

LESSON NOTES

All About #10 Cantonese Pop Culture

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GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson is Pop Culture in Hong Kong

Music

Cantopop is a colloquialism for "Cantonese pop music" or "Hong Kong popular music." Cantopop is one of the more prominent genres of music produced in Hong Kong. It has become synonymous with local music culture since its birth in Hong Kong. While many other forms of music exist, Cantopop is still the most popular; however, you'll also hear mandopop from Taiwan and China in Hong Kong as well. Most artists are essentially multilingual these days and sing in both Cantonese and Mandarin.

One popular singer in recent years is Eason Chan Yik-Shun, a male singer from Hong Kong. He has been described as a blast of fresh air in the Hong Kong music scene, and his album *U87* has been recommended by *Time Magazine* as one of the five best Asian albums worth buying.

Movies

The movie industry in Hong Kong has been one of the most successful worldwide, especially during the second half of the twentieth century. It remains prominent in Hong Kong despite a severe slump starting in the mid-1990s. Local martial artists and stars such as Jackie Chan and Bruce Lee are known globally. Many Hong Kong actors have transitioned to Hollywood over the years as well, including Chow Yun Fat and John Woo. Hong Kong cinema has also received international recognition through the work of the director Wong Kar Wai whose *2046* is one of the best films of the last ten years.

Television

Hong Kong has two broadcast television stations: ATV and TVB. The latter, launched in 1967, was the territory's first free-to-air commercial station and is currently the predominant TV station in the territory. Paid cable and satellite television are also widespread. Soap operas, comedies, and variety shows produced in Hong Kong now reach mass audiences throughout the Chinese-speaking world. Many international and pan-Asian broadcasters are based in Hong Kong because of its position as a hub broadcaster, including News Corporation's STAR TV. Hong Kong's terrestrial commercial TV networks are also making inroads into mainland

China. TVB and ATV can be seen in neighboring Guangdong Province and Macau via cable.

The popularity of American television programs is having a profound effect on China's entertainment industry. While actual American shows have yet to hit Chinese airwaves (the government considers them too violent and too sexual for Chinese audiences), Internet video-sharing sites and file-sharing programs have created a sizable fan base for American programs in China.

Gambling

Gambling is popular in Chinese culture and Hong Kong has a long history as a gambler's den. That said, gambling is now controlled in the territory. It is legal only at three established and licensed institutions approved and supervised by the government of Hong Kong. The Hong Kong Jockey Club provides a major avenue for horse racing and gambling to mostly middle-aged locals. The club was established in 1844 by the British with the first racecourse built in Happy Valley. The club closed for a few years during World War II due to the Japanese occupation of Hong Kong. In 1975, Mark Six lottery was introduced. And in 2002, the club offered wagering for soccer world championship games including the English FA Premier League and the World Cup.

On a smaller scale, games like Mahjong and many types of card games can be played for fun or with money at stake in many smaller clubs. There are many small and unregulated Mahjong parlors available. Movies such as the 1980s *God of Gamblers* have given a rather glamorous image to gambling in Hong Kong and encouraged the sport.