

WANG RENMEI

The Wildcat of Shanghai

Richard J. Meyer



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Illustrations

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(All photographs courtesy of the China Film Archive and Qin Yi.)



Introduction

I first saw the film *Wild Rose* in Pordenone at the world's largest silent film festival. There, with screenings of other films from the Golden Age of Chinese Films, I discovered this masterpiece film from the Hollywood of Asia. Over the next decade and a half, I proceeded to seek out and view, in depth, those magnificent motion pictures, mostly at the China Film Archive in Beijing. In addition, I started to research the lives of many of the stars who made this period so famous.

Thanks to my son, Mahlon, who is fluent in Mandarin and a writer and teacher himself, I was able to access and understand the materials about this period and the actors who appeared on the screen.

My first book about Ruan Lingyu, the brilliant actress who took her own life at the age of 24 at the height of her career, led me to her co-star Jin Yan. After finishing his biography, I realized that no history of Chinese film would be complete without a book about Wang Renmei, Jin's first wife who was a marvelous singer and screen star at an early age. Too early, it seemed as I unfolded her history—a history also affected by Chairman Mao Zedong.

All of these actors played in films which reflect the turbulent times of China in the twentieth century. Both Jin and Wang experienced the Japanese invasion, World War II, the Chinese Civil War, the creation of the People's Republic of China and the Cultural Revolution. Their careers and lives were affected by all of these events.

I am grateful to the hardworking staff of the China Film Archive in Beijing for making materials and films available to me. Several people in China spent time with me to talk about their experiences and their knowledge of Wang Renmei. I want to thank Qin Yi, Wang Yong, and Yuhua Dong especially. Assisting me with translation, in addition to Mahlon, were Yong Wei and Xinyu Dong.

I have used the pinyin system of romanization in the text except for the well-known names and historical references.

My wife Susan Harmon encouraged me to write another book. She, together with Michelle Cash, helped with typing the text and Michelle and Nona Perry assisted with transcriptions. Dr. Edwin Weihe, chairman of film studies at Seattle University, supported my efforts.

Finally, I would like to thank Michael Duckworth, publisher of Hong Kong University Press, and his talented staff, for giving me yet another opportunity to tell the story of Shanghai film stars with this book about "Wildcat" Wang Renmei.

Richard J. Meyer
Wellington, New Zealand
March 2013



Cast of Characters in the Life of Wang Renmei

In order of appearance in the text

Mao Zedong – chairman of the Communist Party of China 1945–1976; chairman of the People’s Republic of China 1954–1959.

Wang Zhengshu (Li’an) – father of Wang Renmei, teacher of Mao Zedong.

Wang “Xixi” – youngest daughter of Wang Zhengshu; her name was later changed to Wang Renmei.

Dr. Sun Yat-sen – played a role in the overthrow of the Qing dynasty in 1911; first provisional president of the Republic of China in 1912; co-founded Guomindang.

Yuan Shikai – second provisional president of the Republic of China 1912–1915; self-proclaimed emperor of China 1915–1916.

Chiang Kai-shek – president of the Republic of China 1948–1949; president of the Republic of China on Taiwan 1950–1975; leader of Guomindang.

Wang Renxuan – Wang Renmei’s oldest brother.

Zhu De – commander-in-chief of the People’s Liberation Army, 1946–1954.

Li Jinhui – founder and director of the Bright Moon Troupe; director of the Meimei School; father of Chinese popular music.

Wang Renda – brother of Wang Renmei.

Wang Renlu – brother of Wang Renmei.

Wang Renyi – brother of Wang Renmei.

Li Minghui – Classmate of Wang Renmei at Meimei School; fellow performer and singer with the Bright Moon Troupe; Shanghai movie star.

Luo Mingyou – owner and operator of movie theaters all over China in the 1920s and founder of Lianhua Studios.

Sun Yu – U.S. trained director who worked at Min Xin and Lianhua.

Shi Dongshan – one of China’s leading directors from the 1920s to 1950s.

Li Ming – caretaker of Wang Renmei in 1929, stage performer; underground member of the Chinese Communist Party.

Jin Yan – considered to be the most popular male movie star in Shanghai in the 1930s; first husband of Wang Renmei.

Situ Huimin – pioneer of Chinese sound reproduction.

Cai Chusheng – film director at Lianhua Studios.

