The Popular Religion of
Female Employees in Cantonese Opera

by

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ABSTRACT

Cantonese opera (Yueju 粵劇) is one of the most common regional operas performed in the Guangdong province. Within Cantonese cultural areas, before the establishment of the government of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949, most Cantonese opera actresses had to endure the triple burdens of economic hardship and social immobility as well as religious prejudice. In order to obtain blessing for successful performances and to fight against life uncertainty, they often worshipped patron deities and ancestors, and observed occupational taboos. After the early 1950s, the Chinese Communist Party severely attacked the traditional patriarchal system and the popular religious activities, especially during the 1960s. These policies enabled the actresses to achieve upward social mobility but at the same time, enforced restrictions on their religious practices. However, in Hong Kong and other overseas Cantonese communities, the religious traditions of Cantonese opera are still preserved up to the present time.

The overall objective of this thesis is to offer a thorough description and discussion concerning the taboos, beliefs and practices of female Cantonese opera performers. Moreover, based on materials that are obtained through historical analysis, interviews and fieldwork, this research also examines the uniformity and variation between the actresses' popular religious system and that of women in the larger society. In addition, four arguments are put forward in the Conclusion. First, female performers have to observe the gender taboos of the dominant culture and the occupational religious prohibitions of their own profession. Second, their popular religion can be characterized as a polytheistic system. Third, the roles of actresses in performances are clear evidence to show that the boundary between sacred and profane is blurred within the secular
world. Finally, the subcultural religious system of the actresses in Cantonese opera contains some of the religious elements of the dominant cultural group but also has beliefs and practices of its own.
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support.
INTRODUCTION

The main aim of my research is to answer two core questions:

1. What have been the popular religious beliefs and practices of women, and the taboos concerning women in Cantonese opera since the early 20th century?

2. To what extent do their subcultural beliefs and activities conform to the popular religious system of the dominant culture of Cantonese society?

The early 20th century is a crucial time in the history of Cantonese opera. Before this period, all Cantonese operatic troupes were male troupes. During the early 20th century, some female Cantonese operatic troupes were formed. Since then, many women (especially those from poor families) have entered the Cantonese operatic career. In order to avoid confusion, a brief discussion concerning the meanings of the key terms is necessary.

Cantonese Opera (Yueju or Daxi) – It is one of the most common regional operas performed in the Guangdong province. Foshan, Guangzhou, Hong Kong and Macao are the major centers of performances (Chan, 1991: 1). Cantonese opera is a kind of performance art. Its main purpose is to describe a story to the audience through the artistic means of song, speech, dance and acrobatics. Concerning its vocal music and stage language, from the 17th century to the 18th century, the Yiyang Qiang弋陽腔 (also known as Gao Qiang高腔) and the Kunshan Qiang崑山腔 (also known as Kun Qiang) are...
were the two most popular Qiang or Shengqiang (聲腔) in Guangdong. Zhongzhou Yin 中州音 (Central Dialect) was the dominant stage language. However, since the early 19th century, especially after the compilation of Yue Ou 粵譜 (The Cantonese Odes) by Zhao Ziyong 招子庸 in 1828, Cantonese had gradually begun to replace the Zhongzhou Yin as the dominant stage dialect. Moreover, since the mid 19th century, instead of the Yiyang melody and the Kunshan tune, the Banghuang 樂簧 singing style has been the most

2 Kun Qiang or Kunshan Qiang is a kind of traditional Chinese tune that dominated operatic music throughout China from the mid 16th to the mid 17th century. Its origin can be traced to the late period of the Yuan dynasty (mid 14th century). However, the Kun Qiang did not flourish until the middle of the Ming period when Wei Liangfu 未梁蝮, a distinguished musician and actor, used his knowledge of local music to create the Shuimo Qiang 水磨腔 (Water Polishing Music). Since Wei Liangfu had stayed at Kunshan of the Jiangsu province, his Shuimo Qiang, which was often accompanied by flutes, was also known as Kun Qiang or Kunshan Qiang (cf. Siu, 1997: 8; Yung, 1989: 4). Many Chuangi 傳奇 which were written in Ming and Qing dynasties, such as Huansha Ji 洗紗記 (The Story of Washing Silk), Mudan Ting 牡丹亭 (The Peony Pavilion) and Changsheng Dian 長生殿 (The Longevity Palace), were sung in Kun Qiang.

3 This term has two different meanings. First, it refers to various kinds of melodies or tunes which originated in different parts of China. By the early Ming dynasty, four types of Qiang flourished throughout the country. They are the Haiyan Qiang 海鹽腔, which originated in Zhejiang, the Yuyao Qiang 餘姚腔 and the Kunshan Qiang, which originated in Jiangsu, and the Yiyang Qiang 弋陽腔, which originated in Jiangxi (Yung, 1989: 4). All these tunes have great influences in the development of Cantonese opera and other kinds of regional operas. Secondly, the term Qiang also means “multiple notes [that are] sung to one syllable” (Chan, 1991: 188). Within the Banghuang 樂簧 system, when the Qiang appears at the end of a line, the last note of the line must end in a specific tone. For instance, in the case Bangzi Zhongban 棄子中板, the principal male role has to end the first line (upper line) of a couplet with a Che tone and the second line (lower line) with a Shang tone. However, in the case of Erhuang Zhongban 二簧中板, the principal male role has to end the first line with a Ho tone and the second with a Shang tone.

4 Bangzi 棄子 and Erhuang 二簧 are two types of dominant vocal music in Cantonese opera. Cantonese people usually called them as Banghuang or Bangwang 樂簧. Bangzi is a kind of tune that originated in Gansu province. Anhui is believed to be the place of origin of Erhuang. Concerning the text structure of Banghuang, lines are written according to the rule of two-line parallelism. Within each couplet, the last syllable of the first line (also known as upper line) must be an oblique tone while the last syllable of the second line (also known as lower line) must be a level tone. According to Master Wong Toa, an experienced musician in Cantonese opera for seventy years, each line of the verse can have seven or eight or even ten characters (syllables). Extra syllables known as padding syllables, may be added to the verse in order to clarify the meaning of the content (Wong, 1995: 1; Yung, 1989: 70; Bai, 1996: Extracted from Mary Yeung’s manuscripts). Traditionally the musical notation of Banghuang and other kinds of tunes in Cantonese opera are known as Gongche 工尺. Its seven basic tones are Ho 合, Shi 土, Yi 乙, Shang 上, Che 割, Gong 工, and Fan 反. In comparison with the western musical notation, Professor Bell Yung states that “Ho=Sol, Shi=La, Yi=Si, Shang=Do, Che=Re, Gong=Mi, and Fan=Fa” (Yung, 1989: 15). With regard to the metrical pattern, the Yiban Sanding 一板三叮 (one strong beat followed by three weak beats), the Yiban Yiding 一板一叮 (one strong beat followed by one weak beat), the Liu Shubian 流水板 (evenly stressed beats) and the Sanban 楩板 (no beats) are the four types of metrical pattern used in the Banghuang songs. As far as I know, the Bangzi tune is used for more relaxed occasions, while the Erhuang melody is
important vocal music in Cantonese operatic performance (Siu, 1997: 24). With regard to
the dance in Cantonese opera, its origin can be traced back to the tradition of the Tang
dynasty. In addition, the acrobatics in the Cantonese operatic performance are believed to
have originated from the acrobatic skills of the Anhui operatic troupes and the martial arts
of the Shaolin Monastery 少林寺 at Fujian.

Culture – This term refers to the shared ways of acting, thinking, believing and feeling
that “grow out of group experience and are passed from one generation to the next”
(Broom, 1981: 54). In other words, it is the traditions (such as religions, customs, art,
laws, morals and knowledge) which are acquired by the members of a society. Culture is
transmitted from one generation to the next through the socialization process. Instead of
referring to Chinese culture, the term dominant culture in my research simply refers to
Cantonese culture. The Cantonese cultural areas mainly include Guangzhou, Nanhai,
Panyu, Shunde, Zhongshan, Dongguan, Hong Kong and Macao (Macao is not included in
my areas of study). These places are the core area in Guangdong where most local people
speak Guangzhou Cantonese (Li, 1993: 487). Variation-in-uniformity is an important
characteristic of Chinese culture. Even within one province such as Guangdong,
uniformity and variation of the local cultures in different areas also exist side by side (cf.
Ward, 1965: 117). In order to have a more valid and reliable measurement, my study is
only focused on the religious beliefs and activities of women in the Cantonese cultural
areas.

\[\text{used for more solemn occasions in Cantonese performance. All together, there are about twenty-five different kinds of Bangzi melodies and eleven Erhuang tunes respectively.}\]
\[\text{3 The Shaolin Monastery at Fujian is commonly known as the Southern Shaolin Monastery.}\]
Popular Religion – In my research, popular religion is defined as “the religion of the whole population except those who specifically opted out of it, such as orthodox Daoist priests, Buddhist monks, Confucian scholars, and state officials in their public roles” (Overmyer, 1987: 281). The religion of the actresses in Cantonese opera is a loosely integrated system of legends, beliefs, cults, and practices in relation to the supernatural beings. It amalgamates important elements from local rituals, Daoism and Buddhism. Thus, the religion of the female performers in Cantonese opera falls within the category of Chinese popular religion. Besides, it is important to note that there are three different forms of popular religion: popular religious sects, popular religion in families and local communities, and popular religion in occupational groups and triad societies. My thesis mainly examines the popular religious beliefs and activities of women in families, local communities and Cantonese operatic groups (such as Cantonese operatic troupes and Cantonese operatic training schools).

Ritual Performance (Shengong Xi神功戲) – It is a kind of show which is staged on ritual occasions. Ritual plays are performed mainly for four types of celebrations. They are festivals, birthdays of gods, rites of purification (Dajiao打醮), and opening ceremonies of temples (Chan, 1991: 5). On these occasions, Cantonese ritual performances are staged in the form of operatic series since these ceremonies usually last for three or four days. During the late Qing period, there were four types of operatic items within each operatic series. These were the ritualistic playlets (Lixi例戲), the Kun operatic items

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6 The Jiao is a kind of Daoist ritual. It includes a series of rites, such as invocations to the deities, offerings of incense, singing of introits and purification. For more detailed explanations concerning the Jiao, please refer to The Taoist Today written by Schipper, pp. 72 – 79.
(Kunqu 崑曲), the three main operatic items (San Chutou 三齣頭) and the dawn performances (Tianguang Xi 天光戲). (Leung, 1992: 46-47). In the early 20th century, the Kun operatic items were canceled (Wong, 1995: 39). In Hong Kong, at the present time, ritualistic playlets, main operatic items and dawn performances are three kinds of operatic items in a ritual performance. Ritualistic playlets are compulsory and formalized religious programs. In normal cases, two ritualistic playlets are performed in an operatic series. One of them is usually staged in the opening evening preceding the main operatic items. Another one is performed in the afternoon of the main festival day (Zhengdan 正誕). Main operatic items usually start at about 7:30 p.m. after the performances of the ritualistic playlets. They are often performed by famous performers according to well written scripts. Dawn performances start at about 11:00 p.m. after the performance of the main operatic items. Dawn performances normally last for three or four hours and finish at dawn. They are performed mainly by minor roles. They are improvisatory religious plays which do not have well written scripts. However, it is important to note that dawn performances are not always staged at the present time (Chan, 1991: 56).

Subculture – It means “a pattern that is distinctive in important ways but has much in common with the dominant culture” (Broom, 1981: 66).

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7 In the late Qing period, the Kun operatic items were sectional military plays. The Yiyang tune (or Gao Qiang) was the dominant vocal music. The Central Dialect (Zhongzhou Yin or Guanhua) is the dominant stage language.

8 The three main operatic items (San Chutou) were three short civil plays. Cantonese was the dominant stage language.
Taboos – It derived from the Polynesian word “tabu”. The word “taboos” in my thesis means “ritual prohibitions”. The objects of taboos are mainly confined to women of the dominant culture and female Cantonese operatic performers.

Most of the Chinese terms are romanized according to the Hanyu Pinyin system. Names of people and streets in Hong Kong are romanized according to the usages of the Hong Kong government.

The four research methods which I apply in my thesis are historical analysis, interviews (face-to-face interview, telephone interview and mail interview), fieldwork, and learning the performing art of Cantonese opera.

My research has four major limitations. First, since there are no primary sources which are directly related to my topic, it is very difficult for me to examine the validity and reliability of my information and materials. Secondly, since my knowledge of the European theatre is limited, I am unable to make a comparison between the situations of actresses in Cantonese opera and European theatre. Thirdly, my informants cannot recall the accurate times and places of their own personal experience. Therefore, I can only record the approximate time periods and places of the empirical evidence. Fourthly, with regard to the popular religious beliefs and practices of some famous actresses in Cantonese opera, most of my informants are unwilling to tell me the details.

A word about the contents of my thesis is necessary. Chapter One is a brief analysis of the situations of women in the Cantonese family and the Cantonese opera group (such as opera troupes). Chapter Two offers a detailed discussion of the popular religious activities of women in Cantonese cultural areas. The taboos for women in
Cantonese opera are examined in Chapter Three. Chapter Four discusses the cults of occupational deities and ancestors concerning female Cantonese operatic performers. In Chapter Five, I provide a thorough examination concerning the activities and roles of actresses in ritual performances. Finally, a general conclusion is drawn in Chapter Six.
CHAPTER ONE
Situations of Actresses in the Cantonese Family
and the Cantonese Opera Profession

The following questions are analyzed in this chapter:

1.1. To what extent does the organizational structure of the Cantonese opera group conform to the structural arrangement of the Cantonese family; and what are the performers’ fictive kinship relations with their masters and fellow students?

1.2. What are the actresses’ relationships with their natal families?

1.3. Do most female performers marry and have families?

1.4. Do actresses and actors engage in homosexual relationships?

1.1. The Organizational Structure of Cantonese Opera Groups and the Fictive Kinship Relations among Cantonese Opera Employees

Dr. Wai-Kin Che, a distinguished sociologist, states, “Anyone who wants to understand the life and society of the Chinese should first study the Chinese family. The Chinese society is ‘familistic’ in that other social structures ramify from the family” (Che, 1979: v). Thus, before analyzing the structural arrangement of the Cantonese operatic profession, let us first take a look at the organizational structure of the Cantonese family.

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9 Family is a cooperative unit, which is formed according to kin ties. In the case of a nuclear family, two generations, a married couple and their children, share a common residence. An extended family consists of at least three generations, married siblings, their parents, spouses and children. Ideally, all members would live together in a family compound. From the traditional Chinese or Cantonese point of view, having five generations to live together under one roof is the most ideal type of extended family (cf. Broom, 1981: 324 – 326).

10 People who related to each other through descent or marriage are relatives (kin). “The domain of ideas constituted by the beliefs and expectations kin share about one another is called kinship” (Harris, 1988: 330).
Relationships within Cantonese families are governed by the principle of patriarchal hierarchy. Men occupy a superior position and women are only their subordinates. In usual cases, the patriarch is the eldest male of the most senior generation. Before the 1911 revolution, the patriarch was the absolute ruler of the family. He had the right to disciple, educate and punish his family members. He was also responsible for arranging marriages for his children. He exercised his power according to the clan rules (Zongfa), which were recorded in the genealogies. Many of these rules were “formally registered with the [imperial] government and their binding effect approached that of the law” (Lin, 1959: 23-24). At present, in Cantonese society, some of these rules are regarded as standard social norms. Although the patriarchal system is weakened to some extent, the patriarch could still exert great influence on family affairs.

Most Cantonese parents love their children. Nevertheless, they seldom openly express their affection towards them. This is because they believe that “one must not praise children for accomplishments or they will feel they have done well enough and will stop trying to do better”. For daughters and sons, they are required to observe the principle of filial piety (Xiao). Before and during the early 20th century, upper class women were expected to observe the principle of gender segregation. They would not go beyond the inner doors of their mansions without good reasons. Some of them even learnt how to read and write. Moreover, in order to prepare them to be pious wives and

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11 In Cantonese family, a new bride has to give birth to a son (sons) in order to become a full member of her conjugal family. It is important to point out that although married women do not possess real powers, they do have a lot of influence. Mothers, especially old grandmothers, are chief advisors of their husbands and sons.

12 Power is “the ability to get others to do what one wants them to, assuming this is different from what they have done anyway, with the use of threat or sanctions if necessary” (Poton, 1983: 50).
obedient daughters-in-law, their mothers would always remind them to observe the three forms of obedience (Sancong 三從) and the four virtues (Side 四德)\textsuperscript{14}. With regard to the common class families, many daughters were good helpers of their mothers. They had to do a lot of domestic work, such as cooking, sewing, looking after their younger brothers. In addition, within Cantonese sericultural areas, some unmarried daughters had to engage in the silk industry in order to support their families.

According to the principle of filiality, married women should assist their husbands in ancestral worship and remain pious to their parents-in-law. They are responsible for preparing offerings for household sacrifices. Moreover, they are expected to take care of the daily needs of their fathers- and mothers-in-law. Before the early 20\textsuperscript{th} century, young married women in Cantonese families needed to get up early every morning before their parents-in-law arose. Moreover, they had to do house work or take charge of domestic management. Young daughters-in-law were also required to serve their senior family members with food and drink. They had to stand to one side and assist those who were eating. At night, they could not sleep until their parents-in-law and husbands retired.

Most fathers’ relations with their daughters are informal since many of them consider their daughters to be temporary family members. However, their relationships with their sons are different. Most fathers expect their sons to become healthy adults who are filial and capable of supporting them in their old age. As a Chinese proverb states: “raise children for the support in the age and to accumulate grains for the famine (Yang’er

\textsuperscript{13} Influence refers to the ability to get other to do what one wants them to, without using sanctions.

\textsuperscript{14} The three forms of obedience are: “a young girl should obey her father in the family, a married woman should obey her husband, and a widow should obey her son”. “The four virtues are women’s virtues, speech, appearance, and work” (Che, 1979: 28).
"Fanglao Jigu Fangji 養兒防老，積穀防饑" (Che, 1979: 31). Owing to this reason, fathers in Cantonese families usually establish a rigid standard of respect and obedience in their sons. They would scold or even flog their sons for misbehavior. According to clan rules and social norms, sons should meet the wishes of parents, during their life and after their death. They are also required to work hard for the honor and prosperity of their families.

In Cantonese families, juniors often address their seniors (those older in generations) by using appropriate kinship terms, such as father, mother, brother and sister. Similarly, kinship terms are also used among Cantonese opera employees (both female and male). For instance, disciples always address their teacher(s) as Shifu 師父. Fellow students often call each other Shijie 師姐 (older female classmates), Shimei 師妹 (younger female classmates), Shixiong 師兄 (older male classmates) or Shidi 師弟 (younger male classmates). Moreover, within the Cantonese opera profession, an actress of relatively older age is generally called elder sister (Jie 姐). An old actor is often addressed by his juniors as uncle (Shu 叔).

The Cantonese operatic group is a fictive kinship association formed for the purpose of performance. This realistic goal gives rise to a hierarchical arrangement within the profession. Before 1933\textsuperscript{15}, Cantonese opera troupes were classified according

\textsuperscript{15} A mixed troupe comprised of both female and male members. In Cantonese cultural areas, mixed troupes of Cantonese opera were completely banned before the 1930s. In Hong Kong, this ban was removed in 1933. Then, three years later, this ban was also removed in Guangzhou. Reliable sources indicate that the first Cantonese operatic mixed troupe was Da Luotian 大羅天 (A Great Collection under Heaven). It was formed by Ma Shiceng 馬師曾 (whose legal name is Ma Bolu 馬伯魯) and Tan Lanqing 譚蘭卿, a famous actress of principal and comic roles, in Hong Kong during the early 1930s. Ma Shiceng is one of the five great masters of Cantonese opera. Besides, according to Mr. Chan Kwok Yuen, a designer
to the principle of gender hierarchy. The male troupes such as the Renshounian Ban 人壽年班 (The People's Longevity Troupe)\textsuperscript{16} occupied a superior profession status in comparison with the female troupes\textsuperscript{17}. One of the main reasons was that actresses were considered to be inferior to actors in performing art. Owing to the removal of the ban on mixed troupes and the influence of western culture, gender was no longer an important factor that determined the occupational reputation of a troupe after the mid 1930s.

From the early 20\textsuperscript{th} century up to the present time, status within a Cantonese opera troupe is determined by two basic principles. One is the qualification of the performers. The other is the dominance of generation hierarchy. For example, Mr. Wu Zhen (a veteran actor of military roles) said, “Before the 1950s, masters were responsible for providing their disciples with basic necessities (such as housing and food). Hence, it is easy to understand that only those established players, who were famous and good at operatic performances, could adopt private students\textsuperscript{18}.” Moreover, positions within an opera troupe are well defined according to the performers’ qualification. Nowadays, in Hong Kong, all the major characters of an opera troupe, such as civil-military roles (\textit{Wenwu Sheng} 文武生), principal female roles (\textit{Zhengyin Huadan} 正印花旦) and military roles (\textit{Wusheng} 武生)\textsuperscript{19}, are occupied by prominent and veteran players (both female and male) who have a high standard of performing. The second and the third class

\textsuperscript{16} During the 1920s, many famous actors, such as Bai Jurong (actor of young male roles), Qianli Ju 千里驹 (actor of principal female roles), were major members of the Renshounian Ban.

\textsuperscript{17} For descriptions of the female troupes, please refer to Chapter Three (section 3.1).

\textsuperscript{18} As mentioned above, the ban on mixed troupes was completely removed in the mid 1930s. Since then, established performers (both female and male) have adopted disciples of both sexes.

\textsuperscript{19} See the detailed description of the role classification system of Cantonese opera in appendix 6.
performers would only play the supporting characters, such as supporting male roles (Xiao Sheng 小生) and supporting female roles (Erbang Huadan 二幫花旦). Among players of minor roles, “female actors are known as Meixiang 梅香 (maid); male actors are known as Lache 拉扯 (dragger) and Shouxia 手下 (one who works under somebody). Meixiang and Shouxia are actors of the lowest rank in a troupe; they are the ones who get the lowest pay” (Chan, 1991: 42). These minor roles are often played by unknown performers or students of both sexes.

Furthermore, within the Cantonese opera profession, fictive kinship relationships between masters and disciples are governed by the principle of generation hierarchy. Before the 1949 revolution, similar to the patriarch of the Chinese family, masters had absolute control over the daily conduct of their trainees. However, unlike parents, many masters did not have benevolent affections for their female and male disciples. Most students had to endure poor living standards, such as homelessness, overwork and inadequate diet. Female disciples and their male counterparts were flogged severely if they violated the taboos or misbehaved\(^\text{20}\). The masters exercised their power according to the master contract, which was made between the disciple and the master. A sample of the full text of the contract is offered below:

Zhang Xiaomei 張小妹, the person who signs [this] master contract, is willing to give myself to Master Ma Daigu 馬大姑 for a period of six years [in order to] learn the performing art of the pear garden. It is

\(^{20}\) Before the late 1940s, young trainees were often flogged by their master(s). In some cases, if one pupil violated the rules or made mistakes, all his (her) fellow students would also be flogged. This custom is known as Datongtang 打通堂 (Flogging the Whole Hall).
forbidden to flee and retreat halfway. In cases of running away and retreating, the master must be compensated with monthly provisions. The monthly provisions are calculated from the time since I had joined the school. If any accidents happen\textsuperscript{21}, I have to accept my own fate and never cast the blame on someone else\textsuperscript{22}. Contractor Zhang Xiaomei (fingerprint) (Xin, 1990: 26, translated by Mary Yeung).

In Mainland China, after the establishment of the government of the People’s Republic of China in 1949, the old training system was ended and all the old contracts were nullified. Owing to the influence of western culture, the rule of signing master contracts has gradually died out in Hong Kong since the 1950s.

Moreover, respect for seniority is extended beyond the parents to the masters. Young disciples or trainees (both female and male) in Cantonese opera are expected to venerate their master(s). As a popular Chinese proverb says, “A teacher for one day is a teacher forever (\textit{Yiri Wei Shi Zhongshen Wei Shi 一日為師，終身為師})”. For example, female performers and their male counterparts worship their kinship and non-kinship ancestors (deceased masters and colleagues) in daily sacrifices and annual cults\textsuperscript{23}. In addition, before the 1950s, young disciples (both female and male) were responsible for taking care of the daily necessities of their master(s). Thus, their practices to some

\begin{footnotesize}
\footnote{The compound “\textit{Shangao Shuidi} 高水低 (High Mountains and Low Water) is a metaphorical expression for accidents. That is, Cantonese operatic actresses and actors have to stage their performances in villages and local communities. In the past, they usually went to these places on foot and by water. On the way, some accidents or unfortunate events might happen unexpectedly and cause casualties.}

\footnote{The compound “\textit{Yongbu Zhuijiu} 避追究” can be translated as “never investigate the causes”. However, according to the content of the text, I think that it is more reasonable to translate this compound as “never cast blame on someone else”.}
\end{footnotesize}

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extent conform to those of women in Cantonese families. As Ms. Chen Shaozhen 陳少珍, a veteran actress of principle female roles, said:

I began my career as a trainee in a Cantonese opera troupe during the mid 1940s. Every morning, I rose before daybreak. I often practiced singing and acrobatics for a few hours. Then, when my master arose, I assisted her to brush her teeth, rinse her mouth and wash her face. In addition, I had to prepare food for her. Afterwards, I usually took a nap. In the afternoon, I had to play the minor roles such as Meixiang (maid), in ritual performances. Sometimes, I acted two or even three times a day. I could not go to sleep until dawn (Chen, 1995: Extracted from Mary Yeung’s manuscripts).

At present, female disciples and their male counterparts are not required to meet their masters’ daily needs. Mr. Ponny Ma, an actor of male roles, explained that most female and male disciples are part time players since they cannot earn their living simply by participating in Cantonese operatic performances. Many of them only meet their masters at night and learn some performing techniques. Thus, they seldom maintain a close relationship with their masters and fellow students.

1.2. Relationships between Cantonese Opera Actresses and Their Natal Families

From the late 19th to the mid 20th century, Cantonese women (especially common class women) who earned their livings were mainly engaged in four kinds of occupations: silk reelers, bonded servants (Meizi 姊仔), spirit mediums and operatic performers. In

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23 For the activities of actresses in ancestral worship, a thorough analysis is offered in Chapter Four
Cantonese sericultural areas\textsuperscript{24}, most silk reelers were village sisters\textsuperscript{25}, spinsters\textsuperscript{26} or bridedaughters\textsuperscript{27}. They had close relationships with their parents and siblings. Most of them "contributed to their natal families through a combination of income from wages and direct labor input in family enterprises" (Topley, 1975: 83 - 84; Stockard, 1989: 20 - 21, 78 - 79). In the case of bonded servants, many of them were daughters of landless peasants. As young girls, they were sold into domestic servitude by their parents. They lived and worked at their masters' homes. Hence, many bonded servants seldom had strong ties with their natal families. In some cases, if their masters treated them well, they would maintain a closer relationship with their masters' families than with their own natal families. With regard to spiritual mediums, many of them entered the career after disastrous events, such as the death of children. They became spirit mediums mainly due

\textsuperscript{24} "Shunde Xian, particularly the eastern part; a small part of Nanhai Xian, adjoining northern Shunde and including the Xiqiao foothills; and a small part of Panyu, to the east of Shunde" were sericultrual areas in the Canton Delta during the late 19\textsuperscript{th} and the early 20\textsuperscript{th} century (Topley, 1975: 68).

\textsuperscript{25} During the early 20\textsuperscript{th} century, "the formation of strong bonds between women who were from the same village" was a common practice in the Canton Delta. In usual cases, an adolescent girl engaged in silk weaving industry. She worked and took meal at her natal home in the day. At night, she stayed in a girl's house, which was located in her father's village (Stockard, 1989: 32).

\textsuperscript{26} In the late 19\textsuperscript{th} and the early 20\textsuperscript{th} century, some women in Cantonese sericultural areas became spinsters mainly due to two reasons. First, most of them were skillful labor in the silk industry. They were capable of supporting themselves and their natal families. Hence, they preferred to remain celibate in order to escape from being "a human machine of propagation" (Topley, 1975: 79). Secondly, these women believed in the religious benefits of celibacy. In Chinese society, childbirth is the most important duty of married women. However, according popular beliefs, "childbirth is a sin, for which women are punished after death by being sent to a bloody pond" (Topley, 1975: 75). This is because postpartum discharge is regarded as a polluted substance. Thus, in order to avoid suffering after death, some women in Cantonese society preferred to become spinsters.

\textsuperscript{27} According to Janice E. Stockard, during the late 19\textsuperscript{th} and the early 20\textsuperscript{th} century, delayed transfer marriage was a common practice in Cantonese sericultural areas. "In the delayed transfer form of marriage, brides separated from their husbands on the third day after marriage and returned home to live with their natal families" (Stockard, 1989: 4). Bridedaughters were young married women who lived with their natal families in the early years of marriage.
to the request of their deceased children’s spirits. In usual cases, they kept in close contacts with their husbands\textsuperscript{28} and other family members (cf. Potter, 1974: 226 – 227).

The Cantonese opera actresses’ relationships with their natal families vary according to different time and circumstances. In Chinese society, before the 1950s, female and male performers were bracketed with prostitutes, shamans, bonded servants, barbers, massagers, musicians, jailers, pig men\textsuperscript{29} and corpse handlers at the bottom of society. Actresses were regarded as the lowest of low since traditional Chinese people had a prejudice against the spectacle of women onstage. Owing to this reason, wealthy or upper class women would be expelled from their families if they became performers. In other words, they would lose all contacts with their parents and siblings. For example, in order to challenge the patriarchal system, to struggle for personal freedom and to achieve self-satisfaction, one of the daughters of the owner of the Weishiji Jiujia 威士忌酒家 (The Whisky Restaurant)\textsuperscript{30} became a Cantonese opera actress in the 1920s. As result, her father completely cut off relationships with her since she was regarded as an unfilial daughter who had polluted the family fame (Chen, 1995: Extracted from Mary Yeung’s manuscripts). Within Cantonese cultural areas, owing to the relaxation of moral norms, this prejudice against actresses no longer exists in recent years.

Nevertheless, it is important to note that most female players came from poor families. In usual cases, they were willing to enter the Cantonese opera profession in

\textsuperscript{28} In some cases, female spirit mediums were widows. If their husbands were still alive, they had to obtain the consent of their husbands before entering the career.

\textsuperscript{29} In traditional Cantonese villages, a pig man often led a boar to local farms, where the boar copulated with the sows, which were bred by the farmers.

\textsuperscript{30} The Weishiji Jiujia (The Whisky Restaurant) was a very big restaurant in Guangzhou during the early 20\textsuperscript{th} century.
order to support their parents, brothers and sisters. They maintained close and good relationships with their family members. For instance, Ms. Chen Shaozhen said:

I was born of poor parents. My mother told me that I should either become an actress or a bonded servant in order to support the family. I decided to be a Cantonese opera performer and began my career at the age of twelve. Though I always stayed away from home for operatic performances, I struggled very hard to support my family and had a great affection for my father and mother... Besides, some of my female colleagues were mothers. Since they often stayed away from their homes for operatic performances, they relied entirely on their parents to look after their children. Hence, it is reasonable to believe that these actresses’ relationships with their natal families were close (Chen, 1995: Extracted from Mary Yeung’s manuscripts).

Moreover, Ms. Wei Shaofang 衛少芳, a renowned Cantonese opera actress in the early 20th century, is another typical example to support my argument. Similar to many female employees in Cantonese opera, she came from a poor family. After becoming famous, she and her families (both conjugal and natal) migrated to the United States of America, where she continued to make economic contributions to her families by participating in operatic performances and picking apples in orchards. In Hong Kong, from the 1950s to the 1970s, many female performers entered the Cantonese opera profession mainly because of poverty. They were responsible for supporting their own families. Since the 1980s, most actresses study Cantonese opera usually due to personal
interest. In normal cases, they stay in close contact with their parents, brothers and sisters.

Reliable sources indicate that in Cantonese cultural areas, from the late 19th century up to the present time, female players who come from an acting family usually have a close relationship with their parents and siblings. They usually receive earliest training from their close relatives. They are also responsible for assisting their family members in Cantonese operatic performances. For example, Ms. Liang Juanjuan 梁娟娟, whose legal name is Liang Deqing 梁德馨, is an actress of female roles in Hong Kong. Her father, Liang Pin 梁品 (whose legal name is Liang Yaopin 梁耀品), has been an impresario of Cantonese opera troupes since the 1930s. Her grandfather, Liang Hengtai 梁恆泰, was a distinguished martial arts actor before the mid 20th century. Five of her ten siblings are active performers. She and her brothers often work in their father’s troupes. They usually receive no pay31 (cf. Chan, 1991: 62 - 63; Chan, 1996a: 108 - 109).

1.3. Marriages in Cantonese Opera Profession

In Cantonese society marriage is nearly universal for all women. As mentioned in Section 1.1., during and before the early 20th century, parents had absolute right to arrange marriages for their children. Daughters were married to men either as wives or concubines. At present, the practice of concubinage no longer legally exists. Both women and men are free to choose their marriage partners. Many married women in the larger society have a very successful family life. However, some others have serious

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31 Before the 1950s, acting was often an inherited occupation. Nowadays, this custom no longer exists. Many actresses and actors do not encourage their children to inherit their profession since there is no guarantee for success. They prefer their daughters or sons to receive higher education and engage in other kinds of occupational activities.
marriage problems, which are due to many reasons, such as adultery, incest, bigamy, mistreatment by spouse and relatives, sickness and abandonment.

Marriage is also a common practice of women in Cantonese opera. As mentioned above, before the mid 20th century, performers (both female and male) were classed at the bottom of the society. They were looked on as wanderers and vagabonds. Owing to this discrimination, it was very difficult for female players to marry into prosperous or scholarly families. Most of them had no choice but to become wives\(^{32}\) of their male colleagues. For example, Shanghai Mei 上海妹\(^{33}\) and Banri An 半日安, and Hongxian Nu 紅線女\(^{34}\) and Ma Shiceng 马師曾 are married couples. In Hong Kong, the influence of western culture has undermined the traditional values since the 1950s. Hence, some men, who are wealthy and highly educated, are willing to marry female performers in Cantonese opera. For example, Ms. Liang Yanfang 梁燕芳, whose stage is Fang Yanfen 方燕芬\(^{35}\), is a distinguished actress of principal female roles. She retired and married Dr. Yang Jinghuang 楊景煌 (a medical specialist) in 1959. In recent years, Cantonese operatic performances are considered to be an upper class activity. Many amateur players

\(^{32}\) It is important to note that some Cantonese operatic actresses might become concubines of rich men.

\(^{33}\) Shanghai Mei, whose legal name is Yan Sizhuang 颜思莊, was born in Singapore. She was one of the most popular actresses of female roles during the 1930s. As a famous female player, she always performed in Hong Kong and Guangzhou. Her husband, Banri An (whose legal name is Li Hongan 李鸿安) was a distinguished actor of comic roles. Shanghai Mei passed away in 1954.

\(^{34}\) Hongxian Nu, whose legal name is Kuang Jianlian 鄭健潔 or Kuang Qingwei 鄭清薇, is regarded as a national treasure of China. She is the most famous Cantonese operatic actress in Mainland China. In the early 1940s, she was the supporting female role of the Kangzhan Jutuan 抗戰劇團 (War of Resistance Troupe). The impresario of the troupe was Ma Shiceng. As a senior, Ma taught Hongxian Nu how to perform Cantonese operatic plays. Their relations extended well beyond cultural cooperation. Later, they married and became good partners onstage.

\(^{35}\) Before her retirement in the late 1950s, she donated a flat to the Xianggang Bahe Huiguan 香港八和會館 (The Chinese Artists Association of Hong Kong), a work union of the Cantonese operatic employees in Hong Kong. The old headquarters of the association was located in this flat. In order to express their gratitude, employees in Cantonese opera honor her as the permanent honorary president of the association (Please refers to Chapter Three for detailed descriptions of the Xianggang Bahe Huiguan).
(both female and male) come from prosperous families and have received a good education. These changes enable female employees in Cantonese opera to achieve upward social mobility. Thus, similar to women of the larger society, actresses are free to choose their marriage partners, who engage in various kinds of occupational activities.

Some married actresses have a harmonious family life. For example, Shanghai Mei had a very successful marriage. "She and Banri An were certainly a pair of good partners onstage. In family life, they were also praised for [being] the model of [married] couples" (Lai, 1990: 304, translated by Mary Yeung). Moreover, according to the Xianggang Bahe Huiguan Sishi Nian Jinian Tekan (A Special Memorial Magazine concerning the 40th Anniversary of the Chinese Artists Association of Hong Kong), Ms. Fang Yanfen and Dr. Yang Jinghuang are a compassionate married couple. Ms. Fang is Dr. Yang's successor wife. His first wife passed away and left behind three children. In order to be a pious wife and a responsible mother, Fan Yanfen retired to private life after marriage. She treats the children of the first wife with complete maternal concern. Hence, relationships between her own four children and the first wife's children are very good. Her family life is full of joy and peace.

It is important to point out that harmony is not easy to maintain in a family. Some female players end their marriages in separation or divorce. For instance, my informants stated that before the 1950s, many married actresses completely retired from performances in order to rear children and take charge of housework. Their husbands, who were usually their male colleagues, might have sexual relations with young actresses.
As a result, their marriages either ended in divorce or separation (Chen, 1995: Extracted from Mary Yeung’s manuscripts).

1.4. Performers and Homosexual Behaviors

According to Marjorie Topley and Andrea Sankar, during the late 19th and the early 20th century, lesbian relationships were part of sisterhood life for some sworn spinsters in Cantonese sericultural areas (Sankar, 1985: 78 – 81). One of Topley’s informants explained: “...a woman may be predestined to marry a certain man over and over again in different incarnations; even if her predestined husband should in one incarnation be born a female, she is nonetheless attracted to her predestined partner...” (Topley, 1975: 76). Lesbian practices among Cantonese sworn spinsters were also known as “grinding bean curd (Mo Doufu 豆腐)”. That is, they used a dildo, which was “made of fine silk threads and filled with bean curd”, for sexual intercourse (Topley, 1975: 76).

My interviewees stated that homosexual practices also occur in Cantonese operatic employees (both female and male). Before the 1950s, performers engaged in homosexual activities mainly due to two reasons. In the first place, some players were forced to have sexual intercourse with other men. For example, during the 1920s and the 1930s, the Lianhua Shan 蓮花山 (The Lotus Mountain), which is situated south of Guangzhou, was infested with bandits. Many actresses and actors, who were captured by these brigands, were compelled to have sexual or homosexual relationships with them. Thus, at that time, most Cantonese opera performers (both female and male) were always worried about their own personal safety. In the second place, the sexual preference of the
actresses and actors was also affected by social environment. As mentioned in Section 1.1., Cantonese operatic mixed troupes were banned before the early 1930s. In other words, women could only join the female troupes at that time. The actresses played all men’s roles in performances. Female performers, who impersonated male characters, often possessed a special mien onstage. Though they were not men, they learnt to know men and reproduced them as artists. Their handsomeness attracted other female troupe members who played women’s roles. Hence, lesbian relationships might form among some actresses in the troupe. At present, in Hong Kong, it is no secret that some female performers are lesbians. They become female homosexuals mainly due to their own sexual preference.

This in sum, is the situation of female performers in the family and the Cantonese operatic occupation.
CHAPTER TWO

Popular Religious Beliefs and Activities of
Women in Cantonese Cultural Areas

In this chapter I propose to consider the following questions:
2.1. What are the gender taboos for women in Cantonese society?
2.2. What are the reasons for women to observe taboos?
2.3. Why are women considered as objects of taboos?
2.4. What are the roles and situations of women in god sacrifices and ancestral worship?
2.5. What are the basic principles of the cults of deities and ancestors?

