

Enlightenment Activities of Taiwanese Cultural Association Film Team and Mei-Tai Group

Yu-lan Lee

ABSTRACT

Many people suggested that the Mei-Tai Group (美臺團) is “the film team of the Taiwanese Cultural Association.” As a matter of fact, in April 1926, the Taiwanese Cultural Association film team (臺灣文化協會寫真隊) had already started activities. However, it was not until the end of 1927 that Pei-hwo Tsai (蔡培火) decided to establish the Mei-Tai Group. The reason why most people have the impression that the Mei-Tai Group is the film team of the Taiwanese Cultural Association is the influence of previous researchers, who confused the Mei-Tai Group that was later established with the earlier film team of Taiwanese Cultural Association.

In April 1926, the Taiwanese Cultural Association film team began to play films across Taiwan. The main members were Wui-ji Guo, Bing-ding Lu, Tz-yuan Chung, Chiu-wu Lin, Hsin-tuan Chen, and Tien-chi Chou. The team was supported by the Taiwanese Cultural Association activists in various places. At the end of 1927, Pei-hwo Tsai established the Mei-Tai Group in order to create a noble entertainment organization and to develop the recreational life of Taiwanese people. In January of the following year, assisted by the Taiwanese People’s Party, a film tour was launched, and Shao-chuang Chen and Te-fa Wang served as narrators. After 1929, the Mei-Tai Group’s activities were reduced significantly. In 1933, Pei-hwo Tsai attempted to revitalize the Mei-Tai Group. The Mei-Tai Group cooperated with Taiwan New Citizen Newspapers for a film tour, but the ticket revenue was not satisfactory. The main reason was that Taiwan New Citizen Newspapers’ attitude was not positive, and film had become increasingly popular at the time and the era of sound films had begun. It was difficult for the Mei-Tai Group’s educational films to attract the interest of the public.

This study mainly used historical materials, such as Pei-hwo Tsai’s diaries and *Taiwan People’s Daily* to restore how the Taiwanese national activists during the Japanese colonial period used the Taiwanese Cultural Association film team and the Mei-Tai Group

to enlighten the public. In addition to describing the evolution of the process, the participants, and the reasons why it was difficult to continue such activities subsequently, this study also analyzed the connotation, significance and impact of such enlightenment.

Keywords: Pei-hwo Tsai, Taiwanese Cultural Association Film Team, Mei-Tai Group