Tian Han – famous Communist writer.

Nie Er – composer of many leftist songs, as well as the official anthem of the People’s Republic of China.

Zhang Shankun – flamboyant impresario and film producer; director of Xinhua Film Company.

Wu Yonggang – well-known director whose first film, *The Goddess*, is considered to be one of the top ten films made in China.

Tian Fang – head of the Beijing Film Studio and vice-dean of the Central Movie Bureau.

Ye Qianyu – well-known Chinese painter and second husband of Wang Renmei.

Qin Yi – second wife of Jin Yan; famous actress of Chinese films and friend of Wang Renmei.

Madame Mao (Jiang Qing) – actress in Chinese films during the 1930s; married Mao Zedong in Yan’an in 1940; one of the Gang of Four.

Deng Xiaoping – paramount leader of the People’s Republic of China from 1978 to 1992.

Yuhua Dong – student leader during the Cultural Revolution.

Dr. Wang Yong – professor at Shanghai Conservatory of Music and noted author.

Land of Fish and Rice

... crowded years and months of endeavor,
Young we were, and schoolmates,
In high assurance, fearless
Pointing the finger at all things . . .
Under the unmoving sky a million creatures try out their
freedom
I ponder, I ask the boundless earth,
Who rules over destiny?
Do you remember?
How, reaching midstream, we struck the waters,
And the waves dashed against our speeding boats?¹

The poem, “Changsha,” written by Mao Zedong about his days at the First Normal School in Changsha was a poem of nostalgia. He remembered the experience that he had under the leadership of math teacher Wang Zhengshu (Li’an) at the First Normal School in Hunan.

The future leader of the world’s most populous nation spent many happy days at the home of teacher Wang during the turbulent years after the overthrow of the Qing dynasty in 1911. In fact, one

summer he spent the entire vacation living at the educator's home. During that time, he had an opportunity to get acquainted with the entire Wang family, including the ten children and other relatives who stayed with the family.

It was a happy time for the teenage Mao, even though he was beginning to see the injustices of the contemporary Chinese society.

The young student was particularly fond of the youngest daughter of teacher Wang whose nickname was "Xixi," which meant double slight or thin. She later took the name of "Wang Renmei" when she was older. Renmei remembers that she would sit bouncing on the knee of this young student and never contemplated what the future would hold.

What Mao discovered living with the Wang family was a typical feudalistic family with modern ideas. For example, none of the daughters had their feet bound, nor did the female servants. Wang Zhengshu was not only a famous mathematics teacher in the province, he also tutored his children and others in classical Chinese, calligraphy, and medicine. He collected rare books which Mao had the opportunity to read. At the dinner table, children were expected to discuss the great Confucius classics that they had read. Even the servants were asked to recite. No one laughed at the poorly educated servant who made amusing mistakes when reading these texts, but the kindly teacher believed that a classical education was the foundation of the future of a modern China. He believed that learning could rescue the country from foreign imperialists and industrial development would make the nation stronger. He encouraged his children to study abroad.²

Mao, as a student at the First Normal School, was free and easy when he spoke, never getting flustered, losing his temper, or speaking in anger. However, when it came to the feudal autocratic

work style, he was not as temperate. In his views, “he made absolutely no compromise.”³

Each day, as Mao walked to school, he experienced firsthand the corruption of the ruling class. He “had a deep hatred for the entire old feudal order. He despised the gentry, whose mouths were full of benevolence and righteousness, for their meanness and their falseness . . .”⁴

As the First Normal School was located alongside the railroad, Mao observed that whenever troops came and invaded by train, the school was the first target. Sometimes the soldiers took everything in sight, including food and firewood. Other times, the students would not permit the soldiers to enter and so the troops simply took over the large dormitory. The young student was a witness to the killings and theft of the various warlords’ men.⁵

Mao’s grades in math were poor because he was more interested in other subjects and reading his own books. Despite this, Wang Renmei’s father, the math teacher, still had a high regard for Mao because of his abilities as a natural leader in the school. Her father was instrumental in preventing Mao from being expelled from the First Normal School in an incident in which the young student stirred the student union to fight red tape. Mao harassed the stuffy and corrupt principal whom Mao called “Mr. Turn-back-the-clock.” He also was one of the leaders persuading students to barricade the school against soldiers who wanted to loot.⁶

