the

metropolitan culture of old Shanghai—beautiful, modern, legendary, exuding middle-class appeal, and embodying the characteristics of secularisation, consumerisation, and internationalisation. [Translated by Johnny Ko] ■

#### Notes

- 1 *The Soong Sisters* was a co-production involving Hong Kong, the Mainland, Taiwan, and other places. Golden Harvest from Hong Kong was the chief producer and Beijing Film Studio also participated in its production. *Eighteen Springs* was co-produced by Mandarin Films Limited from Hong Kong and Tianshan Film Studio et al. from the Mainland.
- 2 Lu Xun's article "'The Beijing School' and 'The Shanghai School'", first published in the fourth issue of the second volume of *Tai Bai Biweekly* on May 5, 1935 (in Chinese).
- 3 'Space, Gender, Love and History—An Interview with Director Zhang Wanting', interviewed by Yang Yishu, collated by Zuo Xingning, *FilmArt*, Vol. 323, Beijing, November 2008 (in Chinese).
- 4 Li Siu-leung, 'The Retreating Tide of History—The Film and Literature of *Eighteen Springs* and *Half a Lifelong Romance*', in *Rereading Eileen Chang*, Joseph S. M. Lau, Leung Ping-kwan and Xu Zidong (eds), Jinan: Shandong Pictorial Publishing, 2004, p 91 (in Chinese).
- 5 Eileen Chang, 'Writing of One's Own', in *Eileen Chang Collection Complete Works—Prose (Vol.1): 1939-1946*, Harbin: Harbin Publishing, 2003, p 16 (in Chinese).

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# 難得有知己——德寶源起談

## A Rare Meeting of Like-Minded Souls—D & B's Origins

張寶晶 Cheung Po-ching

踏入八十年代，隨著邵氏兄弟（香港）有限公司淡出，德寶電影公司乘勢崛起，與當時聲勢甚隆的嘉禾電影（香港）有限公司、新藝城影業有限公司，儼然香港電影業三雄鼎立。繼 2013 及 2016 年推出的嘉禾及新藝城回顧專題，本館今年再接再厲，在星空華文傳媒電影有限公司的支持下，舉辦「創意搖籃——德寶的童話」回顧展及出版專書，並於 7 月 12 日在本館電影院以「德寶源起」為題舉行座談會，邀來登徒主持，德寶前期主帥岑建勳、創作部經理陳翹英、導演張婉婷和羅啟銳任嘉賓，與觀眾一起細訴點滴，回顧德寶當年曾迸發的異彩。

### 德寶的多元路向

德寶電影公司於 1984 年由商人潘迪生夥拍影人洪金寶及岑建勳成立，頭四年由岑建勳主理製作；至 1992 年結束時，公司共出品了 67 部電影。創業作《雙龍出海》（1984）為同年寶禾影業有限公司出品的《神勇雙响炮》（1984）續集，由洪金寶監製，從娛樂性、片種和「卡士」（叫座的演員）來看，都屬「穩賺」，最終票房也獲得 1,800 多萬元的佳績。然而，重看《雙》片時，有份主演的岑建勳卻自言大感尷尬。「我想做『傻仔』和『獅子頭』嗎？我完全不欣賞自己在銀幕上的演出，但我知道我不拍這類 blockbuster（流行大片）來賺錢，我就沒有資格拍那些不一定賺錢的另類電影。我要在兩者之間取得平衡。」他更強調，拍這類商業大片時，也要有原則，就是可以放心給自己的女兒看。

有別於嘉禾和新藝城盛產主流功夫片或喜劇，德寶另闢蹊徑，開拓創作空間，提攜新晉創作人，製作具「收得」元素以外的另類電影，例如緊接創業作後的《等待黎明》（1984）說的是抗戰期間香港淪陷的故事，還有關懷弱勢社群的《癲佬正傳》（1986）和《聽不到的說話》（1986）、探討都市愛慾的《地下情》（1986）、穿越時空的《夢中人》（1986）等，都屬具前瞻性的另類電影，時至今日仍教人回味。

岑建勳表示，德寶的多元路向絕非偶然「撞」出來，而是與他自身的背景、圈子、思維方式等有關。岑是土生土長的 baby boomers（嬰兒潮一代），看《中國學生周報》、英文雜誌及外國電影成長，又曾在英國當記者。岑回港為紀錄片搜集資料時，認識了梁普智、陳欣健等影人，後來在《號外》雜誌當總編輯，結識更多曾到海外讀電影的新浪潮導演，如徐

