



# Preserving Our Audiovisual Heritage

© Bianca Lei

We are living in a fast-changing world with rapid technological and economic developments. We are constantly bombarded with information and are always seeking newer versions of everything. Even old films are remade into new ones. Traditional art forms are abandoned to make way for newer forms. Being a young member of this modern society, I witness the fast disappearance of much of our important history and many of our interesting old stories.

I spent a considerable amount of my childhood in my grandparents' house. What I remember most about the visits were the Chinese operas that were always shown on their television. I still remember watching one with them called "The Legend of the Purple Hairpin".

"The Legend of the Purple Hairpin" is a story about love and devotion. Li Yi and Huo Xiaoyu fell in love at first sight and were eventually married after experiencing many hardships together. Xiaoyu had a purple hairpin, which she regarded as a token of their love for each other. However, another girl had fallen in love with Yi and begged her father Lo, a court official, to arrange a

marriage. Yi declined the request as Xiaoyu was the only one he loved. Meanwhile, Xiaoyu was separated from Yi and had to pawn her purple hairpin to support her family. As fate would have it, the hairpin fell into the hands of the Lo family. Lo threatened to kill Yi for declining his daughter's hand in marriage and planned to kill Xiaoyu when she tried to save her lover. Fortunately, a man in a yellow robe arrived in time, revealing himself to be the Fourth Prince under orders to arrest Lo for treason. In the end, Yi and Xiaoyu found each other again and had their happy ending.

Chinese poetry, novels and operas are of great value not only because they are part of our history, but most importantly, because of the messages they convey. From "The Legend of the Purple Hairpin", we see the value that our ancestors placed on love, friendship, and integrity. Presented in a beautiful language and heartfelt performance, the story transports us back to a time that we have lost touch with.

Our audiovisual heritage plays an indispensable role in transmitting our culture to future generations, but it can be easily lost in the pursuit of progress. Little do we realize that tradition and progress do not stand at opposite ends of the spectrum, but rather, are complementary in nature. We should not have to choose between the past and the future because we can have both. Our past shapes us into who we are, and it is our legacy that makes us unique contributors to the world. It is, therefore, the mission of education to ensure that we have access to this precious inheritance so that our stories are conserved and preserved for future generations to enjoy.