Several authors hint that the province of Hunan (“south of the lake”) and the capital city of Changsha (“long sands”), known as the “land of fish and rice,” were an influence not only on Mao but on many people who came from that province and contributed to the development of the Chinese nation. The attributes of Hunanese people can be summed up with the quote in Ross Terrill’s biography of Mao, “China can be concurred only when every Hunanese is

dead,” these people “fight and curse and state their views with gusto.” Terrill says that they are known as China’s Prussians.⁷

Other writers claim the ancient beauty of Hunan Province was instrumental in the development of its people. Hunan is a temperate region with misty undulating hills that have been populated ever since the Neolithic Age. Buddhist temples dating from the Tang dynasty (AD 618–906), when Buddhism first came here, are still in use. Three hundred species of trees grow in the hills where wild animals still roamed in the early twentieth century. Bertrand Russell, who visited in 1921, viewed Changsha just like a medieval town with narrow streets and no traffic possible except sedan chairs and rickshaws. The First Normal School, where Professor Wang taught and Mao studied, was built in a Romanesque style with a wide column porch. The classrooms had wooden floors and glass windows.⁸

Hunan was a land of contrasts as Wang Renmei and Mao Zedong grew up—contrast between the natural environment and the marauding soldiers; contrast between old feudalistic ideas and the emerging revolutionary movements started by Dr. Sun Yat-sen and which challenged the ancient dynasties which had ruled China for thousands of years.

Three years before Wang Renmei was born in 1914, the old Manchu dynasty was overthrown. In Changsha, as in most areas of China, people rose up against the soldiers of the Qing dynasty. However, Mao observed that the leaders of the rebellion were killed in the street and the representatives of the gentry took over. He really believed that they were killed because they were poor and stood for the interests of the oppressed and that the landlords and merchants were dissatisfied with them. This led Mao to join the revolutionary forces where he spent most of his six months in the army reading newspapers.

On New Year's Day 1912, Dr. Sun Yat-sen was sworn in at Nanjing as China's first president. Yuan Shikai, who became the next provisional president, was about to challenge Sun's leadership and the Hunanese were preparing to oppose him. Sun and Yuan came to an agreement and on February 12, the emperor abdicated. Two days later, Sun stepped down in Yuan's favor. A few months later, Mao decided to return to school.

The province of Hunan was caught up in the struggle between Sun and Yuan from 1912 to 1916. During this time, the reformist governor was ousted by Yuan and the Changsha arsenal was blown up. Yuan proclaimed himself emperor in 1915 and capitulated to Japan, which was when secret societies rebelled against Beijing's appointed governor of Hunan. These efforts failed, but the governor declared Hunan independent. That government fell in 1916 after the governor fled and Yuan died. Prolonged political chaos followed with weeks of bloodletting and internal strife in Changsha.

During all those years of turbulence, Wang Renmei's father continued to instruct Mao and other students at the First Normal School, even though for many months teachers went unpaid. Many students fled, but Mao remained and received his teaching diploma in June of 1918 when Renmei was four years old.⁹

Mao considered the time when he returned to the First Normal School, after his brief army service as one of the most influential periods of his life. He developed his mind, writing ability, and physical strength. In 1915, he was elected secretary of the Students' Society at the First Normal school and two years later, he had a leading role in forming the New People's Study Society, Xinmin Xuehui, which was one of the most radical student groups in China at that time. "Virtually its entire membership ultimately joined the Communist Party." Mao graduated from the First Normal School in spring 1918 and returned to Hunan in the summer of 1919 after a

half of a year in Beijing where he had participated in the political activity that followed the May Fourth student demonstrations. According to Stuart Schram, “he had already set his foot on the path that would lead him shortly to a career as a professional Revolutionary.” Mao became director of the primary school that was attached to the First Normal School in 1920 and subsequently became a Marxist. Attending the primary school was little Wang Renmei, whose path seemed to be intertwined with that of the new primary school director.¹⁰

In his work at the school, Mao continued to follow what he had written in 1917 in “a study of physical culture,” which was published in *Hsin Ch’ing-nien* (New Youth) in 1917. He wrote:

