

## NEW CHINA'S FORGOTTEN CINEMA, 1949–1966 More Than Just Politics

by Greg Lewis

Several years ago when planning a course on modern Chinese history as seen through its cinema, I realized or saw a significant void. I hoped to represent each era of Chinese cinema from the Leftist movement of the 1930s to the present “Sixth Generation,” but found most available subtitled films are from the post-1978 reform period. Films from the Mao Zedong period (1949–76) are particularly scarce in the West due to Cold War politics, including a trade embargo and economic blockade lasting more than two decades, and within the arts, a resistance in the West to Soviet-influenced *Socialist Realism*.

Two years ago I began a project, *Translating New China's Cinema for English-Speaking Audiences*, to bring Maoist cinema to students and educators in the US. Several genres from this era's cinema are represented in the fifteen films we have subtitled to date, including those of heroic revolutionaries (*geming yingxiong*), workers-peasants-soldiers (*gongnongbing*), minority peoples (*shaoshu minzu*), thrillers (*jingxian*), a children's film, and several love stories. Collectively, these films may surprise teachers and students alike. To be sure, they are not subtle in justifying the Communist victory nor the correctness of Chinese Communist Party (CCP) policy. However, film-makers' earnest and vigorous depictions of the common people and their lives, and of economic reconstruction, offer educators the opportunity to humanize a people and an era that has often been demonized in the West and to reflect explicit aspects of cultural history unknown to non-Chinese audiences.

In addition to providing a window to Chinese culture and history for educators and students, we hope this project stimulates a discourse on the significance of Maoist cinema. There is comparatively a dearth of written analysis on this era's films, but energetic debates are underway in China with at least four identifiable schools of thought. The theoretical approaches of these schools vary according to the themes they wish to emphasize. So-called *negation* [*chuan foudingde*] scholars tend to emphasize 'art for art's sake' or the heavy-handed politics of this era. Meanwhile, *leftists* [*zuopai*], including many veteran Maoist-era film-makers, continue to defend art that serves the people, downplaying political interference. Two other schools are the *perfectionists* [*wanmeide*], who feel that Maoist cinema substantially fulfilled its educational and entertainment obligations, and *centrists* [*zhongjianlu*], like Meng Liye, who identify the artistic achievements of the era's cinema even as they criticize the heavy-handedness of Maoist political administrators. To date, only the centrists have published book-length monographs that include empirical examples to support their theses (please see the annotated bibliography at the end of this article).

### Phase One. Economic Recovery, Heroic Revolutionaries, and Workers, Peasants, and Soldiers (1949–52)

Despite differences in perspective on Maoist cinema, general agreement exists as to the demarcation of its five distinctive phases (four of which are represented in our program). The initial phase of economic recovery (1949–52) began with the emergence of the Dongbei (later Changchun) Film Studio as China's new film capital. The studio, originally built by the Japanese in 1938, produced the first heroic revolutionary (*geming yingxiong*) and worker-peasant-soldier (*gongnongbing*) films in the new People's Republic (PRC). Among the best of these are two films from our program, *Daughters of China* [*Zhonghua nu'er*](1949) and *Gate #6* [*Liu hao men*](1952).

*Daughters of China*, one of the PRC's first features, is based on the true story of eight women soldiers who sacrificed themselves rather than surrender to the Japanese. Although its production values are quite modest, the film is valuable to educators and students above the eighth grade because of its historical immediacy and documentary-like quality. Veteran director Ling Zifeng authentically depicted the brutal Japanese consolidation of poverty-stricken wartime villages, the Chinese refugees' frantic struggle for food, and the socioeconomic and ethnic diversity of anti-Japanese opposition. He also coaxed an inexperienced cast to



convey the sense of outrage and desperation many Chinese villagers felt at the hands of the Japanese. Also, a remarkable variety of dialects by the film's actors gives indication of the "melting pot" quality that marked Dongbei Studio personnel in this early period.

