

**University of Alberta**

**The Social Functions of Cantonese Opera in  
the Edmonton Chinese Community 1890-2009:  
From Sojourners to Settlers**

by

**Helen Kwan Yee Cheung**

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## Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my beloved parents  
LO Po Yiu 勞甫堯 and YU King Yuk 余琮玉  
for bringing Cantonese opera into my life  
and for inspiring me to pursue life-long learning.

## Abstract

This thesis expands prior academic studies on the social context of Cantonese opera by analyzing its social functions and the role it plays in the Edmonton Chinese community from 1890 to 2009. This study affirms the versatility of Cantonese opera as an art form that has been transmitted overseas and continued its presence and vibrancy throughout the history of Chinese immigration in Edmonton. This study uncovers the social relevance of Cantonese opera in meeting changing community needs and in fortifying the changing Chinese self-identity from sojourners to settlers through three historical episodes.

As such, this study adds knowledge to understanding Chinese life experiences previously unexplored in Edmonton and contributes to the overall body of knowledge on prairie Chinese and on Cantonese opera in an overseas setting. This study has implications for further research or comparative studies on the socio-cultural life of Chinese in Canada and cultural globalization.

## Acknowledgement

I wish to express my heartfelt thanks to my two supervisors, Professor Jennifer Jay and Professor Jenn-Shann Lin, for their academic guidance and unreserved advice. Both have been a constant source of encouragement and inspiration throughout this study.

My sincere appreciation goes to friends in Edmonton and Calgary, especially those who donated their much-treasured Cantonese opera photographs and valuable primary source materials from the distant and recent past to the University through my collection project. Jimmy Gin, Jimmy Lim, Marvin Mah, Stanley Mah, Ellen Mah, Frank Gee, Sein Mah and Ned Lee have been particularly helpful in sharing their personal experiences and knowledge of Cantonese opera activities in Edmonton between the 1950s and 1990s. They have also helped validate some primary source materials. Special thanks go to Robert Desmarais of the University of Alberta Bruce Peel Special Collections Library, the Glenbow Archives and the City of Edmonton Archives for allowing me to use primary source materials from their repositories.

I am grateful to Tsui Yiu Kwong, Dr. Brian Evans, Dr. Robert Desjardins and Dr. Reinhild Boehm for their intellectual challenges. My Cantonese opera Masters Wai Lam, Dawei Chen and Hoi Sang Ileong have been instrumental in helping me understand and gain insight into the art of Cantonese opera and the true meaning of a performer's lifelong commitment. Last but most importantly, I am indebted to my husband, Bill, for his ongoing encouragement and unwavering support.

## Table of Content

Introduction	1
Chapter One: Cantonese Opera as an art form and its adaptation to the overseas setting of Edmonton	13
Chapter Two: The social function of homeland politics in the era of exclusion before 1950: The sojourners' mentality	31
Chapter Three: The social function of community cohesion in the era of transition in the 1950s and 1960s: From sojourners to settlers	48
Chapter Four: The social function of integration into society in the era of inclusion from 1970 - 2009: The settlers' mentality	70
Conclusion	98
Bibliography	104
Appendices	129

## Notes on Conventions

- Where the Figures cite ‘Collection Project with the Bruce Peel Special Collections Library’ as the source, it means that the item is from the inventory of primary source materials that I have collected and turned over to the Bruce Peel Special Collections Library.
- All the charts are my creation based on data collected from various sources, such as: Statistics Canada, Census of Canada, Executives or members of opera clubs, ephemeras, the Chinese Benevolent Association publications and the Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission.
- Chinese names follow the tradition of placing the last name before the given name and all last names are capitalized except for in-text citations.
- English translation for names of Cantonese opera performers are taken from the HKMDB (Hong Kong Movie Data Base 香港影庫) or according to local conventions of Hong Kong and Guangzhou.
- English name of individuals, organizations and places will be followed by Chinese names where applicable and only at first occurrence.
- Where there is no transliteration of names and operatic terms, the pinyin system<sup>1</sup> is used.
- All Chinese characters are in traditional Chinese except when simplified Chinese is used in the original text cited. English and Chinese translations of mine are in italics placed within single quotation marks.

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<sup>1</sup> Today, the pinyin system has become a popular computer input method for entering Chinese texts. The Chinese developed the pinyin system in the late 1950s and it was officially adopted in Mainland China in 1979. It was also accepted as an international standard for Romanizing modern Chinese (ISO-7098: 1991). Since 1997, the US Library of Congress accepted it as the new standard system for their Chinese files (Learn NC Editions).

## List of Figures

Figure 1: Map of the Pearl River Delta area in the southern tip of China	2
Figure 2: Location of the City of Edmonton in the Province of Alberta, Canada	3
Figure 3: Poster of a performance by the Phoenix Cantonese Opera Troupe	17
Figure 4: Performers' hand signals for Cantonese Opera musical tunes	21
Figure 5: Cantonese Opera in Southern Alberta 1910-1929	33
Figure 6: Cantonese opera staged at the Moose Hall in Edmonton in 1931 by the Edmonton Chinese Dramatic Club	38
Figure 7: 1948 Cantonese opera in Edmonton: CHAN Shu Liu, Mary WONG	41
Figure 8: 1948 Cantonese opera musicians in Edmonton	42
Figure 9: 1935 Chinese float in Edmonton Exhibition parade	44
Figure 10: A 1952 Cantonese opera staged by the Edmonton Chinese Youth Club	55
Figure 11: A 1953 Cantonese opera in Calgary by the Jin Wah Sing Musical Society	58
Figure 12: A 1953 Cantonese opera in Calgary: Irrelevant backdrop	59
Figure 13: A 1969 Cantonese opera held at the Victoria Composite High School Theatre	63
Figure 14: Program booklet of "The Butterfly Lovers" held on April 3, 2004 at the Victoria Composite High School theatre	82

Figure 15: A group photo at the end of the performance showcasing a range of grandiose costumes, musicians and volunteers	83
Figure 16: Stage effects: “Mystery of the Imperial Decanter” held at the Northern Alberta Jubilee Auditorium by the Sound of Opera Society on October 15, 2006	84
Figure 17: Part of the cast for “Prime Minister of Six States 六國封相” presented by the Hua Yi Students’ Association on September 29, 2007 at the Northern Alberta Jubilee Auditorium: youth involvement	85
Figure 18: A program booklet in Chinese and English of the “Mystery of the Imperial Decanter”	87
Figure 19: Singing session in the club house at Chinese New Year	89
Figure 20: 1986 Hung Fung Athletic Club of Edmonton 20 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary Cantonese opera singing performance at a restaurant	90
Figure 21: Cantonese opera musical ensemble performance staged by the Chinese Dramatic Club on Canada Day - July 1, 1986 at the Edmonton Chinatown Multicultural Centre	91
Figure 22: A 1982 post-performance photograph of the Guangzhou Cantonese Opera Troupe with organizers and volunteers at the Northern Alberta Jubilee Auditorium	94



## List of Charts

Chart 1: Chinese Population of Edmonton 1911-1941	31
Chart 2: Chinese Population of Edmonton 1941-1961	53
Chart 3: Chinese Population of Edmonton 1961-1971	61
Chart 4: Chinese Population of Edmonton 1971-2006	72
Chart 5: Cantonese opera and singing clubs in Edmonton by year and by number of clubs founded 1890 - 2009	74
Chart 6: Edmonton Chinese community organizations by types as at 2013	75
Chart 7: Use of charitable casino proceeds by number of Cantonese opera clubs and by activities and administrative items as at March 2012	77

## List of Appendices

Appendix 1: Chinese newspaper clippings on the collection project with Bruce Peel Special Collections Library in The Chinese Journal dated October 13, 2011.	129
Appendix 2: Cantonese opera repertoires in the 1950s and 1960s	131
Appendix 3: Cantonese opera and singing clubs in Edmonton by year founded	132
Appendix 4: List of Cantonese Opera Clubs in Edmonton by year of first-time use of casino proceeds to fund Cantonese opera activities and administrative items	133
Appendix 5: A Compiled list of Edmonton Chinese Community and Cantonese Opera Organizations 1917 – 2010	134
Appendix 6: List of Activities of the Edmonton Cantonese Opera Associations and Music Clubs	137

## Introduction

Cantonese opera as a cultural practice and performance artistry was recognized by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization when it was inscribed onto the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2009 (UNESCO)<sup>1</sup>. It is one of about three hundred sixty regional operas of China that shares many repertoires and performance conventions with other genres, for example: Beijing opera, Chaozhou opera, Shanghai Yueju, Sichuan opera and others. Cantonese opera is known for its flamboyant costumes, painted faces, highly-stylized operatic movements, high-pitched falsetto singing and the deafening sound of drums and gongs from the music ensemble. It is commonly known as daxi or Grand Opera amongst the plebeian and yueju in scholarly literatures (Yung 2010, 7).

Cantonese opera is a popular and important form of entertainment and cultural practice in the Pearl River Delta area in the province of Guangdong at the southern tip of China. This area includes the four counties of Taishan, Xinhui, Kaiping, Enping and Hong Kong where the majority of the Chinese in Edmonton originated prior to the early 1990s (See Figure 1 on the next page).

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<sup>1</sup> Kun opera, which is the oldest form of Chinese opera, was inscribed in 2008 and Beijing opera was inscribed in 2010.



Figure 1: Map of the Pearl River Delta area in the southern tip of China.

Source: Wikipedia China Guangdong location map.svg

Note: The following have been inserted onto a blank map from Wikipedia: a directional arrow, the locations of the four counties inside a large circle, Hong Kong inside a small circle, Guangzhou and Foshan.

Cantonese opera is delivered in Cantonese or the Yue dialect spoken by the vast majority in the Pearl River Delta area. An integral part of spoken Cantonese is the use of colloquial vocabularies. Cantonese opera performances involved local ballads and the extensive use of such colloquial vocabularies in operatic dialogues and monologues. As such, the genre appeals to the plebeian. It is generally perceived as popular culture and a lowbrow art form compared to the literary and refined art form of Kun opera.

The continued presence and vibrancy of Cantonese opera in the community throughout the history and settlement of Chinese immigration in Edmonton prompted this study. My thesis analyzes Cantonese opera in an overseas setting and contends that it played a number of social functions in meeting the changing community needs within the changing Canadian socio-political milieu and in manifesting the changing Chinese self-identity from sojourners to settlers from 1890 to the end of 2009 (See Figure 2 for the location of Edmonton, Alberta, Canada).



Figure 2: Location of the City of Edmonton in the Province of Alberta, Canada

Source: Free US and World Map.com

Note: A circle has been inserted to highlight the location of the City of Edmonton.

The period of study starts with 1890 because that is the year when the first Chinese arrived in Edmonton (Evans 27). 2009 is used as the end period to align with the inscription of Cantonese opera onto the world intangible cultural heritage list which marks the pinnacle in the history of Cantonese opera. It is also to reflect a fuller picture of the evolution of Cantonese opera in Edmonton. This end period also covers the emerging interest in Beijing opera as the source of immigration shifted from Hong Kong to China after the early 1990s. It is important to mention Beijing opera as it may eventually compete for and share the stage with Cantonese opera as the Chinese population pattern changes.

Edmonton is selected for this study because it is the capital city of the province of Alberta where Cantonese opera is very vibrant and local opera clubs have an extensive network across Canada with cities such as Vancouver, Toronto, Calgary, Winnipeg and Regina. Most importantly, Edmonton has a long history of Cantonese opera closely linked to the local Chinese immigration history and is a research area previously unexplored.

This study is motivated by my interest and involvement in this performing art. As a child growing up in the Cantonese-speaking Hong Kong, I was fascinated by the colourful costumes, intrigued by the painted faces, captivated by the storyline, and mesmerized by the singing of Cantonese opera. My academic interest developed after an extensive research was done in preparation for a “Chinese history and Cantonese opera 粵曲面面聽” radio talk

show that I hosted and aired in 2004<sup>2</sup>. It was repeated in two subsequent years upon popular demand. Research effort at that time resulted in discovering minimal public records and no prior academic studies on Cantonese opera and its interconnectivity with the Chinese community in Edmonton. There were only a few archived Cantonese opera photographs from the 1930s and 1940s and none from 1950 onward. Yet, the community was abuzz with Cantonese opera activities, especially in the last sixty years, as confirmed by my interviewees and my observation. In the last 95 years, Edmonton saw the growth of Cantonese opera clubs from one in 1917 to twenty, with sixteen still active as at the end of 2009. The precipitous growth in the 1990s and the incremental growth after year 2000 will be analyzed in Chapter Four.

This study uses a multi-disciplinary approach (history, sociology, anthropology) and the following research methods: ethnohistorical research method, analyses of primary source materials, literature review, interviews, participatory observation and field trips to China. Secondary sources include books, journals, academic theses, government records, census information, newspaper clippings and internet resources. Field trips to Hong Kong and Guangzhou were made to validate information and to access primary source historical materials on Cantonese opera not available in Edmonton.

As an amateur performer and having lived in Edmonton since 1979, I am able to offer more indepth and insightful participatory observations. I am also

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<sup>2</sup> This weekly series was aired on World FM 101.9 in 2004 as 1-hour clips and repeated on air as ½-hour clips in 2005 and 2006 upon popular demand.

privileged to have had the opportunity to meet with seven Edmonton seniors who were directly involved in Cantonese opera as performers, playwrights or organizers after their arrival in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Most of them are still involved in Cantonese opera in various capacities. They all expressed great delight in being able to share information as a means to preserve the history of the Chinese and the cultural practice of Cantonese opera in Edmonton.

This thesis opens up a new territory of research in Edmonton and unveils a small part of a much larger collection of over 500 valuable primary source materials on Cantonese opera that tells the life stories and experiences of the Chinese in a prairie city over the last nine-five years. Primary source materials were sparse for this study at the time when the topic came to mind. In order to garner primary source materials for this study, I conceived and initiated a collection project in late 2010. I approached the Bruce Peel Special Collections Library of the University of Alberta and the Alberta Chinese Cultural Society in Edmonton for support. This led to the formation of my collection project.

The collection effort spanned over a year and a half from 2010 and resulted in an inventory of over two thousand primary source materials on the life experiences of the Chinese in Edmonton. This inventory includes over five hundred Cantonese opera photographs, monographs, ephemeras and four original librettos, all of which formed the basis for this study.

The actual collection of materials related to Cantonese opera was done on a pro bono basis through my persistent individual solicitation and personal connections in the community. I led a small team of volunteers to collect other



materials related to the Chinese community in general such as head tax certificates, war bonds, old books and photographs of daily life experiences. All collected materials were handed over to the Bruce Peel Special Collections Library to become part of their Chinese collection. In 2011, the Library and the Alberta Chinese Cultural Society launched a featured article in the local newspaper, the Chinese Journal 光華報, to generate public awareness (See Appendix 1).

The Library is so pleased with the outcome of my collection project that it has planned an exhibition on Cantonese opera in Edmonton as part of their “Chinese Experience in Canada” series to be held in the summer of 2014. I have agreed to serve as their guest curator for this exhibition which will be presented in English and Chinese. It is hopeful that the exhibition will enhance intercultural understanding and attract more scholarly interest in pursuing this area of research.

While academic interest and scholarly studies on Cantonese opera are slowly on the rise, those with Canadian content continued to be sparse despite the vibrancy of this performing art in Canadian urban centres such as Vancouver, Toronto, Edmonton, Calgary, Montreal, Winnipeg and Regina. A national search on various library databases resulted in one research paper, seven monographs and two Masters’ theses.<sup>3</sup> While they all examined the socio-cultural context of Cantonese opera, the majority is about activities in Vancouver

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<sup>3</sup> These include: Hoe (1976), Li (1984), Huang and Thrasher (1993), Johnson (1996, 2005), Kwong and Chiu (1995), Nipp (1983), Li (1987), Sebryk (1995) and Ng (2005-06). Details are in the bibliography.

and Toronto with the exception of Sebryk about Victoria and Hoe about Edmonton and Calgary.

The paper by Huang and Thrasher is a review of Cantonese opera in the context of musical societies in Vancouver. They concluded that the older style of Cantonese music was well preserved in Vancouver but mainly amongst the older immigrants and not the youths. The paper is a valuable record of the socio-cultural life of the Chinese community in Vancouver. Ng's article analyzes Cantonese opera in the context of theatres as transnational business in the exclusion era prior to 1947. While he did not detail the characteristics of Cantonese opera as an art form, I support his observation that studying Cantonese opera will help us understand the Chinese community in Canada. Johnson has two articles on Cantonese opera. One is on the historical development of Cantonese opera in Vancouver from the 1800s to the 1900s and the other is on Cantonese opera costumes. She discusses Cantonese opera as an art form in its social context but only underscored the genre's function in meeting social and welfare needs of the Chinese in Vancouver. The paper on costumes focuses on Cantonese opera as a performing art of symbolisms.

The paper by Kwong and Chiu provides a synoptic overview of Cantonese opera traditions, costumes, music, operatic conventions and the staging of opera in Toronto and Vancouver. Nipp's article in 1983 describes the three major Cantonese opera societies and activities in the 1930s and 40s. Both articles are short and descriptive but not analytical. Li's M.A. thesis is about Cantonese opera in Toronto from a historical perspective. He outlines how the

function of Cantonese opera shifted from being political to recreational. He argues that Cantonese opera is a popular recreation that plays an import role in the cultural life of the dominant Cantonese-speaking population in Toronto (Li 192). Sebryk's M.A. thesis argues that the role of Cantonese opera in Victoria went beyond entertainment to preserving the Chinese culture, meeting cultural needs, and slowing down the assimilation process to reaffirm the ethnic identity of the Chinese (Sebryk ii).

Hoe's research paper analyzes the structural changes of the Chinese communities in Calgary and Edmonton within the context of their immigration history. He argues that changes within the two Chinese communities are closely linked to the socio-political, economic and historical development of the mainstream society. As Cantonese opera was beyond his scope of research, he only documented a few activities related to the club. He noted 1919 as the year when the Edmonton Chinese Dramatic Club 警世鐘劇社 was formed. This is contrary to my findings through a newspaper article in the Edmonton Chinese News in the early 1980s written by Jimmy GIN 甄炳沾 who verified that the founding year should be 1917. Mr. GIN came to Edmonton as a teenager in the early 1950s and became involved with this club since his arrival. He confirmed that the club has been using 1917 as the basis to celebrate their anniversaries. I have therefore adopted 1917 as the year for the founding of this club.

I find all the aforementioned studies most helpful in giving me a solid foundation to develop this study and to formulate my arguments. My thesis

analyzes a wider range of social functions to argue the interrelationship of Cantonese opera and the Chinese in Edmonton within the context of their immigration history and their changing self-identity from sojourners to settlers over a period of close to a hundred and twenty years in three historical phases.

The historical period is divided into three phases because each has a distinctly different set of community characteristics within a different socio-political milieu and with one distinct Cantonese opera function that surfaces prominently. As Cantonese opera activities in the three historical phases are analyzed, the changing mentality of the Chinese from sojourners to settlers is underscored and evidenced by the extent to which the Chinese share or involve the mainstream in this cultural practice. I argue that the lesser degree of sharing with the mainstream society reflects a stronger sojourner's mentality whereas the opposite is true for a settler's mentality. It is based on the premise that sharing arises out of a sense of belonging to the overall community — a place called 'home' for the settlers.

The three observed historical phases are: era of exclusion before 1950, era of transition between the 1950s and 1960s, and era of inclusion from 1970 onward. The era of exclusion was marked by the head tax legislation, the 1923 Chinese Immigration Act, a homogeneous Chinese community and the Cantonese opera function of homeland politics. The era of transition was marked by the repeal of the Chinese Immigration Act, a relatively homogeneous community reinforced through family reunification and the function of

community cohesion. The era of inclusion was marked by inclusive legislations, a heterogeneous community and the function of integration into society.

This thesis expands prior academic studies on the social context of Cantonese opera by building on the theoretical frameworks of Bell Yung and Alan P. Merriam on the social functions of Cantonese opera and of music, respectively. These functions include entertainment, communication-and-education, ritual activities, integration to society and symbolic representation (Yung 2010, 2; Merriam 219-245). Analyses of these functions are expanded to include three other functions I observed in the Edmonton Chinese community: homeland politics, altruism and community cohesion. These are unique to Cantonese opera in an overseas setting where the socio-cultural and socio-political milieus are different from its place of origin in China.

To provide context and background, Chapter One gives a brief overview of Cantonese opera as an art form and cultural practice. This chapter underscores its adaptive nature in an overseas setting to lay the ground for analyzing the evolution of Cantonese opera in Edmonton. Chapter Two features the social functions of entertainment, symbolic representation, homeland politics, communication-and-education and altruism to argue that they express the sojourners' mentality of the Chinese in Edmonton. Chapter Three argues that Cantonese opera functioned to meet changing community needs in the family reunification process and fortified the shifting mentality of the Chinese from sojourners to settlers within a relatively homogeneous community. Chapter Four analyzes Cantonese opera activities in a heterogeneous Chinese community after

1970 and argues that the social functions of entertainment, altruism and integration into society express the settlers' mentality of the Chinese in Edmonton. The concluding chapter gives a synopsis of the evolution of Cantonese opera and how this cultural practice functioned to meet changing community needs as the Chinese transitioned from sojourners to settlers through its history of immigration and settlement in Edmonton from 1890 to 2009 as I have contended. As this study is a first of its kind, implications for further research are identified. In the process of creating my charts, I have compiled raw data into a number of tables that I am appending to this thesis in order to share valuable information collected and compiled (See Appendices 2-6).

In the next chapter, I contend that the three characteristics of creativity, versatility and tenacity underscore the uniqueness of Cantonese opera as a regional art form. Cantonese opera is analyzed for its adaptability in an overseas setting and its connectivity and significance to the Chinese in Edmonton as a cultural practice to lay the foundation for my overall thesis argument.

## Chapter One: Cantonese Opera as an art form and its adaptation to the overseas setting of Edmonton

Cantonese opera has a long evolutionary history of over four hundred years in China. The exact origin of Cantonese opera is unable to be determined due to the lack of documentation. It is believed that Cantonese opera originated in Foshan of the Guangdong Province in China in the Ming dynasty between 1521 and 1620 (Yu 17). While Cantonese opera originated in Foshan, Guangzhou became its stronghold in the Qing dynasty when the latter was designated the only commercial centre for external trades by an order from Emperor Qianlong in the late 1750s. At that time, the audience base consisted mainly of the trading merchants. Guangzhou had gone through a barrage of wars in the nineteenth century, such as the First Opium War (1839-42), the Second Opium War (1856-60) and the Taiping Rebellion (1850-64). The city subsequently lost its monopoly as the trading post to the West.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, many performers moved from Guangzhou to Hong Kong, fleeing from social disorder and in search of employment and a better life. Hong Kong was a logical place to go because of its close proximity of less than 180 kilometres away. Cantonese opera flourished in these two cities and eventually matured into a regional opera after a series of operatic reforms in the 1920s and 1930s followed by a long and continuous process of modernization and evolution.

Cantonese opera is commonly called *daxi* or Grand opera for its grandiose presentation and *Yueju* because Cantonese or the Yue dialect is used

in performances. The one description of Cantonese opera cherished by many is ‘Red bean of the South’ fondly coined by China’s Premier Zhou Enlai in his second speech at the 1956 Shiwuguan Symposium 《十五貫》座談會 after viewing the Cantonese opera “Sou shuyuan” 搜書院 (Zhou). Red bean is a product of southern China and a symbol of love and friendship associated with endearment and fond memories. For the Chinese in Edmonton, such a term carries a much deeper and more profound meaning of homeland nostalgia. Such nostalgic sentiment is one of the driving forces for the sustainability and vibrancy of this cultural practice in the city.

Cantonese opera is one of about three hundred sixty regional operas in China that shares many repertoires and performance conventions with other operas. It is known for its unique features of flamboyant costumes, painted faces, highly-stylized operatic movements, high-pitched falsetto singing and the deafening sound of drums and gongs from the music ensemble. These visual and aural elements are merged with dramatized historical episodes and characters, legends and folklores into various repertoires to captivate the imagination of the audience. They also provide a sense of “shared history, a common body of myths and legends, and a set of social and ethical mores with which to forge a cultural identity (Yung 2010, ix).” The repertoires can be broadly divided into the wen or civil<sup>4</sup> and the wu or military categories with themes of loyalty, filial piety, benevolence, righteousness, chastity and romantic love. These themes are

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<sup>4</sup> Wen performances are slower in pace compared to wu which usually have fighting scenes. Wen performances involve water-sleeves whereas wu do not. Their singing styles and operatic movements are very different as well.



instrumental in forging and sustaining traditional customs, ethics, values and social norms in the Chinese culture. With the visual, aural and thematic elements being uniquely Chinese, Cantonese opera in an overseas setting such as Edmonton becomes a “cultural visibility” that marks those practising them as Chinese (Wickberg 135).

