



CHAN Lai-kuen 陳麗娟 (1935.10.13–2021.1.19)

Actress

A native of Chao'an, Guangdong, Chan Lai-kuen spent her earlier years living in her maternal grandfather's home with her mother and elder brother Chan Wing-ming. After her mother passed away, she and her brother joined Zhengmingshun, a Chaozhou opera troupe in the rural district. They became featured players of the theatre troupe and occasionally performed in puppet shows. In the late 1940s, Chan and her brother relocated with the troupe to Hong Kong. By this time, the troupe had been sold to and operated by a Hong Kong company. In 1959, Chan joined the Dongshan Chaozhou Music Company as an actress. In 1960, she performed in the company's first stage production of *A Pair of Carved Jade* and later in the film adaptation.

Dongshan later established a long-term partnership with Tung Shan Film Co. As a result, Chan performed in numerous Tung Shan productions, including *The Story of Splashed Water* (1962), *The Pearl and the Sword* (1962), *The Huntsman's Tale* (1962), *The Maiden's Tears* (1962), *The Chivalrous Female Outlaw* (1963), and *The Perfumed Ball* (aka *Twin Charms*, 1963). She also took on the child role in *An Upright Stepson Crying on the Streets* (1961). Some of the best roles that showcased her talent include her quick-witted character, Phoenix who serves as a matchmaker for her brother in *The Colored Phoenix Aloft* (the first part of the omnibus film, *Chaozhou Opera Panorama* [1962]), and Xu, her tyrannical wife character in *Wife in Disguise* (1963) who forces her husband to take an ugly servant girl as his concubine. Over the span of her career, Chan was featured in close to 20 Chaozhou-dialect films. She also performed extensively in Thailand during the release of her films.

After Chaozhou-dialect film production fell into decline, Chan continued to work for local Chaozhou opera troupes, performing primarily during the Yu Lan Festival and occasionally in 'Operas for Deities'. Chan retired from the stage in 1967 due to poor health. On 19 January 2021, she passed away of illness in Hong Kong.