2.1. General Taboos for Women in Cantonese Society

Women in Cantonese society have to observe a number of gender taboos. For example, in Foshan:

On the wedding day, the woman who gets married should be borne
out of her father’s house] on the back of another woman. [The bride’s]
feet cannot touch the ground. Otherwise, it would be inauspicious...
(Ou, 1993: 840, translated by Mary Yeung).

In the twelfth lunar month, on the day of worshipping the stove,
women are forbidden to pay tribute to the Stove God... (Ou, 1993: 572,
translated by Mary Yeung).

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36 In a wedding ceremony, besides being borne by another woman, the bride may also walk upon covered
ground when she leaves her natal home.
Pregnant women are prohibited from going out at night or entering temples. [This is due to] the fear of demonic possession... (Ou, 1993: 574, translated by Mary Yeung).

In Hong Kong, there are also many religious restrictions placed on women. For instance, women, when menstruating or within a month of childbirth, are prohibited from participating in the activities of god sacrifices and ancestral worship. Moreover, they are not allowed to touch the sacrificial items. With regard to pregnant women, many of them observe some specific religious prohibitions. For instance, they would not break, cut or strike anything inside their bedrooms.

It is believed that postpartum women are dangerous to other people. Thus, many religious restrictions are also imposed on other persons in order to keep them away from postpartum women. For example, in Guangzhou:

Within the month following a woman’s confinement, children are not allowed to enter her lying-in room. Children who poke in [her room would become] unintelligent. [When] studying, they would be punished by drawing circles [around] their eyes. The father cannot enter either. If he goes into the lying-in room, he must change his clothes and take a bath afterwards. Then and only then can he pay tribute to the deities (Wu, 1993: 417, translated by Mary Yeung).

At Dongguan, women within a month of child delivery are also considered as objects of taboos. Men and boys are prohibited from entering their lying-in rooms. This religious restriction is not imposed on girls (Yuan, 1993: 426). Moreover, Cantonese
people believe that new born babies (both female and male) are polluted by the contamination from the womb. Hence, after one month of birth, children are purified by having their heads shaved. New mothers would use pomelo leaves and water to purify themselves before they resume normal activities.

2.2. Reasons for Observing Gender Taboos

There are two major reasons for women to observe gender taboos. First, women have to observe a number of gender taboos when they are in certain transitional phases or dangerous conditions, such as marriage and pregnancy. Danger is perceived during these periods of change. For example, in a wedding ceremony, the bride is believed to be in a very dangerous condition while she is traveling from her father’s home to the groom’s house. During this crucial transitional process, she is in a state of suspense. That is, she is not a member of her natal family, but neither is she a member of her conjugal family. Owing to this reason, she is not under the protection of the deities and ancestors of these two families. Since she is extremely vulnerable, it is believed that she would be easily injured by wandering ghosts or demons. According to traditional Chinese beliefs, these evil and profane spirits always wander about on roads or streets (dirty places). Therefore, as mentioned in section 2.1., the bride is prohibited from touching the bare earth when she is on her way to the groom’s house.

In the case of pregnant women, they have to observe some specific religious restrictions mainly due to their beliefs about the existence of a spiritual entity known as Taishen 胎神 (The God of Womb). The Taishen is considered to be the soul of a child. According to popular beliefs, this spirit always moves about inside the bedroom of a
pregnant woman. Hence, if she cuts, breaks or strikes anything in her room, her child’s body would be hurt (Ahern, 1965: 196 - 197).

Secondly, when menstruating or within a month of child delivery, women are considered to be polluted. This is another reason why women have to observe a number of gender taboos. Menstrual flow and postpartum discharge are unwanted substances from the body. According to Chinese popular religious beliefs, they have evil power that could weaken the Yangqi 陽氣 of gods and strengthen the Yinqi 隱氣 of evil spirits. In other words, they are extremely dirty and dangerous. Therefore, women, during menstruation or within one month of parturition, are prohibited from worshipping deities and touching sacrificial items.

2.3. Reasons for Regarding Women as Objects of Taboos

Women are considered to be taboo objects because of two major reasons. In the first place, women, especially postpartum women, are regarded as transmitters of evil supernatural power since they have many opportunities to touch the postpartum discharge (an unwanted substance from the body). Thus, they are also dangerous to other persons. People who make contact with them would immediately become taboo themselves. Owing to this reason, when a woman is within a month of childbirth, other individuals (especially men and boys who fall within the category of Yang 陽 according to traditional beliefs) are prohibited from entering her lying-in room (or bedroom).

In the second place, power struggle is another reason for regarding women as taboo objects. The Chinese family can be characterized as a patriarchal system. From the view point of men, women should be inferior to them. After giving birth to a son, women
can confirm their status in the family. Some men may be afraid that their dominant positions would be challenged by women. Hence, it is reasonable to argue that the belief in pollution may serve as an excuse for men to exert their control over women. By labeling women as taboo objects and restricting their personal freedom, such as speaking in public contexts, men can prevent women from being involved in many social activities and challenging their leading positions.

2.4. Roles and Situations of Women in God Sacrifices and Ancestral Worship

Deities are different from ancestors. According to Arthur Wolf, “gods are powerful and represent public morality”, while “ancestors are relatively weak and concerned only with their own welfare and that of their descendants” (Wolf, 1974: 168). Owing to this reason, deities could be worshipped by general public, while ancestors could only be worshipped by their descendants.

In terms of time, Cantonese women have two kinds of sacrifices: regular and irregular (or occasional). Regular sacrifices can also be sub-divided into daily cults and annual cults. God sacrifices are usually held at household altars, local shrines and temples. Ancestral worship often takes place at home altars, ancestral halls and graves.

2.4.1. Roles and Situations of Women in God Sacrifices

The popular religion of women in Cantonese society can be characterized as a polytheistic and humanized system. All living creatures and natural phenomena can become gods. For example, Cantonese women in Hong Kong worship innumerable deities such as Tangong (Lord Tan) and Tianhou (The Heavenly Empress), legendary figures; Guangong (Lord Guan), an indigenous historical figure;
Huaguang Shifu (Master of Splendor and Brightness), a personification of fire; and Guanyin (Goddess of Mercy), a Buddhist deity.

Within Cantonese cultural areas, women are dominant individuals in the daily worship of deities. For annual sacrifices and occasional offerings, the situations are rather complicated. Their roles vary according to different circumstances.

In Cantonese society, women are dominant individuals in the daily worship of household gods. They are assistants and participants in the annual sacrifices to high ranking deities or major gods, such as Tianhou (The Heavenly Empress), Guangong and Guanyin. These annual cults are usually performed at home altars and local temples. For instance my mother once told me:

At Guangzhou, during the 1930s, your maternal grandmother burnt incense for the household gods and chanted sutras in front of the home altar everyday. On New Year’s Eve, she and her maids were responsible to prepare eight dishes of food and a lot of paper money as well as candles for family sacrifices. In the sacrificial procedure, your maternal grandfather was the first to pay tribute to the household gods (Yeung, 1997: 25).

Besides, from the mid 1960s to the late 1970s, our family paid annual visits to the Tianhou Temple which is located at Causeway Bay on Hong Kong Island. Each year before our sacrifices, my maternal grandmother prepared all the offerings such as

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37 She is the first concubine of my maternal grandfather.
38 She is the second concubine of my maternal grandfather.
chicken, tea, wine, incense and paper ingots. My father was the first to perform the kowtows before the figure of Tianhou (Queen of Heaven) and other deities.

With regard to the annual worship of the low ranking gods and feminine deities\(^{39}\), women in Cantonese society play a dominant role. For example, in the 1960s, women of the Sheung Shui Liao lineage\(^{40}\) were responsible for representing their households to offer annual offerings (they also offered monthly sacrifices) to the God of Earth and Grain, a relatively low god in the celestial bureaucratic system in comparison with high deities such as Guangong and Tianhou. Male members of the lineage seldom paid tribute to this minor deity at his shrine, which was located at the outskirts of the Sheung Shui village (Baker, 1968: 86).

In the case of Huaguang Daidi (The Great Emperor of Splendor and Brightness), he was a major deity in Cantonese cultural areas before the 1950s (such as in Foshan). Women were participants in the temple festivals for celebrating his birthday. At the present time, although Huaguang is still the most important patron god of the Cantonese operatic occupation, he is no longer considered to be a chief deity in Cantonese society. Owing to limited human resources, I cannot collect reliable information concerning the worship of Huaguang in Mainland China. However, I discover that there is only one Huaguang Temple in Hong Kong. It is located at Tai O on Lantau Island. On 18\(^{th}\) December 1996, I went to visit this temple and realized that since the mid 1970s, there has been no annual festival there. Old women who live in the local village play a

\(^{39}\) In this thesis, feminine deities refer to those gods who are worshipped only by women.

\(^{40}\) The Liao lineage is one of the five large lineages in Hong Kong. Its founding ancestor was Liao Zhongjie 鄭仲杰 (Chung-chieh). He settled at the Sheung Shui/Fanling Plain in the Yuan dynasty (A.D. 1264 – 1368).
dominant role in the daily sacrifices. They are responsible for offering incense, fruit, and flowers to Huaguang and other deities\textsuperscript{41} in the temple everyday.

Women in Cantonese society are active worshippers and dominant individuals in annual sacrifices to the feminine gods\textsuperscript{42}. Men can only participate as members of the audience. The Seven Sisters Festival (Qijie Dan 七姐妹)\textsuperscript{43} is a typical example to explain this point. Let us take a look at the activities of women in the Qijie Dan at Guangzhou during and before the mid 1930s:

The seventh day of the seventh moon, [according] to popular traditions, is the time when the cowherd and the weaving maid meet. Most young unmarried women joined together to form the associations of the skill in needlework. Various kinds of curious playthings were prepared in advance. Moreover, straw-colored paper, sesame and grains of rice etc., were used for making different kinds of flowers, fruit, maids utensils and mansions\textsuperscript{44}, and so forth. It was a very marvelous battle of wits. On the sixth day, [these elaborate preparations], which were mixed

\textsuperscript{41} Besides Huaguang, the Seven Hands and Eight Arms (Qishou Babei 七手八臂), the Goddess of Mercy and the Earth God are also worshipped in the Huaguang Temple. It is important to note that although the temple is known as the Huaguang Miao, the principal deity at the main altar is the Seven Hands and Eight Arms instead of Huaguang.

\textsuperscript{42} As mentioned above, feminine deities refer to those gods who are worshipped only by women. With regard to Guanyin and Tianhou, I classify them as major deities who are worshipped by both female and male devotees in Chinese communities.

\textsuperscript{43} In the Seven Sisters Festival, women celebrate the reunion of the cowherd and the weaving maid. According to the legend, both the cowherd and the weaving maid were immortals in the Heaven. The weaving maid was good at spinning and weaving. She was very hardworking. Her father, a celestial deity, married her to the cowherd. After the marriage, the celestial couple neglected their work. As a result, the Queen Mother of the West (Xi Wangmu 西王母) was extremely angry. She “took out her magic hairpin and, with one sweep of her arm, drew the Milky Way across the sky leaving the cowherd on one side and the weaving maid on the other” (Law, 1982: 67). The celestial lovers were allowed to meet only once a year, on the seventh day of the seventh moon.

\textsuperscript{44} All these curious things were made in small-scale.
with needlework, rouge and powder, antiques, valuable playthings, flesh flowers and seasonable fruit etc., were fully displayed on tables (set out in a courtyard). In extreme cases, several tens of square shaped tables were set out. Relatives and friends were invited. Blind girls were summoned to play music throughout the night. Poor and small families would also try their best [to make preparations] for celebrating the festival. In the evening (7 – 9 p.m.)\(^{45}\) of the sixth day, incense and candles were burnt. [The unmarried women] performed kowtows to the Heaven. [This] was called [the Ritual for] Inviting the Immortals. From 11 p.m. to 5 a.m.\(^{46}\), all bows were performed in multiples of seven\(^{47}\) since the immortal maids were always seven in number. [This] was called [the Ritual for] Worshipping the Immortals...A circular tray (made of paper) was also burnt. Inside the tray, there were [various] items (made of paper): clothes, wraps, shoes, rouge and powder, mirror-stands, and fine-toothed combs etc... The displayed items of the seventh day were still not removed. At night, [the lads] worshipped the deity\(^{48}\) [in the same way as the unmarried women paying tribute to the seven sisters] in the last evening. This was

\(^{45}\) According to the *Mathew's Chinese-English Dictionary*, *Chugeng* 初更 = 7 – 9 p.m. (Mathews, 1956: 1176).

\(^{46}\) My mother told me that *Sangeng* 三更 = *Sangeng* 三更, and *Wugeng* 五更 = *Wugeng* 五更. According to the *Mathew's Chinese-English Dictionary*, *Sangeng* = 11 p.m. – 1 a.m., and *Wugeng* = 3 – 5 a.m.. Thus, *Sangeng* to *Wugeng* = 11 p.m. to 5 a.m..

\(^{47}\) On the sixth day, from *Sangeng* to *Wugeng*, unmarried girls paid tribute to the seven sisters for seven times. Seven kowtows were performed in each time of worship. In other words, they offered forty-nine kowtows altogether.

\(^{48}\) The term "deity" refers to "the cowherd".
The end of a woman’s participation in the Seven Sisters Festival came after the first year of marriage. According to Cantonese traditions, a newly married woman was required to hold a departing ceremony. In this ritual, she worshipped the seven sisters alone. Pears, sour ginger, roast pork, fruit, incense and paper money were major offerings. Thereafter, this married woman could only participate in the Seven Sisters Festival as part of the audience.

At the present time, the celebrations of the Seven Sisters Festival have declined in scale. However, it is important to emphasize that women still play a dominant role in offering annual worship to the seven sisters. Joan Law and Barbara Ward state that in Hong Kong, young unmarried girls pay tribute to the seven sisters (especially the weaving maid) on the seventh day of the seventh lunar month. Circular trays, incense, flowers and fruit are major sacrificial items (Law, 1982: 67).

Occasional sacrifices mainly deal with specific events or problems. Women in Cantonese society are active performers and dominant individuals in these irregular rites (cf. Topley, 1966: 99). In special occasions, such as the wedding ceremony and the spinster ceremony (Shuqi Li 梳起禮), women often pay tribute to gods. Let us take a look at the spinster ceremony. As mentioned in Chapter One, during the late 19th and the early 20th century, sworn spinsterhood was a common practice in some Cantonese sericultural areas (especially in Shunde). Sworn spinsterhood was achieved through a

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49 Women would not participate in the Ritual for Worshipping the Cowherd.
spinster ceremony (*Shuqi Li*). Women were dominant individuals and active participants in this ritual. As an old spinster recalled her own celibacy rite:

The *Shuqi* ceremony is similar to a marriage ceremony. Your friends and your relatives come. All the guests brings gifts. Mine was very grand; many people came. Many older spinster women came...The banquet was held at my mother’s home...

...I bought a lot of long buns to distribute to the guests informing them of the celebrations. Women who are about to marry also distribute cakes to relatives and friends. After giving out the long buns, I went to the temple of Guanyin, the Goddess of Mercy, to worship. Every spinster must worship Guanyin because she is a woman and remained unwed. I went to the temple alone to worship for the hair-combing ceremony and brought a lot of food as offering to the goddess; mainly I gave her chicken backs. I also offered chicken backs and tea to my ancestors in the ancestor hall. After I returned home, I paid my respects to my mother and offered her a cup of tea... Then my godmother dressed my hair as married woman’s... (Stockard, 1989: 80 - 81).

The content of the above passages clearly reveals that Guanyin was the patron deity of spinsters. The nonmarrying woman, who vowed to remain celibate in front of Guanyin’s image, was the dominant individual in the worship. Other spinsters were active assistants and participants. Besides, it is important to note that men and married women could only participate in the *Shuqi Li* as members of the audience.
Women in Cantonese society also play an active role in offering occasional or irregular sacrifices when they come across serious problems. In my own case, when my father was very sick in early 1978, I accompanied my mother to the Guanyin Temple in Causeway Bay on Hong Kong Island. We reverentially appealed for the full recovery of my father.

With regard to the situations of the professional experts, female spirit-mediums often act as consultants and intermediaries between the mortals and the deities in occasional rituals. Jack Potter states that at Ping Shan in Hong Kong, during the 1960s, people of the local communities always consulted Kao Paak-neung (one of the three female spirit-mediums of Ping Shan) when their family members were seriously ill. In cases, Kao Paak-neung summoned Hua Tuo 華陀 to possess her. She also wrote charms which were burnt in water and drunk by the patients. The local people believed that these charms had curative power, which could exorcise evil spirits and cure the patients (Potter, 1974: 222).

2.4.2. Situations and Roles of Women in Ancestral Worship

Within Cantonese cultural areas, women participate as dominant individuals in daily ancestral worship, as mourners (not chief mourners) at funeral rites, and as assistants and worshippers in annual sacrifices. In normal cases, after they pass away, their spirits would become the objects of worship.

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50 Hua Tuo was a medical authority during the Three Kingdoms era (A.D. 220 – 280). He was killed by Cao Cao 曹操, a famous warlord at that time. Owing to his contributions to Chinese medicine, Hua Tuo was worshipped by many people as a medical sage. Nowadays, he is still regarded as the patron deity of the Chinese medical profession.
Birth, marriage and death are three great events in the life of an individual. Let us examine the situations and roles of women in three occasional rites - the Kaideng Li 開燈禮 (The Ceremony of Lighting a Lantern), the marriage ritual and the funeral rite. Ancestor worship is the core feature of these three occasional sacrifices, which are held respectively in the three great events.

After 1949, the custom of the Kaideng Li died out in Mainland China. However, members of the big lineages in the Hong Kong New Territories still perform this ceremony. According to traditional Chinese clan rules, lineage membership is conferred on men by the lineage leaders in the Kaideng Li. Men are dominant individuals in this rite, which takes place at the ancestral hall. Women have no right of participation. In this rite, both male and female ancestors are objects of worship. Their tablets are placed on the main altar of the ancestral hall. The newly born son and his father are active worshippers. They pay tribute to their ancestors in front of the main altar. Moreover, the father is responsible for hoisting an ornate lantern in his son’s name and giving a feast to the lineage leaders in the hall. The Lineage Headman (Zuzhang 族長), the Deputy Lineage Headman (Fu Zuzhang 副族長), the Branch Headmen and the elders are participants in this cult. As ritual leaders, they are empowered to confirm the status of the newly born son in the Kaideng ceremony. This recognition of membership entitles the son to inherit land and property. No ceremonies are held for daughters since they are not considered as full lineage members (Baker, 1968: 48 - 49).

51 According to Baker, lineage membership “is conferred on women by their marriage or concubinage to a male lineage member” (Baker, 1968: 47). Female ancestors refer to the spirits of these married women.
Marriage is another occasional celebration in the lifetime of an individual. Women (female relatives and friends of the bride and the groom) play essential roles in wedding ceremonies. For instance, on the night before the wedding day, a woman who has good fate would perform the Rite of Putting Up the Hair (Shangtou 上頭) for the bride. The main aim of this ritual is to offer auspicious blessings to the bride. On the wedding day, both the bride and the groom are active worshippers. The bride pays tribute to her father’s ancestors before she leaves his house. After arriving at her conjugal home, she and her husband both offer kowtows to the tablets or portraits of his male and female ancestors. Ancestor worship in a wedding ceremony has two implications. First, a marriage ritual is a process which transfers the physical and spiritual home of a woman. After performing the sacrificial rites on the wedding day, the bride ends her reciprocal relationships with her father’s ancestors since she is no longer considered to be a member of his family. She becomes a member of her husband’s family. Hence, one of her major duties is to offer regular and irregular worship to his male and female ancestors. Reciprocally, these ancestors are responsible for blessing the bride because she is now one of their descendants. Secondly, formal worship of the groom’s ancestors reminds the bride that her action and behavior are under the strict supervision of his forebears. Therefore, she should beware of her conduct. Otherwise, she would be punished by them.

52 In the Kaideng Li, a newly born son obtains a certificate of lineage membership. This certificate is signed by the lineage leaders. According to traditional clan rules, this male member (Ding 丁) could not inherit land and property without obtaining such a certificate.

53 In Cantonese society, only those married women, whose husbands are still alive, and have children and grand children are qualified to perform the Shangtou Li for the bride.

54 It is important to note that a man who has good fate would also perform the Rite of Putting Up the Hair for the groom.
Besides birth and marriage, death is another important event in an individual’s lifetime. One of the major functions of a proper funeral is to transform the status of a deceased from an unstable spirit to a benevolent ancestor. If the deceased is a married woman, especially an old woman who has a son (or sons), her funeral would be an elaborate one. The funeral rite of my great grandmother (my maternal grandfather’s mother) is a typical example to illustrate this point. My great grandmother passed away in the early 1930s. Her funeral ritual lasted for thirty-five days. During that period, her corpse was placed in the main hall of the house. Rice and paper money were offered to her. My maternal grandfather was the chief mourner. According to the Wufu System (The System Concerning the Five Kinds of Clothing), he wore mourning dress made of hemp and sackcloth. His most important duty was to perform the rite of buying water (Maishui). My two maternal grandmothers also participated in the funeral ceremony as mourners. They wore sackcloth with their hair unbound. As daughters-in-law, they were responsible for transferring the longevity clothes to my great grandmother. Moreover, in order to absorb the death pollution and to take on the fertility of my great grandmother (the deceased), my two grandmothers rubbed their unbound hair against the coffin (cf. Watson, 1982: 162 - 173). With regard to the funeral specialists, Daoist and Buddhist priests were invited for several times to chant scriptures for easy passage of my great grandmother’s spirit through purgatory. In addition, they also performed a special rite in order to release her spirit from the blood pool in hell. The

55 In the rite of buying water, my grandfather paid tribute to the guardian spirit of a stream or well and “bought water” by leaving a few coppers. This water was used to bathe my great grandmother’s corpse.
56 According to Chinese traditions, “longevity is the standard euphemism used in the funeral when referring to death”. Thus, “the grave clothes are called longevity clothes” (Thompson, 1996: 45).
burial took place at Da Honggu 大紅谷, a fengshui 風水 tomb site in Canton. The mourning lasted for three years\(^{57}\) (cf. Overmyer, 1986: 62). My great grandmother’s spirit was then received as a benevolent ancestor within the kinship system (Detailed discussions concerning regular ancestral worship are mentioned below). Nowadays, Cantonese people in general still practise this cult of ancestors but in a more simplified way. For example, in Hong Kong, funeral rites and the subsequent mourning usually last for one month. It is important to note that although funeral rituals usually take place at the funeral parlors, women still play subordinate but essential roles in the rites. They serve as guardians and consultants of funeral activities. For instance, in my father’s funeral ceremony, my mother tried to find out the night when my father’s spirit would return to our home\(^{58}\). My maternal grandmother stopped her immediately and said, “This is the job of the funeral priest. You should not make any calculation. Otherwise, you would bring calamities on yourself”.

With regard to daily sacrifices, these simple cults usually take place at home altars. According to Baker’s field research (during the late 1960s and the early 1970s) in the Hong Kong New Territories, “the daily worship was usually undertaken by women, falling as it did within the home, the woman’s sphere” (Baker, 1979: 88). This simplest

\(^{57}\) My maternal grandfather and his two concubines observed Grade 1 mourning for my great grandmother according to the Wufu System. The Yi Li 儀禮 (Ceremonial and Ritual) states that the Grade 1 mourning is the deepest mourning. The mourning period is twenty-seven months (three years). The mourners are required to wear untrimmed sackcloth coats and grass sandals. Sons, unmarried daughters and daughters-in-law have to observe Grade 1 mourning for their parents and parents-in-law. Owing to this reason, my grandfather and his two concubines observed the three-year mourning for my great grandmother.

\(^{58}\) This night is known as the Huihun Yi 回魂夜 (The Night of the Returning of the Spirit). According to popular Cantonese beliefs, the spirits of those recently dead would return to their homes from purgatory. These spirits stay at their homes for a few hours at a specific night. The funeral priest is a specialist who knows how to make calculation concerning when these deceased spirits would visit their homes.
form of family worship consists of offering daily tea and incense to the tablets or portraits of the ancestors.

Besides the daily cults, both female and male ancestors are also worshipped by their descendants on important occasions (such as their birth and death anniversaries, and festivals). For members of the big lineages\(^{59}\) in the Hong Kong New Territories, these annual cults often take place at ancestral halls and graves. In normal cases, men play a dominant role in these annual sacrificial rites. Women can only participate as observers or assistants. The Sheung Shui Liao lineage in Hong Kong is a typical case to illustrate the subordinate status of women in the annual sacrifices. Baker states that in the mid 1960s, the Spring Rites (Chunji 春祭) were important annual sacrifices of the Liaos. These regular cults took place at Wanshi Tang (The Hall of the Ten Thousand Piculs), the main ancestral hall of the Liao lineage. According to Baker’s description, both male and female ancestors were worshipped in the Wanshi Tang. Their tablets were placed at the main altar of the hall\(^{60}\).

With reference to Baker’s record, during the mid 1960s, the Spring Rites were held on the second day of the second lunar month. Before the early 1940s, women were prohibited from participating in the ceremonies. Men were the dominant individuals and worshippers. The Lineage Headman was the celebrant. The Deputy Lineage Headman,

\(^{59}\) Lineages do not exist in China any more. Nowadays, only the big lineages in Hong Kong still possess ancestral halls.

\(^{60}\) In the mid 1960s, there were three altars in the Wanshi Tang. Among them, the main altar was the most important. It consisted of the tablets of the founder (Zhongjie) and his wife, of his son (Ziyu 朱玉) and that man’s wives and of his grandsons. In addition, it also consisted of the tablets of some ancestors and their wives who were senior to Zhongjie. Another altar consisted of the tablets of the Gongming (those who succeeded in the imperial examinations). The final altar consisted of one hundred and fifty-six tablets. They belonged to men who donated money for the restoration of the hall. Besides annual worship, it is
the Branch Headmen, the elders (men who were sixty-one Sui or above) and the Gongming (men who had high academic achievements) were worshippers in the rites (a total of fifty to sixty males). These male leaders first paid tribute to their male and female ancestors in front of the main altar. Then, they offered a short sacrifice to the ancestors of particularly high academic achievement. During the process of worship, music was played in order to accentuate the effect of the rites; huge decorative candles and large sticks of incense were burnt; different kinds of food such as pork, fish, fruit, rice, wine and tea were offered; and kowtows were performed by all the participants. After the Second World War, ritual restrictions on women were loosened. For instance, in 1965, village women were allowed to enter the Wanshi Tang as observers in the Spring Rites. Moreover, female representatives of the Liao Surname Association in Kowloon were given privilege of paying tribute to the ancestors as guests. At the feast after the Chunjie, before World War Two, women had no right of participation. The lineage heads, the Gongming 功名 and the elders were active participants. In 1965, according to Baker’s observation, female representatives of the Liao Surname Association were invited to join the banquet (Baker, 1968: 65).

Besides the ancestral halls, family graves (for recently dead) and ancestral tombs (for remote ancestors) are two other common places for the lineage members to pay
tribute to their ancestors every year. In the case of the Sheung Shui Liao lineage, during the mid 1960s, members of the Liaos usually visited the family graves in the Spring Festival (Qingming Jie 清明節)\(^{62}\). For the remote ancestors, such as Zhongjie and his son Ziyu\(^{63}\), the lineage members often visited their tombs on the Chongyang 重陽 (the Autumn Festival)\(^{64}\). Men played a dominant role in these sacrificial rites. Women could only participate as assistants. Although I cannot collect the latest information concerning the ancestral rites of the Liao lineage, it is reasonable to believe that women still play a subordinate role in these annual sacrifices.

For most people\(^{65}\) in Cantonese society, annual ancestor cults usually take place at family graves. In Hong Kong, most of these graves are located at the public cemeteries, such as the Wo Hop Shek Cemetery in the New Territories, and the Aberdeen Cemetery on Hong Kong Island (Law, 1982: 39). Women are assistants and worshippers in these annual rituals. They are responsible to prepare the offerings, such as food, paper ingots, incense, candles, tea, wine and flowers. Men play a dominant role in these family cults. Male family members are often responsible for painting the inscriptions on the graves, and offering incense and paper money. In normal cases, the oldest male member worships the ancestor first, and the other members follow in the order of their status in the family.

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\(^{62}\) The Spring Festival is usually in early April (one hundred and six days after the winter solstice).

\(^{63}\) The Liao lineage members visited Zhongjie's tomb and Ziyu's grave on the ninth day of the ninth month and the tenth day respectively.

\(^{64}\) The Autumn Festival is on the ninth day of the ninth moon.

\(^{65}\) In Hong Kong, most people are not members of the big lineages.
The above paragraphs offer a detailed discussion concerning the roles of living women in ancestor worship and the situations of female ancestors as objects of worship. However, with regard to the unmarried girls and the spinsters, their situations in ancestor sacrifices are very different.

During the 1930s, sworn spinsterhood was a common practice in some Cantonese cultural areas (such as Shunde). At that time, according to traditions, a spinster could not die at her natal home. Otherwise, all the inauspicious things that happened to her own kin group would be blamed on her spirit. In addition, her tablet could not be placed at her father's ancestral altar. According to one Shunde spinster, “a spinster could not die at home, but if she had money, she could go to a spinster house and have her tablet placed there after death...If a spinster did not have funds for a spinster house, her tablet was taken outside the village and placed in a wayside temple” (Stockard, 1989: 88). For some spinsters, however, a spinster house (which was usually located without the boundaries of family lands or local communities) was not an ideal place for setting up their tablets after they died. They preferred to buy a host for their tablet by arranging a bride-initiated marriage. In the wedding ceremony, the living bride married the spirit of a deceased groom. She paid tribute to her deceased husband’s ancestors and household deities. She was then regarded as a full member of the groom’s family. Hence, her tablet was entitled to a place on his ancestral altar after she passed away.

66 After the hairdressing ceremony, a spinster was regarded as a married woman. According to Chinese traditions, a married woman was not allowed to die at her father's house. Thus, a spinster also could not passed away at her natal home.
According to religious traditions, the spirit of an unmarried girl is not entitled to a place on her father’s ancestral altar. This is because she is not considered to be a permanent member of her father’s line (Wolf, 1974: 152). In Cantonese society, there are two common solutions to this problem. First, parents can pay a professional expert to look after their deceased daughter(s). For instance, during the early 1960s, there were three female spirit mediums in Ping Shan, a Cantonese lineage in the Hong Kong New Territories. These spirit mediums played a dominant role in offering daily, monthly and annual worship to the spirits of unmarried girls in their shrines (Potter, 1974: 215).

Secondly, parents may arrange a ghost marriage for their deceased daughter. That is, they can marry the spirit of their unmarried daughter either to a spirit groom or to a living groom. After the marriage ritual, the tablet of their deceased daughter (the ghostly bride) would be placed on the groom’s ancestral altar and becomes an ancestor.

2.5. Basic Principles of the Cults of Deities and Ancestors

Reverence and efficacy (Ling 禮) are the two basic principles of god sacrifices in Cantonese society. These two principles have close interrelationships with each other. According to these sacrificial rules, pious offerings of the devotees would move the gods to show their efficacy by giving blessings (such as protection of life and property and salvation from punishment in hell). On the other hand, irreverence by worshippers would provoke the deities to show their efficacy by giving punishments. If the gods cannot react properly or cannot demonstrate their efficacy, they would lose their credit among people in the Cantonese cultural areas (cf. Thompson, 1995: 55).
In Chinese society, the most important principle of ancestor worship is filiality (Xiao 孝). Most Cantonese people regard Confucianism as the orthodox teaching. The core of this Confucian orthodoxy is filial piety. Ancestral cults are the quintessential expressions of this value. As Confucius says: “When parents are alive serve them according to ritual, when dead bury them according to ritual and sacrifice to them according to ritual” (Baker, 1979: 83). Moreover, the Xiaojing 孝經 (Scripture of Filiality) states: “In serving his parents the filial son is as reverent as possible to them while they are living. In taking care of them he does so with all possible joy; ... when he buries them he is stricken with grief; when he sacrifices to them he does so with the utmost solemnity…” (Thompson, 1996: 37).

Most Cantonese people (both men and women) think that ancestor worship is an effective means of socialization. In the sacrificial rites, parents often tell their children about the good deeds of their male and female ancestors. As a result, these young people are reminded of what their ancestors did and stood for. In this way, each generation is taught to follow the footsteps of its forebears.

This in sum, is the context of the religious beliefs and activities of women in Cantonese society.

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67 According to Confucianism, besides sons, daughters and daughters-in-law are also responsible to serve the spirits of their parents and parents-in-law.
CHAPTER THREE

Taboos for Women in Cantonese Opera

Two questions are examined in this chapter:

3.1. What are the taboos for female performers in Cantonese opera?

3.2. What are the reasons for imposing taboos on Cantonese operatic performers?

3.1. Feminine Religious Restrictions and General Taboos for Cantonese Operatic Performers

Actresses in Cantonese opera have to tolerate three kinds of taboos. These are gender taboos of the dominant culture and two other kinds of occupational taboos: feminine restrictions and general taboos. Feminine restrictions are specially imposed on women in Cantonese opera. General taboos are adopted to constrain the behavior of both male and female performers.

Similar to women in the larger society (Cantonese society), female performers in Cantonese opera have to observe the gender taboos mentioned in section 2.1. In addition, they also have to tolerate many feminine religious restrictions. For example, from the early 1870s to the late 1940s, actresses had no right to occupy the post of chairperson of the Bahe Huiguan 八和會館 (The Eight Harmony Association) mainly

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The Bahe Huiguan (The Eight Harmony Association) was a work union of the Cantonese operatic profession in Guangzhou before the 1950s. According to reliable historical record, the Qionghua Huiguan 瓊花會館 (The Beautiful Flower Association) was the first organization of the Cantonese opera profession. It was formed at Foshan in the early 19th century (Women De Bahe Shilue: 1949: 1). Owing to the anti-Qing revolt led by Li Wenmao 李文茂 (an actor of the warrior role) and other Cantonese operatic performers in the early 1850s, Cantonese operatic performances were banned in 1855 and the Qionghua Huiguan was destroyed. In 1868, Rui Lin 瑞麟, the governor-general of Guangdong and Guangxi, invited two famous Cantonese opera male performers, Xin Hua 新華 and Goubi Zhang 胡桂章, to stage performances in his mansion for celebrating his mother’s birthday. When Goubi Zhang were impersonating a young female role onstage, Rui Lin’s mother suddenly cried and left the room. She summoned Goubi Zhang to her presence and adopted him mainly because Goubi Zhang looked like her deceased daughter.
because they were regarded as unclean. With regard to the *Xianggang Bahe Huiguan* (The Chinese Artists Association of Hong Kong)*69*, from 1953 to 1991, eight people were elected to the post of chairperson. All of them were men. The first woman who occupied this leading post was Wang Ming Chun (a famous actress). One of my informants stated that when she was first elected chairperson in 1991*70*, some members of the association did not support her leadership mainly because they had religious prejudice against women.

Since 1953, members of the *Xianggang Bahe Huiguan* have held grand celebrations on the birthday of Huaguang Shifu (Master of Splendor and Brightness)*71*. Each year before Master Huaguang’s birthday, a male member of the association would purify his images (a big image and a small one). This rite of purification usually takes

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69 The *Xianggang Bahe Huiguan* (The Chinese Artists Association of Hong Kong) was established in 1953. Since then, it has been a work union of the Cantonese operatic profession in Hong Kong. As mentioned in Chapter One (Section 1.3.), Ms. Fang Yanfen 芳艷芬 is the permanent honorary president of this association. It has over one thousand members. One of the major duties of the members of this association is to arrange the birthday ceremony of Master Huaguang. Each year, about two months before Huaguang’s birthday, the members hold meetings in order to determine the place for the ceremony and the performance for the celebration. There are six sub-unions within this professional association. They are the Union of Cantonese Opera Performers, the Union of Musicians, the Union of Affairs, the Union of Costumes and Stage Properties, the Union of Stage Light and Scenery and the Bat Wo Institute of Cantonese Opera. The address of the headquarters of the Chinese Artists Association of Hong Kong is Flat A, 4th Floor, 493 Nathan Road, Kowloon, Hong Kong.

70 Wang Ming Chun left the post of chairperson of the *Xianggang Bahe Huiguan* in 1997. The present chairperson is Chen Jiansheng 陳劍聲, a prominent actress of the principal male role in Cantonese opera.
place at the main hall of the headquarters of the *Xianggang Bahe Huiguan*. Female members are strictly prohibited from doing this ‘sacred task’ mainly because they are considered to be polluted (Yeung, 1995: 24). I once interviewed Mr. Gu Hongjian, the actor who is responsible for performing this job at the present time. He told me:

I am the one who is responsible to purify Huaguang Shifu’s images. The procedure is simple but solemn. First, I take a bath and use pomelo leaves to purify myself. Then, with very great respect, I also use pomelo leaves and water to purify Master Huaguang’s images… Of course, women are forbidden to perform this task (Gu, 1996: Extracted from Mary Yeung’s manuscripts).

Moreover, Mr. Chan Kwok Yuen even stated that women are not allowed to participate as observers in the ritual for purifying Huaguang’s images. Mr. Chan said: “Our secretary is a woman. Thus, last year, just before the beginning of this rite, I told her to leave the main hall and stay in the office until the ceremony had been performed” (Chan, 1996: Translated by Mary Yeung).

Before 1937, red boats (*Hongchuan* 紅船) were an important form of transportation for Cantonese opera troupes in the Pearl River Delta. In the case of the male troupes, “[female performers] and women [in Cantonese society] could not be allowed to bestride the deck [of the red boats]…If the deck was walked across by women,

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71 The birthday of Master Huaguang is on the twenty-eighth day of the ninth lunar month. For the legend of Huaguang, please see Chapter Four.
72 Mr. Gu Hongjian has entered the Cantonese operatic career for over seventy years. He is a distinguished actor of martial arts.
73 The term “our secretary” here refers to the secretary of the Chinese Artists Association of Hong Kong.
74 Please refer to appendix 1 for the description of the red boats.
[the male troupe members] would use ingots and incense candles to worship" the deities and to appease the demons (Wu, 1993: 19, translated by Mary Yeung).

With regard to the female troupes, most of them could not afford to rent red boats. Mr. Wen Zhipeng (a scriptwriter and researcher of Cantonese opera) states that only the four big female troupes were wealthy enough to visit the rural districts of the Canton Delta by red boats. When the troupe members of these big female troupes went on red boats, they (both female and male) had to observe a number of general taboos. For instance, members of the female troupes who traveled in red boats were prohibited from swimming and fishing in the rivers. Otherwise, the minor military roles would make mistakes and hurt each other in their performances. According to Mr. Wu Zhen, an experienced actor of the military role, red boats were also known as dragon boats. Since the carp was believed to be the incarnation of dragon, all members of the female troupes were not allowed to eat carp. When eating other kinds of fish, they were forbidden to turn the fish upside down (a gesture that symbolized the sinking of a boat). Moreover, members of the female troupes who went on red boats were prohibited from saying

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75 In the early 20th century, many female troupes of Cantonese opera were formed. However, it is important to state that only the four big troupes could afford to travel in red boats. These four big female troupes were the Qunfang Yanying (The Beautiful Shadows of the Myriad Flowers), the Jinghua Ying (The Shadows of the Flowers in a Mirror), the Jin chaiduo (The Golden Hairpins and Bells) and the Qionghua Ying (The Shadows of the Beautiful Flowers). Besides performing in the commercial theatres, these big troupes also staged Cantonese operatic performances in the rural areas of Nanhui, Panyu and Shunde. Red boats were a major form of transportation. For other small female troupes, they often staged their performances on the roof of large department stores, at large teahouses, and in private mansions.

76 When a big female troupe traveled in red boats (a big female troupe often traveled in three red boats), it usually comprised of approximately sixty performers (both female and male), twelve musicians together with a number of property men, medical advisors, cooks, laundry men, barbers and boatmen. It is important to emphasize that female troupe members to a great extent outnumbered the male troupe members.

