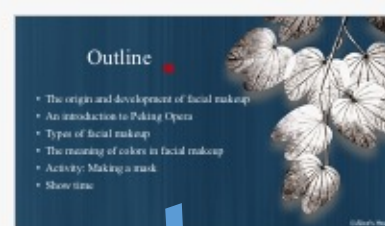




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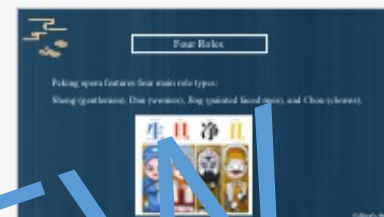
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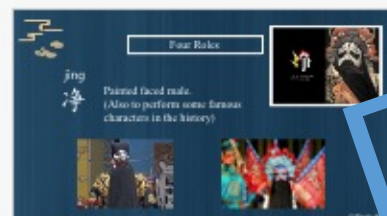
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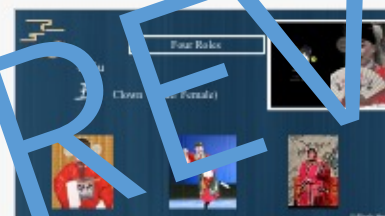
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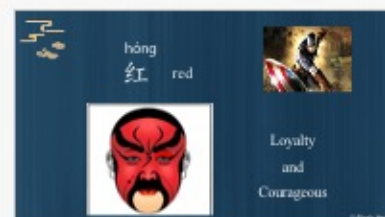
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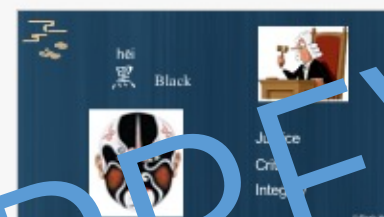
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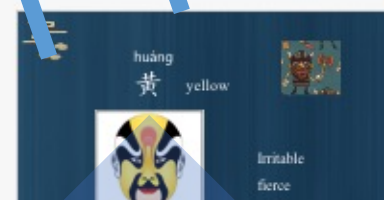
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Peking Opera

An introduction to Peking Opera

Peking opera is the most widely known as one part of the Chinese opera form. It is the most influential and the most mature performance art in China, representing the highest development level of Chinese operas. Together with traditional Chinese medicine and Chinese painting, it is called the "national quintessence of China."



Peking opera has a history of over 200 years. It has drawn on the strengths of many local operas and being influenced by the Peking dialect and customs. Peking opera was born when the 'Four Great Anhui Troupes' brought Hui opera, or what is now called *Huiju*, in 1790 to Beijing, for the eightieth birthday of the Qianlong Emperor on 25 September. It was originally staged for the court and only made available to the public later. In 1828, several famous Hubei troupes arrived in Beijing and performed jointly with Anhui troupes. The combination gradually formed Peking opera's melodies.



Peking opera is generally regarded as having fully formed by 1845. Although it was born in Peking, Peking opera is not a local opera, as there are troupes that perform it all over China.

An Introduction to Facial makeup

Facial makeup is a special art in Chinese operas, especially in Peking Opera, where it distinguishes different roles and reveals their dispositions and moral qualities via artistic exaggeration, truthful portrayals, and symbolism.

There were two legends of the origin of facial makeup. The first one proposed that it is mask used for sacrifice in the ancient time. Like in the "Nuo" dance, people wear masks to expel the drought demon. Fierce masks were used to highlight the fearsome image of the devil. The second one proposed that mask originated from a historical person. The legend says that Jing Lan Ling of the Northern Qi Dynasty (550-557) is very handsome and have a beautiful face. So, he has to wear a fierce mask in battle to intimidate his enemies.



The origin of using masks in art performance can be traced back to the Southern and Northern Dynasties Period more than 1,400 years ago when leading actors used to wear masks. As the operatic arts developed, performers gradually took off their masks and painted colorful patterns on their face instead since it was difficult to show facial expressions behind a mask.

Peking Opera and Facial Makeup

There are four main types of roles in Peking Opera: "Sheng", "Dan", "Jing" and "Chou". The "Sheng" refers to the male roles; the "Dan" is a generic term for women; the "Jing" is a male role with a unique style in terms of character or personality. They are also commonly known as "painted faces" because their faces are made up in various colors and patterns; "Chou" is a comic character with humor and comic relief.

Facial makeup in Peking opera is mainly for two roles: Jing and Chou. There are relatively few makeup patterns for Chou. The most common being a white-painted nose for comic relief. Jing's patterns are much more complicated and varied.

In Peking Opera, the colors of facial makeup are of great importance in revealing the age, profession, and personality of a character. Normally, red is the color of loyalty and courage; black indicates serious, justice, and integrity; white reveals a crafty, suspicious, and fussy character. Besides, purple indicates righteousness and stability; yellow indicates fierce and irritable; green indicates recklessness or brave; blue indicates brave and straightforward; and gold indicates God and Buddha.

