



CHAN Kam-tong 陳錦棠 (1906.8.7–1981.12.30)

Actor

A native of Zhongshan, Guangdong Province, Chan was a disciple of opera actor Sun Bak and later studied under Sit Kok-sin. He later joined Kok Sin Sing Opera Troupe and became Sit's sworn son.

As early as 13, Chan already began to play *lache* (miscellaneous roles) in an opera troupe; he played the supporting *xiaowu* (young military male) role when he was around 17. After joining Tai Law Tin and Kok Sin Sing Opera Troupe, he began to perform as a *xiaosheng* (young civil male role) and *wenwusheng* (civil and military male role). His career took off with his villain role in *Sweet Girl*, one of the master works of Kok Sin Sing Opera Troupe. He starred in many famous operas and played opposite renowned actresses Fong Yim-fun and Hung Sin Nui in some of them.

Chan was also a formidable performer of martial arts and was known as a 'martial arts champion'. He founded the Kam Tim Fa Opera Troupe in 1937 and it proved to be one of the longest-lasting troupes. He made his exit from the stage in 1973 after performing his last Cantonese opera *Vengeance Resolved in the Qiu River Battle*.

In 1934, Chan made his screen debut in *Story in a Cantonese Opera Company*, a film shot on location in Shanghai; Chan starred with Tse Sing-nung in *Romance of Jade Hall*, in one of the operas within the film. He went on to act in such Hong Kong productions as *Man of All Evil* (1937) and *Eighth Heaven* (1939). In 1941, he landed his first *wuxia* role in *The Furry Rat* (1941). From 1934 to 1968, he appeared in over 100 films, many of them opera films including *The Security Escort Master Wong Tin-ba* (1948), *The Story of Tung Siu-yuen* (1950), *Sweet Girl* (1953), *A Beauty Flourishing Fragrance* (1955), *The Fairy of Ninth Heaven* (1959), *Red Shoes Solves the Mystery Case* (1959), *Rescue at the West River* (1960), and *Tragic Love of Ping-kei* (1963). Two contemporary films which Chan starred in were *Silk Factory Girl* (1955) and *How Third Master Sha Killed Tam Ah-yan for Love* (1959). He appeared in his last film *Tragedy of a Poet King* (1968).

Chan died in 1981. His artistic legacy is upheld by his outstanding students Leung Yam-tong, Siu Chung-kwan and So Siu-tong.