Cantonese opera is a form of popular entertainment for the people in the Pearl River Delta area where Cantonese or the Yue dialect is spoken by the vast majority<sup>5</sup>. Until its reform in the 1920s and 1930s, Cantonese opera is a form of “entertainment for the masses with little formalized aesthetic value attached to them (Yung 1989, 8).” It uses the Cantonese dialect in singing, monologues and dialogues. Spoken Cantonese in the opera consists of colloquial vocabularies that appeal to a very broad audience, especially the illiterate and the semi-literate who constituted the vast majority in China until the twentieth century (Yung 2010, 2). Historically, performers travelled in small boats to meander through narrow rivers to reach remote towns and villages to perform. As travelling performers, they shaped the versatile nature of Cantonese opera. The performers adapted to local situations to perform on temporary stages built of bamboos or wood in a semi-open area inside the temples or in the open field. They adapted to living and sleeping on the boat as they travel. These boats were painted red for good luck and were fondly nicknamed ‘the red boat’ and the performers were called the hongchuan zidi 红船子弟 or ‘*students of the red boat*’.

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<sup>5</sup> Yue, Hakka and Min or Shaozhou tuhua 韶州土話 are the three main dialects spoken in the province of Guangdong (Chang). Siyi is a sub-dialect spoken by the majority of Chinese in Edmonton prior to the late 1960s.

These hongchuan zidi were all males prior to the founding of the Republic of China in 1911. This was because Confucian social ethics in the Ming dynasty (1368-1643) did not allow women to perform. In the Qing dynasty, laws forbade women from performing on stage. Male performers therefore had to cross-dress to play the female roles. Following the May Fourth Movement in 1919 calling for gender equality, all-female troupes proliferated and reached its height between 1920 and 1931 in Guangzhou and Hong Kong (Huang). Mixed male-female troupes did not appear until the ban was lifted in 1933 in Hong Kong and 1936 in Guangzhou (Lee 2005, 307). In Edmonton, Cantonese opera has always been staged by male-female mixed troupes of amateurs and/or professionals. In the era of exclusion prior to 1950, it was common for males to cross-dress for female roles due to the disproportionate male/female ratio in the Chinese population. After the 1950s, cross-dressing for male or female roles was mainly due to personal preference or the individual's vocal and physical suitability. A first-in-Edmonton all-female troupe called Phoenix Cantonese Opera Troupe 鳳凰劇團 was formed in 2009 (See Figure 3). The performance involved females cross-dressing to play the male roles and males were involved as volunteers working backstage.



Figure 3: Poster of a performance by the Phoenix Cantonese Opera Troupe held on September 6, 2009 at the Edmonton Chinatown Multicultural Centre  
Source: Collection Project with the Bruce Peel Special Collections Library

The appearance of theatres in the late 1890s and early 1900s in Guangzhou and Hong Kong marked the turning point in the evolutionary history of Cantonese opera. Prior to the appearance of theatres, performances were held in the open or semi-open stages. The environment was informal and the audience was very noisy. It was a place for social gathering where people casually chatted, ate and even played a game of mahjong while the performance was going on. Loud musical accompaniments with drums and cymbals were played to overcome the noise. Performers sang in loud falsetto to amplify their voice. They acted with exaggerated movements so that the audience could see them from afar. There was hardly any aesthetic value to the performances but Cantonese opera continued to be a form of entertainment cherished by the masses. As performances moved into theatres with good acoustics, the singing

and the sounds from the drums and cymbals were toned down (Luo 71). The operatic movements became more refined with a touch of aesthetics.

In Edmonton, when Cantonese operas are staged in community halls, the audience is very noisy because the community hall is usually a hub for socializing casually. It is common for people to walk in and out of the hall or talk to friends sitting next to them without toning down their voice during the performance. When operas are staged in theatres, the audience behaves very differently. People do not walk in and out of the theatre. They socialize with friends only during the intermission. This is because the audience quickly learned to follow this Western theatre-going etiquette in Edmonton.

Cantonese opera is a creative and complex art form that has four basic and integral components: singing, operatic movements, dialogues and acrobatics. These components have to be well synchronized with the music, the role being played, the setting and the other performers through complex and highly stylized conventions such as 'patterned performance segments' and 'common performance segments'. Patterned performance segments are traditionally used to train new artists. The segments consist of fixed patterns of operatic movements tied to specified roles, singing styles, musical accompaniments and percussions, plot and related stage arrangements. Common performance segments are basic operatic movements for all role types, for example, riding the horse, attending a banquet, and visiting the dungeons (Wong, cityu.edu.hk).

All these operatic movements and gestures carry symbolic meanings that can be easily perceived by frequent opera-goers, for example: walking in a circle

means having travelled a long distance, waving a whip decorated with coloured tassels means riding a horse and lifting a foot means entering a house or a room. Cantonese opera is an opera of symbolisms expressed through gestures, operatic movements and its complex array of colours and designs in costumes, head pieces and the painted faces of the performers. These symbols work on the illusions and imagination of the audience to take them into a world of fantasy and fulfillment otherwise impossible in reality. This performing art never ceases to transcend time and space to enthrall the audience.

Cantonese opera has a strong element of music. It is part of the family of *pihuang xi* or '*pihuang drama*' (Lai J., 2; Yung 2010, x). Talented musicians have been creating new tunes and new musical instruments for accompaniment. Hundreds of tunes are used in Cantonese opera singing and can be grouped into two main categories: Siukuk 小曲 and Bongwong 梆簧.

Siukuk or small tunes are very melodic and historically linked to Kun opera. They have memorable and hummable melodies that mesmerize the audience to favour them over other kinds of tunes (Yung 2010, 12-13). Since the late 1990s and the early part of year 2000, Cantonese opera in Hong Kong incorporated tunes from Mandarin and Japanese popular songs to modernize the genre and to attract the young and the uninitiated. These new songs are quickly followed by the 'trendy' Cantonese opera singers in Edmonton. To the traditionalists, the use of such popular tunes is incompatible with Cantonese opera and therefore unacceptable. Yet, these changes indicate the flexibility of Cantonese opera as a living and creative art form.

Bongwong tunes are characterized by short melodies in couplet form with a fixed metrical framework<sup>6</sup> and a fixed cadential note<sup>7</sup>. The text is also arranged in a couplet form that may be repeated several times (Yung 2010, 12-13). One unique musical structure within the Bongwong category is its *shuochang* or storytelling system. It includes the singing of *muyu*, *nanyin*, *longzhou* and *yueou*<sup>8</sup> which are songs based on local folk culture, sung in the Cantonese dialect and orally transmitted (Yu 32-42). Today, *muyu* and *nanyin* are still being used in Cantonese opera songs or as musical interludes but *longzhou* and *yueou* are no longer in use. Cantonese opera songs always consist of a combination of different tunes from *Siukuk* and Bongwong with fixed melodies that the performers, singers and musicians are familiar with. This explains why the performers and musicians can work in tacit harmony despite improvisations made at the spur of the moment during the performance.

There are three unique characteristics that best reflect the resiliency and continued vibrancy of Cantonese opera throughout its evolutionary history in China and overseas. These characteristics are creativity, versatility and tenacity. Each will be discussed in the context of librettos, opera singing and music.

The creativity of Cantonese opera is closely linked to librettos in the early part of its evolutionary history. Prior to the era of Cantonese opera reform in the

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<sup>6</sup> A fixed metrical framework is the number and grouping of musical beats (Yung 2010, 12-13).

<sup>7</sup> A fixed cadential note is the ending note in a musical phrase (ibid.).

<sup>8</sup> The lyrics of *muyu* 木鱼 can range from literary to colloquial. *Longzhou* 龍舟 is known as the beggar's song 乞丐歌, the blind girl's song 盲妹歌 or the boat people's song 蛋家歌. The singers usually carry a long cane with a dragon boat at the top. As they sing, they will hit the small drum and gong hanging in front of their chest for rhythm. *Nanyin* 南音 is based on *muyu* and *longzhou* but hybridized with the Yangzhou *tanci* 楊州彈詞 which has a very strong folk music flavour and very expressive of the sentiments of the songs (Yu 31-42).

1920s and 1930s in Guangzhou and Hong Kong, performances were based on outline librettos (Yu 187). They consisted of a synopsis of the plot, the sequence of the Acts, relevant backdrops and names of fixed musical tunes to be used. There were no written lyrics and dialogues. After being briefed by the outline-writer, the performers simply improvised the lyrics and dialogues as they perform and according to their interpretation of the story or the mood of the Acts. The musicians had no musical notes to follow. They simply watched the performers closely to play the tunes according to the performers' hand-signals. Each hand signal represented a different set of fixed musical tunes (See Figure 4).



Figure 4: Performers' hand signals of Cantonese Opera musical tunes for accompaniment  
Source: Laige's Personal Space

The performers usually signal these hand-signs from behind their back or in a way unnoticeable to the audience so that the performance would not be interrupted. If the wrong musical tune was played, the performers simply sang along with their improvised lyrics. The performers and musicians were usually

in near perfect synchronization. This kind of performance using outline librettos was mirrored in Edmonton prior to the mid-1950s.

There was no limit to the performers' improvisation when outline librettos were used. In the 1920s and 1930s in Guangzhou and Hong Kong, creativity was hampered when larger opera troupes replaced outline librettos with full-scripts. Full-scripts were not used in Edmonton until the mid-1960s, reflecting that Edmonton was at least thirty to forty years behind the times. In the era of exclusion, it was difficult to keep up-to-date on the latest development of Cantonese opera because travels between Edmonton and China were infrequent due to costs and restrictive Canadian legislations such as the head tax legislation and the 1923 Chinese Immigration Act that made procedures to re-enter Canada very cumbersome.

In the 1920s and 1930s, playwrights in China created many new librettos or full-scripts based on traditional plots from classical stories. Tong Dik Sang 唐滌生 (1917-1959), a highly respected playwright at that time, started the trend of using poems, literary lyrics and dialogues of refinement in new repertoires adapted from classical dramas. His work reached its height in the 1950s and expanded the audience base beyond the plebeian to the well-educated. This change broadened the audience appreciation level and moved the genre one small step away from being a lowbrow art form.

The use of full-scripts at that time impinged upon the improvisation of the performers who were required to rehearse according to the scripts. Instead of



singing improvised lyrics to the musical tunes of their choice at the spur of the moment, performers had to memorize the lyrics and the corresponding musical tunes. They had to follow scripted monologues and dialogues. However, as a living and creative performing art, performers have continued to improvise because the scripts cannot define every detailed gesture and operatic movement. Unforeseen circumstances can happen, such as the performer forgetting a line in singing or in dialogues, operatic movements that went out of sync with others or a head-piece fell off while performing. In order to salvage those situations, improvisations are usually made quickly and within the framework of a formulated operatic pattern in order to be inconspicuous to the audience. The performers' skills and talents are often judged by the audience according to how well he or she salvaged those situations. As a result, two Cantonese opera jargons emerged: *zhi-sheng* 執生 and *bao-du* 爆肚. *Zhi-sheng* means responding to the situation accordingly and *bao-du* literally means the explosion of one's belly or to improvise. These two terms are now used as slangs in daily spoken Cantonese, indicating the interrelationship between Cantonese opera and the daily life of the Chinese.

The creative, versatile and tenacious characteristics of Cantonese opera are best seen through its modernization process through history and in keeping with the changing times and audience demand. The modernization of Cantonese opera is not fortuitous but ensued through fundamental and lasting changes since the 1920s. These changes were initially introduced for their novelty and to compete for a loyal audience base and opera fans. The modernization effort later

evolved into a pursuit of aesthetics in the artistry of performance. The changes were spearheaded by two renowned performers, SIT Kok-Sin 薛覺仙 and MA Sze-Tsang 馬師曾 during the period of the 1920s and 30s fondly known as the ‘*SIT-MA Hegemony Period*’ 薛馬爭雄時代 (Li 2010, 267).

A series of significant changes were made in the areas of acting, singing, dialogues, music and staging. SIT Kok-Sin incorporated a number of Beijing opera elements into Cantonese opera. Northern acrobatic movements were incorporated into various repertoires with fighting scenes. The dragon and phoenix drum was used for sword dancing, ribbon dancing and traditional dancing. Metal bells were used to enrich the percussion segment of the musical group (Wang 210). The most significant change was the use of Western musical instruments such as violin, saxophone, electric guitar and trumpet to add a modern sensation to the musical accompaniment (Cui 138).

In the early 1900s, performer Zhu Cibo 朱次伯 started a trend of singing in a natural voice or pinghou with the musical scale correspondingly lowered by one octave to harmonize with his singing (Lai 2001: 201). He was followed by the male cross-dresser Qianliqu 千里驅 who started to use pipes as part of the musical accompaniment to add a lower tone to complement his singing (Lai 2001, 224, china.com). The inclusion of all these new and complementary singing techniques and musical instruments added a harmonizing cultural timbre and a modern element to the musical artistry of Cantonese opera.

In that era, singing styles were clearly defined into three major types: falsetto for female singing, natural voice or pinghou for male singing, and the more forceful dahou or baqiang 霸腔 for the role of warriors or villains (Li 2010, 265). These different singing styles were fondly embraced by the audience and its continued practice was fortified. Professional performers often developed their own style of singing over a period of time to epitomize the art of singing and to form a vocal signature so that their identity could be easily and quickly recognized by the audience and the aficionados. This helped the performers retain a loyal audience base. The vocal signatures were cherished by the aficionados and imitated by amateur performers with great pride.

A number of creative and lasting changes to the performance artistry in the areas of roles, staging, props, lighting and sound were made in the 1920s and 1930s in Guangzhou and Hong Kong. The roles of performers were reduced from ten to a new *Six Pillar System*<sup>9</sup> (Wang 81). While it was done for economic reasons, it was also practical at that time. Running parallel to role reform was stage reform. Stage lighting changed from the use of gas lamps to electric lamps and then to mercury lamps and eventually to the use of spot lights for special dramatic effects (Wang 76). Stage backdrops changed from hard boards to soft cloths for ease of handling and transportation. Backdrops were changed to befit different scenes. Changing backdrops for various scenes were mechanically

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<sup>9</sup> The major roles in the “Six Pillar System” were: wusheng 武生 or warriors, xiaowu 小武 or warriors support role, huadan 花旦 or lead female role, erhuadan 二花旦 or support role to the lead female, xiaosheng 小生 or male civil role and chousheng 丑生 or comic role. Other than the two lead roles, others played dual roles e.g. the comic role could also play the role of an older man to meet script requirements.

rather than manually done. Microphones were used so that the performers could focus on the artistry of singing rather than on their voice level (Wang 76). Commercial advertisements that used to be on backdrops or props were removed. Musicians were moved from the back-centre of the stage facing the audience to the side (Li 312). Clearing the cluttered stage immediately added a modern theatrical ambience to the performance. All these changes were mirrored in Edmonton in the 1960s, trailing at least thirty to forty years behind. Today, Edmonton is able to keep up with the latest changes in Hong Kong or Guangzhou because of increased travels and the use of information technology.

The versatile nature of Cantonese opera was reflected through adaptations made to befit the overseas setting upon its initial transmittal to Edmonton. The visual aspect of Cantonese opera was generally consistent and closely followed. Costumes and props were not as elaborate and up-to-date compared to those in Hong Kong and Guangzhou in the same period because transmittal was delayed due to distance, restrictive Canadian immigration legislations and cumbersome Canadian re-entry processes.

Some unique elements related to Cantonese opera such as religious rituals and worships, bamboo-constructed theatres and commercial opera troupes had either disappeared or modified. Edmonton never had its own commercial troupe due to the lack of a critical mass to create demand. There were no bamboo-constructed theatres typical of Cantonese opera involved in ritual celebrations and traditional opera as sacred merits performed for the deities 神功戲 (Chan 2005, 173). Edmonton did not have the critical mass to support large-scale

traditional religious rituals and celebrations such as those practised in Hong Kong, for example the Rites of Purification for Thanksgiving, the Ghost Festival, the Initiation Ritual for Temples, and birthdays of deities (Chan 2005, 173). However, staging Cantonese operas to fundraise and to celebrate club anniversaries and festivals such as Chinese New Year and mid-Autumn continued to be a common practice in Edmonton.

In an overseas setting, customs and rituals practised by the performers continued but modified to befit the local situation. Traditionally, the Cantonese opera patron god Huaguang zushi 華光祖師 must be enshrined on the props side or the right backstage and worshipped prior to the show by burning joss sticks. Some troupes also enshrined and worshipped other patrons such as Tian 田, Dou 竇 and Master Zhang Wu 張五. It was common practice to burn joss sticks and to pray on the front-stage for a safe and successful performance (GOVHK).

In Edmonton, the practice of worshipping the patron gods is modified. Today, instead of a tablet with names of the patron gods, three Chinese characters *jing ruzai* 敬如在 are written in Chinese calligraphy on a tablet placed on a simple shrine. The three Chinese characters mean to pay respect and honour to the opera patron gods as if they are present. Joss sticks, matches, offerings of fruits and red lucky-money packages are usually displayed on a small table. The shrine is not always placed on the required props side but simply somewhere appropriate at the back of the stage.

Everyone involved in staging the performance observes the ritual practice of paying respect to the patron gods before the performance. Some theatres disallow the use of matches to burn joss sticks due to fire hazards. After making three respectful bows before the shrine, he or she picks up a red lucky money package from the table for good luck. Some will go as far as following the other ritual practice of getting onto the front-stage to make three respectful bows at each of the four corners and the centre of the stage to pray for a safe and successful performance. Some Christian performers do not burn joss sticks but follow the customary practice of bowing before the shrine to pay respect while some others simply pray to the Christian god on the front-stage. The continuation of this ritual practice in various forms reflects the versatility of Cantonese opera.

In 1858, when the anti-Qing revolt led by a performer LI Wenmao 李文茂 was crushed by the government, Cantonese opera performances were banned until 1871. During these years, some fled overseas and travelled as far as the United States and Canada. Other performers from the lower stratum of the opera troupes in China saw the opportunity of making more money by working as cooks and waiters on ships to North America in the 1890s. They performed Cantonese opera as part of the entertainment program on the ship. When the ship docked in the ports of San Francisco and Vancouver for a few days, they took the opportunity to perform on land. (Wang 7, Yu 288, Foshan Museum)

There is no record of these performances branching out to Edmonton before the 1900s. The first Chinese only arrived in 1890.

The earliest appearance of Cantonese opera in North America was in San Francisco performed by professionals in the 1850s and the first permanent Chinese theatre Hing Chuen Yuen was built in 1868 (Johnson 1996, Rao 236). In Canada, five Chinese theatres were built in Victoria, British Columbia between 1860 and 1885 (Sebryk 142). In Toronto, the first appearance of Cantonese opera was in the 1910s with a drama society Sai-gai-geng 世界鏡 formed in 1918 (Li 1987, 192). Vancouver saw two commercially-operated theatres by 1915. Opera troupes were contracted to perform in the city regularly and activities reached a peak in the 1920s (Ng 2005, 31). As audience demand dwindled upon the onset of the 1923 Chinese Immigration Act followed by the Great Depression in the early 1930s, these opera theatres turned into movie theatres to offer an alternative form of Chinese entertainment (ibid.). Yet, Cantonese opera activities did not stop but continued with the same zeal at a modified scale in Vancouver. In Alberta, Edmonton's first Cantonese opera club, the Chinese Dramatic Club 警世鐘劇社, was founded in 1917. In Manitoba, the Winnipeg Chinese Dramatic Society 警魂社 was formed in 1921 (WCCC). In Calgary, the San Liarn Jyuh Sheh 三聯劇社 was formed between the late 1930s and the early 1940s and the Chinese Musical Society 華僑音樂社 was formed in 1960 (Chang 1984, 45; Hoe 164). The formation of Cantonese opera clubs in

various cities manifested the portability and popularity of this cultural practice in Canada.

Prior to 1950, Cantonese opera was the only familiar and comprehensible entertainment for most of the Chinese in Edmonton. In the late 1960s to the late 1990s, Cantonese opera brings back nostalgic childhood memories for the Cantonese-speaking immigrants from Hong Kong. For the Mandarin-speaking immigrants from Mainland China who came in the early 1990s to the present, Beijing opera provides a similar nostalgic homeland connection. The Taiwanese opera *gezaixi* 歌仔戲 is yet to be seen in Edmonton. Chinese traditional dancing and choir singing are the main Taiwanese cultural activities today.

Cantonese opera continued to be zealously maintained by the Chinese in Edmonton. The three characteristics of creativity, versatility and tenacity marked Cantonese opera as a regional art form fondly embraced and zealously practised. It adapted to the overseas setting of Edmonton, and went beyond its function of entertainment to play a number of social functions to meet community needs as the Chinese negotiate their identity from sojourners to settlers through three historical phases to be discussed in the next three chapters.



## Chapter Two: The social function of ‘homeland politics’ in the era of exclusion before 1950: the sojourners’ mentality

In this era, the Chinese lived in a Canadian socio-political milieu marked by discriminatory legislations and immigration policies. Under the 1885 Chinese Immigration Act, a \$50 head tax was imposed on the Chinese. It was increased to \$100 in 1900 and peaked at \$500 in 1903. Despite the prohibitive \$500 head tax, Chinese continued to arrive in Canada in search of employment and a better life. Hence the population increased from 168 in 1911 to 518 in 1921. In 1923, the head tax was replaced by a discriminatory legislation, the Chinese Immigration Act, which virtually stopped all Chinese immigration to Canada until its repeal in 1947.

In 1890, the first Chinese arrived in Edmonton before it became a town in 1892 and a city in 1904 (Evans 27, Poy 4). The Chinese population fluctuated between 168 in 1911 and 384 in 1941, peaking at 518 in 1921 (See Chart 1 below).

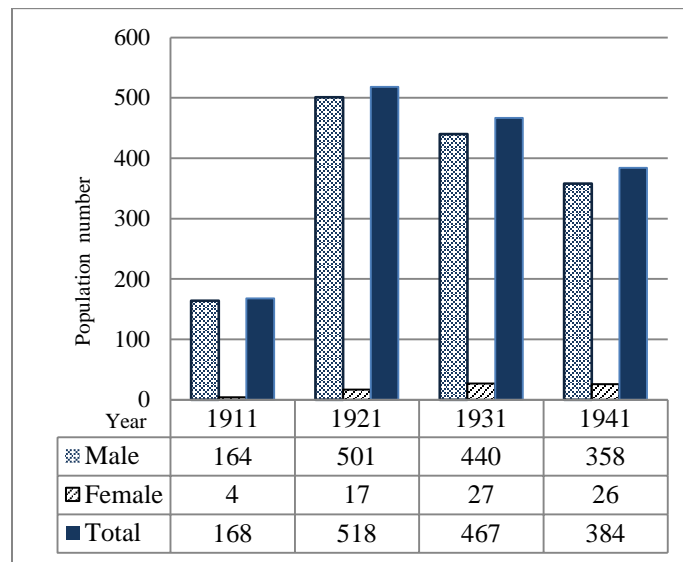


Chart 1: Chinese Population of Edmonton 1911-1941

Source: Statistics Canada. *Census of Canada*. Census on population of cities and towns of 10,000 and over, classified according to racial origin and sex 1911 to 1941.

Note: The 1901 Census has no information on Edmonton.

The male-female sex ratio was highly disproportionate throughout the

years. It ranged from 41:1 in 1911 to the best ratio of 13:1 in 1941. This disproportionate sex ratio together with restrictive immigration legislations turned the Chinese community into a community of married bachelors. The population trended downward between the 1930s and 1940s from 518 in 1921 to 384 in 1941 because of the onset of the Great Depression when the Chinese were treated inequitably. Many left the Prairies for the West coast or returned to China despite the turmoil of war with the Japanese (Evans 53). This manifested the sojourners' mentality of many. The population stayed below 600 until the Chinese Immigration Act was repealed in 1947. While the Chinese were engaged in a wide range of jobs, laundries and cafés were the “hallmarks of their presence on the Prairies (Evans 24).”