Our nation is wanting in strength. The military spirit has not been encouraged. The physical condition of the population deteriorates daily. This is an extremely disturbing phenomena . . . If this state continues, our weakness will increase further. To attain our goals and make our influence felt are external matters, results. The development of our physical strength is an internal matter, a cause. If our bodies are not strong, we will be afraid as soon as we see enemy soldiers, and then how can we attain our goals and make ourselves respected? . . . The principle aim of physical education is military heroism.¹¹

Mao’s emphasis on physical education influenced young Wang Renmei when she entered the primary school at age six. “I did not feel the curriculum was very difficult because I already studied classical Chinese and mathematics at home and two of my sisters were teachers. So, I did not want to spend too much time in studying—I really liked sports.”¹²

Notes

1. Ross Terrill, *A Biography: Mao* (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1980), p. 76.
2. Wang Renmei, *Memoir: Wo de chengming yu buxing*, Xie Bo (ed.) (Shanghai: Shanghai Art Press [Shanghai: Wenyi Chubanshe], 1985), pp. 3–6.
3. Li Jui, *The Early Revolutionary Activities of Comrade Mao Tse-Tung*, Anthony W. Sariti (trans.), James C. Hsiung (ed.) (White Plains, NY: M.E. Sharpe 1977), pp. 43–44.
4. Li, *The Early Revolutionary Activities of Comrade Mao Tse-Tung*, p. 46.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 46–49.
6. Terrill, *A Biography: Mao*, p. 32.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 6–7.
8. Jung Chang and Jon Halliday, *Mao: The Unknown Story* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005), pp. 2–11.
9. Phillip Short, *Mao: A Life* (New York: Henry Holt & Company, LLC., 1999), pp. 46–78.
10. Stuart Schram, *Mao Tse-tung* (New York: Simon and Schuster, second printing, 1966), pp. 38–51.
11. *Ibid.*, pp. 28–36.
12. Wang Renmei, *Memoir: Wo de chengming yu buxing*, p. 20.



Filmography of Wang Renmei 1914–1987

Yinhe Shuangxing (Double Stars Shining in the Milky Way/Two Stars Shining in the Milky Way), 1931 Lianhua Studios, black and white; no sound; Director: Shi Dongshan; Cast: Wang Renmei, Jin Yan (Yang Yiyun), Zi Luolan (Li Yueying), Gao Zhanfei (Gao Qi), Ye Juanjuan, Chen Yanyan (actor), Song Weisai (Li Xudong), Li Jiqun (assistant director), Wang Cilong, Zhou Wenzhu, Sun Yu, Tang Tianxiu, Cai Chusheng, Li Lili, Zhou Ke, Dong Shaofen.

Bajiaoye Shang Shi (Poetry on Palm Leaves), 1931, Tian Yi Movie Company, black and white; Director: Sun Yu; Sound: Situ Huimin; Cast: Wang Renmei, Bright Moon Troupe.

Chunchao (Stirring of Love/The Spring Tide), 1931 Heng Sheng Film Company; Director: Zheng Yingshi; Script: Cai Chusheng; Cinematography: Chen Emian; Art: Cai Chusheng; Cast: Wang Renmei, Gao Zhanfei, Yuan Congmei.

Ye Meigui (Wild Rose), 1932 Lianhua Studios, black and white; no sound; Director: Sun Yu; Cast: Wang Renmei (Xiao Feng), Jin Yan (Jiang Bo), Ye Juanjuan (Su Qiu), Zheng Junli (Xiao Li), Wei Langen (Lao Qiang), Zhang Zhizhi (father of Xiao Feng), Hong Jingling (Hu Jin), Liu Jiqun (Lao Niu).

Gongfu Guonan (Going to Aid the Nation Together/Coming to the Rescue of Our Country), 1932, Lianhua Studios, black and white; Directors: Cai Chusheng, Shi Dongshan, Sun Yu, Wang Cilong; Script: Sun Ya; Cast: Wang Renmei (civilian), Jin Yan (volunteer soldier), Wang Cilong (Hua Weng), Gao Zhanfei (Zhangzi/eldest son), Song Wei (Cizi/second eldest), Deng Junli (Sanzi/third son), Jiang Junchao (Sizi /fourth son), Zhou Wenshu (Zhangxi/eldest daughter-in-law), Ye Juanjuan (Cixi/second daughter-in-law), Chen Yanyan (Zhangnu/eldest daughter), Liu Jiqun (servant).