*Gate #6* [*Liu hao men*] gives educators and viewers extraordinary insight to the plight of Tianjin dockworkers at the hands of their penurious bosses just before and after the Communist victory. Filmed on location with its largely non-professional cast and employing many actual dockworkers, this film sometimes also resembles a documentary. *Gate #6* is notable for the debut of charismatic, bus-ticket-seller-turned-actor Guo Zhenqing, who plays a starving, vengeance-minded dockworker, Hu Er, and for a bravura performance by veteran Xie Tian as the dockyard boss Ma Jinlong. Educators and students sixth grade and above will easily recognize straightforward themes of revenge, oppression, and especially, the workers' optimism at the Communist liberation. For additional context, *Gate #6* also includes an original fourteen-minute prologue featuring particulars about the film, film-makers, and its historical significance.



*Liu hao men* 六号门 [*Gate #6*] (1952)

Dongbei Motion Picture Studio.  
Director: Lu Ban  
Starring: Guo Zhenqing, Xie Tian

The first "worker's" film to employ large numbers of actual workers. *Gate #6* relates the conflict between Tianjin dockworkers and their bosses directly before and after liberation.

Phase Two. From the Wu Xun zhuan Movement to the Anti-Rightist Campaign: the Revival of Shanghai's Film Industry (1952–57)

### Phase Two. From the Wu Xun zhuan Movement to the Anti-Rightist Campaign: the Revival of Shanghai's Film Industry (1952–57)

The second phase of Maoist cinema, from 1952 to late 1957, began with the Mao Zedong-led movement in 1951 to criticize *Wu Xun zhuan* [*The Story of Wu Xun*]<sup>1</sup>—a film he viewed as servile and promoting education at the expense of Marxist ideology—and ended with the Anti-Rightist campaign. Despite these obstructive political movements and the end of private studio productions, China's film industry eventually increased its output and also moved beyond staple heroic revolutionary and worker-peasant-soldier themes to include thrillers, love stories, and children's films. Shanghai also recovered its pre-eminent status as China's film capital in these years, as indicated by the five films in our program from the second phase.

*Reconnaissance Across the Yangzi* [*Dujiang zhenchaji*] (1954) follows Chinese Communist scouts sent to locate Nationalist artillery positions before the decisive civil war battle in Shanghai. More elaborate and complex than the earlier *Daughters of China*, educators will find *Reconnaissance* reflects with reasonable accuracy the CCP's military strategy and People's Liberation Army (PLA)-local militia relationships. *Reconnaissance* also features a



*Dujiang zhenchaji* 渡江侦察记 [*Reconnaissance Across the Yangzi*] (1954)

Shanghai Film Studio.  
Director: Tang Xiaodan  
Starring: Sun Daolin, Qi Heng, Chen Shu, Li Lingjun  
B/W, 110 minutes.

This suspenseful and much-decorated film (1st class awards for best picture, director, and actor) follows a Communist scout team sent to locate Nationalist artillery positions before the decisive civil war battle in Shanghai in May 1949.

suspenseful story, elements of a thriller, and a poignantly understated love story between scout leader Commander Li and a village girl, Fourth Sister Liu, who years before had saved his life. Most important, *Reconnaissance* brought legitimacy to a beleaguered Shanghai Film Studio, gaining first-class recognition for best picture (one of only four films to be so honored between 1949 and

1957), director Tang Xiaodan, and lead actor Sun Daolin. Because of its seminal influence, we have also created an original, seventeen-minute prologue including details about the making of *Reconnaissance*, its cast and crew, and its place in PRC cinema history.

*The Little Messenger* [*Ji mao xin*] (1954), one of the PRC's first children's films, is suitable for American elementary students and above. Able film-maker Shi Hui, assisted by a youthful Xie Jin, examined Chinese village life and the Anti-Japanese War through the eyes of young shepherd Hai Wa, who has been entrusted to deliver a secret letter. Japanese military leaders and their Chinese puppet troops are portrayed as cartoon-like figures with bulging eyes and buck teeth. Under a less experienced director, the comic relief they provide might detract from the film's overall suspense and gravity. However, Shi Hui's accurate portrayals of the early-warning communication system, often operated by children, as well as of the extraordinary efforts of villagers to protect their grain from Japanese invaders, more than offset these commonplace stereotypes.



*Ji mao xin* 鸡毛信 [*The Little Messenger*] (1954)  
(aka "The Letter with Feathers")

Shanghai Film Studio,  
Director: Shi Hui  
Assistant Director: Xie Jin  
Starring: Cai Yuanyuan

Much-loved children's classic of a shepherd boy entrusted with delivering an urgent letter during the Anti-Japanese war.

