

Introduction to Chinese Music, Languages, and Culture by Stella Hei-Tung Chan

Where/What is Hong Kong/China?

- * **Hong Kong:**
 - International City
 - Located in the Guangdong Province of China
 - British Colonial background more than 100 years
 - Returned to China in 1997
 - Cantonese-speaking area
 - Different currency/passport/administrative system/culture/eating habit from China
- * **China:**
 - Capital city: Beijing
 - Mandarin as official language
 - One of the oldest countries in the world



What is the *sanxian*?

- * *sanxian* 三弦 = “three” + “string”
- * a Chinese three-stringed long neck fretless plucked lute
- * its root can be traced back to 2000 years ago
- * generally believed it was invented during the construction of the Great Wall
- * from a paddle drum to a string instrument
- * famous for its accompanying role in traditional narrative singing performances



Types of the *sanxian*:

- * *xiao sanxian* (small *sanxian*) and *da sanxian* (large *sanxian*)
- * the small *sanxian* is common in the southern China, whereas the large model is prevalent in the north

Listening examples:

- * *Shibaban* 十八板 (Eighteen Beats)—*sanxian* solo
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f-kSc4ivsvY>
- * *Heitu ge* 黑土歌 (Song of the Black Earth)—*sanxian*, narrative singing and Chinese orchestra
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rRYdsxRIoHw>
- * Traditional Northern Narrative Singing in 1939
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o2b2TYgVXyw&t=1s>