Duhui De Zaochen (The Morning of a Metropolis), 1933, Lianhua Studios, silent; Director: Cai Chusheng; Cinematographer: Zhou Ke; Cast: Wang Renmei (Xu Lan'er), Gao Zhanfei (Xu Qiling), Yuan Congmei (Xu Huiling), Tang Huaiqiu (Huang Menghua), Wang Guiling (Xu Ada), Liu Jiqun (Xiao Zhang), Ye Juanjuan (a girl who loses her footing), Tang Tianxiu (Mr. Huang's wife), Han Langen (the youngest son).

Yu Guang Qu (Song of the Fishermen), 1934, Lianhua Studios, black and white; Director: Cai Chusheng; Cast: Wang Renmei (Xu Xiaomao), Luo Peng (He Ziyang), Yuan Congmei (He Renzhai), Han Langen (Xu Xiaohou), Tan Ying (Xue Qiyun); Tang Guanwu (He Shunwen), Pei Yiwei (uncle).

Xiao Tianshi (Little Angel), 1934, Shanghai Film Studio, black and white, sound; Director: Wu Yonggang; Cast: Wang Renmei.

Fengyun Ernu (Sons and Daughters of Wind and Cloud/Children of Troubled Times), 1935, Diantong Film Company; Director: Xu Xingzhi; Scriptwriters: Tian Han, Xia Yan; Cinematography: Wu Yinxian; Cast: Wang Renmei (Ah Feng), Yuan Muzhi (Xin Baihua), Tan Ying (Madam Shi), Gu Menghe (Liang Zhifu), Lu Luming (girlfriend).

Changhen Ge (The Song of Perpetual Regret), 1936, Xinhua Enterprises; Director: Shi Dongshan; Cinematography: Cui Baoqing; Cast: Wang Renmei (Ma Nina), Mei Xi (Zhu Dongxin), Jin Shan (Hong Nanping), Wang Naidong (Xu Peilan), Gu Eri (Father Ma), Xu Manli (Yu Wanfen).

Zhuangzhi Lingyun (Soaring Aspirations), 1936, Xinhua Enterprises, black and white, sound; Director: Wu Yonggang, Cast: Wang Renmei (Black Clown), Jin Yan (Shun'er), Tian Fang (Tian Dehou), Zong You (Old Wang), Wang Cilong (Jian Xi), Han Langen (Monkey), Zhang Zhizhi (Fatty), Chen Juanjuan (Black Clown as a child), Jin Lun (Shun'er as a child).

Huanghai Dadao (Pirates of the Yellow Sea), 1937, Xinhua Enterprises; Script/Director: Wu Yonggang; Cast: Wang Renmei (Lin Qing), Chen Tianyuan (Liang Yongnian), Zhang Huiling (Lin Lushi), Gao Zhanfei (Zhang Zhong), Xu Mianwen (Wang Keqiao), Tang Jian (Director Zhao).

Li Hen Tian (Parting from Heaven with Sorrow), 1938, Xinhua Enterprises; Director: Wu Yonggang; Cinematography: Bi Boqing; Cast: Wang Renmei (Rose), Liu Qiang (Ah Bing Cheng), Bai Hong (Little Rose), Han Langen (Ah Gen), Yin Xiucen (Old Sheng), Zhang Zhizhi (Old Zhang).

Changkong Wanli (Ten Thousand Mile Sky/Wings of China), 1940, Zhongyang Movie Studios; Director: Sun Yu; Cinematography: Hong Weilie; Cast: Wang Renmei (Bai Yanxiu), Gao Zhanfei (Gao Fei), Bai Yang (Bai Feng), Jin Yan (Jin Wanli), Wei Heling (Le Yiqin), Shi Chao (Mr. Shi), Gu Eryi (Mr. Gu).

Chun Hui Dadi (Spring Returning to the Earth), 1941, Hong Kong; Cast: Wang Renmei (*never completed due to outbreak of World War II).

Jinxiu Jiangshan (Beautiful Rivers and Mountains), 1946, Suzhou; Cast: Wang Renmei (*never completed due to outbreak of Chinese Civil War).

Guanbuzhu De Chunguang (Boundless Spring/The Spring That Cannot Be Confined), 1948, Kunlun Movie Company; Director: Wang Weiyi; Script: Ouyang Yuqian; Cinematography: Wu Weiyun; Cast: Wang Renmei (Mei Chunli), Feng Zi (Mei Chunhua), Zhao Dan (Wu Jingzhi), Zhong Shuhuang (Chen Wenqi).

