

= Hu Die =

Hu Die ( Chinese : 胡蝶 ; Wade ? Giles : Hu Tieh ; 1907 or 1908 ? April 23 , 1989 ) , also known by her English name Butterfly Wu , was one of the most popular Chinese actresses during the 1920s and 1930s . She starred in The Burning of the Red Lotus Temple , which started a craze for martial arts films , Sing @-@ Song Girl Red Peony , China 's first sound film , and what is considered her best film , Twin Sisters . She was voted China 's first " Movie Queen " in 1933 , and won the Best Actress Award at the 1960 Asian Film Festival for her performance in Rear Door .

= = Early life = =

Hu Die was born Hu Ruihua ( Chinese : 胡瑞华 ; Wade ? Giles : Hu Jui @-@ hua ) in Shanghai in 1907 or 1908 , and moved to Guangzhou ( Canton ) when she was nine . Her father then became the general inspector of the Beijing ? Fengtian Railway , and she spent much of her adolescence in northern cities including Beijing , Tianjin and Yingkou , and learned to speak perfect Mandarin , which later proved to be a great advantage when the Chinese cinema transitioned from silent films to talkies .

In 1924 , Hu Ruihua moved back to Shanghai with her family . When China ( Zhonghua ) Film School , the country 's first film actor training school , opened , she was the first student to enroll . She adopted the professional name " Hu Die " , meaning " butterfly " , and Butterfly Wu in English ( Wu is the Shanghainese pronunciation of Hu ) .

= = Early career = =

Hu Die played her first role in the film Success , as a supporting actress . She played her first major role in the film Autumn Stirs Resentments ( Qiu Shan Yuan ) , and fell in love with her co @-@ star Lin Xuehuai . The relationship did not work out , and the local newspapers were filled with rumours when they broke off their engagement .

In 1926 , Hu Die had her big break when she was signed by Tianyi ( Unique ) Film Company , one of the major studios of Shanghai , headed by Runje Shaw ( Shao Zuiweng ) . Tianyi catered to the tastes of the common people with rapid production of films . Hu Die starred in 15 films within the two years she worked for Tianyi . Many of them , such as The Traumatic Romance of Liang and Zhu ( 1926 ) and Lady Meng Jiang ( 1927 ) , were popular , but not considered artistically worthy .

= = Mingxing Studio = =

In 1928 , Hu Die declined to renew her contract with Tianyi , and signed with the rival Mingxing ( Star ) Film Company , led by the shrewd businessman and director Zhang Shichuan , and the talented writer Zheng Zhengqiu . She had a salary of \$ 1 @, @ 000 a month , a large sum at the time . Her first film with Mingxing was Tower in the White Clouds ( 1928 ) . She befriended her co @-@ star Ruan Lingyu ; the two women would become China 's biggest film stars of the 1930s . Her role as Red Girl in the film The Burning of the Red Lotus Temple ( 1928 ) propelled her to stardom . The film was such a success that the studio made 17 sequels of the same name between 1928 and 1931 . It started a craze for martial arts films , but also attracted criticism from intellectuals when children neglected their schoolwork to study martial arts or devote themselves to martial arts fiction .

In 1931 , Hu Die starred in Sing @-@ Song Girl Red Peony ( dir . Zhang Shichuan ) , the first Chinese sound film ( although it was sound @-@ on @-@ disc , not sound @-@ on @-@ film ) . Compared with other silent @-@ era film stars , who were mostly southerners with poor Mandarin , Hu Die made the transition to sound with ease . She appeared in more sound films and was able to sing in The Flower of Freedom , a real sound film of much higher quality .

Hu Die starred in Twin Sisters ( Zimei Hua , dir . Zheng Zhengqiu ) in 1934 , in which she skilfully played the double role of twin sisters with very different personalities . The film was not only

extremely popular but also won critical acclaim . It is generally considered her best film .

= = Mukden Incident = =

On 18 September 1931 , Hu Die arrived in Tianjin en route to Beijing , where Mingxing was planning to shoot the film Marriage of Tears and Laughter , an adaptation of the novel by Zhang Henshui . On the same day , the Japanese engineered the Mukden Incident , and used it as pretext to launch an invasion of Manchuria . Zhang Xueliang , the " young marshal " who was the head of the northeastern army , ordered his soldiers to retreat rather than fight the Japanese . There was rumour that on the evening that the Japanese took Mukden , Marshal Zhang was dancing with Hu Die in Beijing , a serious charge which threatened to damage her reputation . Hu Die had to purchase space on Shen Bao , Shanghai 's biggest newspaper , to dispel the rumour , which she believed was started by the Japanese media in order to discredit Zhang Xueliang . Her account was corroborated by other Mingxing actors and employees . Years later , memoirs of people close to Zhang Xueliang indicated that he had never met Hu Die in his life , and Zhang was ordered by Chiang Kai @-@ shek not to resist the much stronger enemy .

= = Movie Queen = =

In 1933 , the newspaper Star Daily ( ???? ) conducted China 's first public poll for the most popular movie stars . Fans across the country , as well as some from Japan , participated in the poll , and the results were unveiled in a public ceremony on 28 February . Hu Die was the runaway winner with 21 @,@ 334 votes , more than twice as many as the first runner @-@ up Chen Yumei , and almost three times the votes her friend Ruan Lingyu received . She was crowned China 's first " Movie Queen " .