77 At the present time, many female and male performers still observe this taboo.
“帶（Dai）戒（Jie）子（Zi）（wearing rings）”, a metaphorical expression for a boat striking on a rock. Members of the male troupes who lived in red boats were also required to observe these taboos (Chan and Wu, 1996: Extracted from Mary Yeung’s manuscripts).

During the 1940s, basin boats or vessels (Panting 盤艇) were the major transport means of the mixed troupes. Although female performers were allowed to live in the basin boats, their personal freedom on the vessels was strictly restrained by ritual prohibitions. Ms. Chen Shaozhen recalled and dictated:

The bow of a basin boat was known as the dragon head. It was a sacred place for worshipping the deities. Thus, unlike their male counterparts, actresses and other female troupe members were prohibited from entering the basin boat from the bow, something which was commonly called “riding on the dragon head”. They were only allowed to enter the basin boat through the side windows...Moreover, giving birth was strictly forbidden [on the boats] (Chen, 1995: Translated by Mary Yeung).

Besides the two feminine restrictions mentioned above, mixed troupe members (both female and male) on basin boats also had to observe many general taboos. These general taboos for Cantonese operatic troupe members on basin boats were very similar to those for troupe members on red boats. For instance, troupe members who lived in the basin boats had to observe the same taboos as those who lived in red boats.

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78 The basin boat was a form of transportation for Cantonese operatic troupes during the 1940s. According to Ms. Chen Shaozhen’s description, the size and the internal structure of a basin boat were similar to those of a picture boat. For the layout of a picture boat, please see appendix 1.
basin boats were strictly prohibited from fishing and swimming in the rivers. In addition, they were also forbidden to eat carp and to say inauspicious words.

Regarding the taboos for women at performance halls or theatres, women were prohibited from entering the backstage area before the late 1910s\textsuperscript{79}. Mixed troupes have become very popular since the 1930s. Since then, actresses and other female troupe members of Cantonese opera have been allowed to put on their costumes and facial makeup in the backstage area. However, their freedom of movement is still restrained by some gender taboos. For instance, during menstruation and pregnancy, Cantonese operatic actresses are forbidden to have any contacts with the offerings for god sacrifices before their performances. They are only permitted to show their respect to the protective deities\textsuperscript{80} by bowing in front of their images (Yeung, 1995: 13).

Ms. Summy Leung, an experienced actress and teacher of Cantonese opera, stated: "In the past, pregnant actresses were prohibited from performing onstage mainly because they were regarded as unclean. However, at the present time, no one observes this precept" (Leung, 1996: Translated by Mary Yeung).

In addition, it is important to point out that after purification, female performers in Cantonese opera can act as deities when menstruating. The main reason is due to the consideration of the survival of the Cantonese operatic troupes. Ms. Chen Shaozhen said:

Economic benefit is the vital interest of all the troupe members.

The existence of the Cantonese opera troupes mainly depends on the support of the audiences. Many of the female performers are their idols.

\textsuperscript{79} For the layout of the backstage area, please see appendix 2.
Thus, they are willing to spend money to watch their favorite actresses' performances. If these actresses are periodically absent from performances due to menstruation, would those who idolize them spend money on buying tickets? As result, who would hire the troupes? (Chen, 1995: Extracted from Mary Yeung's manuscripts).

Moreover, women in Cantonese opera are strictly prohibited from sitting on the deity trunk in the backstage area. After putting on their costumes and makeup, male performers of female roles were also required to observe this taboo because they were considered to be women at that time. Master Wong Toa says:

If a female role has mistakenly sat on the top of the deity trunk (this trunk stores the tablets of the masters) or has wrongly stepped on the tooth powder bucket (this bucket holds the tablet of Master Zhang Qian 張騫), the miscellaneous trunk uncle would give a white beard to a black beard [role] and provide an ink tray instead of a wine-cup tray for the stage.

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81 For the legends of the patron deities of the Cantonese operatic profession, please read Chapter Four.
82 Besides in the backstage area, female troupe members have to observe this taboo at any place and any time. With regard to the deity trunk of a Cantonese operatic troupe, it is used for storing the tablets of the patron deities of the Cantonese operatic profession.
83 Before and during the early 20th century, men often played female roles in Cantonese operatic performances. After the removal of the ban on mixed troupes in 1933, this practice died out completely. As mentioned in the main text, actors of female roles were regarded as women after they had put on their costumes and makeup. Thus, they were also forbidden to sit on the deity trunk. However, it is important to emphasize that the male performer who acted as Taohua Nu (The Lady of the Peach Blossoms) did not need to observe this taboo. Taohua Nu is a female character in the Yuhuang Dengdian (The Jade Emperor Ascends the Hall), a ritual playlet of Cantonese opera that has not been performed since the 1930s. During and before the early 20th century, the actor who acted as Taohua Nu was not constrained by the feminine taboos mainly due to two reasons. First, from the performers' view point, the actor who played this character had an equal status with their occupational deities since Taohua Nu is a deity in the Yuhuang Dengdian. Secondly, the actor who performed this role would be very toilsome since he had to wear armor which was very heavy. Therefore, he was allowed to lean on the deity trunk while waiting to ascending the stage at stage right rear.
without any reason. Therefore, the miscellaneous trunk uncle\textsuperscript{84} is very afraid of female roles walking near the deity trunk because it is a sacred place which should not be bestrode and polluted (Wong, 1995: 11, translated by Mary Yeung).

In performance halls or theatres, besides the feminine religious restrictions, actresses have to observe general taboos which are also imposed on their male counterparts. For instance, before and during the 1940s, members of the \textit{Guoshan Ban} \textsuperscript{85} often staged the rite \textit{Potai} (The Ritual for Initiating the Stage)\textsuperscript{86} when a theatre or a permanent hall was a new one that had never been used for Cantonese operatic performances. In other words, the \textit{Potai} was a ritual for purifying a new stage. Mr. He Jianfeng (actor of the supporting painted face role) stated that before the performance of this ceremony, both male and female troupe members were strictly prohibited from chatting inside or outside the performance hall. Moreover, it is important to emphasize that women never took part in the rite mainly because they were regarded as unclean (He, 1996: Extracted from Mary Yeung’s manuscripts).

Since 1950s, the custom of the \textit{Potai} has gradually died out in southwestern part of Guangdong. In Hong Kong, at the present time, the ritual for purifying the new stage is known as \textit{Ji Baihu} (Worship of the White Tiger) or \textit{Potai} (Ritual for Initiating

\textsuperscript{83} Master Zhang Qian, who is also known as Zhang Wu 张五, is one of the five patron deities of the Cantonese operatic occupation. For the description of his legend, please refer to Chapter Four.

\textsuperscript{84} The miscellaneous trunk uncle (ZaxiangShushu) is a position in a Cantonese opera troupe. This job can be done by a male or a female, who is responsible for taking charge of all the miscellaneous items such as stage instruments and troupe properties.

\textsuperscript{85} Before the 1950s, members of the Cross-Mountain Troupes seldom performed in the large cities of the Pearl River Delta. They usually staged their performances in the Leizhou Peninsula (southwestern part of Guangdong) and Guangxi. Usually, they went to these rural areas on foot.
the Stage)\(^87\). Women never participate in this rite since they are considered to be polluted.

With regard to the general taboos concerning the Worship of the White Tiger, Dr. Chan Sau Y. states:

First, in order to avoid ‘coming into conflict’ with the actors, who participate in “the Worship of the White Tiger”, or violating the taboo of ‘opening the mouth’, [the impresario], within a few hours before the performance of the rite, forbids the people who are not members of the troupe to walk onstage (which includes the front stage and the backstage). Secondly, just before the beginning of the performance, the impresario (through the representatives of the local community) invites the people who are not members of the troupe to retreat from the gallery. In the [Cantonese operatic] profession, [this is] known as ‘clearing the hall’. Thirdly, on that day\(^88\), before the rite is finished, the troupe members, no matter [they are] inside or outside the performance hall, would try their best to avoid chatting with people who are not members of the troupe...

[According to] the custom, they are strictly prohibited from calling other persons’ names before the execution of the Worship of the White Tiger. [This is] because the person whose name has been called would usually be

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\(^86\) See the detail description of the rite Potai, which was performed by the Cross-Mountain Troupes, in appendix 3.

\(^87\) Though the Ji Baihu is also known as Potai. The procedure of its performance is completely different from the rite Potai that was commonly practiced by the Guoshan Ban in southern western Guangdong before the 1950s. See the explanation of the Ji Baihu (the Worship of the White Tiger) in appendix 4.

\(^88\) In normal cases, the Ji Baihu is executed before the first evening’s performances.
hurt by ‘the White Tiger’. Fourthly, the two actors who participate in the performance of the rite after arriving at the performance hall would retreat from the crowd and stay by themselves at a corner [of the backstage]...

Fifthly, after the execution of the rite or on the ordinary days when it is not necessary [to perform] ‘the Ritual for Initiating the Stage’, the troupe members, for the sake of safety, would also make every endeavor to avoid talking about ‘the Ritual for Initiating the Stage’ (Chan, 1996b: 51).

Besides, Ms. Summy Leung had the following experience concerning the Ritual for Initiating the Stage:

Once upon a time, members of the Hanfeng Yueju Tuan 漢風粵劇團 (the Cantonese Operatic Troupe of the Han Customs) performed in the Queen Elizabeth Gymnasium. I was a member of the troupe at that time. Since the gymnasium had never been used for Cantonese operatic performances, the Ji Baihu was executed in order to purify the stage. Before the beginning of this sacrificial rite, all of us hid quietly at the backstage. I also informed the new performers that they should not call other persons’ names. However, Mr. Ye Shukun 業樹坤, an experienced percussionist, suddenly called my name. I was quite unhappy. I did not know why he violated this taboo. Since he was my senior, I thought for a while and responded to him...After becoming a

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89 According to popular beliefs of the Cantonese operatic troupe members, the White Tiger can make use of a troupe member’s mouth to injure another member. That is, the words which are spoken by one member can become a curse and anyone who answers such an utterance would have bad luck.
research assistant of Dr. Chan Sau Y., I had more opportunities to witness
the Ji Baihu. I realized that nowadays, most of the Cantonese operatic
performers observe the taboo of “shutting the mouth” before and during
the Ritual for Initiating the Stage. Nevertheless, some young actresses and
their male counterparts do not pay much attention to this religious
restriction (Leung, 1996: Extracted from Mary Yeung’s manuscripts).

In Hong Kong, a ritual operatic series (which takes place at a temporary hall)
would usually last for a few days and nights. In the opening evening, chatting is not
allowed until the principal comic role performer has written “大吉” (Great
Auspicious)” on a board surrounded with flowers or on a big pillar near the stage right
rear (Yeung, 1995: 14). Moreover, all male and female performers are strictly prohibited
from practicing their voices onstage until the Liuguo Fengxiang (The Six
States Appointing a Chancellor), a ritual playlet of Cantonese opera, has been
performed. Otherwise, they would lose their voices or forget their texts and melodies
(Wong, 1995: 91).

90 The word “us” here refers to the troupe members of the Hanfeng Yueju Tuan (the Cantonese Operatic
Troupe of the Han Customs).
91 This rite is known as Kaibi (The Beginning of Makeup). When writing the radical “口” of the Chinese
character “吉”, the principal comic role performer is prohibited from joining the four strokes together.
Otherwise, it is believed that the performers would be unable to open their mouths. In case of the Ji Baihu,
Dr. Chan Sau Y. states that the principal comic role performer may either write “大吉” (Daji)” before the
performance of the Worship of the White Tiger or he may write the two characters after the performance of
this ritual. However, Mr. Wu Zhen, an experienced actor of the principal military role, does not agree with
Dr. Chan’s views. Mr. Wu insists that in case of the Ji Baihu, the actor of the supporting painted face role
is responsible for writing these two characters before the performance of this rite. The actor of the
supporting painted face role usually acts as Zhao Gongming, one of the two characters in the ceremony.
For the legend of Zhao Gongming, please refer to appendix 4.
92 For the detailed description of the playlet Liuguo Fengxiang, please refer to Chapter Five (Section
5.3.2.).
Moreover, Master Wong Toa notes that in performing the play of *Yeshen Guohuai* 夜審郭槐 (The Night Judgement of Guohuai), the masked minor role performers “who act as small demons are prohibited from looking at mirrors [in the backstage area]. Otherwise, they would discover innumerable ghosts in the mirrors which scare them out of their wits” (Wong, 1995: 91, translated by Mary Yeung).

In addition, actresses and their male counterparts are not allowed to trample on battle axes and long melon-shaped mallets. These stage weapons should be used in pairs. In Cantonese operatic performances, they can only be used for showing one’s glory. Actresses and their male counterparts are forbidden to use them for fighting. Otherwise, the performers would bring calamities on themselves. Furthermore, actors and actresses are not allowed to kick the costume and the miscellaneous trunks. Otherwise, they would lose their voices.

3.2. Reasons for Taboos on Women and Men in Cantonese Opera

Traditional religious prejudice against women is the most important reason for imposing feminine restrictions on Cantonese operatic actresses. Female performers are regarded as unclean mainly because of menstrual flow and postpartum discharge. Thus, their situation is very similar to the case of women in Cantonese society (the larger society). As mentioned in Chapter Two, menstrual flow and postpartum fluids are considered to be polluted since they are unwanted discharge from the body. According to popular beliefs of the Cantonese operatic troupe members, these two substances have evil power that could weaken the *Yangqi* of their patron deities and strengthen the *Yinqi* of the evil spirits. Thus, when actresses and other female troupe members are menstruating or
within a month after child bearing, they are prohibited from touching the sacrificial offerings. Moreover, women in Cantonese opera are believed to be transmitters of evil supernatural power since they have more opportunities to touch these two ejected substances. Hence, even when they are not menstruating or have not recently given birth to a child, they also have to observe a number of feminine religious restrictions. For instance, before the 1940s, in the case of male troupes, women were strictly forbidden to bestride the deck of the red boats. With regard to the mixed troupes, during the 1940s, female troupe members were not allowed to enter the basin boats from the bow. Furthermore, from the late 19th century up to the present time, women in Cantonese opera have been prohibited from purifying Master Huaguang’s images before his birthday and participating in the Worship of the White Tiger. In addition, they are forbidden to sit on the deity trunk93, the most important property of a Cantonese operatic troupe.

Power struggle is another reason to explain why feminine restrictions are imposed on women in Cantonese opera. Mr. Chan Kwok Yuen told me that during the 1930s, a very prominent actor of the principal female role stated: “actresses are becoming more and more popular. We must try our best to weaken their influence both within and without the occupation” (Chan, 1996: Extracted from Mary Yeung’s manuscripts). Mr. Chan even thought that the feminine religious restrictions are intentionally imposed on Cantonese operatic actresses by their male counterparts. That no women were elected to the post of chairperson of the Bahe Huiguan before the 1990s is a typical example to support his viewpoint.

93 Since the deity trunk is used for storing the tablets of the patron deities of the Cantonese operatic
With regard to the general taboos, they are used to uphold the moral code within the Cantonese operatic troupes. Mary Douglas argues that “when moral indignation is not reinforced by practical sanctions, pollution beliefs can provide a deterrent to wrongdoers” (Douglas, 1966: 133). I think her point of view can well explain the practical reason for imposing religious restrictions on the male and female performers in Cantonese opera. As Mr. Wu Zhen stated: “In the past, there were usually about one hundred members in a Cantonese operatic troupe. Most of them were illiterate and superstitious. Therefore, taboos could serve as a supernatural means to maintain the order of the troupe” (Wu, 1996: Extracted from Mary Yeung’s manuscripts). In addition, Ms. Chen Shaozhen also offered a very similar explanation. She said:

Property preservation of the Cantonese opera troupes is very important. All the miscellaneous items and stage equipment are very expensive. If they are preserved well, they can be used for over five decades. However, it is very difficult to impose any practical sanctions on the troupe members who destroy troupe properties. Therefore, taboos are used to uphold moral principles. For example, both male and female troupe members are prohibited from kicking the drama trunks. If they violate this taboo, they would lose their voice (Yeung, 1995: 17).

This in sum, is the context concerning the taboos for female performers in Cantonese opera.

profession, it is considered by the troupe members as the most important property of their troupe(s).
CHAPTER FOUR

God Sacrifices and Ancestral Worship

In this chapter, four questions concerning the Cantonese operatic actresses and their cults of occupational deities and ancestors are explored:

4.1. What are the patron deities worshipped by both female and male performers of Cantonese opera?

4.2. How and when do women in Cantonese opera pay tribute to their gods?

4.3. How and when do actresses in Cantonese opera worship their ancestors and non-kinship ancestors (deceased teachers and colleagues)?

4.4. From the female performers’ viewpoint, what are the basic principles and major functions of their cults of deities and ancestors?

4.1. Occupational Deities of Female and Male Employees in Cantonese Opera

Women in Cantonese opera and their male counterparts pay tribute to five patron deities. They are Huaguang Shifu (Master of Splendor and Brightness), Tiandou Ershi (The Two Masters of Field and Hollow), Tangong Ye (Grandfather - Lord Tan) and Zhang Wu Shifu (Master Zhang Wu) or Zhang Qian Shifu (Master Zhang Qian). Unlike Tiandou Ershi and Zhang Wu, who are only patron deities of Cantonese operatic employees, Huaguang Shifu and Tangong Ye are also worshipped by people in the larger society.

With regard to the legends of Huaguang that are popular among Cantonese operatic employees, Master Wong Toa (a distinguished musician and teacher of Cantonese opera) states:
...His birthday is on the twenty-eighth day of the ninth lunar month. He is the God of Fire in Heaven who received an order from Yuhuang Dadi 玉皇大帝 (The Jade Great Emperor) to descend to the mortal world and investigate why Yuhuang Dengdian 玉皇登殿 (The Jade Emperor Ascends to the Hall)\(^4\) was being performed among ordinary people. [Yuhuang instructed Huaguang that] if they had spoken of wrongly of the Heaven Palace, he could immediately burn down [their stage]. Huaguang came down to the mortal world [and] perceived that the operas they performed were reprimanding villains and protecting the state. [There were] no derogatory remarks about the Heavenly deities at all. Therefore, he did not burn down [their stage]. The performers were grateful to him for his preservation of [their stage]. [Since then], they have worshipped him as the highest and the most venerable deity\(^5\) (Wong, 1993: 1, translated by Mary Yeung).

All my female informants such as Ms. Chen Shaozhen and Ms. Summy Leung, offered similar descriptions concerning the legend of Master Huaguang. One of my male interviewees, Mr. Chan Kwok Yuen (a famous designer and maker of Cantonese operatic costumes) gave a similar but more detailed oral account:

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\(^4\) The *Yuhuang Dengdian* (The Jade Emperor Ascends the Hall) is a ritual playlet of Cantonese opera that has not been performed since the 1930s. This playlet requires the participation of about sixty performers. Its content is that the Jade Emperor (the male principal role) ascends the hall and all immortals offer their greetings to him. After realizing the chaotic situation of the mortal world, Yuhuang send all celestial deities to the profane world to restore order.

\(^5\) For the legendary origin of Huaguang, please see appendix 5.
When Yuhuang Dadi saw that Cantonese opera players performed *Yuhuang Dengdian* (The Jade Emperor Ascends the Hall), he was very angry. He sent Huaguang, his adopted son, to the mortal world to burn the stage of the performers at *Wushi Sanke*午時三刻. Huaguang descended to the secular world and enjoyed watching the opera. As a result, he forgot to execute his errand on time. In order to deceive the Jade Emperor, he showed himself on a costume trunk and told the players about the orders of the Yuhuang Dadi. He taught the performers to burn straw at an open area near the backstage so that smoke would ascend to the heaven. Huaguang hoped that in this way, the Jade Emperor would be deceived. Up in the Celestial Palace, Yuhuang sent Qianli Yan 千里眼 (Thousand-li Eye) and Shunfeng Er 順風耳 (Favorable-wind Ear) to investigate why Huaguang did not return to report on his mission for such a long time. These two deities immediately discovered that Huaguang had swindled the Jade Emperor. However, since they were good friends of Huaguang, they kept the secret for him and reported to Yuhuang Dadi that Huaguang had already carried out his mission. The performers well understood that because of the admirable plan of Huaguang as well as the assistance of Qianli Yan and Shunfeng Er, their lives and properties were preserved. Since then, in order to express their gratitude to Huaguang, the Cantonese operatic performers (both female and male) have offered daily worship to

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96 According to Mathew’s *Chinese-English Dictionary*, *Wushi Sanke* is approximately equal to 12:30 p.m.
him. In addition, Cantonese operatic actresses and their male counterparts also held regular celebrations on his birthday\textsuperscript{97} (Chan, 1996: Extracted from Mary Yeung’s manuscripts).

Regarding the legend of Tiandou Ershi (The Two Masters of Field and Hollow), Ms. Chen Shaozhen said:

Their birthday is on the twenty-fourth of the third moon. According to legend, one day, when two martial arts actors were practicing martial arts on a path in a field, two small children came out from a hole in the midst of the field and fought a whole day with each other and then disappeared. The performers thought that they were deities who came to teach them special skills of martial arts. Since they did not know the names of these two gods, they addressed them as Tiandou Ershi because they had come out of a hole in a field (Chen, 1995: Translated by Mary Yeung).

With reference to Tangong (Lord Tan), his birthday is on the eighth day of the fourth moon (Law, 1982: 47). Reliable sources indicate that there are two Tangong temples on Hong Kong Island. One is at Wong Nai Chung Gap and the other is at Shau

\textsuperscript{97} It is important to note that since Huaguang is the most venerable deity of the Cantonese operatic profession, his images or tablets are often worshipped by both female and male performers. Nevertheless, with regard to Qianli Yan (Thousand-li Eye) and Shunfeng Er (Favorable-wind Ear), the players seldom pay tribute to them. In Hong Kong, their images are found at the headquarters of the Union of Musicians (a sub-union of the Chinese Artists Association of Hong Kong). The address of the headquarters of the Union of Musicians is Flat 15 – 16, 3\textsuperscript{rd} Floor, 385 Nathan Road, Kowloon, Hong Kong. Moreover, according to Professor Daniel L. Overmyer, images of Qianli Yan and Shunfeng Er are also found at all Tianhou temples.
Kei Wan. I visited the Tangong Temple at Wong Nai Chung Gap on 16th November 1996. The epitaph of the temple states:

It is said that Xiansheng Tangong (Holy Immortal – Lord Tan) is a patron deity of fishermen. His native place was Huizhou98. He lost his parents in early boyhood [and] relied on his grandmother for nurture. In his childhood, he could foretell the future and cure illness in marvelous ways. Moreover, he was able to summon wind and rain. He was able to participate in natural transformations, and so often manifested miracles by sending down sweet dew and calming storms. So, fishermen had a great respect for him...At the age of twelve, he became an immortal [and] was canonized as a deity...


From the epitaph mentioned above, it is reasonable to believe that women and men in Cantonese opera worship Tangong mainly because he could control weather and cure sickness. Mr. Chan Kwok Yuen even told me an interesting story concerning why Lord Tan, a local god, is worshipped by Cantonese operatic players as one of their patron deities. Mr. Chan said that in the late Qing period, when a male troupe was travelling in red boats, a severe storm came up all of a sudden. The “four great head persons (Sida Touren 四大頭人)99”, after searching over for a while, found that a young woman was...

98 Huizhou is a place in the southeastern part of Guangdong.
99 The “four great head persons (Sida Touren)” were experienced performers who had comprehensive knowledge concerning the precepts of the Cantonese operatic profession. In normal case, the Sida Touren of a Cantonese operatic troupe would comprise of one female role performer, one military role actor, one young male role player and one young military role actor. Nowadays, the system of Sida Touren no longer exists.
hiding inside the galley of one of their red boats. She was the lover of a cook. According to traditional religious precepts of the Cantonese employees, women were not allowed to enter the red boats. Otherwise, all troupe members would suffer great misfortune. Owing to this reason, the *Sida Touren* immediately forced this young woman to leave their boat at once. They put her in a large wooden bucket and let her drift about helplessly at the wind and waves. As a result, she was drowned in a river and became a malign ghost. In order to take revenge, this “water ghost” burnt down the masts of all those red boats which sailed across the river. Hence, all Cantonese operatic troupe members were afraid of it. However, one day, when the ghost was burning a mast of a red boat, a charm was blown up to the mast by a blast of wind. The fire was immediately put out by a sudden downpour. Mr. Chan stated that this charm, which was obtained from a Tangong temple, was owned by a troupe member who traveled in the red boat. As decades passed, this story became more and more popular among the Cantonese operatic employees. Since the early 20th century, women in Cantonese opera and their male counterparts have worshipped Lord Tan as one of their occupational deities (Chan, 1996: Extracted from Mary Yeung’s manuscripts).

Last but not least, Zhang Wu or Zhang Qian is also an important occupational deity of the Cantonese operatic performers. His birthday is on the twenty-eighth of the third lunar month (Wong, 1993: 1). Mr. Chen Feilong, a prominent actor of female roles, offered the following portrayal concerning his legend:
Zhang Wu, whose nickname was Tanshou Wu (Unfolded Hand – the Fifth), was a famous actor in Beijing during the Yungzheng reign (A. D. 1723 – 1735)... He was dissatisfied with the despotic [rule of the Qing Court]. His speeches were anti-Qing. As a result, he was seized by [the Qing Court]. He escaped to Guangdong [and] concealed himself at Foshan. When he was in Foshan, he taught all he knew about operatic arts and martial arts to the local Cantonese operatic performers... [In addition], he also rearranged [the Cantonese operatic roles] into ten types such as (i) Mo (Old Male Roles); (ii) Jing (the Red-faced Role); (iii) Sheng (Male Roles); (iv) Dan (Female Roles); (v) Chou (Comic Roles); (vi) Wai (Painted Face Roles); (vii) Xiao (Young Male Roles); (viii) Tie (Supporting Female Roles); (ix) Fu (Old Female Roles); (x) Za

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100 Zhang Wu had such a nickname mainly because one of his arms was paralyzed.
101 Mr. Wu Zhen (an experienced actor of military roles) argued that Zhang Wu was a native of Hubei, the place of origin of the Han opera. Besides, during the Yungzheng reign, the Kun opera and the Yiyang opera were the two most popular kinds of traditional operas in Beijing. Hence, it is reasonable to believe that what Zhang Wu taught to the operatic performers in Foshan were the different performance styles of the Han opera, the Yiyang opera and the Kun opera.
102 Today, Cantonese operatic roles are classified into six major types. For detail descriptions, please refer to appendix 6.
103 For performers of the red-faced role, they often impersonated Guan Gong (Lord Guan) in operatic performances.
104 In normal cases, performers of male roles acted as middle-aged men (with or without official rank). They often wore “the three tufts”, a kind of long black beard, in their operatic performances.
105 For players of female roles, they usually impersonated young elegant women.
106 The comic roles were sub-classified into two types: male comic roles and female comic roles.
107 In the early Qing period, actors of painted face roles often impersonated treacherous ministers such as Cao Cao and Dong Zhuo.
108 Performers of young male roles usually acted as young warriors, young civilians and young civil-military officers. Players of supporting female roles often impersonated middle-aged women, female warriors and maids.
(Miscellaneous Roles)\textsuperscript{109} ... [Zhang Wu's classifications] enabled a more
clear division...He [therefore] made very great contributions to [the
development of Cantonese opera]. Hence, people in Cantonese opera
respect him as Zhang Xianshi 張先師 (Late Master Zhang)... (Chen,

The above descriptions concerning the legends of the five patron deities clearly
reveal the cosmic view of Cantonese operatic actresses and their male counterparts.
There are two dimensions to this point. In the first place, physical and natural phenomena
are anthropomorphized and personified. For example, in the legend of Master Huaguang,
the Jade Emperor, who is regarded as the most dignified ruler of the celestial bureaucratic
system according to Chinese popular religion, becomes the symbol of Heaven. The
natural phenomenon of fire is humanized as a subordinate official of the Jade Emperor
within the celestial bureaucracy. Most women and men in Cantonese opera perceive him
as a righteous savior of the operatic occupation.

In the second place, the popular religion of women in Cantonese opera can be
characterized as a polytheistic system. Since they believe the whole universe is full of
supernatural bureaucrats, they embrace and respect an unlimited number of deities
without caring for their historical and hagiographic origins. For instance, among the five
protective gods, Master Zhang Wu is a historical figure; Lord Tan, Master Tian and Dou
are legendary figures; and Master Huaguang is the personification of fire. Besides these
occupational deities, it is important to point out that many female performers of

\textsuperscript{109} The miscellaneous roles were further sub-divided into several types, such as supporting painted face
Cantonese opera also worship other popular gods of the larger society. As Ms. Chen Shaozhen said:

During the 1940s, owing to the long term suppressions and humiliations by the rest of the society, Cantonese operatic actresses in comparison with their male colleagues, were more pious in god sacrifices. They worshipped as many deities as they could... I had experiences of traveling on basin boats. Besides paying their respect to the patron gods, many female troupe members on the basin boats also worshipped their own private deities such as Guanyin, Celestial Master Zhang (Zhang Tianshi 張天師) and Maitreya. They put small images of these gods in their sleeping areas and offered daily incense to them... Moreover, in the Seven Sisters Festival, those unmarried actresses also paid tribute to the seven sisters. Incense, candles, paper money, fruit and paper clothes were major sacrificial items (Chen, 1995: Extracted from Mary Yeung's manuscripts).

In addition, Ms. Summy Leung, an actress of male roles in Cantonese opera, told me that although she is a Buddhist, she also offers regular worship to a number of deities.

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110 *Tianshi* is the most prestigious title or post of the *Tianshi Dao* (the Way of the Celestial Masters). This title or post remained the hereditary property of the Zhang lineage. The term Zhang Tianshi (Celestial Master Zhang) refers to Zhang ling 張陵 or Zhang Daoling 張道陵, a native of Jiangsu in the second half of the 2nd century A.D. He was the first Celestial Master of the *Tianshi Dao*. It is believed that around A.D. 142, he received a revelation from Lao Zi, who bestowed him “the Orthodox and Sole Doctrine of the Authority of the Covenant (Zhengyi Mengwei Zhi Dao 正一盟威之道)” (Schipper, 1982: 9). Zhang Daoling is regarded as the founder of the *Tianshi Dao*. In about A.D. 183, Zhang Lu or Zhang Gongqi (the third Celestial Master) set up the Celestial Master state in Sichuan. “Since members were required to contribute five bushels of rice each year, the nickname for this group was The Way of Five Roles, Minor Roles and Warrior Roles.
at her home. These deities are Master Huaguang, Master Tian and Dou, Master Zhang Qian, Guanyin and Guan Gong (Leung, 1996: Extracted from Mary Yeung’s manuscripts).

In a telephone interview, Mr. Chan Kwok Yuen explained that women in Cantonese opera believe that all deities are good because they teach people to behave virtuously. Thus, from the actresses’ viewpoint, there are no reasons for them to restrict themselves to honor only one particular god while neglecting all the others. Mr. Chan also stated that although some Cantonese operatic actresses are Catholic, they still follow the religious tradition of paying their respect to the image of Huaguang before their performances (Chan, 1995: Extracted from Mary Yeung’s manuscripts).

4.2. Roles and Situations of Cantonese Operatic Actresses in Sacred Times

Women in Cantonese opera usually have two kinds of worship: regular and irregular. Regular sacrifices can also be sub-divided into daily cults and annual cults.

In Cantonese cultural areas, before and during the 1940s, women in Cantonese opera played a dominant role in daily sacrifices which were held at home altars, red boats\textsuperscript{111} and basin boats. Female Cantonese employees were responsible for offering incense to their private gods and patron deities every day. They performed daily sacrificial rites in front of their family altars. When traveling in red boats or basin boats, they burnt daily incense in front of the images of their private gods which were put in their own bunks or sleeping areas. With regard to occupational deities, their images were

\textsuperscript{111} As mentioned in Chapter Three, members of the four big female troupes could afford to travel in the Pearl River Delta by red boats.

Bushels of Rice (Wudou Mi Dao 五斗米道) (Overmyer, 1986: 37). This state lasted until A. D. 215 when Zhang Lu surrendered to Cao Cao, a warlord at that time.
installed in public shrines\textsuperscript{112} of the vessels. In usual cases, female players were responsible for paying daily respect to these patron gods on behalf of their troupes.

At the present time, in Hong Kong, female employees in Cantonese opera are also chief performers in daily worship. As Ms. Winnie Poon explained: "It is just like saying 'good morning' or 'hello' to a senior everyday" (Yeung, 1995: 23). However, with regard to daily rites which take place at the headquarters of the Chinese Artists Association of Hong Kong and at the headquarters of its sub-unions, men play a dominant role. This is because most of the regular staff are senior males. For instance, at the Xianggang Bahe Huiguan Yueju Xueyuan 香港八和會館粵劇學院 (The Bat Wo Institute of Cantonese Opera in Hong Kong), Mr. Zhong Zhaohan (a retired actor and regular staff of the institute) is responsible for paying daily tribute to Master Huaguang on behalf of the whole Cantonese operatic profession. The worship takes place at the shrine of the institute.

Turning to annual worship, both female and male employees in Cantonese opera consider the birthdays of their patron deities as sacred times and important occasions. Female performers are participants, assistants and dominant individuals in these annual rituals. Let us examine the birthday ceremonies of Master Huaguang and Master Zhang Qian.

From 1953 to the present time, members of the Chinese Artists Association of Hong Kong have held grand celebrations on Master Huaguang's birthday. The situations of actresses in these rites are complicated. Their roles vary according to different

\textsuperscript{112} See appendix 1 for the locations of public shrines in red boats.
ceremonial procedures and times. In normal cases, there are six major procedures in the sacrifices. First, each year before Huaguang Shifu's birthday, a male member of the Xianggang Bahe Huiguan is responsible for purifying Huaguang's images. This rite takes place at the headquarters of the association. As mentioned in Chapter Three, female members are strictly prohibited from doing this "sacred task" mainly because they are considered to be polluted.

Second, the small image of Huaguang is taken to a restaurant where the major ceremonies take place. There, his image is put on an altar. Many of my informants told me that only the martial arts actors are responsible to perform these duties. No women would take part in this procedure. Mr. Gu Hongjian, an experienced martial arts actor, explained: "Martial arts players are very hard working. We always have to practice different kinds of acrobatics, such as somersaults and weapon combats, which can easily hurt ourselves. According to my memory, no female colleagues have been trained as martial arts performers since the late 19th century. This is because none of them could tolerate to go through such a strict training course" (Gu, 1996: Extracted from Mary Yeung's manuscripts).

Third, the chairperson of the Xianggang Bahe Huiguan offers incense to Master Huaguang. From 1953 to 1991, the association was governed according to the principle

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113 In recent years, the birthday celebrations of Master Huaguang are usually held at the Haicheng Great Restaurant. It is located at Tsim Sha Tsui in the Kowloon peninsula.

114 In 1996 (Year of Bingzi 丙子), I was an observer-as-participant in Master Huaguang's Birthday Ceremony, which took place at the Haicheng Great Restaurant. In the rite, I saw that Huaguang's image was put on an altar that was located at the performing hall of the restaurant. For the description and layout of the performing hall, please read appendix 7.
of male dominance\textsuperscript{115}. Therefore, worshipping was arranged according to gender hierarchy. The chairperson paid tribute to the occupational deities first, and the other members followed in the order of their status in the association.

However, in recent years, owing to the shattering of the traditional patriarchal system and the influence of western culture, most of the female employees in Cantonese opera are able to achieve upward mobility within their occupational association. As a result, members of the association no longer follow the traditional order of worship. For example, in Master Huaguang's birthday ceremony in year of Bingzi (1996), Ms. Wang Ming Chun, the first female chairperson of the association (1992 – 1997), was the dominant individual. She was the first to offer incense to Master Huaguang and other patron deities. Then, guests and members of the association paid tribute to the gods. Professor Daniel Overmyer and I also offered incense to them. It is important to note that at this point in the ceremony, male members did not have priority in worshipping the occupational deities. Pork, fruit, cooked rice, chickens, tea, wine, red buns, paper money, candles and incense were major sacrificial items. My informants stated that both female and male members of the association were active assistants in preparing these offerings.

Fourth, after the worship, Cantonese operatic players usually perform ritualistic playlets. Actresses are active participants in these performances. For instance, in Huaguang's birthday celebration in 1996, two ritualistic plays were staged. They were the \textit{Xianghuashan Da Heshou} 香花山大賀壽 (Great Birthday Greetings at Fragrant

\textsuperscript{115} As mentioned in Chapter Three, from 1953 to 1991, eight persons were elected to the post of chairperson. All of them were men.
Flower Mountain) and the *Tianji Da Songzi* 天姬大送子 (The Celestial Maid’s Great Offering of a Son)\(^{116}\).

Fifth, after the ritual performances, there is always an intermission (about three hours). Many guests and members of the Chinese Artists Association of Hong Kong spend their time in playing *Majiang* 麻將, a very popular gambling game for the Chinese people. Similar to their male counterparts, women are active participants in this game.

Sixth, following the intermission, a large banquet is held at the restaurant. Both female and male members of the *Xianggang Bahe Huiguan* have right of participation. Many guests, both male and female, are also invited to join the feast.

In comparison with Huaguang Shifu’s birthday ceremonies, the celebrations of Master Zhang Wu’s birthday are held on a much smaller scale. Only the martial arts actors celebrate his birth anniversary. In other words, women in Cantonese opera did not take part in the rites as worshippers or as members of the audience. This is because no women have been trained to be martial art performers since the late 19\(^{th}\) century. According to Mr. Wu Zhen, Master Zhang’s birthday ceremonies often take place at the headquarters of the *Luanyu Tang* 鷺興堂 (The Hall of the Imperial Carriage)\(^{117}\). All the offerings, such as paper money, candles, incense, wine, tea, chickens and pig bowels, are prepared by men. In usual cases, no ritualistic playlets are performed. After the cults,

\(^{116}\) Please refer to Chapter Five for detailed descriptions concerning the plays *Xianghuashan Da Heshou* and *Tianji Da Songzi*.

\(^{117}\) The *Luanyu Tang* is a private work union of the martial arts players. According to my knowledge, it is not a sub-union of the Chinese Artists Association of Hong Kong. On Master Huaguang’s birthday, the martial arts actors are responsible for putting his small image in an imperial carriage and carrying it to the restaurant where the rites take place. Hence, their work union is known as the Hall of the Imperial Carriage.
pig bowels, chickens and wine, which are used as sacrificial items, are distributed among all the members of the Luanyu Tang.

Similar to the situation in the larger society, both male and female employees in Cantonese opera offer irregular sacrifices only when they come across important events or serious problems. I perceive that female performers are pious participants in these occasional cults. For instance, before and during the 1940s, when Cantonese opera troupes sailed across Ganzhu Tan (a rapid stream in Shunde), all members would pray piously to their protective deities at the Dragon Head of their vessels and spread paper money all around in order to appeal for security (Chen, 1995: Extracted from Mary Yeung's manuscripts).

Even up to the present time, before the beginning of the ritual performance, irregular sacrifices are offered. Female troupe members are active worshippers. For example, Ms. Summy Leung said:

A few years ago, the Hanfeng Yueju Tuan (The Cantonese Operatic Troupe of the Han Customs) was often employed by the local communities of Po Toi Island in Hong Kong for celebrating the birthday of the Lady of Golden Flowers (Jinhua Furen 金花夫人)\(^\text{118}\). At that time, I was a member of the troupe. For eight years, I performed on her birth anniversary. In normal cases, after arriving at the performance hall, I went together with all other troupe members to the Temple of the

\(^{118}\) Jinhua Furen is a feminine deity. According to the legend, the Lady of Golden Flowers was a native of Guangdong. She was a spirit medium who could cure illness and bestow sons. After she was drowned in a river, Cantonese people, especially women, worshipped her as a deity.
Lady of Golden Flowers (Jinhua Furen Miao 金花夫人廟). We offered incense and paper money to her. After these rites, we also worshipped our patron deities, whose shrines were placed at the backstage area (Leung, 1996: Extracted from Mary Yeung’s manuscripts).