Three films completed just prior to the Anti-Rightist campaign in 1957 are indicative of the relaxed atmosphere in the Hundred Flowers Period directly preceding it. *The City That Never Sleeps* [*Bu ye cheng*] (1957) features a rare portrayal of a Shanghai industrialist who survives the Nationalist-era inflationary spiral after 1949 and who eventually sees the state take over his textile business. This melodrama's vision of capitalism—both before and after 1949—is



**Bu ye cheng 不夜城 [The City That Never Sleeps] (1957)**

Jiangnan Film Studio (Shanghai).  
 Director: Tang Xiaodan  
 Starring: Sun Daolin, Gu Yelu, Li Lingjun  
 Color, 114 minutes.

This overlooked and rarely screened melodrama follows Shanghai textile industrialist Zhang Bohan and his family from 1935 to 1956.

uneven, to be sure, especially for a group of actual Shanghai capitalist-consultants to the production who criticized Ke Ling's script as illogical. However, director Tang Xiaodan offers compelling details about the inflation, including the daily price increases, rough queuing for precious metals and commodities, and especially, the inexorable movement of capital from productive investment to speculative ventures.

Equally interesting for students ninth grade and above is the portrayal of industrialist Zhang Bohan and his family after the Communist takeover. Zhang retains his factory and palatial estate, and through the gentle persuasion of his employees and state officials, comes to realize the error of seeking profit at the expense of his factory workers and the state. Finally, he voluntarily merges his factory with a jointly-run state operation and reconciles with his estranged daughter in the process. Although *The City That Never Sleeps* was not shown on a regular basis for more than twenty years, its unusual theme, elaborate sets, outstanding cast, and distinctive characterizations make it well worth seeing.

An interesting phenomenon of this second phase is the informal revival of the so-called star system. The heightened visibility of individual film-makers, especially those like Tang Xiaodan and Sun Daolin, both active before the liberation, coincided significantly with the restoration of Shanghai as China's film capital. This trend continued after 1954 and is particularly



**Hushi riji 护士日记 [Diary of a Nurse] (1957)**

Jiangnan Film Studio (Shanghai).  
 Director: Tao Jin  
 Starring: Wang Danfeng, Li Wei, Fu Botang, Huang Wensu  
 B/W, 95 minutes.

The story of a recently graduated Shanghai nurse who volunteers to work in a construction worker's clinic in a remote area of China despite the objections of her ambitious inter-fiance. Features popular actress Wang Danfeng in what was arguably her best-known role.

evident in films like *The City That Never Sleeps* and *Diary of a Nurse* [*Hushi riji*] (1957). *Diary of a Nurse* features prolific director Tao Jin and an experienced Shanghai cast led by marquee actress Wang Danfeng. She plays Jian Shuhua, recently graduated from a Shanghai nursing school. She insists on working at a remote

construction site despite the objections of her doctor-fiancée, who is ensconced in Shanghai. At the construction site (an actual site in Inner Mongolia), she fends off the advances of a male colleague, deals with the jealousy of another co-worker, and receives an ultimatum from her fiancée to return to Shanghai. Of chief interest to educators and students ninth grade and above is the film's mixture of playful elements one might associate with bourgeois Shanghai culture, especially in the glamorous and beautiful Wang Danfeng, along with more orthodox communist rhetoric about party, reconstruction, and serving the people. The schizophrenic quality of the film is evident in Wang Danfeng's initial visit to the construction site; the contrast between her selfless devotion to the workers and her diva-like appearance is readily apparent.

*The Story of Liu Bao Village* [*Liu bao de gushi*], the third film in our series from 1957, also reflects the relaxed political atmosphere of the later second phase even as it differs from the two Shanghai films above in its budget, *aura*, and inexperienced cast. Produced by the Chinese Army's August First studio in Beijing, the film recounts a tale of forbidden love between a peasant girl and a soldier whose unit is passing



**Liu bao de gushi 柳堡的故事 [The Story of Liu Bao Village] (1957)**

August First Film Studio.  
 Director: Wang Ping  
 Starring: Tao Yulin, Liao Youliang  
 B/W, 72 minutes.