克、許鞍華、嚴浩等。「我的圈子主要就是新浪潮，與他們特別投緣。那時正值八十年代初，一種有別於科班出身的思潮、拍攝方式和電影語言也在慢慢形成。」岑更指出，德寶的多元路向其實就是香港傳統文化與外來文化結合的典型，但他坦言，德寶仍是三雄中最弱的「小朋友」。「嘉禾、新藝城、德寶，無論財力或人力，我們肯定是最小的『細佬』（弟弟）。」

### 拍「有話要說」的電影

除了娛樂性、片種和卡士，岑建勳認為電影是否好看，更要視乎導演有沒有話要說，以及能否透過電影帶出自己對社會和世界的看法。「你（導演）想說甚麼？如果你沒有話要說，那就是『搵食戲』（用來賺錢的電影），我就會用『搵食戲』的標準來衡量。如果你有話要說，我就會聽。」

張婉婷也認同做導演最重要是有話要說。她導演的首兩部作品《非法移民》（1985）及《秋天的童話》（1987），都涉及移民題材，而創作故事時，正值中英雙方就香港主權進行談判。「（1982 年）會談過後，戴卓爾夫人步出人民大會堂時跌倒，香港社會頓時人心惶惶。我那時還在美國唸書，美金暴跌，人人勸我不要回港，而移民這話題也突然變得很 hot（熱門），大家都在想：是否要離開香港？移民又該往哪裡？這系列移民電影就是我們想說的故事。」她又指，電影是用來 express yourself（表達自



座談會嘉賓講者：（左起）陳翹英、張婉婷、岑建勳、羅啟銳、登徒

At the seminar: (From left) Chan Kiu-ying, Mabel Cheung, John Sham, Alex Law, Thomas Shin

己)，從沒有想過拍的是藝術電影還是商業電影，或者是否賺錢，能夠拍就要拍自己想說的故事。

## 遇上伯樂成就童話

然而，電影能夠開拍絕非必然。與羅啟銳完成《秋天的童話》的劇本後，張婉婷決意找當時的「票房毒藥」周潤發當男主角，認為只有他才演得來既似「爛鬼」（混蛋）又有浪漫感覺的船頭尺，得他首肯後，才四出找電影公司投資，怎料卻處處碰壁。「有公司竟建議把場景搬到旺角，主角變成旺角『爛鬼』跟港大女生。但港大女生有家人和朋友，為何要到旺角找『爛鬼』相依為命呢？這不成立。我在紐約生活時，就是覺得跟所有黃皮膚、黑頭髮的人都很 friend（投契），可以每晚一起吃飯，才產生相依為命的感情啊。」

與張婉婷合作多年的羅啟銳補充，雖然有公司很喜歡這劇本，但得悉要由周潤發主演，都說不行，甚至主動提供很多巨星，例如洪金寶、成龍等，給他們選擇。羅笑言，洪金寶會令這部片變了笑片。「至於成龍，你想想最後一場戲，要成龍追車，他怕甚麼？就這樣跳下大橋也可以，他根本不會怕。」因此，他們都一一回絕。

後來，經當時在德寶任監製的陳冠中穿針引線，張婉婷和羅啟銳戰戰兢兢去找岑建勳，放下劇本便離去。回家沒多久便收到岑的來電，請他們翌日來簽約。岑憶述，他看劇本時正在拍夜戲，還有十多頁沒看完，就己很喜歡這故事，尤其是當中的情懷，更形容它為「a romance that never was（從未發生的愛情故事）」。

由於周潤發在德寶只剩下一部片約，本來是要演德寶歷來投資最大的電影

《中華戰士》（1987）的，但岑仍特意抽調他去演《秋》片，改由爾冬陞頂上他在《中》片的角色。

張婉婷表示，大部分監製或投資者看劇本，多側重是否賺錢、有甚麼卡士等，因此能夠遇上岑建勳，這種只要電影好看就願意投資的人，自覺幸運。「我們這些在海外讀電影回來的新浪潮導演，如果只是空有抱負，沒有遇上伯樂，是不可能冒起的。」

最終，《秋》片票房突破二百萬元，更獲得第七屆香港電影金像獎最佳電影、最佳編劇和最佳攝影三項殊榮，成為票房與口碑俱佳的德寶作品。岑建勳笑稱，他在《秋》片的創作貢獻是零，唯一的貢獻就是不干預。「我只會偶爾問他們幾句，答錯了，我就知道他們不知道自己在做甚麼；答對了，我就不再理會。這是他倆的創作，我不可能比他們更清楚那世界。若多加甚麼創作意見，那就會沒有了整體性，整部戲都會走歪。」