The Chinese community in this era was very homogeneous. Nearly every Chinese who came to the Prairies was from the four counties in the Pearl River Delta area with the largest number from Taishan and Kaiping (Evans 13). They all spoke Siyi which is a sub-dialect of the Yue or Cantonese dialect. In Edmonton, kinship ties were very strong especially because they came from the same district and the majority had the same last name of MAH, meaning “horse” in English. This led to the Edmonton Chinese community nicknamed “the stable 馬房”. Other common last names included WONG, LEE and CHOW.

The paucity of records and written documentation made it very difficult to determine the exact year that Cantonese opera was transmitted to Edmonton. However, there should be no Cantonese opera activity before 1890 because the first Chinese only arrived in that year. The Chinese did not arrive en masse but

in small numbers and over a period of time. It would have taken some time for a critical mass to create a supply and demand for Cantonese opera. The earliest documented evidence of opera activities is a photograph of Cantonese opera in Southern Alberta from the period between 1910 and 1929 showing opera props, costumes and head pieces (See Figure 5 below). The two persons in the middle have distinctive male facial features but dressed in costumes and head pieces for females. This indicates male cross-dressing for female roles in Cantonese opera in those days when there were typically more men than women in the community.



Figure 5:  
Cantonese Opera in Southern Alberta  
1910-1929

Source:  
Glenbow Archives NC-7-917

Cantonese opera in Edmonton has a history of about ninety-five years as at 2012, based on the establishment of a drama club in 1917. Other evidences of

Cantonese opera activities include a 1923 newspaper clipping<sup>10</sup> and a number of photographs from the 1930s and 1940s in the repository of the Glenbow Archives and the City of Edmonton Archives. These are indicators reflecting the continued presence of Cantonese opera throughout this era from 1890-1950.

Despite the discriminatory socio-political milieu, Cantonese opera survived with the Chinese in great tenacity to play a pivotal role in their lives. In this era, Cantonese opera played out five social functions: entertainment, communication-and-education, symbolic representation, homeland politics and altruism. The function of altruism pulled the community together to meet social and welfare needs of the time. The function of homeland politics manifested the sojourners' mentality of the Chinese in Edmonton.

In order to understand the social functions of Cantonese opera in the community, it is important to examine the socio-historical and socio-political milieu of that time in Canada and in China. Edmonton's first Cantonese opera club was formed in 1917. Its formation was related to historical events in China. At that time, the Qing Dynasty had fallen. YUAN Shikai's 袁世凱 rule had ended upon his natural death in 1916 and the warlords' era returned. Dr. SUN Yat-sen 孫中山 resumed leadership and led the Kuomintang Party to crush the warlords in northern China as a final effort to unify China, but he needed

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<sup>10</sup> The article was mainly about a waitress who was Edmonton's first Chinese female aviator. There was only one phrase referencing her involvement in Chinese plays. This newspaper clipping was shared with me by Dr. Brian Evans, a Professor emeritus of the University of Alberta and a well-respected historian on Chinese history.

financial assistance. In 1917, Dr. SUN sent LIN Sen 林森, the former Chairman of the government of the Republic of China, to fundraise in Edmonton.

Upon arrival, LIN Sen was enthusiastically welcomed by a group from the small Chinese community of about five hundred (Gin). A group of six with musical and drama talents quickly formed a temporary troupe with a few other volunteers to fundraise through Cantonese opera. To the surprise of everyone, this debut performance raised a large sum of money to support the war effort. Mr. LIN was so impressed by the volunteer performers and the community response that he immediately gave the performing group an official name — Chinese Dramatic Club 警世鐘劇社. In Chinese, the name means ‘*to serve as a warning bell to the world*’. Mr. LIN then wrote a pair of inspiring couplets in Chinese calligraphy on two vertical scrolls with an accompanying horizontal title that read ‘*Heroes of the Time* 時勢英雄’ in recognition of their fundraising effort (Southcn.com). Over the years, the original scrolls were lost but the club subsequently reproduced the couplets and proudly displayed them on a wall inside the club (Gin). These mementos served as a legacy of the community’s contribution to building the nation of China.

This fundraising event clearly manifested the social function of homeland politics and a strong sojourner’s sentiment in this era. It manifested the community’s strong allegiance to China — a place that, sentimentally, was ‘home’ to the Chinese despite the naturalized Canadian status of many. China was still a place they felt secure and belonged, in contrast to the resentful and

hostile Canadian society that they were living in. The reasons for their allegiance to China were twofold.

First, the successive governments of China from the period of 1911 to 1940 were encouraging “the Chinese outside of China to think of themselves as Overseas Chinese, or huaqiao — sojourners whose ultimate commitment was to China (Wickberg 138).” Such encouragement was readily accepted because it came at a time when the Chinese were living in a hostile and discriminatory socio-political milieu with Chinese stereotyping still rampant under the \$500-head tax legislation and later under the 1923-1947 Chinese Immigration Act. The Chinese were often referred to as the ‘yellow peril’ or a bad influence in society.

Secondly, when Mr. LIN appealed to them for financial assistance, they felt respected, valued and wanted by their homeland. This prompted their acts of support. Henceforth, they kept up-to-date on homeland news and on Dr. SUN Yat-sen’s revolution in China through their social network in Vancouver and the Vancouver newspaper Tai Hon Kung Bo ‘大漢公報’ (Con 76). This reinforced their sojourners’ mentality and fortified the already strong ties between the Edmonton Chinese and their homeland.

In March 1927, the Kuomintang Party formed China’s national government in Wuhan but it was controlled by the left-wing party members and the communists. The following month, CHIANG Kai-shek purged the communists and formed a right-wing National Government in Nanjing. The

polarization of these two national governments was known as the '*Ninghan Split*' 寧漢分裂. The same split in political ideologies happened in the Edmonton Chinese community (Gin). The previously strong Edmonton Chapter of the Kuomintang Association 中國國民黨點問頓分部 was weakened and quickly disbanded. It was replaced by a new non-partisan organization called '*Huaqiao gongsuo*' 華僑公所 in 1929 and later renamed the Chinese Benevolent Association of Edmonton (CBA) 點問頓中華會館 to align with CBAs in other Canadian cities.

The new organization was formed to offset the split in the community and to provide a common ground for those who did not want to be labelled leftists or rightists. At that time, every Chinese in Edmonton was automatically considered a CBA member, according to Mr. Gin and my other interviewees. CBA became a community-wide umbrella organization responsible for external liaison because some English-speaking members could deal with the mainstream on behalf of the non-English-speaking Chinese. The Chinese Dramatic Club became its entertainment arm responsible for raising funds to support all CBA-endorsed community activities.

Cantonese opera continued its function of homeland politics into the 1930s as evidenced by two performances reported by Hoe Ban Seng and a 1931 archival photograph showing a sizeable cast of the Edmonton Chinese Dramatic Club at the Moose Hall in downtown Edmonton (See Figure 6 on the next page; Hoe 203).



Figure 6: Cantonese opera staged at the Moose Hall in Edmonton in 1931  
by the Edmonton Chinese Dramatic Club

Source: Glenbow Archives ND-3-5957

A banner embroidered with the club's name in Chinese was prominently displayed above the stage. Two vertical scrolls previously given to the club by Mr. LIN from the government of the Republic of China in 1917 was prominently displayed at the centre of the backdrop as stage decoration. The scrolls were irrelevant to the repertoire when placed at the centre of the stage against the scene of rolling hills. However, it was a display of their proud affiliation and a silent voice of their sojourners' sentiment.

Two other performances in 1939 used Cantonese opera as a communication-and-education tool to fortify the function of homeland politics related to their sojourners' sentiment. Both were staged to raise funds to support



the war effort of China and the war refugees during the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945). Substantive proceeds were frequently sent to China through the National Relief Commission in China (Hoe 203, Gin, *Edmonton Bulletin* 1939). This indicated the frequency of performances and an enthusiastic community. While the remittal of funds echoed their political allegiance, the staged repertoires served the function of communication-and-education to arouse the patriotic feelings of the local Chinese for China.

The two repertoires were: “The Departure of Shih Pang-guey” and “The Time Has Come” (Hoe 203). Both were held at the 500-seat Empire Theatre in Edmonton (*Edmonton Bulletin* 1939). The first repertoire was taken from a well-known repertoire but the second one was not. The latter could have been an adapted version of another repertoire or simply custom-written for the occasion. The two repertoires communicated the common theme of combatting external invasions to protect the motherland. The audience response was good because the vast majority of the community members still had families in China whose safety was a common concern. Hence, expelling the invading enemy would mean restoring peace and harmony to both the motherland and their families.

A piece of post-performance news in the *Edmonton Bulletin* of February 9, 1939 indicated a mixed audience of Chinese and non-Chinese. This implied that the fundraising appeal went beyond the Chinese community and that the Chinese did have a circle of non-Chinese friends, contrary to the general stereotyped perception that the Chinese lived in seclusion and were unable to integrate. A report on the event by a newspaper reporter who did not have the Chinese

language or cultural background missed the implied political messages and simply focused on the fundraising objective and the entertainment aspect of the show. Most importantly, this report was one of the rare positive news about the Chinese of that time. Usually, the Chinese received the most publicity for being involved in drugs, prostitution and gambling (Evans 35).

A strong sense of homeland politics continued into the 1940s alongside historical events in China. As World War II came to an end in 1945, the Chinese civil wars between the Kuomintang nationalists and the communists resumed. Similarly, the Edmonton Chinese community was split into two groups holding opposing Chinese political ideologies – nationalism and communism. Four 1948 photographs from the Edmonton Archives carried voluminous stories about Cantonese opera and the Chinese of that time.

When piecing the four photographs together, an inter-provincial network could be discerned. The name of a troupe called Sing Kew Dramatic Society<sup>11</sup> 醒僑劇社 of Vancouver was embroidered and prominently displayed on the covers of a table and chairs. It was, and still is, a common practice for the club's name to be embroidered on various props or on a banner to identify the presenting or sponsoring club. The appearance of Sing Kew Dramatic society in the photographs carried two implications. First, it implied that the local club did not have sufficient local resources. Secondly, the props could have been

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<sup>11</sup> Sing Kew Dramatic Society was a Cantonese opera club in Vancouver. Based on the founding of the Sing Kew Theatre in 1898, the Society was likely established before that year. The theatre was used for Cantonese opera performances as well as a venue for public and private debates and forums especially during Dr. SUN Yat-sen's fundraising visits to Vancouver in the 1910s (Chinese Benevolent Society - Vancouver).

borrowed or purchased from the Sing Kew Dramatic Society. In this instance, Cantonese opera functioned as a conduit for inter-provincial social networking for the Chinese. The sharing of resources reinforced the bondage of the Chinese communities in two different locations. In this era of exclusion, the socio-political milieu was such that the community had to garner support from Chinese in various Canadian locations in order to maximize resources, to gather up-to-date homeland news and to support one another in a common front to tackle racist issues because “the Canadian government at that time regarded racial and ethnic differences detrimental to Canada’s interests, character and integrity (Richmond Public Library 2).”

One of the four archival photographs clearly evidenced the homeland politics function of Cantonese opera. The male performer was dressed in a custom-made opera costume with the four 12-spiked white suns of the Nationalist Party’s emblem in the front (See Figure 7 below).



Figure 7: 1948 Cantonese opera in Edmonton: CHAN Shu Liu, Mary WONG  
Source: City of Edmonton Archives EA-600-1559b

The homeland politics and communication-and-education functions of Cantonese opera are evidenced by the background of the photograph and the male costume with one Chinese character inside each of the four white suns that reads 民國萬歲 or '*Long-live Republican China*'. The costume has become a tool for political propaganda and a clear statement of political allegiance. The photograph shows the portrait of Dr. SUN Yat-sen and the flags of the Republican government in the background. The Chinese at that time were obviously keen on China politics — a sign of their political allegiance and sojourners' sentiment.

A photograph of the musicians and musical instruments showed the use of live music in Cantonese opera (See Figure 8 below). More importantly, it showcased musical talents in Edmonton at that time.



Figure 8: 1948 Cantonese opera musicians in Edmonton  
Source: City of Edmonton Archives EA-600-1559a

The musicians were dressed in 3-piece suits. Their overall grooming projected their sense of dignity, pride and confidence. This is consistent with Allan P. Merriam's assertion that a musician's self-image and public expectations influence how they behave (Merriam 123). In this case, the dress code clearly reflected their self-perception and how they wanted others to perceive them. To them, it was also a sign of respect for the art of Cantonese music, for other musicians, for the singers and for the audience.

The photograph shows two typical musical sections: melody section and percussions section of a Cantonese opera music ensemble. However, some basic musical instruments such as cymbals and flute are missing. This is because the photograph was posed rather than taken during the performance. It also does not reflect a typical musical ensemble of its land of origin in the 1940s. At that time, Guangzhou and Hong Kong had already incorporated Western musical instruments such as violin, saxophone, electric guitar and trumpet to add a modern sensation to musical accompaniment (Cui 138). The photograph reflects a very basic ensemble of the pre-1920s, indicating that Cantonese opera musical accompaniment in the late 1940s in Edmonton was at least twenty years behind the times.

This 1948 Cantonese opera was a two-hour fundraising performance staged at the Memorial Hall of Edmonton on October 17, 1948 to pay for the medical bills of the destitute elderly Chinese in the community (*Edmonton Bulletin* 1948). The opera was staged by professional performers, CHAN Shuliu

陳少鑾 and Mary WONG 黃容芳 who came to work in Edmonton but were stranded because they could not return to China during the Pacific War (1941-1945). They joined the Chinese Dramatic Club and were instrumental in staging a series of these performances to raise funds to meet community welfare needs.

The function of symbolic representation and a changing sojourners' mentality were manifested in a 1935 photograph captioned "Chinese float in Edmonton Exhibition parade" (See Figure 9).



Figure 9: 1935 Chinese float in Edmonton Exhibition parade  
Source: Glenbow Archives ND-3-7050b

The group posing in front of the Chinese Nationalist Association Edmonton Chapter before the start of the Edmonton Exhibition parade reflected their connection to the Association and their political allegiance. The use of Cantonese opera costumes carried several meanings for the Chinese. First, it

affirmed that Cantonese opera activities continued through time. Secondly, Cantonese opera in this instance served as a symbolic representation and a “cultural motif” for the Chinese (Merriam 245). The colourful and uniquely designed costumes were significant motifs that embodied culture and art as well as a “cultural visibility” that clearly marked them as Chinese (Wickberg 135). Thirdly, their participation reflected a more accepting social milieu in Alberta. In the 1930s, the social milieu in Alberta became more positive because Chinese cafés in the rural areas fed the destitute during the Great Depression and media reports on Japanese brutality in China during the Sino-Japanese war generated local sympathy (Evans 55). The public parade in Cantonese opera costumes helped articulate and define their ethnic identity and culture.

The function of “altruism” was most prominent in the 1940s. During the Pacific War, many elderly Chinese wanted to return to die in their homeland but were stranded in Edmonton. The community of married bachelors with language barriers and in low-paying jobs were unable to pay medical bills when they became ill. The Canadian universal health care services with the unique characteristics of public administration, comprehensiveness, universality, portability, and accessibility that we know of today was nonexistent in those days (Government of Canada). When Alberta finally introduced a program of prepaid health services in 1948, it did not cover all residents. For years, those “individuals who could not afford to pay for care relied on philanthropic organizations, public assistance, or the good will of providers (BCMA 2).” In

Edmonton, many turned to CBA for refuge and assistance in their old age when they became fragile, sick and unable to work.

Those without next of kin died and left no money to cover funeral costs. The physicians, hospitals and funeral homes contacted CBA to collect outstanding bills incurred by the dying or the deceased because the organization was known to represent all Chinese in dealing with matters outside the community. When contacted, CBA stepped forward to assist. It quickly mobilized the Chinese Dramatic Club to regularly perform Cantonese opera to raise funds until all outstanding medical bills and funeral debts were paid. Many operas were staged and the audience had been overwhelmingly supportive of the effort.

These acts of philanthropy manifested the entertainment and altruism functions of Cantonese opera in meeting the cultural and social welfare needs of the community. They also manifested their strong kinship relationship. These acts were applauded both within and outside the Chinese community (Gin). Such commendation from hospitals and funeral homes were positive developments conducive to fortifying the settlers' mentality of the Chinese in Edmonton.

During the head tax period prior to 1923, Cantonese operas were staged mainly within the Chinese community by local performers. Cantonese opera was a cultural practice and a means to ease their loneliness and boredom within a small community of married bachelors. It was hardly shared with the mainstream who shunned any association with the Chinese who were perceived



as heavily involved in gambling, opium-smoking and prostitution (Evans 35). In the 1930s and 1940s, Cantonese opera was shared with the mainstream in a limited way through public parades and a few fundraising events. The Chinese in this era had a strong allegiance to China that reinforced their sojourners' mentality which started to shift as the social milieu became more positive. This shift became more obvious upon the repeal of the Chinese Immigration Act in 1947 that ushered in the family reunification process in the era of transition in the late 1940s to the late 1960s.

Chapter Three: The social function of 'community cohesion' in the  
era of transition in the 1950s and 1960s:  
From sojourners to settlers

This era of transition was marked by the repeal of the 1923 Chinese Immigration Act, a homogeneous Chinese community reinforced through family reunification and the community cohesion function of Cantonese opera. In this era, there were two significant inflows of Chinese immigrants. The first inflow occurred in the late 1940s to the mid-1950s with the arrival of the wives and children. The second inflow occurred in the 1950s to the late 1960s when the children became young adults and their fiancés and wives started to arrive. Towards the end of this era, the self-identity of the Chinese had clearly shifted from sojourners to settlers as manifested through a heightened degree of sharing and involvement of the mainstream society as seen through the cultural practice of Cantonese opera.

Two significant events ushered the Chinese community into this new era. The first event started soon after the end of World War II in 1945 with Chinese across Canada actively lobbying the repeal of the 1923 Chinese Immigration Act. Actions from Chinese across Canada gathered momentum in the Toronto-Montreal-Ottawa area with sympathetic support from mainstream organizations and the media (Ng 19). The community's persistent political lobbying came at an opportune time when Canada was playing a key role in drafting the United Nations Charter of 1945, in advocating for human rights and in defending democratic values (Government of Canada 2011). This led to the subsequent repeal of the Chinese Immigration Act in 1947.

Following the repeal, Prime Minister Mackenzie King told the House of Commons that the policy of the government was to foster population growth through immigration but that the immigrants must be carefully selected to preserve the fundamental character of Canada's population. The policy was operationalized through an Order in Council P.C. 2115. It meant that "Asian immigration would continue to be restricted while applicants from the 'old' Commonwealth countries and the United States would continue to receive preferred treatment (Government of Canada 2006)." What happened was, only Canadian citizens were allowed to sponsor their wives and children under 18 years of age but not their adult children or elderly parents. Siblings and relatives were not eligible either. Although these restrictive regulations and policies slowed down the family reunification process, they were incrementally relaxed over time. In 1950, Canadian citizens were allowed to sponsor children under 21. By 1955, they could sponsor their parents. By 1957, Chinese landed immigrants were allowed to sponsor their families. In 1967, a new Point System for immigration was introduced and the criteria of race and country of origin were removed. It was only at this point that the Chinese attained true equity in the area of immigration.

The Chinese wasted no time in applying for the immigration of their wives and children after the Chinese Immigration Act was repealed in 1947. However, the application process was affected by restrictive Canadian immigration policies and political events in China. Under the newly formed Communist government of the People's Republic of China in 1949, a process of

land reform was launched in Guangdong. Many families of Chinese in Canada were affected. Land ownership was taken away and the families were accused of being class enemies with overseas bourgeois connections. Under such oppression, many families fled their hometowns to Hong Kong which was the major port of embarkation for those emigrants (Ng 84). The Chinese in Canada wanted to expedite the immigration process for family reunification but it continued to be slow despite repeated petitions.

Many of the wives and children had to wait in Hong Kong for years in the late 1940s and early 1950s. At that time, Cantonese opera development was at its height in Hong Kong. Apart from live performances, Cantonese opera movies were available as a cheaper form of entertainment. Through Cantonese opera movies, the performers were popularized and quickly moved into stardom. They started to make vinyl records and cassette tapes and popularized many Cantonese opera songs. These records and tapes were bought by the wives waiting for migration to Canada. Listening to these songs later became their main form of entertainment in Edmonton where there were no Chinese-speaking public entertainment facilities.

While many were waiting in Hong Kong for their migration, an incident impacted the Chinese in Edmonton. The incident occurred on December 24, 1953 when the area of Shek Kip Mei 石硤尾 in Hong Kong was engulfed in fire. 2,500 wooden huts in 41 hectares of land were burnt to the ground and 20,000 people lost their homes (hkheadline.com). The Hoy Sun Ning Yung Benevolent

Association 台山寧陽會館 of Vancouver launched a fundraising drive to aid fire victims, believing that their families and kinsmen were affected (Ng 84). The Chinese in Edmonton learned of the incident through the news and quickly contacted their associates at the Hong Kong Wuyi gongshang zonghui 香港五邑工商總會<sup>12</sup> to make enquiries and to express a desire to join their relief effort, believing that their family, relatives or hometown folks were affected. After the offer to assist was accepted, the Edmonton Chinese quickly organized a Cantonese opera to fundraise.

The opera was held at the Ukrainian Centre on 97 Street and 110 Avenue in Edmonton. The two professional performers in Edmonton, CHAN Shuliu and Mary WONG, quickly trained some volunteers from the Chinese Youth Club and worked with the Chinese Dramatic Club to make up a small troupe of ten to stage a performance. The two professionals taught the volunteers simple choreographed movements according to a simple outline-libretto which involved a synopsis of the plot, the sequence of the Acts, relevant stage backdrops and props, and a list of musical tunes to be played. There were no written lyrics, dialogues or musical notes for either the performers or the musicians. They all improvised on-the-go. The audience was very accommodating and supported the cast enthusiastically because the performers were family members, kinsmen or friends.

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<sup>12</sup> The Hong Kong Wuyi Gongshanghui was founded in 1921 by a group of sojourners in Hong Kong from the five counties of Taishan, Xinhui, Kaiping, Enping, and Heshan (台山、新會、開平、恩平、鶴山).

The two clubs selected a light-hearted and familiar repertoire ‘*You Long Xi Feng* 游龍戲鳳’ to attract a larger audience. The original repertoire was a legendary historical episode. Emperor Zhengde 正德皇帝 of the Ming dynasty disguised as a commoner to tour the scenic Jiangnan<sup>13</sup> area in the southern part of China and fell in love with a beautiful young lady. She was bestowed the title of Imperial Concubine but the emperor never sent for her. She subsequently died of depression and love-sickness. Although the original story had a sad ending, the overall mood of the repertoire was light-hearted and entertaining. The repertoire was modified to shorten the show-time to less than four hours and to create a happy ending.

The local audience supported the performance enthusiastically and a substantive amount of funds was raised to aid fire victims. Subsequently a framed tablet with words of commendation in Chinese calligraphy was mailed to the club by the Association in recognition of their effort. This event not only highlighted the social functions of altruism and entertainment, but most significantly, the function of community cohesion. The event functioned to pull the community together in a common front, for a common philanthropic cause and for a resolution to a common concern — relief for their families, relatives and hometown folks believed to be fire victims.

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<sup>13</sup> Jiangnan covers the area south of the Yangtze River and included major cities such as Shanghai, Nanjing, Ningbo, Hangzhou, Suzhou, Wuxi, Changzhou and Shaoxing.

After the Chinese Immigration Act was repealed in 1947, the Chinese population in Edmonton doubled, from 384 to 782 and from 782 to 1,805 as reflected in Census 1941 to 1961 (See Chart 2).

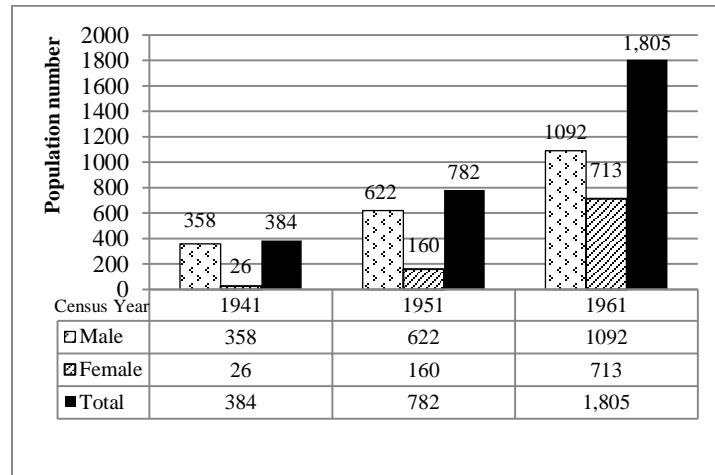


Chart 2: Chinese Population of Edmonton (1941-1961)

Source: Statistics Canada. *Census of Canada*. Census on population of cities and towns of 10,000 and over, classified according to racial origin 1941 to 1961.

