

**‘Hollywood of the East’ in the Making –
the Cathay Organization vs. the Shaw Organization in Post-war Hong Kong**

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Abstract

Film-making is both a craft and an industry. The hardest battles of the movie industry were always fought at the distribution and exhibition fronts. In Asia, the Cathay Organization and the Shaw Organization under the direction of Loke Wan Tho (1915-1964) and Run Run Shaw (1907-) respectively represented two of the most significant attempts to adopt vertical integration of production-distribution-exhibition into the movie industry. Modeling their operations after the western industrial structure and managerial styles, the Cathay and Shaw enterprises have lend themselves readily to organizational analysis in an era of rapid globalization. Although both Shaw and Cathay adopted the studio system from the West, they retained the structure of the traditional Chinese family business. To a greater degree these Chinese family based business operations depended on the temperament of the families’ patriarchs. The issues that surrounded the history of these two families, therefore, are profound indications of the era. By documenting the history of the two families/companies under their patriarchs, this article illustrates the transformation of a Chinese *nouveau riches* class in the frontier society of Modern Asia.