## 強勢監製軟硬兼施

登徒指出，不少人形容岑建勳屬強勢領導，但很多創作人仍願意與他合作，全因他懂得軟硬兼施。岑坦言，自己強勢，有時不止會改劇本，更會去剪片。「最重要是我能否幫到他？用哪種方式去幫他？」

岑建勳說，《最後勝利》（1987）起初拍下的結局是徐克飾演的黑幫「大佬」一刀插死曾志偉飾演的「細佬」。「這個結局當然不好，是徐克打電話告訴我，我才知道的，嚇得我差點把電話也掉了。」於是，岑立刻找導演譚家明和編劇王家衛出來聊天。他說，要說服這兩個人一點也不容易。「我出盡所有招數，由晚上十時聊至翌日朝早六時，最後叫 Patrick（譚家明）先照我的意思拍，拍完剪

好，整體看後再比較，你仍認為你的結局較好，我會讓你用。」結果，譚家明也認同岑的想法較好，因此才有現在大家看到的結局。「你不能只說這場戲不好看，沒有意思的。怎樣才是好？你要提出，再辯論。」

《等待黎明》的編劇陳冠中也在台下表示，該片的三位主角乘船逃亡前，原先尚有日軍進村抓村民槍斃，周潤發與萬梓良引開日軍的動作場面，但因節奏問題，岑建勳把這場全片最昂貴的動作戲剪掉。「這是很好的決定，畢竟整體效果才是最重要的。」

## 香港影人的「can do」精神

電視台編劇出身的陳翹英一直希望從事電影業，德寶成立不久，獲朋友岑建勳邀請，擔任創作部經理，負責商業大片的編審工作。對他而言，這是一項苦差，因為當時往往沒有完整劇本，要在現場即興創作。「第一次見識到片場打燈原來不是用來拍戲，是用來騰出時間寫劇本。」

岑建勳補充，當時拍的是《聖誕奇遇結良緣》（1985），本來在復活節公映的，但因洪金寶要拍其他電影，《霹靂大喇叭》（1986）不能如期在聖誕上畫，只好日以繼夜地趕拍《聖》片填補檔期。期間，他們不止試過半夜找製片崔寶珠要十二隻牛在數小時後拍攝用，更曾於夜晚在戶外搭景拍日戲。「鍾志文（導演）厲害，懂得用 HMI（高強度氣體放電燈）打燈，夜晚也變成白晝！」

陳翹英認為，這種極端的「即興」，看似很不專業，其實非常專業。「我在德寶那幾年最大的見證就是這種香港特色，完全是香港人的『can do（事在人為）精神』。我相信荷里活或日本的電影製作都沒可能達到這高峰。」

岑建勳表示，他的德寶團隊很不錯：創作部有陳翹英；宣傳部有舒琪、文雋；製作部有谷薇麗、崔寶珠；發行部又有張家振……全都令他引以為傲。也許正是有心意相通的知己人才匯聚，班底實力強大，才能成就德寶一浪接一浪的創意作品。■

張寶晶為香港電影資料館二級助理館長（研究及編輯）。

「德寶源起」座談會以粵語主講，足本片已上載，請到本館網頁瀏覽。



劉天蘭（右一）在「德寶歌廳」細賞自己主唱的《異鄉故事》（1987）主題曲〈望鄉〉。

At the zone 'Hall of Songs': Tina Liu (1st right) immersed in the theme song she sang for *Sapporo Story* (1987).



As the 1970s morphed into the 1980s, Shaw Brothers (HK) Ltd shrank its production and D & B Films Co., Ltd. capitalised on the opportunity to rise to prominence. Alongside the two movers and shakers at the time—Golden Harvest (HK) Limited and Cinema City Company Limited, it became one of the three pillars of Hong Kong cinema. Following the retrospectives of Golden Harvest and Cinema City in 2013 and 2016 respectively, the HKFA received support from Fortune Star Media Limited to launch the ‘A Different Brilliance—the D & B Story’ retrospective exhibition and publish a monograph on the subject in June 2020. We also organised a seminar on ‘How It Got Started’, hosted by Thomas Shin and featuring speakers John Sham, former D & B helmsman; Chan Kiu-ying, former manager of D & B’s creative department; and film directors Mabel Cheung and Alex Law. The guests shared their memories of the film production company in its most glorious years.