The male to female sex ratio changed dramatically from approximately 14:1 to 4:1 in 1951 and from 4:1 to 2:1 in 1961, indicating that the wives and children had joined the early Chinese settlers.

The early 1950s was a significant period because the arrival of family members fortified the settlers' mentality when they started to establish their home in Edmonton. The community remained generally homogeneous because these new arrivals were from the same hometowns and shared the same language and traditional values. Their arrival naturally increased the demand for Cantonese opera as a form of familiar and popular entertainment.

Majority of the children who came to Canada in these two decades were in their mid to late teens. Unlike their fathers and grandfathers, this group came

with much better educational background. Many of them were highschool students or had already graduated from highschools and universities in China. Many could not find jobs due to language barriers. They started to learn English while looking for work but their effort usually ended in futility. With the exception of a few, many had no choice but to take up various jobs in restaurants, Chinese groceries and herbal stores in Edmonton. Some had to leave for smaller towns to find work.

The interests and needs of this youth group were different from their parents. Recreational activities were varied and ranged from singing, going to picnics, playing basketball games to getting involved in Cantonese opera as performers, musicians or event organizers. In 1952, they formed their own club called the Edmonton Chinese Youth Club 點城華人青年會. They were generously supported by the Edmonton Chinese United Church 點城華人協和教會 which allowed them to meet regularly in the Church facility free of charge. Club members also took the opportunity to attend English classes offered by the Church. In 1952, this Club staged a Cantonese opera “The Obedient Grandchild 乖孫” to fundraise for the operation of the Chinese Benevolent Association of Edmonton (See Figure 10 on the next page). The script was written by someone from their parents’ generation. Admission to the opera was free. Attendees were simply asked to make a donation at the door. Parents and friends who attended the opera showed enthusiastic support and a substantive amount was raised.





Figure 10: A 1952 Cantonese opera staged by the Edmonton Chinese Youth Club  
Source: Collection Project with Bruce Peel Special Collections Library

In the same year, another Cantonese opera script “The Squandering Son 二世祖” was written for the Chinese Dramatic Club to celebrate the twenty-third anniversary of the Chinese Benevolent Association of Edmonton. Although the performers were in Cantonese opera costumes, the performance was closer to modern drama than Cantonese opera because it involved minimal stylized operatic movements and there were more dialogues than singing, according to Mr. Stanley Mah, one of the performers.

The two performances were staged at the Strand Theatre located at 10209 Jasper Avenue in downtown Edmonton. The theatre, once known as “the most northerly high-class playhouse in North America”, was eventually closed down in 1979 (Herzog 2011). A delicate association of this theatre with the Chinese community was perhaps the panel of “red damask figured silk imported from China (ibid.).” The choice of this venue carried two meanings. First, it reflected the importance that the community placed on the performances associated with

supporting the Chinese Benevolent Association. Secondly, it implied that the Chinese in Edmonton perceived Cantonese opera as a highbrow performing art. In reality, Cantonese opera was still struggling to move away from being lowbrow and to establish itself as a regional genre in Guangzhou and Hong Kong in the same time period. In an overseas setting such as Edmonton, this cultural practice was more than entertainment. It embodied the cultural identity of the Chinese as they negotiated a space as settlers in the local community.

The choice of the two repertoires carried profound meaning. First, these were locally-scripted by an old-timer and a young person. Secondly, both affirmed the patriarchal family structure and the five Confucian cardinal relationships of ruler with subject, father with son, husband with wife, elder brother with younger brother, and friends with friends. These relationships were associated with the virtues of loyalty, filial piety, respect, love and trust.

The repertoire “Obedient Grandchild” offered a positive reinforcement of the virtue of filial piety as enshrined in the unconditional respect and care for the parents, in this case, the grandparents. The old-timer who scripted this repertoire integrated performing art and moral education as a means to reach out to the newly arrived youths and to connect with them after many years of separation. It was also another way of setting some value-based expectations for the newly-arrived wives and children.

The other repertoire “The Squandering Son” presented an unfilial son to teach the audience not to follow the example of his corrupted life. Incidentally, this was written by “a son”, the young Jimmy GIN who was in his late teens at

that time. Both repertoires manifested the social functions of “entertainment” and “communication-and-education” as articulated in his 1952 article in the *Tai Hon Kung Bo* of Vancouver (Gin 1952). Cantonese operas were staged but not shared with the mainstream, indicating that the sojourners’ mentality and sentiments were still lingering. This sentiment was evidenced by a number of articles and poems written by the youths.

In the early 1950s, some of these educated youths formed a writers’ group as an outlet to express themselves through literature and to connect with other young writers across Canada. They wrote novellas, literary articles and poems which were published in the *Tai Hon Kung Bo*. A close examination of the poems and articles from my collection project with the Bruce Peel Special Collections Library revealed a number of shared sentiments amongst these Chinese youths. There were sentiments of loneliness, of yearning for freedom, of yearning for their loved ones and of feeling like a sojourner who wanted to be back in a familiar environment with their own circle of friends. The writers’ group provided a forum for these young people to connect, to verbalize and to share their feelings. For many, it was comforting to know that they were not alone in how they felt.

While these young people under 18 came through the family reunification process for the obvious reason of settlement, they still identified with their homeland emotionally at this stage because the entire family was not reunited in Edmonton. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, their adult siblings over 18 and

grandparents were not allowed into Canada due to restrictive immigration policies.

Apart from writing, this youth group actively helped organize Cantonese opera performances in the community. They worked alongside their parents' generation. Through their polished writing skills, a few of them wrote featured articles to call for community cohesion and changing traditional customs and social mores through Cantonese opera. The same message was embroidered on a small banner displayed on the stage as seen in a photograph of a 1953 performance staged by the Calgary Jin Wah Sing Music Society (See Figure 11 below).



Figure 11: A 1953 Cantonese opera in Calgary by Jin Wah Sing Music Society  
Source: Collection Project with Bruce Peel Special Collections Library

This photograph captured the community's inter-city social network. It was staged in Calgary by the locals but also attended by Chinese from Edmonton.

Commercial advertisements were prominently displayed on the backdrop. In the same scene, a cloth backdrop was used mainly for decoration and irrelevant to the operatic text (See Figure 12).



Figure 12:  
A 1953 Cantonese opera  
in Calgary: Irrelevant  
backdrop

Source: Collection Project  
with Bruce Peel Special  
Collections Library

The backdrop displayed a big phoenix in the middle with two dragons on both sides. Further from the dragons were two big signs advertising two well-known Chinese herbal stores and two commonly used herbal medicines. This reflected a stage setup typical of Cantonese opera before the stage reforms of the 1920s and 30s (Li 312). The use of such a setup in 1953 signified that Cantonese opera in Edmonton was behind the times.

By the late 1950s, many of the youths who arrived earlier had grown into young adults and ready to move into their next stage in life — marriage. However, at that time, there were not enough available young Chinese women. Inter-racial marriage was not a preferred option. It was also frowned upon by the

families of young white women. This started a trend of overseas brides 過埠新娘 through arranged marriages.

For those who could afford to go to their hometown or Hong Kong, they would make a trip for the sole purpose of meeting a young Chinese woman for marriage. They usually got married after spending a couple of weeks to a few months together. The new husband then returned to Edmonton to apply for his wife's immigration. It took about a year or so before the wife could join him in Edmonton. For those who could not afford to make a trip or did not wish to make a trip for various reasons, they relied on arranged marriages through relatives and friends. They went through a process of exchanging portraits and/or letters. Upon mutual agreement to get married, the young man in Edmonton would apply for the immigration of his fiancé whom he never met in person.

Many of these fiancés or wives received formal education in China at elementary and high school levels but no proficiency in English. Upon arrival from a tropical climate, it took them a long time to get adjusted to the severe Edmonton winter and a new environment where the streets were filled with white faces in the 1950s (MacLeod). They could not participate in mainstream activities because of language barriers. There was no Chinese radio or television program. As a result, many simply listened to Mandarin popular songs and Cantonese opera on vinyl records in the late 1950s and listened to cassette tapes in the 1960s as a form of home entertainment. Some helped at their husband's

grocery store or restaurants. Some joined the Chinese United Church for worships and group activities. A common activity for all was to attend the occasional Cantonese opera performances staged by local amateurs. In the 1960s, as more wives arrived, they occasionally gathered in a group of four to play a game of mahjong or took turns to host a dinner. For those whose husbands did not own a business, they found jobs which did not require the use of English. In the 1960s, many worked as seamstresses at the Great Western Garment Company or commonly known as GWG “the sweat shop” for its harsh working conditions (Beharry). Some wives simply stayed home to raise children.

Between 1961 and 1971, the total Chinese population in Edmonton more than doubled. The increase occurred on a larger population base and jumped from 1,805 to 4,940. The male to female sex ratio changed from 2:1 to 1:1 by 1971 (See Chart 3 below).

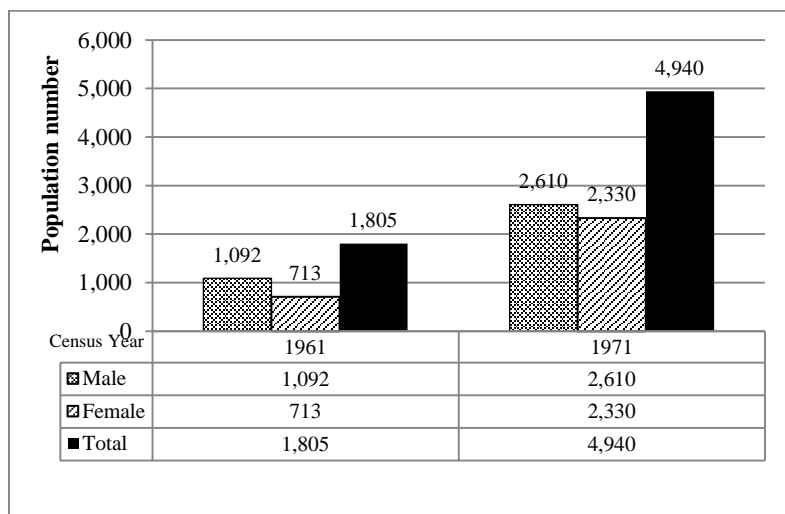


Chart 3: Chinese Population in Edmonton (1961-1971)

Source: Statistics Canada. *Census of Canada*. Census on population of cities and towns of 10,000 and over, classified according to racial origin 1961 to 1971.

With the population increase and an almost balanced sex ratio, Cantonese opera took on a new life in meeting the changing community needs in the 1960s. As the fiancés and wives arrived, the demand for Cantonese opera increased. More up-to-date Cantonese opera librettos and song sheets from Hong Kong and Guangzhou were brought in by these fiancés and wives, through the mail from friends or brought in by the Chinese travellers from Edmonton. However, these scripts were often modified because audience needs were different and there was a lack of performers for the full cast required in the original librettos.

Before the mid-1960s, performances were all staged by local amateurs with the help of two professionals in Edmonton. After 1965, professionals from Hong Kong and the United States were on the cast because the two local professionals had passed away. Local amateurs played supporting roles alongside the professionals from Hong Kong and the United States. As most local amateurs worked long hours in restaurants, they had no time to memorize the lyrics or dialogues specified in the script and had to be prompted during the performance. It was done through a creative but very unusual way by having the lyrics and dialogues written in large Chinese characters on a long scroll of paper placed on the floor of the stage near the microphone (See Figure 13 on page 63). This performance was staged in 1969 by local amateurs and professional performers SO Siu-tong 蘇少棠 and WONG Gam-oi 黃金愛 from San Francisco.





Figure 13:  
A 1969 Cantonese opera  
held at the Victoria  
Composite High School  
theatre

Source: Collection Project  
with the Bruce Peel  
Special Collections  
Library

It was much cheaper to bring in professionals from the United States than from Hong Kong. In the mid to late 1960s, individual professionals rather than the entire troupe from Hong Kong were occasionally brought in to complement local performances. There were no professional performers from Mainland China due to the Cultural Revolution between 1966 and 1976 when no Chinese were allowed to leave the country.

In 1966, the Chinese Benevolent Association of Edmonton needed a new building and a Chinese school. A Cantonese opera was jointly organized by the Chinese Dramatic Club and the Edmonton Chinese Businessmen Association 點城華僑經營西人雜貨業同業聯會 to raise funds. It was staged by local amateurs and professionals from San Francisco, Seattle and Vancouver

(*Edmonton Journal* 1966). Building community infrastructures denoted a sense of permanence and a settlers' mentality.

The Association was formed in 1962 when the number of Chinese-owned grocery stores increased and the group needed to consolidate for better negotiation power with white suppliers and the government (Hoe 206, Con 232). While there was nothing unusual about the English name of the Association, the Chinese name did reflect a sojourner's mentality of the members. These were Western-style grocery store-owners. Those who exclusively sold Chinese groceries were not members of this Association.

The Association wrote two newspaper articles to appeal for a concerted effort to fundraise through Cantonese opera. They highlighted the superlative cast of renowned professional artists from San Francisco and Seattle as the attraction. These included LO Hoi-Tin 盧海天, CHIN Siu-lei 秦小梨, YIM Kwan-fong 艷群芳, YING Lai-ming 英麗明 and CHOW Siu-ping 周少平. Another draw for the audience was the local professional Cantonese opera musician, WONG Tao 黃滔, who served as the lead musician. The event raised a substantive amount of funds through ticket sales and donations. Both the old-timers and their sons were actively involved in organizing the event and were pulled together for a common cause. Cantonese opera fulfilled the function of community cohesion to consolidate the community as new members were added through the family reunification process.

The Association was very active in organizing and supporting Cantonese operas to meet the needs of family members at a time when there were no Chinese-speaking public entertainment facilities in Edmonton. Attending Cantonese operas or the occasional Cantonese-speaking movie was an indulgence and an occasion to socialize and renew kinship relations.

In the early 1960s, two other performances entitled “The Butterfly Lovers” and “Playing Mischief on Provincial Officer Mei 大鬧梅知府” were fondly embraced by the community. Both repertoires manifested the functions of entertainment and communication-and-education. The first one was a classic repertoire based on a Chinese legend with the theme of romantic love. The second repertoire was a comedy with a theme on justice. The two performances were held at the Dreamland Theatre at 9697 Jasper Avenue in Edmonton with a seating capacity of 200 to 300. Once in the cinema strip<sup>14</sup> of downtown Edmonton, Dreamland Theatre was eventually closed in 1979 (Herzog 2006).

These two performances were followed by many others held once or twice a year in community halls or local theatres. Locally-scripted and outline-librettos disappeared. By the late 1960s, librettos were “imported” from Vancouver, Hong Kong or Guangzhou through personal connections. These were full-scripts modified for local performances. After reviewing three original librettos from the 1960s, several observations were made. Only one libretto had a brief description of the storyline with a list of roles aligned with the names of

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<sup>14</sup> The downtown cinema strip was along Jasper Avenue between 96<sup>th</sup> and 97<sup>th</sup> Street in Edmonton.

the performers. The other two had no storyline and roles were listed without the performers' name. All the librettos had a story with a happy ending.

Two of the repertoires were historical epics in an imperial or military setting. These repertoires shared the common theme of loyalty and filial piety which reinforced Confucian ethics and values related to either the traditional social hierarchy or family patriarchy. The librettos did not have musical notes to the lyrics. They only named the basic categories of small tunes, Bongwong and the typical Guangdong ballads such as muyu. As the performers and musicians were familiar with these fixed tunes, it was unnecessary to have musical notes to the lyrics. If the tunes were out of the ordinary, both the lyrics and accompanied musical notes were outlined at the end of the libretto. An example of this treatment was reflected in one of the repertoires '*Loyalty through Bloodshed*' 碧血丹心 which used a modified small tune '*Chaodiao zhaojunyuan*' 潮調昭君怨.

The delivery style of monologues and dialogues in these librettos of the 1960s were varied but very prescriptive in expressing different sentiments, such as: speaking in plain monologue, in reciting poetry, in raps, in rage, in astonishment, in a sob, with a wry smile and with a hysterical laugh (口古、詩白、白攬、怒曰、惊愕曰、泣白、苦笑白、狂笑白). Such prescriptive monologues and dialogues also served as cues for acting. Colloquial vocabularies were used in dialogues except in poetry recitals. However, there was one libretto that contained uncouth languages delivered in a rap to express rage. It was learned that such angry swear words containing a curse on the other

person's entire family were not uncommon amongst the old-timers when they swore in anger. The use of vulgar vocabularies reflected that Cantonese opera in Edmonton was behind the times because in the 1960s, vulgar vocabularies had basically disappeared from Cantonese opera in Hong Kong but colloquial vocabularies continued to be used in operatic dialogues because they were integral to spoken Cantonese as the medium for the genre's delivery.

Two other events in the late 1960s reflected the settlers' mentality of the Chinese through Cantonese opera by sharing the cultural practice and involving the mainstream. The first event was reported by the *Edmonton Journal* on January 30, 1968 with the headline "Greeting the Year of the Monkey". Ned LEE, owner of the Bamboo Palace Restaurant, invited performers from the Chinese Dramatic Club to sing Cantonese opera songs to celebrate Chinese New Year. The Lieutenant Governor Grant MacEwan attended the event in a traditional Chinese outfit. The event carried two significant implications. First, the Lieutenant Governor's attendance and his Chinese outfit were clear indications of acceptance and public appreciation of the Chinese culture. Secondly, this event indicated that the Chinese had already established important political connections in the mainstream.

The second event was a Cantonese opera staged by a 70-person troupe from Hong Kong via Vancouver in 1969. It was the first time for a commercial troupe of that size to perform in Edmonton. The *Edmonton Journal* reported this second performance and called it an event that promoted "better understanding and good fellowship between Chinese and Western cultures (Edmonton Journal

1969).” The performance was staged to raise funds for the Cancer Society of Edmonton. This was not only a philanthropic gesture but a clear indication of the settlers’ mentality of the Chinese who wanted to contribute towards the betterment of Edmonton, a place where they worked and lived.

Cantonese opera continued its presence throughout the history of Chinese immigration regardless of whether the socio-political milieu was positive or negative in Canada or China. In the early twentieth century to 1940, overseas Chinese were called to view themselves as sojourners whose ultimate commitment was to China (Wickberg 138). During the second half of the 1950s, overseas Chinese were encouraged to view themselves as settlers or ‘envoys of friendship’ and to take up citizenship of their receiving countries (Chang, C.Y. 284). By then, the socio-political milieu in Edmonton was becoming more affable. The establishment of an Alberta Culture Department in 1959 provided a nurturing environment for the Chinese to freely express their culture and openly articulate their homeland sentiments in Canada.

Local amateurs usually with little or no operatic training dominated the Cantonese opera stage before the mid-1960s. Performances stayed within the community and staged for the community as a local form of family entertainment. Cantonese opera served to meet changing community needs and reinforced traditional Chinese cultural values. After the mid-1960s, Cantonese opera was staged by a mixed cast of professional and amateur performers. Performances were shared with the mainstream and proceeds from fundraising events went beyond the Chinese community to benefit mainstream institutions, indicating a

greater degree of integration into society. A quote in the *Edmonton Journal* of November 24, 1966 best reflected the transitioning process of the Chinese mentality as Mr. Vic Mah said, “The Chinese are becoming more Canadianized all the time ... But they aren’t about to lose their identity.”

The settlers’ self-identity was the strongest in the era of inclusion after 1970 because new immigrants actually arrived with that mindset in addition to being in a more affable socio-political milieu that fortified that sentiment.

#### Chapter Four: The social function of integration into society in the era of inclusion 1970-2009: The settlers' mentality

This era was marked by inclusive legislations, a heterogeneous Chinese community and Cantonese opera's social function of integration into society. There were two significant inflows of Chinese immigrants. The first large inflow was from Hong Kong between the late 1960s and the late 1990s. The second inflow was from China in the early 1990s to the present. The inflows of immigrants fundamentally changed the Chinese community from a homogeneous to a heterogeneous one. Four phenomena in this era provided a snapshot of the evolution of Cantonese opera as an art form, its function in meeting community needs and its role in fortifying the settlers' mentality of the Chinese.

Three political events in Hong Kong and China triggered a series of emigration to Canada in this era. The first event was the Cultural Revolution of 1966-76, the second event was the return of the Colony of Hong Kong to China by the British in 1997 and the third event was the 1989 Tiananmen Square Incident. When the Chinese Cultural Revolution spilled into Hong Kong from Guangzhou in 1967, it resulted in a series of open confrontations between the nationalist and communist factions. Demonstrations, street bombings and martial laws ensued (Con 245-6). This led to an exodus from Hong Kong to Canada. The Point System for immigration introduced by the Canadian government in 1967 to foster economic development came at an opportune time for the Chinese (Badets 3). This new immigration policy targeted immigrants with proficiency in English, higher educational level and the ability to adapt



quickly to the Canadian society. It opened the door to a very different group of well-educated students, merchants and professionals.

The second event started in 1984 when British Prime Minister signed a Sino-British Joint Declaration with ZHAO Ziyang 趙紫陽, the Premier of China and General Secretary of the Communist Party, agreeing to restore Hong Kong to China on July 1, 1997. The news triggered another surge of immigration from Hong Kong in the 1980s and 1990s. This was because unpleasant memories of the Cultural Revolution that previously spilled into Hong Kong were still fresh in people's mind that triggered a strong feeling of insecurity and uncertainty under a Chinese regime.

The 1989 Tiananmen Square Incident and the horrific memories of the Cultural Revolution triggered an influx of immigrants from China. After the Tiananmen Square Incident, many Chinese students and scholars already in Canada applied for immigration and many new immigrants arrived in the early 1990s. This trend continued well into the twenty-first century.

Immigrants from the influx between the late 1960s and late 1990s were mainly from the cosmopolitan city of Hong Kong. They were urban, English-speaking and well-educated at high school to university levels. This influx of immigrants led to an exponential growth of the Chinese population in Edmonton in addition to those from other sources such as Taiwan and other Southeast Asian countries (See Chart 4 for the Chinese Population of Edmonton from 1971-2006).

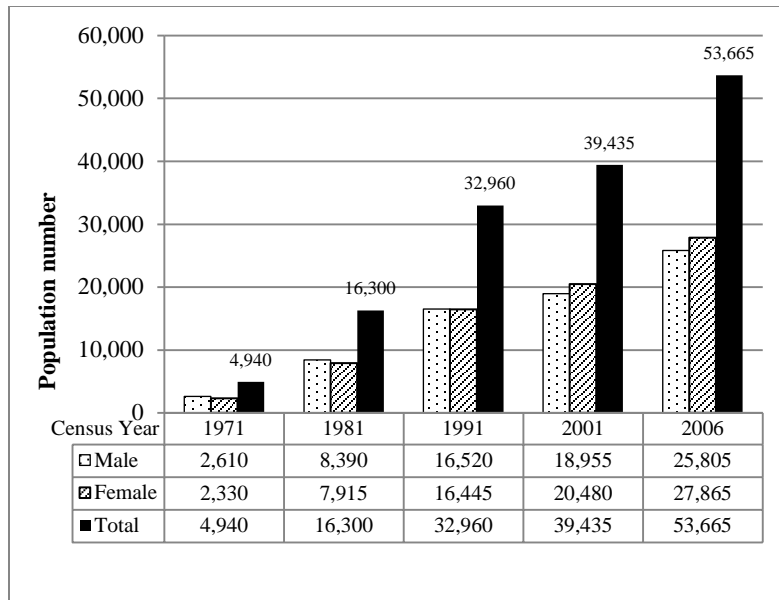


Chart 4: Chinese Population of Edmonton 1971-2006

Sources: Statistics Canada. *Census of Canada*. Census on population of cities and towns of 10,000 and over, classified according to racial origin 1971 to 2006

The population more than tripled by 1981, doubled on a larger population base in 1991, and slowed down slightly by 2001 as the source of immigration from Hong Kong dropped. This was because Chinese in Hong Kong saw a smooth turnover of sovereignty from the British in 1997 with no aftermaths of concern. The population continued to increase from 32,960 in 1991 to 39,435 in 2001 through births, internal migration and new immigrants from China and an insignificant number from other countries. The sex ratio of the Chinese population in Edmonton was close to complete balance between 1971 and 1991. The source of immigration shifted from Hong Kong to China in the late 1990s and the Chinese population in Edmonton rose to 53,665 in 2006. The 2006 Bi-Census is used in Chart 4 instead of the more recent 2011 Census because the bi-census constitutes the most up-to-date population information for the 2009 end

period of this study. Besides, information by ethnic origin and by sex was not collected in Census 2011, making it difficult to make comparisons with past census data.