Described by scholars as one of the most important PRC films of the 1950s, unusual for its frank examination of love between a peasant girl and a soldier sent to protect her village from Japanese invaders and Guomindang brigands.

through her village. For the first time, PRC film-makers explored the psychology of a soldier tormented by divided loyalties. Educators and students ninth grade and above will note how soldier Li Jin, especially in his affection for the villager Ermeizi, portrays a less wooden, orthodox "socialist realism" than an earlier soldier (from 1955), *Dong Cunrui*. The film is noteworthy also for examining the relationship between the sometimes-cautious relationship between the PLA and villagers in a manner that informs without due exaggeration. Also of interest to educators are views of arranged relationships, overturning feudalism (in the form of the landlord and the villain Liu Huzi, both of whom wield absolute power over Ermeizi's family), and the issue of gender equality. Regarding the latter, remarkable parallels can be found between Ermeizi and the peasant girl Cuiqiao in Chen Kaige's film *Yellow Earth* (1984), the feature that introduced the entire Fifth generation of Chinese films.

### Phase Three. The Great Leap Forward (1958–60)

The third phase of Maoist cinema, encompassing the Great Leap Forward, began in 1958 and ended in 1960. Exhorted politically to build a "greater, faster, better, and more economical" China, the film industry registered impressive production increases in the first



永不消逝的电波 (1958) THE UNFAILING RADIO WAVE  
Yong bu xiaoshide dianbo 永不消逝的电波 [The Unfailing RadioWave] (1958)

August First Film Studio.  
Director: Wang Ping  
Starring: Sun Daolin, Yuan Xia  
B/W, 112 minutes.

Sophisticated story of love, intrigue, loyalty, and betrayal set in Shanghai through the years of the Anti-Japanese and Chinese civil wars. Sun Daolin's reprisal of the underground CCP radio operator Li Xia is one of his best-known roles.

two years of the Great Leap. Several new studios opened, and the state's film production for 1958–59 (totaling 189 features) exceeded the previous eight years' output. Films from the Leap vary wildly in quality, as Paul Pickowicz has noted in a seminal 1974 article (see bibliography). Several historical epics, like *Lin Xexu*, *The Long March* [*Wan shui qian shan*], and *The Song of Youth* [*Qing chun zhi ge*], were made in celebration of the PRC's first decade and reflect extra care in production, scripts, and cast. Other popular genres included thrillers and revolutionary romanticism, three of which are in our program.

One of the very best thrillers is *The Unfailing Radio Wave* [*Yong bu shao shi de dianbo*] (1958). Made in the Chinese army's studio, the film follows underground CCP radio operator Li Xia through the Anti-Japanese and Chinese civil wars (1937–49). Educators and students ninth grade and above will find fascinating the ambivalent attitude that PRC film-makers *not* living in Shanghai often exhibited toward bourgeois Shanghai culture. In a positive

way, female director Wang Ping's Shanghai enables Li Xia to live comfortably as a merchant by day (his legitimate "cover"), to fall in love with and to marry his "merchant wife," and to enjoy their young son and circle of friends (most of whom are fellow CCP members living in disguise). Yet Shanghai is also supposed to be murky and filled with intrigue and moral decadence. The sumptuous apartment and gaudy dress of puppet and Nationalist agents, especially Li Li'na, a courtesan who attaches herself easily to men she finds useful, were meant to be shown in a negative light but in fact often generated the opposite reaction from audiences. Other elements of the film that still resonate include the harrowing existence of CCP members living in Shanghai in these years, the widespread sympathy for the Communist cause among the working class, artists, and students in Shanghai, and the formidable intelligence networks set up by the ruling puppets of the Japanese, and, after 1945, by the Nationalists. Less satisfactory is the love story, which is woefully underdeveloped (especially when compared to the one in *The Story of Liu Bao Village*, also a Wang Ping-directed film), and several cartoon-like characters.



Jintian wo xiuxi 今天我休息 [My Day Off] (1959)

Haiyan Film Studio (Shanghai).  
Director: Lu Ren  
Starring: Zhong Xinghuo, Zhao Shuying, Ma Ji,  
Li Baoluo, Shi Yuan  
B/W, 85 minutes.

