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**Reflection on Participating in  
the 2019 Senior Play: *Golden Child***

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LOD: 2019 Senior Play Reflection

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### Reflection on Participating 2019 Senior Play

When I joined the Drama Club in my first year in college, it was my first time to know about theater. Since then, I've taken a fancy to the lighting, sound and effects, stage in theater and theater itself. Afterwards, I learned that the tradition of the English Department is graduation performances and annual performances. Thus, I determined that if possible, I will participate in every performance. The first time I participating in senior play was in my sophomore year. That time, I was one of the members of publicity group. Although I was only a small member of administrative group, I felt really touched that senior sisters and brothers made every effort to accomplish the performance. Therefore, I expected I can join the technical group and then complete a play that will touch everyone with my classmates in the next semester.

My role in senior play this time is stage manager. The main job of the stage manager is to manage and supervise various technical groups, including the stage and props design group, the costume group, the make-up group, the lighting group, the sound effects group, and the translation group. I am responsible for assisting them in designing and executing designs. In addition, stage manager is also the important bridge between director and technical groups. I am in charge of conveying each other's opinions and ideas. For instance, if director has some suggestions and ideas for stage design group, I am responsible for communicating to the stage design team. If any technical team finds it difficult to implement, it is also my responsibility to let

the director know.

This year, the senior play was led by Mandy, she decided to perform a script named *Golden Child* by David Henry Hwang. The script tells an interesting story of Andrew Hwang's ancestors, a Chinese family dealing with the onslaught of Western culture, particularly Christianity, in 1918. When I first finished reading this script, I think story is special and interesting. This will probably be the first performance wearing Chinese costumes but speaking English lines in our department. Although I was excited about the script at the beginning, during the production period, another senior stage manager Jackson and I gradually discovered that there are many difficult parts to perform. What impressed us most were stage design, lighting and costume groups.

First of all, in terms of stage design and props group, the first difficulty is that in the script, the character Tieng-Bin has three wives, and they all have their own pavilion. However, due to issues of stage space and funding, it was difficult for us to put three wives' pavilion on the stage at the same time, and we didn't have enough money to buy three sets of furniture, either. Afterwards, we came up with a solution that would not make the stage look crowded and would not cost a lot of money. We let three wives use the same bed, dressing table, and chair. However, we changed the position of each item, changed the color of the sheets, and changed the breed of flowers in the vase to represent the three different rooms. And the color of sheets and the breed of the flowers were all according to wives' personality and characteristic. We spent considerable time and energy thinking about the solution to this problem. When we came up with this method, it eased our burden a lot. It didn't seem to be a perfect solution, but it was already the best one for student production.

The second difficult point is that the background of this story was set in 1918 in China. In other words, we had to find the props which match that generation. For

instance, in ancient China, people loved to eating or chatting on round wooden tables. For the ancient Chinese, this symbolizes reunion. However, the round wooden table was not only expensive but also heavy, we couldn't afford it at all. Later, we found a white round table but with four legs in CFL theater. Yet, this was the exact table we want because it was white and it was not made of wood. Therefore, the stage design and props team slightly transformed this table by pasting wooden-color wallpaper on it. Then, it looked like it was made of wood. In addition to the table, there were a lot of props that were extremely hard to find such as Occidental clock, waffle iron, phonograph player, lantern, and so on. We spent some money renting these props in order to show the most beautiful scenes to the audience.

The third difficulty was that it was the first time for all the members in stage design and props team to participate in the performance. Furthermore, most of them were girls. They often had no ideas or they didn't know what to do. Therefore, Jackson and I spent a lot of effort and time leading and guiding them what to do now or how to solve the problems. Fortunately, they had good attitude and they were also willing to listen our orders.

Then comes to the lighting part. I think the most difficult part was scene 4 that three wives kneeling before the ghost money burner and burning offerings for their ancestors. At the beginning, we had no idea how to design the light of burning ghost money, because we thought setting a light in front of the actresses to present the burning was very unrealistic and not beautiful. Therefore, we started figuring out the alternatives. Finally, we found a kind of flickering light. The result of using this light looked like burning something. However, it took us a lot of effort to connect this kind of light to the lighting system in SF theater. Luckily, we got help from the teacher assistants who working in SF theater. Nevertheless, there was still a problem. Since we used a very long wire to connect this kind of light and the light system in SF

system, it made a loud noise when actresses holding the ghost money burner walked from the backstage to the stage. Besides, it was also dangerous if someone trapped by the wire. Due to this situation, we practiced countless times of blocking to reduce the volume of noise and to prevent the wire from becoming tangled. I still remembered I had nightmare that the wires made loud noise or someone got trapped by the wires. Happily, we performed well in all three days of performance.

On the other hand, my favorite light was the three lanterns we rented. We let three lanterns hang at different heights to indicate the status of the three wives at this family. When we actually hang up and light up the lanterns, it looked extremely gorgeous. After the performances, many of my friends or senior sisters and brothers said they liked the lanterns and they thought it was so creative and meaningful.

The last difficult part was costume group. Like I mentioned before, the background of this story was set in 1918 in China. Not only props were hard to find, but also costume. At that generation, Chinese women wear clothing like cheongsam, and Chinese men wear a kind of traditional costume called Tangzhuang. This was not the most difficult part. The most difficult part was that we had to find three cheongsams with different colors and different patterns for three wives. The shoes for three wives were also difficult to find. This really took the members in costume group a lot of effort and hard work. Although the process was tough, we still overcame all problems and difficulties.

I feel honored and grateful to be one of the members of this play. I learned a lot when working with senior stage manager Jackson. I realized that the stage manager must be a person with ideas and leadership, since we must guide inexperienced team members to complete the tasks in their group. I think the most important thing I should learn is how to be a good leader if I want to participate in a performance next time. I still remember during the theater week, Jackson and I first arrived at

the theater but the last one leaving the theater. During that week, I slept less than six hours and I needed coffee to boost my spirit every day. I once wanted to give up in the process because I felt extremely exhausted and I even felt like I couldn't stand it. But this was the only step left. Everyone was working hard in their own positions. I couldn't give up so easily. Thus, I worked hard to get over it. When we successfully completed three performances and received praise from a large number of audiences, I was really touched. I think that's why I still want to stay in the theater and why I still want to be a member in a performance. These achievements and efforts are priceless, and the memories left are unforgettable.



Picture A: Second wife's pavilion



Picture B: Baptism