Abstract

Teochew opera has its origins in the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) which was developed from the southern opera in China. Major migration of the Chinese helped to bring this traditional performing art to other parts of the world, especially to the Southeast Asia.

In the early 1950s, Teochew Opera went through a series of reform in China mainland, resulting in better scripts and personnel in this area. This indeed became useful resources when it comes to the production of Teochew opera movies. These Teochew opera movies from China, including: Fire at the Riverside Pavilion, Su Liu Niang, Prosecuting the Husband, are shown in 1959 and the early 1960s, featuring the most well established stars in China. They provided Singapore opera fans with new ideas of packing a complete story in two hours with elegantly written lyrics, heightened dramatic tensions and composition and instrumentation that paralleled the development of the plot and portrayal of characters with strong musical elements.

These Teochew opera movies made a great impact in Singapore and proved to be a hit with the Chinese. Most of the local traditional Teochew Opera troupes end up adopting the so called "movie style" in their performance, and thus achieved a better standard in their production. This
improvement, together with the well-received Teochew opera movies, brought about the flourish status of the Teochew opera scene in Singapore in the early 60s. Together they boost the popularity of this performing art in Singapore.

Due to the above situation, it promoted the growth of Hong Kong made Teochew Opera Movies during this period on the other hand. Local films industries even went further to invest in this area. Witnessing nearly 200 productions in 5 years (1960-1965), this period was being commonly known as a "Golden Period" in the history of Teochew opera in Singapore.

This thesis aims to study about the interaction between the traditional performing Teochew opera and the Teochew opera movies. It hopes to examine how traditional opera institution provides resources to the productions of the movies, and how the movies on the other hand, end up affecting the performing styles of local opera troupes. A further study on the reasons of the booming of the Hong Kong made Teochew opera movies is also being done, so as to better prove the interaction between the stage and the screen.