Zhong Xinghuo is outstanding in his first starring role as an altruistic Shanghai policeman performing heroic feats during China's Great Leap Forward. A love story offers an appealing subplot in this episodic comedy.

The optimistic zeal and innocence peculiar to the Leap are captured well in the project's two films from 1959. *My Day Off* [*Jintian wo xiuxi*] provides an informative look at the arranged engagement of a policeman, Ma Tianming, and of a model female postal worker, Liu Ping. Perhaps, because of its low budget (70,000 RMB, including 17 yuan total for costumes), the film offers educators and students above the sixth grade numerous realistic "slice of life" perspectives on Shanghai during the Leap: i.e., on the bus, at the police station, and in the hospital. The spontaneous exuberance of charismatic lead actor Zhong Xinghuo (in his first starring role) is revealed through the amazing variety of tasks he undertakes on his day off. Besides the unusually benign commentary on the hit-and-miss Sunday courtship of the protagonists, *My Day Off* extols the virtues of self-sacrifice, hard work, and economic reconstruction.

The second film, *Women of the Great Leap Forward* [*Wan zhi qian hong zongshi chun*] (1959) details the lives of several production team members and their families. Led by an all-star Shanghai cast featuring an animated Zhang Ruifang, the luminous actress Sha Li, and a bookish, chauvinistic Sun Daolin, the film is valuable in

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Wan zi qian hong zongshi chun 万紫千红总是春  
[Women of the Great Leap Forward] (1959)  
(aka "Everywhere is Spring")

Haiyan Film Studio (Shanghai).  
Director: Shen Fu  
Starring: Zhang Ruifang, Sha Li, Wang Yi, Sun Daolin,  
Fan Xuepeng  
Color, 110 minutes.

Another fascinating perspective on China's reconstruction, this involving the demands by a neighborhood bloc of Shanghai women to be included as participants in the Great Leap Forward.

in-law, and two youthful single model workers. Their contributions to production, put forth with a *can do* enthusiasm, suggest how China tried to export its light industrial production in these two years. Ironically, however, the unintended truths embodied in the skepticism of the mother-in-law, resonate still and offer poignant insight to the Leap's failures.

#### Phase Four. The Thermidorean Interregnum (1961–65)



Hongse niangziju 红色娘子军 [The Red Detachment of Women]  
(1961) Tianma Film Studio (Shanghai). Color, 112 minutes.

Director: Xie Jin  
Starring: Wang Xin'gang, Zhu Xijuan, Chen Qiang, Chen Shu  
Xie Jin's stylish treatment of the first women's company in the Red Army on Hainan Island in the early 1930s swept the first Hundred Flowers awards (best picture, director, actress, and supporting actor). The film is also interesting for its film noir-like quality.

integration of politics and art. This feature gives stylish treatment to the first women's company in the Red Army on Hainan Island in the early 1930s. Teachers will find much to recommend in the dramatic interweaving of the three main roles: a servant girl-turned-guerrilla out to avenge her father's death; the company's virile male CCP secretary who, disguised as an overseas merchant, recruits her; and most important, the tyrant-landlord who opposes them and attempts to liquidate the Communists. *Red Detachment* swept China's first Hundred Flowers awards for best picture, best director (Xie Jin), actress (newcomer Zhu Xijuan), and supporting actor (Chen Qiang). Its theatrical lighting and dramatic camera angles are reminiscent of 1940's American *film noir*, and in fact, Xie Jin has been cited by

several ways to educators and students above the sixth grade. First, its frankly bourgeois and melodramatic examination of a Shanghai neighborhood during the Great Leap complements rather than duplicates the community perspective in *My Day Off*. Second, a variety of women characters dominate the film, including three housewives, a political commissar, a feudal-minded mother-

several Chinese commentators for directing in a "Hollywood style." Disturbing elements are present as well; mob violence and parading through the streets presage the worst excesses of the Cultural Revolution; and revenge, the motivating element for each of the protagonists and one that precludes compromise and ensures a fight to the death between the main protagonists.

