



## FONG Yim-fun 芳艷芬 (b. 1928)

### Actress

Born Leung Yin-fong, Fong Yim-fun is a native of Enping, Guangdong Province. At the age of ten, she entered the Guosheng School of Cantonese Opera to learn Cantonese opera under the tutelage of Pak Kit-cho. In the following year, she joined the Shing Sou Lin Opera Troupe. In 1941, she was given the stage name 'Fong Yim-fun' by the esteemed musician Yik Kim-chuen. She switched to the Chow Fung Nin Troupe in 1945. After that, she joined the Tai Lung Fung Opera Troupe. There, she delivered an extraordinary performance singing 'Worship of Tower Lui Fung' in her unique *manban* in *fanxian* (reversed tuning) *erhuang* mode, which was later known as her signature 'Fong Vocal Style'. In 1949, she, along with opera stars such as Chan Yin-tong, established the Yim Hoi Tong Opera Troupe. She worked with various well-known opera troupes, including Kok Sin Sing Opera Troupe, and Kam Tim Fa Opera Troupe and Golden Phoenix Opera Troupe. She was voted 'The Queen of *Huadan*' for two consecutive years—1952 and 1953—in 'The Three Champions of the Opera World' contest organised by the Amusement News. In 1953, she established the San Yim Yeung Opera Troupe, successively releasing notable works such as *A Forsaken Woman*, *The Nymph of River Lo*, *Joyous Wedding*, *Snow in June*, and *The Tragic Story of Leung Shan-pak and Chuk Ying-toi*. Her elegant and dignified image touched the hearts of many.

Since 1949, Fong has begun a dual career on the Chinese opera stage and the silver screen. From her cinematic debut, *The Flower Drops by the Red Chamber* (1950), to her retirement following her marriage in 1959, she appeared in around 150 films over the course of ten years. As a highly adaptable actress, versatile in playing roles in both period and contemporary films, she portrayed characters with such intricate nuance that it struck a deep chord with viewers. From young girls to senior, she played various kinds of characters, such as a self-willed wealthy young lady, a mischievous village girl, a virtuous and loyal wife, and even a chivalrous heroine. In 1953, she founded the Zhili Film Company, which produced renowned films, including *Belle in Penang* (1954), *A Forsaken Woman* (1954), *Moonlight* (1956), and *The Sweepstakes Seller* (1958). She starred in a number of Cantonese opera films adapted from her famous stage operas, including *The Nymph of River Lo* (1957) and *Snow in June* (1959). She also sang numerous film songs, such as the song for *She Says "No" to Marriage* (1951) and the film songs for *Belle in Penang*, which were all widely popular at the time.

After retiring, she founded the 'Kwan Fong Charitable Foundation' with Maria Lee Tseng Chiu-kwan in 1984. Starting in 1987, she returned to the stage for several charity performances. In 2012, she sponsored Shaw College of the Chinese University of Hong Kong by launching the 'Art of Fong Yim-fun Sustainability Project' to promote Cantonese opera and foster artistic development. In 2003, she received the Bronze Bauhinia Star from the HKSAR Government. In 2017, she received the Lifetime Achievement Award at the 36th Hong Kong Film Awards in recognition of her outstanding achievements in the performing arts.

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