



KAO Li 高立 (1924.10.5–1983.8.17)

Director

A native of Nanjing, Kao worked as a primary school teacher and civil servant after graduating from a normal school. He travelled around the Mainland during the war with a theatre troupe. Kao entered the film industry in 1951 as a continuity and started working with Li Han-hsiang in *Blood in Snow* (1956), first as a continuity and later as an assistant director in a number of Li's films, such as *Lady in Distress* (1957) and *A Mellow Spring* (1957) for Shaw & Sons Ltd, as well as the famous *The Kingdom and the Beauty* (1959), *Back Door* (1960), *Yang Kwei-Fei, the Magnificent Concubine* (1962), *The Empress Wu Tse-tien* (1963) and *Beyond the Great Wall* (1964) for Shaw Brothers (Hong Kong) Ltd. Kao also wrote the screenplays of *He Has Taken Him for Another* (1957) and *Diau Charn* (1958), both directed by Li Han-hsiang; the latter further won Best Screenplay at the 5th Asian Film Festival. He made his directorial debut with the critically acclaimed *The Pistol* (co-directed with Li Han-hsiang, 1961). His second film was a *huangmei diao* musical, *Return of the Phoenix* (1963). In 1965, Kao directed *The Mermaid*, which brought actress Li Ching to stardom; she was awarded Best Actress at the 12th Asian Film Festival. In addition, Kao shot *Inside Forbidden City* (1965), *Dawn Will Come* (1966), *The Perfumed Arrow* (1966), *The Silent Swordsman* (1967), *The Mirror and the Lichee* (1967), etc.

He left Shaws at the end of the 1960s and joined Cathay Organisation (HK) (1965) Ltd, for which he made *Jade Dragon* (1968), *Eighth for the Border* (1969), *Affection* (1969) and *The Devil's Skin* (1970). He returned to Shaws in 1970 and directed *It Takes a Man to be Henpecked* (1971), *Of Wives and Mistresses* (1972), *Let's Go to Bed* (1972), and assisted Li Han-hsiang in the production of *The Empress Dowager* (1975). Kao later retired from filmmaking and launched into business. He passed away on 17 August 1983 in Hong Kong.