

[Finding KUKAN at DOC NYC Film Festival 2016](#)

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November 14th, 2016 by Mr. C



There are so many facets and layers of why I enjoyed watching **FINDING KUKAN** and I think you will, too! At the very most outer shell, *Kukan* (1941) – an American made documentary film about a war torn China being invaded by Japan with live video footage on location from China during the attacks, was one of the very first if not first documentary film that was given an Academy Award. And to add to the mystery, *Kukan* was a “lost” film. Very few have ever seen it and there were no copies of the film to be found. The director of *Finding Kukan* – Robin Lung began to assemble the pieces of the puzzle together and to try & answer the question, who was behind the documentary film KUKAN?

This is where the most interesting aspect of the film arises. Who really was the artistic creator, writer, & producer of KUKAN? We do know that Rey Scott was the cinematographer for the film but he was not the only inspiration. Director Robin Lung – started peeling away at the layers of KUKAN and the name **Miss Li Ling-Ai** seemed to be always attached with the promotion of KUKAN though her name was not officially linked with the creatives in any way. Bits & pieces of evidence tied Ling Ling-Ai as the mastermind of KUKAN and the rest of *Finding Kukan* would unravel this lady’s fascinating story as a Chinese American woman growing up in an America that was not welcoming towards the Chinese. For one, the Chinese exclusion act in the United States of ‘Murica was in effect from 1882-1943 during her time. All things seemed to be pointing to Li Ling Ai’s as KUKAN’s beating heart inspiration and her desperate wanting to tell the story of the Chinese and their struggle in China. In an interview from archived footage shown in *Finding Kukan*, Miss Li drove home that she wanted everyone to know that the Chinese were not just a sing song ching chong china club as portrayed in America.

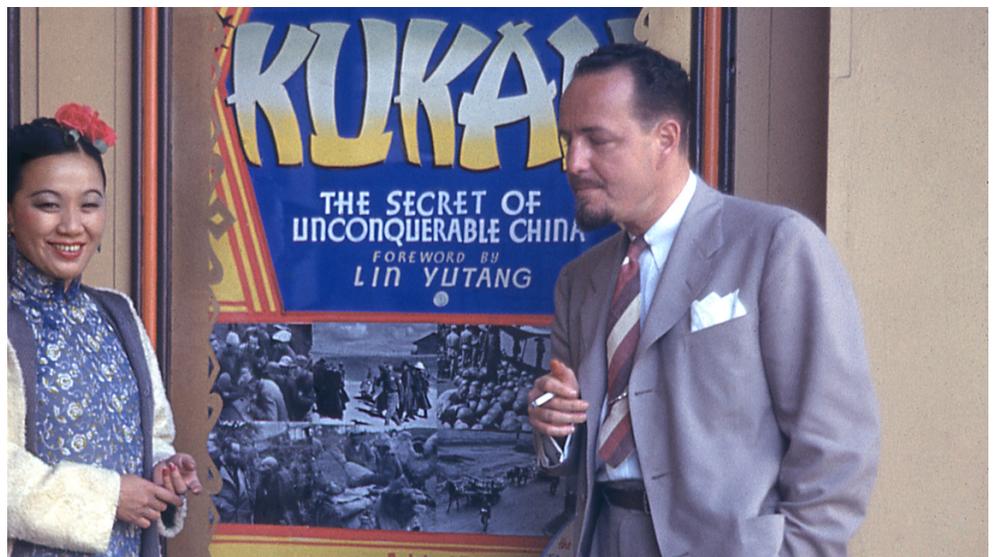
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At the inner most layers of FINDING KUKAN, I think the most important duty that this film is trying to achieve with the **valiant** efforts of the director was to locate/preserve the lost film in some form or fashion. Kukan is an important document of Chinese history as well as being an important part of American filmmaking. The other aspect of the film that I appreciated was exposing the courageous and outrageous Miss Li Ling-Ai. Here you have a very well-spoken for Chinese American woman born in Hawaii, living during the times of the Chinese exclusion act yet she was boisterous and proud of being Chinese. Her yankee accent would tell you otherwise. She was a very proud american as well! Her mingling with the press and lifestyles of the rich & famous like The Ripley's tells you the kind of personality she had! She was the Bruce Lee of playwrights! Go grab some dried octopus or popcorn and find the nearest theatre screening Finding Kukan! If you are near NYC, you are lucky!

Finding Kukan screens at [DOC NYC film festival](#) on Tuesday 11/15 at 5.30pm and 11/16 at 12:45pm

Expected to Attend: Robin Lung; editor/producer Shirley Thompson; 11/15 Screening Only – subjects Mark Scott (son of Rey Scott) and Michelle Scott (granddaughter of Rey Scott)



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