

# ICHO launches “Fun in ICH” Series to introduce traditional funeral rite “Breaking Hell Gate” and Nanyin (with photos)

The Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) Office under the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) will launch the "Fun in ICH" Series programme. Under the theme of "Myth Breaker on Breaking Hell Gate and Nanyin", the series introduces two ICH items of Hong Kong, namely traditional funeral rites and Nanyin, to members of the public. Taoist priest and the Taoist priest consultant of the movie "The Last Dance", Mr Leung Chun, will unveil the mystery of traditional funeral rites including breaking hell gate, while the troupe The Gong Strikes One will perform Nanyin. Admission is free and members of the public are welcome to join on the spot.

The majority of traditional funeral rites were performed for ground burial, and some communities in the New Territories still keep the practice of the ground burial, while people in urban areas usually adopt cremation and hold funerals at funeral parlours. Traditional funeral rites include chanting scriptures, breaking hell gate, buying water, placing the dead body in a coffin, encircling the coffin, bidding farewell, holding a funerary feast when the mourning period is over, and consolation feast rites. Taoist priests play a vital role in the rituals. Mr Leung is an eighth-generation descendant from a family of Taoist priests of the Zhengyi School. He joined his father in the funeral industry when he was 12 years old and has been practising in the industry for over 30 years. He hopes to reshape public perceptions of Taoist priests through participating in film production.

Mr Leung will hold two talks at the Theatre on the first floor of the Hong Kong Heritage Museum for two consecutive Sundays in December. The talk, "'Nahm Mouh' Master: Myth Breaking the Traditional Funeral Rites", to be held from 2.30pm to 4pm on December 15, will unveil the traditional funeral rites and their underlying meaning; the talk "'Nahm Mouh' Master: The Communicator in Traditional Funeral Rites", to be held from 2.30pm to 4pm on December 22, will unveil the role and significance of a Taoist priest, serving as a guide to lead the deceased. The venue will open for admission 15 minutes before the event starts. Admission is free on a first-come, first-served basis.

Nanyin is a kind of traditional music popular in the Pearl River Delta region. It is performed in Cantonese operas, Guangdong "murmuring prayers", Taoist rituals, celebrations and funeral rites. Musicians usually accompany themselves on the instruments while they sing. Nanyin is featured throughout the movie "The Last Dance". The performance "'A Wanderer's Autumn Grief' – Nanyin", will be performed by the local troupe The Gong Strikes One from 2pm to 3pm on December 21 (Saturday) at the Hall on the first floor of the Hong Kong Museum of Art. The troupe will also introduce the structure, history and

culture connotations of Nanyin, particularly its connection with funeral rites. There will also be a live Nanyin performance for the audience to experience and enjoy the music. Members of the public are welcome to join.

For programme details of the "Fun in ICH" Series – "Myth Breaker on Breaking Hell Gate and Nanyin", please visit [https://www.icho.hk/en/web/icho/fun\\_in\\_ich.html](https://www.icho.hk/en/web/icho/fun_in_ich.html) or call 2851 6134 for enquiries.

The programme is also one of the activities in the Chinese Culture Promotion Series. The LCSD has long been promoting Chinese history and culture through organising an array of programmes and activities to enable the public to learn more about the broad and profound Chinese culture. For more information, please visit [www.lcsd.gov.hk/en/ccpo/index.html](http://www.lcsd.gov.hk/en/ccpo/index.html).