The community was heterogeneous in this era of inclusion. There were eight distinct Chinese sub-groups with different characteristics in terms of place of origin, education, sub-culture and sub-dialects spoken. The first sub-group was the Chinese who came as pioneers before 1950. The second sub-group was the wives and children who arrived in the 1950s and 60s. The other six sub-groups included: the Hong Kong group, the Taiwanese, Vietnam Chinese, Chinese from the People's Republic of China, Canadian-born Chinese and "Others" such as those from Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines and other parts of the world.

The Hong Kong group invariably labeled the pioneers and their families collectively as 'old-timers 老華僑' whose social background, interests, needs and sub-dialects were seen as different. The old-timers and the Hong Kong immigrants became two divergent groups with minimal interactions until after they were pulled together in a common front to deal with a community-wide racist issue triggered by the W5 Incident. The incident was sparked off by an erroneous CTV W5 program entitled "Campus Giveaway" that portrayed Chinese university students as foreign students who deprived white Canadians the opportunity for advance education and unduly took advantage of subsidized public education (Li 1998, 144-5). The eventual victory over this issue brought the two divergent groups together. However, the term 'old-timers' continued to

be referenced until the early twenty-first century. For the balance of this chapter, the term ‘old-timers’ will be used in order to follow local conventions and for ease of reference.

Despite diverse interests and needs in the community, Cantonese opera never ceased to be vibrant in the city. In a span of over 90 years, the number of Cantonese opera and singing clubs grew from one in 1917 to twenty, with sixteen active clubs as at the end of 2009 (See Chart 5 for the pattern of growth).

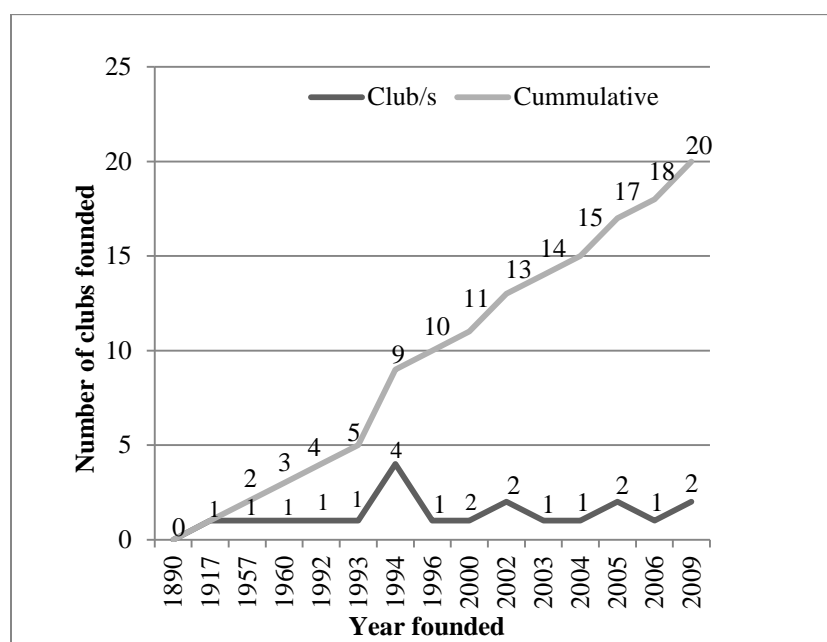


Chart 5: Cantonese opera and singing clubs in Edmonton by year and by number of clubs founded 1890 - 2009

Notes: This chart was created from information collected through club Executives or members and verified by primary source materials. It does not include private and informal groups unknown to the public. The total number of 20 includes 4 discontinued or inactive clubs as at 2009.

There was a precipitous and exponential growth of seven Cantonese opera and music clubs between 1992 and 1996. By the 1990s, many Chinese from Hong Kong had settled in Edmonton with stable employment and a

comfortable home. For the married, their children had become teenagers and the mothers found time for leisure activities. By then, the Huah Chiaur Musical Society had become inactive but the other old-timers' clubs such as Chinese Dramatic Club, Jin Wah Sing Musical Society, Hung Fung Athletic and Alberta Kwan Ying Recreation Club continued to actively stage Cantonese opera and singing performances to meet the needs of their families, clansmen and friends. As at the end of 2012, sixteen Cantonese opera clubs made up the largest single-purpose organization after the clans associations (See Chart 6 below).

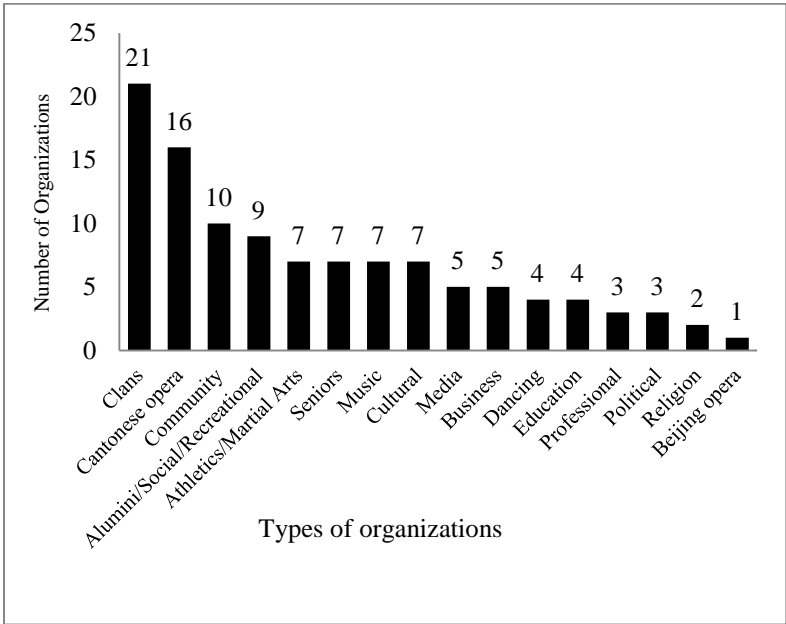


Chart 6: Chinese community organizations by types<sup>15</sup> as at 2013  
 Note: This Chart was created by combining information from Chart 1 with information from the 2013 publication of the Chinese Benevolent Association (ECCC).

Three reasons explained the exponential growth of Cantonese opera and music clubs in Edmonton. First, it was due to an increase in supply and demand.

<sup>15</sup> This chart does not include informal groups and those unknown to the public. Organizations are categorized by their main activities. 'Community' includes organizations that provide settlement services and those functioning as advocacy groups.

The Chinese population grew from 16,300 in 1981 to 53,665 in 2006. After year 2000, many of the retired or semi-retired from the Hong Kong group became active in the clubs and many attended performances. They added a new vitality to Cantonese opera as a popular entertainment and cultural practice in Edmonton. In the past, getting a full-house attendance for a 300 to 400-seat theatre was easy. In the twenty-first century, it was easy to fill a 700-seat theatre.

Secondly, the numeric growth was due to differences in ideology and opinions amongst club members. Some left existing clubs to form their own. Majority of the new clubs were operated by those from Hong Kong and Vietnam with the old-timers as musicians.

Thirdly, it was motivated by charitable casino proceeds as funding support from the Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission (AGLC). Between 1993 and 1994, four community organizations received funding support for charitable activities including Cantonese operas staged as community service for seniors. Apart from using casino proceeds for charitable activities, part of the proceeds can be used for approved eligible administrative purposes (AGLC).

As at the end of 2012, fourteen out of the sixteen active Cantonese opera and music clubs were funded by casino proceeds used for performances and administrative items such as club rental, utilities and supplies, costumes, musical instruments, training and public workshops, honoraria and travel expenses for outside performers and musicians, cultural exchange tours, performance-related rentals and promotion (See Chart 7).

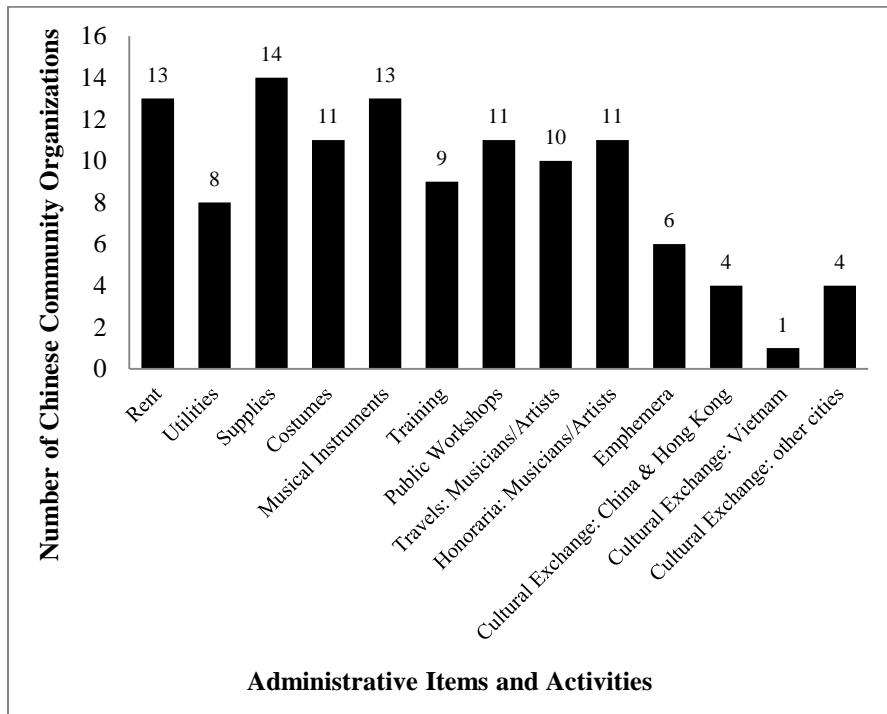


Chart 7: Use of charitable casino proceeds by number of Cantonese opera clubs and by activities and administrative items as at March 2012

Note: This Chart was created by using information specifically obtained in March 2012 from the Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission.  
Other cities included Winnipeg, Toronto, Victoria, Montreal, Halifax, Regina, and Vancouver on single or multiple destination trips.

With charitable casino proceeds supporting activities and administrative items, this funding source became critical to the sustainability and affordability of Cantonese opera as a cultural practice and a popular entertainment. Most of the performances were either free or at a nominal charge unless they were staged for fundraising purposes. As casino proceeds must be used for charitable purposes, Cantonese operas in Edmonton carried a de facto function of altruism in addition to entertainment.

The main source of Chinese immigration shifted from Hong Kong to Mainland China in the late 1990s, leading to a growing interest in Beijing opera. The Edmonton Beijing Opera Association was formed in 2002 and remained the only Beijing opera club in Edmonton as at the end of 2009. It was also funded by charitable casino proceeds. Their 2007 performance by a 45-member troupe led by MEI Baojiu 梅葆玖, son of the late renowned Beijing artist MEI Lanfang 梅蘭芳 was a landmark event in Edmonton. It was attended by a vast majority of Chinese who did not speak Mandarin because it was the ‘opera’, the ‘Chineseness’ of the performance and the name of MEI Lanfang and his son that attracted many to the show. Local amateur performers of Cantonese opera attended the show as a learning opportunity because the two genres shared many common repertoires and performance conventions. However, a critical mass for a Beijing opera audience and local amateur performers have yet to happen before it can compete and share the stage with Cantonese opera in Edmonton.

Many qualified clubs<sup>16</sup> in Calgary are also recipients of charitable casino funding which is unique to Alberta. While Cantonese opera is very vibrant in other Canadian locations such as Vancouver, Toronto, Winnipeg and Regina, their clubs are without the same public funding support. Instead, expenses are usually borne by the amateur performers and through ticket sales, sponsorships and donations. As the focus of this thesis is on Edmonton, activities in other cities have not been explored.

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<sup>16</sup> To “qualify for a casino licence, a group must have delivered a charitable program in Alberta for a minimum of 24 months at the time of application (AGLC)”



The evolution of Cantonese opera as an art form and its role in affirming and fortifying the Chinese settlers' identity were manifested through four observed phenomena in this era. These included amateurs staging Cantonese opera performances in the community; the growing popularity of singing sessions; performances staged by professional performers from Hong Kong and China; and the Canadian socio-political milieu becoming more conducive to fortifying the Chinese settlers' mentality. The first phenomenon manifested the evolution of Cantonese opera as an art form in an overseas setting such as Edmonton. The second and third phenomena manifested the settlers' mentality as expressed through Cantonese opera. The fourth manifested the inclusive and supportive Canadian legislations and policies that fortified the settlers' mentality.

The first of the four phenomena was the evolution of Cantonese opera as an art form in Edmonton. Amateur performers, organizers and the audience had always been the backbone that kept the genre alive and vibrant throughout the years in Edmonton. Before the mid-1960s, performances were staged by local amateurs with little or no training. There was hardly any artistry to performing Cantonese operas. Between the mid-1960s and the early 1970s, performances were staged by local amateurs alongside professionals who added an element of artistry to Cantonese opera. With an increased number of clubs in the 1990s, local amateurs with little or no training brought the art of Cantonese opera back to the period before the mid-1960s with hardly any artistry to the performances.

Between the 1970s and 1990s, there was no opera master in Edmonton to train the amateur performers who typically performed excerpts of repertoires that

usually lasted about thirty to forty-five minutes each. A show typically included a combination of excerpt performances and opera singing. In the early 1990s, Cantonese opera karaoke discs became available in Edmonton. Some of the talented and self-confident enthusiasts simply spent time imitating the singing and operatic movements from karaoke and improvised as they perform. Audience expectation was low because many were simply happy to see the painted faces, flamboyant costumes, the loud drums and gongs, the music and the singing of Cantonese opera.

A few other enthusiasts travelled to Calgary, Vancouver, Hong Kong and China to take lessons from professionals such as CHEN Dawei 陳大衛 from China, Hoi Seng IEONG 楊海城, Rose LEE 鄭麗兒 and BAI Xuehong 白雪紅 from Vancouver, as well as Wai LAM 林慧 and May AU 歐美玉 from Calgary. These opera masters were instrumental in refining the performance artistry of amateurs in Edmonton. It followed that the audience was inadvertently educated to appreciate Cantonese opera as an art form and to expect a certain standard of performance from local amateurs. Performing excerpts from more refined repertoires from Hong Kong in the late 1990s involved monologues and dialogues with vulgar and colloquial vocabularies disappearing quickly. Cantonese opera in Edmonton moved a step closer to artistic performance.

Globalization and information technology contributed to the rapid modernization and evolution of Cantonese opera as an art form in Edmonton. There were three related developments: acquisition of the most up-to-date

repertoires, the use of modern stage effects and capitalizing on visiting professionals to take lessons from them. Frequent travels between Edmonton, Hong Kong and China in the twenty-first century enabled amateur performers to easily acquire the most up-to-date repertoires and news to share with other club members. The information and news were then transmitted to the audience through performances.

After year 2000, the Sound of Opera Society 樂風文娛曲藝社 brought opera Masters CHEN Dawei from Zhuhai, China and Hoi Seng IEONG from Vancouver to Edmonton for Cantonese opera training. The Masters often served on the cast to perform alongside their students. This gave the students a greater sense of confidence when performing with a seasoned professional who were more astute to improvise in case the students made an error or when the singing and acting went out of sync. In 2004, a full-scale repertoire “The Flower Princess” was staged by the Sound of Opera Society together with Master Hoi Seng IEONG who trained, directed and acted in the show.

Another evolution was the introduction of special stage effects to add modern drama elements to Cantonese opera performances in an overseas setting. In 2004, the Beautiful Sky Opera Association staged a large scale Cantonese opera “The Butterfly Lovers” at the Victoria Composite High School Theatre to fundraise for a Chinese nursing home. There were a number of creative presentations. First, the program booklet was beautifully designed and printed in Hong Kong with a butterfly theme to align with the repertoire (See Figure 14).



Figure 14:  
Program booklet of “The Butterfly Lovers” held  
on April 3, 2004 at the Victoria Composite High  
School Theatre

Source: Collection Project with the Bruce Peel  
Special Collections Library

Its final Act was a ballet dance accompanied by Western style orchestral music entitled the “Butterfly Lovers’ Violin Concerto”. The violin concerto represented the female protagonist and the cello represented the male protagonist. Incorporating these Western elements into traditional Cantonese opera performance was a bold and creative attempt to modernize, enhance and exemplify Cantonese opera as a performing art that is also innovative. It set a new benchmark for the performance of Cantonese opera as a creative art responsive to modernity and audience needs.

In 2006 and 2007, two clubs started the use of Artistic Directors and playwrights to elevate the standard of Cantonese opera performances. The 2006 performance entitled “Mystery of the Imperial Decanter” marked the turning point in the evolution of Cantonese opera in Edmonton because of a number of features. First, the script was adapted and customized to include all club

members in the performance. New lyrics were written for nine major roles so that all club members with the vocal proficiency had a singing part.

Secondly, it was a very large scale performance involving 35 local amateur performers and over 100 volunteer helpers to organize and run the show at a modern and well equipped 2,400-seat Northern Alberta Jubilee Auditorium in Edmonton (See Figure 15).



Figure 15: A group photo at the end of the performance showcasing a range of grandiose costumes, musicians and volunteers of “Mystery of the Imperial Decanter” in 2006.

Source: Collection Project with the Bruce Peel Special Collections Library

This was the largest Cantonese opera show staged by the largest number of amateur performers in the history of Edmonton. Performances were usually staged in theatres with a capacity of about 700. A near full-house attendance of 2,000 at this performance implied that the audience had expanded from a group of seniors to include the uninitiated. Non-Chinese from the public asked for tickets after seeing an advertisement on the CTV television network in

Edmonton. Many non-Chinese friends and colleagues of the performers attended to show support.

Thirdly, special stage effects and modern drama elements were extensively used in this performance, as evidenced by the personal notes on the libretto used by the stage director. Modern drama elements included special light and sound effects. For example, the stage was dimmed to 20% light intensity with the immediate onset of spooky sounds and smoke to create an eerie effect for the appearance of ghosts. Light intensities were manipulated through the computer and deployed electronically and instantaneously (See Figure 16).



Figure 16: Stage effects: “Mystery of the Imperial Decanter” held at the Northern Alberta Jubilee Auditorium by the Sound of Opera Society on October 15, 2006  
Source: Collection Project with the Bruce Peel Special Collections Library

Five lead musicians were brought in from Zhuhai, China to make up a music ensemble of eleven, including local musicians and the use of Western musical instruments such as saxophone and cello. The opera Masters CHAN Dawei and Hoi Seng IEONG were also on the cast. They played significant

roles involving more complex operatic and acrobatic movements that no amateurs could perform due to their lack of training at a young age.

Local-born Chinese and non-Chinese youths who could not speak the Cantonese dialect were involved in minor roles without having to speak or sing. Their participation initiated them to Cantonese opera and connected them closely to the Chinese community. These young amateurs subsequently became part of a cast for the repertoire “Prime Minister of Six States 六國封相” in a 2007 show held at the Northern Alberta Jubilee Auditorium (See Figure 17 below).



Figure 17: Part of the cast for “Prime Minister of Six States 六國封相” presented by the Hua Yi Students’ Association on September 29, 2007 at the Northern Alberta Jubilee Auditorium: youth involvement

Source: Collection Project with the Bruce Peel Special Collections Library

This repertoire was one of the “ritualistic items” in a series of religious performances of Cantonese opera (Chan 2005, 187). It was traditionally performed on a very large scale to showcase the size of the full cast, the range of grandiose costumes and the operatic skills of the performers. This performance was the first of its kind in Edmonton. In the past, there were not enough local

amateur performers and no trainers for this repertoire. This performance was not possible without Master CHEN Dawei who directed this segment and Master Hoi Seng IEONG from Vancouver who played the role involving highly complex and arduous operatic movements. The original old form of performance routines and singing were followed. The original type of music was pre-recorded in Zhuhai, China for this performance. Amateur performers each played a specific role with specific operatic routines.

The success of the “Mystery of the Imperial Decanter” and the “Prime Minister of Six States” was followed by another full-scale Cantonese opera ‘*Taming the Princess*’ 打金枝 staged by the Edmonton Opera Association 藝晉軒曲藝研習社 at the same facility in 2007. A special feature of this performance was the use of pre-recorded musical accompaniment for the entire show. This was a cost-saving measure but also a historical move that was never done for a full-scale Cantonese opera because live music was traditionally used in all Cantonese opera performances. Use of pre-recorded music was a daunting move because the speed of a monologue or dialogue in between two lyrical songs had to be perfectly timed to maintain the flow of the performance. This marked a new page in the development of Cantonese opera as a performing art in an overseas setting.

In the twenty-first century, a lot of effort was made in sharing Cantonese opera with the mainstream society as evidenced by the 2004 and 2006 performances. The prologue and storyline of the 2004 “The Butterfly Lovers”



were in Chinese and English. The 2006 “Mystery of the Imperial Decanter” was well-supported by the well-patronized national television network of CTV in Edmonton. The entire program booklet was in Chinese and English (See Figure 18). A deck of English slides with information on the storyline was presented before each Act to keep the performance in its original cultural flavour by using the Cantonese dialect in singing, in monologues and in dialogues.

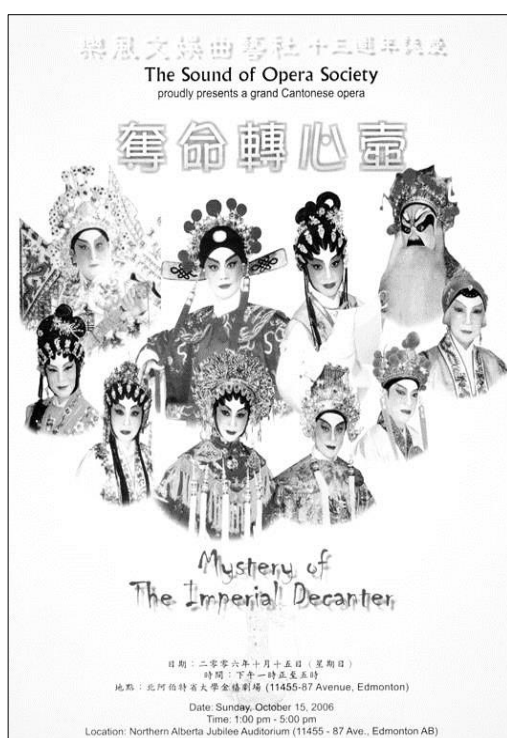


Figure 18:

A program booklet in Chinese and English of the “Mystery of the Imperial Decanter”

Source: Collection Project with Bruce Peel Special Collections Library

The three aforementioned landmark performances indicated that Cantonese opera in Edmonton had caught up with developments in Hong Kong and Guangzhou in its delivery with a touch of artistry in performance.

The second observed phenomenon in this era of inclusion was the trend of holding singing sessions in the clubs. Singing sessions were very popular

from the late 1970s to today. This phenomenon manifested the “entertainment” function of Cantonese opera at two levels: personal and public. At the personal level, the clubs became a place to go for leisure and self-entertainment. The atmosphere was generally casual, friendly and respectful. Singers were never critiqued for their skill or the quality of their voice. Everyone who participated in those sessions simply listened quietly or followed the singing from a song-sheet. For those who wanted to socialize, they would go into a separate room to carry on a conversation while enjoying a cup of tea and snacks. At one time, there was a club with a separate room for the singers to play a game of mahjong while they waited for their turn to sing. Club houses were rented and regular singing sessions were held in the evening or on weekends.

The set-up of the club house was similar to the Songstress Stage of the 1920s in Hong Kong. The singer or singers would stand on a raised platform behind a microphone mounted on a podium or behind a stand-up microphone paired with a stand for holding song-sheets. The musicians would sit on the side, behind or in front of the singer or singers (See Figure 19). A few clubs had the percussion ensemble separated by plexiglass to keep the loud percussions from drowning out the singers, similar to the setup in Hong Kong (Yung 39).