= = European tour = =

In February 1935 , Hu Die was invited to join a Chinese delegation to participate in the Moscow International Film Festival in the Soviet Union . She was the only film star in the delegation , which mainly comprised influential men of the industry . She arrived too late for the festival , but received a warm welcome , and her films Twin Sisters and Orchid in a Remote Valley ( Konggu Lan ) were shown in Moscow and Leningrad . From Moscow she went on to tour Germany , France , England , Switzerland and Italy , receiving significant public attention and VIP treatment from the Europeans , to whom Chinese film stars were novelties . She took many notes and photographs , and published a travelogue after returning to China .

= = Marriage = =

In 1931 , a cousin introduced Hu Die to Pan Yousheng ( ??? ) , a young employee of a Shanghai trading firm . Hu Die was careful about her personal life and their relationship progressed slowly until autumn 1935 , when they announced their impending marriage . Their wedding was the most important social event in Shanghai of that year . Famous film stars served as bridesmaids and groomsmen , and child stars were their flower girls and page boys . Hu Die was ready to retire from the film industry , as was customary at the time after an actress ' marriage , but with her husband 's support , she signed a contract with Mingxing to make one film per year . She only made one more film under the new contract , before the Second Sino @-@ Japanese War broke out , and the hard @-@ fought Battle of Shanghai completely destroyed Mingxing and other Shanghai studios in 1937 .

= = Sino @-@ Japanese War = =

As the Empire of Japan invaded and occupied Shanghai and much of east China , Hu Die and Pan

Yousheng fled to British Hong Kong . Hu Die gave birth to a daughter and a boy during this time . Pan worked for a trading firm in Hong Kong , while she also made two films . After the outbreak of the Pacific War in December 1941 , Hong Kong also fell to the Japanese . The Japanese pressured her to make a documentary film entitled Hu Die Touring Tokyo for their war propaganda , but Hu Die refused to become a collaborator , and secretly escaped to inland Chongqing , the war @-@ time capital of the Republic of China resistance . It was a long and circuitous journey through a war zone . She entrusted her belongings to the underground , and casually walked out of her Hong Kong home one day . Resistance partisans guided her through the New Territories to Guangdong province . She stayed in Shaoguan for a year and a half before leaving for Guilin in Guangxi , and did not reach Chongqing until the end of 1943 .

Soon after arriving in Chongqing , Hu Die starred in the film The Road to Nation Building to aid the war effort . While she was filming on location in Guilin , the Japanese launched a major offensive in the area . The film crew lost all their equipment , and had to join the tens of thousands of refugees fleeing the war front on foot . The Road to Nation Building was Hu Die 's only unfinished film , and she later described the incident as " the most tragic moment of my life " .

While in Chongqing , Hu Die became connected with the powerful spy master Dai Li . She had been previously introduced to Dai Li in Shanghai by her colleague Xu Lai , who was married to a close friend of Dai Li 's . According to the memoir of Dai Li 's lieutenant Shen Zui , Hu Die became Dai Li 's mistress during the period .

= = Post @-@ World War II = =

Hu Die returned to Shanghai after the surrender of Japan in 1945 . Dai Li was killed in a plane crash in March 1946 . In the midst of the Chinese Civil War , Hu Die again moved with her husband to Hong Kong in 1946 . Pan Yousheng started a company making thermoses with the brand Butterfly , and she actively promoted her namesake product in Hong Kong and Southeast Asia . They lived a few happy years together , until Pan died soon after being diagnosed with liver cancer in 1958 .

After her husband 's death , Hu Die returned to the film industry in 1959 , now taking roles as older women , which took her some time to adjust to . She made several films for Shaw Brothers Studio , a successor company of Tianyi , and her performance in Li Han @-@ hsiang 's Rear Door ( Houmen ) won her the Best Actress Award at the Seventh Asian Film Festival held in Tokyo in 1960 . It also won the Best Film Award .

Hu Die retired in 1966 , after a career spanning more than four decades . It was said that in 1967 she married an admirer named Zhu Fangkun ( or Song Kunfang ) , who had given her financial support in the difficult period following Pan Yousheng 's death . She emigrated to Vancouver , Canada in 1975 to join her son . She lived a low @-@ key life and avoided attention by using the name Pan Baojuan . She dictated her memoir in 1986 , which first appeared in Taiwan 's United Daily News in serials , and was published in mainland China in 1987 . She died on 23 April 1989 , after suffering a stroke .

= = Daughter = =

Hu Die had an illegitimate daughter named Hu Ruomei ( ??? ) , later renamed to Hu Yousong ( ??? ) , who was born in 1939 . The identity of her father is unknown . She was raised by a foster mother and stayed in mainland China while Hu Die moved to Hong Kong . In 1966 , Hu Yousong married Li Zongren , who had briefly served as president of the Republic of China , and was 49 years her senior . After Li Zongren died in 1969 , she was persecuted during the Cultural Revolution , and later became a Buddhist nun .