4.3. Situations and Roles of Cantonese Operatic Actresses in Ancestral Worship

Female employees in Cantonese opera are active worshippers in daily and annual sacrifices. In the case of funeral rites, they participate as assistants and mourners. After they pass away, they become kinship and non-kinship ancestors. Kinship ancestors are benevolent spirits of the dead within the same patrilineal group, whose relationships with their descendants are based on blood ties. Non-kinship ancestors of the Cantonese operatic profession are benevolent spirits of deceased masters or colleagues. Similar to people in the larger society, birth, marriage and death are three great occasional events in the life of a Cantonese operatic player. Nevertheless, owing to limited materials, my discussions are mainly confined to the activities of living actresses and actors in funeral rites. Moreover, it is important to note that both male and female Cantonese operatic performers also offer irregular sacrifices to the non-kinship ancestors before staging their performances.

Female employees in Cantonese opera are active worshippers in daily sacrifices. At household altars, they offer incense to their kinship ancestors every day. With regard to non-kinship ancestors, before and during the 1940s, home altars, sleeping areas of red boats and basin boats, and shrines of the headquarters of Cantonese operatic troupes were common places of daily worship. In Hong Kong, since the 1950s, deceased employees
(both male and female) of Cantonese opera have been worshipped by their living colleagues everyday at home altars, at shrines of the headquarters of Cantonese operatic troupes and associations, and at the headquarters of the Xianggang Bahe Huiguan.

Cantonese operatic actresses and their male counterparts also worship their kinship and non-kinship ancestors in the Spring and Autumn Festivals (Qingming Jie and Chongyang Jie). For kinship ancestors, these annual cults usually take place at family graves. Similar to the situation in Cantonese society, actors are dominant individuals in these family cults. Female performers participate as worshippers and assistants. They are often responsible for preparing all the sacrificial items.

In Canton before the 1950s, annual sacrifices to the non-kinship ancestors often took place at Sanyuan Li 三元里 and Songhua Gang 松花岗, common burial sites of deceased Cantonese operatic employees. Since 1978, in Hong Kong, annual ancestral cults have been held at the Bahe Xiamen Jinian Bei 八和先人纪念碑 (The Ancestral Monument of the Eight Harmonies), which is located at the Wo Hop Shek Cemetery in the New Territories. In usual cases, male employees in Cantonese opera play a predominant role in these annual rites. They are usually responsible for painting the inscriptions on the monument and offering paper articles, candles and incense sticks. Female employees are active participants. They have the right of worship. Moreover, they are sometimes responsible for preparing the sacrificial items. It is important to note that since most Cantonese operatic performers are busy at work, they seldom participate

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119 In the past, especially before the 1950s, some actors, especially those who impersonated female roles, were expelled from their lineage. Thus, it is reasonable to believe that they had no right to participate in the cults of their kinship ancestors.
in these annual cults. My informants told me that only those retired Cantonese operatic employees (both female and male) would make regular visits to the monument.

As mentioned in Chapter Two, lineage membership is conferred on men by the lineage leaders in the Kaideng Li (the Ceremony of Lighting a Lantern). Before the 1950s, many actors' lineage status was also confirmed in this ritual when they were newly born. However, after becoming Cantonese operatic actors (especially those who performed female roles), some of them were expelled from their lineage. For instance, according to clan rules of the Sheung Shui Liao lineage in Hong Kong, “if any male becomes an entertainer, or a lictor, or is adopted into another surname group or becomes a priest, or commits a serious offence against lineage rules, his name should be expunged from the genealogy” (Baker, 1968: 50). Reliable sources indicate that no ceremonies are held for women in Cantonese opera when they are newly born. Moreover, marriage is another occasional celebration in an individual’s lifetime. At the present time, in Hong Kong, when Cantonese operatic employees get married, many of them still worship their kinship ancestors (both male and female) in their wedding ceremonies.

Besides birth and marriage, death is also an important event in the lifetime of an individual. In the case of women in Cantonese opera, before the 1949 revolution, most of them were very poor. If they died at big cities such as Guangzhou, the Bahe Huiguan would hold funeral rites for them. However, if they passed away in rural areas or on boats (red boats and basin boats), there were no special funeral rites and mourning observances for them. As Ms. Chen Shaozhen said:
While travelling on basin boats, a senior actor would usually be in charge of the funeral services. When a troupe member passed away, he would put the troupe’s rice bushel on the floor. Troupe members threw their donations, such as money and jewels, into the rice bushel. Since most of the troupe members were suffering economic hardship, their donations were only enough to buy a poor coffin and to bury the deceased colleague nearby. No funeral specialists, such as monks, nuns and Fengshui master, were employed. All living troupe members served as worshippers, mourners and assistants. For example, they washed and dressed the corpse. They were also responsible for carrying the coffin to the burial site. In normal cases, descendants of the deceased troupe member would not participate in the rite since they lived too far away (Chen, 1995: Extracted from Mary Yeung’s Manuscripts).

Ms. Chen argued that some senior male performers who were in charge of the funeral services had prejudices against women. In other words, they were more positive in reaction when the deceased troupe member was a male instead of a female. However, both Mr. Wu Zhen and Mr. He Jianfeng insisted that there were no prejudices against the deceased actresses since all troupe members were equally treated as brothers and sisters of a big family. In addition, according to their experiences, the funeral services of the red boat troupes (both female and male troupes) and the cross-mountain troupes were the same as those for troupes which traveled in basin boats.

Nowadays, when lineage members become performers, their names are not expunged from the
By contrast, in recent years, many actresses of Cantonese opera in Hong Kong have greatly improved their economic and social situations. Therefore, when they pass away, their funeral rites to a great extent conform to those of women in the general society. Their funeral ceremonies usually take place at funeral parlors. Moreover, it is important to point out that both actresses and actors are treated without distinction. For example, from 1990 to 1993, each deceased member (no matter male or female) of the Xianggang Bahe Huiguan could obtain four thousand Hong Kong dollars for funeral services from the association (Au, 1993: 144).

Ms. Summy Leung stated that when those famous actresses passed away, their disciples would hold splendid funeral rituals for them. For instance, when Ren Jianhui 任劍輝\(^{121}\) (1913 – 1989) passed away, her students such as Long Jiansheng 龍劍生 and Mei Xueshi 梅雪詩, were mourners and active assistants in her funeral rite. In addition, many male and female employees in Cantonese opera also took part in the ceremony as worshippers.

Mr. Tang Wing-cheung M. B. E. 鄧永祥, a great master of Cantonese opera, passed away in 1997. His wife and four children (two sons and two daughters) participated as mourners in his funeral rite, which lasted for several days. They wore mourning dress made of hemp and sackcloth. Moreover, one of his female disciples, Ms. Chen Jiansheng (an actress of principal civil-military roles) also observed mourning for him. Ms. Wong Ming Chun and Ms. Xie Xuexin 謝雪心 went to pay their tribute to Mr.

\(^{121}\) It is important to note that Ren Jianhui was a Catholic. Thus, her funeral services were arranged according to the liturgical tradition of Catholicism. Ms. Ren is regarded as the most distinguished actress of principal civil-military roles in Hong Kong.
Tang on behalf of the Chinese Artists Association of Hong Kong. Sacrificial items such as rice, incense, flowers and paper articles were offered to him. Daoist priests were invited to chant scriptures for easy passage of his spirit through purgatory. The burial took place at the Junk Bay Chinese Permanent Cemetery. Mr. Cai Boli 蔡伯勵, a prominent geomancer, was in charged of the burial ritual (Sing Tao Daily, 1st May, 1997: A20).

According to Mr. Chan Kwok Yuen, when those poor actresses and actors passed away, the Xianggang Bahe Huiguan often paid for their funeral rites. In addition, some female Cantonese operatic performers, such as Li Xiangqin 李香琴 and Chen Haoqiu 陳好球, are kindhearted souls. They always donate money for funeral expenses of their deceased colleagues (Chan, 1996: Extracted from Mary Yeung’s manuscripts).

Cantonese operatic troupes are subcultural organizations that have their own cult of non-kinship ancestors. Female troupe members are active participants and assistants in these irregular rituals. In the case of ritual performances, both female and male members of a Cantonese operatic troupe would pay tribute to the deceased colleagues whose graves are located near the performance hall. In normal cases, they would perform this rite before the first evening performance. All the offerings, such as incense, sweets, fruit, wine, tea and pork, could be prepared by female or male troupe members (Hung, 1995: Extracted from Mary Yeung’s manuscripts). During the sacrificial procedure, incense is burnt and music is played in order to appease the invisible spirits. At the end of the offering, female troupe members and their male counterparts would shout: “having a loud and bright voice (Gaosheng Xiangliang 高聲響亮)” (Chan, 1991: 53). This ritual is known as Ji Xianren 祭先人 (Offering to the Ancestors). Moreover, before the second
evening's performance, both female and male members of an operatic troupe would also
worship their non-kinship ancestors at the backstage area. Sweets used as offerings in the
rite are often distributed among the performers, who believe that they will have a good
voice after eating them. Furthermore, actresses would offer incense at the edge of the
stage before the beginning of each of the performances (Chan, 1991: 52+53).

4.4. Basic Principles and Major Functions of the Cults of Deities and Ancestors

The two basic principles of god sacrifices and ancestral worship of employees in
Cantonese opera are reverence and efficacy (Ling). Many male and female Cantonese
operatic employees believe that on the one hand, their pious offerings can move the
deities and ancestors (both kinship ancestors and non-kinship ancestors) to show their
efficacy by giving blessings. On the other hand, their irreverence could provoke the gods
and ancestors to demonstrate their efficacy by giving punishments. For instance, Mr.
Alex Hung believes that Master Huaguang is very “ling”. He said:

Pious offerings and respect of Cantonese operatic players would
move Master Huaguang to bless them during their performances as well as
in their daily lives. I remembered that I once lost my camera. I looked
around for a very long time but still I could not find it. I prayed devoutly
to Huaguang Shifu. A few days later, I discovered it in one of my costume
trunks (Yeung, 1995: 29).

Cantonese operatic actresses and their male counterparts also believe that Master
Huaguang is very sensitive to disrespect and improper worship. He often shows his
efficacy by punishing the operatic troupe members (male or female) who have provoked his anger. Ms. Winnie Poon recalled and stated:

There was a menstruating actress who did not worship Huaguang’s image before her rehearsal. As a result, when she came onstage, she forgot the metrical patterns. I told her that although she was not allowed to offer incense to Huaguang Shifu, she should still pay tribute to him. She took my advice and bowed before his image. Since then, nothing has happened to her any more (Yeung, 1995: 29).

In addition, Ms. Summy Leung said:

My mother, an experienced actress, and many of my seniors told me that if I do not pay tribute to Huaguang and other patron deities, anything that happens to me, such as dizziness and fever, would be punishment from these occupational deities. As an actress for over thirty years, I have gradually internalized this kind of belief (Leung, 1996: Extracted from Mary Yeung’s manuscripts).

Ms. Leung also told me that when she was still a child, one day she was busy with her costumes and make-up before a performance. Hence, she did not bow to the statue of Huaguang at the backstage. However, when her mother asked her whether she had sacrificed to the Master, she replied “Yes!” As a result, she got a headache after her performance. Her seniors insisted that this was because she did not worship Huaguang and thus received a punishment from him (Leung, 1996: Extracted from Mary Yeung’s manuscripts).
With regard to the cults of non-kinship ancestors, the most common form of reciprocal relationship is food sharing (cf. Overmyer, 1986: 70). For example, sweets which have been offered to the non-kinship ancestors before the second evening’s performance would be distributed to the male and female performers. These sweets are considered as “food blessed with divine power” (Overmyer, 1986: 70). Thus, the players believe that they would possess a bright voice after eating them (cf. Chan, 1991: 53). In addition, many female and male performers also think that they have moral responsibilities for the worship of non-kinship ancestors. From their point of view, it is a way of showing their reverence for deceased masters and colleagues. Similar to people in the larger society, many employees in Cantonese opera also pay tribute to their kinship ancestors since they insist that they are responsible to observe the principle of filiality, a quintessential expression of Confucianism.

Reinforcing group solidarity and overcoming anxiety are the two major sacrificial functions for both male and female employees in Cantonese opera. In my opinion, the most important social function of the annual ceremonies of the divine birthday of Huaguang is to enhance organizational integration. The committees of the Chinese Artists Association of Hong Kong spend large sums of money in celebrating Huaguang’s birth anniversary. For instance, in 1992, members of the association spent about five hundred and sixty-two thousand Hong Kong dollars for his birthday (Au, 1993: 137). Most male and female members of the association would participate annually in these solemn and auspicious occasions. Through their intense interaction with one another in these “sacred times”:
...a sort of electricity is formed by their collecting which quickly transports them to an extraordinary degree of exaltation. Every sentiment expressed finds a place without resistance in all the minds, which are very open to outside impressions; each re-echoes the others and is re-echoed by the other... (Durkheim, 1965: 247).

In other words, when members of the Xianggang Bahe Huiguan in these rituals concentrate their attentions on the image of Huaguang and the performances onstage, they lose their individuality and at the same time, a sense of collectivity develops in their minds. As a result, an affirmation of the unity of the whole association can be achieved.

Besides organizational reinforcement, another sacrificial function of Cantonese operatic actresses and their male counterparts is to overcome the fear and anxiety which mainly caused by the harsh working environment and the specific nature of their tasks. Before the 1950s, both living and working circumstances of the Cantonese operatic employees were very poor. The red boats and basin boats where they lived and the stages where they performed were made of bamboo and wood. Owing to their limited technological knowledge, they were very afraid of fire, which could burn down their properties and cause danger to their lives. In order to overcome this fear, both men and women in Cantonese opera tried to obtain supernatural protection by offering sacrifices to their professional deities and benevolent ancestors. Among all their patron saints, Master Huaguang’s blessings were the most important. This is because he is considered to be the personification of fire.
With regard to the fear and anxiety which are caused by the performers' job nature, it is important to note that public singing and speaking are not encouraged in Cantonese society. Thus, female players and their male colleagues may have anxiety about public performances since what they do are to some extent, against social norms. In order to gain self confidence and overcome anxiety, they worship their deities and ancestors.

Moreover, Mr. Alex Hung also offered another reason to explain why the players' job nature would cause fear and anxiety. He said:

Male and female players always act as historical figures in their performances according to the outlines or scripts instead of the real lives of these historical persons. Therefore, many actresses and actors are very afraid of provoking the anger of the spirits of these deceased persons. In order to appease the anger of these spirits, the performers frequently pay tribute to them (Yeung, 1995: 32).

Nevertheless, some of my informants do not agree with Mr. Hung about this point. They insist that the deceased would not take revenge on those performers who impersonate them in Cantonese operatic performances.

In brief, female employees in Cantonese opera and their male counterparts worship five patron deities. They also pay tribute to their kinship and non-kinship ancestors. Except for the birthday celebrations of Master Zhang Qian, actresses are active worshippers in the cults of gods and ancestors.
CHAPTER FIVE
Ritual Performances

The following three questions are explored in this chapter:

5.1. What are the major functions of ritual performances?

5.2. How did female players and their male counterparts perform ritualistic plays on Huaguang’s 1996 birthday?

5.3. What are the roles and functions of actresses in operatic rituals?

5.1. Functions of Ritual Performances

Ritual performances are shows which are staged on auspicious and important occasions. Cantonese opera is performed for four different kinds of ritual celebrations. They are birthdays of deities, festivals, rites of purification (Dajiao) and opening ceremonies of temples.

In my opinion, these ritual performances have four important functions. First they are sincere means for offering greetings and expressing gratitude to deities. In Hong Kong, Cantonese operatic employees (both female and male) often perform ritualistic plays in Master Huaguang’s birthday ceremonies. The main purpose of these performances is to express their thankfulness for his protection and blessing. With regard to people living in local communities or villages, they always hire Cantonese operatic troupes to perform ritual operas on birthdays of local deities. For instance, Dr. Chan Sau Y. states that in Hong Kong, during 1990, there were twenty-three Cantonese operatic series staged on Tianhou’s birthday (Chan, 1996b: 3). Moreover, in the case of the Rite for Peace and Purification Held Every Ten Years by the Tianxin Village of Shatin (1996)
(Shatian Tianxin Cun Shinian Yijie Taipingqing Jiao 沙田田心村十年一届太平清醮)

(Bingzi Nian 丙子年), its major purpose was to honor Che Gong 車公 who had shown his efficacy by clearing infectious disease and bestowing genial dew at the request of the local residents. Besides organizing various celebratory activities, representatives of the Tianxin village also hired the Ryuexing Jutuan (Opera Troupe of the Sun, Moon [and] Star) for ritual performances. The operatic series lasted for four nights and three days. Many actresses of the troupe, such as Nam Fung 南鳳 and Gou Lae 高麗, were active participants in the performances (The leaflet of the Ryuexing Jutuan, 1996).

Second, ritual performances also function to placate hungry ghosts during the Ghost Festival (Guijie 鬼節). According to Chinese popular beliefs, the gates of purgatory would be opened in the seventh moon and the ghosts are free to roam wherever they like. Thus, besides the rites of purification, ritual operas are also performed in order to appease these lost or hungry souls. Mr. Wu Zhen said that before the 1950s, in Cantonese cultural areas, Cantonese operatic troupes, especially female troupes, often performed ritual operas in the Ghost Festival. At present, in Hong Kong, people living in

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122 According to Chinese popular legends, Che Gong, whose birthday is on the two of the first lunar month, was a native of Jiangxi in the Song dynasty (A.D. 1127 – 1279). He was a military official of the Song court. He successfully suppressed the revolt in Jiangnan and was promoted to great marshal. Many people venerated his loyalty and righteousness. They worshipped him as one of their patron deities. Once upon a time, many villagers living in Shatin suffered from infectious disease. Che Gong demonstrated his efficacy by clearing the epidemic. In order to express their gratitude, the local residents of Shatin dedicated a temple to him.

123 Nam Fung, whose legal name is Gou Pui-wa 高佩華, is an actress of female roles. She learnt performing arts of Cantonese opera under Wong Jyt-seng 王競生 (a famous musician) and Nam Hung 南紅 (a prominent actress of principal female roles). In recent years, Ms. Nam Fung is often employed as the principal female role in both ritual and theatrical performances. Gou Lae is Nam Fung's cousin. Ms. Gou is an actress of female roles.

124 For Cantonese people, the main festival day of the Guijie is on the fourteenth of the seventh lunar month. However, with regard to the Chaozhou people, the main festival day is on the fifteenth of the seventh moon.
local villages or communities still hire Cantonese operatic troupes for ritual performances in the Guijie. For instance, in 1985, the Lisheng Yueju Tuan (Cantonese Opera Troupe of the Singing of the Pear) was hired to stage Cantonese ritual operas in the Ghost Festival at Shaukeiwan on Hong Kong Island (Chan, 1991: 35).

Third, it is believed that ritual performances could enhance the life vitality of local communities and temples. Mr. Alex Hung explained that the colorful costumes, dauntless acrobatics and comic episodes in Cantonese operatic performances would attract crowds of people gathering together (Ward, 1989: 29). The local districts would become very prosperous (Wang 旺). This kind of prosperity functions to accumulate the Yangqi and weaken the Yinqi of the villages or communities. As a result, evil spirits, which rely on Yingqi for existence, would be exorcised. Moreover, according to Chinese popular beliefs, the Ji Baihu (The Worship of the White Tiger) is an effective method for expelling all kinds of demons and evil spirits. Thus, this ritual opera is often performed in the opening ceremonies (Kaiguang Li 開光禮) of new temples.

Fourth, ritual performances also provide auspicious occasions for social gathering. In a temple festival, Cantonese ritual operas entertain both divine and human participants. Besides, the temple theatres are often surrounded by temporary food stalls, gambling

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125 It is important to point out that in Hong Kong, in comparison with Chaozhou opera, Cantonese opera is less frequently performed in the Ghost Festival. Chaozhou opera is a kind of regional opera performed in Chaozhou, a region in the northeastern part of Guangdong. Its origin can be traced back to the Ming dynasty (A.D. 1368 – 1644). During that time, performers in Chaozhou used local singing styles to perform plays. They also developed Chaozhou opera by incorporating the Kun melody and the Yiyang musical style. Chaozhou opera orchestration relies on stringed, wind and percussion instruments (Siu, 1997: 25). At the present time, roles in Chaozhou opera are classified into four different types: Sheng (male roles), Dan (female roles), Jing (painted face roles) and Chou (comic roles). The Chaozhou dialect is the stage language used in the performances.

126 The Worship of the White Tiger is not only regarded as a rite. It is also considered to be a Cantonese religious playlet. For detailed descriptions of the Ji Baihu, please see Chapter Three.
tables and restaurants. All these are ideal places for people living in local communities and villages to gather together to spend their leisure time, to improve their inter-personal relationships, and to enhance their group solidarity.

5.2. Ritual Performances on Huaguang’s 1996 Birthday

As mentioned in Chapter Four, the *Xianghuashan Da Heshou* (Great Birthday Greetings at Fragrant Flower Mountain)\(^{127}\) and the *Tianji Da Songzi* (The Celestial Maid’s Great Offering of a Son)\(^{128}\) were the two

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\(^{127}\) *Zhongzhou Yin* 中州音 is the staged language used in the performances of the *Xianghuashan Da Heshou*. My informants told me that this ritual opera is often performed in Huaguang’s birthday ceremonies. However, since my study is focused on his 1996 birthday, I tend to use the past tense to describe the performance of this play. With regard to its historical origin, the *Kunqu Daquan* (A Complete Collection of the *Kun* Arias) states that it is a *Kun* opera. Nevertheless, I cannot find enough evidence to support this argument. Mr. Mo Rucheng, a scholar in Cantonese opera, says that the *Xianghuashan Da Heshou* originated from the *Mulian Jiumu Xiwen* (Drama Texts of Mulian Saving His Mother), which was compiled in 1582 by Zheng Zhizhen 鄭之珍. Zheng was a scriptwriter and a native of Anhui province in the Ming dynasty. Reliable sources indicate that he lived in a period when *Mulian Xi* (Mulian opera) and *Yiyang Qiang* (Yiyang melodies) were very popular. Many operatic troupes in Anhui at that time performed the *Mulian* opera in *Yiyang Qiang*. When Zheng Zhizhen compiled the *Mulian Jiumu Xiwen*, he incorporated many acrobatic arts, such as turning somersaults and walking on a tightrope, of the *Mulian* opera. In the case of Cantonese opera, Mr. Mo states that there are forty-one types of acrobatics in the play of the *Xianghuashan Da Heshou*. According to his description, some of the acrobatics such as the Dragon Dance and the Jumping over Wall, are very similar to those mentioned in Zheng’s script. For the description of the background story and the English translation of the Great Birthday Greetings at Fragrant Flower Mountain, please see appendix 8 and 9.

\(^{128}\) Similar to the case of the *Xianghuashan Da Heshou*, *Zhongzhou Yin* is the stage language used in the performance of the *Tianji Da Songzi*. Regarding the historical origin of this ritualistic playlet, most of my informants argue that it is an extract from a Ming fiction known as *Zhijin Ji* (The Story of Weaving Silk). The play was written by Gu Jueyu 顧覺宇, an actor of the *Yiyang* opera in the mid 16th century. Although the original text of the Story of Weaving Silk was lost, Mr. Mo Rucheng states that the content of the *Tianji Da Songzi* is the same as the content of the *Tianjie Chonghui* (A Reunion at the Heavenly Street), one act of the *Zhijin Ji* (Mo, 1987: 9). For the vocal music of the *Tianji Da Songzi*, I think that it is to some extent, originated from the *Kunshan Qiang*. The South-North Suite 南北套 (*Nan-Bei Tao*) is very popular in *Kunqu*. It is a series of alternating southern and northern arias unified by an identical tonal mode and “by a single rhyme which runs through all the verses of the text” (Yung, 1989: 2). One typical example of this *Nan-Bei Tao* is “the *Xinshuling* 新水令 (New Water Order) – *Bubujiao* 步步橋 (Beauty Steps Forth) Suite”. It consists of ten arias: [North] *Xinshuling* (New Water Order); [North] *Bubujiao* (Beauty Steps Forth); [North] *Zheguiling* 折桂令 (Breaking Off the Cassia Bough); [South] *Jiangshui'er* 江水兒 (River Water); [North] *Yangerluo* 雁兒落 and *Deshengling* 得勝令 (Wild Goose Falling and A Winning Order); [South] *Xingxingling* 星幸令 and *Yuanlinhao* 園林好 (A Lucky Order, and Gardens and Forests Fine); [North] *Gumeijiu* 沽美酒 and *Taiplingling* 太平令 (Appraising Fine Wine and A Peace Order); [South] *Qingjiangyin* 淸江引 (Clear River Prelude) (Wang, 1994: 639). In the script of the *Tianji Da Songzi* mentioned in appendix 10, the
ritualistic plays performed by both female and male players in Huaguang’s 1996 birthday celebration.

The plot of the *Xianghuashan Da Heshou* is very simple. Guanyin is the heroine in this play. She obtains the Way at the Purple Bamboo Grove (Zizhu Lin 紫竹林). All immortals, such as the Eight Immortals\(^{129}\), the Four Dragon Kings\(^{130}\), the Three Holy Mothers\(^{131}\), Liu Haixian 劉海仙\(^{132}\), the Dragon Subduing Celestial General, the Tiger arias are very similar to “the *Xinshuiling – Bubujiao Suite*”. For example, the second aria is *Bubujiao*, the third one is *Jiangshui’er*, the fifth one is *Yuanlinhao*, the sixth one is *Xingxingling*, the seventh one is *Yuanlinhao* (The Phoenix Comes), the eighth one is *Bubujiao Tao* and the last one is *Qiangjiangyin*. Except Deshengling, Gumeijiu 和 Taipingling, all other names of arias in “the *Xinshuiling – Bubujiao Suite*” are found in the *Tianji Da Songzi*. Moreover, the recurring musical notations of *Bubujiao* (321231656176), *Jiangshui’er* (653532162) and *Yuanlinhao* (165323) in “the *Xinshuiling – Bubujiao Suite*” are also found in “the *Xinshuiling – Bubujiao Suite*” of the script of the Celestial Maid’s Great Offering of a Son (Wang, 1994: 58).

\(^{129}\) The Eight Immortals are Lu Dongbin 呂洞賓, Li Tieguai 李鐵拐, Zhang Guolao 張果老, He Xiangu 何仙姑, Lan Caihe 藍采和, Cao Goujüi 曹國舅, Han Xinagzi 韓湘子 and Han Zhongli 漢鍾離. They are regarded as protectors of Daoism. According to Chinese popular legends, Lu Dongbin was a scholar in the Tang dynasty (A.D. 618 – 907). He met Han Zhongli in an inn on his way to Changan, which is known as Xi’an nowadays. While Han Zhongli was heating a jug of sorghum wine, Lu went to sleep and in a few moments, dreamed a long life of fifty years. This is the incident referred to in Chinese literature in the phrase “sorghum wine dream”. When Lu awoke, he realized the vanity of worldly dignities. Thus, he was converted by Han Zhongli and soon became an immortal. Of Li Tieguai we know that he could send his soul on visits. One day, when his soul left his body for a journey to Huashan, he told his disciple to take charge of his body for six days and to cremate it on the seventh if he had not returned. However, his disciple burnt his body on the sixth day. When Li’s soul returned, it had no choice but to enter the corpse of a lame beggar. After entering this vile body, he went about on an iron crutch. He often wandered about and cured sick people. Zhang Guolao was an official of the Tang court. One day, he gave up his post and became a hermit. He often rode his white donkey backward, facing the animal’s tail. Lan Caihe was born in the Tang dynasty. Lan was a young person of indeterminate sex. He (or she) was a street singer who always donated money to the poor. One day, he (or she) left the mortal world and ascended to the celestial palace. It is believed that Han Xiaozhi lived in the mid Tang dynasty. He was the nephew of Han Yu 賀愈, a great poet. In order to achieve immortality, he became a disciple of Lu Dongbin. With regard to He Xiangju, it is said that she lived in the time of Empress Wu (A.D. 684 – 705) of the Tang dynasty. She retreated in the mountains for a long period of time. Later, she met Lu Dongbin who offered her a peach. After eating the fruit, she became an immortal. Cao Guojüi was the brother of an empress of the Northern Song dynasty (A.D. 960 – 1127). He was converted by Han Zhongli and Lu Dongbin (cf. Schipper, 1993: 160 – 166).

\(^{130}\) According to Chinese popular beliefs, the Four Dragon Kings live in crystal palaces in the depths of the oceans. The Dragon King of the Eastern Sea is the chief of the Four Dragon Kings. Their most important duty is to send down rain. They make regular reports to the Jade Emperor every year in the third month. Many aquatic officials assist them to govern their territorial waters (Werner, 1994: 210 – 212).

\(^{131}\) In the 1996 performance of the *Xianghuashan Da Heshou*, the three Holy Mothers were Wenshu 文殊, Puxian 普賢 and Weiling 威靈. In my opinion, the identities of Wenshu and Puxian may originate from the
Taming Celestial General\textsuperscript{133} and Wei Tuo \textsuperscript{134}, go to Zhizhu Lin to offer their congratulations. Owing to the requests of all immortals, the Goddess of Mercy makes a display of her eight miraculous transformations. In Huaguang’s 1996 birthday celebration, about forty players participated in the performance of this play, only thirteen of whom were actresses. Ms. Wang Chaoqun 王超群, actress of female roles, was selected to portray Guanyin.

Before and during the 1960s, the performing time of the \textit{Xianghuashan Da Heshou} was approximately four hours. The performances were mainly based on the script offered in appendix 9. However, since the early 1970s, many speeches, acrobatics and arias have been omitted in the performances of this ritual show. Owing to this reason, on Huaguang’s 1996 birthday, its performance only lasted for about one hour and fifteen minutes. Since a full translation of the play is provided in appendix 9, the descriptions mentioned below are more condensed and analytical. Hence, I will only

\begin{itemize}
  \item Buddhist bodhisattvas Wenshu (Manjusri) and Puxian (Samantabhadra). According to Buddhist beliefs, Wenshu and Puxian are the left – and right – hand guardians of Sakyamuni, representing wisdom and law respectively. It is believed that Puxian, who is the patron of the Lotus Sutra, always rides on a white elephant. In China, he (or she) is a bodhisattva of indeterminate sex. Since the Song dynasty, Puxian has often been regarded as a female bodhisattva (cf. Soothill, 1962: 153+374). I cannot find any information about the identity of Holy Mother Weiling.
  \item According to Chinese popular beliefs, Liu Haixian was a native of Beijing in the Five Dynasties era (A.D. 907 – 970). He met a Daoist master and became a priest. Finally, he became an immortal. Since then, many Daoist devotees have worshipped him as a deity. Besides, my informants stated that Liu Haixian is also called Cao Bao 曹寶. He is a deity who bestows wealth on people.
  \item The Dragon Subduing Celestial General and the Tiger Taming Celestial General are believed to be two of the Eighteen Arhats, a group of protectors of the Buddhist Law. According Buddhist beliefs, Sakyamuni had once ordered sixteen of his disciples to remain in the mortal world until the future Buddha Maitreya’s coming. The legend of these sixteen arhats was introduced to China by Xuan Zang 玄奘 in the Tang dynasty. (For the names of the sixteen arhats, please see the \textit{Zonghua Shenmi Wenhua Cidan}, p. 64). Around the 10\textsuperscript{th} century, both the Dragon Subduing Celestial General and the Tiger Taming Celestial General were added to this group (cf. Wu, 1993: 64).
  \item It is believed that Wei Tuo is a protector of the Buddhist Law. He is “one of the generals under the southern Maharaja guardian in a temple” (Soothill, 1962: 317). In the 1996 performance, the actor who
\end{itemize}
discuss how the performance of the Great Birthday Greetings at Fragrant Flower Mountain in 1996 was different from performances during or before the 1960s.

First, in the pre-1970 performances, three arias, *Liangzhouxu* 梁州序 (*Lingzhou Prelude*), *Paige* 排歌 (*Permutation Song*) and *Sanchunjin* 三春锦 (*Three Spring’s Brocade*), were sung in the performances. Nevertheless, all these three arias were omitted in the performance on Huaguang’s 1996 birthday.

Second, there was also change in speech. In the performances before and during the 1960s, Guanyin, in the scene of the Purple Bamboo Grove, said: “Immaculate and reverent, I cultivate my person, cultivate my person. Within the Bodhi Grotto, in the Purple Bamboo Grove, I hear the cries of the world... Thanks to the Jade Emperor, I have received an imperial appointment, and I am the Universal Savior, who rescues those in difficulty and distress and shows great compassion to those in sorrow...” With regard to the performance on Huaguang’s 1996 birthday, this speech in the same scene had changed to: “The barge of Compassion saves all the living beings across [the ocean of misery]. What is the golden rule? It is the Goddess of Mercy in the Purple Bamboo Grove (*Cihang Pudao Jiu Zhongsheng. Jinke Yulu Wei Hewu? Zizhu Lin Zhong Guanshiyin* 慈航普道救衆生，金科玉律何物? 紫竹林中觀世音).”

Third, in the pre-1970 performances, the martial arts actors performed forty-one types of acrobatics, such as the *Zhuangzhong* 撞鐘 (*Striking the Bell*), the *Shiba Luohan* 十八羅漢 (*Eighteen Arhats*) and the *Xiangba* 象拔 (*Elephant’s Trunk*)\(^{135}\), in the scene of impersonated Wei Tuo wore armor and held a pestle. His make-up was in keeping with the historical prototype of this deity.

\(^{135}\) *Zhuangzhong*, *Shiba Luohan*, 十八羅漢 and *Xiangba* 象拔 are three kinds of traditional acrobatics. The martial arts actors often performed these acrobatic skills in the pre-1970 performances of
Displaying Flowers (Chahua 插花). However, in the performance of 1996, the martial arts actors only performed four simple kinds of acrobatics in this scene. These were the Dafan 大番 (Great Somersault), the Shigou 屎鉤 (Filth Hook), the Zefan 側番 (Side Somersault) and the Gundi Hulu 滾地葫蘆 (Guards Roll on the Ground)\textsuperscript{136}.

Fourth, in the performances before and during the 1960s, players, who impersonated the Happy Buddha, the Long Brow Buddha, the Lame Buddha, the Xianghuashan Da Heshou. These acrobatics are very difficult to learn. Hence, at present, in Hong Kong, only a few martial arts actors know how to perform these skills. The performance of the Zhuangzhong 足丈中 requires the participation of about nine martial arts actors. First, four martial arts performers stand upright facing each other to form the first level (the base). On top of their shoulders, stand two other martial arts actors. They hold their hands together and form the second level. Then, on top of these two actors' shoulders, stands another martial arts performer who forms the third level. As a result, all these seven actors pile up and form the shape of a bell. Secondly, a martial arts actor holds a large gong and stands on the ground at one side. Another martial arts actor acts as a bell clapper. His limbs are held separately by the four actors who form the first level (the base). In other words, he is held horizontally in the mid-air. After holding his limbs, the four actors (who form the base) push his head to beat the gong. Finally, the martial arts performer who forms the third level turns a side somersault and jumps down. While he jumps down, some other actors are waiting on the ground in order to hold him (Yin, 1962: 11). In performing the Shiba Luohan, martial arts actors form a human pyramid by piling up themselves into several levels. To begin, some martial arts players stand on the stage to form the base. On top of their shoulders, stand several other players who form the second level and so on. The better techniques of these martial arts performers are, the more levels they can form. (Wong, 1996: Extracted from Mary Yeung's manuscripts). With regard to the Xiangba, its performance requires the participation of nine martial arts actors. These nine performers divide themselves into three groups (each group has three actors). Players in each group queue up and walk onstage in the shape of a “∞” (Yin, 1962: 8).

\textsuperscript{136} Dafan大番, Shigou屎鉤, Zefan側番 and Gundi Hulu滾地葫蘆 are four types of acrobatic skills often shown by martial arts actors. To begin the performance of the Dafan, the player stands upright with his face to the backstage (or to the audience). He then bends his elbow to the left side (right side). After placing his palms on the floor of the stage, he leaps his left (right) foot and whips up his right (left) leg and bends his torso forward for a leftward (rightward) somersault. Finally, he lands on his feet and stands upright with his face to the backstage (If the actor stands with his face to the audience when he begins his actions, he would conclude his movements by standing with his face to the audience). With regard to the performance of the Shigou, it starts with the martial arts performer standing upright and facing the backstage (or facing the audience). The actor then bends his elbow to the left side (right side). After placing his palms on the floor of the stage, he leaps his left (right) foot and whips up his right (left) leg and bends his torso forward for a leftward (rightward) somersault. Finally, he lands on his feet and stands upright facing the audience (If the player stands facing the audience when he starts these actions, he would conclude his movements by standing with his face to the audience). To start the performance of the Zefan, the martial arts actor stands upright. He then leaps on his left (right) foot and whips up his right (left) leg and then bends his body forward for a leftward (rightward) somersault. Finally, he lands on his right (left) foot and then on his left (right) foot. In the performance of the Gundi Hulu, the martial arts performer sits on the floor of the stage with his legs crossed. Maintaining this position, he rolls on the floor as if he cannot be toppled.
Hunchbacked Buddha and the monk with big head and big belly, came onstage respectively and performed series of stage movements in the scene of the Bodhi Grotto. In the scene of the Crystal Palace, performers who acted the characters of the Carp Demon, the Shrimp Demon, the Oyster Demon and the Tortoise Demon made circuits of the stage. By contrast, in the 1996 performance, all these characters and their conventions were totally omitted.

Fifth, at the end of the pre-1970 performances, gold coins were usually stored inside a large immortal peach and an actor was responsible for opening the peach and tossing the coins to the audiences. However, at the end of the 1996 performance, a small child was hidden inside a big immortal peach. When it was carried onstage, the small child came out and tossed the gold coins.

Turning to the *Tianji Da Songzi*, Dong Yong 董永 and the Celestial Maid are the two main characters in this ritualistic playlet. With regard to the legendary history of the play, it is believed that Dong Yong lived in the Later Han dynasty (A.D. 25 – 220). He was a poor scholar who lived together with his father. When his father passed away, he did not have enough money to offer him a proper burial. Thus, he sold himself as a bondman for three years. Moving by Dong Yong’s filial affection, the Jade Emperor ordered the Celestial Maid to descend to the mundane world and marry Dong Yong. In order to pay his three years’ debt, the Celestial Maid wove three hundred rolls of silk within a hundred days. As a result, Dong Yong was set free. Since she had completed her errand, the Celestial Maid left the secular world and returned to the heavenly palace. Soon afterwards, she gave birth to a son. Dong Yong won the title of the Principal
Graduate in the imperial examination. On his way home, he passed under the shade of the locust tree, where he met the Celestial Maid who offered him his son.

Except for the omission of the aria *Lin'erjiang* (The Unicorn Son Descends), the content of the 1996 performance of the *Tianji Da Songzi* was very similar to the details described in the script of this playlet\(^\text{137}\). In addition, unlike the performance of the *Xianghuashan Da Heshou*, actresses were the predominant and active participants in the 1996 performance of the Celestial Maid’s Great Offering of a Son. There were about seventeen players who took part in the performance. It cannot be denied that actors portrayed many characters in this ritual show. Nevertheless, except for Luo Jiaying (a famous actor and the leading male role) who acted the character of Dong Yong and performed much of the singing, conventional movements and speech delivery, all the other actors did not sing or speak in the performance. They only performed simple stage movements when they made their entrances and exits. Unlike their male counterparts, actresses played a more conspicuous and active role in the play. Ms. Nam Hung (a veteran female performer) was selected to portray the Celestial Maid. As the heroine, she sang three arias, delivered a speech and performed series of complex stage movements such as the *Qiaobu* (Pretty Steps)\(^\text{138}\) and the *Lashan* (Pulling the Mountain)\(^\text{139}\). Six actresses of minor roles performed the six immortal maids attending her. Although they were minor characters who seldom sang or spoke in the performance, they repeatedly performed complex conventional actions, such as the

\(^\text{137}\) Please refer to appendix 10 for the English translation of the playlet *Tianji Da Songzi.*

\(^\text{138}\) Ms. Nam Hung, who impersonated Guanyin, walked on tiptoe.
Fangongzhuang 反宮裝 (Transforming Palace Costume), the Huakaimen 花開門 (Flowers Open the Gates), the Yanmen 拖門 (Closing the Gate) and the Chuansanjiao 穿三角 (Threading Through the Triangle), together with the principal male role (Dong Yong) and the principal female role (the Celestial Maid).