Figure 19: Singing session in the club house at Chinese New Year  
Source: Collection Project with the Bruce Peel Special Collections Library

At the end of each song, the singers would respectfully thank the musicians, following the common practice in the circle of Cantonese opera singers. This reinforced the Confucian virtue of *li* or reverence as an extension of filial piety. These sessions usually lasted at least four or five hours with a recess in between. During the break, they socialized and snacked on food that they brought to share or supplied by the clubs through membership fees. The sessions became conduits for a wide range of social experiences such as: community networking, leisure activities in pursuit of personal interests and a form of legitimate companionship for emotional support. These sessions offered a platform for members to express their creativity and to articulate their Chinese identity through Cantonese opera singing.

As members gained confidence singing in the club houses, they started to sing in restaurants and banquet halls on special occasions such as club

anniversaries and festivals such as Chinese New Year, mid-Autumn festival and Christmas (See Figure 20).



Figure 20: 1986 Hung Fung Athletic Club of Edmonton 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary  
Cantonese opera singing performance at a restaurant  
Source: Collection Project with the Bruce Peel Special Collections Library

Almost all amateur singers were from Hong Kong or Vietnam while most of the musicians were the “old-timers”. Local musicians were amateurs usually used for singing sessions in the clubs. For public performances, seasoned musicians from other cities such as Vancouver, Toronto, Calgary and Regina were invited to join the local musicians. This was necessitated by the need for a fuller compliment of musical accompaniment unavailable in Edmonton. This inadvertently expanded the Edmonton Chinese community network across Canada.

In the 1980s, performances by Cantonese music ensembles also took off and they began to perform for the mainstream society. Music transcends national boundaries and language barriers when the Jin Wah Sing Music Society

played Cantonese opera small tunes at the Alberta Provincial Museum to enhance inter-cultural understanding and to enrich the multicultural mosaic of Edmonton. The Chinese Dramatic Club performed on Canada Day in the 1980s (See Figure 21). The Canada Day performance carried profound meaning as a bold statement of “We are Canadians”. Both occasions clearly manifested the settlers’ mentality of the Chinese in Edmonton.



Figure 21: Cantonese opera musical ensemble performance staged by the Chinese Dramatic Club on Canada Day - July 1, 1986 at the Edmonton Chinatown Multicultural Centre

Source: Collection Project with the Bruce Peel Special Collections Library

The third phenomenon was staging Cantonese operas by professionals in the 1970s and 1980s when the two local professionals had passed away. In the 1970s, four local clubs<sup>17</sup> were instrumental in bringing professionals to perform in Edmonton. However, individual professionals rather than the entire troupe were usually invited due to affordability and the lack of a critical mass to support

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<sup>17</sup> The four clubs were the Edmonton Chinese Dramatic Club, the Jin Wah Sing Musical Society, the Huah Chiaur Musical Society and the Hung Fung Athletic Club.

commercially-operated entertainment. Professionals were mainly from the United States in the late 1960s and from Hong Kong in the 1970s. No professionals came from China because of the Cultural Revolution between 1966 and 1976 when no one was allowed to leave the country.

Cantonese opera performances were infrequent in the decade of 1970 to 1980 because it was expensive to stage a show by professionals from outside of Edmonton. The Huah Chiaur Musical Society and the Hung Fung Athletic Club were very active at that time but they barely managed to stage about one show a year as affordable entertainment in the mid-1970s at the expense of losing money on every occasion, according to my interviewees. The deficits were usually covered by generous donations from businesses and fans. In 1975 and 1976, the Huah Chiaur Musical Society presented a number of Cantonese operas at the Victoria Composite High School Theatre. The performers were renowned professionals from Hong Kong and familiar to the local audience, such as LAW Yim-Hing 羅艷卿, SO Siu-Tong 蘇少棠, LEUNG Sing-Bo 梁醒波, LEUNG Bo-Chu 梁寶珠 and LEE Heung-Kam 李香琴. The Victoria Composite High School Theatre was chosen for the performance because the Executives of the Society were closely connected with the Edmonton Public School Board and obtained free use of the theatre in the form of sponsorship in kind. This was a sign of support from the mainstream society and a sign of Chinese integration.

In 1978, the high-profile and renowned Chor Fung Ming Troupe 雛鳳鳴劇團 from Hong Kong staged a performance presented by the Hung Fung

Athletic Club. The troupe staged one of the most popular repertoires, “The Flower Princess”. The protagonists were played by two popular young performers LUNG Kim-Sang 龍劍笙 and MUI Shuet-Sih 梅雪詩. They were students of renowned artists YAM Kim-Fai 任劍輝 and Pak Suet-Sin 白雪仙 adored by fans in Edmonton. Ticket sales were exceptionally good because of the superlative cast and the novelty that came with it. The Troupe had over thirty performers and was on its second North American tour (Li, Jian 442). The club capitalized on this tour to manage costs and ended with an unexpected surplus. Capitalizing on Canada-US or Canada tours of the opera troupes became a cost-saving trend that continued to today. With a national network in place, news about visiting troupes was quickly shared. Professionals who performed in Vancouver would typically make a stop in Edmonton and move on to Calgary or Toronto, or simply returned to Vancouver before heading back to Hong Kong or Guangzhou in order to maximize their Canadian tour.

In 1982, a large-scale Cantonese opera was jointly organized by the Alberta Chinese Cultural Society and the Edmonton Chinese Dramatic Club. They capitalized on the North American tour of the Guangzhou Cantonese Opera Troupe (Cantonese Opera Encyclopedia 1078). The novelty of its large troupe size and the name-recognition of renowned artists, such as HUNG Sin-Nui 紅線女 and CHAN Siu-fung 陳笑風, led to a full-house attendance. I was at the show in 1982 and made two observations. First, the audience consisted of a significant number from the Hong Kong group. Secondly, volunteers consisted

of the “old-timers” and the Hong Kong group. Through Cantonese opera, the two previously divergent groups were brought together as a working team. The size of the troupe and the number of volunteers involved in organizing the show were impressive (See Figure 22).



Figure 22: A 1982 post-performance photograph of the Guangzhou Cantonese Opera Troupe with organizers and volunteers at the Northern Alberta Jubilee Auditorium  
Source: Collection Project with the Bruce Peel Special Collections Library

A number of Cantonese opera performances contributed to building infrastructures for the Chinese community in the city. In 1987, the Edmonton Chinese Dramatic Club staged a performance to fundraise for the construction of a building for the Chinese Benevolent Association. Between 1994 and 1999, the club staged three performances to fundraise for the expansion and operation of the Edmonton Chinatown Multicultural Centre<sup>18</sup> which was a hub for leisure,

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<sup>18</sup> The Edmonton Chinatown Multicultural Centre was founded in 1985 with the objectives of preserving, promoting and sharing the Chinese culture with Canadians (ECCCC 59).



cultural and educational activities for many Chinese in Edmonton. After year 2000, many clubs were involved in fundraising for community infrastructures, such as the renovation of the Edmonton Chinatown Multicultural Centre, the construction of a Chinese Library and a nursing home.

Some clubs went beyond the Chinese community to fundraise for mainstream institutions, such as the United Way of the Alberta Capital Region, the Canadian Cancer Society, the Stollery Children's Hospital and the Edmonton Youth Emergency Services and Shelter. The altruism function of Cantonese opera was manifested. I contend that such altruistic acts of the Chinese expressed their sense of belonging to the city of Edmonton — a place that they have claimed settlement and a place that they have already called 'home'. Taking this one step further, the Chinese in Edmonton had clearly claimed their identity as settlers of Canada.

A number of external factors shaped this settlers' identity, leading to my fourth observed phenomenon related to the changing socio-political milieu in this era of inclusion. Significant legislative and policy changes occurred in the 1970s to 1990s had profound and enduring effects on the Chinese.

Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau set the national scene for an inclusive Canadian society when he announced a multiculturalism policy within a bilingual framework at the House of Commons on October 1, 1972 (Trudeau). This was an official and public recognition that all ethnic groups, including the Chinese, contributed to the cultural enrichment of Canada. One of the objectives of the new policy was "to assist cultural groups to retain and foster their identity"

on the basis of equal and full opportunities to participate in the Canadian society (Dewing 4). In 1982, the Canadian Constitution Act was passed, followed by the Canadian Multiculturalism Act in 1988. A federal Department of Multiculturalism and Citizenship was established in 1991 and later split into two programs housed in the Department of Canadian Heritage and the Department of Citizenship and Immigration respectively.

At the provincial level, the Alberta Government established a Department of Cultural Affairs in 1975. It became the Department of Culture in 1980 and then the Department of Culture and Multiculturalism in 1987 before it was dissolved in 1992. Ministers Horst A. Schmid (1975-1980) and Mary LeMessurier (1980-1987) regularly participated in cultural activities and maintained a close and positive relationship with the Chinese in the 1970s and 1980s. A number of new legislations, policies and announcements were made between 1980 and the end of 2009. One of the significant legislative changes was the Alberta Cultural Heritage Act passed in 1984 and later replaced by the Alberta Multiculturalism Act in 1990. The 1990 Act acknowledged the multicultural heritage of Alberta and encouraged all Albertans to participate and contribute to the social, cultural, economic and political life of the province (Dewing 13).

In this era of inclusion from 1970 to 2009, Chinese in Edmonton were living in an increasingly more inclusive socio-political milieu because of positive legislative and policy changes at the national and provincial levels. The Chinese capitalized on such an environment and accelerated the growth and development

of Cantonese opera especially in the 1990s and well into the twenty-first century. Performances were staged as fundraising activities that manifested its functions of entertainment, altruism and integration into society in this era. Cantonese opera helped build community infrastructures and made contributions to mainstream social and medical institutions. It also enriched the cultural fabric of Canada as the Chinese share this performing art to facilitate cross-cultural understanding and to articulate their self-identity as settlers.

## Conclusion

Cantonese opera has continued through good times and the bad to mark its presence as a cultural practice and an evolving art form in an overseas setting. It has played a number of social functions in meeting the changing community needs and in manifesting the changing Chinese self-identity from sojourners to settlers within the changing Canadian socio-political milieu as I have contended and evidenced.

As a cultural practice and popular entertainment, Cantonese opera is vibrant throughout the history of Chinese immigration and settlement in Edmonton from 1890 to 2009. This is evidenced by primary source materials from provincial archives and my collection project with Bruce Peel Special Collections Library, such as photographs, monographs, newspaper clippings, librettos and ephemeras of opera activities in every decade between the 1910s and 2009. Cantonese opera has proven to be an integral part of prairie living for the Chinese in Edmonton for over ninety years. In an overseas setting, this genre carries nostalgic memories and zealously embraced by a passionate audience and amateur performers who kept this cultural practice and art form alive throughout the years. The audience and the amateur performers are mainly first-generation immigrants. The very young local-born Chinese are sometimes taken to the show by the parents. The older local-born Chinese with no proficiency in Cantonese are sometimes recruited as volunteer helpers or as casual performers involving no singing or speaking roles.

As an art form transmitted to Edmonton, the versatility of this genre facilitated its growth and development from an unpolished rudimentary performance of little aesthetic value to a more polished form of performance artistry through training by local or visiting professionals. Prior to the mid-1960s, Cantonese opera in Edmonton was at least twenty to thirty years behind the times when compared to Cantonese opera development in Hong Kong and Guangzhou within the same time period. This was due to a socio-political milieu of resentment under discriminatory legislations, restrictive immigration policies and cumbersome re-entry procedures that discouraged travels from Edmonton. In the twenty-first century, with the onset of information technology and globalization, Cantonese opera in Edmonton is on par with developments in Hong Kong and Guangzhou.

In an overseas setting, the delivery of Cantonese opera is basically intact in terms of its visual and aural elements because they are entrenched in fixed conventions. The aural element that distinguishes Cantonese opera from other genres is the use of Cantonese or the Yue dialect in its singing, monologues and dialogues. Uncouth languages occasionally used in Edmonton prior to the mid-1960s have disappeared but colloquial vocabularies continued to be used in operatic dialogues because they are integral to spoken Cantonese of everyday life. It is this familiar colloquial element of Cantonese opera that warms the heart of a broad base of Cantonese-speaking audience in Edmonton.

The visual elements of flamboyant costumes, painted faces, loud music and the sound of gongs and drums are beginning to shape Cantonese opera into a

Chinese icon or cultural visibility that manifests “Chineseness” in much the same way as eating Chinese food, performing a lion dance or engaging in Chinese religious practices in an overseas setting (Wickberg 2010, 135). Embracing such “Chineseness” or cultural heritage is encouraged by a number of legislative and policy changes at the provincial and national levels that fortified the settlers’ mentality of the first-generation Chinese because they legitimized, respected and encouraged the cultural practices of the Chinese including Cantonese opera. Although Cantonese opera has been designated a world intangible cultural heritage to be preserved, protected and promoted, it continues to evolve with the passage of time as a creative and living art form that is responsive to audience demand and the socio-political milieu of the day.

Apart from being an art form, Cantonese opera plays a myriad of social functions to make positive contributions to the Chinese community and the mainstream society in Edmonton. The following functions have been analyzed within the theoretical frameworks of Bell Yung on Cantonese opera and Alan Merriam on music, such as entertainment, communication-and-education, ritual activities, symbolic representation and integration into society. Other observed functions such as homeland politics, community cohesion and altruism have also been analyzed. All these social functions evidenced my argument that Cantonese opera plays a pivotal role in meeting changing community needs and in shaping the Chinese self-identity that shifted from sojourners to settlers over a period of nearly a hundred years in Edmonton. I have divided the Edmonton Chinese immigration history into three periods to underscore the transition of the Chinese

self-identity that shifted from sojourners to settlers. These are: the era of exclusion before 1950, the era of transition in the 1950s and 1960s, and the era of inclusion from 1970 onward.

In the era of exclusion before 1950, Cantonese opera met the emotional, social and cultural needs of the Chinese in Edmonton as they struggled under a resentful socio-political milieu. Cantonese opera served as a social niche that brought the community together. The repertoires offered them a world of imagination and fantasy otherwise unavailable in reality. The lyrics and music of Cantonese opera helped them articulate or release a myriad of emotions such as happiness, love, sadness, anger and hostility in a safe haven and in times of loneliness. One social function of Cantonese opera that manifested a strong sojourners' mentality in this era was homeland politics. It was a sign of strong allegiance to the homeland that reinforced the sojourners' self-identity. This self-identity shifted as Cantonese opera was shared and interactions with the mainstream society increased.

The sojourners' mentality clearly shifted upon the arrival of family members for settlement purpose after the 1923 Chinese Immigration Act was repealed in 1947. At the emotional level, the sojourners' sentiment was yet to be transitioned through the passage of time in order to change attitudes and to forge a shared Canadian identity. In this era, Cantonese opera functioned to meet the needs of the newly-arrived and facilitated the consolidation of the community through a series of Cantonese opera performances for entertainment and altruistic

purposes. It also met the resinification<sup>19</sup> needs of the community through custom-librettos and selected repertoires that reinforced Confucian values and set expectations for the newly arrived. As Cantonese opera was increasingly shared with the mainstream, the settlers' mentality was fortified. This paved the way for the Chinese to move into the next era when the settlers' mentality and sentiments were clearly articulated.

A strong settlers' self-identity was evidenced by the Chinese reaching out to the mainstream to share and involve them through Cantonese opera in the era of inclusion from 1970 onward. Through its function of "altruism", contributions were made to building Chinese community infrastructures and to fundraise for mainstream social welfare and medical institutions. Building community infrastructures and contributing to the betterment of the mainstream society were clear indicators of the settlers' mentality because both implied a sense of permanence and belonging.

My thesis has evidenced that Cantonese opera is inextricably linked to the Chinese community and the changing Canadian socio-political milieu. It played a number of social functions in meeting the changing community needs and in manifesting the changing Chinese self-identity from sojourners to settlers in the immigration and settlement history of the Chinese in Edmonton from 1890 to 2009.

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<sup>19</sup> Resinification is one of the five Overseas Chinese organizational needs identified by Edgar Wickberg who defined it as "a concern for reviving and transmitting aspects of Chinese culture, particularly to younger generations. (Wickberg 2010, 133)."



As such, this study contributes to the body of knowledge on migration studies, on the prairie Chinese and on overseas Chinese in general. It broadens the scope of the relevance of ethno-cultural arts in addressing community needs. As this cultural practice is also vibrant in other Canadian cities such as Vancouver, Toronto, Calgary, Winnipeg and Regina, a comparative study will add value to the current understanding of the Chinese in Canada. This study has implications for further research on the socio-cultural life of Chinese in Canada, using the cultural practice of Cantonese opera as a point of convergence. Overseas Cantonese opera is closely linked to its place of origin. Its modernization process is accelerated by technological advancement and globalization. Further exploration in this area will throw new light on cultural globalization.

Cantonese opera will undoubtedly continue to establish a Chinese spatial presence in the social fabric of multicultural Canada. It will enrich the Canadian quality of life in its unique way as an art form and a cultural practice, as aptly put by the former Prime Minister of Canada, Jean Chrétien, “In a world where human development, quality of life and economic prosperity are increasingly driven by knowledge and creativity, who better to lead the way than our artists, writers and performers (Chrétien 1999).”

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# Appendix 1: Chinese newspaper clippings on the collection project with Bruce Peel Special Collections Library in The Chinese Journal dated October 13, 2011.

B11 光華報

The Chinese Journal

Tel: 780-424-0213

2011 10 13

## 專題報導 書寫華人拓墾生活史 留下亞省歷史珍貴一頁 ——訪「亞省華人歷史文獻收集計劃」有關人員

加拿大是一個富饒而美麗的國家。在這個奉行多元文化的國家裡，來自世界各地移民，如今在這裡和睦相處，共同建設美麗的家園。在加拿大的移民中有著一百多萬的華裔移民。在加拿大的華裔移民有一百多年的生活史，充滿著曲折和艱辛，有很多故事，就埋藏在那厚厚的檔案下。



Desmarais先生接受本報採訪

一百四十年前，剛剛建國的加拿大為確保地大物博的領土完整、國家統一，不惜遠隔重洋招募華工幫助修築從大西洋到太平洋貫穿加拿大的太平洋鐵路，一萬五千多名華工因此漂洋過海，而且數以千計的華工為此獻出生命。這個悲壯而著涼的故事，僅僅是華人奮鬥史的一部分。整個加拿大華人奮鬥史本應是一本厚重的書，因種種原因被擱置、被冷落。直到近些年來，才先後有《楓香中華魂》和《失去的歲月》，把華人的千辛萬苦、堅毅勇氣和拓墾決心載入史冊，讓加拿大華人看到同時瞭解加拿大華人是整個加拿大史不可缺少的一部分，並以此進一步還原華人社區的各個層面。

早前，亞省華人文化社和亞大Bruce Peel Special Collections Library在本報刊登廣告，解釋《亞省華人歷史文獻收集計劃》，要求讀者捐贈在亞省

一九九零年之前的個人、父母、祖父母、曾祖父母、社團活動或各個方面的生活照片及歷史文件，例如家庭的生活照或工作照、明信片、信件、日記、有關的收據、車票、戲票、廣告、海報、日曆、茶譜等等。特別是有關「華人之拓墾生活及奮鬥等文化方面的照片與文件」。希望藉此收集計劃能在亞省的發展史上留下華人在拓墾時期及一九九零年之前的安居情況和生活經驗，供學者研究，並讓後人了解。之後，本報人員有機會與張芳坤女士詳談，初步了解了這一計劃的用意，於是產生了對「計劃」有關人員進行採訪的想法，以便作深入了解，幫助推動這一「計劃」的落實。



亞省華人文化社主任馮次輝先生接受本報採訪

本報人員於十月七日上午到亞大Bruce Peel特別文獻收藏館對特別文獻收藏部主任Robert J. Desmarais，亞省華人文化社主任馮次輝，計劃負責人張芳坤和亞省支持人士進行了採訪。

一、《亞省華人歷史文獻收集計劃》的由來

亞大Bruce Peel特別文獻收藏館主任Robert J. Desmarais介紹說，這一計劃是由張芳坤女士提出的。他表示，該館之所以贊同她的這一提議，是因為這一計劃符合該館的工作目標。該館叫作特別文獻收藏館，故名思義，就是要收藏亞省各族裔的歷史、文化各方面的珍貴資料，供學者加以研究，作為公共教育的內容進行展覽、教育後人。

華人是亞省大家庭的重要成員，該館曾經出版過一本有關華人早期歷史的畫冊，也於一年前搞過一次展覽，約有五百人觀摩。張芳坤女士提出這一計劃，是對亞省華人歷史、文化的補充和完善，很有意義，所以該館支持立項。

這一計劃預計五年階段性完成，這只是第一步，也許還會有第二步、第三步，這類特殊歷史文獻的收集本應是長期的。在第一步完成之後，該館計劃再搞一次展覽，特聘張芳坤女士為展覽的統籌。

Desmarais主任提醒說，對每一份文件的捐贈者即時發給收條。該館擁有特殊的設備和技術對捐贈的文件加以保

存，並有專家對文件加以鑒定、認證，作為珍貴的歷史資料永久收藏。

二、《亞省華人歷史文獻收集計劃》的承辦者

這一計劃由亞大Bruce Peel特別文獻收藏館和亞省華人文化社共同支持由張芳坤女士來推動實施。

亞省華人文化社主任馮次輝先生介紹說，亞省華人文化社成立於一九七四年，其宗旨就是服務華人社區，宣揚中華文化，增進中西人士對中華文化之認識，促進加中兩國之間的文化交流及友誼。《亞省華人歷史文獻收集計劃》與華人文化社的宗旨相一致，所以大力支持。

另外，亞省華人文化社計劃負責人張芳坤女士有過合作。

在華語廣播節目上，張芳坤女士作過「亞省面面觀」，講解廣東粵劇，反應十分好。有過這樣的經驗，文化社相信張芳坤女士有熱心、有能力具體承擔這一計劃，並協助好亞大Bruce Peel特別文獻收藏館和亞省華人文化社的關係，共同把這一計劃完成好，為書寫亞省華人歷史這一意義重大的事情作出貢獻。

三、《亞省華人歷史文獻收集計劃》的進展

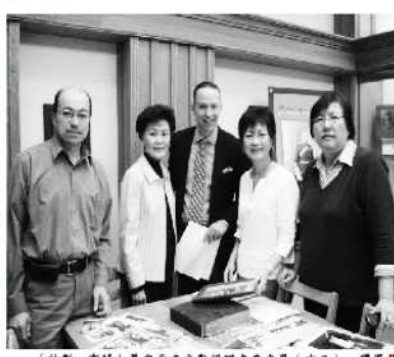
張芳坤表示，她只是這一計劃的義工。她之所以提議這一計劃，並願意為這一計劃出力，是因為她覺得這一計劃特別有意義。透過收集一九九零年之前（越老越舊越好）的歷史文獻，可以為華人在亞省的歷史上寫下珍貴的一頁，並且世代相傳。同時也能發揚和協助更多學者讓華人在人頭稅和修鐵路時期以後到一九九零年代的歷史。這段時期就是華人移民法在一九四七年被取消以後，華人可以家庭團聚，在加拿大落地生根的一些生活經驗和成就。（下接B10）



張芳坤女士接受本報採訪



Desmarais先生和張芳坤女士就「計劃」進行交談



「計劃」有關人員與兩名文獻捐贈者唐志恩（右二）、譚鳳琴（右一）合影。



# Appendix 1 (cont'd): Chinese newspaper clippings on the collection project

2011 10 13  
E-mail: chinajournal@chinaplanet.net  
The Chinese Journal  
光華報 B10

（上接B11）張秀坤女士介紹說，她是去年開始和亞大Bruce Pea特別文獻收藏處及亞省華人文化社會合作收集華裔華人歷史文獻的，到目前為止，已有一年的時間。在這一年的時間裡，除了在光華報刊登廣告之外，她主要是登門拜訪了一些老一代移民，例如鄭炳站、林景生等，和許多朋友見面，聽他們講述自己的經歷，一方面學到不少知識，一方面也得到他們的熱心支持，就這樣，已經收集到二千件照片和文獻。照片方面有一些家庭照，包括一些十分珍貴的很老很老的一九一零、一九二零和一九三零年代的家庭照，也有一些關於經營雜貨店、咖啡小餐館、大中小型餐館的照片和資料。也收集了四百多張一九三零到二零零零年代有關廣東粵劇的照片，還有不少珍貴的文件，比如一張一九九一年的人權證書，一九三零年代的國民政府債券和記錄簿，更有辛巳年手寫、珍貴的中醫藥方書卷等等。這就是歷史，這就是華人文化，看到這些文件和照片，真覺得太珍貴了！太有意義了！

張秀坤女士表示，她從小受到父母影響而對粵劇有濃厚興趣，來到愛城後，她十分關注粵劇的動向。她發現粵劇團體在三十年代只有三個，而現在已發展到至少十七個之多。這說明什麼？這說明華裔人對自己的文化越來越感興趣，也說明華裔文化對西人的影響力越來越大，這不是一個值得研究的現象嗎。

