



UPCOMING CCSC EVENTS



In Search of Tea: Chinese Tea Appreciation and Brewing Workshop. City University of Hong Kong, February 20, 2016. Ms. Katherine Hung of Taetea, and the Chinese Tea Culture International Tea Exchange Association, demonstrates tea brewing.

DEAR FRIENDS,

Just recently CCSC, in collaboration with the Chinese Tea Culture International Tea Exchange Association, took part in a Chinese tea appreciation and brewing workshop that was organized by City University of HK students who have been working with CCSC as part of their final year project. This workshop was a wonderful example of how the younger generation can actively take initiative in the learning and sharing of cultural information and traditions.

One of the main focuses of CCSC is education. We believe a truly educated individual is someone who conscientiously works to better himself/herself and the life of others, and someone who understands and appreciates traditions, cultures and differences. Tea drinking was one such way that Chinese scholars created a space and time for themselves to think and reflect on life and how they can better themselves and society.

Allow us to share a quote with you from the Chinese classic *Higher Education* (大學), as translated by Mr. Gu Hong Ming: *"The object of a Higher Education is to bring out the intelligent moral power of our nature; to make a new and better society; and to enable us to abide in the highest excellence. When a man has a standard of excellence before him, and only then, will he have a fixed and definite purpose; and with a fixed and definite purpose, and only then, will he be able to have peace and tranquility of mind; with tranquility of mind, and only then, will he be able to have peace and tranquility of soul; with peace and serenity of soul, and only then, can he devote himself to deep, serious thinking and reflection; and it is only by deep, serious thinking and reflection that a man can attain true culture...."*

We hope that you will join CCSC this year as we strive to create educational opportunities and spaces that allow us to attain culture that can bring out our excellence!

15 March 2016

Heaven and Earth Within A Square Inch: A 2-talk series on Chinese Seal Carving

Part 1: The Function of Seals and their Societal Application

方寸之間見天地第一講
印章功能與社會應用

Dr. Lau Ho Man will talk on the origin and development of Chinese seals, covering the origin of ancient bronze seals, and a general developmental picture of how seal carvings became a literati pursuit in the Ming and Qing dynasties.

12 April 2016

Heaven and Earth Within A Square Inch: A 2-talk series on Chinese Seal Carving

Part 2: From Shang to Qing: The Evolution of Seal Types and Styles

方寸之間見天地第二講
由商至清：古璽印式和風格的演變

The second session of the two-talk series by Dr. Lau Ho Man will focus on the classification of the differences and similarities of the representational styles and forms of seals from the Shang to the Qing dynasty.

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INTERVIEW

Wang Kit Ching provides a peek into what goes on behind the scenes for a Cantonese Opera actress.



How did you become involved in the world of Cantonese opera?

I guess you can say that I am someone who is quite traditional and old-fashioned; I have always been interested in traditional Chinese culture and history. Cantonese opera is not merely a form of theater, but is also an art that is richly saturated with distinguishing qualities of Chinese culture. My favorite opera productions have more than just beautiful costumery and elegant body movements—a key point is if the actors are able to embody and reflect the spirit of what it means to be a Chinese, traditionally.

It can be said that opera has its origins in real life but is greater than real life; Cantonese opera could be said to be greater than real life, but also isn't separated from or removed from how real life is like.

As a full-time Cantonese opera actress, what does your normal day look like? How is the time in your day allocated?

Time slots for rehearsal and performances are scheduled differently according to the specific production. Usually, between performances and rehearsals, I will take time to meet with my teacher for singing lessons.

Friends sometimes ask me how I can find the time to memorize all the lyrics and the script, given my packed schedule. The time that I have to actually sit down and memorize songs is limited, so whenever I get a new script, I will do my best to save time by recording the song lyrics and then listen to it while I am cleaning, brushing my teeth, washing my face, or showering. People are familiar with the saying, “three minutes on stage is equal to ten years of preparation off-stage,” but the reality of the hard work that happens off-stage cannot be easily understood by the audience.

What is your preparation process for a role? Have you ever encountered any difficulties in preparing for and portraying a role?

I will first read the script from beginning to end, to try to see what the approach and starting point for my role should be. Preparation time and method is different with each script, and each script usually has some sort of historical basis and literary foundation to research. For example just [last] year, I really enjoyed performing in *Dream of the Red Chamber* (紅樓夢), where I was the fadan (the main female character, the “flower” or young belle), Lin Daiyu. This role required more research than any role I've had in recent years. Beyond reading the novel, I also watched the 50 plus episodes of the mainland China TV series adaptation. But later I discovered that the character of Lin Daiyu as portrayed in the TV series and as written in the opera script aren't similar at all, but studying the different portrayals allowed me to carefully consider what the defining characteristics of Lin Daiyu should be.

What have you gained from Cantonese opera? What has it taught you?

