



LAN Chi Pak 靚次伯 (1904.12.24–1992.2.6)

Actor

Real name Lai Chung-pak and also named Lai Chi-pak, Lan is a native of Xinhui County, Guangdong Province. Since he was fourth in the family, he earned the respected name 'Uncle Fourth' in the Cantonese opera circle. Having cultivated a deep interest in Cantonese opera from an early age, Lan followed the footsteps of his third eldest brother—the opera actor Sun Tai Tze Cheuk in joining the Wan Kau Lok Troupe at 16. He later apprenticed under his master Lan Tai Fong and also learned from *wusheng* (civil and military male) Chu Chi-pak. To honour his two mentors, he adopted their names and subsequently changed his stage name to Lan Chi Pak. He first performed as the third *wusheng* in the Chuk Wa Lin Opera Troupe. At the age of 19, he became the lead *wusheng* in the Chung Tai Ping Troupe. His other brothers were also opera actors. Together they founded the Shing Sou Lin Opera Troupe. Early signature works include *How Old Master Keung Crossed the River*.

Lan has also performed for various troupes and has participated in some of the most popular operas of the time: *The Impeachment of Yan Song*, *Judge Bao's Night Trial of the Wicked Guo Huai*, *The Butterfly Lovers*, *Red Maid*, *the Matchmaker*, *Romance of Mount Fuji*. In 1956, upon the establishment of the Sin Fung Ming Troupe, Lan formed the bedrock of the troupe. He was honoured with the title of 'the King of *Wusheng*' for his feats and vocal prowess in *Prime Minister of Six States*.

In 1940, while Lan was in the US, he acted in the film *Searching for My Husband*. He had played in more than 147 Hong Kong movies, including *A King Speaks His Heart in the Cuckoo's Song* (1951), *Judge Bao's Night Trial of the Wicked Kwok Wai* (1952), *The Legend of Purple Hairpin* (1959/1977), *The Impeachment of Yim Sung* (1952), and *The Great Red Robe* (1965), just to name a few. His performing skills as displayed in *An Immortal Refuses Love* (1958) will be remembered as perhaps his definitive performance on film.

In the 1980s, Lan was still active in the opera theatre, performing under the banner of Chor Fung Ming Opera Troupe. He later took on Christopher Choo from Singapore as his 'official' disciple. In 1992, he passed away in Hong Kong.