看到這一計劃目前進展得如此順利，得到越來越多的人響應，她特別高興。她一再表示要特別感謝推動的朋友們和給予大力支持的張耀華、黃兆俊、周禮月梅，以及近來加入支持隊伍的江李麗珠、唐志恩和陳鳳等等。她堅信，只要大家同心協力，這個計劃一定會如願滿成功！

四、支持者的心聲

張耀華：我很高興能夠參與這個項目，用我一分精力協助推廣中華文化。

黃兆俊：我認為這個華人歷史文獻收集計劃很有意義，能保存我們一些珍貴的文件、照片和書籍世代相傳。

周禮月梅：我覺得能夠為這個華人歷史文獻收集計劃收集到一些罕有的粵劇照片，進而推廣這個藝術是非常有意義的。

江李麗珠：能夠為這個華人歷史文獻收集計劃收集到一些罕有的書籍及刊物是非常有意義的，因為它們也是愛城華人歷史重要的一部分。我們華埠中文圖書館可以幫忙的地方，我們會盡力而為，更願意做這個項目的一箇收集站。歡迎各界人士把捐贈品送到位於愛城中華文化中心二樓的中文圖書館。

唐志恩：當我的公公於一九九九年去世時，留下一箱的照片和資料。最早的照片是於一九一七年拍攝的。我們覺得他保留這麼長時間的資料一定是有些特殊意義和價值的，但我們又不知如何處理，只能繼續保存。當張秀坤女士來到我們家，花了一天的時間幫我們整理、檢查這些照片和資料，並講解這一收集計劃的意義，我們感覺到了把它們捐贈出來的重要性。於是我們同意參與這一十分值得的計劃，和大家一起書寫亞省華人的歷史，讓亞省人了解華人的生活、經歷和貢獻。

陳鳳等：我愛以「數字」讀人生。明日講今天，今天說昨日，天天都在創造歷史。而「歷史」正是一門研究人類行為超越時間的學問」。當我得知張秀坤女士正忙錄訪《亞省華人歷史文獻收集計劃》時，我自願加入這一極具意義的歷史性收集計劃，讓自己平凡的人生添上新光彩，寫上歷史新一頁。我希望能有更多的人來一起書寫百年華史這彩筆，以各人經歷的種種人生點滴，描寫出華人光輝的彩頁！

這些支持者並願意參與這一「計劃」的人有不同的經歷和不同的故事，但他們有一個共同的態度，那就是認定這一「計劃」是有意義的，是值得積極參與的。讓華人歷史永載亞省史冊。









## Appendix 2: Cantonese opera repertoires in the 1950s and 1960s

Year	Repertoire Name	Location	Performers
Late 1950s. Exact year unknown	The Butterfly Lover 梁山伯與祝英台	Unknown	Local (Jimmy LIM)
Late 1950s. Exact year unknown	<i>'Playing mischief on Provincial Officer Mei</i> 大鬧梅知府	Unknown	Local (Jimmy LIM)
1962	Dan Qing Pei 丹青配	Edmonton Ukrainian Hall	Local and Vancouver
December 25, 1963	Jinquan longfeng pei 金釧龍鳳配	Edmonton Ukrainian Hall	Local
December 25, 1965	<i>'Ten years equate one dream in Yangzhou'</i> 十年一覺楊州夢	Unknown	Local: Edmonton Chinese Dramatic Club members
1965	<i>'The swallow returned but not the person'</i> 燕歸人未歸	Unknown	Local (Jimmy LIM) USA: San Francisco YAN Taohong 艷桃紅
Mid 1960s. Exact year unknown	<i>'Marrying the beloved upon a warrior's triumphant return'</i> 百戰榮歸迎彩鳳	Edmonton Grand Theatre	Same as above
November 27, 1966 (Sunday)	<i>'The happy reunion'</i> 丹陽彩鳳喜重圓	Edmonton Ukrainian Hall	USA professional performers Local performers played minor roles
December 1, 1966 (Thursday)	<i>'Putting on the armours again to revive the family name'</i> 重披戰甲振家聲	Edmonton Ukrainian Hall	USA professional performers Local performers played minor roles
1967	"A wild rose in the palm of the hero" 英雄掌上野茶薇	Unknown	Unknown
1968 or 1969	<i>'The swallows return once a year'</i> 一年一度燕歸來	Unknown	Local (Mrs. Ellen Mah)

Note: This list is compiled through newspaper clippings and from memories of my interviewees Jimmy GIN, Jimmy LIM and Marvin MAH. This list is incomplete and not exhaustive but it captures valuable information otherwise lost. This list provides a glimpse of the variety of the repertoires which are taken from typical traditional repertoires. Four original librettos from the 1960s are in the repository of the Bruce Peel Special Collection Library at the University of Alberta.

### Appendix 3: Cantonese opera and singing clubs in Edmonton by year founded

Number	Year founded	Name of Club founded
1.	1917	Edmonton Chinese Dramatic Club 點問頓警世鐘劇社
2.	1957	Jin Wah Sing Musical Society 洪門振華聲劇社
3.	1960	The Huah Chiaur Musical Society* 華僑音樂社
4.	1992	The World Harmony Opera Association 樂昇平
5.	1993	Cantonese Opera Music Research Edmonton Association 粵韻曲藝研究社
6.	1994	Sound of Opera Society 樂風文娛曲藝社
7.	1994	The Edmonton Opera Association 藝晉軒曲藝研習社
8.	1994	Peach Garden Art Society 桃園曲藝社
9.	1994	Friendship Opera and Art Society 友好曲藝社
10.	1996	Sunny Day Chinese Opera Club* 炎陽天粵劇團
11.	2000	Golden Phoenix Singing Club 金鳳鳴曲藝研習社
12.	2002	Gala Music Academy 嘉樂曲藝之家
13.	2002	South Star Singing Club* 南星音樂社
14.	2003	Beautiful Sky Opera Society* 采雲天粵劇團
15.	2004	The Edmonton Supreme Opera Research Association 文康演藝研習社
16.	2005	The Institute of Cultural Performing Arts (ICPA) 小英楓演藝團
17.	2005	Asian Chinese Opera Association 麗音曲藝研究社
18.	2006	Hua Yi Students' Association 華藝同學會
19.	2009	Edmonton More Than Opera Society 雅樂
20.	2009	Phoenix Cantonese Opera Troupe 鳳凰劇團

Source: Club Executives or Members and verified through ephemeras, Club documents and local Chinese newspapers.

Notes: This is not an exhaustive list as there may be clubs unable to be contacted, unavailable to be contacted, do not wish to be counted or simply unknown. Clubs marked with an \* are no longer active as at the end of 2009.

Appendix 4: List of Cantonese Opera Clubs in Edmonton by year of first-time use of casino proceeds to fund Cantonese opera activities and administrative items

Number	Year of first-time use	Name of Club
1.	1993	Edmonton Chinese Dramatic Club 點問頓警世鐘劇社
2.	1993	Alberta Chinese Cultural Society 亞省華人文化社
3.	1994	Jin Wah Sing Musical Society 洪門振華聲劇社
4.	1994	Hung Fung Athletic Club 點城雄風體育會
5.	2002	Sound of Opera Society 樂風文娛曲藝社
6.	2002	Alberta Kwan Ying Athletic Club 亞省群英體育會
7.	2005	Cantonese Opera Music Research Edmonton Association 粵韻曲藝研究社
8.	2006	The Edmonton Opera Association 藝晉軒曲藝研習社
9.	2007	Golden Phoenix Singing Club 金鳳鳴曲藝研習社
10.	2008	Peach Garden Art Society 桃園曲藝社
11.	2009	The Edmonton Supreme Opera Research Association 文康演藝研習社
12.	2009	The Institute of Cultural Performing Arts (ICPA) 小英楓演藝團
13.	2011	Asian Chinese Opera Association 麗音曲藝研究社
14.	2011	Hua Yi Students' Association 華藝同學會

Source: Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission March 2013

## Appendix 5: A Compiled list of Edmonton Chinese Community and Cantonese Opera Organizations 1917 – 2010

(Source: *Edmonton Chinatown 100: Past, Present and Future* published by the Chinese Benevolent Association of Edmonton, Cantonese opera club Executives, members, ephemeras and local Chinese newspapers)

Year	Nature	Name of Organization
1917	Clans	Mah Society of Edmonton
1917	Cantonese opera (Community)	Edmonton Chinese Dramatic Club of Canada
1920	Clans	Wong's Benevolent Association
1929	Community	Chinese Benevolent Association
1920	Clans	Gee Society of Edmonton
1953	Community	The Chinese Freemasons Edmonton
1957	Cantonese opera	Jin Wah Sing Musical Society
1960	Cantonese opera	The Huah Chiaur Musical Society*
1966	Athletics (Cantonese opera)	Hung Fung Athletic Club
1969	Martial Arts	Canadian Ging Wu Kung Fu Martial Arts Association
1973	Cultural	Canada-China Friendship Society of Edmonton
1974	Cultural (Cantonese opera)	Alberta Chinese Cultural Society
1975	Cultural (Community)	Chinese Graduates Association of Alberta
1976	Clans (Cultural)	Edmonton Taiwanese Association
1977	Community	ASSIST Community Services Centre
1979	Community	Edmonton Chinese Lions Club
1979	Community	Vietnam Chinese Association of Edmonton
1980	Clans	Toi Shan Society of Edmonton
1982	Community	Edmonton Chinese Bilingual Education Association
1983	Cultural	Edmonton Chinese Chess Association



# Appendix 5 (cont'd)

Year	Nature	Name of Organization
1985	Athletics (Cantonese opera)	Alberta Kwan Ying Athletic Club
1985	Clans	Chow's Family Association
1985	Community  (Cultural)	Edmonton Chinatown Multi-cultural Centre
1985	Community	Chinatown Multi-Level Care Foundation
1985	Cultural	Edmonton-Harbin Friendship Society
1986	Community	Edmonton Chinatown Neighbourhood Society
1987	Choir	Edmonton Chinese Choir
1988	Clans	Hakka Tsung Tsin Association of Edmonton
1988	Clans	IndoChina Chinese Senior Citizens Association of Edmonton
1989	Clans	Alberta Kaiping District Association
1991	Community	National Congress of Chinese Canadians (Edmonton Region)
1992	Cantonese opera	The World Harmony Opera Association
1993	Cantonese opera	Cantonese Opera Music Research Edmonton Association
1993	Professional	Edmonton Chinese Engineers Society
1993	Cantonese opera	Sound of Opera Society
1994	Cantonese opera	The Edmonton Opera Association
1994	Cantonese opera	Peach Garden Art Society
1994	Cantonese opera	Friendship Opera and Art Society
1994	Clans	The Pon Cultural Society of Edmonton
1996	Cantonese opera	Sunny Day Chinese Opera Club*
1997	Martial Arts	Shang De Tai Chi Praying Mantis Martial Arts Association
2000	Computer	Edmonton Chinese Computer Society
2000	Community	Edmonton Chinese Garden Society
2000	Cantonese opera	Gold Phoenix Singing Club

Appendix 5 (cont'd)

Year	Nature	Name of Organization
2002	Cantonese opera	Gala Music Academy
2002	Cantonese opera	South Star Singing Club*
2002	Beijing opera	Edmonton Beijing Opera Association
2002	Political	Edmonton Chinese Alliance for Peace and Unity Society
2002	Clans	Yee Fung Toy Society of Edmonton
2003	Cantonese opera	Beautiful Sky*
2003	Clans (Community)	Fuzhou Association (Community Service) of Alberta
2003	Clans	Lee's Community Association of Edmonton
2004	Cantonese opera	The Edmonton Supreme Opera Research Association
2005	Clans	Alberta Lao Chinese Association of Edmonton
2005	Alumni	Hanoi-Haiphong Alumni Association of Alberta
2005	Cantonese opera	Institute of Cultural Performing Arts
2005	Cantonese opera	Asian Chinese Opera Association
2006	Cantonese opera	Hua Yi Students' Association
2008	Martial Arts	Hong De Cultural & Athletic Association
2008	Martial Arts	Jing Ying Martial Arts Association
2009	Cantonese opera	Edmonton More Than Opera Society
2009	Cantonese opera	Phoenix Cantonese Opera Troupe
2009	Clans	East China Immigrants Society of Edmonton
2010	Business	Edmonton Chinese Business Development Association

Note: This is not an exhaustive list. 48 organizations are not included on this list because their founding year is unknown. This list also does not include informal groups and those unknown to the public.

## Appendix 6: List of Activities of the Edmonton Cantonese Opera Associations and Music Clubs

Source: Edmonton Chinese newspaper clippings 1985-2009

Name	Source	Special and Fundraising Activities	Additional Information
1) Beautiful Sky Opera Society 采雲天粵劇團	<u>The Chinese Journal</u> 光華報 Mar 20, 2003 Ad P.12	June 22, 2003: - Full opera show “The Legend of the Butterfly Lovers” 梁山伯與祝英台 - To fundraise for the construction of the Edmonton Chinatown Multicultural Centre Chinese Library	- Location: Victoria Composite High School - Chair: Sylvia Yiu - Artists: local and Vancouver - Artistic Director: Vancouver Bai Xuehong 白雪紅 - Musicians: HK LAU Wing Chuen 劉永全 and those from Vancouver
	<u>The Canadian Chinese Times</u> 加華報 Oct 10, 2003 Ad P. 37	Oct 12, 2002 – 1 p.m.: - To celebrate Thanksgiving Day - To fundraise for United Way designated for the children’s hot lunch program - Jointly organized with Lee’s Society and Alberta Chinese Culture Society	- Location: Victoria Composite High School - 5 Cantonese opera excerpts, 2 opera songs - Artists: local, Vancouver 白雪紅, China 湛江粵劇團 and 梁兆明 - Artistic Directors: 2 from Vancouver - Tickets: \$50, \$25, \$15
	Ephemera: Colour program booklet	Apr 3, 2004: - Full opera show “The Legend of the Butterfly Lovers” 梁山伯與祝英台 - To fundraise for the building of the Edmonton Chinatown Care Centre	- Location: Victoria Composite High School - Chair: Sylvia Yiu - Opened with Lion dance; Original script modified & directed locally - Artists: local members & Vancouver guest - Incorporated ballet dancing by Stephanie Litven & dancers from Danceco Ltd. for “the Butterfly Dance” accompanied by music from the <i>Butterfly Lovers Violin Concerto</i>
2) Sunny Day Chinese Opera Club 炎陽天粵劇團	<u>Edmonton Chinese News</u> 愛華報 June 22,, 2001 news release P.23 June 29, 2001 Ad P.77 July 20, 2001 Ad P.35 July 20, 2001 news release P.17	Aug 12, 2001: - To celebrate 5 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary	- Location: Edmonton Chinatown Multicultural Centre 9540-102 Avenue, Edmonton - 4 Cantonese opera excerpts, 3 opera songs - Artists: local - Tickets: VIP \$20, Open \$10

3) Gala Music Academy 嘉樂曲藝之家	<u>Edmonton Chinese News</u> 愛華報 Jan 3, 2003 Event report P.17 <u>The Canadian Chinese Times</u> 加華報 Jan 3, 2003 Event report P.27	Dec 25, 2002: - To visit Chinese Seniors Lodge 華人安老院 (part of quarterly visits)	- Location: Chinese Seniors Lodge 華人安老院 - 7 opera songs, 1 Cantonese musical piece, Christmas carol music - Artists: members
	<u>The Chinese Journal</u> 光華報 Feb 6, 2003 Event report P.78	Feb 2, 2003: Year of the Ram - To perform for the Chinese grocery store T&T to add a festive mood to the mall	- Location: West Edmonton Mall T&T Store - Live music - Artists and musicians: members - Chinese New Year songs, music, and shortened form of Cantonese opera songs
	<u>The Canadian Chinese Times</u> 加華報 Issue 1227 Jan 7, 2005 Event report P.60 <u>Edmonton Chinese News</u> 愛華報 Jan 7, 2005 Event report P.23. <u>The Chinese Journal</u> 光華報 Jan 6, 2005 Event report P.12	Dec 25, 2004: - To visit Chinese Seniors Lodge 華人安老院 (part of quarterly visits)	- Location: Chinese Seniors Lodge 華人安老院 - Artists: members - Singing Cantonese opera songs and playing music
	<u>Edmonton Chinese News</u> 愛華報 Dec 30, 2005 Event report P.16 <u>The Chinese Journal</u> 光華報 Dec 29, 2005 event report P.B6	Dec 25, 2005: - To visit Chinese Seniors Lodge 華人安老院 (part of quarterly visits)	- Location: Chinese Seniors Lodge 華人安老院 - 6 opera songs, 1 Cantonese musical piece - Artists: members
	<u>Edmonton Chinese News</u> 愛華報 Dec 22, 2006 event report P.25	Dec 25, 2006 - To visit Chinese Seniors Lodge 華人安老院 (part of quarterly visits)	- Location: Chinese Seniors Lodge 華人安老院 - Artists: members - Singing Cantonese opera songs & playing music - 5 opera songs, 1 Cantonese musical piece
	<u>The Canadian Chinese Times</u> 加華報 Jan 1, 2009 Report P.66	Dec 25, 2008: - To visit Chinese Seniors Lodge 華人安老院 (part of quarterly visits)	- Location: Chinese Seniors Lodge 華人安老院 - Artists: members - Singing Cantonese opera songs and playing music: 5 opera songs, 1 musical piece - Musicians: local

4) Asian Chinese Opera Association 麗音曲藝研究社	Ephemera: program booklets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- July 2007: 2 performances (星輝粵劇團) from HK – professional artists and young students (5-17 years old)</li> <li>- July 2008: 1 performance (星輝粵劇團)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- July 2007: 2 performances Location – Myer Horowitz Theatre at U of A; and Edmonton Chinatown Multicultural Centre</li> <li>- July 2008: 1 performance Location – Myer Horowitz Theatre at U of A</li> <li>- Occasional workshops on singing, acting, Chinese music instruments guest performers from overseas</li> <li>- After each performance, will sponsor public workshops on singing, acting etc. for a nominal fee</li> </ul>
5) The Edmonton Opera Association 藝晉軒曲藝研習社	Ephemera: Program booklet	Mar 13, 2000: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cantonese opera and singing performances</li> <li>- Jointly organized with the Edmonton Chinese Community Services Centre</li> <li>- To fundraise for United Way Alberta Capital Region</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Location: Edmonton Chinatown Multicultural Centre 9540-102 Avenue, Edmonton</li> <li>- Tickets: \$8</li> <li>- Chair: Monie Pang 彭凌</li> <li>- 3 opera and 6 singing performances</li> <li>- Artists: members and Calgary friend</li> <li>- Music: karaoke</li> </ul>
	<u>Edmonton Chinese News</u> 愛華報 Jan 26, 2001 Ad P. 99	Feb 18, 2001 为舞台添色彩: To fundraise for the renovation of the stage at the Edmonton Chinatown Multicultural Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Location: Edmonton Chinatown Multicultural Centre</li> <li>- 3 Cantonese opera excerpt, 4 singing</li> <li>- Artists: members &amp; Calgary friends</li> <li>- Musicians: local</li> </ul>
	Ephemera	June 30, 2002 Calgary Performance: Cultural exchange	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Location: Calgary Cultural Centre</li> <li>- Artists: members</li> </ul>
	Ephemera: Reported in 12 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary program booklet	2003 Performed for Alberta Kwan Ying Athletic Club to celebrate mid-Autumn festival with seniors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Location: Edmonton Chinatown Multicultural Centre</li> <li>- Artists: members</li> </ul>
	Ephemera: Anniversary program booklet	2007 Performance: To celebrate Association Anniversary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Location: Edmonton Chinatown Multicultural Centre by members</li> </ul>
		2007 Singing Performance: To celebrate Chinese New Year with seniors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Location: Edmonton Chinatown Care Centre (nursing home) for the mobility-challenged seniors.</li> <li>- Artists and musicians: members</li> </ul>
	Ephemera:	2009 Performance:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Location: Northern Alberta</li> </ul>

5) The Edmonton Opera Association 藝晉軒曲藝研習社 (cont'd)	Anniversary Program booklet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Full opera show "Taming of the Royal Shrew" 打金枝: Original script modified &amp; directed locally</li> <li>- To celebrate Association Anniversary</li> </ul>	<p>Jubilee Auditorium 11455-87 Avenue, Edmonton</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Tickets: VIP \$25, Open \$10</li> <li>- Artists: members and 2 instructors (1 from Vancouver)</li> </ul>
6) Peach Garden Art Society 桃園曲藝社	<u>Edmonton Chinese News</u> 愛華報 Sept 11, 2009 Thank You Ad P.75	<p>Aug 4, 2009: 粵曲敬老聯歡宴會</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To celebrate 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary</li> <li>- To honour the seniors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Location: Edmonton</li> <li>- Artists: local</li> <li>- Musicians: local and guest 李阮文 from Toronto</li> <li>- Sponsors: Individuals, businesses, community organizations</li> </ul>
7) Golden Phoenix Singing Club 金鳳鳴曲藝研習社	<u>Edmonton Chinese News</u> 愛華報 Sept 8, 2000 Ad P.83 Sept 18, 2000 profiling the artists P.57 Sept 22, 2000 Thank you Ad P.26	<p>Sept 16, 2000 performance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To fundraise for the construction of the ASSIST Community Services Centre</li> <li>- To fundraise for the Edmonton Chinese Library</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Location: Edmonton Chinatown Multicultural Centre 9540-102 Avenue, Edmonton</li> <li>- Artists: local and famous professional artists 文千歲、梁少芯 from Hong Kong*also see Chinese Dramatic Club</li> <li>- Cantonese opera singing</li> <li>- Sponsors: Sponsors: Individuals, businesses, community organizations, media</li> <li>- Tickets: \$50 VIP; Open \$15</li> <li>- Musicians: local</li> </ul>
	<u>Edmonton Chinese News</u> 愛華報 Aug 24, 2001 Ad P.16 Sept 7, 2001 Ad P.89 Oct 15, 2001 Thank you Ad P.26 <u>The Canadian Chinese Times</u> 加華報 Sept 6, 2001 Ad P.49	<p>Sept 16, 2001 performance 阮眉粵劇粵曲作品欣賞會:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cultural exchange: to raise the artistic standard of Cantonese opera performance</li> <li>- To promote Chinese drama and Chinese culture.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Location: Victoria Composite High School</li> <li>- Artists: local, Calgary 盧美霞, Hong Kong 鍾麗蓉, Toronto 阮眉、勞允澍</li> <li>- Musician: Toronto 馮華, Vancouver 莫雄正, Saskatoon 陳新尚, Calgary 呂志軒 and local</li> <li>- Tickets: VIP \$50, Front \$25, Back \$15</li> </ul>
	<u>The Chinese Journal</u> 光華報 Sept 18, 2003 Ad P.22	<p>Oct 26, 2003: 南蒲笙歌引鳳鳴</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To fundraise for the construction of the Edmonton Chinese Library</li> <li>- Jointly organized with Vancouver 南蒲樂院</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Location: Edmonton Chinatown Multicultural Centre 9540-102 Avenue, Edmonton</li> <li>- Artists: China (Toronto) 何華棧, 簡燕萍, Vancouver, local</li> <li>- Tickets: VIP \$50, Open \$20</li> <li>- Musicians: Vancouver, local</li> </ul>