5.3. Roles and Functions of Female Players in Ritual Performances

According to Barbara Ward, performers are “at times more than merely players” (Ward, 1989: 18). In my opinion, from the audiences’ point of view, actresses play the twin roles of entertainers and mediums of supernatural beings. However, with regard to the female performers, their viewpoints vary according to their working conditions, ages and experiences. The case of Master Huaguang’s birthday celebration in 1996 mentioned above is a typical example to support my argument. Moreover, in this section, I also provide an analysis concerning the roles and functions of actresses in ritualistic playlets, which occur in rural and urban areas of Hong Kong.

5.3.1. Roles of Actresses in the Performances on Huaguang’s 1996 Birthday

In Master Huaguang’s 1996 birthday ceremony, many members of the Xianggang Bahe Huiguan (The Chinese Artists Association of Hong Kong) such as Wang Ming Chun 汪明荃, Xie Xuexin 謝雪心 (actress of principal female roles), Chen Jiansheng 陳劍聲 (actress of principal male roles) and Gu Hongjian 顧鴻見, did not take part in the

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139 The Lashan (Pulling the Mountain) is a kind of arm movement. It starts “with the left hand (palm up) below the right (palm down), then moves the left hand inward and to the right and the right hand outward and to the left, in horizontal circles” (Zung, 1937: 115–116).

140 According to Master Wong Toa, the Fangongzhuang is only worn by the seven immortal maids in the playlet Tianji Da Songzi. In the pre-1970 performances, the immortal maids wore red palace robes onstage. When they met Dong Yong, they lifted up the red front panels of their red robes to the back in order to display the ornamented palace robes. Since the 1970s, this Fangongzhuang has been replaced by a new style of palace robe, which is not as heavy as the old type.
performances of the *Xianghuashan Da Heshou* and the *Tianji Da Songzi*. However, some other members, such as Nam Hung, Luo Jiaying and Wang Chaoqun, were active participants in these two ritual operatic shows.

According to my observation, whether they performed on Huaguang’s 1996 birthday or not, most female and male members of the association thought that Ms. Wang Chaoqun, who impersonated Guanyin in the 1996 performance of the Great Birthday Greetings at Fragrant Flower Mountain, would serve as a medium to communicate with Master Huaguang. As mentioned in Chapter Four, Cantonese operatic employees believe that Huaguang is the adopted son of the Jade Emperor. Hence, he is considered to be a very high ranking official in the celestial bureaucratic system. My informants stated that on Huaguang’s 1996 birthday, the *Xianghuashan Da Heshou* was chosen to honor him mainly because many female performers and their male counterparts believe that only Guanyin, one of the most venerable deities except the Buddha, was qualified to communicate with Huaguang on their behalf. In other words, Ms. Wang Chaoqun was regarded by many of her female and male colleagues as the medium of Guanyin who represented them to entertain Master Huaguang and offer their gratitude to him.\(^\text{142}\)

From the spectators’ viewpoint, Ms. Wang Chaoqun, who acted the character of Guanyin in the 1996 performance of the *Xianghuashan Da Heshou*, played the role of a compassionate mother. That is, she was regarded as a symbolic representative of Guanyin, who could save all living beings from calamities and suffering. This graceful

\(^{141}\) For the explanations of the movements *Huakaimen, Yanmen* and *Chuansanjiao*, please see appendices 11, 12 and 13 respectively.
\(^{142}\) I was unable to obtain Ms. Wang Chaoqun’s personal opinion on this point.
and charitable image of Guanyin was conveyed to the spectators through the formalized speech, the colorful costumes and the complex stage conventions.

In the 1996 performance, when Wang Chaoqun, who portrayed Guanyin, first appeared onstage, she introduced herself: "The barge of Compassion saves all the living beings across [the ocean of misery]. What is the golden rule? It is the Goddess of Mercy in the Purple Bamboo Grove". Such polite, impersonal, archaic and fixed speech provides strong auditory effects which reinforced the image of Guanyin as a kindhearted mother for the audience.

Guanyin's role as a compassionate mother was also enhanced by her costumes. For instance, when Ms. Wang entered the stage for the first time, her hairdressing was decorated with pink silk lotus. She held a horse-hair whisk, which showed her purity and refinement. In addition, she wore an embroidered formal robe with rippling-water sleeves and rounded precious-stone belt, and a pair of embroidered flower shoes. Her dress indicated her exalted position as a bodhisatta, since according to traditional Chinese theatrical practices only high-ranking gods in the celestial bureaucratic system and noblewomen in the mortal world are qualified to wear formal robes in ceremonies. In other words, the make-up of Ms. Wang who impersonated Guanyin was in keeping with the historical prototype of this popular and venerable deity. Hence, when she put on her make-up and appeared onstage, her presence stimulated the spectators to recall the compassion, charity and altruism of Guanyin, which they had learnt from history or legend. As a result, they became intoxicated by the performance and believed that
Guanyin, the universal merciful mother, had really descended to the mundane world and bestowed good fortune on them.

The compassionate image of Guanyin was further manifested by her eight transformations in the 1996 performance. According to Chinese popular religious beliefs, Guanyin is a bodhisatta who always uses expedient methods (upaya 方便) to enlighten sentient beings. That is, she delays her entry into nirvana and insists on remaining in the world until she has enlightened all living beings, whether they be human beings or animals, rich or poor, men or women. She assumes their forms and teaches them to detach themselves from egoistic pursuits. Hence, on Huaguang’s 1996 birthday, when Ms. Wang Chaoqun who impersonated Guanyin displayed her eight miraculous transformations and performed formalized movements onstage, the audience became extremely enthusiastic. This is because they were stimulated by her elaborate movements. They shouted joyfully and clapped their hands. Their shouts of approval also stimulated Ms. Wang to perform better and better. As a result, the boundary between the sacred and profane world was blurred since the actress and the spectators were intoxicated into the holy world of Guanyin.

In the 1996 performance of the Xianghuashan Da Heshou, Guanyin transformed herself into a dragon, a tiger, a general, a Prime Minister, a fisherman, a forester, a farmer and a scholar. In fact, Wang Chaoqun did not portray these eight characters. They were played by eight other performers. Their identities were indicated by their make-up. The dragon wore a red dragon-like mask and red clothes. The tiger wore a yellow tiger-like mask and yellow clothes. The general wore helmet and ordinary armor. The Prime Minister wore a gauze hat with long wings at the side and a formal robe embroidered with dragons. The fisherman wore a straw hat and coarse clothes. The forester and the farmer wore the same kind of clothes as the fisherman. The scholar wore a civilian hat and a robe.

According to Buddhist beliefs, the word nirvana means the cessation of suffering.

For the descriptions of these stage movements, please refer to appendix 9 (the English translation of the play Xianghuashan Da Heshou).
Furthermore, in the scene of the Bodhi Grotto, Liu Haixian\textsuperscript{146} came onstage. The Goddess of Mercy ordered him to toss the gold coins (made of paper). When Liu Haixian carried out his errand, everyone in the performing hall became frenzied, since the gold coins were symbols of auspicious gifts which Liu offered to all sentiment beings on behalf of Guanyin. I saw that the performers (both female and male) onstage rushed towards him in order to get as many gold coins as possible. Many spectators also rushed to the stage and picked up as many coins as they could. Even Ms. Wang Ming Chun, the chairperson of the Chinese Artists Association of Hong Kong (1992 – 1997), joined in. Those who could not get any coins waved their hands and shouted to Liu Haixian in order to arouse his attention. I was lucky enough to get one of these coins.

From the viewpoint of the spectators and the Cantonese opera players (both female and male), the \textit{Tianji Da Songzi}\textsuperscript{147} is an auspicious playlet. Hence, it was performed on Huaguang’s 1996 birthday. For instance, Ms. Nam Hung, who portrayed the Celestial Maid\textsuperscript{148}, was considered to be the symbolic representative of the female deity. Mr. Luo Jiaying, who impersonated Dong Yong\textsuperscript{149}, was regarded as a symbol of the audience. In Cantonese society, bearing a son for the continuation of the father’s

\textsuperscript{146} In the 1996 performance of the Great Birthday Greetings at Fragrant Flower Mountain, Mr. Cai Qilin 蔡麒麟 was selected to portray Liu Haixian. With regard to his make-up, he wore a small square pavilion shaped hat, a green robe and a pair of black boots. He also wore red quadripartite beard. In addition, he held a big gold coin (made of paper) and a horsehair duster in his hands.

\textsuperscript{147} Besides the \textit{Tianji Da Songzi}, the \textit{Baxian Heshou} (Birthday Greetings from the Eight Immortals) is another ritual playlet, which is often performed on Master’s birthday. Please see section 5.3.2. for the description of the playlet \textit{Baxian Heshou}.

\textsuperscript{148} In the 1996 performance, Ms. Nam Hung, who acted the character of the Celestial Maid, wore a crown decorated with small pearls, a red formal robe embroidered with dragons and water-waves, a precious-stone belt and a pair of embroidered flower shoes. Her make-up showed that she was the wife of an official in the show.

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family line is one of the major purposes of marriage. Hence in the 1996 performance, Dong Yong received the unicorn son from the Celestial Maid symbolized that as a deity, the Celestial Maid also offered sons and other blessings to the spectators.

5.3.2. Female Players and Ritual Performances in Cantonese Cultural Areas

Many female performers of the older generation (over sixty years of age) deem themselves as agents of socialization. As Mr. Alex Hung noted: “many senior actresses and their male colleagues think that they have the important responsibility of propagating virtuous religious ideas and upholding the proper moral principles in their performances” (Hung, 1996: Extracted from Mary Yeung’s manuscripts). In addition, Ms. Chen Shaozhen, a veteran Cantonese operatic artist, had the experience of acting in the dawn performances (Tianguang Xi 天光戲) at Yangjiang in Guangzhou during the mid 1940s. She recalled and dictated:

When I was a young actress, I always performed the dawn play Yazai Huanhun 哑仔還魂 (The Returned Soul of a Mute). I remembered that the story is about the revenge of the spirit of a dumb man. A mute was murdered by someone. His corpse was burnt and the ashes were turned into an earthen basin. Later, his restless spirit took revenge against...
the murderer with the assistance of the person who picked up this earthen basin (Chen, 1995: Extracted from Mary Yeung’s manuscripts).

Ms. Chen explained that the main theme of this ritual play is to make use of the demons or ghosts in order to deter the audiences from behaving viciously. In the 1940s, when she performed the playlet, she always thought that she was responsible for propagating this Buddhist karmic law to the spectators. She expected that by watching her performances, the audiences could internalize the Buddhist idea that good deeds have rewards while bad deeds have retributions. Even nowadays, Ms. Chen still thinks that Cantonese operatic employees ought to disseminate and uphold the Chinese traditional values and beliefs.

In Hong Kong, the most popular Cantonese operatic troupe during the 1960s was the Xianfengming Jutuan 仙鳳鳴劇團 (The Immortal Phoenix Singing Troupe, 1956 – 1969). According to Mr. Chan Kwok Yuen, this troupe was frequently hired by the local people at Aberdeen on Hong Kong Island and at Hung Hom in Kowloon for celebrating the birthdays of deities. Besides ritualistic playlets, troupe members also performed main operatic items (Zhengben Xi 正本戲)\(^{153}\), such as the Baishe Xinchuan 白蛇新傳 (The New Legend of the White Snake)\(^{154}\) and the Diniühua 帝女花 (The Emperor’s

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\(^{152}\) The Tianguang Xi (dawn performances) is a kind of ritual performance. Please see the Introduction for the definitions of ritual performance and dawn performance.

\(^{153}\) For the meaning of the Zhengben Xi, please refer to the definition of the Shengong Xi (ritual performance) in the Introduction.

\(^{154}\) Since the Southern Song dynasty (A.D. 1127 – 1279), the story of the White Shake (Baishe) has been very popular. Based on this story, many scholars compiled regional operatic plays. The outline of the New Legend of the White Snake was created by Nangong Bo. The script of this Cantonese operatic play was a collective work of the Scenario Committee of the Xianfengming Jutuan.
Mr. Chan also told me that Ms. Ren Jianhui 任劍輝 and Ms. Bai Xuexian 白雪仙 often placed great emphasis on the contents of plays. As actresses of the older generation, both of them insisted that their performances should enable the spectators to internalize Chinese traditional principles, such as benevolence, filiality, loyalty and reverence. In order to explain my argument, let us examine the main themes and contents of the Baishe Xinchuan and the Dinîhua.

Although the Baishe Xinchuan is a play with a romantic theme, it also contains the popular Buddhist idea that good deeds have rewards while bad deeds have retributions. As the principle civil military role of the Xianfengming Juan, Ren Jianhui often impersonated Xu Xian 許仙. Bai Xuexian, the principle female role, usually portrayed the character of Baishe 白蛇 (also known as Lady White). By watching Ren and Bei’s performances, the audiences could learn that the White Snake was buried alive under the foundation of Leifeng Ta 雷峰塔 (The Thunder Peak Pagoda) because of her bad deed of flooding the Jinshan Si 金山寺 (The Gold Mountain Monastery). On the other hand, they could also learn that she was finally rescued by Nanji Xianweng.

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155 The play Dinîhua was written by Huang Yunshan 黃雲珊, a scholar in the mid Qing dynasty. Based on Huang’s script, Mr. Tang Disheng 唐德生, a distinguished scriptwriter of Cantonese opera, compiled the Cantonese opera Dinîhua. The meaning of the word “Hua花” (Flower)” is very blurred. The Chazi Yanhong Kaiban Juanji states that once upon a time, the Buddha ordered the Sanhua Tiannu散花天女 (The Celestial Maid Who Sprinkles Flowers) and the Shixiang Jintong侍香金童 (The Gold Boy Who Serves Incense) to descend to the mundane world. The Sanhua Tiannu entered the womb of Empress Zhou, the wife of Emperor Chongzhen (the last emperor of the Ming dynasty). The Shixiang Jintong was born into the family of Zhou. His name was Zhou Shixian. In my opinion, the origin of the name Dinîhua can be traced back to this legend. The name Dinîhua means that the Flower Immortal was born to be the elder daughter of Emperor Chongzhen (Liu, 1995: Vol. 1, p. 69).

156 Ms. Ren Jianhui and Ms. Bai Xuexian were founders of the Xianfengming Jutuan. Ms. Ren Jianhui is the most popular actress of principal male roles. She is also regarded as one of the greatest singers in South China. She retired in the late 1960s and passed away in 1989 at the age of seventy-seven. Ms. Bai Xuexian is about seventy years of age. She is an actress of principal female roles. Her father, Bai Jurong, is one of the five great masters in Cantonese opera.
Bai Suzhen, you have cultivated yourself in seclusion for one thousand years and will soon attain the proper reward.

It is a pity that your worldly desires have not yet ended,
And you have to conceal yourself in the mundane world.

Luckily, you are a kindhearted soul who has saved people from disease and sufferings.

Therefore, [after] passing through all the calamities and tribulations,
You have finally invited the blessings of Heaven.

Today, I lead you to ascend to the immortal world and let you return to your simple and perfected state.

(Lady White speaks plain speech)

Ah! Old Immortal!

(The lower line of the Old Medium Beat)

157 For the summary of the play, please see appendix 14.
158 Plain speech (Bai 白), supported speech (Tuobai 托白), percussion speech (Luogu Bai 鑾鼓白), poetic speech (Shibai 詩白), rhymed speech (Kougu 口白), patter speech (Bailan 白挽), and comic rhymed speech (Yunbai 雲白) are seven types of speech delivery used in Cantonese opera. Among them, plain speech is most similar to Cantonese dialect. It is “delivered slowly and with exaggerated intonation to enable the audience to hear clearly through the amplifying system” (Chan, 1991: 276). In addition, plain speech has no regular structure in respect to the number of lines, phrases and syllables. Cantonese opera players always improvise plain speech in their performances (For detailed explanations of speech delivery
Indebted to your favor,

I can luckily preserve what remains of my life.

The rest of my fragrance is buried long but my previous love is difficult to entrust to the east flowing streams.

Though I am restored to life,

How [can] I [obtain] re-union [with my husband]?

My mortal karma is not yet finished and my regret continues long.

I am not afraid of afflictions but afraid of separation from my husband.

(Little Green recites plain speech)

Sister, your true love and righteous principles deserve respect and sympathy.

Hence, you have moved the Old Immortal to descend to the mundane world to rescue you.

Because of Xu Xian’s past karma,

He too has attained his proper reward.

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159 The Old Medium Beat (*Gulao Zhongban* 古老中板) is a type of aria in Cantonese opera. It falls within the category of the *Banghuang* system (See the explanation of the *Banghuang* modes in the Introduction). The term *Zhongban* refers to the metrical pattern of *Yiban* and *Yiding* (one strong beat followed by one weak beat). With regard to the text structure of the *Gulao Zhongban* aria type, lines are written according to the rule of two line parallelism. In each couplet, the last syllable of the upper line is an oblique tone while the last syllable of the lower line is a level tone. According to Master Wong Toa, one of the major characteristics of this aria type is that there are usually seven syllables in each line. In the text mentioned above, the Old Medium Beat is composed of six lines. The term lower line (*Xiajiu* 下句) means that the first line of the lyrics is sung as a lower line. It is then understood that the second, the fourth and the sixth lines are sung as upper lines. Similar to the first line, the third line and the fifth one are also sung as lower lines. The difference between an upper line and a lower line lies in the line-ending pitches, which may vary according to the role type, to the mode and to the tune family (Yung, 1989: 67 – 72; Wong, 1998: 67 – 72). Extracted from Mary Yeung’s manuscripts).

Turning to the Dinuhua (The Emperor’s Daughter), besides romantic love, the main themes of this play are loyalty and filial piety. Ren Jianhui usually acted the character of Zhou Shixian 周世顯 (The imperial son-in-law) and Bai Xuexian often impersonated Princess Changping 長平. By watching their performances, the spectators could internalize the Confucian idea that at a time of critical moment, filial and loyal children should prepare for self-sacrifices in order to uphold the moral principles. The extract below portrays the plan for burying the Ming emperor, rescuing the heir, and upholding fidelity by committing suicide.

Extracted from Scene VII: Submitting the Memorial

(Zhou Shixian speaks plain speech)

Princess, Shixian is not an ungrateful person.

Do you know that the later emperor’s mausoleum is not yet buried and the crown prince is [still] imprisoned?

I therefore have to use this inferior contrivance.

Though they wear Ming costumes,

The twelve palace maids, who [stand here] just now, are still loyal [servants] of the Qing court.

160 For the summary of this play, please refer to appendix 15.
How [could] I venture to leak out the message [in their presence]?

Princess!

(Changping is as if she has just awakened from a dream. She gloomily sighs and recites rhymed speech\textsuperscript{161})

Ah! I remember that the emperor’s daughter has met with hundreds of calamities.

What power do I still have to [so that I can] save the heir from prison and lay the former emperor in the mausoleum?

(Shixian recites rhymed speech)

Princess, you have been clever for your whole life.

I do not need to speak too much;

You should spiritually understand [my intention].

You [ought to] as soon as possible,

Edit a memorial so that I can submit to the imperial court on your behalf.

If I can accomplish [this] big affair,

I will return to my old nest.

If this big task is impossible to accomplish,

I will cut my throat and let my blood spatter the palace.

(Changping speaks rhymed speech)

Ah! Imperial son-in-law,

\textsuperscript{161} Rhymed speech (\textit{Kougu}) is a kind of speech delivery used in Cantonese opera. Dr. Chan Sau Y. states that there are no rules prescribing the number of syllables, phrases and lines. However, it is important to point out that the ending syllables of each line are in rhyme.
Though you possess talents that astonish the world,
I have sworn not to serve two dynasties.
How can I accompany you until old age at the Qing court?

(Shixian recites rhymed speech)

Ah! Princess!
If the emperor’s daughter does not enter the Qing court,
How would the Qing emperor carry out the three agreements?
You ease your mind!
Once our plan is accomplished at the Qing palace,
Both of us will take poison below the flower camphor tree on the wedding day.
Our fidelity and righteousness will not be polluted.

(Changping is startled, she holds Shixian, weeps bitterly and speaks plain speech)

O! You... are these words serious?

(Shixian weeps bitterly, he nods and then speaks plain speech)
I request the princess to edit the memorial.

(Changping endures her grief and recites plain speech)

In that case, all the writing materials\textsuperscript{162} are ready... (Tang, 1957: 92, translated by Mary Yeung).

\textsuperscript{162} Paper, brush pen, ink and ink-stone are traditional Chinese writing materials.
Both Ren Jianhui and Bai Xuexian are charismatic idols of thousands of playgoers. For instance, Ms. Ren is also known as Ximi Qingren 戲迷情人 (Lover of the Playgoers). During and before the 1960s, her sweet voice, lofty mien, ethereal gestures, and colorful costumes onstage provided visual and auditory stimuli which drew the attention and moved the minds of her theatergoers. As Fanyin 梵音, a drama critic in Hong Kong, states:

...[While] Sister Ren performed misery [onstage], each [of her] playgoers too knitted his (her) brows and was distressed for her. [When] she wept suddenly, the spectators too shed tears together with her. It seemed as if they themselves were also suffering her grief. Suddenly, Sister Ren smiled [again], the audiences too changed [their moods] from sadness to happiness... (Lu, 1995: Vol. 3, p. 64, translated by Mary Yeung)

Owing to these charismatic qualities, Ren Jianhui was an effective model in the sense that such extraordinary qualities could to some extent, attract many of her playgoers to commit themselves to the proper moral principles and the virtuous religious ideas, which she intentionally or unintentionally portrayed in her performances.

With regard to the young Cantonese operatic actresses (about or under forty years of age) in Hong Kong, they also participate in ritual performances, which are staged in local villages or districts. Nevertheless, it is important to note that many of them do not deem themselves as agents of socialization or representatives of deities. For example,
Ms. Summy Leung\textsuperscript{163} said: “Unlike my seniors, I never think that as an actress, I am responsible for propagating Chinese traditional beliefs and moral principles in both ritual and theatrical performances” (Leung, 1996: Extracted from Mary Yeung’s manuscripts). Some of my informants, who are players of the younger generation, also take a similar attitude towards Cantonese opera performances.

In Hong Kong, some Cantonese operatic actresses and actors are very negligent in their performances when they are hired to stage ritual operas in local communities. For instance, Ying, a critic of Cantonese opera, states:

...I suspect that some performers completely do not know what characters they themselves are impersonating onstage. They laugh and talk at their pleasure with people next to them. Though wearing traditional costumes, they walk to the edge of the stage using modern steps. Moreover, they do not understand where they should stand and when they [should] exit... (Chan, 1996b: 118, translated by Mary Yeung)

The players (both female and male) are negligent in their ritual performances mainly due to the following reason:

...A performer’s qualification for a certain character can be recognized in the profession or not is totally depended on whether he (she) has portrayed this character in the theaters. His (her) performances in the ritual operas are not taken into consideration. For example, ...Nam Fung... pointed out that in the early 1990s, since she herself had not been

\textsuperscript{163} As mentioned in the previous chapters, Ms. Leung is an actress of principal male roles. She is now
employed as "the principal female role" in theater troupes, employees in [Cantonese opera] only regarded her as "the supporting female role". Though she was employed as the principal female role in ritual opera troupes, her wages still could not be fixed too high... (Chan, 1996b: 118, translated by Mary Yeung)

The content of the above passages clearly reveals that in recent years, some female and male employees in Cantonese opera think that ritual performances, which are staged in local communities or districts, are inferior to theatrical performances. Since they are heedless of performing ritual plays, it is no wonder why they do not deem themselves as symbolic representatives of deities or agents of socialization.

Turning to the audiences' point of view, Mr. Chan Kwok Yuen and Dr. Chan Sau Y. state that in Hong Kong, representatives of villages or local communities, who are responsible for hiring Cantonese operatic troupes to perform in ritual celebrations, often require the female and male troupe members to perform ritualistic playlets such as the *Liuguo Fengxiang* 六國封相 (The Six States Appoint a Chancellor)\(^\text{165}\), the *Baxian*

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164 In Cantonese cultural areas, before the 1950s, representatives of local communities sometimes required actresses and actors to perform the *Xianghuashan Da Heshou* (Great Birthday Greetings at Fragrant Flower Mountain). Since the establishment of the government of the PRC in 1949, this ritual play has not been performed in Mainland China. This is because its content is regarded as superstitious by the Chinese Communists. In Hong Kong, since the early 1960s, leaders of local villages or districts have seldom required the players to stage this play mainly because the fee for its performance is too high. In recent years, this ritualistic play has been only performed on Master Huaguang's birthday.

165 The *Liuguo Fengxiang* is also known as the *Qicai Liuguo Fengxiang* 七彩六國封相 (The Colorful Six States Appoint a Chancellor). The performance of this playlet requires the participation of about sixty characters. Its content is that in the late Warring States period (around 333 B.C.), Su Qin 蘇秦 had successfully united the six states, Qi 齊, Chu 楚, Yan 燕, Han 韓, Zhao 趙, Wei 魏, to fight against the state of Qin 秦. Thus, rulers of these six states decided to appoint Su Qin as the chancellor of their states. Many large Cantonese opera troupes in Hong Kong nowadays perform this playlet in major festivals and on birthdays of deities. However, it is important to emphasize that the major function of this ritual play is to demonstrate the size of the operatic troupes; its content consists of no special auspicious attributes.
Heshou 八仙賀壽 (Birthday Greetings from the Eight Immortals)\textsuperscript{166}, the Tiao Jiaguan 跳加官 (Dance to Promotion)\textsuperscript{167}, the Nu Jiaguan 女加官 (The Promotion of a Woman to Higher Official Rank)\textsuperscript{168}, the Tianji Da Songzi (The Celestial Maid’s Great Offering of a Son) and the Xiao Songzi 小送子 (The Small Offering of a Son)\textsuperscript{169}.

Most of these ritual playlets are believed to have auspicious meaning. For example, the story of Baxian Heshou is about greetings from the Eight Immortals (Baxian) to the Queen Mother of the West (Xi Wangmu 西王母)\textsuperscript{170} at her birthday ceremony. It offers symbolic auspicious blessings of long life and good health. Many spectators of local communities perceive that actresses, who often portray the character of Xi Wanmu, Lan Caihe and He Xiangu, are mediums of these deities. Dr. Chan Sau Y. says that in Hong Kong, the Baxian Heshou and the Tianji Da Songzi are indispensable performances in any ritual operatic series. Many people of local villages or districts, who

\textsuperscript{166} For the content of the ritual playlet Baxian Heshou, please see the next paragraph.

\textsuperscript{167} The performance of the Tiao Jiaguan only requires the participation of one actor. When the male performer comes onstage, he holds an ivory tablet and wears a mask. In addition, he wears a formal robe and a gauze hat with long wings at side. Standing at the edge of the stage, he shows two red scrolls (one after another) to the spectators. One states the four Chinese characters: “Feng,” “Tiao,” “Yu”, and “Shun” (May the Weather be Good). Another states the following: “Guo,” “Tai”, “Min”, and “An” (May the State Prosper and the People Enjoy Peace).

\textsuperscript{168} The performance of this ritualistic playlet requires only requires the participation of one actress. When this female performer comes onstage, she holds an ivory tablet. She wears a formal crown and formal robe embroidered with dragons. Then, she performs a routine of movements in order to display the following four Chinese characters: “—(Yi), “Pin” (“Fu”), “Ren” (Lady of the First Rank). At the beginning, she stands upright with her feet together and arms extending sideways at shoulder level to display the character “—”. Then, she opens her mouth and stands upright with hands akimbo to demonstrate the character “Pin”. After finishing these movements, she extends her arms sideways and stands with feet apart to display the character “Fu”. Finally, in order to show the character “人”, she stretches out her left arm (or right arm) and bends her elbow to the left side (or the right side) (Chan, 1996b: 65).

\textsuperscript{169} The Xiao Songzi is a simplified version of the Tianji Da Songzi. For its English translation, please see appendix 10.

\textsuperscript{170} In China, there are many legends about Xi Wangmu. One of the most popular stories is that she is the wife of the Jade Emperor. Her palace is located at the Kulun Mountains. She holds the Feast of Peaches (Pantao Yan 果桃宴) every three thousand years on her birthday. All deities are invited to attend the banquet. Besides several superfine meats, the deities are served with peaches of immortality. It is believed that one can achieve longevity after eating one of these peaches.
have voluntarily donated money for these shows, expect that the female and male players who serve as representatives of deities could bring longevity, harmony, prosperity and male descendents to their families (cf. Chan, 1991: 57).

In brief, ritual performances are often staged on auspicious and important occasions. They function to appease deities, entertain spectators, placate ghosts, renew life vitality and enhance group solidarity. With regard to the roles of actresses in ritual shows, Huaguang's 1996 birthday ceremony is a typical example to reveal that both the performers (female and male) and the audience think that the players, who participated in the performances of the Xianghuashan Da Heshou and the Tianji Da Songzi, were entertainers and mediums of deities. However, for the ritual performances which occur in local districts or communities, the audiences usually think that actresses and actors, who take part in the ritualistic shows, are representatives of supernatural beings. Besides, from the veteran actresses' point of view, artists have responsibility of upholding and propagating virtuous religious ideas and moral principles in their performances. Nevertheless, unlike their seniors, many young female and male players in Hong Kong do not consider themselves as mediums of deities or agents of socialization in their ritual performances.
CHAPTER SIX

Conclusion

This thesis began by discussing the situation of women in Cantonese families and Cantonese opera groups (such as opera troupes). Cantonese opera groups are pseudo-kinship associations, which are organized to some extent along kinship lines. Before the mid 1930s, gender was a crucial factor that determined the status of a troupe within the Cantonese opera profession. Within a troupe, the organizational arrangement is governed by the principle of generation hierarchy. Seniority in a Cantonese family is also determined by the male principle and the principle of generation hierarchy. However, it is important to note that a Cantonese opera troupe is an occupational group formed mainly for the purpose of performances. Thus, unlike the situation in a Cantonese family, qualification is also an important element that determined the performers’ status and seniority in the troupe.

In a Cantonese family, the patriarch exercises his power according to clan rules and social norms. Though parents may treat their daughters and sons in different ways, most of them have a great affection for their children. Moreover, the principle of filial piety and the cult of ancestors are effective elements which reinforce the ties of loyalty and solidarity among female and male members in the family. Masters do not exercise their power according to clan rules. Before the 1950s, they usually exerted power or influence on their disciples according to the master contract. In addition, unlike parents, many masters did not have benevolent affection for their female and male students. At that time, pupils (both female and male) were often flogged by their masters if they...
misbehaved themselves. Nowadays, masters no longer use physical punishments to shape the behavior of their disciples. They prefer to use occupational taboos and professional norms as means to enhance group solidarity and to teach their students.

Before the early 1950s, performers were classed at the bottom of the society. Thus, upper class women would be expelled from their families and lose all contact with their parents if they became actresses. In usual cases, however, most female performers came from poor families. Similar to the sworn spinsters, many of them maintained a close relationship with their family members.

Marriage is a common practice of women in Cantonese cultural areas. Similarly, most female Cantonese operatic employees also marry and have families. Owing to social prejudices, before the mid 20th century, female players usually married their male colleagues. Nowadays, the relaxation of traditional values enable them to marry men who engage in different kinds of professional activities. As married women in the general society, some married actresses have a harmonious family life. Some others end their marriages in divorce or separation.

During the later 19th and the early 20th century, lesbian relationships were part of sisterhood life for some sworn spinsters in Cantonese sericultural areas. Similarly, homosexual practices also occur among Cantonese opera employees. In the early 20th century, both female and male performers engaged in homosexual relationships mainly due to two reasons. First, they were captured and forced to do so by the brigands. Secondly, they engage in homosexual activities because of their own sexual preference.
At present, most male and female players become homosexuals or lesbians mainly due to their own personal will.

Similar to women in Cantonese society (the larger society), female performers in Cantonese opera have to observe the gender taboos mentioned in Chapter Two (Section 2.1.). In addition, they also have to endure two kinds of occupational taboos, feminine restrictions and general taboos. Feminine restrictions are specially imposed on female employees in Cantonese opera. General taboos are adopted to constrain the behavior of both male and female players. As women in the larger society, actresses are regarded as taboo objects because of two major reasons. One is the religious prejudice against women. Female performers are considered to be polluted when menstruating or within a month of child delivery. They are also regarded as transmitters of evil supernatural power since they have many opportunities to touch the postpartum discharge (an unwanted substance from the body). The other reason is the power struggle within the Cantonese opera profession. In order to weaken the actresses’ influence both within and without occupation, some actors may intentionally impose feminine religious restrictions on their female colleagues.

Nevertheless, it is important to point out that many actresses believe that if they violate the religious prohibitions, their irreverence would provoke the deities and the ancestors (both kinship and non-kinship), who would punish them. These punishments include forgetting the texts, losing their voices, and unsatisfactory performance, which directly affect their reputation and incomes. Hence, although the occupational taboos are dysfunctional for the female troupe members in terms of their personal freedom, most of
them are willing to follow the traditional precepts since they believe that these religious practices will bring good memory, sweet voices and successful performances, which may be seen as functional for them in terms of their personal fame and economic benefits.

Female employees in Cantonese opera and their male counterparts worship five patron deities. They are Huaguang Shifu (Master of Splendor and Brightness), Tiandou Ershi (The Two Masters of Field and Hollow), Tangong Ye (Grandfather – Lord Tan) and Zhang Wu Shifu (Master Zhang Wu). Unlike Tiandou Ershi and Zhang Wu, who are only patron deities of the Cantonese opera profession, Master Huaguang and Lord Tan are also worshipped by people in the larger society.

Similar to the popular religion of women in Cantonese society, the popular religious beliefs of female players can also be characterized as a polytheistic and a humanized system. Women in Cantonese opera worship innumerable gods of the larger popular religious system, such as Guanyin and Lord Guan. In addition, they also pay tribute to their five occupational deities. Their roles in the cults of gods are similar to those of women in general society. Female employees of Cantonese opera serve as dominant individuals in daily worship. They are active participants in annual sacrifices and occasional cults. Furthermore, women in Cantonese society often pay tribute to their deities at home altars, local shrines and temples. For actresses and actors, besides these places, red boats, basin boats, the headquarters of the *Bahe Huiguan* (The Eight Harmony Association), and headquarters of operatic troupes were common places of worship during and before the 1940s. The tradition of holding religious ceremonies in red boats and basin boats completely died out after the 1950s.
Within Cantonese cultural areas, women are dominant individuals in daily ancestral worship. They participate as active assistants in annual sacrifices, and as mourners at funeral rituals. After they die, they themselves become ancestors. Daily rites often take place at household altars. Annual cults are usually held at ancestral halls and graves. As mentioned in Chapter Four (section 4.3.), the roles of female players in daily and annual cults of kinship ancestors are similar to those of women in the larger society. Nonetheless, Cantonese opera groups are subcultural organizations. Therefore, actresses and actors have their own cults of non-kinship ancestors. For instance, unlike women in Cantonese society, many female performers before the late 1940s did not practice a comprehensive form of ancestral worship mainly due to their financial difficulties. When they passed away, their funeral rituals were very simple. However, in recent years, owing to the improvement of their economic and social situations, their rituals of ancestral sacrifices to a great extent conform to those of women in the larger society. Moreover, the rite Ji Xianren (Offering to the Ancestors), which are practiced at graves and at the backstage area, is another typical example to show the unique religious practices of both women and men in Cantonese opera profession. Besides, reverence and efficacy, which are the two most important principles of worship in Cantonese society, are also the major precepts of the cults of deities and non-kinship ancestors in Cantonese opera profession.

According to Laurence Thompson, a comprehensive form of ancestral worship in Chinese cultural areas should include “the funeral rites, the mourning observances, and the continuing sacrifices to the manes” (Thompson, 1995: 44).
Reliable sources indicate that ritual performances, which are often staged on important occasions, have four major functions. First, they are sincere means for expressing thankfulness to gods on their birthdays. Second, they function to placate hungry ghosts in Ghost Festival. Third, it is believed that ritual performances could enhance the life vitality of local communities. Finally, another function of ritual performances is that they offer auspicious occasions for improving interpersonal relationships and enhancing group solidarity. From the viewpoints of the performers and the audience, the actresses and actors, who took part in the ritual performances on Huaguang’s 1996 birthday, were entertainers and medium of deities. With regard to ritual performances that are staged in local districts, the spectators think that both female and male performers, who participate in ritual shows, are not merely performers but also representatives of supernatural beings. Though the veteran female performers may not regard themselves as representatives of gods, most of them think that artists have the responsibility of propagating traditional Chinese norms and beliefs in their performances. However, unlike their seniors, many young female and male players in Hong Kong do not consider themselves as medium of deities or agents of socialization in their ritual performances. Although the roles of female players in ritual shows are rather complicated, the viewpoint of the audiences reveals that the boundary between sacred and profane is blurred within the secular world. Hence, it is unsuitable to apply a dichotomized method to analyze religious phenomena within the context of the secular world (cf. Ward, 1989: 19).
In view of the above discussion, it is crystal clear that the subcultural religious system of the female employees in Cantonese opera contain some religious elements of the dominant cultural group but also has beliefs and customs of its own. Families, opera groups, bureaucrats and storytellers are important agents of socialization. These agents enable the female performers to internalize the traditional Chinese beliefs and norms, which are believed to be the orthodox literati views. However, owing to their special occupational circumstances, Cantonese opera actresses and their male colleagues also have their unique norms, precepts and practices that are different from those of women in Cantonese cultural areas. These variations are major elements which reveal the differences concerning their religious beliefs and activities (cf. Ward, 1965: 122).
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Bai, Xuemei 白雪梅. She is a distinguished artist and teacher of Cantonese opera. Her father, Bai Jurong 白駒榮, is one of the five great masters in Cantonese opera. She formed the Xue Mei Academy of Cantonese Folk Music and Operatic Arts in 1992. In addition, she is also an instructor of Cantonese operatic singing of the Richmond Chinese Culture Centre and the Vancouver School Board. Since 1996, she has been my Cantonese opera teacher.

Chan, Kwok Yuen 陳國源. He is a researcher of Cantonese operatic art, and a designer and maker of Cantonese costumes. I had a telephone (long-distance) interview with him on November 5, 1995. Moreover, on September 13, 1996, I had a face to face interview with him in Vancouver for two hours.

Chan, Sau Y. 陳守仁. He is an associate professor in the Music Department of the Hong Kong Chinese University. I sent a fax to him and received his reply on November 8, 1995. I interviewed him in Hong Kong on November 11, 1996.

Chen, Shaozhen 陳少珍. She is a famous actress in the Guangzhou Cantonese Opera Troupe. Before her retirement, she was also an experienced teacher at the Guangdong Cantonese Opera College. I had personal interviews with her in Vancouver for four times: September 15, 19, 27, 1995 and October 1, 1995. Besides, on November 2, 1996, I had an informal interview with her at Guangzhou.

He, Jianfeng 何劍峰. He is a veteran actor of supporting female roles. Before the 1950s, he often joined the Cross-Mountain Troupes and performed in the southern western part of Guangdong. I interviewed him on December 22, 1996.

Hung, Alex and Winnie Poon 何加峰、潘倩影. Both of them were chairpersons of the Elite Cantonese Opera Musical Society in Richmond. I had a face to face interview with them in Vancouver on November 12, 1995. In addition, I had a follow-up telephone interview with Mr. Hung on November 27, 1995. Although he has been sick, he kindly accepted my interview in April 1996. Hence, a credit should be given to him.

