



Yi Jin Cantonese Opera Benefit Performance Post-performance Dinner 19 March 2006

Thankyou Speech for Yi Jin's Generous Donation to CLF

Speech by Rabin Rabindran, CLF Trustee

Yip Kin xian sheng, Chairman of the Yi Jin Cantonese Opera, Li Ziliu xian sheng, Former Mayor of Guangzhou, Deng Xiang Duan xian sheng, President of Guangzhou Returned Overseas Chinese Office,

*Nu shi men, xian sheng men, wan shang hao
Ni men piao yen, xing ku la
Wo shi lu bin lu bin juen
Wo shi da lü shi, wo ye shi
Han yu ji jing huay de, zhu yao fu jer ren
Wo fei chang, yong shin da, huan yin do jia tao
Xin xi lan lai.*

We are today enjoying the afterglow of a remarkable benefit concert yesterday. We cannot thank the Yi Jin Cantonese Opera and the Guangzhou Cantonese Opera Troupe enough for your wonderful effort in raising over \$43,000 for the Chinese Language Foundation.

The vision that the Chinese Language Foundation has is to encourage and enable all New Zealanders of various ethnic and cultural backgrounds to learn Chinese.

The value of learning Chinese cannot be underestimated with regard to business connections and trading advantages. The fact that nearly a quarter of the world's population lives in China adds to the importance of learning Chinese. However, the value of learning Chinese extends well beyond any financial benefits that may accrue to a country. It is hard to think of a culture with a longer history or a greater depth of philosophical thought and literature than China. Language is the key to unlock that cultural tradition because language is the filter through which thinking occurs.

Even though most of you at the function tonight are Chinese, I wonder how many of you are aware that the learning of Chinese exercises both sides of the brain unlike any other language.

In order for the Chinese Language Foundation to grow and be able to make its vision become a reality there is a desperate need for Chinese teaching materials as well as Chinese teachers. The money that has been raised by the wonderful concert last night will go a long way towards increasing the number of schools that the Chinese Language Foundation can help and increase the number of young New Zealanders who will learn this wonderful language and culture.

We are working very hard to spread the teaching and learning of Chinese for it to become the second international language of New Zealand. We are competing with a range of other languages including Spanish, French, German and Japanese, many of which languages already have a significant base in New Zealand. The Chinese Language Foundation is the first organization with the sole purpose of encouraging and enabling New Zealanders to learn Chinese and any help that we can get will be appreciatively received.

We thank again the Yi Jin Cantonese Opera and the Guangzhou Opera Troupe for their significant contribution to our cause. To the people of Guangzhou, I hope you have enjoyed the hospitality of our beautiful country and will come back to visit us soon. To Yip Kin xian sheng, Grace and Elaine of the Yi Jin Cantonese Opera, we are proud that you live in our city and we look forward to a continuing friendship.

Xie Xie