

REPORT ON THE WORK
of the
CHINA FILM ARCHIVE
to
The Fourteenth Annual Meeting of the
International Federation of Film Archives.

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October 1958

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On behalf of the China Film Archive, please allow me, first of all, to extend my warm greetings to the convocation of the 14th Annual Meeting of the International Federation of Film Archives, and my heartfelt thanks to the Federation and all our friends for the deep concern and unfailing help given us over the past two years.

After more than two years of preparation, the China Film Archive was established on September 1 this year. It is directly under the administration of the Film Bureau of the Ministry of Culture of the People's Republic of China. At present, it has five sections. The first is the secretariat section, in charge of administrative and financial work, capital construction and friendly exchanges with foreign countries. The second section is in charge of collecting and supplying reference materials, exhibitions, lectures and other work. The third is in charge of keeping and filing all kinds of materials related to films, including books and objets d'art. The fourth section is in charge of research work and compiling of materials. The fifth and last section is in charge of storing all kinds of films in the repository, and technical matters.

Over the past two years, the emphasis of our preparatory work has been placed on the collecting and compiling of materials related to films. To date, we have collected, compiled and kept on the files approximately five thousand titles of Chinese and foreign films, 62,000 rolls of films (including originals and reproductions), 30,000 stills, 4,000 film-scripts and scripts already adapted for films (including some manuscripts), 18,000 books and magazines (about 10,000 of these are on films, and 8,000 are related materials), and some costumes, props, designs, apparatus and objets d'art.

We have come across difficulties in our work, but with the attention, help and support given us by the government and all quarters concerned, we have been able to achieve what we have done, as I have just mentioned above. We also received the help and support of friends abroad. We should like to mention Comrade Privato of Gosfilmsfond of the Soviet Union for consenting to exchange with us a hundred films; and he has been so kind as to send us copies of the following six films:

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| 1, Александр Невский. | 4, Гроза. |
| 2, Арсенал. | 5, Девушка с коробкой. |
| 3, Встречный. | 6, Дон Диего и Педагог. |

At the same time he has given us a classified catalogue of the Chinese films in their collection. The Czechoslovak Film Archive has loaned to us Documents of Shanghai, a documentary made by our Soviet comrades in China in 1926, for us to make a reproduction. Mr. J. de Veal of the Dutch Film Archive has made for us a reproduction of The West Chamber, a Chinese film made in 1927, which is in their collection. We wish to take this opportunity to express our sincere thanks to them. We think this is a concrete manifestation of the spirit of mutual co-operation as promoted by this international federation.

As regards our work of collecting and compiling, we have made a classified catalogue and card indexes of the films, books, stills and other related materials. As the amount of these materials is constantly increasing, we have made a classified catalogue of the Chinese films produced from 1906 to 1949. (Since 1949, we have a list of the films produced every year.) This is of great importance to the work of editing the history of Chinese films and doing research work on the development of the Chinese cinematographic art. The materials we have collected are still far from being complete, and it is inevitable that there are defects in the compiling of certain items in our catalogue. But we have done our utmost to interview script writers, directors, actors and actresses, producers and distributors of the older generation in an attempt to obtain as much accurate materials as possible. From these interviews, and from the diaries they have so kindly lent to us, we have obtained much valuable material to supplement what we have already got, thereby making it possible for us to compile as accurate and reliable a classified catalogue as possible. In the course of our work, we have cleared up the question of the time the first Chinese film was produced, and the place where it was first shown. This is indeed something we should rejoice at. In this respect, we should like to mention that the materials we gave Mr. Sadoul concerning the production of Chinese films before 1949 need be corrected and supplemented in the light of the materials we have now compiled. We have yet to inform Mr. Sadoul about this.

Over the past two years we have collected tens of thousands of films, stills and related materials. But as there have been constant requests from various organizations to borrow these materials from us, we have not had enough time to make a careful study of them. At present, we are rather short-handed, but we have obtained the help of amateur film lovers and college students who, though young and inexperienced, are studying hard and exerting their utmost, and are bold in their thinking

and deed. Within the short space of two months, we have compiled a classified catalogue of the titles and card indexes of the greater part of these films and related materials. Though there is much to be desired, what we have done will, we believe, be of convenience to those who wish to find whatever materials they want. To these people, we can within a matter of a few minutes find out the materials they want, provided we have them in our archive.

Over the past two years, apart from putting our emphasis on the collecting and compiling of materials, we have done the following work. We took part in the exhibitions commemorating the 60th anniversary of the appearance of films held in Berlin jointly by the International Federation of Film Archives and the Film Archive of the German Democratic Republic. We also took part in the exhibition of animated cartoons and puppet films held in Paris under the auspice of the French Film Archive. At the exhibition commemorating the 60th anniversary of the appearance of films, we gave a comparatively systematic account of the development of the Chinese cinematographic art based on the materials available to us at the time. The exhibition aroused Mr. Henry Langlois's great interest. In accordance with his request, we have agreed to send these materials to the exhibition to be held in Paris next spring under the auspice of the French Film Archive. In addition to what has already been exhibited, we shall add some more materials which we have on hand.

Research work on the history of the Chinese cinematographic art has already begun. Though this work is not being undertaken by us, we are maintaining the closest contact with the organization doing the actual work -- the Chinese film history section affiliated to the cinematographic art research department of the Association of Chinese Film Workers.

We have done much in loaning film materials and in showing archive films; the scope of our activity is being enlarged gradually. Our country is at present forging ahead in great strides in every aspect of life, and urgent demands are made to make the fullest utilization of the film materials. We do not, therefore, confine the use of these materials only to research work on the history of the films and cinematographic art, or consider our work as solely concerned with the arts. But we make use of the materials at our disposal to serve the needs of the great socialist construction of our country. The policy of our entire work is very clear. We do not compile or do research work merely for the sake of compiling or research, but our work is directly linked with the

socialist construction of our country today. Our work of collecting film materials will therefore take on a new character and have greater significance.

I shall not take up your time by talking about our work for the next year or the years following the next. But I should like to take this opportunity to make an earnest request of the Federation and our friends present today. As we need urgently to carry the study of the development of cinematographic art throughout the world a step further so as to assimilate all the best elements to enrich our own film industry, we are in pressing need of exchanging films and related materials with the film archives of other countries. Over the past two years we have made much effort in this direction, but we have not done enough. We hope that our friends in various countries will recommend to us what they consider to be good films produced in their respective countries, and give us help by making reproductions of these films for us, supplying us with related materials, both written and in pictures, just as our Soviet friends are doing now. As to how we should carry out such exchange and as to the cost entailed for making the reproductions, we shall discuss in detail and come to concrete decisions according to varied conditions. We sincerely welcome the film archives of the various countries to hold exhibitions of films and related materials in our country, so as to introduce the development of the cinematographic art to our people, and promote cultural exchanges.

We have just set up our archive; much remains to be done. We have the confidence to do our work well, but as we are still inexperienced, I should like to say, once again, we warmly and earnestly hope that the Federation and all our friends here will spare no efforts to pass on to us your advanced experiences. We look forward to the further strengthening of co-operation between us.

I wish this session all the success, and wish all our friends the best of health.