



A Global Ambassador for Chinese Movies

An Interview with Yan Xiaoming, President,
Movie Channel Program Center of China, Beijing



Yan Xiaoming

EDITORS' NOTE Yan Xiaoming is chairman of the China Film Group and president of China Movie Channel, in addition to his responsibilities as president of Movie Channel Program Center of China.

COMPANY BRIEF In January 1996, the Movie Channel Program Center of China officially launched China's first nationwide movie channel, CCTV6. With a daily prime-time average of 10 million viewers and 800 million total viewers, CCTV6 constantly rates as one of China's top three channels. The center now owns the domestic broadcast rights to more than 95 percent of Chinese films and holds international rights over most of them. Since 1999, the center has produced more than 100 TV movies each year, and has hosted or broadcast many national and international award ceremonies, concerts, and variety performances. The center has expanded its international service by launching the China Movie Channel (CMC) in North America. It also recently launched its domestic pay-TV channel, CHC (China Home Cinema), and its fourth channel aimed at IPTV subscribers in Hong Kong.

To many Westerners, Chinese state-owned media have been perceived as a government mouthpiece. How do you feel about this perception?

Some in the West believe that Chinese media, regardless of their format, are only a tool for propaganda. To be candid, we feel that the media have responsibilities beyond providing entertainment. Editorial biases exist among all media. So-called absolute freedom or objectivity does not exist. I am certain that, regardless of country or territory, irresponsible media and media workers are not something that the people would welcome.

We recognize the dual role of media orientation and social responsibility, while valuing the functions of public service and entertainment. The challenge is how to balance the two. At the China Movie Channel, specifically through our comprehensive broadcast media platform, we strive to present the world's top-quality films and the culture of movies to our large audience.

What causes foreign misconceptions, and how can they be corrected?

I think that, for the most part, these foreign misconceptions are caused by differences in cultural traditions and understanding, and the way in which ideas are expressed by different groups. We sincerely wish to have wide and extensive exchanges with counterparts around the world. I believe that people who come to China and have an opportunity to explore will be impressed by the openness within China. Let's take the China Movie Channel as an example. We broadcast 350 to 400 foreign movie titles each year. This large volume is not frequently matched by mainstream media in any other country in the world.

What have you done in order to establish a first-rate brand?

First, in order to establish a strong foundation we invested heavily in acquiring core assets – movie rights. We possess the exclusive long-term TV broadcasting rights of more than 95 percent of all Chinese movies. Moreover, in the last 10 years, we have imported more than 3,000 titles from abroad.

Second, we have prudently organized and invested in TV movies that are aired on our own channel. Since 1999, we have produced more than 100 TV movies per annum. Since last year, we have switched the majority of our productions

to the high-definition format. As of the end of June 2005, we have produced over 600 TV movies.

Third, we exclusively organize and produce almost all the major Chinese film-award ceremonies. In addition, we have secured the exclusive rights to telecast top international film-award ceremonies, including the Oscars, the Cannes Film Festival, and the Golden Globes, and we send our own crews to cover these events.

Fourth, we originate high-quality, timely programming that reports on movies and movie-related events in China and the rest of the world. Our top shows include *China Movies Reporting* and *The Journey of World Cinema*.

Fifth, we strongly support the sustained development of the overall Chinese film industry and recognize that our own growth is intricately tied to its healthy long-term development. We invest a portion of our profits back into more productions, and in recent years, we have invested in one out of every two Chinese movies produced.

Sixth, in light of our responsibilities to society as a member of the media, we are actively involved in movie-related public services and cultural events that have general public interest. Currently, to celebrate the centenary of Chinese movies, we are organizing a large-scale, multimedia, musical and theatrical stage production of *The Song of Movies*, which involves top Chinese artists from around the globe.

What do you have planned for your specialized channels, and what is your global strategy?

As we maintain the operational excellence of our domestic flagship CCTV6 China Movie Channel, we are ramping up our domestic premium pay service, China Home Cinema, and have active growth targets for our overseas CMC.

CMC, a channel that possesses the overseas TV broadcasting rights outside China for most Chinese movies, was launched in North America last year. Audiences from all around the world can use this as a portal to gain a better insight into the lifestyle, emotions, and history of the Chinese people. 