Koo, Hung Kin 顧鴻見. He is an experienced martial arts actor in Cantonese opera. He is an expert of acrobatics. He has been a performer for over seventy years. Owing to his unique knowledge, he is one of the chief informants of universities and museums in Hong Kong. I interviewed him in Hong Kong on November 22, and 23, 1996.
Lau, Ling Yan 劉令茵. She is my mother. She was born in Guangzhou in the late 1920s. My maternal grandfather is called Lau Chou Shing 劉秋生. His second concubine, Wong Hing 黃卿, gave birth to my mother. I always chat with my mother concerning the popular Cantonese beliefs and practices.

Leung, Sum Yee Summy 梁森兒. She is the administrator of the Hong Kong Cantonese Opera Workshop. She is a Cantonese operatic actress of male roles. I had a face to face interview with her for two hours in Hong Kong on November 28, 1996.

Ma, Tak Ming Ponny 馬德明. He is a part time male role actor. He supports his family by working as a senior business manager of an assurance company. His wife, Chen Mingying 陳銘英, is an actress of Chaozhou opera. In some cases, she also participates in Cantonese opera performances. I had an interview with both of them on November 22, 1996.

Tan, Aiting Tina 譚愛婷. She is an actress of female roles in Cantonese opera. Her mother is Ms. Chen Shaozhen. As a graduate of the Guangdong Cantonese Opera College, she joined large troupes and performed in Guangdong for several years. After she migrated to Vancouver, she married and retired to private life. I had a chat with her on September 15, 1995.

Wong, Toa 黃滔. He is a researcher of Cantonese operatic art and an musical advisor of the Jin Wah Sing Musical Association in Vancouver. I had a face to face interview with him in Vancouver on September 27, 1995. Master Wong is my most important informant. I had face to face interviews and telephone interviews with him for many times in late 1996 and early 1997. Without his help, I could not finish this thesis. Thus, a credit should be given to him.

Wu, Zhen 吳貞. His stage name is Xin Jinshanzhen 新金山貞. He is a veteran actor of military roles in Cantonese opera. He has been a performer for over seventy years. Owing to his expertise, he is one of the chief advisors of Cantonese operatic troupes and training colleges. I had two interviews with him in Hong Kong on December 11, and 12, 1996. The first interview lasted for four hours and the second one lasted for three hours.

Yung, Bell 楊鴻曾. He is a professor in the Department of Music of the University of Pittsburgh. He is Dr. Chan Sau Y.’s teacher. I interviewed him in Hong Kong on November 15, 1996.

Zhong, Zhaohan 鍾兆漢. He has been an actor in Cantonese opera for over sixty years. He is one of the chief informants of universities and museums in Hong Kong. Moreover, he is also a regular staff of the Bat Wo Institute of Cantonese Opera. I interviewed him in Hong Kong on November 28, 1996.
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From the mid 19th century to 1937, red boats were the most important form of transportation for the Cantonese operatic troupes.

Red boats were made of matting and bamboo. Their method of “propulsion was by long sweeps or by poling. Later, in the 20th century, the red boats were towed by small launches” (Ward, 1981: 236). A large Cantonese opera troupe usually rented three boats. They were known as “heaven boat (Tianting 天艇)”, “earth boat (Diting 地艇)” and “picture boat (Huating 畫艇)” respectively. According to Mr. Wu Zhen, performers of the comic female role, the young male role, the comic male role and the whole group of musicians would live in the heaven boat. Performers of the military role, the young military role, the third supporting young male role and the third supporting military role would live in the earth boat. The picture boat was used for carrying all the scenery (Wu, 1993: 14).

Most performers spent almost the whole year on the red boats. According to traditional precepts, Cantonese opera troupes dispersed annually on the first day of the sixth lunar month and then reorganized on the eighteenth of the same month. They began their performances on the nineteenth. The troupe members only had a holiday for ten days when the red boats were moored at Canton (from the twentieth of the twelve moon to the twenty-ninth of the same month).

Bunks were well allocated annually by drawing lots fifteen day after the first performance. All the troupe members would first elect “four great head persons (Sida
“Touren 四大頭人)” who were responsible for dealing with all problems of the whole troupe. Then, names of the bunks such as “azure dragon”, “white tiger” and “trunk store”, were written on strips of paper and put in the boat’s rice bushel. Each candidate took a turn to pick out a strip of paper by using a pair of chopsticks. Owing to this lucky draw method, many of the senior troupe members picked bad bunks. In order to have more comfortable living places, they would usually use money to exchange for better bunks with some junior members who had drawn good places (Wu, 1993: 15+16; Ward, 1981: 244).

In 1937, all red boats were commandeered by the Japanese army. They were bombed during the Second World War. Since then, the custom of sailing in red boats no longer exists.
APPENDIX 1

Diagram 1: The Layout of the Heaven Boat

Bow

APPENDIX 1

Description of the Compartments of the Heaven Boat

1. Lower Hand’s Place (Xiashou Wei 下手位): one single bunk
2. Great Trunk Store (Daxiang Tou 大箱頭): one mobile bunk for two persons
3. The Place of Bearing Up the Cryptomeria (Tuoshan Wei 托杉位): one single bunk
4. Azure Dragon (Qinglong 青龍): one bunk for two persons
5. Shoes Basket (Xieluo 鞋籃): one single bunk
6. White Tiger (Baihu 白虎): one single bunk
7. Hoist Sails Place (Cheli Wei 扯掣位): one single bunk on the top and one double bunk at the bottom
8. Bedding Hold (Shuipu Cang 睡鋪艙): one single bunk on the top and one at the bottom
9. Grasp Pinch (Zhanian 搏撓): one bunk for two persons
10. Mosquito Den (Wendou 蚊竃): one single bunk
11. Urinating Place (E’niao Wei 屬尿位): one bunk for two persons
12. Rubbish Dump (Laji Wei 垃圾位): one single bunk
13. Cross-ways Cabin (Shizi Cang 十字艙): one single bunk on the top and one double bunk at the bottom
14. Cross-ways Cabin (Shizi Cang 十字艙): one double bunk on the top and one single bunk at the bottom
15. Cross-ways Cabin (*Shizi Cang* 十字艙): one double bunk on the top and one single bunk at the bottom

16. Cross-ways Cabin (*Shizi Cang* 十字艙): one double bunk on the top and one at the bottom

17. Water Cabin (*Shuicang* 水艙): one double bunk on the top and one single bunk at the bottom

18. Bedding Hold in Front of the Shrine (*Shenqian Shuipu* 神前睡舖): one double bunk on the top and one at the bottom

19. Entrance to the Water Cabin (*Shuicang Kou* 水艙口)

20. Shrine (*Shenwei* 神位)

21. Rice Store (*Migui* 米櫃): one single bunk on the top

22. Prince Place (*Taizi Wei* 太子位): one double bunk on the top and one single bunk at the bottom

23. Galley (*Chucang* 廚艙)

24. Toilet (*Cesuo* 廁所)

25. Catwalk (*Shajie* 沙街)

APPENDIX 1

Diagram 2: The Layout of the Earth Boat

APPENDIX 1

Description of the Compartments of the Earth Boat

1. Lower Hand’s Place (Xiashou Wei 下手位): one single bunk
2. Great Trunk Store (Daxiang Tou 大箱頭): one mobile bunk for two persons
3. The Place of Bearing Up the Cryptomeria (Tuoshan Wei 托杉位): one single bunk
4. Azure Dragon (Qinglong 青龍): one single bunk
5. Shoes Basket (Xieluo 鞋籠): one single bunk
6. White Tiger (Baihu 白虎): one single bunk
7. Bedding Hold (Shuipu Cang 睡舖艙): one single bunk on the top and one at the bottom
8. Hoist Sails Place (Cheli Wei 扯幟位): one double bunk on the top and one at the bottom
9. Grasp Pinch (Zhanian 握捻): one bunk for two persons
10. Rubbish Dump (Laji Wei 垃圾位): one bunk for two persons
11. Urinating Place (E’niao Wei 尿位): one bunk for two persons
12. Mosquito Den (Wendou 蚊竃): one bunk for two persons
13. Cross-ways Cabin (Shizi Cang 十字艙): one double bunk on the top and one at the bottom
14. Cross-ways Cabin (Shizi Cang 十字艙): one double bunk on the top and one at the bottom
15. Cross-ways Cabin (Shizi Cang 十字艙): one double bunk on the top and one at the bottom

16. Cross-ways Cabin (Shizi Cang 十字艙): one double bunk on the top and one at the bottom

17. Bedding Hold in Front of the Shrine (Shenqian Shuipu 神前睡舖): one double bunk on the top and one at the bottom

18. Water Cabin (Shuicang 水艙): one double bunk on the top and one at the bottom

19. Shrine (Shenwei 神位)

20. Prince Place (Taizi Wei 太子位): one double bunk on the top and one at the bottom

21. Rice Store (Migui 米艙): one single bunk

22. Galley (Chucang 廚艙)

23. Toilet (Cesuo 廁所)

24. Catwalk (Shajie 沙街)

APPENDIX 1

Diagram 3: The Layout of the Picture Boat

1. Removable Covers
2. Window
3. Personal Locker
4. Bunk Space
5. Catwalk
6. Gangway
7. Ballast

APPENDIX 2

Diagram 4: The Layout of the Stage

1. Stage Right (Zabian雜邊)
2. Stage Left (Yibian衣邊)
3. Dressing Compartments
4. Corridor at Backstage
5. Trunks for Miscellaneous Items
6. Trunks for Weapons
7. Costume Trunks
8. Backdrop
9. Shrine
10. Stage Right Rear (Zabian Jiao雜邊角)
11. Stage Left Rear (Yibian Jiao衣邊角)
12. Curtains
13. Audience

APPENDIX 3

The Ritual for Initiating the Stage in the Southwestern Part of Guangdong (The Potai大破台)

Mr. He Jianfeng, an experienced actor of the Guoshan Ban (the Cross-Mountain Troupes) said that before 1949, the Potai would be performed when a permanent hall was erected on a new site. The main aim was to exorcise the evil spirits. The performance of the Potai only required the participation of one actor. Women never participated in this ritual. Mr. He offered the following account concerning the procedure of the Ritual for Initiating the Stage:

At the beginning, all the lights in the performance hall were turned off and the whole stage was in utter darkness. Holding a halberd of three tips, a painted face actor rushed onstage. He brandished the halberd for a while and ascended a platform which was piled up with chairs and tables. Then, he used all his strength to thrust his halberd through the ceiling (which was made of tile) of the stage. After finishing this task, he broke a pile of porcelain bowls which were put onstage beforehand. He then killed a cock and dripped its blood on the whole stage. Afterwards, he retreated to the backstage. All the lights were immediately turned on and the performers began their operatic performances (He, 1996: Extracted from Mary Yeung’s manuscripts).

In addition, Mr. He Jianfeng also emphasized that if the actor failed to thrust his halberd through the ceiling of the stage, all the troupe members would run away and
refuse to stage their performances since they believed that the whole stage was completely occupied by evil spirits which were too powerful to be exorcised.
APPENDIX 4

The Worship of the White Tiger (The Ji Baihu 祭白虎)

In Hong Kong, the Ji Baihu is the sacrificial rite for purifying a new stage (in a temporary hall or a theatre) that has never been used for Cantonese operatic performances. It is also known as Tiao Xuantan 跳玄壇 (Promotion of the Black Face) or Tiao Caishen 跳財神 (Promotion of the Wealth God). According to Dr. Chan Sau Y., Mr. Huang Yongzhu 黃永珠 is an expert of this ritual. His son and grandson are also active participants. Although the Ji Baihu is a rite for purifying the stage, it is also considered to be one of the ritual playlets (Chan, 1991: 56). Dr. Chan and Professor Barbara E. Ward state that this ritual only required the participation of two actors. One acts as Zhao Gongming 趙公明 (the Black Face or the Wealth God) and another acts as the White Tiger.

According to Mr. E. T. C. Werner (a barrister and British consul in China during the early 20th century), Zhao Gongming was a great warrior during the late Shang period (around 1040 B.C.). He fought for Wu Huang of the Zhou dynasty. Owing to his bravery, he won many great battles. He always rode on a black tiger and hurled pearls which burst like bombshells. However, he was eventually killed by a form of sorcery. Later, his spirit was released from purgatory by the Most High Original Lord (Yuanshi Tianzun 元始天尊), the most Supreme God of the Daoist religion. In order to praise Zhao Gongming’s bravery, Yuanshi Tianzun canonized Zhao as “President of the Ministry of Riches and Prosperity” (Werner, 1994: 171). Similar to people in the larger society, performers believe that the Baihu would make use of one person’s mouth to
injure another especially during the Stirring of Hibernating Insects (the Jingzhe 驚蟄), one of the twenty-four nodes (the Ershisi Jie 二十四節) of the Chinese solar calendar. From the viewpoint of the Cantonese operatic performers, Zhao Gongming possesses supernatural power that can overcome the White Tiger.

With regard to the procedure of the Worship of the White Tiger, Professor Ward's case study at Castle Peak in the Hong Kong New Territories (1975) offered a detailed description:

...Suddenly the musicians broke into a distinctive rhythm on percussion alone and a black-faced, black-bearded, male-role figure entered stage right bearing aloft in his right hand a three foot stave from which dangled a string of exploding fire crackers...He ran straight across (upstage, in front of the backcloth), off stage left and then immediately round backstage and on again stage right, without the firecrackers, to take up a pose on top of the table (center front stage) facing stage left with the stave held at the ready...

There then entered, stage left, a crouching figure clad in a fairly close-fitting yellow costume with a long tail and a grinning cat-like mask: the White Tiger. Running on all fours, the Tiger came down stage left to the front where he discovered a piece of raw pork and mimed eating it. Meanwhile the god descended from his mountain and took up an attacking pose and the two proceeded to fight until the blackfaced figure overcame the Tiger, bestrode his prostrate body, and then fitting his mouth with a
kind of bit made of metal chain...rode him off backwards, up stage left.
As the two disappeared, a rather ragged shout came from behind the
backcloth, the property man came forward to remove a row of chairs
which had been placed along the front of the stage, and the orchestra
immediately struck up the first notes of the usual opening performance...
(Ward, 1979: 30+31).
APPENDIX 5

The Legendary Origin of Huaguang

There are four fire deities in the Chinese popular religious system. They are Wangling Guan 王靈官¹, Zhurong 祝融², Wuhui 吳回³ and Huaguang. The Nanyou Ji 南遊記 (Journey to the South), the most comprehensive source concerning the legendary origin of Huaguang, states that Huaguang was originally the halo of light from a lamp of the Lingguang Tathagata 靈光佛 (Buddha of the Divine Light) (Wu, 1985: 85 - 160). One day, the Buddha transformed Huaguang into the deity Miao Jixiang 妙吉祥 (Wonderful and Auspicious). He became a disciple of the Buddha.

Having a fiery temper, Miao Jixiang disobeyed the Tathagata by killing the Duhuo Gui 獨火鬼 (The Ghost of Single Fire). Hence, he was degraded and sent to the mortal world to be the son of Ma’er Shan Niangniang 馬耳山娘娘 (The Lady of Horse-Ear Mountain), the widow of Ma’er Shan Dawang 馬耳山大王 (The Great King of Horse-Ear Mountain). He was known as Sanyan Lingguang 三眼靈光 (Three Eyes Divined Light). As the reincarnation of Miao Jixiang, Sanyan Lingguang was born with three eyes. In addition, he also possessed five supernatural powers⁴. His father, Ma’er Shan

¹ According to Daoist beliefs, Wangling Guan is the first of the twenty-six Heavenly Generals. It is said that he was a Fangshi 方士 (necromancer), who specialized in fire magic, during the Song dynasty. After he passed away, the Jade Emperor appointed him as the General of Fire (Cheng, 1987: 90).
² Mr. Cheng Manqi states that Zhurong was one of the ministers of Huang Di 黃帝 (The Yellow Emperor). He taught people the use of fire for cooking, curing diseases and making implements. Owing to these contributions, he has been worshipped as the god of fire since ancient times.
³ According to Chinese legend, Wuhui is also known as Hui Lu 回祿. He was the younger brother of Zhurong (Cheng, 1987: 92+93). However, Mr. E. T. C. Werner says that Wuhui was a follower of Zhurong. He often called himself “the Disciple of the Master of Fire (Huoshi Zhi Tu 火師之徒)” (Werner, 1994: 239).
⁴ Huaguang received the five supernatural powers from the Lingguang Tathagata. Having these miraculous powers, Huaguang could wander through heaven, break through earth and remain unscathed by water and fire. Moreover, he could be invisible from the naked eye.
Dawang, was killed by “the Iron-Shod Dragon King of the Eastern Sea (Donghai Tieji Longwang 東海鐵跡龍王) in a rivalry over their magic treasures” (Cedzich, 1992:148).

Three days after his birth, he killed the Iron-Shod Dragon King of the Eastern Sea in revenge for his father’s murder.

Later, when Sanyan Lingguang stole the golden lance of the Beiji Ziwei Dadi 北極紫微大帝 (The Great Emperor of Purple Vacuity of North Pole), he was killed by the emperor. Owing to the compassion of Tianzun 天尊 (The Heavenly Honored One), he was reborn into the family of Yanxuan Tianwang 炎玄天王 (The Glorious King of Heaven). His name was Lingyao 靈耀 (the second reincarnation of Miao Jixiang). Soon afterwards, he became the disciple of the Heavenly Honored One. After obtaining his master’s gold blade, Lingyao refined it into a gold brick and treated it as his own magic treasure. He subdued many evil spirits and demons. As a result, he was appointed as Huobu Bingma Da Yuanshuai 火步兵馬大元帥 (The Great Marshal of Troops and Horses of the Ministry of Fire). Nevertheless, at a celestial banquet, he clashed with the heir to the Jade Emperor’s throne. As a result, the Superior Emperor of the Mysterious Heaven (Xuantian Shangdi 玄天上帝) overcame him. After surrendering to the Superior Emperor, he fled to the mortal world and subdued many demons such as Qianli Yan 千里眼 (Thousand-li Eye) and Shunfeng Er 順風耳 (Favorable-wind Ear). Owing to his contributions, he was worshipped as a deity by people in the secular world.

The Jade Emperor sent celestial deities and armies to catch Lingyao (the second reincarnation of Miao Jixiang). In order to escape capture, he entered the womb of a woman and was reborn into the Xiao (蕭) family. He was known as Xianhua 顯華 (the
third reincarnation of Miao Jixiang). His mother, Jizhituo 吉芝陀, was a man-eating demon who had killed the real Lady Xiao. However, Xianhua had no idea about his mother’s true nature. Later, Jizhituo was put in purgatory by a dragon king. As a deity who possessed supernatural powers, Xianhua descended to the underworld to search for his monstrous mother. In a fight with celestial gods, he lost his golden brick. Then, he obtained the golden pagoda of Yuhuan Shengmu 玉環聖母 (The Sacred Mother of Jade Bracelets) by tricks, and refined it into a golden brick. Moreover, he also took her daughter, Tieshan Gongzhu 鐵扇公主 (Iron Fan Princess), as his wife.

Finally, Huaguang succeed in rescuing the spirit of the real Lady Xiao and liberating Jizhituo, his monstrous mother. In order to redeem his mother from her cannibalism, he stole immortal peaches from the Celestial Palace. After eating the fruit, Jizhituo stopped her riotous behavior. Soon afterwards, Huaguang converted to Buddhism and was appointed by the Jade Emperor as Wuxian Lingguan Dadi Huaguang Tianwang 五顯靈官大帝華光天王 (The Great Emperor of Splendor and Brightness among Divine Agents of the Five Manifestations).

Some scholars argue that Huaguang’s ancestors belong to a vast category of half-animal, half human monsters. In addition, they also state that the cult of Huaguang is directly related to the cults of Wutong 五通 (The Five Supernatural Powers)⁵ and Wuxian

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⁵ According to Chinese popular beliefs, Wutong are evil spirits. On the one hand, they could bestow prosperity and safety on his devotees. On the other hand, they might also cause monster birth and calamities.
Nevertheless, besides historical analysis, I cannot discover any anthropological and sociological findings to support their arguments.

五顯 (The Five Manifestations). In the 12th century, they were canonized by the Song emperors. Owing to this reason, they became major deities in major cities of southern China.
The Six Great Pillars is a role classification system of Cantonese opera. As mentioned in Chapter Four, during the early Qing period, Master Zhang Zu arranged Cantonese operatic roles into ten different types. In the early 1930s, Xue Jiaoxian 薛覺先, one of the greatest artists of Cantonese opera in the 20th century, simplified and modified the ten roles into a system of six major roles which is still practiced by Cantonese opera performers up to the present. It is better known as the Six Great Pillars System. The six role types are:

1. Civil-Military Role (Wenwu Sheng文武生). This refers to the principal male role. Performers of this role type usually act as scholars and marshals.

2. Principal Female Role (Zhengyin Huadan正印花旦). Performers of this role type often impersonate ladies, female generals and gay women.

3. Supporting Male Role (Xiao Sheng小生). Players of this role type usually act as young men of different characterizations. They can be young warriors, young scholars and young civilians.

4. Supporting Female Role (Erbang Huadan二帮花旦). Players of this role type often impersonate young ladies of different characterizations. They can be young female warriors, ladies or maids.

5. Military Role (Wu Sheng武生). Performers of this role type often impersonate male military generals.
6. Comic Role (Chou Sheng风生). Performers of this role type usually act as civil or acrobatic comedians who improvise comic episodes in order to entertain the audience. All the technical terms of the Six Great Pillars mentioned above are translated by Bell Yung (1989: 20+21).
APPENDIX 7

Description of the Performing Hall of the Haicheng Great Restaurant

According to my observation on 18th November 1996 (the twenty-eighth of the ninth month of year Binzi), the performing hall was situated at the northeastern side of the Haicheng Great Restaurant. Both the altar and the stage where most important religious practices took place were located side by side at the east of the hall.

With regard to the arrangement of the altar, it included a square shaped table, an elongated table and a pair of scrolls. The tables were covered with red table cloth. On top of the square shaped table stood a red dais. Upon this dais, there was placed a small image of Huaguang. Behind him was a tablet inscribed with the titles of six deities: Tianxian Lingguan Huaguang Xianshi (Late Master Huaguang – The Efficacious Official of the Celestial Manifestations), Tianhou Yuanjun (The Original Ruler – Consort of Heaven), Tiandou Ershi (The Two Masters of Fields and Hollows), Tanggong Yie (Grandfather – Lord Tan), and Zhang Qian Xianshi (Late Master Zhang Qian). Two vases of flowers were put respectively to the right and left sides of the red dais. In front of the dais stood a lotus flower lamp and several dishes of offerings such as chicken, apples, oranges and red buns. The altar was extended by the use of an elongated table that was placed in front of the square shaped table. On top of this subordinate table there was a big incense burner, a pair of candle stands with candles lit, a teapot, a bundle of incense and several sacrificial dinner-sets including chopsticks, teacups and wine-cups. In addition, pagoda incense (a kind of ringed incense) and a pair of scrolls were vertically hung down from the ceiling. The inscription on the right scroll
read: “Zongheng Haoqi Lingxiaohan （The natural greatness of [his] spirit pervades the length and breadth of the Heaven）”. The one on the left read: “Dandang Qionghua Yao Huolun （May the light, great and beautiful flower illumine the fire wheel）” (Extracted from Mary Yeung’s manuscripts, 1996).

Regarding the arrangement of the stage, a sign of the Chinese Artists Association of Hong Kong was on the back curtain. Below this sign stood a big platform. A large piece of yellow carpet was placed on the stage floor. In front of the stage, over five hundred chairs were prepared for the audience. They were divided into three groups and arranged into rows.
Appendix 7

Diagram 5: Layout of the Performing Hall of the Haicheng Great Restaurant

Source: Extracted from Mary Yeung's manuscripts, 1996.
APPENDIX 8

The Background Story of the Great Birthday Greetings at Fragrant Flower Mountain (Xianghuashan Da Heshou 香花山大賀壽)

The heroine of the Xianghuashan Da Heshou is Guanyin (Goddess of Mercy). The name Guanyin is a Chinese translation of the name Avalokitesvasra 觀世音. According to Indian Buddhist texts, Avalokitesvasra, who is one of the two assistants of the Buddha Amitabha 阿彌陀佛, is a male bodhisattva. He often appears in many forms in order to save all sentient beings from samsara 輪迴. In China, before the 7th century, Guanyin was at one time always represented as a man. However, since the Tang dynasty (A.D. 618 – 907), this bodhisattva has been represented as a woman in many Chinese temples. She wears a white robe and holds a white lotus flower. Some scholars argue that this feminine form of Guanyin originated from the Tibetan Buddhism. In the Tantric literature, Buddhas and bodhisattvas appear in multiple forms, masculine and feminine, gentle and terrible. It is believed that Guanyin Clothed in White is the gentle aspect of Tara, which is often called by the Tibetans as the White Tara.

It is believed that Dao Xuan 道宣, an eminent monk in the Tang dynasty, wrote the first legend of Guanyin. During the 13th century, this story was recorded in the popular devotional texts entitled the Xiangshan Baojuan 香山寶卷 (Precious Chapters of the Fragrant Mountain). Later, in the early 14th century, Guan Daosheng 管道昇, wife of the painter and calligrapher Zhao Mengfu 趙孟頫, reproduced the legend. She compiled the Guanyin Dashi Chuan 覲音大士傳 (Legend of the Mahasattva Guanyin). In the late
Ming period (early 17th century), scholars, writers and publishers turned their attention to operatic performances. The play *Xiangshan Ji* 香山記 (*The Story of the Fragrant Mountain*), a theatrical version of the legend of Guanyin, was compiled in the Wanli reign (A.D. 1573 – 1619). According to Dudbridge, this play comprises many formalized stage movements (Dudbridge, 1978: 62+63).

At present, the most widely known novel concerning the legend of Guanyin is the *Nanhai Guanyin Quanchuan* 南海觀音全傳 (*The Complete Legend of Guanyin of the Southern Sea*), which was compiled in the early 17th century. Its content is that King Miaozhuang 妙莊, the ruler of the Kingdom of Xilin 西林8, had three daughters. The first two obeyed his imperial decree and got married. Nevertheless, the youngest one, Miaoshan 妙善, refused to follow his order. Her wish was to attain enlightenment and save all living beings from suffering. She retreated to the White Bird Nunnery and began to cultivate the Way. King Miaozhuang was very angry. He sent soldiers to burn down the nunnery. Miaoshan was captured by the soldiers. The king had her executed. However, the Jade Emperor was moved by her determination to attain Perfection. He ordered the King of Hell to send her soul back to her body. Thus, Miaoshan was restored to life. The Buddha appeared in front of her. He instructed her to go to Xiangshan 香山 (The Fragrant Mountain) to cultivate the Way9. He also bestowed on her an immortal peach. After eating this peach, she immediately obtained immortality. Miaoshan attained

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7 The term *samsara* means the revolving of repeated births and deaths caused by one's actions, thoughts and words (cf. Lester, 1987: 152+153).
8 According to Chinese legends, the land of Xinlin was situated between India and Siam.
9 The *Daojiao Da Cidian* (A Grand Dictionary of the Daoist Religion) states that the Taibai Jinxing 太白金星 (Spirit of the West Pole Star) transformed himself into an old man and instructed Miaoshan to go to the Fragrant Mountain to cultivate the Way (Li, 1981: 219+220).
enlightenment after nine years’ cultivation at Xiangshan. All immortals, such as the Dragon Kings, the gods of the Five Peaks and the Eight Immortals, went to offer their greetings to her. Later, King Miaozhuang became seriously sick. Miaoshan cured her father by offering her eyes and hands as medicine. Then, she used her supernatural power to recover her eyes and hands. Owing to her filial affection, the Jade Emperor bestowed on her the title of Truly Pitying and Truly Benevolent Bodhisattva. Her two sisters, who had been converted, also became bodhisattvas. With regard to King Miaozhuang, after his full recovery, he renounced the throne and followed Guanyin (Miaoshan) to cultivate the Way (Werner, 1994: 251 – 187; Dudbridge, 1978: 10 – 65).

The content of the play Xianghuashan Da Heshou is an extract of the popular legend of Guanyin mentioned above. In this play, Guanyin is the heroine. She attains the Way at the Fragrant Flower Mountain. All deities go to offer their congratulations to her.
APPENDIX 9

The Great Birthday Greetings at Fragrant Flower Mountain (Xianghuashan Da Heshou)

Brief Descriptions of the Major Characters

The principal female role acts as Guanyin (heroine).

The principal painted face role acts as Han Zhongli.

The principal male role acts as Lu Dongbin.

The second supporting painted face role acts as Zhang Guolao.

The miscellaneous role acts as Cao Guojiu.

The female comic role acts as Li Tieguai.

The second supporting male role acts as Han Xiangzi.

The third supporting male role acts as Lan Caihe.

The fifth supporting female role acts as He Xiangu.

The third supporting painted face role acts as the Celestial Groom.

The principal military role acts as the Dragon King of the Eastern Sea.

The principal old male role acts as the Dragon King of the Southern Sea.

The second supporting military role acts as the Dragon King of the Western Sea.

The third supporting military role acts as the Dragon King of the Northern Sea.

Three female roles act as Holy Mother Wenshu, Holy Mother Weiling and Holy Mother Puxian respectively.

The principal male comic role acts as Liu Haixian.

The third supporting painted face role acts as the Dragon Subduing Celestial General.

The second supporting painted face role acts as the Tiger Taming Celestial General.
The young male role acts as Wei Tuo.

Eight minor female roles act as the eight immortal maids.

Several martial arts performers act as the small monkeys.


The Content

To the Paizi Xianshuiling (New Water Order), Han Zhongli comes onstage; again, when the percussion pattern Chongtou (The Rising Prelude) [commences], Lu Dongbin, Zhang Guolao, Cao Guojiu, Li Tieguai, Han Xiangzu, He Xiangu, and Lan Caihe come onstage. With each phrase of the Chongtou [pattern], one [immortal] enters. Facing forward, [they perform the sequence] Yanmen (Closing the Gate). As [the actors] form a line, snake fashion, at the front of the stage, they wait until all Eight [Immortals] have entered and then turn around [to face the audience].

10 The Paizi is a type of vocal music in Cantonese opera. It is also known as fixed tunes mainly because it has "relatively identifiable preexistent or pre-composed melodies" (Chan, 1991: 10) in comparison with the Banghuang 榜簧 tunes. It is believed that the Paizi melodies originated from Kunqu 嵴曲 and Yiyang Qiang 弋陽腔. Dakaimen 大開門 (Open Wide the Gate), Shuidiyu 水底魚 (Fish in the Water), Bubujiao 步步媺 (The Beauty Steps Forth), Fenglaiyi 鳳來儀 (The Phoenix Comes), are typical examples of the Paizi tunes.

11 The Chongtou is a type of percussion pattern. "In Cantonese opera, percussion music precedes the actor’s entrance and exit, accompanies the actor’s gestures and stage movements, introduces vocal and speech passages, episodes, scenes and acts" (Chan, 1991: 49). The Chongtou percussion pattern is "usually used when a character enters the stage with an urgent message" (Chan, 1991: 126+360). There are various ways of playing this percussion pattern. In the play Xianghuashan Da Heshou, the prominent sounds of the Chongtou percussion pattern are: dik的, ca茶, do多, cing呈, cing呈, cing呈, ca茶..., deik得, cing呈 (Romanization of these sounds are according to Cantonese dialect) (Chan, 1991: xvi+xvii; Yin: 1962: 1).

12 See the explanation of the sequence Yanmen in appendix 12.
Zhongli (speaks): I am Han Zhongli.

Dongbin: I am Lu Dongbin.

Guolao: I am Zhang Guolao.

Guojiu: I am Cao Guojiu.

Tieguai: I am Li Tieguai.

Xiangzi: I am Han Xiangzi.

Xiangu: I am He Xiangu.

Caihe: I am Lan Caihe.

Zhongli: Assembled Immortals, Greetings!

Immortals: Greetings!

Li: This is the day appointed for the Compassionate Mother (Guanyin) to obtain the Way. Let us go together to offer our congratulations.

All [immortals]: Please take the lead!

Notes: As the tune Jiuzhuan (Ninth Transmutation) starts up, [the eight performers], according to stage instructions\(^\text{13}\), perform the movements Fanzhuchang (Reversing the Pig's Bowels), turn round and stand at the front of the stage in a horizontal line. [Then], they all exit the stage at stage left rear.

Notes: At the opening phrase of the Paizi Zhuisi (Pursuing Thought), and accompanying the percussion pattern Dachongtou (The Great Rising Prelude)\(^\text{14}\), the Celestial Groom\(^\text{15}\),

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\(^{13}\) The Chinese character \(\text{介 (Jie)}\) means stage instructions.

\(^{14}\) The \text{Dachongtou} percussion pattern comprises more prominent sounds than the \text{Chongtou} percussion pattern mentioned above. In the ritual opera \text{Xianghuashan Da Heshou}, the sounds of this percussion pattern are: \text{deik}得, \text{ca}茶, \text{ca}茶, \text{cing}呈, \text{ca}茶, \text{cing}呈, \text{ca}茶, \text{cing}呈, \text{ca}茶, \text{ding}得, \text{ding}得, \text{ling}得, \text{ling}得, \text{ding}得, \text{ding}得, \text{ding}得, \text{ca}茶.... \text{(Yin, 1962: 7).}
who holds a palm-leaf fan and covers his face with the fan, comes out. [When] he moves to the front of the stage, he puts down his fan. [After] taking one look [at the audience], he enters the [backstage]. He rushes back [onstage] and performs the movements *Lashan* (Pulling the Mountain)\(^{16}\). [Then], he pauses for a while (*Zajia*) and says:

Sun Wukong, Sun Wukong, practiced cultivation in the Water Curtain Cave. With one somersault I ascend to the Celestial Hall; and with another (miming the movement) descend to the Crystal Palace. I am Sun Wukong (*Erchui*)\(^{17}\). Today the Compassionate Mother acquires the Way, and I offer my congratulations to her with this immortal peach.

Notes: According to stage instructions, a crowd of small monkeys cross the stage carrying the peach and exit at stage left rear.

Notes: [To the accompaniment of] the *Dachongtou* percussion pattern, the Carp Demon enters, makes a circuit of the stage (*You Yi Wantai* or *Yuantai*), and seats himself at stage left rear. To the accompaniment of the same pattern, the Shrimp Demon comes running onstage. He strikes a fish-clawing pose and also circles the stage. He then seats himself at stage right rear. To the same pattern, the Tortoise Demon comes onstage in pursuit of

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\(^{15}\) The Celestial Groom, whose name is Sun Wukong, is the leading characters of the popular novel *Xiyou Ji* (The Journey to the West). He is also known as Qitian Dasheng 齊天大聖 (Grand Saint, Governor of Heaven) (Werner, 1994: 329). It is said that Sun Wukong, who possessed magic power, was the king of monkeys on the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit (*Huaguo Shan*). He made havoc in the celestial palace, such as swallowing up all the pills of Lao Zi, and eating up all the immortal peaches in Xi Wangmu’s peach festival. Later, the Buddha shut him up under a mountain. In order to get out of his stone prison, Sun promised to be one of the three disciples of Xuan Zang 玄奘, a monk who undertook the difficult journey to the Western Heaven. On the way, he subdued many demons and evil spirits. After the journey, Sun attained his proper reward and became a Buddha. He is a very popular deity in China. Many temples are dedicated to him (For the summary of the *Journey to the West*, please see *Myths and Legends of China*, pp. 325 – 369).

\(^{16}\) The *Lashan* is a kind of arm movement which starts “with the left hand (palm up) below the right (palm down), then moves the left hand inward and to the right and the right hand outward and to the left, in horizontal circles” (Zung, 1937: 115+116).

the shrimp and circles the stage. After [the two demons] fool around for a while, [the Tortoise Demon] seats himself at stage left rear. Then, to the same pattern, the Oyster Demon, played by the female role who wears a ghost mask, enters and comes to stage front. Opening her shell, she looks down at the ground, then enters the backstage.

Notes: The melody *Yidingjin* (One Gold Ingot) \(^{18}\) commences, played by the horizontal flute, and the Oyster Demon, according to stage instructions, comes back onstage. While the tune *Yidingjin* [is played], the Oyster Demon fools around [first] with the Shrimp Demon, then with the Carp [Demon], and finally with the Tortoise [Demon], after which each returns to his seat. According to stage instructions, the oyster and the shrimp sit together at stage right rear.

Notes: To the melody *Suipai* (Petty Fixed Tune) \(^{19}\), four soldiers come onstage wearing small demon masks and vests on which the word “courageous” is embroidered. They hold in their hands night illuminating pearls and corals. They perform the sequence *Huakaimen* (Flowers Open the Gates) \(^{20}\) and then stand still. The Four Dragon Kings enter.

The East Dragon: I am Ao Guang, the Dragon King of the Eastern Sea.

The South Dragon: I am Ao Shun, the Dragon King of the Southern Sea.

The West Dragon: I am Ao Xiang, the Dragon King of the Western Sea.

The North Dragon: I am Ao Bian, the Dragon King of the Northern Sea.

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\(^{18}\) The tune *Yidingjin* is often played when the characters are performing comic patternized episodes in a Cantonese opera play (cf. *YJCQ*, 1984: 461).

\(^{19}\) The Cantonese opera musicians always play the melody *Suipai* when the characters are attending a banquet in the performance of an opera. In some cases, when the characters cross the stage, the musicians also play this tune in order to accompany the players’ movements (cf. *YJCQ*, 1984: 463).

\(^{20}\) For the description of the conventional actions *Huakaimen*, please refer to appendix 11.
The East Dragon: Your Highnesses—please accept my greetings.

Others: Greetings!

The East Dragon: Today is the day [when we celebrate that the Compassionate Mother obtained the Way, let us go together to offer our congratulations.

Others: Please take the lead!

Notes: To the melody Suipai, the four virgins, holding salvers, come onstage and perform the sequence Qidong (Standing at a Grotto)\textsuperscript{21}. [Then], the Three Holy Mothers, Wenshu (Manjusri), Weiling and Puxian (Samantabhadra), come onstage.

Wenshu: I am Holy Mother Wenshu.

Weiling: I am Holy Mother Weiling.

Puxian: I am Holy Mother Puxian.

Wenshu: Holy Mothers, greetings.

Others: Greetings!

Wenshu: Today is the day [when we celebrate] that Guanyin attained the Way, [let us] go together to offer our congratulations.

Others: Please take the lead!

Notes: They all enter [the backstage] from stage left rear.

Notes: [To the accompaniment of] the Dachongtou percussion pattern, the Dragon Subduing Celestial General [enters]. He holds a Dragon-seizing Pearl and a Diamond Ring (\textit{Jingang Quan}) in his hands. His face and hair dressing are red. He wears a red livery, red snow robe with sleeve cords, red leggings and pointed flower sipping shoes.

\textsuperscript{21} See the explanation of the sequence \textit{Qidong} in appendix 16.
His hand covers his face, and he comes out to center stage front, puts down his hand, looks up to the sky and exits at stage left rear. He reenters and after performing a routine of movements (*Tiaojia*), he uses the pearl to induce the dragon to come out from stage right rear. They perform the sequence Flowers Open the Gates, make a circuit of the stage, [repeat the sequence] Flowers Open the Gates, approach stage left rear and stand still.

Notes: The Dragon Subduing [General] stands until after the Bigheaded Monk has come onstage striking a bell and beating a drum, and then he exits.

