

RED CRANE NEWS

Term 3 Newsletter, 19th July - 25th Sep

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Winter Issue

Chinese Opera - Face Painting and Its Various Meanings

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臉譜 (Lian Pu) Opera Face Painting

In Chinese Opera, there are various designs of lines and coloured patches painted on the faces of certain operatic characters. They follow traditionally fixed patterns for specific types to highlight the disposition and quality in the personages so that the audience may immediately know whether they are heroes or villains, whether they are kind or treacherous. The following describes briefly the major categories of facial paints:

The **RED FACE** shows bravery and loyalty. A typical 'red face' is

the character 'Guan Yu' who is a general of the period of the Three Kingdoms (220-280), and is famed for his faithfulness to his Emperor, Liu Bei.

The **REDDISH PURPLE FACE** likewise shows a just and noble character, for instance, Lian Po in the well known play Jiang Xiang He (The General Reconciled with the Chief Minister), in which General Lian was proud and impetuous and quarrelled with the chief minister to whom he was, in the end, reconciled.

The **BLACK FACE** indicates either a rough and bold character or an impartial and selfless personality. Typical of the former

are General Zhang Fei of the 'Romance of the Three Kingdoms', and Li Kui of 'Water Margin', and of the latter is Bao Gong, the legendary fearless and impartial judge of the Song Dynasty.

The **GREEN FACE** depicts surly stubbornness, impetuosity, and a total lack of self restraint.

Commonly seen on the stage is the **WHITE FACE** for the powerful villain. It highlights all that is bad in human nature: cunning, craftiness, and wickedness. Typical characters are Cao Cao, a powerful and cruel prime minister in the time of the Three Kingdoms, and

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Qin Hui, a wicked Song Dynasty prime minister who put the national hero Yue Fei to death.

All the above facial painting belong to a category of characters collectively called *jing* - all males with pronounced personal traits.

For the clowns of traditional opera, there is a special painting technique called Xiaohualian (the petty painted face), that is, a small patch of chalk painted on and around the nose to show a mean and secretive character, such as Jiang Gan of the 'Three Kingdoms' who fawned over Cao Cao. It is also occasionally painted on a young page or an ordinary working man, often to enhance his wit, humour or jesting and to enliven up the performance.

Another class of players, called 'acrobatic clowns' (Wuchou), are also touched up with a tiny patch of white on the tip of the nose to show an astute mind, a keen and quick wit. Several of the stage heroes from the novel 'Water Margin' are made up this way.

Face painting dates a long time back to the Song (960-1279)

and Yuan (1206-1368) Dynasties at least. Simple patterns of painted faces are found in tomb murals of that age. During the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), improvements were made in the skills of drawing and in preparing the paints, leading to the whole set of colourful facial patterns that we see in today's Jingju (Beijing Opera).

As to the origin of the face painting, it is still largely a matter for conjecture. And there are different theories. The following is just one of the few theories to date. It is believed that the face paint owes its origins to the mask. Prince Lanling of the Northern Qi Dynasty (479-507) was a good fighter, but because of his handsome features, aroused no fear in his enemy. So he had a ferocious looking mask made and wore it into battles. He proved himself much more formidable. His followers composed a song to sing of his successes, which developed into a masked dance, showing him storming into the enemy formation. Subsequently, the mask became painted patterns for stage characters.

Chinese Idiomatic Expressions

(Edition 13)

一日三秋 yi ri san qiu

Literally says 'One Day Three Autumns'. This expression means to miss someone deeply, one day equalling three years.

Book Corner:

1. Red Crane Glossary Book

This book is a glossary of the main words found in the first six books from Red One to Orange Two. It is used as a consolidated guide book to the vocabulary found in the main textbooks used in class. Highly useful in locating the context of where a word has been used in any of the above textbooks, without having to flip through all of them. Perfect for students who haven't had the time to consolidate their studies. \$23 incl of GST

2. Red Crane Chinese Character Picture Book

This book is a compilation of all the drawings used in classes from Red One and Two. Extremely helpful in helping students to identify and recollect how a Chinese character looks like, and its process of writing. \$20.00 incl of GST



Cross Culture Comic Spot

Those of us who decide to take on another language apart from our mother tongue, will soon find out that like all languages, not all words can be taken literally. Red Crane students have often in class burst into laughter when teachers explain what the new Chinese phrase actually suggests. The following is a comic strip done by Luke Sinclair on his experience of how some of us Chinese people can stuff up too sometimes, taking some words too literally. Plenty of mistakes like these can make for fun times.



Melbourne Timetable (Term 3 - 19th July to 25th Sep)

Chinese Character Writing Beginner's Level 6	Time	Location	Code
Wednesday	5.30pm - 7.30pm	City	W6

Chinese Character Writing Intermediate Level	Time	Location	Code
Tuesday	7.30pm - 9.30pm	City	WIn

Red One (level 1)	Time	Location	Code
Monday	5.45pm - 7.30pm	City	C01
Tuesday	7.30pm - 9.30pm	City	C01a

Red Two (level 2)	Time	Location	Code
Tuesday	5.45pm - 7.30pm	City	C02a
Thursday	7.30pm - 9.30pm	City	C02b

Blue One (level 3)	Time	Location	Code
Wednesday	5.30pm - 7.30pm	City	C03
Wednesday	7.30pm - 9.30pm	City	C03a
Saturday	10.30am - 12.30pm	City	C03b

Blue Two (level 4)	Time	Location	Code
Monday	7.00pm - 9.00pm	City	C04

Blue Conv (level 5)	Time	Location	Code
Thursday	5.30pm - 7.30pm	City	C05

Intermediate Conv 1 (level 9)	Time	Location	Code
Monday	7.30pm - 9.30pm	City	C09

Intermediate Conv 4	Time	Location	Code
Thursday	5.30pm - 7.30pm	City	CIC4

Intermediate Conv 6	Time	Location	Code
Tuesday	5.30pm - 7.30pm	City	CIC6

High Intermediate / Advanced Conversation	Time	Location	Code
Thursday	7.30pm - 9.30pm	City	HIC

Sydney Timetable (Term 3 - 19th July to 25th Sep)

Red One (level 1)	Time	Location	Code
Thursday	5.45pm - 7.30pm	City	S01

Red Two (level 2)	Time	Location	Code
Tuesday	7.30pm - 9.30pm	City	S02

Blue One (level 3)	Time	Location	Code
Tuesday	5.30pm - 7.30pm	City	S03

Orange Two (level 7)	Time	Location	Code
Monday	7.30pm - 9.30pm	City	S07

Melbourne Class Locations

City - Suite 609, 365 Little Collins St, Melbourne 3000

Sydney Class Location

City - 661 George St, Sydney 2000

To Enrol:

Please make cheque payable to:

Red Crane School of Chinese

and send to: **Suite 609, 365 Little Collins St, Melbourne 3000**

For Enquiries, call:

(03) 9378 8463 or 0411 117 188

Email: contact@redcrane.com.au

Alternatively, if you prefer internet banking, please let us know and we will provide you with our school's bank account details. Fee: Melbourne \$300 / Sydney \$310 per term (inclusive of textbook and audio podcast where applicable) GST inclusive. Fees (less service charge of 10%) are not refundable after first lesson of term.

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Class Code: _____

I enclose a cheque of \$ _____

Name: _____

I found out about Red Crane from

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