展覽廳中：（左起）張婉婷、羅啟銳、岑建勳、陳翹英、陳冠中  
At the exhibition hall: (From left) Mabel Cheung, Alex Law, John Sham, Chan Kiu-ying, John Chan Koon-chung

### Diversified Direction

D & B was established in 1984 by businessman Dickson Poon, in partnership with filmmakers Sammo Hung and John Sham; Sham was in charge of its production in the first four years. By the time it ceased operation in 1992, the company had made 67 titles. Its inaugural production *The Return of Pom Pom* (1984) was the sequel to a Bo Ho Films Company Limited production of the same year, *Pom Pom* (1984). The film was produced by Sammo Hung and it scored high in entertainment value, as well as genre and cast appeal. It ultimately grossed a whopping HK\$18 million at the box office. Yet rewatching it, one of the lead actors John Sham, said he felt embarrassed. ‘Did I really want to play such idiotic and silly roles as Beethoven and Lion Head? I don’t appreciate my performance at all, but I knew if I didn’t make blockbusters to earn money, I wouldn’t be able to make less financially promising alternative films. I had to strike a balance.’ Sham stressed that his guiding principle was that the commercial films he made were ones he could comfortably show his daughters.

Unlike Golden Harvest and Cinema City which specialised in mainstream martial arts titles and

comedies, D & B embarked on creative explorations and nurtured young creatives. It engaged in projects for which profit considerations were not first and foremost, like *Hong Kong 1941* (1984), a film about the fall of Hong Kong during the War of Resistance Against Japan, that followed close on the heels of its founding work. There were also *The Lunatics* (1986) and *Silent Love* (1986), which were concerned with disadvantaged groups in society; *Love Unto Wastes* (1986) which dissected love and desire in the city; and *Dream Lovers* (1986) which traversed time and space. These were all forward-looking alternative titles that still continue to mesmerise.

John Sham remarked that D & B’s diversity was no coincidence, but had much to do with his own background, social circle, and way of thinking. A baby boomer born and raised in Hong Kong, Sham grew up reading *The Chinese Student Weekly* and English language magazines, and watching foreign films; he was also a journalist in the UK. Sham later made a research trip back to Hong Kong when he was working on a documentary. There he made the acquaintance of Leong Pochih, Philip Chan and others in the film circle. He subsequently became Editor-in-Chief of *City Magazine*, a

position that allowed him to befriend New Wave directors who had studied film overseas, such as Tsui Hark, Anne Hui and Yim Ho. ‘My circle comprised mostly the New Wave. I got on especially well with them. It was the early 1980s. A mindset, shooting style and filmic language that detracted from that of folks raised in the studio began to take shape.’ Sham added that D & B’s positioning was also a classic example of how traditional and foreign cultures merged in Hong Kong. But he admitted that D & B was the youngest of the three ‘pillars’. ‘Of Golden Harvest, Cinema City, and D & B, we were definitely the “tiniest” in terms of financial power and human resources.’

### Films with Something to Say

Besides entertainment value, genre and cast, Sham believed a film’s appeal was determined by whether the director had something to say about society and the world, and whether they said it well through the film. ‘What do you want to say? If you have nothing to say, your work is no more than a money-making tool and I will judge its merits on its ability to bring home the dough. But if you have something to say, I’m all ears.’

Mabel Cheung agreed that the most important thing about being a director was giving vent to their thoughts and ideas. Two of her directorial efforts, *The Illegal Immigrant* (1985) and *An Autumn’s Tale* (1987), are related to immigration. The stories were created when talks over Hong Kong’s sovereignty were underway between China and Britain. ‘After the talk ended in 1982, British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher tripped and fell as she walked out of the Great Hall of the People. Hong Kong



「創意搖籃——德寶的童話」展覽，以時間線淺談德寶的歷史；文物櫃中精選展示連戲相簿、手稿等多項珍貴原物，上方配以繽紛的劇照及幕後花絮，讓觀眾全程感受德寶電影背後的創作故事。

The exhibition 'A Different Brilliance—The D & B Story' begins with a brief timeline introducing D & B's history. The second zone displays rare film artefacts such as production still albums and manuscripts, and features a light box portraying stills and behind-the-scenes photos. All these serve to rekindle visitors' memories of all the classic cinematic moments.

society was in a state of panic. I was studying in the US at the time. The US dollar plummeted and everyone told me not to return to Hong Kong. Immigration suddenly became a hot topic. Everyone was thinking: should we leave Hong Kong? If yes, where should we go? The immigration titles were the stories we wanted to tell.' Cheung also observed that films were her way of expressing herself, of saying what she wanted to say; that she never considered whether she was making an art movie or a commercial one, or whether it would be lucrative.

