



2016-2017 School of Chinese Seminar

**Eunuchs are not all *chou* 丑 Roles:
The Historical Zheng He 鄭和 and the Fictional Chen Lin 陳琳
in Two Newly Edited Beijing Operas**

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Time: 4:00-5:30 pm, 8 June 2017 (Thursday)

Venue: Room 730, Run Run Shaw Tower, Centennial Campus, HKU

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Of the several thousand Chinese eunuchs for whom we have names, only a few are not ridiculed as negative characters in Chinese history and popular culture. In opera they are most often seen in *chou* 丑 or clown roles, but in two newly edited Beijing operas, Zheng He 鄭和 (1371-1433) and Chen Lin 陳琳 are cast in principal and principled roles. In Tianjin Qingnian jingju tuan's *Zheng He xia xiyang* 鄭和下西洋, Meng Guanglu 孟廣祿 (1948-) plays the role of Zheng He, who ventured out on seven naval voyages to as far as the east coast of Africa. In Shanghai jingju tuan's *Limao huan taizi* 狸貓換太子 Chen Shaoyun 陳少雲 (1948-) performs the role of Chen Lin, who sacrificed his life saving the infant, the future Song Renzong 宋仁宗 (r.1010-1063). The main objective of this paper is to compare and contrast the representation of the historical Zheng He and the fictional Chen Lin.

Jennifer Jay is professor of History and Classics at the University of Alberta, She teaches Chinese history, women's studies, and Chinese opera while her research is focused on Tang, Song, and Yuan history.

ALL ARE WELCOME