Notes: [To the accompaniment of] the *Dachongtou* percussion pattern, the second painted face role, who impersonates the Tiger Taming Celestial General [enters]. He holds a Diamond Ring in his hand. His face and hair dressing are black. He wears a fighting cap, black livery and crepe belt, black leggings and pointed flower sipping shoes. Over [the black livery], he wears a black long sleeved gown belted with cords. After he has performed a routine of movements, a tiger comes onstage. They perform the sequence Flowers Open the Gates, and make a circuit of the stage. [Then, the Tiger Taming Celestial General] kneels down, mounts the tiger and strikes its head several times. [Afterwards], he pursues the tiger around the stage and stands still at stage right rear. He makes his exit after the Bigheaded Monk has struck the bell.

Notes: [To the accompaniment of] the *Dachongtou* percussion pattern, Wei Tuo comes onstage, holding a pestle and covering his face. He comes out to center stage front, looks up to the sky and exits. He reenters and after performing a routine of movements and
making a speech, he mounts the Yuhuangchang (Jade Emperor Platform)\textsuperscript{22} at stage center and looks down.

Notes: To the tune Shuidiyu (Fish in the Water), which is played by the conical pipe, the Happy Buddha and the Long Brow Buddha come out from the left and right rear of the stage [respectively]. According to stage instructions, the two stand on either side facing each other and perform a bow. They walk to stage center and bow to each other again. [Then] they go to the left and right rear and bow to each other [for the third time]. After they have completed their bows, they enter the backstage. The Shuidiyu is played again, the Lame Buddha and the Hunchbacked Buddha come out from the left and right rear of the stage [respectively]. As before, after changing positions and bowing to each other three times, they go offstage. At the third playing of the Shuidiyu, a monk with a big head and big belly comes onstage, eyes closed. He walks to the front of stage center, stretches and yawns and rubs his eyes. He opens the door and uses his buttocks to push [open] the [outer] gate. Having come out from the gate, according to stage instructions, he urinates at stage right rear. [When] he has finished, he reenters the monastery gate. He fetches a basin, fills it with water and washes his face. He [then] uses a shoe-brush to brush his teeth. He uses a slip of bamboo as tongue scraper. He bathes and dries his body. Having washed body, feet and face, brushed his teeth and rinsed his mouth, he sprinkles water and sweeps the floor and pours rubbish onto the front of the stage. At stage center, he

\textsuperscript{22} This is a kind of stage property. According to Master Wong Toa, it is formed by two square shaped tables and one chair. The two tables are put onstage side by side. The chair is put on top of them. However, in the 1996 performance, the Yuhuangchang was formed by an elongated platform and a chair. The chair was put on top of the platform.
puts down a glass lantern, fills it with oil and lights it. After offering incense, beating the drum and striking the bell, he makes his exit.

Notes: To the tune *Suipai* or *Xiaokaimen* (Small Opening of the Gate)\(^23\), the Jade Girl, holding a sweet dew vase, and the Gold Boy\(^24\), holding a willow branch, lead out the Goddess of Mercy.

[The Goddess of Mercy]: Immaculate and reverent, I cultivate myself, cultivate myself. Within the Bodhi Grotto, in the Purple Bamboo Grove, I hear the cries of the world (she ascends her throne). Thanks to the Jade Emperor, I have received an imperial appointment. I am the Universal Savior Guan Shiyin, who rescues those in difficulty and distress, and shows great compassion to those in sorrow (She performs miming gestures). Today being the day my enlightenment, all immortals and Buddhas have surely come to offer their congratulations. Gold Boy, Jade Girl (mimes) prepare to serve the sweet dew.

Gold Boy, Jade Girl: We obey!

Notes: [To the accompaniment of] *Suipai*, the Eight Immortals enter and give greetings:

The Compassionate Mother above, we offer our kowtows.

The Goddess of Mercy: Immortals, thanks for your deep obeisance. I return my respect.

Immortals (in unison): We return our respect (according to stage instructions, they return their respect).

Notes: To the percussion pattern *Erchui*, [the Eight Immortals] form separate ranks on either side and speak in unison:

\(^{23}\) The tune *Xiaokaimen* is often played when the actors are attending a feast in the performance of a Cantonese opera show.
We offer our birthday greetings to the [Compassionate] Mother.

Notes: The first pair is Zhongli and Dongbin; the second pair is Guolao and Guojiu; the third pair is Tieguai and Xianzi; the four pair is Xiangu and Caihe. According to stage instructions, when each pair goes to stage center to bow and kneel to the Goddess of Mercy, double-reed conical pipes strike up the tune *Liangzhou Xu* (Liangzhuo Prelude) [in order to] accompany the Eight Immortals as they bow.

[The Eight Immortals sing]:

Our shouts are conveyed to Sea Hall filled with tallies\(^{25}\).

On high protect the Changgeng star\(^{26}\) that illumines far and wide.

We hold high the wine goblets.

Drunk and falling over, colorful troupe [members] dance.

Happily we fill the cups, as night follows day.

In this world within a jar, we completely forget about growing old.

The Gold Cinnabar Mother\(^{27}\) bestows smiles all around.

Bestowing smiles all around,

It is just like mounting phoenixes and fabulous birds on the Penglai Island.

Who can calculate the assemblage\(^{28}\) of humankind?

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\(^{24}\) According to popular beliefs, the Gold Boy, whose name is Shancai善財 (Sudhana), is a Buddhist bodhisattva. In order to obtain Perfection, he paid tribute to fifty-three prominent Buddhist masters. Since he had worshiped Guanyin, he becomes one of the two guardians of the Goddess of Mercy (Wu, 1993: 63).


\(^{26}\) The term “Changgeng star” refers to the Taibai Jinxing太白金星 (Spirit of the West Pole Star), a Daoist deity. As mentioned in appendix 8, the Taibai Jinxing instructed Miaoshan (Guanyin) to go to Xiangshan (The Fragrant Mountain) in order to cultivate the Way. Thus, he is regarded as Guanyin’s master (Li, 1981: 220+221).

\(^{27}\) The Chinese character (Cha) means cinnabar.
This morning a jade edict has come, bestowing a title.

Our only wish is that for a myriad of years,

She who is on high be secure.

Notes: After the Eight Immortals have completed their obeisance, the Goddess of Mercy speaks:

Excellent! Please retire to the grove, where I will offer my thanks with sweet dew.

Eight Immortals: We accept with thanks! (They exit at stage left rear)

Notes: To the accompaniment of the Paizi, the Four Dragon Kings enter. They offer their respect [to Guanyin], saying:

Our respect, Mother!

The Goddess of Mercy: My thanks to you! (Standing opposite to the kings, [all] mime performing an obeisance)

Four Dragon Kings (in unison): Mother, please ascend [the throne]. We are going to offer our greetings.

Notes: After the Four Kings have completed their obeisance to the tune Suipai, they rise, form ranks on either side, and stand still.

The Goddess of Mercy: Please enter the grove, [so that I can] return thanks with sweet dew.

Four Dragon Kings (in unison): Heartfelt thanks!

Notes: All four exit together at stage left rear.

Notes: The Three Holy Mothers enter to the tune Suipai, and together say:

28 The term Fucou 輯轍 means the hub of a wheel. It is also a metaphorical expression of assemblage or
[Compassionate] Mother, please seat yourself while we perform our kowtows.

The Goddess of Mercy: Let me return thanks for the Holy Mothers’ visit.

Three Holy Mothers: We offer our birthday greetings to you, the [Compassionate] Mother.

Notes: Guanyin stands up, with head lowered and hands clasped. After she receives the obeisance of the Three Holy Mothers, she stands up [again].

The Goddess of Mercy: Gold Boy, Jade Girl (They reply “we attend”), prepare sweet dew for the Holy Mothers.

Gold Boy [and] Jade Girl speaks: We obey!

Notes: To the tune Paige (Permutation Song)\(^29\), wine is served. Wenshu and Weiling sit at the right and left side facing the audience. Guanyin is seated stage right and Puxian is seated stage left. According to stage instructions, the four drink together.

[Three Holy Mothers sings]:

Holding up the dragon jars\(^30\),

We drink wildly.

Before the mats, flutes and reed organs play.

We just make a show of our martial spirits and empty a whole goblet of wine.

As pleasing and plangent songs circle the painted hall,

We offer congratulations to you and the [Jade] Emperor\(^31\) at this birthday banquet.

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\(^29\) The tune Paige is usually played when the characters are attending a feast in the performance of a Cantonese operatic show (YJCQ, 1984:477).

\(^30\) In my opinion, the term “Longjiang 龍江” here means dragon jars. In the past, although many Cantonese opera employees were not completely illiterate, most of them only knew a limited number of concentration.
Wine drips from proffered pot, fragrant everywhere.

On the morrow summon the troops,

For this evening don’t miss the fine atmosphere!

Weiling: We request the Mother to make a display of her miraculous transformations; let us see you transform.

The Goddess of Mercy: Alright. Watch me transform\(^\text{32}\). (Exits)

Notes: The drinking table is taken away and replaced with an elongated platform, which is three stories high. According to stage instructions, Wei Tuo sits at the center of the \textit{Yuhuangchang}. Weiling, Wenshu and Puxian, seat themselves in order from top story to bottom.

Notes: A double-reed conical pipe plays the melody \textit{Dababantou} (The First Great Eight Beats).

Notes: Gongs and drums start up, Guanyin immediately comes onstage holding a flywhisk. She performs the \textit{Lashan} and the \textit{Cheshen} (Turning the Body)\(^\text{33}\). [Then], she enters the backstage to change her costume.

Notes: Gongs and drums start up, the dragon, at stage right rear, makes a bow, claws extended and resting on his breast. The Gold Boy bows at stage left rear, bows again at stage center, and for the third time at stage right rear. The dragon [performs] the same

\(^{31}\) The meaning of the character “\textit{Huang}” is blurred. In my opinion, according to the content of the text, it stands for the Jade Emperor.

\(^{32}\) The Goddess of Mercy transforms herself into a dragon, a tiger, a general, a Prime Minister, a fishermaid, a forester, a farmer and a scholar.

\(^{33}\) The \textit{Cheshen} is a kind of conventional action. The player, who impersonates Guanyin, performs this stage movement by turning her body round.
[actions] as the Gold Boy does. After the Gold Boy has finished his bows, the dragon, according to stage instructions, turns a somersault and enters the backstage.

Notes: The second transformation begins; Guanyin, to the tune Xianhuadiao (Immortal Blossoms), enters from stage right rear. According to stage instructions, she performs the Lashan and the Yidanbian (Holding on the Single Side)\textsuperscript{34} in order to alter her position onstage. [After finishing these movements], she enters the backstage from stage left rear to change her costume.

Notes: Gongs and drums play, the tiger comes out from stage right rear and makes a bow. The Gold Boy bows [to the tiger] at stage left rear. He moves to the stage center and bows [again]. [Then], he bows at stage right rear for the [third time]. The tiger [performs] the same [actions] as the Gold Boy does. After finishing [these movements], the tiger, according to stage instructions, turns a somersault and enters the backstage.

Notes: At the tune Dangzhou (Rowing a Boat), according to stage instructions, Guanyin comes out at stage right rear and performs a routine of conventional movements (Tiaoji). She [then] enters the backstage from stage left rear to change her costume.

Notes: Gongs and drums play, the Prime Minister comes out from stage right rear and bows to the Gold Boy, who [stands] at stage left rear. He makes a bow at stage center again. He then moves to stage left rear and bows for [the third time]. [Having finished these movements], he turns a somersault and enters the backstage, as the tiger does.

\textsuperscript{34} According to Master Wong Toa, the Yidanbian is also known as the Zou Qiaobu (Walking in Small Pretty Steps). The actress performs this stage convention simply by walking on tiptoe.
Notes: At the tune *Baxian Nao Donghai* (The Eight Immortals Make Havoc in the Eastern Sea), Guanyin, according to stage instructions, enters at stage right rear and performs the *Lashan*. After finishing [these] arm movements, she enters the backstage to change her costume.

Notes: Gongs and drums start up, the general comes out. He bows at stage right rear, stage center and stage left rear. [Then], he enters backstage. The Gold Boy bows at stage left rear, stage center and stage right rear. After finishing his actions, he turns a somersault [and exits].

Notes: At the melody *Xiu Hebao* (An Embroidered Pouch), Guanyin, according to stage instructions, comes out from stage right rear and performs a series of actions as mentioned earlier. [After finishing the movements], she makes her exit from stage left rear to change her costume.

Notes: Gongs and drums start up, the fishermaid, carrying a fish in her hand, bows at stage right rear, stage center and stage left rear. The Gold Boy bows at stage left rear, stage center and stage right rear. After finishing his movements, the God Boy, according to stage instructions, turns a somersault and [enters the backstage].

Notes: As the melody *Xiannu Muyang* (The Immortal Maiden Shepherds Sheep) commences, Guanyin, according to stage instructions, comes out at stage right rear and performs the stage movements as mentioned earlier. [After] finishing these actions, she makes her exit from stage left rear to change her costume.

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35 In Cantonese opera performances, the melodies *Dangzhou* and *Baxian Nao Donghai* are played when the performers are making circuits or rowing a boat onstage.
Notes: Gongs and drums play as the forester, according to stage instructions, comes out and bows at stage right rear, stage center and stage left rear. After finishing [his actions], he makes his exit. The Gold Boy, according to stage instructions, bows contrariwise at stage left rear, stage center and stage right rear. [Then], he turns a somersault [and exits].

Notes: As the tune *Xiangshan Heshou* (Birthday Greetings at Fragrant Mountain) plays, Guanyin, according to stage instructions, comes out from stage right rear and performs the actions at mentioned before. After she has finished, she makes her exit from stage left rear.

Notes: Gongs and drums play as the farmer comes onstage. He bows at stage right rear, stage center and stage left rear. [Then], he makes his exit. The Gold Boy, according to stage instructions, bows contrariwise at stage left rear, stage center and stage right rear. After finishing these [movements], he turns a somersault [and exits].

Notes: For the eighth transformation, Guanyin comes onstage at stage right rear, performs her movements as before and exits stage left rear. The melody *Jianjianhua* (Cutting Flowers) begins, and to gongs and drums the scholar comes onstage at stage right rear. He bows at stage right rear, center and left rear, as the farmer does. [Then], he makes his exit. The Gold Boy performs bows contrariwise, at stage left rear, center and right rear; he then turns a somersault [and enters the backstage].

Guanyin, attired in formal palace robe, comes onstage and speaks: I have been [performing] transformations, and know that I have not greeted you as I should.

Three Holy Mothers (in unison): Your transformations are unsurpassed in their deftness!
Notes: To the tune Suipai, numerous celestial grooms enter carrying a giant immortal peach.

Grooms: Our respect, Compassionate Mother.

The Goddess of Mercy: You need not stand on ceremony, let the banquet begin!

Notes: At the front of the stage, the monkeys use the bowls, chopsticks and ladles provided to serve up the feast, and perform [the action of] drinking wine. They speak after having drunk [the wine].

Notes: After the drinking is over, because there is too much time, the [minor] roles and the [martial arts actors] can add a Chahua (Displaying Flowers) sequence—i.e., acrobatics such as a human pyramid of the Shiba Luohan (Eighteen Arhats), the Zhuangzhong (Striking the Bell) and the Xiangba (Elephant Trunk). Female roles can [also] add a Baihua (Arranging Flowers) sequence in which each actress holds a flower pot and paper flowers. They perform the Lashan and the Zajia. [Then, using their flower pots and paper flowers], they display the four great [Chinese] characters: “Tian”, “Xia”, “Tai”, “Ping” (Peace Reigns Over the World).

Notes: As for the music, the [musicians] can play a little tune to accompany [the movements].

Monkey King: We especially take the immortal peach with us and come [here] to offer our greetings. To the [Compassionate] Mother above, we offer our congratulations!

36 Besides somersaults, the word Dafan also stands for the martial arts performers.
37 Please refer to Chapter Five (Section 5.2.) for the discussions of the acrobatics Shiba Luohan, Zhuangzhong and Xiangba.
Notes: After making their obeisance, the monkeys, according to stage instructions, stand up and carry the peach onstage from stage right rear.

The Goddess of Mercy: First hang up the immortal peach.

Notes: According to stage instructions, as the peach is being hung, the tune *Dakaimen* (Open Wide the Gate)\(^3^8\) is played.

The Goddess of Mercy: Summon Liu Haixian to come to see me!

Liu Haixian (from offstage): Coming!

Notes: [Accompanied by] the *Dachongtou* percussion pattern, the two gods Peace and Harmony\(^3^9\) come onstage first. According to stage instructions, they perform the sequence *Huakaimen* (Flowers Open the Gates) and make a bow to Guanyin. [Then], they stand still at the left rear and right rear of the stage respectively.

Notes: [Accompanied by] the *Dachongtou* percussion pattern, several minor roles come out and perform the sequence *Guidandan* (A Ghost Picul)\(^4^0\). [Then], Liu Haixian comes onstage. He pauses for a while (Zajia) and speaks:

Floating, Ya! Floating—Hither and thither I toss gold coins. Free and happy am I, Liu Haixian. If there are some who obtain these [gold coins] of mine, gold and silver will fill their coffers for a myriad years. *(Yichui)*\(^4^1\) I am, *(Yichui)* Liu Haixian! Guanyin has

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\(^3^8\) The melody *Dakaimen* is usually played when the actors and actresses are performing the patternized episode of welcoming the guests *(YJCQ, 1984: 459)*.

\(^3^9\) One popular legend of these two deities is that in the early Tang dynasty (around A.D. 630), there were two monks, Hanshan 韓山 and Shide 拈得. They were very good friends who always wrote poems. Reliable sources indicate that they have been worshipped as deities since the early Qing dynasty (around A.D. 1733).

\(^4^0\) Please refer to appendix 17 for the explanation of the sequence *Guidandan*.

\(^4^1\) The *Yichui* (One Stroke) is a type of percussion pattern. There are eight different ways of playing the *Yichui* percussion pattern. As mentioned earlier, one of the major functions of the percussion music is to introduce vocal and speech passages. With regard to the content of the text, the actor who impersonates Liu Haixian delivers a plain speech. In this case, the percussionists would perform the *Yichui* by playing a single
summoned me, and I must hasten forward. (Erchui) [Compassionate] Mother, I offer my kowtows.

The Goddess of Mercy: You need not stand on ceremony.

Liu Haixian: Mother, [you] have summoned me. What is your command?

The Goddess of Mercy: Quickly, toss the gold coins.

Liu Haixian: I obey!

Notes: According to stage instructions, he takes a broom and sweeps the ground, then uses a square dish as a rubbish scuttle. Peace and Harmony assist in sweeping the stage, then walk around the stage once and return to their original positions. When Liu Haixian has finished sweeping, according to stage instructions, he tosses the gold coins. The percussion pattern Paizitou (The Fixed Tune Prelude) starts up. For opening the peach, the tune Sanchunjin (Three Spring’s Brocade) is used, with a single flute accompaniment.

[The Goddess of Mercy sings:]

I gaze at the empty orb between earth and sky.
Take all the endless afflictions of the human world,
And for those who come after, add one round.
For those who have perished before, all is effaced.
I laugh that each and every person in the mortal realm has high ambitions,
That all, on account of the struggle for profit and fame,
Endure toil and moil to the full.

stroke on the small woodblock and a single stroke on the gong. The prominent sounds are: dik的, cing鼔 (cf. Huang, 1957: 16).
Only Zhang Zifang\textsuperscript{42} showed spring cinnabar,

Showed spring cinnabar;

And Chijingzi\textsuperscript{43}, with singleness of mind, learned the Way.

I laugh at how Han Xin\textsuperscript{44}, presuming on his ten great acts of merit,

Nonetheless brought upon himself a criminal investigation.

Looking back at a moment’s happiness,

Only those who are confused strive and seek after power, on account of wine, crave women.

They must not; must not.

Again, I only see how men in the mortal realm have one hundred years of happiness.

How can they know that in the ranks of immortals?

When leisure comes, [there are those who] regret that they had not long since penetrated the meditation texts, recited the Heart Sutra\textsuperscript{45}.

Paramita, Paramita.

Again, all I hear is the music of immortals above the clouds,

Gold chimes, striking in unison.

Again, I hear the oriole’s song, yemo’a,

Liduo and Boluo,

\textsuperscript{42} Zhang Zifang, one of the founders of the Western Han dynasty (202 B.C. – A.D.9), is also named Zhang Liang 張良. After the establishment of the Han dynasty, he left the court and became a hermit.

\textsuperscript{43} Chijingzi was an immortal during the reign of Zhuan Xu 顓頊 (c. 2513 – 2435 B.C.). According to historical sources, Zhuan Xu was one of the legendary emperors in ancient China.

\textsuperscript{44} Han Xin was a native of Huaiyin in the late Qin and the early Han dynasties (around 3\textsuperscript{rd} century B.C.). Liu Bang 劉邦 (Han Gaozu 漢高祖), the first emperor of the Western Han dynasty, appointed him general. After the death of Liu Bang, Empress Nu (the widow of Han Gaozu) executed Han Xin.

\textsuperscript{45} According Buddhist beliefs, people can exorcise evil spirits when they recite the Heart Sutra.
Juduomo,
Chaoliluo,
Qiaolishupo’a,
Shupo’a,
Po’a.

Leaving the imperial palace,
Leaving the imperial palace,
They experience all manner of toil and only then attain the proper reward.

Branches of the willow disperse sweet dew,
Which saves all living beings and gets rid of retribution.

Those who believe in me wander free and easy in the happy land;
Those who don’t believe, find it difficult to escape from their sins.

Have they never heard that, in the end, good and evil are recompensed?

It is just like bees making honey, silkworms spinning cocoons, moths beating at the flame;
I urge mankind to repent sooner rather than later.

It is good to Chant “[A]mi to [Fo]” several times.

After one hundred years,
They will be free and happy, free and happy.

Flowers are in full bloom in the bodhi tree.
The tree’s tips are evergreen in all the four seasons.

For ten thousand years, it does not grow old.
The sun shines on all the buds, which gleam with an auspicious light,
Gust and gust of fragrant wind bestows long [life],
Bestows long life of thousands upon thousands [of years].
Vast flows the sea of blessings;
[Bestows] long life of thousands upon thousands [of years].
Vast flows the sea of blessing.
The five elders of Fragrant Mountain all arrive together.
Respectfully, they bless [the mortals] with prosperity and long life span,
Like Qian and Kun46 that never grow old.
Notes: While opening the peach, the Paizi tune is played, and gold coins are tossed from inside of the peach. After the [musicians] have finished playing the Paizi tune, the Goddess of Mercy speaks:
You immortals and Buddhas, take your original places.
All (in unison, as they leave the stage): Holy long life without end!
Notes: According to stage instructions, all [immortals and Buddhas] go offstage.
Guanyin, the Gold Boy and the Jade Girl bring up the rear as all exit.

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46 Qian and Kun here may stand for heaven and earth.
APPENDIX 10

The Celestial Maid’s Great Offering of a Son (*Tianji Da Songzi*)

The Characters

The principal male role acts as Dong Yong (the Principal Graduate).

The principal female role acts as the Celestial Maid (heroine).

Six female minor roles act as the six immortal maids.

Four minor military roles (*Butieshi*) act as the official servants who hold long melon-shaped mallets and battle axes.

The principal comic role and four minor female roles (*Tangdan*) act as the official servants who hold the silk umbrellas.

The Content

The principal female role (Celestial Maid) (sings):

*Lin’er Jiang* (The Unicorn Son Descends)

Spreading auspicious omens, the Unicorn Son\(^{47}\), astride mists and mounting clouds descends;

Midst jade stairways, in the imperial capital, I await in the market;

Waiting in the market, I meet him;

I give him the child who will continue the line of descent.

Father and son meet;

They smile at each other happily.

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\(^{47}\) The term “Unicorn Son” is a figurative expression of a clever and handsome son.
Notes: While singing, each of the six immortal maids performs the sequence *Huakaimen* (Flowers Open the Gates)\(^{48}\), in which they mount a high platform\(^{49}\) (facing the audience) from either side. The principal female role comes out last; using a chair, she mounts the platform and stands among the immortal maids. All stand with their backs to the audience. The secondary female role, holding the child, stands to one side, at stage right rear behind the immortal maids. For the first tune, the small gong is used as accompaniment.

Notes: The Principal Graduate holds a horsewhip; the four *Butieshi* (minor military roles) hold long melon-shaped mallets and battle-axes. The *Tangdan* (minor female roles) and the *Zhengchou* (principal comic role) hold silk umbrellas. As the Principal Graduate (principal male role) comes onstage he sings:

*Cheng 'en* (Receiving Imperial Favor)

Receiving imperial favor, I have passed the examinations,

Riding on horseback and flourishing my whip, I wear a purple robe.

Decked with palace flowers,

A palace flower sticks rakishly in the brim of my hat.

To change the lintel of one’s door;

Is something rare in this world.

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\(^{48}\) Please see the description of the sequence *Huakaimen* in appendix 11.

\(^{49}\) In Chinese theatrical practice, the high platform can be regarded as a symbol of clouds. Hence, mounting the platform symbolizes that the characters are deities who can mount clouds and ride mists.
I have realized the wish of my lifetime,
And return in glory to my home, wearing brocade.

Servants: Beg to inform Your Honor: the horse cannot advance.

Principal Graduate: I have received the imperial decree to parade through the streets;
what auspicious vapor is it that blocks my horse’s way?

Celestial Maid (atop the platform): We once met in the shade of a locust tree. I have
come especially to this place to bestow the Unicorn Son.

Principal Graduate: Ah—so it is the Celestial Maid who speaks!

(Sings):  

_Anzhijian (All I See)_

All I see is brilliant purple mists descending from the azure sky;
Quickly I dismount, and bow body down in obeisance.
So the Celestial Maid has come here in accord with karma!

Meeting on this morning,
We slowly walk at leisure.
Since we part, I have often wept sadly.

Celestial Maid and Chorus:

_Bubujiao (The Beauty Steps Forth)_

Having received imperial grace, the Celestial Maid left Penglai for your sake;
Covered with rainbows and purple pendants;
The Immortal Phoenix rides the cloud gong;\(^ {50} \)

The celestial music sounds plangently,

As the Celestial Maid comes fluttering down.

Scattering the mists, she sees her son;

How much can one know the grief of separation?

Principal Graduate (sings):

*Zhègǔílíng* (Breaking Off the Cassia Bough)

I recall how I lived, dejected, in a poor hut in a mean alley;

On account of my father’s passing, my reputation for filial virtue was high;

I am thankful that Heaven has been moved by my filial conduct,

And even more thankful to the Celestial Maid for becoming my “Phoenix-glue” mate.\(^ {51} \)

My body was bathed in the bounty of your love;

As a mother, you toiled [for our son].

I am thankful to the Celestial Maid for her “Silk-weaving” love.

Within three years, my debt was fully paid;

Our hundred day karma was too short.

That today I have received such favor,

Is all on account of my filial fame.

Meeting together in the shade of the locust tree,

\(^{50}\) Many Chinese dictionaries state that the character 恐 (*Ao*) is a kind of ancient musical instrument. According to the *Hanyu Da Cidian*, it is a type of gong which was commonly used as a percussion instrument in the Western Han dynasty (202 B.C. – A.D. 9).
Our alliance is not rare!

Notes: After [the pitches] Yi, Che, Gong, Che, Yi, Wu, [the drummer] plays the percussion music *Da Xiangsi* (Great Love). The principal male role looks left and right, and the seven sisters descend from the platform in two groups, from the left and right rear of the stage. They introduce the sequence *Huakaimen* (Flowers Open the Grates), in which they go to stage center and stand still facing the audience in a horizontal line. The first and second immortal maids walk to the edge of the stage using *Qiaobu* (Small Pretty Steps). They bow twice [to each other], then go towards the principal male role. The principal male role places one arm on each of their shoulders and determines that neither is [his wife]. They perform the movements to *Yanmen* (Closing the Gate), then turn around and [perform the movements to] *Chuansanjiao* (Threading Through the Triangle). [When they have finished the movements], the first and second maids go back to stage center. A second and third pair perform the above mentioned actions in turn. The principal female role performs the movements mentioned earlier. When it is time for the principal female role [to meet the principal male role at the edge of the stage], they join hands three times to conclude the sequence.

Celestial Maid (sings):

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51 *The General Chinese-English Dictionary* states that the word “Luanjiao” means rejoining the strings. It is a metaphorical expression of marrying a second wife or marrying a wife again.

52 These are tones of the *Gongche* system, a notational system of Cantonese opera music. In comparison with the western musical notation, Yi=St, Che=Re, Gong=Mi, and Wu=La (cf. Yung, 1989: 15).

53 For the explanation of the sequence *Yanmen*, please refer to appendix 12.

54 Please see appendix 13 for the description of the sequence *Chuansanjiao*.
Jiangshui'er (River Water)

When I saw my husband in the profane realm, prostrated from weeping,
Anxiously and precipitously, I mounted the mist and clouds.
When we parted, I said to you:
Hope for the Celestial Maid to give birth to a Unicorn Son
And send him to you to cherish.

Notes: While the principal female role is singing, the third supporting female role brings
the son\textsuperscript{56} to her; she presents the son to the principal male role.

The Principal Graduate (after receiving the child, sings):

Luoyan'er (Wild Goose Falling)

Seeing this child, I am overcome with happiness;
He will be the support of our lineage one hundred years hence.
I look at this handsome child,
I look at this child, lofty of mien.
But alas! He weeps and cries;
I cannot help but feel worried and upset at his sad cries.
I hope that the Celestial Maid will listen to my plea,
Listen-- I fear that
Once you go, who will care for him?

\textsuperscript{55} The principal female role also performs the movements to Yanmen and Chuansanjiao.
Once you go, who will care for him?

Celestial Maid (sings):

*Xingxingling* (A Lucky Order)

My love, you have completely failed to understand why "Brilliant Gold Bird" was united to her "Phoenix-glue [Mate]".

Having entrusted the child to your care,

I only fear that a new love will grow, and your old love will fade.

A new love will grow, and your old love will fade.

Notes: According to the stage instructions, [the principal female role] points to the face of the principal male role.

Principal Graduate (sings):

*Fenglaiyi* (The Phoenix Comes)

I hope,

I hope the Celestial Maid will forgive my many faults.

Greatly consider that I have erred without meaning to.

Truly, my only hope is to be happy with you again.

Who could have known that I would fail the beautiful one?

We pledged our troth to Heaven;

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56 The son is represented by a doll, a kind of stage property which is called Douguan 斗官 (Little Master).
In my heart I was moved that your kindness was deep as the sea, as high as the mountains,
As deep as the sea, as high as the mountains.

Celestial Maid (sings):

*Cheng Changfeng* (Mounting Strong Winds)
I smile at the confusion of your words;
Do not be greedy or expect too much.
I am a golden bird of the upper realm,
Do not think to share your nest with me again,
Do not think to share your nest with me again.

Principal Graduate (sings):

*Xiajiangnan* (Down South of the River)
I hope the Celestial Maid will tell our son
I hope the Celestial Maid will tell our son—
Do not cry, do not wail.
My only hope is for him to grow into a man of high rank and emolument.
You should not suffer more care [on our account];
I have a lucky star that shines on me.
I will make sure that he will mount the azure clouds’ young,
My only wish for him to mount to the imperial court.

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57 The term “Brilliant Gold Bird” here stands for the Celestial Maid.
Notes: The principal female role walks from stage right rear to stage left rear, exchanging positions with the principal male role.

Principal Graduate (sings):

Yuanlinhao (Gardens and Forests Fine)

Ah!, Ah! My only wish is for his rank, life span, fame and fortune to be great.

And that the Celestial Maid need not have borne [our son] in vain.

In this human world the good and virtuous, loyal and filial are rare.

Notes: At this point, the minor military role brings the horse for the principal male role to mount, as [musicians] stroke the percussion pattern Baoyichui. The principal female role bends her waist backward, and according to stage instructions, the principal male role uses his whip to help her up.

Celestial Maid (sings):

Qingjiangyin (Clear River Prelude)

Having departed from the mundane Way,

I ascend straight to the Palace of the Jade Empyrean,

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58 One of the major functions of the percussion music in Cantonese opera is to close all vocal and speech passages. There are four ways of playing the Baoyichui percussion pattern. According to the content of the text, the Baoyichui is played immediately after the Principal Graduate has sung the aria Yuanlinhao. Hence, in this case, the percussionists would play a single stroke on one of the pairs of cymbals, one or two or three strokes on the medium woodblock, and a single stoke on the gong. Its prominent sounds are: ca 茶, lak 剃, cing 昌 (Yin, 1962: 16).
And wander freely over the Penglai Island.

My wish is that father and son enjoy prosperity and success to ripe old age.

Notes: At the beginning of [Clear River Prelude], the Butieshi and the Tangdan shout “Ho! Ho!” and lead the principal male role offstage, from stage right rear. The principal female role turns so that her back is facing the audience and tosses her [right] sleeve onto her right shoulder; she then goes offstage from stage left rear. As the principal female role is making her exit, each of the immortal maids walks from the center of the stage towards stage left rear. They stand still until the principal female role has turned and exited the stage. They then retreat in formation.

Notes: Day one, standard version: According to this sequence, [the performance] consists of Offering of a Son, the tunes 1 – 13 and [the conventional movement] Fangongzhuang (Transforming Palace Costume).

Notes: Day two: According to this [sequence, the musicians] play tunes 1 – 13.

Notes: Day three: According to this [sequence, the musicians] play nine tunes altogether: 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 11, 12, 13.

Notes: Day four: According to this [sequence, the musicians] play six tunes altogether: 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 13.

APPENDIX 10

The Small Offering of a Son (Xiao Songzi)

After [the musicians] perform the first tune\(^{59}\), dialogue as follows:

[Servants]: Principal Graduate, the horse cannot advance.

Principal Graduate: Having received the imperial decree to parade through the golden streets, the Principal Graduate comes on horseback.

Celestial Maid: After we parted [in the shade] of the locust tree, I came especially to bestow the little son.

Principal Graduate: I see it! The Celestial Maid has descended from the Jade Terrace\(^{60}\)!

Notes: [The musicians] immediately play two phrases from the third tune\(^{61}\), proceed to the Zhongban pattern\(^{62}\) of the fifth tune, and conclude with the thirteenth tune\(^{63}\).


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\(^{59}\) The first tune is the Unicorn Son Descends (*Lin'er Jiang*).

\(^{60}\) According to Chinese popular beliefs, the Jade Terrace is a place where immortals live.

\(^{61}\) *Anzhijian* (All I See) is the third tune.

\(^{62}\) The *Zhongban* pattern is a kind of percussion musical rhythm (about 144 rhythms per minutes) in the *Paizi* tunes.

\(^{63}\) The *Zheguiling* (Breaking Off the Cassia Bough) is the fifth tune. The thirteenth tune is the *Qingjiangyin* (Clear River Prelude).
APPENDIX 11

Diagram 6: The Sequence *Huakaimen*花開門 (Flowers Open the Gates)

Source: Leung, 1996: Extracted from Mary Yeung’s manuscripts.
APPENDIX 11

Description of the Sequence *Huakaimen* (Flowers Open the Gates)

The *Huakaimen* is a series of stage movements often staged in Cantonese opera shows. For example, in the performances of the playlet *Tianji Da Songzi* (The Celestial Maid’s Great Offering of a Son), the actresses who impersonate the Celestial Maid and the six immortal maids would perform the sequence *Huakaimen* as shown in Diagram 6 on the previous page.

To begin, each immortal maid moves to point A in the sequence and performs the *Lashan* (Pulling the Mountain), a kind of arm movement which starts with “the left hand (palm up) below the right (palm down), then moves the left hand inward and to the right and the right hand outward and to the left, in horizontal circles” (Zung, 1937: 115+116). After finishing these actions in turn, each of them moves to the appropriate position and stands there facing the audience. That is, the first immortal maid stands at point 1, the second one at point 2, the third one at point 3, the fourth one at point 4, the fifth one at point 5, the sixth one at point 6, and the Celestial Maid at point 7. These orderly and repeated movements of *Huakaimen* provide an opportunity for the players to show off their basic performing techniques to the spectators (Leung, 1996: Extracted from Mary Yeung’s manuscripts).
APPENDIX 12

Diagram 7: The Sequence Yanmen (Closing the Gate)

Source: Leung, 1996: Extracted from Mary Yeung's manuscripts.
APPENDIX 12

Description of the Sequence Yanmen (Closing the Gate)

Cantonese opera players always perform the sequence Yanmen, an elaborate series of stage movements, in their performances. According to appendices 9 and 10, actors and actresses would stage the movements to Yanmen in the performances of the Xianghuashan Da Heshou (Great Birthday Greetings at Fragrant Flower Mountain) and the Tianji Da Songzi.

In the performance of the Tianji Da Songzi for example, the players who portray the characters of the Principal Graduate (Dong Yong), the Celestial Maid and the six immortal maids perform the sequence Yanmen when they meet under the shade of the locust tree. As shown in Diagram 7, Dong Yong stands at point A facing the spectators. The six immortal maids separate themselves into three pairs. The first immortal maid and the second immortal maid (the first pair) move to point B and point C respectively. They stand there facing the audience. Then, Dong Yong and these two immortal maids turn round with their backs to the spectators. They move towards stage center. Dong Yong stands at point F. The two immortal maids stand at point D and point E respectively. After finishing these movements, the two immortal maids move back and stand near the left and right rear of the stage. The second pair and the third pair perform the above mentioned actions in turn. After they have finished, the Celestial Maid moves to point B (or point C) and stands there facing the audience. Dong Yong moves to point A and stands there facing the spectators. Then, they turn round together with their backs to the audience and walk towards stage center. The Celestial Maid stands at point D (or point
E) and Dong Yong stands at point F (Leung, 1996: Extracted from Mary Yeung’s manuscripts).

\[\text{\textsuperscript{64}}\] It is important to state that if the Celestial Maid moves to point C, she would walk to stage center and stand at point E.

\[\text{\textsuperscript{64}}\] It is important to state that if the Celestial Maid moves to point C, she would walk to stage center and stand at point E.
APPENDIX 13

Diagram 8: The Sequence *Chuansanjiao*穿三角

(Threading Through the Triangle)

Source: Leung, 1996: Extracted from Mary Yeung's manuscripts.
APPENDIX 13

Description of the Sequence *Chuansanjiao* (Threading Through the Triangle)

The sequence *Chuansanjiao* is an elaborate series of conventional actions. In the performances of the playlet *Tianji Da Songzi*, the performers who act as the Principal Graduate (Dong Yong), the Celestial Maid and the six immortal maids would perform the movements to *Chuansanjiao* as shown in Diagram 8 after they have finished the sequence *Yanmen*.

In performing the sequence *Chuansanjiao*, the immortal maids separate themselves into three pairs. Dong Yong stands at point A facing the audience. The first immortal maid and the second immortal maid (the first pair) stand at point B and point C respectively facing the spectators. Following the direction as shown by the inner arrows, the immortal maid at point B walks onstage and Dong Yong follows her closely. At the same time, the immortal maid at point C also walks onstage following the direction as indicated by the outer arrows. When they finish, the immortal maid at point C walks again following the direction as shown by the outer arrows and Dong Yong hurries behind her. The immortal maid at point B also walks onstage at the same time following the direction as indicated by the inner arrows. The second pair and the third pair perform the above synchronized movements in turn. After they finish, the Celestial Maid moves to point B (or point C) and stands there facing the audience. Dong Yong also stands at point A facing the spectators. Following the direction as shown by the inner arrows (or
the outer arrows\textsuperscript{65}, the Celestial Maid walks onstage and Dong Yong hurries behind her. Besides creating a beautiful effect, these repeated and formalized movements also symbolize that Dong Yong is hurrying in pursuit among the immortal maids. He wants to meet with the Celestial Maid, his beloved wife, as soon as possible (Leung, 1996: Extracted from Mary Yeung’s manuscripts).