Wangshi Sixia (Four Knight-Errants Named Wang), 1949, Hong Kong Great Wall Film Company, black and white, sound; Director: Shi Dongshan; Cinematography: Zhou Shimu; Cast: Wang Renmei (extra), Wang Yuanlong (Older Brother Wang),

Wang Xuefei (Wang Changyun), Wang Yingzhi (Wang Shidong), Wang Zhengxin (Wang Yizai), Wang Naidong (Wang Wulao), Zhou Wenzhu (Wang Yizai's daughter), Xie Yunqing (the brigand chief).

Liangjia Chun (The Double Spring/A Spring for Two Families), 1951, Changjiang Movie Production Company; Director: Qu Baiyin; Script: Li Hongxin (based on the novel, *Breaking Apart the Bitter Melon*); Cinematography: Shi Fengzhi; Cast: Wang Renmei (head of the women's ward), Qin Yi (Zhui'er), Gao Bo (Da Kang), Wang Longji (Xiao Yong).

Menghe De Liming (The Dawn of River Meng/Dawn over River Meng), 1955, Changchun Film Studio; Directors: Lu Ren, Zhu Danxi; Screenplay: Zhu Danxi, Sun Mu, Shi Chao; Cinematography: Li Guanghui; Art: Wang Guiji; Music: Chang Leming, Liu Wenpu; Cast: Wang Renmei (extra), Zhu Danxi (Luobu Danzeng), Tao Peng (Da Erjie), Su Man (Xie Chunbu), Liu Ru (Lang Jie), Liu Dachi (Chen Shaohua), Ba Lihua (Huang Hanchu).

Qingchun De Jiaobu (The Steps of Youth), 1957, Changchun Film Studio; Director: Su Li; Script: Xue Yandong; Cinematography: Li Guanghui; Art: Tong Jingwen; Music: Quan Rufen; Cast: Wang Renmei (Shufang), Yuan Mei (Lin Meilan), Chen Ying (Peng Ke), Liu Zengqing (Xiao Ping).

Tanqin Ji (The Story of Visiting Family/Story of Visiting Relatives), 1958, Beijing Film Studio; Script: Yang Runshen; Director: Xie Tian; Cinematography: Gao Hongtao, Chen Guoliang; Art: Tian Shizhen, Zhang Xiande; Music: Shi Lemeng; Cast: Wang

Renmei (extra), Wei Heling (Tian Laogeng), Zhang Yuan (Zhao Yushu), Zhang Ping (the third son), Sang Fu (Tian Gang).

Qingchun Zhi Ge (The Song of Youth), 1959, Beijing Film Studio; Director: Cui Wei; Script: Yang Mo; Art: Qin Wei; Music: Luo Bujian; Cast: Wang Renmei (mother of Lin Daojing's friend), Xie Fang (Lin Daojing), Yu Yang (Jiang Hua), Yu Shizhi (Yu Yongze), Qin Wen (Wang Xiaoyan), Ma Chenxi (Bai Liping), Kang Qin (Lu Jiachuan), Qin Yi (Lin Hong), Zhao Lian (Dai Yu), Zhang Miansheng (Hu Luoan).

Hua'er Duoduo (Flowers), 1962, Beijing Film Studio; Directors: Xie Tian, Chen Fangqian; Script: Xie Tian, Chen Fangqian; Cinematography: Li Wenhua, Chen Guoliang; Art: Xiao Bin, Mo Renji; Music: Kang He, Ding Ping; Cast: Wang Renmei (Fang Xiaohua's mother), Liu Jin (Fang Xiaohua), Cao Zengyin (old caretaker), Zhang Shipeng (little backstage manager), Hu Zhongtao (little assistant manager).

Kunlunshan Shang Yi Ke Cao (A Blade of Grass on Mount Kunlun/ Grass on Mount Kunlun), 1962, Beijing Film Studio; Director: Dong Kena; Script: Hua Ming, Dong Kena (based on the novel, *Hui Sao*); Cinematography: Gao Hongshou; Art: Zhang Xiande; Music: Liu Zhuang; Cast: Wang Renmei (mother of Li Wanli), Liu Yanjin (Hui Sao), Wang Zhelan (Li Wanli), Li Mengyao (Lao Hui), Zhao Wande (Xiao Liu).