*Li Shuangshuang* [*Li Shuangshuang*](1962), the twelfth film in our series, is a comedy-drama detailing a couple's travails as they implement a work-point system in a rural commune. It garnered *Hundred Flowers* awards for best picture, screenplay, actress, and supporting actor. Educators will find compelling the biting commentary on the institutionalized corruption existing in Chinese villages, and this after playwright Li Zhun softened his original 1959 story for the screen. Li Zhun also movingly depicts the earthiness of ordinary village life, particularly in the two main characters. The



Xiaobing Zhang Ga 小兵张嘎 [Little Soldier Zhang Ga] (1963)

Beijing Film Studio, B/W, 110 minutes.

Directors: Cui Wei, Ouyang Hongying Starring: An Jisi, Zhang Ping  
Story of a young boy who lives and fights with the Eighth Route army in order to save his uncle and revenge his grandmother's death during the Anti-Japanese war.



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title role is arguably the signature performance of Zhang Ruifang's career; her idealistic wife is selfless, open, and so principled as the production team leader that she turns in her husband to the local secretary. Convincing too is Zhong Xinghuo's impressionable husband, who symbolizes the easy inertia of a "live and let live" tradition.

The final three films share the common theme of oppression in the years before 1949. *Little Soldier Zhang Ga* [*Xiaobing Zhang Ga*](1963) follows the exploits of a youthful scout during the anti-Japanese war and as a children's film, is a good companion to the earlier *Little Messenger*. *Daji and Her Two Fathers* [*Daji he tade fuqin*](1961) introduces the Yi nationality of southern China amidst a melodramatic story of mistaken identity, parental anguish, and economic reconstruction. *Daji* also offers a rare positive portrayal of intellectuals and book-learning during these seventeen years. Our fifteenth film, *Serfs* [*Nongnu*], a story of Tibetan feudalism, created a stir when it was released in 1963. Screenwriter Huang Zongjiang took the unusual step of making the film's protagonist a mute, unwilling to speak of the horrors of slavery before the Communist victory. Use of a largely native Tibetan cast also makes *Serfs* unique even among minority films made before 1966.

Our project, funded through grants from the Hemingway Foundation and the Utah Humanities Council, will continue until May 2008. By that time we hope to have translated and subtitled an additional twenty-three films from the 1949–76 period, including films from each of the five phases. Films from the project are available to

educators through Interlibrary Loan at the Stewart Library, Weber State University, 2901 University Circle, Ogden, UT 84408-2901 (or contact Debbie Stephenson at [dstephenson2@weber.edu](mailto:dstephenson2@weber.edu) or by phone at 801-626-6384). ■

### Translating New China's Cinema for English-Speaking Audiences

The fifteen films translated and subtitled to date:

1. *Daughter of China* [*Zhonghua nu'er*], 1949. 86 minutes.
2. *Gate #6* [*Liu hao men*], 1953. 96 minutes.  
Includes 14-minute video prologue (133 visual images).
3. *The Little Messenger* [*Ji mao xin*], 1954. 67 minutes.
4. *Reconnaissance Across the Yangzi* [*Dujiang zhenchaji*], 1954. 103 minutes. Includes 17-minute video prologue (157 visual images).
5. *The City That Never Sleeps* [*Bu ye cheng*], 1957. 114 minutes.
6. *Diary of a Nurse* [*Hushi riji*], 1957. 97 minutes.
7. *The Story of Liu Bao Village* [*Liu bao de gushi*], 1957. 72 minutes.
8. *The Unfailing Radio Wave* [*Yong bu shaoshide dianbo*], 1958. 112 minutes.
9. *My Day Off* [*Jintian wo xiuxi*], 1959. 85 minutes.
10. *Women of the Great Leap Forward* [*Wan zi qian hong zongshi chun*], 1959. 110 minutes.
11. *The Red Detachment of Women* [*Hongse niangzi jun*], 1961. 114 minutes.
12. *Li Shuangshuang* [*Li Shuangshuang*], 1962. 108 minutes.
13. *Little Soldier Zhang Ga* [*Xiaobing Zhang Ga*], 1963. 95 minutes.
14. *Daji and Her Two Fathers* [*Daji he tade fuqin*], 1963. 100 minutes.
15. *Serfs* [*Nongnu*], 1963. 90 minutes.

### SELECTED ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Chen Huangmei, ed. *Dangdai Zhongguo dianying* [*China Today: Film*]. Two volumes. Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 1989. The best comprehensive critical study of post-1949 Chinese cinema published either in Chinese or English to date. Indispensable reference.