\textsuperscript{65} If the Celestial Maid moves to point C, she would walks onstage following the direction as indicated by the outer arrows.
APPENDIX 14

The New Legend of the White Snake (*Baishe Xinchuan* 白蛇新傳)

Summary of the Play

Opening Scene: Descending to the Mortal World

Bai Suzhen 白素貞 was a semi-divine white snake who had practiced for immortality at Penglei 蓬萊 for over a millennia. Although she could attain immortality very soon, she was unhappy because of loneliness. She decided to descend to the mortal world to find a lover. The Nanji Xianweng 南極仙翁 (Old Immortal of the Southern Pole) recommended that she not go, so that she could continue her self-refining practices. However, she had already made up her mind and came down to the mortal land with the Green Snake (her maid).

Scene I: Wandering the Lake

The White Snake and the Green Snake transformed themselves into human beings who were known as Lady White and Little Green respectively. They visited the West Lake at the Qingming Festival. On their way, they met a young and handsome man whose name was Xu Xian 許仙. Lady White was immediately attracted by his manly handsomeness while Xu was also impressed by her beauty. In order to have a chance to chat with Xu Xian, Lady White used her magic power to cause a sudden downpour. Xu Xian invited her and Little Green to take a shelter from the rain in his boat. Xu Xian and Lady White introduced themselves to each other. All of the three spent a very happy time in the cabin.
of the boat. Xu Xian and Bai Suzhen deeply fell in love with each other and decided to marry.

Scene II: Astonishment at the Transformation

One cheerful year had passed since Xu Xian married Lady White. Xu became a merchant. He owned a medicine shop with very good business. Lady White became a herbalist. Although she was pregnant, she still worked very hard to offer free medical treatments to the local people. As a result, she gained a good reputation in the local communities. Nevertheless, her virtues had provoked the anger of Fahai, the abbot of the Jinshan Si (Monastery of the Gold Mountain). This is because since Lady White offered free medical services, no people were willing to spend money to buy his talismans. As a result, the income of the monastery greatly decreased. In order to take revenge against Lady White, Fahai secretly exchanged Xu Xian’s regular wine for his realgar wine (a kind of wine which could reduce any humanized goblins back to their monstrous shapes) in the Dragon Boat Festival. Xu offered the realgar wine to his wife. Bai Suzhen had not aware Fahai’s plot. She drank the realgar wine and was immediately reduced to her original shape. Xu Xian was scared to death.

Scene III: Stealing of the Immortal Herb

In order to save Xu Xian’s life, Lady White went to Kunlun Shan to steal an immortal herb. The two guardians of the mountain blocked her way. Luckily, the Nanji Xianweng was moved by her true love. He kindly offered her the immortal herb.
Scene IV: Destroying of the Bridge

After being saved by Lady White, Xu Xian was kidnapped by Fahai. Bai Suzhen tried to rescue her husband. She begged the monk to release Xu. Fahai promised to let Xu Xian go if Xu was still willing to accept Lady White after knowing her real identity. After realizing the truth, Xu Xian was reluctant to separate from his wife. He requested Fahai to set him free. However, the monk broke his promise. He destroyed the bridge so that the road to Jishan Ji was blocked. Xu Xian was further detained.

Scene V: Deluging of the Monastery

Bai Suzhen went to the Jinshan Si and requested Fahai to release Xu Xian. The monk firmly refused to do so. Therefore, Lady White had no choice but to flood the monastery with the help of her aquatic assistants. Fahai in turn used his magic power to call down Wei Tuo, a heavenly deity, to encounter the White Snake. Lady White was defeated. Luckily, the Nanji Xianweng appeared in time. He rescued both Xu Xian and Bai Suzhen. The couple happily reunited.

Scene VI: Detained in the Bowl

Lady White soon gave birth to a son. Since she was considered as unclean within a month of her childbirth, the Nanji Xianweng had to stay away in order to avoid pollution. Fahai took advantage of this opportunity. He caught Bai Suzhen with his sacred bowl and buried her alive under the Leifeng Ta 雷峰塔 (The Thunder Peak Pagoda).
Scene VII: Destruction of the Pagoda

Several years later, Lady White's calamities were over. Xu Xian had also achieved immortality due to previous karma. He accompanied the Nanji Xianweng to destroy the Leifeng Ta and saved his beloved wife.

Last Scene: Immortal Re-union

Lady White and Xu Xian both ascended to the Heavenly Palace. They were welcomed by many immortals. Hereafter, the couple lived happily in the immortal land forever.

Source: XFMJ, 1961: Scene VII, p. 3.
APPENDIX 15

The Emperor’s Daughter (Dirühua 帝女花)

Summary of the Play

Scene I: Tree Oath

Princess Changping 長平公主 was the elder daughter of Emperor Chongzhen 崇貞皇帝, the last emperor of the Ming dynasty. One day, she met Zhou Shixian 周世顯, a young official, in the Imperial Garden of the Forbidden Palace. Zhou was attracted by the princess’ beauty while his handsomeness and talents impressed Changping. They fell in love with each other and swore an oath of unchanging fidelity below a flowered camphor tree. Emperor Chongzhen well understood Changping’s desire. He betrothed his beloved daughter to Shixian. Shixian therefore became the imperial son-in-law.

Scene II: Fragrant Calamity

Before the imperial wedding was held, the political situation of the Ming dynasty rapidly deteriorated. When Emperor Chongzhen realized that Li Zicheng 李自成 would soon capture the Forbidden Palace66, he issued a decree to order all the female members of the imperial family to commit suicide. Although Changping was a filial daughter, she was unwilling to kill herself, mainly because she did not want to separate from her husband.

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66 Li Zicheng (A.D. 1605? – 1645) was a rebel leader during the reign of Emperor Chongzhen. On April 25, 1644, Li’s troops captured Beijing. Emperor Chongzhen committed suicide on Prospect Hill, overlooking the Imperial Palace. After entering the Forbidden City, Li Zicheng ordered Wu Sangui 吳三桂, the commander of the Ming forces at Shanhai Guan 山海關, to surrender. Li even captured Wu’s father. Wu Sangui decided to ally with the Manchus. Owing to the assistance of Wu, the Manchu troops defeated Li Zicheng’s forces and captured Beijing on June 6, 1644 (Hsu, 1983: 26+27).
The Emperor expelled Shixian from the Imperial Palace and tried to killed Changping himself. Luckily, the princess managed to survive but was seriously hurt.

Scene III: Begging for the Corpse

Zhou Zhong 周鍾, a high-ranking official of the Ming dynasty, rescued Changping. Zhou concealed the princess in his home. He told Zhou Ruilan 周瑞蘭, his beloved daughter, to look after Changping. After a certain period of time, Li Zicheng was defeated by the Qing armies. The Forbidden Palace was captured by the Manchus. Zhou Zhong and his son, Zhou Baolun 周寶倫, realized that there was no hope for the restoration of the Ming dynasty. They therefore decided to surrender to the Qing court. In order to show their loyalty to the new dynasty, they planned to kidnap Princess Changping and take her to the Qing court. Ruilan was fully aware of their plot, she secretly helped the princess to escape to the Weimo An 維摩庵 (The Weimo Nunnery).

Scene IV: Meeting at the Nunnery

In order to escape the capture of the Qing armies, Changping dressed herself as a nun and lived alone in a small hut at the Weimo Nunnery. She was very depressed, mainly because she missed her late imperial parents and her beloved husband. Shixian knew that the princess had escaped from the calamity. He searched everywhere in order to find his wife. Accidentally, he passed the small hut in Weimo An. He recognized that the young nun inside the hut was Princess Changping. However, the princess did not want her
husband suffering because of her, she therefore pretended to not know him and denied her real identity.

Scene V: Happy Reunion
Shixian knelt down in front of the princess to beg for her recognition. He swore to commit suicide if the princess refused to reunite with him. Changping was moved by his true faith and true love. She finally recognized her husband.

Scene VI: Welcome of the Phoenix (Surrender Persuasion)
Zhou Zhong was informed by his servant that both the princess and the imperial son-in-law were in Weimo An. He therefore went to the nunnery with a large number of Qing troops. Aware of the dangerous situation, Changping and Shixian concealed themselves inside a small hut in the nunnery. Zhou Zhong went to the small hut and negotiated with Shixian. He suggested that the imperial couple should surrender to the Qing dynasty. Since the whole nunnery was surrounded by Manchu troops, Shixian had no choice but to pretend to accept Zhou Zhong’s suggestion. He also pretended to persuade the princess to surrender to the Qing court. Without realizing her husband’s intention, Changping was very angry and swore to separate from him.

Scene VII: Submitting the Memorial
While Zhou Zhong and the Qing armies was waiting outside the nunnery, Shixian explained to Changping his plot to rescue the heir, bury the Ming Emperor and uphold
their fidelity by committing suicide\textsuperscript{67}. Then the princess understood Shixian's contrivance and edited a memorial to submit to the Qing court.

Scene VIII: Fragrant Death

The imperial couple entered the Qing court and pretended to pay tribute to the Qing emperor. The emperor was very pleased. He offered a national funeral to the late Ming emperor and released the heir of the Ming dynasty. In addition, he held an imperial wedding for Changping and Shixian. When the imperial couple realized that their plot had succeeded, they both committed suicide by taking poison under the flowered camphor tree. Their spirits ascended to the Heavenly Palace and lived happily together forever.


\textsuperscript{67} See Chapter Five for detailed descriptions of this scene.
APPENDIX 16

Diagram 9: The Sequence Qidong企洞 (Standing at a Grotto)

APPENDIX 16

Description of the Sequence *Qidong* (Standing at a Grotto)

The *Qidong* is a routine of actions always performed by four minor role players in Cantonese opera performances. According to Diagram 9 on the previous page, the first performer comes onstage and stands at point A. The second one enters and stands at point B. Then the third one and the fourth one come onstage and stand at point C and point D respectively (Wong, 1997: Extracted from Mary Yeung’s manuscripts).
APPENDIX 17

Diagram 10: The Sequence *Guidandan*鬼擔擔 (A Ghost Picul)

APPENDIX 17

Description of the Sequence Guidandan (A Ghost Picul)

The Guidandan is a series of formalized conventional actions always performed by four minor role players in Cantonese opera performances. According to Diagram 10 on the previous page, the first and the third performers stand at point A and point C respectively. The second player stands at point B while the fourth one stands at point D. Thus, the first one and the third one stand at stage left in a vertical line. The second one and the fourth one also stand in a vertical line at stage right. Then the first and the third players move to point B and point D respectively. At the same time, the second performer moves to point A and the fourth one moves to point C (Wong, 1997: Extracted from Mary Yeung’s manuscripts).
APPENDIX 18

Chinese Texts

Chapter One


立師約人張小妹自願投身馬大姑師傅學習梨園工藝，以六年爲期，中途不得逃走及退出，如有逃走及退出，要補回師傅每月飯食，照入館後每月計算。倘有山高水低，各安天命，永不追究。立約人張小妹（指模）…” (Xin, 1990: 26).

p. 21.

APPENDIX 18

Chapter Two

p. 24.

嫁娶時，出嫁女須由另一婦人背著行進，雙足不能沾地，否則不祥… (Ou, 1993: 840).


十二月祭灶日，忌婦女祀灶神… 孕婦忌夜出或入廟，恐受邪侵…(Ou, 1993: 572).

p. 25.

婦女在月時，孩子不准窺入月間去，撞進去的小孩不 明，念書會被罰畫眼圈；父親亦進不得，若入月間之後，要更衣洗澡，方可拜神…(Ou, 1993: 574).

Pp. 31 – 33.

七月初七日，俗傳為牛女相會之期，一般待字女郎，聯集為七巧會，先期備辦種種奇巧玩品，並用草色紙芝麻粒等，製成各種花果仕女器物宮室等等，極鉅心細角之妙。初六日陳之庭內，雜以針絨粉香疊香及生花時果等，羅列滿案，甚有羅列至數十方桌者，邀集親友，鳴招髯姬，作終夜之樂。貧家小戶，亦必勉力為之，以應時節。初六夜初更時，焚香燃燭，向空祈叩，曰迎仙；自三鼓以至五鼓，凡禮拜七次，因仙女凡七也，曰拜仙…並焚一紙製之圓盆，盆內有紙製衣服巾履脂粉鏡台梳篦等物…初七日陳設之物，仍然不動,
APPENDIX 18

Chapter Three

p. 48.

我們的秘書是女人，故此在去年，這儀式快開始前，我告訴她離開大堂並留在辦工室內直至儀式演畢（Chan, 1996: Extracted from Mary Yeung’s manuscript).

Pp. 48 – 49.


p. 50.

盤艇的船頭稱作龍頭，是供奉神明神聖的地方，所以，跟男同僚不同，女演員和其他女團員被禁止從船頭進盤艇，俗語叫作騎龍頭，她們只准從旁邊的窗口進入盤艇…還有，嚴禁分娩（Chen, 1995: Extracted from Mary Yeung’s manuscripts).

p. 51.

以前，大肚的女演員被禁上台做戲，因爲她被認為是不潔；但是，現在沒有人會守這戒條（Leung, 1996: Extracted from Mary Yeung’s manuscripts).

Pp. 52 – 53.

要是女角坐錯在神箱上，（此箱藏師傅神位用）或錯踏牙灰桶上（此桶藏有張壽師傅神位）的話，雜箱叔叔會無端端將白鬚給黑鬚戴，明明台口用酒杯盤，會
錯給筆墨盤等等，所以雜箱叔叔最忌女角行近神箱，因爲神聖所在，不容跨誡污蔑之意 (Wong, 1995: 11).

Pp. 54 – 55.

(一) 爲免『衝撞』參演《祭白虎》的演員或違反『閉口』禁忌，在儀式演出的幾小時內，戲台上包括前台、後台均謝絕班外人踏足；(二) 在演出快要開始之時，班主透過地方主會請非戲班人員撤離觀眾席，行內叫『清場』；(三) 在儀式完成之前，不管在戲棚內外，當天戲班成員盡量避免與班外人士談話，…習俗以《祭白虎》之前嚴禁叫別人名字，因爲被叫名之人往往被『白虎』所害；(四) 參與演出儀式的兩位演員在到達戲棚後均避開群眾而自處一角；(五) 在儀式過後，或在平日不用『破台』時，為求安全，班中成員對『破台』儀式亦盡可能不作談論 (Chan, 1996b: 51).

p. 57.

誰扮小鬼切忌照鏡，否則會在鏡中發現無數鬼魂，便嚇到魂不附體 (Wong, 1995: 91).
APPENDIX 18

Chapter Four

p. 61.

……誕辰乃九月廿八日，祂是天上之火神，奉玉皇大帝之命，下凡調查；何以民間有演「玉皇登殿」？如有說天宮不是，可即用火焚之。華光下凡見所演是劇，乃懲奸佞國，絕無說天神之壞話。因此沒有燒到，伶人們感謝祂，得以保存，故奉祂為最高至尊之神 (Wong, 1993: 1).

p. 63.

……誕辰乃三月廿四日，據傳說，某一天，當兩個打武演員在舊時小徑上練功之際，有兩個小孩從田中的竇開走出來互相對打，祂們打了一整天然後消失；藝人們認為祂們是神明，來教他們特別的武功。因藝人不知這兩位神祇姓甚名誰，故稱祂們為田竇二師，因祂們是從田竇中鑽出來的 (Chen, 1995: Extracted from Mary Yeung’s manuscripts).

p. 64.

據云仙聖譚公為漁民庇護之神，原籍惠州；幼失怙恃，賴祖母鞠育。幼時能知未來，治病神妙，更能呼風喚雨，功參造化，降甘霖、息風暴，顯奇跡。漁民推崇備至……年十二登仙，籍奉為神……(The Epitaph of the Tanggong Temple at Wong Nai Chung Gap, 1996: Extracted from Mary Yeung’s manuscripts).


張五（綽號撈手五）是雍正年間（公元1730年左右）北京的一位名
伶…他是不滿專制，言論反清，致被緝。他逃亡來粵，匿居佛山。他在佛山時，把他懂的劇藝、武功，全部傳授給當地的粵劇伶人…他又把粵劇的角色，調整成十類，如一末、二淨、三生、四旦、五丑、六外、七小、八貼、九夫、十雜，使分工明確。他對粵劇是有很大貢獻，因此，粵劇班中人尊之為張先師… (Chen, 1983: 131)
APPENDIX 18

Chapter Five


白蛇新傳（第七幕：毀塔）

（仙翁白）
白素貞，你千載潛修，
將成正果，
可惜凡心未了，
遷跡塵寰；
幸喜你宅心善良，
濟人疾苦，
所以歷盡劫磨，
終邀天佑，
今日引渡你飛昇仙境，
等\(^68\)你返樸歸真。

（白娘白）
仙翁呀！

（古老中板下句）：
蒙恩眷，幸得殘命留，
臍脂殘黛\(^{69}\)況埋久；
前情難付水東流，
縱得重生，何從聚首，
塵緣未了恨悠悠，

\(^{68}\) 等=使
我不怕折磨，只怕與個郎分手。

（青兒白）
姐姐，你真情真義，
堪敬堪憐，
故此感動仙翁，
下凡相救；
許仙早有夙因，
亦成正果，
此後同居仙境，
永結仙緣…

Source: *XFMJ*, 1961: Scene VII, p.3.

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APPENDIX 18

Chapter Five


帝女花（第七幕：上表）

（世顯白）
公主，世顯不是一個負義忘恩之人，
你可知先帝陵仍未葬，
太子被困，
我才有出此下策，
方才七十二宮娥，
雖則身穿明服
仍是清室之心腹，
你叫我點敢^71洩漏風聲呢？公主！
（長平如夢初醒，黯然嘆息介，口古）
唉！想帝女花曾遭百劫，
我重有^72乜嘅^73力量，
救太子於困籠，
安先帝於陵墓？
（世顯口古）
公主，你一生聰明，
唔駛^74我多講，

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^70 方才=剛才
^71 點敢=怎敢
^72 重有=還有
^73 乜嘅=甚麼
^74 唔駛=不用
你都已经心领神会了，
你就快修下表章，
等我代递上朝，
若果能成大事，
我就重返旧巢，
倘若难成大事，
我当以血溅公曹。
（长平口古）
唉！驸马爷，
你虽有惊世之才，
但哀家誓不事二朝，
我怎能同你在清宫同谐到老呢？
（世显口古）
唉！公主，
若果帝女花不入清朝，
清帝又如何履行三约？
你放心啦！
但望在清宫成事之日，
花烛之时，
我准备夫妻双双
仰膜于含章树下；

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75 快的＝快些
76 等＝議
77 According to the *Hanyu Da Cidian Disan Ce (A Chinese Great Dictionary, Vol. 3)*, “哀家 (Aijia)” is a specific term used in traditional Chinese operas. Performers who impersonate the imperial ladies, such as princesses, empresses and imperial concubines, often address themselves as “哀家”. Hence, the English word for “哀家” is “I” (Luo, 1995: Vol. 3, p. 337).
我地祇義都難污。
(長平愕然執世顯疼哭白)
哦！你…此話當真？
(世顯疼哭點頭後白)
請公主修表。
(長平忍住悲酸白)
如此說，
文房侍候…


78 我地—我們
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Chapter Five

p. 109.


p. 110.

…我懷疑某些演員完全不知道自己在台上所扮演的角色是甚麼，他們隨意與隔鄰的人說笑，身穿古裝卻以現代人的行路步伐步出台前，更不明白該站在何處或何時入場…(Chan, 1996b:118).


…一個演員能否獲得行內承認勝任某一角色，完全視乎他曾否在戲院裏擔當此角色，而不考慮他在神功戲演出中的表現；例如，…南鳳…指出在九十年代初，由於自己尚不曾在戲院班受聘為「正印花旦」，同行中人士只以「二幫花旦」視之。即使在神功班出任正印花旦，她的薪酬仍不能定得太高…(Chan, 1996b: 117+118).
APPENDIX 18


香花山大賀壽

第一枝：新水令

註：排子一起出漢鍾離，再沖頭出吕洞賓、張果老、曹國舅、李鐵拐、韓湘子、何仙姑、藍彩和，每一句沖頭上一個，正面掩門埋^{79}正面台一條蛇企定^{80}，待出齊八人後轉身。

鍾離白：吾乃漢鍾離是也。
洞賓白：吾乃呂洞賓是也。
果老白：吾乃張果老是也。
國舅白：吾乃曹國舅是也。
鐵拐白：吾乃李鐵拐是也。
湘子白：吾乃韓湘子是也。
仙姑白：吾乃何仙姑是也。
彩和白：吾乃藍彩和是也。
鍾離白：衆仙請了!
衆白：請了!
鍾白：今日慈悲娘娘得道之期，一齊前往拜賀!
衆白：有禮，請!

註：起（九轉）排子，轉身向台口反豬腸，衣邊入齊介。

註：（追思）排子頭一句，連隨大沖頭，馬騾精拿葵扇遮面，上至台口

^{79} 埋=走到
^{80} 企定=站定
放下扇一睇81，再冲出拉山扎架白：
孙悟空，孙悟空，修练在水濂洞，一翻打上靈霄殿，再打（介）打下水晶宫，吾乃孙悟空（二手）；今日慈悲娘娘得道之期，拿仙桃去恭贺。

註：众小猴抬桃过场衣边下介。

註：大沖頭鯉魚精上陽一完台，衣边坐定。大沖頭蝦精追上做爪魚状，
也追一完台，杂边坐定。大沖頭龜精追蝦上一完台，作戲弄一回後，衣
边坐定。大沖頭蚌精花旦飾，戴魅面上，到正面台口，打開蚌一睇地
下，走番入場。

註：再起（一錠金）用横蕭吹，蚌精再上介；蚌精在（一錠金）時與蝦
耍戲，再同魚，三同龜玩完後，各歸原位，蚌與蝦同坐杂边介。

註：（碎牌）四兵戴小鬼面著勇字背心，手捧夜明珠、珊瑚先出，花開
門企定，四龍王上。

東龍白：吾乃東海龍王敖廣是也。
南龍白：吾乃南海龍王敖順是也。
西龍白：吾乃西海龍王敖詳是也。
北龍白：吾乃北海龍王敖邊是也。
東龍白：列位龍王請了！
衆白：請了！
東龍白：今日慈悲娘娘得道之期，齊去恭賀！
衆白：有禮，請！

註：（碎牌）四童女，捧金杯盤上企洞，文殊、威靈、普賢三聖母上。

81 睇-看
文殊白：吾乃文殊聖母是也。
威靈白：吾乃威靈聖母是也。
普賢白：吾乃普賢聖母是也。
文殊白：聖母請了!
衆白：請了!
文殊白：今乃觀音得道之期，一齊去恭賀!
衆白：有禮，請!

註：衣邊全下。
註：大沖頭降龍神將手持龍珠，紅面，紅頭陀，金剛圈，紅坐馬，紅雲幢，接袖素索，紅腳掄，英咀鞋，手遮面出到正面台口，放低手，一睇天復入，再跳架宛，雜邊將珠引龍上，花開門，走大完台，花開門行埋衣邊企定。
註：降龍企至大頭和尚上敲鐘擊鼓後才入場。
註：大沖頭二花面飾伏虎神將，手持黑，中軍帽卡，黑面，黑頭陀，金剛圈，黑坐馬，繡帶，黑腳掄，英咀鞋，外披黑海清素索上，跳架宛，虎上，花開門，走一完台，打虎跪低騎虎，在虎頭釘馬完，追虎走完台，企埋雜邊企定，等大頭和尚敲鐘後入場。
註：大沖頭韋陀持木枷遮面出，到正面台口一睇天復入，再上跳架宛，白後上正面之玉皇廟上望下介。
註：大籚（水底魚）開心佛衣邊上，長眉佛雜邊上，二人企兩邊對拜，行至正面對拜，又換至衣雜邊對拜，拜完入場介。再起（水底魚）劈腳佛衣邊上，陀背佛雜邊上，照前換位三次拜完入場介。三起（水底魚）
出大頭大肚和尚，合埋^3 眼，行至台口伸懶，抹眼，開門，用屎推門出門口在上手位（雜邊）屙尿介，屙完番入^4 寺門，取回面盆栽水洗面，用鞋刷刷牙，用牙簡作利括，沖涼抹下身，洗完身，洗腳、洗面、刷牙、嗽口，洒水掃地，向觀眾台口倒垃圾，放下正面琉璃，斟油、點燈、裝香、打鼓、敲鐘完下。

註：（碎牌）或（小開門）玉女捧甘露瓶，金童捧楊枝引觀音上白：修練修練，潔淨虔心，菩提岩下，紫竹林中，觀世音（埋位介）；感謝玉皇，敕封普天門救主，救苦救難，大慈大悲觀世音是也（介）。今天是吾乃壽誕之期，衆仙佛神，必定到來恭賀，金童玉女（介）；準備甘露侍候！

金童玉女白：領命！

註：（碎牌）八仙入參見白：慈悲娘娘在上，吾等稽首。
觀音白：衆仙隆重，吾乃謝禮。
白仙齊白：吾等回拜（回禮介）。

註：二才分兩邊企齊白：吾等與娘娘拜壽。

註：第一對鍾離、洞賓，第二對果老、國舅，第三對鐵拐、湘子，第四對仙姑、彩和；一對對開正面跪拜觀音時，即起大笛（梁州序）襯八仙拜賀介。

籌添海屋呼傳，

82 In my opinion, the order of these sentences should be rearranged. They should be written as follow:
“…手持黑金剛圈，黑面，黑頭陀，中軍幡卡…”
83 合埋=閤
崇高保護長庚星照遐；
觴高捧，
醉傾，舞彩班，
俺慰酌杯轉日月，
壺裡乾坤恰似渾忘老，
金丹姹姹耶遍笑，遍笑，
恰似駕鳳乘鸞蓬萊島；
日間輾轆誰能料？
今朝玉旨來封浩；
惟願千百歲鞏固高。

註：八仙拜完後，觀音白：
好！請進後林，甘露酬謝。
八仙齊白：領謝！（衣下介）

註：四龍王食住排子上入參見白：
參見娘娘！
觀音白：吾乃謝禮！（同龍王對作一拜介）
四龍王齊白：娘娘請上，吾等拜賀。
註：（碎牌）四龍王齊拜完起身，分兩邊企定介。
觀音白：請進內林，甘露敬謝。
四龍王齊白：感謝了！
註：四人齊衣邊下介。
註：（碎牌）三聖母齊上同白：

注：再走入
娘娘請上，吾等稽首。
观音白：聖母駕臨，吾乃謝禮！
三聖母同白：吾等與娘娘祝壽。
註：觀音起身企，低頭供手，受三聖母拜完起身企定。
觀音白：金童玉女（介，在！）準備甘露，敬奉聖母。
金童玉女白：領旨。
註：起（排歌）擺酒正面檯坐，雜邊文殊，衣邊威靈，檯旁雜邊觀音，
衣邊普賢，聖母四人共飲介。

提起龍江，
懷吞輕狂，
筵前笛奏笙簧，
適逢耀武盡一觴，
宛轉清歌入畫堂，
壽筵祝君與主；
捧盆滴酒四下香，
明早禮兵招，
今宵莫負好風光。

威靈白：吾等請娘娘神通變化，變過我們看看。
观音白：好！待吾變過你來看。（入邊）

註：收酒檯改擺一字檯，分三層高，正面玉皇殿上坐韋陀，威靈、文殊、
普賢分三級依上列次序坐下介。
註：大笛（大八板頭）。
註：觀音食住85拿玄拂上，拉山車身入場改裝。
註：起鑼鼓，龍雜邊伸爪為禮，金童衣邊一拜，正面再一拜，雜邊三一拜，龍亦如童子一樣，童子拜完，龍大番入場介。
註：第二變起（仙花調）觀音雜邊上，拉山屹單邊過位改裝入衣邊下介。
註：起鑼鼓，虎雜邊上一拜，金童衣邊對位一拜，換位正面一拜，雜邊一拜，虎亦照金童一樣拜完，虎大番入場介。
註：（蕩舟）觀音雜邊出，跳架完，衣邊下改裝介。
註：起鑼鼓，宰相雜邊上，向衣邊金童一拜，再正面一拜，換位衣邊一拜，合前玩大番完。
註：起（八仙鬧東海）觀音雜邊上，拉山造手完入衣邊改裝介。
註：起鑼鼓，武將出，照前雜、正、衣拜完下，童子照前衣、正、雜邊對拜完打大番介。
註：起（繡荷包）觀音照前雜邊上，造手衣邊下改裝介。
註：起鑼鼓，漁女手挽魚一條，照前雜、正、衣邊拜完下，金童照前衣、正、雜邊拜完玩大番介。
註：起（仙女牧羊）觀音雜邊出，照前造衣邊下介。
註：起鑼鼓，樵夫出，照前雜、正、衣拜完下介，金童照前衣、正、雜拜完大番介。
註：起（香山賀壽）觀音雜邊出，照前造完衣邊下介。
註：起鑼鼓，耕田公照前雜、正、衣邊拜完下，金童照前衣、正、雜邊對拜完大番介。
註：第八邊，觀音雜邊上，照前造手完衣下介；起（剪剪花）起鑼鼓，讀書郎雜邊上，照前雜、正、衣邊拜完下，金童照前衣、正、雜對拜完玩大番介。

85 食住=隨著「音樂」
觀音著回大宮裝出白：吾乃變化，自知失禮了。
三聖母齊白：變化靈捷，無以上之。

註：（碎脾）眾馬騾挑大仙桃上白：
參見慈悲娘娘。
觀音：少禮，人來賜宴！
註：衆猴子在台口用衆人碗筷飯斗開鑊作飲酒，飲完白。
註：飲完後為時間太多，腳色與大番可加「插花」，即用人疊十八羅漢、撞鐘、象拔等力功；旦角可加「擺花」，即每人持花瓶紙花，拉山扒架，砌成「天下太平」四大字。
註：音樂可任玩吹小調來謹托之。
猴王白：吾等特取仙桃，到來恭賀；娘娘在上，吾等拜賀！
註：衆猴拜完起身入雜邊抬桃上介。
觀音白：先將仙桃掛起。
註：掛桃時用（大開門）掛完介。

觀音白：宣劉海仙來見！
劉海仙內白：來也！
註：沖頭和合二仙齊先上，花開門，向觀音一拜，分衣雜邊企定介。
註：大沖頭鬼擔擔，劉海仙上扒架白：
飄呀飄！浪蕩耍金錢，逍遙快樂劉海仙，有人若得俺這個，金銀滿庫萬千年，（一才）俺（一才）劉海仙是也。觀音菩薩傳見，須速上前。
（二才）慈悲娘娘在上，吾乃稽首。
觀音白：少禮。

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劉海仙白：娘娘傳見，有何使用？
觀音白：命你快要金錢！
劉仙白：領法旨！
註：持掃把掃地，用方盆作垃圾
和合二仙陪掃一完台，企回完位^{86}介，劉海掃完時要金錢介。
註：開起排子頭，開桃用（三春錦），用筍仔單打褸和。

觀天地一輪空磨，
把世人終日捱磨，
後來的添上一翻，
先進的盡皆沒了；
笑世人個個心高，
都只為奪利爭名，
受盡了勞碌奔波。
為有那張子房現出，
現出春思砂；
重有那赤精子，
一心去學道。
笑韓信倚著十大功勞，
反觸了罪究。
反視時歡笑，
唯有那昏迷的鬥勇爭強，
爲酒貪花，
不可，不可。

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^{86}完位=原位
又只見世人有百年快樂，
怎知道仙曹，
閔來時悔何不早把禪經參著、心經念著，
波羅波羅，
又只見雲端仙樂，
金鼓齊敲，
又聽得鶯歌也麼呵，
哩多和著波羅，
咀多麼，
吵利羅，
嘐哩梳婆呵，
梳婆呵，
婆呵。
離了王宮，
離了王宮，
歷盡勤勞方爲正果，
楊柳枝洒甘露，
濟衆生除孽障，
信吾的樂土逍遙，
不信的冤孽難逃，
豈不問善惡到頭終有報？
好一似蜂兒養蜜、蠶兒成繭、蛾兒撲火，
勸世人早早回頭，
好念幾句彌陀；
百年後，
遺遙快樂，
遺遙快樂，
菩提樹花開滿，
樹梢四季長春，
萬年不老，
日照朵朵燦祥光，
陣陣香風齊祝高，
齊祝高壽算千千，
福海滔滔，
壽算千千，
福海滔滔；
香山五老齊來到，
恭祝榮華增壽高，
願與乾坤永不老。

註：一路開桃，一路吹排子，一路由桃心撒金錢，待排子吹完觀音白：
衆仙佛，各升原位。
全部落台齊白：聖壽無疆！
註：衆入場，觀音及金童、玉女包尾^{87}下介。


^{87} 包尾=最後
APPENDIX 18

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天姬大送子

（第一枝：麟兒降、旦唱）
麟兒駕霧騰雲下，
玉墀帝都市上等88，
市上等他相會，
付與孩兒繼後基；
父子相逢，
喜上眉舒。

註：各六仙姬一邊唱，一邊花開門，分兩邊上高檯（正面），正旦出至最尾，由正面用椅作級站在六仙之中，全部背台；二花抱仔站在雜邊各仙姬之最末處。第一枝全用小鐺揹托。

註：狀元執馬鞭，四不帖式執金瓜二斧，堂旦、正丑擔羅傘，狀元一住上唱。

（第二枝：承恩、生唱）
承恩及第，
跨馬揚鞭，
著紫衣，
宮花插，
宮花斜插帽簷底，
改換門楣世上所稀，
遂卻平生志，
衣錦榮歸。

衆白：啓爺、馬不前。
小生狀元白：吾奉聖旨遊街道；何方瑞氣擋馬前？
正花高檯白：槐陰樹下曾有約，特送麟兒到此間。
小生白：呵！原來是仙姬之言！

（第三枝：俺只見、生唱）
俺只見騰騰紫霧下青霄；
忙下馬，
躬身拜倒，
緣來^{89}是仙姬來到此！
相會在今朝，
慢自逍遙，
從別後，
常悲號。

（第四枝：步步嬌、旦唱和合唱）
成恩為你離蓬島，
紫珮雲霞罩；
仙鳳駕雲璈，

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^{88} 等=等候
^{89} 緣來=原來
仙樂琳琅；
仙姬飄然到，
撥霧見兒曹；
離情別緒知多少？

（第五枝：折桂令·生唱）
念鄙人守窮廬陋巷無聊；
爲父先遊孝義名高；
感上蒼念吾行孝，
多感仙姬與我配合鸞交；
身沐恩情厚；
爲母劬勞；
感仙姬織絹恩情，
三年償，
不滿了；
百日緣少。
今日蒙寵愛，
皆因孝義高；
槐陰相會緣非少！

註：食住^{90}乙尺工尺乙五起大相思鑼鼓，生兩望，七姐則由高檯分衣、雜邊落，勾
花開門，埋正面檯一條蛇企定^{91}，一二兩仙姬俏步開台口，一拜二拜俏步走埋生處
，生左右一搭肩認不差，一掩門轉身穿三角，一二姬埋正面台，如上輪回至第二
、第三對，正旦如前動作，至正旦時生旦合手三才收起。

^{90} 食住=隨著
（第六枝：江水兒、旦唱）
見君塵埃中哭倒，
急陣駕霧登雲，
別時曾有言道：
望仙姬產下麟兒，
送與君家懷抱。

註：旦在唱此時，三花將仔送來正旦交與生。

（第七枝：落雁兒、生接仔後唱）
見此子不由人多歡笑；
是吾家百年後宗枝靠，
見此子眉清目秀，
見此子一貌飄飄。
怎奈他哭哭啼啼；
不由人煩惱惱惡嘆。
望仙姬容哀告，
聽著，
恐怕你去後，
誰襁褓？
你去後，
誰襁褓？
（第八枝：倖倖令、旦唱）
冤家全不曉彩金縷紉裳，
付與孩兒撫養著；
只恐怕新情好舊情淡，
新情好舊情淡。

註：一指生面介。

（第九枝：鳳來儀、生唱）
望仙姬，
望仙姬恕罪多，
多念鄙人無知錯過。
實只望再同歡笑，
又誰知失負美多嬌娥？
對蒼天盟告了；
心感這恩德，
深如海、山重高，
深如海、山重高。

（第十枝：乘長風、旦唱）
笑君家言語顛到，
休得要貪心志望高；
吾本是上界金鳥，
再休想鳥同巢，
再休想鳥同巢。
（第十一枝：下江南、生唱）
望仙姬嘱儿曹，
望仙姬嘱儿曹，
休啼哭、
免悲号；
只望他长大成人爵祿高，
休得要多添烦恼；
俺自有吉星高照，
管教他青雲早步，
但願身登廊廟。

註：旦由雜邊過衣邊與生換位。

（第十二枝：園林好、生唱）
俺呵！呵！但只願官高壽高明高利高，
也不枉，
也不枉仙姬懷抱；
賢良忠孝人間少。

註：式在此時帶馬與生上馬，包一才，旦拗腰，生用鞭兜介。

（第十三枝：清江引、旦唱）
別卻凡塵道，
直上玉霄宮，
遊遍蓬萊島；
但願父子們享榮華到老。

註：當第十三枝開始時，式與堂旦叫一聲“哦呵”，引小生入場。正旦則轉身背台一揮袖搭肩由衣邊入，各仙姬當正旦過位時，由正面台向衣邊開行企定，待正旦轉身入場，全體卸入。

註：（第一日、正本）照此段“送子”吹齊“由I-13”及反宮裝便合。
註：（第二日）照此由第一枝吹至第十三枝便是。

註：（第三日）照此由第一、二、三、六、七、八、十一、十二、十三，共九枝便是。

註：（第四日）照此由第一、二、三、六、七、十三，共六枝便是。

小送子
由第一枝吹完說白：
狀元馬不前。
生白：奉旨遊金街，狀元馬上來。
旦白：槐陰分別後，特送小英孩。
生白：呵！原來仙姬下瑤台。

註：即起第三枝吹兩句，再落第五枝中板，第十三枝便合。

Appendix 19
Photographs

1. Images of the Seven Hands and Eight Arms (Qishou Babei), Master Huaguang and Guanyin (18 December 1996, the Huaguang Temple, Tai O, Lantau Island, Hong Kong)

Large Red Image: the Seven Hands and Eight Arms

Small Red Image: Master Huaguang

White Image: Guanyin
2. A Front View of the Huaguang Temple (18 December 1996, Tai O, Lantau Island, Hong Kong)
3. A Front View of the Temple of Lord Tan (Tangong) (16 November 1996, Wong Nai Chung Gap, Hong Kong Island)
4. The Image of Lord Tan (16 November, the Temple of Lord Tan, Wong Nai Chung Gap, Hong Kong Island)

The large image of Lord Tan was placed at the upper story of the shrine. It was dressed in red gown embroidered with dragon.
5. The Shrine of Master Huaguang (28 November 1996, the Headquarters of the Bat Wo Institute of Cantonese Opera, Sham Shui Po, Kowloon, Hong Kong)
6. A View of the Shrine on Master Huaguang’s Birthday (8 November 1996, the Haicheng Restaurant, Tsim Sha Tsui, Kowloon, Hong Kong)
7. The Eight Immortal Maids in the Performance of the Great Birthday Greetings at Fragrant Flower Mountain (*Xianghuashan Da Heshou*) on Huaguang's Birthday (8 November 1996, the Haicheng Restaurant, Tsim Sha Tsui, Kowloon, Hong Kong)

Ms. Wang Chaoqun, who impersonated Guanyin, stood at stage front.
Fragrant Flower Mountain on Huaguang’s 1996 Birthday

Mr. Cai Qilin, who was selected to portray Liu Haixian, stood at stage center. He wore
red quadripartite beard, a small square pavilion shaped hat, a green robe and a pair of
black boots. Moreover, he held a big golden coin (made of paper) and a horsehair whisk
in his hands.
10. A Scene from the Performance of the Celestial Maid’s Great Offering of a Son (*Tianji Da Songzi*) on Huaguang’s Birthday (8 November 1996, the Haicheng Restaurant, Tsim Sha Tsui, Kowloon, Hong Kong)
11. A Scene from the Performance of the *Tiao Jiaguan* (Dance to Promotion) (15 December 1996, the Rite for Peace and Purification Held Every Ten Years by the Tianxin Village of Shatin, the Year of Bingzi)