7) Golden Phoenix Singing Club 金鳳鳴曲藝研習社 (cont'd)			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sponsors: Individuals, businesses, community organizations, media</li> <li>- Cantonese opera singing: 9 opera songs</li> </ul>
	<u>The Chinese Journal 光華報</u> Oct 11, 2007 Report P. B25	Oct 7, 2007: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Invited to sing and participate in a performance in Calgary at the 5<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of 卡加利金紫音乐社</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Location: Calgary Elders Mansion main hall</li> <li>- Artists: Calgary local and Edmonton guests</li> <li>- 7 opera songs</li> </ul>
8) Friendship Opera and Art Society 友好曲藝社	<u>The Canadian Chinese Times</u> 加華報 Sept 2, 1999 Thank you ad P.60	Aug. 22, 1999 Performance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- International Year of Seniors Gala Cantonese opera singing performance</li> <li>- Jointly organized with Edmonton Chinese Seniors Association 華人耆英福利会, ASSIST 華人社區服務中心; 關注華人健康小組</li> <li>- Chinese New Year performance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Location – Edmonton City Hall</li> <li>- Sponsors: Individuals, businesses, community organizations, media</li> <li>- Guests: Anne McLennan, Mary O'Neill, Councillor Michael Phair, Citizenship Judge Bill Lessik, ex-Citizenship Judge Steve Ramshanka and Margaret Osbaldeston, Wildrose Foundation Winston McConnel</li> </ul>
9) Jin Wah Sing Musical Society of the Edmonton Chinese Freemason 洪門振華聲劇社		Sept. 15, 1985: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Performed in Calgary on the occasion of the 74<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Calgary Jin Wah Sing Musical Society of the Calgary Chinese Freemason</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Location: Calgary</li> <li>- Group led by Ken Pon</li> <li>- Chair: Gary Hui</li> </ul>
	<u>The Canadian Chinese Times</u> 加華報 Dec 7, 1990 Event report P. 3	Nov 19-25, 1990: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Presented a Chinese Opera Week (Such kind of cultural week was organized by a Chinese community organization for the first time)</li> <li>- To promote the art of Cantonese opera within the Chinese community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Location: 華都 Night Club, Edmonton</li> <li>- Cantonese opera singing</li> </ul>
	<u>Edmonton Chinese News</u> 愛華報 May 26, 2000 Ad P.40 Ephemera: Program Booklet	July 7, 2000 7 p.m. 名伶名票爱心耀点城: 洪門慈善獻溫情、粵劇曲藝會知音 Chinese Opera Concert Presented by Edmonton Chinese Freemason Fundraising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Location: The Francis Winspear Center for Music #4 Sir Winston Churchill Square, Edmonton</li> <li>- 2 opera and 4 singing performances</li> <li>- Artists from local, San Francisco, Vancouver</li> </ul>

9) Jin Wah Sing Musical Society Edmonton Chinese Freemason (cont'd)		for Canadian Cancer Society: - Cantonese opera and singing performances - Jointly organized with the Vancouver Chinese Freemason - To fundraise for the Canadian Cancer Society	- Musicians from local and Vancouver - Chair: Lap Cheuk Kwong 鄭立焯 - Sponsors: 70 (Individuals, businesses, community organizations, media) - Tickets: \$50 VIP; Open \$12 - Well-known artists: Chun Si Lei 秦小梨、Kim Wong 黃棣婉、Siu Chung Kwan 蕭仲坤
	Ephemera: Program Booklet	- Oct 6, 2002 1 p.m. To celebrate Cantonese opera patron god 華光先師 寶誕戲曲義演	- Location: Vic School of Performing and Visual Arts Theatre
	Ephemera: Program Booklet	- Sept 14, 2003 1 p.m.: 粵風文娛曲藝社成立十周年社慶 戲曲匯演 to celebrate 10 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary	- Location: Vic School of Performing and Visual Arts Theatre - Artists: club members - Artistic Directors: Calgary 欧美玉、雷海年, Toronto 宋錦榮, Saskatoon 陈新尚, Vancouver 杨海城、卢超骏 - Musicians: local, Calgary, Saskatoon
	Ephemera: Program Booklet	Aug 1, 2004 7 p.m.: - Cantonese opera performances - Canada-China cultural exchange with professional artists	- Location: The Francis Winspear Center for Music #4 Sir Winston Churchill Square, Edmonton - 7 opera excerpts - Opened with Lion Dance & speeches - Chair: Lap Cheuk Kwong 鄭立焯 - Minimal props and no backdrops because Winspear is a music theatre
	Ephemera: Program Booklet	July 22, 2006 7 p.m.: - Cantonese opera performances - To celebrate 50 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary - Canada-China cultural exchange with professional artists	- Location: The Francis Winspear Center for Music #4 Sir Winston Churchill Square, Edmonton - 5 opera excerpts - Opened with Lion Dance - Chair: Ken Kwong 鄭健民 - Souvenir presentation and speeches
10) Chinese Dramatic Club	<u>Alberta Chinese Times</u> 加中報 July 2, 1986 13 <sup>th</sup> issue P.1	July 1, 1986: - To celebrate Canada Day	- Location: Edmonton Chinatown Multicultural Centre 9540-102 Avenue, Edmonton



10) Chinese Dramatic Club 點問頓警世鐘劇社 (cont'd)	<u>Chinese News 愛華報</u> July 4, 1986 P.23		
	<u>Alberta Chinese Times</u> 加中報 July 9, 1986 P.17	July 5, 1986: - To perform at a wedding banquet	- Invited by a friend from Saskatoon to perform at a wedding banquet
		July 6, 1986: - To perform at the swearing-in ceremony of the Chinese Benevolent Association	- Location: Edmonton
	<u>Alberta Chinese Times</u> 加中報 Sept 3, 1987 P.1	Aug. 29, 1987: - To promote the China Gate and share the Chinese culture with mainstream Canadians	- Location: Edmonton City Market next to the China Gate - Singing Cantonese opera and popular songs
	<u>Alberta Chinese Times</u> 加中報 Nov 19, 1987 (85 <sup>th</sup> issue P.1 & 4) <u>Alberta Chinese Times</u> 加中報 Dec 3, 1987 (Thank you ad P.18)	Nov. 18-19, 1987 - performances by 广东音乐曲艺团 from China: - Jointly sponsored with Edmonton Chinatown Multicultural Centre - To fundraise for the construction of the Chinese Benevolent Association building (\$6,571.43)	- Location: Edmonton Chinatown Multicultural Centre 9540-102 Avenue, Edmonton - Cantonese opera singing and Cantonese musical comedy. City councillor Terry Cavanagh gave an opening speech
	<u>Alberta Chinese Times</u> 加中報 Oct. 13, 1994 P.31	Oct. 16, 1994: - To fundraise for the building expansion of the Edmonton Chinatown Multicultural Centre	- Location: Edmonton Chinatown Multicultural Centre - Tickets: VIP \$25, Open \$10 - Cantonese opera singing and performance of excerpts
	<u>Chinese News 愛華報</u> Apr 17 Ad P. 79 and Apr 24, 1998 Ad P. 79 <u>Sing Tao Yat Pao 星島日報</u> May 4, 1998 Event report P. A2	May 3, 1998: - 「為點問頓中華文化中心籌務經費粵劇義演」 to fundraise for Edmonton Chinatown Multicultural Centre - Jointly presented with Calgary Chinese Opera Development Society 卡城振興粵劇社	- Location: Edmonton Chinatown Multicultural Centre 9540-102 Avenue, Edmonton - Cantonese opera singing and Cantonese musical comedy - Artists and musicians: local and Calgary - 3 excerpt performances, 4 Cantonese opera songs, 1 Chinese musical instrument performance

10) Chinese Dramatic Club 點問頓警世鐘劇社 (cont'd)		Aug 22, 1998 Saturday 6:00 p.m.: To celebrate 81 <sup>st</sup> anniversary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Location Marco Polo Restaurant, Edmonton</li> <li>- Karaoke singing: popular and Cantonese opera songs</li> <li>- Dinner and dance, door prizes. Ticket: \$20</li> </ul>
	<u>Edmonton Chinese Weekly</u> 華聲報 Aug 27, 1999	Aug 21, 1999: - To visit and perform for the seniors by members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Location: Chinese Seniors Lodge</li> <li>- Live music: local musicians</li> <li>- 7 Cantonese opera songs</li> <li>- Hosted a tea reception at the end of the performance</li> </ul>
	<u>Edmonton Chinese Weekly</u> 華聲報 Aug 27, 1999 (announcement) <u>The Canadian Chinese Times</u> 加華報 Sept 23, 1999 P.30 Ad	Oct 3, 1999: - To fundraise for the Edmonton Chinatown Multicultural Centre operation - Jointly organized with 金龍鳳劇團, 卡城雅韻軒音樂社	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Location: Edmonton Chinatown Multicultural Centre 9540-102 Avenue, Edmonton</li> <li>- Cantonese opera excerpt and singing performance (4 excerpts, 4 opera songs)</li> <li>- Artists: Local and Calgary</li> <li>- Tickets: \$20 VIP; Open \$10</li> </ul>
	<u>The Canadian Chinese Times</u> 加華報 May 11, 2000 Event report P.3	Apr 30, 2000 1 p.m.: Visit the Chinese Seniors Lodge to entertain them	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Location: Chinese Seniors Lodge</li> <li>- Live music, video-recording</li> <li>- Artists and musicians: members</li> </ul>
	Ephemera: Poster <u>The Canadian Chinese Times</u> 加華報 May 18, 2000 Ad P.57	May 28, 2000 1 p.m. 粵劇粵曲義演欣賞會 - Cantonese opera excerpts and singing opera and popular songs - Jointly organized with the Calgary 卡城雅韻軒音樂社 - To fundraise for the building of the Edmonton Chinatown Chinese Library	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Location: Edmonton Chinatown Multicultural Centre 9540-102 Avenue, Edmonton</li> <li>- Tickets: VIP \$20; Open \$10</li> <li>- Artists &amp; musicians from Calgary &amp; members</li> <li>- Event Chair: Jimmy Gin 甄炳沾</li> <li>- 3 Cantonese pop songs, 3 Cantonese opera performance, 3 Cantonese opera songs, 1 musical instrument solo</li> </ul>
	<u>Edmonton Chinese News</u> 愛華報 Oct. 13, 2000 P.17	Sept 14, 2000: Cultural exchange: Visited by famous professional artists 文千歲、梁少芯 from Hong Kong	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Location: Chinese Dramatic Club meeting hall</li> </ul>
	<u>Edmonton Chinese News</u> 愛華報 Oct. 13, 2000 P.17	Sept 30, 2000: To perform for the seniors at the Chinese Seniors Lodge by members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Location: Chinese Seniors Lodge</li> <li>- Live music</li> <li>- 7 Cantonese opera songs</li> </ul>

	<u>Edmonton Chinese News</u> 愛華報 Apr 6, 2001 news release P.23	May 6, 2001: - To celebrate 84 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Location: Edmonton Chinatown Multicultural Centre 9540-102 Avenue, Edmonton</li> <li>- 2 Cantonese opera excerpts, 3 opera songs, 1 Cantonese popular song by Kaiping District Association Women's Division</li> </ul>
	<u>Edmonton Chinese News</u> 愛華報 Sept 21, 2001 Ad P.78	Sept 28-29, 2001 「賞燈迎月匯中西」 - To perform for Edmonton Chinatown Multicultural Centre in celebrating mid-Autumn festival	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sponsored by Edmonton Arts Council</li> <li>- Cantonese opera performance in the evening, sales booth during the day (moon cake, Chinese food delicacies, Chinese arts and crafts)</li> <li>- Artists: local and Calgary</li> <li>- 1 Cantonese opera excerpt, 3 opera songs</li> </ul>
	<u>Edmonton Chinese News</u> 愛華報 Nov 16, 2001 news release P.23	Dec 29, 2001: - To perform in Regina, Saskatchewan for cultural exchange purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Location: Regina</li> <li>- Artists: Edmonton</li> <li>- 4 Cantonese opera songs, 10 Chinese New Year songs, popular Cantonese songs</li> </ul>
	<u>Edmonton Chinese News</u> 愛華報 May 24, 2002 P.97 Ad	June 9, 2002 Sunday 1:00 p.m.: To celebrate the 85 <sup>th</sup> anniversary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Location: Edmonton Chinatown Multicultural Centre 9540-102 Avenue, Edmonton</li> <li>- Cantonese opera singing and performance</li> <li>- Tickets: VIP \$20, Open \$10</li> </ul>
	<u>Edmonton Chinese News</u> 愛華報 May 13, 2005 Ad P.52  Ephemera: Program Booklet	May 22, 2005: - To celebrate 88 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary - To promote Cantonese opera and Chinese culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Location: Edmonton Chinatown Multicultural Centre 9540-102 Avenue, Edmonton</li> <li>- 7 Cantonese opera songs</li> <li>- Cantonese music</li> <li>- Seniors' choir of Alberta Kaiping District Association Women's Division (pop songs)</li> <li>- Artists and musicians: members</li> </ul>
11) Feng Huang Yueju Tuan 鳳凰粵劇團	Ephemera: Poster	September 6, 2009: - Inaugural performance of an all-female local troupe - Male and female stagehands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Location: Edmonton Chinatown Multicultural Centre 9540-102 Avenue, Edmonton</li> <li>- Ticket: free</li> <li>- All opera excerpt</li> </ul>

12) Sound of Opera Society 樂風文娛曲藝社	<u>Edmonton Chinese News</u> 愛華報 Oct 8, 1999 Ad P.43 樂風粵曲演唱會知音 Program (ephemera)  <u>Edmonton Chinese News</u> 愛華報 Oct 22, 1999 Performance review report P.23	Oct 17, 1999 1 p.m. 樂風粵曲演唱會知音: - To celebrate 6 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary - To celebrate the 1999 International Seniors Year	- Location: Edmonton Chinatown Multicultural Centre 9540-102 Avenue, Edmonton - 3 opera excerpts, 3 singing - Artist Director: May Louie from Calgary - Stage management: local and Calgary - Sponsors: Individuals, businesses, media
	<u>The Canadian Chinese Times</u> 加華報 May 11, 2000 Ad P.26	May 20, 2000 To celebrate 7 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary	- Noodle Noodle Restaurant 7 - Singing and banquet - Artists: members and special guest from Hawaii 黃耀斌 - Musicians: local - Tickets: \$25
		Aug 13, 2000 – 1p.m. To fundraise for the construction of the Edmonton Chinese Library	- Location: Edmonton Chinatown Multicultural Centre 9540-102 Avenue, Edmonton - Artists: local and Calgary - Musicians: local, Calgary - 4 Cantonese opera excerpts, 2 opera songs - Tickets: VIP \$50, Open \$25, \$10
	Ephemera: Poster and Program <u>Edmonton Chinese News</u> 愛華報 July 23, 2004 Event report by newspaper July 23, 2004 Review by an audience July 30, 2004 Event report by Society P.23	July 18, 2004. 1 p.m. 仲夏戲曲欣賞會: To perform and entertain	- Location: Edmonton Chinatown Multicultural Centre 9540-102 Avenue, Edmonton - Artists: members - Musicians: Vancouver?? 盧超俊, local, Calgary, Saskatoon
	<u>Edmonton Chinese News</u> 愛華報 Sept 30, 2005 Ad P.51	Oct 4 & 6, 2005 To welcome the visit of artists from China 鐘飛雲、陳大衛、陳蓉芳 to give workshops on	- Location: Club address at the Edmonton Chinatown Multicultural Centre 9540-102 Avenue, Edmonton - Workshop fee: \$10 each

12) Sound of Opera Society 樂風文娛曲藝社 (cont'd)		Cantonese and Beijing operas (唱、做、念、打)	
	<u>Edmonton Chinese News</u> 愛華報 Feb 18, 2005 Ad P.52	Feb 20, 2005 笙歌妙韻慶新春 - To celebrate Chinese New Year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Location: Edmonton Chinatown Multicultural Centre 9540-102 Avenue, Edmonton</li> <li>- Artists: members</li> <li>- Musicians: Vancouver 楊海城、李泰, Calgary 江逸帆</li> </ul>
	<u>Edmonton Chinese News</u> 愛華報 Sept 15, 2006 and Sept 22, 2006 Pre-show feature articles	Show Oct. 15, 2006 Sunday 1:00 p.m.: - To celebrate 13 <sup>th</sup> anniversary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Location: Jubilee Auditorium, Edmonton</li> <li>- Artists: members, 2 instructors</li> <li>- Musicians: Zhuhai, China</li> <li>- Ticket: Free</li> <li>- Free shuttle bus service for seniors between Jubilee Auditorium and Edmonton Chinatown Multicultural Centre</li> </ul>
	<u>Edmonton Journal</u> Oct 13, 2006 Pre-show article	Oct 13, 2006: An Interview with Shirley Kwan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Promotion for the show</li> </ul>
	<u>Edmonton Journal</u> Oct 18, 2006 Post-show article		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Photo taken by journalist on the day of the performance</li> </ul>
	Post-show report in the news by the Association in <u>The Chinese Journal</u> 光華報 Oct 26, 2006		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Association reported on the event</li> </ul>
	<u>Edmonton Chinese News</u> 愛華報 Oct 27, 2006 P. 52 Thank You Ad	Post-Show Thank You Ad	
		June 28, 2009 12:30 p.m.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Calgary cultural exchange (for 志軒 音乐社)</li> <li>- Performed with Dawei Chen</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Location: Calgary Cultural Centre</li> <li>- 5 opera excerpts, 1 singing</li> <li>- Artists &amp; musicians from Calgary, Edmonton &amp; Vancouver</li> </ul>

13) Hua Yi Students' Association 華藝同學會	<p><u>The Chinese Journal</u> 光華報 Oct 11, 2007 articles by an audience P.B25 Ephemera: Program booklet</p> <p><u>The Canadian Chinese Times</u> 加華報 Oct. 5, 2007 P. 70</p>	<p>Sept 29, 2007 1 p.m.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Inaugural Cantonese Opera Presented by Hua-Yi Performing Group</li> </ul> <p>Article by a fan after watching this show.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Location: Edmonton Jubilee Auditorium</li> <li>- 7 opera excerpts (first ever 六国大封相)</li> <li>- Artists: member Calgary and Vancouver guests</li> <li>- Musicians: local and Vancouver, CD</li> </ul>
14) The Institute of Cultural Performing Arts (ICPA) 小英楓演藝團	<p><u>Edmonton Chinese News</u> 愛華報 Apr 6, 2007 (P.55) and May 25, 2007 (P.62) Recruitment Ad</p>	- Recruitment advertisement	
	<p><u>The Canadian Chinese Times</u> 加華報 Dec 11, 2009 Report P.70</p>	<p>Nov 29, 2009:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To fundraise for the Stollery Children's Hospital \$20,388.00</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Location: Edmonton Jubilee Auditorium</li> <li>- Full opera show</li> <li>- Artists: local</li> </ul>
	<p><u>Edmonton Chinese News</u> 愛華報 Oct 19, 2007 Introducing the Club P.26 <u>The Chinese Journal</u> 光華報 Oct 18, 2007 same article and photo P. B8</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Established in June 2007</li> <li>- Free lessons to train children and youth aged 5-15 in Cantonese opera and basic movements</li> <li>- Location: Edmonton Chinatown Multicultural Centre Saturdays 2-4 p.m.</li> <li>- Instructors were professional artists: Dawei Chen and Feiyun Zhong</li> </ul>
15) Edmonton Hung Fung Athletic Club 點城雄風體育會	Ephemera: Program leaflet	<p>Oct 20, 2001 1 p.m.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Full opera show 春草闖堂: Locally scripted &amp; directed</li> <li>- To celebrate their 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary</li> <li>- To fundraise for the Edmonton Chinatown Care Centre (nursing home)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Location: Edmonton Chinatown Multicultural Centre</li> <li>- Tickets: VIP \$25; Open \$10.</li> <li>- Artists &amp; musicians all from Calgary</li> <li>- Chair: Sein Mah 马凯旋</li> <li>- Evening banquet: \$20</li> <li>- 44 sponsors (individuals, businesses, community organizations, media)</li> </ul>

15) Edmonton Hung Fung Athletic Club 點城 雄風體育 會 (cont'd)		Nov. 7, 2004 Sunday 1 p.m. - To celebrate 14 <sup>th</sup> anniversary - To fundraise for Chinatown nursing home	- Location: Edmonton Chinatown Multicultural Centre 9540-102 Avenue, Edmonton - Ticket: \$5 - Full show: "The White Rabbit Encounter" 「白兔會」
16) Alberta Kwan Ying Athletic Club 亞省 點城群英 體育會	<u>Edmonton Chinese News</u> 愛華報 Sept 30, 2005 Thank you Ad P.61	Sept 18, 2005 - 「中秋懷舊粵曲繽紛萬歲聯歡會」 to entertain the seniors	- Location: Edmonton Chinatown Multicultural Centre 9540-102 Avenue, Edmonton - Artists: local - Sponsors: donation in kind by 世界保护动物联合会 SWPAA 500 small red lanterns - Musicians: local
	<u>Edmonton Chinese News</u> 愛華報 Apr 6, 2007 Ad	- Ad to recruit children and youth aged 5-14 for Cantonese opera classes on basic movements	- Location: At the club address 10232-96 Street Edmonton - Classes: Saturdays 12 noon to 4 p.m.
17) Indo-China Chinese Senior Citizens Association of Edmonton 愛城越綿 寮華人敬 老社	<u>The Canadian Chinese Times</u> 加華報 Sept 27, 1991 Ad P. 27 <u>Edmonton Chinese News</u> 愛華報 Oct 25, 1991 Event report P.18 & 23	Oct. 19-20, 1991 「粵劇精華耀點城」 - To promote the art of Cantonese opera - To enrich entertainment for the Chinese community - To promote the welfare of the seniors	- Location: Victoria Composite High School Eva O'Howard Theatre, Edmonton - Artists were from Los Angeles, Vancouver and Calgary - Musicians: own music club and musicians from Calgary - Sponsors: Individuals, businesses, community organizations, media - Tickets: \$5, \$10, \$15 - Cantonese opera excerpts (4 excerpts each day)
18) Toi Shan Association 點問頓台 山會館	<u>The Canadian Chinese Times</u> 加華報 Aug 23, 2001 Ad P.26	Sept 9, 2001 全加台山 邑僑第九界懇親大會 粵劇曲藝欣賞會 - Invited local artists	- Location: Edmonton Chinatown Multicultural Centre 9540-102 Avenue, Edmonton - Artists: local - Musicians: local - 2 Cantonese opera excerpts, 5 opera songs, 1 Cantonese popular

			song by group
	<u>The Canadian Chinese Times</u> 加華報 May 11, 2000 Event report P.3	May 6, 2000 6 p.m.: - To celebrate Chinese New Year at a restaurant	- Location: Edmonton Miramar Restaurant - Dinner and entertainment: Cantonese opera singing, lion dance, Cantonese popular songs
19) 飄音娛樂社	<u>Edmonton Chinese News</u> 愛華報 June 22, 2001 Event report	June 13 & 14, 2001: - To celebrate Fathers' Day	- Location: Chinese Elders Mansion - Cantonese opera songs and Cantonese popular songs by individuals and the choir
20) Alberta Kaiping District Association	Ephemera: Program Leaflet	October 17, 1993: - To honour the seniors in the community - To celebrate Mid-Autumn Festival	- Location: Victoria Composite Highschool Theatre - Variety show including Cantonese opera performance (excerpt) - Tickets: free
21) Edmonton Chinatown Multicultural Centre 點問頓中華文化中心	Edmonton Chinese News 愛華報 Jan 26, 2001 Event report P.27	Jan 20, 2001: - To celebrate Chinese New Year - To fundraise for operation funds	- Location: Northlands Agricom - Variety show included performance of Cantonese opera excerpt
	Ephemera: Program leaflet	Sept 21, 2002 「中秋粵曲粵劇欣賞晚會」 7 p.m.: - To celebrate mid-autumn festival - To fundraise for the Edmonton Chinatown Care Centre (nursing home) - To fundraise for the Chinese Library	- Location: Edmonton Chinatown Multicultural Centre 9540-102 Avenue, Edmonton - Artists & musicians: all local - 6 Cantonese opera singing, 1 Beijing opera solo, 1 musical piece, 2 opera excerpts - Sponsors: businesses

Notes:

Edmonton Chinese Weekly 華聲報 P.8 Aug 27, 1999 (Column issue 13): Ken Chiu 焦根基 Cantonese opera column 偶感隨筆粵劇曲藝漫談 to discuss the art of singing Cantonese opera.  
Edmonton Chinese News 愛華報 P.88: Ken Chiu 焦根基 Cantonese opera column 偶感隨筆粵劇曲藝漫談 Article No. 2 如何唱好粵曲.

The Canadian Chinese Times 加華報 Issue #1227 dated Jan 7, 2005: News release to announce the Jan 9, 2005 Variety Show at the Edmonton Chinatown Multicultural Centre Fundraising for



Tsunami in Indonesia through the Canadian Red Cross in Edmonton: Cantonese opera singing, Beijing opera singing, Taichi, martial arts, popular songs, silent auction.

Edmonton Chinese News 愛華報 P.5 July 4, 2008 Editorial: 發揚粵劇, 培育後進 to promote Cantonese Opera.

The Canadian Chinese Times 加華報 P.49 & 51 (Dec 23, 2005): Featured article about Luo Jiaying 羅家英: 「貪生羅家英」 - kept the fans updated on news about the artist.