Clark, Paul. *Chinese Cinema: Culture and Politics Since 1949*. New York: Cambridge University, 1987. The seminal English-language treatment of Chinese film history, though the author's treatment of the 1949–66 period is brief and lacks discussion of particular films to support his theses. Reflects the Cold War period in which it was written.

*Dazhong dianying* [*People's Film*]. Shanghai, 1950–52, Beijing, Since 1952. Valuable primary reference on government policies, film industry facts, trends, and audience reaction to films, genres, and artists.

*Dianying yishu* [*Film Art*]. Beijing, Since 1956. Contemporary scholarly journal often publishes scholarly articles, interviews, and memoir accounts regarding 1949–66 period.

Hu Chang. *Xin Zhongguo dianying de yaolan* [*The Cradle of Chinese Cinema*]. Changchun: Jilin wenshi chubanshe, 1986. Seminal account of Changchun Film Stu-

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dio by its in-house historian who had access to many primary documents and accounts unavailable to outsiders. Author is surprisingly frank in his assessment of political excesses affecting the studio and industry during the 1949 to 1966 period.

Leyda, Jay. *Dianying: An Account of Film and the Film Audience in China*. Cambridge, MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1972. Often astonishing first-person account of a Westerner who was called to Beijing to help compile a catalogue of both Chinese and foreign films in China in the early 1960s. Cogent insights toward early PRC cinema, but lacks a theoretical framework.

Li Daoxin, ed. *Zhongguo dianying piping shi, 1897–2000 [History of Chinese Film Criticism]*. Beijing: Zhongguo dianying chubanshe, 2002. Impressive comprehensive treatment of genres, critical schools of thought, foreign influences by a brilliant young scholar, includes also numerous references to particular films, but surprisingly spare on 1949–66 period (127 pages of 750 total, or about 18 percent).

Li Suyuan, He Ke, and Yang Yuanying, chief eds. *Xin Zhongguo dianying wushi nian [Fifty Years of New China's Film Since 1949]*. Beijing: Beijing guangbo xueyuan chubanshe, 2000. Outstanding collection of 28 essays by prominent film critics, scholars, and insiders. Includes seven articles devoted exclusively to the 1949 to 1966 period, and a valuable (and rare) exposition by prominent perfectionist school of thought insider Chen Bo.

Meng Liye. "Jicheng yu fayang xin Zhongguo dianying de youxiu chuantong" [Carrying on and developing new China's outstanding cinematic tradition], *Dianying yishu [Film art]* 218 (1991–3), 9–13. Straightforward discussion by most prominent of centrist scholars, discusses how prominent film themes of the 1949 to 1966 period, such as socialist reconstruction, patriotism, and heroism, intermingled with traditional Chinese and foreign artistic techniques. Includes necessary historical context.

Meng Liye. *Xin Zhongguo dianying yishu shigao, 1949–1959 [Historical Sketch of New China's Film Art, 1949–1959]*. Beijing: Zhongguo dianying chubanshe, 2002. Most recent comprehensive treatment of first decade of PRC cinema. Similar to Zhang Jianyong's historical essay in volume one of *Dangdai Zhongguo: dianying [China Today: Film]*, but as former secretary of the China Film Association, Meng's account provides additional context, anecdotes, and analysis. Indispensable reference.

Meng Liye, Zhang Sitao, and Li Jinsheng, eds. *Zaijian geming lishi de yishu: geming lishi tici dianying yanjiu lunwenji [Goodbye to Historic Revolutionary Art: Selected Research and Discussion on Films with Historic Revolutionary Themes]*. Beijing: Zhongguo dianying chubanshe, 1993. Outstanding edited volume with thirty essays comparing films with revolutionary themes in the post-1978 reform period with those from the 1949 to 1966 period.

Pan Ruojian. "Shiqi nian xin Zhongguo dianying de huihuang yu candan" (Seventeen Years of Chinese Film Glory and Misery), *Dianying yishu [Film Art]* 233 (1993–6), 39–44. Concise reflection by centrist scholar on two-edged political ideology, which both inspired and limited artistic creativity and achievement in Chinese cinema, 1949–66.

Pickowicz, Paul. "Cinema and Revolution in China," *American Behavioral Scientist* (1974), 328–59. One of the first fairly comprehensive historical studies of Maoist-era cinema, outstanding both in description and analysis.