About the Author

Richard J. Meyer teaches film at Seattle University and is a visiting scholar at the New Zealand Film Archive. He was a distinguished fellow at the Center for Film, Media and Popular Culture at Arizona State University in 2007 and the Distinguished Fulbright Professor at I'Universita' del Piemonte Orientale Amedeo Avogadro in Italy for the spring 2005 trimester. Dr. Meyer is Edmund F. and Virginia B. Ball Professor of Telecommunications Emeritus at Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana and a visiting professor at the Center for Journalism and Media Studies at the University of Hong Kong.

In 2001, he was a fellow of the Asian Cultural Council in Hong Kong. Prior to his appointment to the endowed chair, he was Fulbright Scholar at National Chengchi University in Taiwan where he studied Chinese silent films at the Beijing, Shanghai, Taipei, and Hong Kong Film Archives. Dr. Meyer received his BA and MA degrees from Stanford University and his Ph.D. from New York University. His postdoctoral fellowships were at Columbia University and the East-West Center in Honolulu.

While pursuing a career in public broadcasting as a producer and executive with WNET, New York and CEO at KCTS Seattle and KERA/KDTN Dallas, he maintained a passion for film by experimenting with the medium, as noted by *TV Guide* in April, 1969. He has published in *Public Opinion Quarterly*, *Journal of Broadcasting*, *Educational Broadcasting Review*, *Film Comment*, *NEA Journal*, *Time (Asia)* and other periodicals and books. His chapter “Blacks and Broadcasting” appears in the book, *Broadcasting and Bargaining*, published by the University of Wisconsin Press. His section on “The Films of David Wark Griffith” is featured in *Focus on D. W. Griffith*, published by Prentice-Hall. His piece “Reaction to the ‘Blue Book’” is presented in *American Broadcasting*, published by Hastings House.

Dr. Meyer has written about the Pordenone International Silent Film Festival for *American Way Magazine*, the *Dallas Morning News*, and other publications. In addition, he has produced two CDs: “Piano Themes from the Silent Screen” and “Piano Portraits of the Goddess,” and three DVDs: the 1934 classic Chinese film, *The Goddess*; the 1931 Shanghai hit, *The Peach Girl*; and *Wild Rose*, one of the most popular films of the 1930s. His books, *Ruan Ling-yu: The Goddess of Shanghai* and *Jin Yan: The Rudolph Valentino of Shanghai*, were published by Hong Kong University Press in 2005 and 2009 respectively.

Throughout the United States, Asia, Southern Africa, and Europe, Dr. Meyer has been a broadcasting consultant, technical and media advisor to public and private schools, cultural groups, the State University of New York, UNESCO, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, the United States Information Agency, and various radio and television institutions. He has worked in all phases of film and educational television production.

The series “Communications and Education,” on which he served as executive producer, won the Ohio State Award in 1968. His film, *The Garden of Eden*, was responsible, in part, for saving the Garden of Eden in Lucas, Kansas. He has been a speaker at the Buster Keaton Celebration, the Taiwan International Symposium on Public Media, the International Film Studies Conference, the International Federation of Film Archives (FIAF) Congress, and numerous venues about film and broadcasting.

Dr. Meyer was a member of the President’s Communications Council at Howard University, an associate of the Columbia University’s seminar on public communications, and an adjunct professor at Simon Fraser University in British Columbia, the University of Texas at Dallas and the University of North Texas. He was a member of the board of directors of the National Association of Educational Broadcasters, the board of managers of the Public Broadcasting Service, the board of directors of the Public Broadcasting Service, and the president of the Washington Educational Network. He served on the Executive Committee of the American Program Service, the Executive Board of the Meadows School of the Arts at Southern Methodist University, and as a member of the National Advisory Council of the Van Cliburn International Piano Competition and a director of the National Museum of Communications.

Presently, Dr. Meyer is president emeritus of the San Francisco Silent Film Festival and a member of the Board of Directors of the Seattle International Film Festival. He produces and introduces restored silent films accompanied by music at various “LIVE CINEMA” presentations. He is a certified scuba instructor of the National Association of Underwater Instructors. His underwater photographs and articles about diving have appeared in various magazines.