AS ABSTRACT

As one of the most popular operatic genres in Southern China, Cantonese Opera dates its origin back to the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644 A.D.). Much research regarding the historical development was done, yet very little research on the scripts (or librettos) of the Cantonese Opera has been carried out.

Cantonese Opera has experienced drastic changes during the past century, especially in the 1920’s and 30’s. The scripts, which reflect not only the contents of the play but also the opera troupes, cast, stage, are important first-hand sources in the study of Cantonese Opera during this period of time.

This study undertakes to explore and evaluate the changes in the Cantonese Opera during the 1920’s and 30’s, based on a collection of plays (《旧本粵劇叢刊》) which is the subject of study in this research. In the meantime, second-hand materials are also used as supplementary evidences.

Chapter one gives a general understanding about the historical development of the Cantonese Opera. It also gives an introduction to the subject of study, explaining the objectives and methodology adopted for the study.

Chapter two concentrates in analyzing the contents of the scripts in the collection, detecting and explaining any changes in the trend of contents during this period of time.

Chapter three focuses on the characteristics of the Cantonese Opera under three categories: 1) opera troupes; 2) role-types and artists; 3) play writers, which are being reflected in the scripts.

Chapter four analyzes the stage performances of the Cantonese Opera under two categories: 1) division of acts; 2) background using examples from the scripts.
Chapter five is the concluding chapter, which gives a summary in the transformation in the different areas of the Cantonese Opera during this period of time. It hopes to show that the traditional art form has been reshaped due to the urban development of Guangzhou, Hong Kong and Macau in particular, the introduction of western performing arts and movies, and the keen competition among opera troupes, etc.

第一章 绪论

第一节 引言

1.1 南国红豆

粤剧素来拥有“南国红豆”的美誉，是广东省地方的地方戏曲艺术，也是中国主要的剧种之一。它不仅流行于广东、广西、香港及澳门等地，即使在遥远的美洲、欧洲、澳洲及东南亚等华侨华人聚居的地区，也时常能听到那“大锣大鼓”之声。

然而，这颗“南国红豆”最初并不称为“粤剧”，据研究其在《粤剧源流考》一文指出，“粤剧”一词，一九三五年始定此名。” 他指出，在《广东地方戏曲史》一文则认为“生活交唱班出现‘粤剧’的名称”。由于粤剧的腔调以梆子（相当于京剧的西皮）、二簧为主，故早期称“广东梆子”或“广东班”。此外也有“广府大戏”、“广东大戏”等称谓。