### Talent Needs a Good Eye to Blossom

Yet not all screenplays become movies. After wrapping up the script for *An Autumn's Tale* with screenwriter Alex Law, Mable Cheung decided to cast Chow Yun-fat, then known as 'box-office poison', as the protagonist. She felt only Chow could ace the role of a convincingly romantic low-life. It was only after Chow agreed to play that they went in search of investors and found themselves up against many obstacles. 'One company suggested we move the setting to Mongkok and change the protagonists to a Mongkok thug and a student of The University of Hong Kong (HKU). If that female character from HKU has family and friends, why would she need to depend on such a loafer in Mongkok? It's not logical. When I lived in New York, all yellow-skinned and black-

haired students were friendly with each other. We ate dinner together every evening. This engendered a feeling of interdependence.'

Alex Law, who has worked with Cheung for many years, added that although film companies liked the script very much, Chow Yun-fat gave them pause, to the point that they would ask Law and Cheung to choose instead among superstars, like Sammo Hung and Jackie Chan. Law quipped that Hung would have made the film a comedy. 'As for Jackie Chan, imagine him in the final scene, chasing the car. Do you think it would have intimidated him in the least, someone who could have jumped from the bridge in a heartbeat?' So they rejected all the suggestions.

Thanks to the introduction of John Chan Koon-chung, who was one of the producers at D & B, Cheung and Law later went to see John Sham with some trepidation; they dropped off the screenplay then promptly left. Shortly after they got home, they received a call from Sham inviting them to return to his office the next day to sign the contract. Sham recalled reading the script during a night shoot. He liked the story tremendously even though he had 10-odd pages more to go; in particular, he loved the sentiments of what he described as 'a romance that never was'. As Chow Yun-fat only had one film contract left with D & B, which was going to be the company's largest investment ever—*Magnificent Warriors* (1987), Sham placed Derek

Yee in that role instead, so Chow could do *An Autumn's Tale*.

Mabel Cheung said they were lucky to have met John Sham. At a time when the majority of investors and producers were attaching great importance to profitability and the popularity of the cast, Sham judged a film simply by how enjoyable it was to watch. 'For New Wave directors like us who returned from studies overseas, we would never have realised our ambitions without people with a good eye for talent.'

*An Autumn's Tale* grossed HK\$20 million at the box office, and bagged Best Film, Best Screenplay, and Best Cinematography at the 7th Hong Kong Film Awards. It was a D & B title that enjoyed both critical and popular acclaim. Sham joked his creative input was zero, that his only contribution was not interfering. 'I would ask them a few questions every now and then. If they answered wrong, I knew they had no idea what they were doing. If they answered right, I left them alone. It's their baby. I couldn't have known it better than they did. If I made too many creative suggestions, it would have hurt the work's integrity and derailed it.'

### Strong-Handed But Flexible Executive Producer

Thomas Shin observed that many people described John Sham as a strong-handed leader, yet many creatives were still willing to collaborate with him, because he

was adept at both soft and tough tactics. Sham confessed that at times he was hands-on not only in revising screenplays but also editing. 'The crucial thing is whether I was helping them and how I could be of help.'

Sham said *Final Victory* (1987) had an original ending in which the triad leader played by Tsui Hark stabbed his younger 'brother' Eric Tsang to death. 'This was not a good ending of course. It was Tsui Hark who rang to tell me. I was so shocked that I almost dropped the phone.' Right away Sham asked director Patrick Tam and screenwriter Wong Kar-wai to come out for a chat. He admitted it wasn't easy convincing those two. 'I used all possible tactics. We chatted from 10 at night to 6 the next morning. Finally I asked Patrick to shoot and edit a version in accordance with my idea, then compare it to the original. If he still thought his was better, then he was free to use it.' In the end, Patrick Tam agreed that Sham's idea was better, hence the ending we see now prevailed. 'You can't just criticise a scene for being no good. It is meaningless. You need to say how it can be better. Make suggestions then have a debate.'

John Chan Koon-chung, the screenwriter of *Hong Kong 1941*, added off-stage that similarly, *Hong Kong 1941* had a scene that never made it to the screen. Originally, just before the three protagonists flee by

boat, there is a scene where Chow Yun-fat and Alex Man try to distract the Japanese soldiers who have entered a village and are executing villagers. But John Sham edited out this action sequence due to its incongruous pace, although it was the most expensive scene to make in the entire film. 'This was a very good decision. It's the overall effect that matters.'

