

3<sup>rd</sup> Place

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### A gem in Chinese culture

Chinese Opera is a gem in Chinese culture. It has a long history which exerts a great influence on Chinese art. It originated in Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) and it was inscribed onto UNESCO list of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in September 2009. It is arguably one the region's best-loved art forms among Hong Kong audience. So I am going to explain why we need to preserve this gem in our culture. I would also suggest three possible ways to promote it.

First and foremost, we have the responsibility to preserve this inheritance from our ancestors. Cantonese opera is one of the three ancient operas in the world and it represents a culture that belongs to our region or even our country. Also, it is a part of Chinese history. It is an integral part of our culture. Secondly, there are fewer and fewer young people who have watched a live Chinese Opera performance. Most of our generation think it is a recreational activity for the elderly. It is because they are often seen listening to it in the parks. Some youngsters even change the channel when they see it on TV. For centuries, Chinese opera has been popular in Hong Kong and Guangdong Province. Hong Kong, as an Asian World City, we need to introduce this performing arts to foreigners. We hold the Hong Kong Arts Festival every year. This can attract more tourists and some would watch the performance. Not only does it boost the local economy, but also promotes this art. We let more people know this cultural heritage.

First, we can mix modern elements with traditional performances. In the past, most of the plays were about history. Now we can write more scripts about daily life. So the audience can easily understand the play. It is more engaging to the audience. Also should make the music sweeter. It will be well accepted by them. Moreover, schools can set up a Chinese Opera Club. It then arranges regular training and performances for members. Children of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century get a chance to appreciate the beauty of an ancient art performance. Schools can invite some professional actors to perform and teach students how to act in a play or put on make-up. These can arouse their interest in opera and encourage them to learn more about it. Last but not least, we can try to preserve this intangible heritage in a tangible way. For instance, the government can build a museum designed in line with the traditional Lingnan garden. The Chinese Opera Art Museum can be built in East Kowloon Cultural Centre. It introduces and revitalize Lingnan culture and Chinese opera culture. We make this kind of culture more common in everyday life.

In conclusion, it is very necessary to preserve and promote our Cantonese Opera. Let's start right now and let the world know more about it.