Cantonese opera has given me a foundation of confidence. When a Cantonese opera actor can handle the thousand pairs of eyes that are on them on stage, then they can more easily exhibit the fruits of their rehearsals and practice.

I also think that Cantonese opera has made me more firm and persistent. I can confirm that being a Cantonese opera is challenging! For example, when performing in shows that take place outdoors during traditional festivals in hot weather, it can be quite easy for the performers to get heatstroke. When the audience, who despite getting

to fan themselves and drink cold soda, are still feeling hot, the performers are having to deal with several layers of clothing. Add to that the heat of the powerful stage lights, and the chances of heatstroke are quite high.

Another thing I have gained from Cantonese opera is the ability to manage emotions. It is impossible for people to always be happy 365 days of the year. I remember one year where I had to perform 14 days in a row, and it just so happened that the first day of the performances was also my grandmother's burial. My grandmother lived with us when growing up, and as my parents had to work, she practically raised me, so it was a big emotional hit for me when she passed away. I'm actually very grateful, because the leader of the troupe knew that I had the night vigil, and told me that I didn't need to act in the play that night, and also helped me to find a replacement for my role for the next day, so that I could be there for the burial—because it was a small-scale production, it was easier to find a Cantonese opera student to act as stand-in. When others heavy of heart had the opportunity to go home and rest after the burial, that was when I had to commence my 14 day-run of the production.

Do you hope your future performances or productions will be true to traditional Cantonese opera, or do you want to create something new?

Traditional Cantonese opera isn't really the direction that I want to develop per se, because this is something that I already do every day. Instead, I am interested in seeing how to achieve a balance between traditional and more modern interpretations of Cantonese Opera. In striking a balance, will we be prioritizing the tension and emotional levels of Cantonese opera, or will we put traditional opera skills at the forefront? This is a question that can't be discussed with just a few words. But speaking for myself and my studio, I hope that each performance can attract new audiences. The reality is that the regular audience is an aging demographic, so how can we attract new and younger people? Since graduating from acting school six or seven years ago, I think I've been to no less than four to five hundred different venues to promote Cantonese Opera. We used to joke that there's no middle school student that hasn't seen me and my fellow actors...if they haven't seen us, then that school probably doesn't have any connection with the real world! Each time that we perform at a different school, we hope to change the way that students look at Cantonese Opera. We do our best to introduce Cantonese Opera in an interesting manner. What we really hope for is the day that these students will actually take the initiative and be willing to pay for a ticket and tell their mom, "I won't be coming home for dinner tonight, because I'll be going to watch Cantonese Opera!"

For the full version of the interview, please visit our website!



UPCOMING

“Heaven and Earth Within A Square Inch”

A two-talk series on Chinese Seal Carving

Part 1: The Function of Seals and their Societal Application

Speaker: Dr. Lau Ho Man

Language: Cantonese

Tuesday, March 15th, 2016

7:00-8:30pm

Chinese Cultural Studies Center

The first session of this 2-talk series will be on the origin and development of Chinese seals, covering the origin of ancient bronze-casted seals, their function, classifications and representational style and a general developmental picture of how seal carvings became a literati pursuit in the Ming and Qing dynasties. To provide context for the artistic development of seals, the talk will also cover the historical framework and related elements such as the social and cultural background of each specific period and how these became decisive factors.

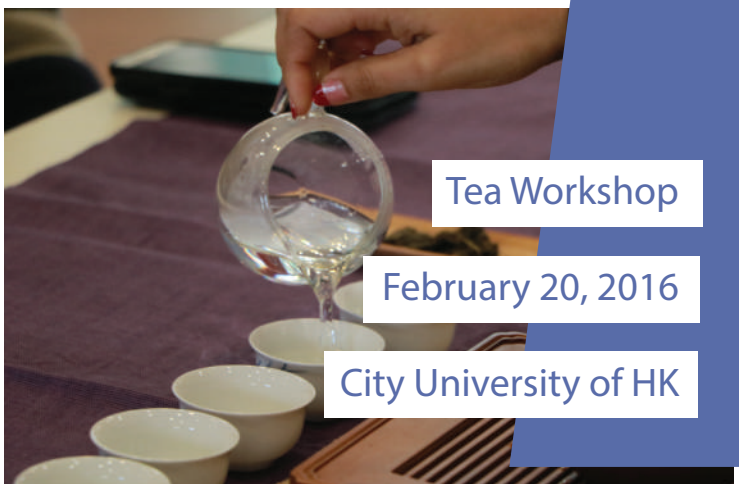
Dr. Lau Ho Man is currently a part-time lecturer at The Chinese University of Hong Kong on The Art of Chinese Seals and Appreciation of Art.”

PHOTO HIGHLIGHTS

“The Chinese Art of Tea”

Talk by Oi Ling Chiang

December 18, 2015



Tea Workshop

February 20, 2016

City University of HK