Abstract

During 1930s, Penang, part of the Straights Settlements of British, was one of a very important free port. Cosmopolitan Penang had soon introduced to the modern amusements, motion pictures. Then, modern theater house built, movies from China, especially Shanghai, and Hollywood imported to this town. However, the overseas Chinese showed a great response to the movies from China compare to the Hollywood. The most welcomed type of show in Penang at those time are Chinese shows that are rich in the Eastern value, which are what the overseas Chinese are familiar and miss with. Watching show is not just for entertainment for them, but also a way to cure their home sick. Using the information from a Chinese daily newspaper "Penang Sin Poe" (1930-1934) and other second hand materials, I would suggest that the movie houses at Penang as a public sphere allowed the overseas Chinese to imagine and construct their identity, which is a social function other than entertainment.