



KU Wen-chung 顧文宗 (1909.2.8–1981.6.15)

Director, Actor, Acting Instructor

A native of Wuxi, Jiangsu and with the original name Gu Jingyan, Ku went to work in Shanghai after graduating from drama school. He first worked at the Commercial Press to proofread national phonetic alphabets in textbooks, and later joined Unique Film Productions as a proofreader for Mandarin, where he was also the continuity, screenwriter, assistant director and film editor. Ku appeared in films such as *Pleasures of the Dance Hall* (1931) and *Han Xiumen The Shanghai Beauty* (1932). He came to Hong Kong during the War of Resistance against Japan and joined Runde Shaw's Nanyang Studio. From 1949 to 1957, he directed a number of Cantonese films, such as the *Thirteen Heroes with Seven Swords* series, the Fong Sai-yuk series, including the popular *The Story of Fong Sai-yuk and Wu Wai-kin* (1955); *Black Peony, the Heroine* (1951), *Heroine with a Red Mantle* (1951) and *Playboy Emperor* (1953). Ku also directed Mandarin titles such as *The Story of Qin Liangyu* (1953), *The 72 Martyrs of Canton* (co-directed, 1954) and *The Blood of Patriotic Souls* (1957); as well as Amoy-dialect works like *Mulian Saves His Mother* (1957), *Blooming Age* (1958) and *Beauty and the Beasts* (1959). Ku was nonetheless an outstanding actor, playing parts in *Beauty in the Maelstrom 1st chapter* (1956), *An Unforgettable Night* (1958), *Yang Kwei-Fei, the Magnificent Concubine* (1962), *The Perfumed Arrow* (1966), *The Twelve Gold Medallions* (1970), *The Warlord* (1972), *Ghost of the Mirror* (1974), etc.

In 1961, Ku scripted and directed the Amoy-dialect film, *Returning to Hong Kong to Marry* for Shaw Brothers (Hong Kong) Ltd. He also became the director of Shaws' Southern Drama Group the same year, devoting himself to training young actors and actress. He wrote many articles regarding to the methodology of training actors and recruited many well-known teachers to teach the group. Within two years, the number of students had gone up from just a few to over a hundred. Under Ku's direction, the training courses had been held for seven sessions, nurturing a host of talented actors and actresses, such as Cheng Pei-peí, Elliot Yueh Hua, Lo Lieh, Fang Ying, Li Ching, Golden Chen Hung-lieh, Chin Ping, etc. Ku had undoubtedly made an indispensable contribution to the development of Shaws at the time.