### 'Can Do' Spirit of Hong Kong Filmmakers

Chan Kiu-ying, who started out his career as a television scriptwriter, was recruited by his friend John Sham into D & B shortly after the founding of the film company. As the manager of the creative department, he was responsible for reviewing and vetting screenplays of large-scale commercial films. This was a tortuous task as there were often no complete screenplays to go by and a lot of improvisation happened on the set. 'For the first time, I realised that lighting was not done because there was a scene to be shot, but to free up time for writing the script.'

John Sham added that the film in question was *It's a Drink! It's a Bomb!* (1985) that was initially slotted for an Easter release. However, *Where's Officer Tuba?* (1986) failed to make the Christmas slot, as Sammo Hung was busy with other projects, so they had to finish *It's a Drink! It's a Bomb!* a few

months early to replace it. This meant not only having to work overtime, but dealing with emergencies such as requesting production manager Chui Po-chu to find 12 cows in the wee hours for a scene to be shot a few hours later, and shooting an outdoor day scene at night. 'Director David Chung was amazing. He used HMI lights and night turned into day!'

Chan Kiu-ying believed that such examples of extreme improvisation might seem frivolous, but they were highly professional. 'My most memorable observation from my years at D & B was this very Hong Kong approach to problems, which completely embodied the Hong Kongers' "can do" spirit. I think this is something filmmaking in Hollywood or Japan has yet to achieve.'

John Sham said he had a strong team at D & B: Chan Kiu-ying in the creative unit; Shu Kei and Manfred Wong in promotion; Linda Kuk and Chui Po-chu in production; Terence Chang in distribution.... He was proud of them all. Perhaps like-minded souls do find their way to each other and this was the secret to D & B's success. [Translated by Piera Chen] ■

**Cheung Po-ching** is Assistant Curator II of the Research & Editorial Unit of the HKFA.

**'How It Got Started' was conducted in Cantonese. For the video in full version, please visit the HKFA's website.**

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## 《創意搖籃——德寶的童話》

### A Different Brilliance—The D & B Story

輯錄多位曾效力德寶電影公司（1984-1992）的影人訪談，分享其時的製作及創作過程，以至本地院線和影片賣埠的情況。多位作者的論述與此互為表裡，從製作特色、創作精神、作品意象等角度，探討德寶作品如何反映八、九十年代生活及文化上的各式面貌，當中的涵意，益見對後來者的啟導。

This book features oral history interviews with various filmmakers, who had served D & B Films Co., Ltd. (1984-1992) at different times. They share their experiences from film production, the creative process, local cinema circuits to overseas distribution. Essays by contributing writers serve as a perfect counterpart to their accounts, which explore how D & B films reflect the socio-cultural milieu at the time and how they continue to inspire and resonate with modern audiences.

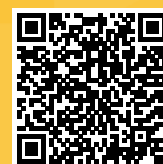
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能令我玩得夠顛兼奔放  
有你做我聖誕夜  
人就會雙眼發光

——《聖誕奇遇結良緣》歌曲〈聖誕夜〉

I, the loner, ran into you  
We embarked on an adventure together  
My heart suddenly roams free  
Wild from now on and forever  
You are my Christmas eve  
You make my life a wild, frantic party  
Ever since you've become my Christmas eve  
My eyes have been sparkling

— Lyrics of 'Christmas Night' from  
*It's a Drink! It's a Bomb!*

《聖誕奇遇結良緣》（1985）貫徹德寶電影健康路線，三位主角大癲大肺，有驚無險。這個「三人行」跟祖與占的浪漫絕緣，Cat（張曼玉）心無城府，孩子氣重的朱頭嘜（岑建勳）有勇，足智多謀的二撇雞（林子祥）有義，組成港版不來梅童話。

*It's a Drink! It's a Bomb!* (1985) is another D & B's family-friendly production. Boisterous and impulsive, the three protagonists remain unscathed despite numerous close calls. The idea of a 'Trio' in this film is worlds apart from the 'ménage à trois' in *Jules and Jim* (1962): Cat (played by Maggie Cheung) is simple and candid; Stewart Pik (played by John Sham) has a brave heart and Bobo Lam (played by George Lam) is a loyal friend. Instead of Bremen, they are the Hong Kong 'Town Musicians'.