Shanghai dianying zhi weiyuanhui [Shanghai Film Record Committee], eds. *Shanghai dianying zhi [Shanghai Film Record]*. Shanghai: Shanghai shehui kexue chubanshe, 1999. Comprehensive factual reference on films, studios, artists, even includes figures on audience attendance and income for the 1949 to 1966 period.

Shu Xiaoming. *Zhongguo dianying yishu shi jiaocheng [The Course of Chinese Cinematic Art]*. Beijing: Zhongguo dianying chubanshe, 1996. Revised and reprinted in 2000. Comprehensive centrist coverage of PRC cinema artistic style and content, examined in the context of world cinematic developments. Generous treatment of 1949 to 1966 period.

Tian Zhengqing. *Beijing dianying yeshi ji [The Mark of Beijing Cinematic Industry History]*. Beijing: Zhongguo dianying chubanshe, 1999.

*Xin dianying [New Movies]*. Beijing, 1951. Short-lived but interesting periodical on contemporary Chinese cinema (similar to *Dazhong dianying*, which not coincidentally relocated to Beijing in 1952).

Zhang Yingjin and Xiao Zhiwei, eds. *Encyclopedia of Chinese Film*. London: Routledge, 1998. Best English-language reference on Chinese film, including pre-1949 period. Includes entries for particular films, artists, genres, studios. Lengthy historical essay by Xiao Zhiwei emphasizes "politics in command" for PRC cinema; one of the most forcefully argued negation school treatments for the 1949 to 1966 period in English or Chinese.

*Zhongguo dianying da cidian [Encyclopedia of Chinese Cinema]*. Shanghai: Shanghai cishu chubanshe, 1995. Indispensable reference is a "Who's Who" of Chinese cinema, including entries for artists, films, studios. Best of its kind.

Zhongguo dianying jiaxiehui [China Film Association], eds. *Xin Zhongguo baibu youxiu yingpian changxi, 1949–1998 [Analysis and Comment on 100 Outstanding Films of New China, 1949–1998]*. Beijing: Zhongguo dianying chubanshe, 1999. Summary and comment on most popular Chinese films made between 1949 and 1990. Includes only ten films from the 1949 to 1966 period. Better on content analysis than setting the films in larger context.

Zhongguo dianying jiaxiehui [China Film Association] and Dianying shi yanjiubu [Film History Research Department], eds. *Zhongguo dianying liezhuan [Biographies of Chinese Film People]*. Seven volumes. Beijing: Zhongguo dianying chubanshe, 1982–86. Indispensable reference on a wide variety of film industry personages, including directors, actors, actresses, critics, screen-writers, cinematographers, and administrators.

Zhongguo dianying jiaxiehui [China Film Association], ed. *Zhongguo dianying nianjian [China Film Yearbook]*. Beijing: Zhongguo dianying chubanshe, Since 1981. Comprehensive annual reference often includes articles on historical aspects of Chinese cinema (though rarely addresses controversies of the Mao period).

*Zhongguo dianying juban xuanji [Collected Chinese Cinema Screenplays]*. Fourteen volumes. Beijing: Zhongguo dianying chubanshe, 1979–94.

Zhongguo dianying yishu yanjiu zhongxin [China Film Art Research Center] and Zhongguo dianying ziliao guan [China Film Archive], eds. *Zhongguo yingpian dadian [Encyclopedia of Chinese Films, 1949–1976]*. Beijing: Zhongguo dianying chubanshe, 2002. Comprehensive factual information on all PRC films from Mao period, particularly valuable for its inclusion of private studio features made between 1949 and 1952.

Zhongguo dianying ziliao guan [China Film Archive], ed. *Quanguo baokan dianying wenzhang mulu suoyin, 1980–1989 [Index of Articles on Chinese and Foreign Films, 1980–1989]*. Beijing: Zhongguo dianying chubanshe, 1994.

Zhongguo dianying ziliao guan [China Film Archive], ed. *Quanguo baokan dianying wenzhang mulu suoyin, 1990–1994 [Index of Articles on Chinese and Foreign Films, 1990–1994]*. Beijing: Zhongguo dianying chubanshe, 1999.

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