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A CURRICULUM STUDY: HUKOU QINGYANG OPERA KNOWLEDGE TRANSMISSION IN JIANGXI PROVINCE, CHINA

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Abstract

Qingyang opera is a cultural feature of Hukou, with the "Xiulan Ban" singing on the banks of Poyang Lake and the Yangtze River. The objective was to study the transmission process of Hukou Qinyang Opera knowledge in Jiangxi Province, China. The research tools include interviews and observation to obtain research data. Qualitative research uses observation, experimentation, and analysis to determine the essential characteristics of things. The informants are classified into three groups: key, Qingyang opera performers, and general. The results showed that the transmission of Qinyang Opera has two systems: one is the informal transmission, with local artists as the main transmission, and the second is the formal transmission, with university and academic institution participants as the main participants in the transmission.

Keywords: Hukou Qingyang Opera, Transmission, Knowledge, Jiangxi Province

1. Introduction

Hukou County is located in the northern part of Jiangxi Province, China. Poyang Lake flows through the entrance of the Yangtze River. It has very convenient water and land transportation. Hukou County is the northern gateway of Jiangxi Province and a place where singing, dancing, and opera are prosperous. The rich natural and cultural landscapes have attracted countless celebrities and guests to sing and dance. Economic development, political stability, convenient water and land transportation, and the resulting multicultural integration provide unique conditions for Qingyang Opera to take root and develop in Hukou (Liu, 2014; Min, 2017; Wang & Jiang, 2021; Li & Liu, 2022).

Hukou is uniquely located. It has a profound historical and cultural heritage and has the reputation of being "the hometown of Chinese folk art" and "the hometown of Jiangxi opera". Hukou Qingyang opera has been successfully selected for the national intangible cultural heritage list. The protection and transmittance of Hukou Qingyang opera are efforts to carry forward the excellent culture of the Chinese nation, and the excavation and research of Qingyang opera are a little contribution to building the common spiritual homeland of the Chinese nation (Liu, 2019; Xu & Wang, 2020). May Hukou Qingyang opera be sung in the land of China for generations. Qingyang opera is known as a rare treasure of Chinese opera art, and when Qingyang opera was circulated in Hukou County, opera, Wenqu opera, Raohe opera, tea picking drama, Huangmei opera, puppet theater, and other opera dramas were also in vogue. The people of Hukou love opera and love Qingyang opera even more, which can be described as a cultural feature of Hukou (Idema, 2014; Shilai, 2018). Sitting and singing around the drum has gradually become a peculiar Yiyuan landscape of Hukou Qingyang opera. In the Qing Dynasty, the "Xiulan Ban" sang on the banks of Poyang Lake and the banks of the Yangtze River, and nearly a hundred peasant amateur theater troupes were active in the vast rural land,

composing a beautiful historical movement for the Qingyang opera loved by the people of Hukou (Chunjiang & Jianjun, 2008).

With the development of society, people's cultural lives have diversified, and their appreciation habits have also changed. In the context of the new era, the development of Qingyang opera is at a critical moment when both crisis and opportunity coexist. The Qingyang opera art market is shrinking, the audience is lost, the performance groups are struggling to survive, the practitioners are seriously aging, the talent training has serious faults, and the public's cognition of Qingyang opera is biased. It is an unavoidable reality. Rescue protection and transmission of Qingyang opera have become top priorities. To transmit Qingyang Opera.

Therefore, the researcher would like to study the transmission process of Hukou Qinyang Opera in order to be able to continue it for future generations.

2. Review literature

Jiangxi is located in the southeast of China, on the south bank of the middle and lower reaches of the Yangtze River. Mountains and hills predominate in it. It is located in the mid-subtropical zone, with a pronounced monsoon climate and distinct four seasons. Hukou County is located in the northern part of Jiangxi Province and is named for its location at the mouth of Poyang Lake. The geographic location of Hukou County is very advantageous. It is located along the Yangtze River, at the mouth of Poyang Lake, with very convenient water and land transportation. Hukou County is extremely rich in opera and folk music (Zhang et al., 2019; Luo et al., 2021; Wu et al., 2021).

The Qingyang Opera in Hukou, Jiujiang City, has kept 108 large and small traditional repertoires alive. Most of them are from the old works of Southern opera, Ming Dynasty legends, and early Yiyang operas; there are almost no Qing works. "Yuanshantangqupin" by Qi Biaoqia from the Ming Dynasty and the collection of operas from the Ming Dynasty made up more than 85% of them (Zhang, 2021).

The history of Qingyang Opera, Qingyang Opera was born in the early Ming Dynasty because Qingyang Opera had been introduced to Jiangxi during the Jiajing period, replacing the local Yiyang Opera, which means that Qingyang Opera was formed before Jiajing in the Ming Dynasty and has been around for nearly five hundred years of history (Changan, 2018). Any art form must follow the vertical path of starting out, getting better, and getting worse as it grows. The development of Qingyang Opera also has stages of formation, prosperity, and decline. Generally speaking, the Ming Dynasty Jiajing period (1522–1566) was the formation period of Qingyang opera; the Ming Dynasty Wanli period (1573–1620) was the prosperous period of Qingyang opera; the middle Qing Dynasty Qianlong period (1736–1795) was the period when Qingyang opera began to decline, and after Xianfeng (1850–) in the Qing Dynasty, it declined further and even lost the mainland (Dong & Zhang, 2014; Tian, 2021).

The artistic value of Qingyang opera, the music of Qingyang opera stays true to the style of Qingyang opera that was popular in Anhui Province during the Ming Dynasty. Qingyang opera has a rich variety of plays and unique singing styles, especially the music of gongs and drums, which has a wide variety and bright colors (Lovrick & Siu, 2011). There are more than 100 sets of gongs and drums, which are divided into accompaniment gongs and drums, side gongs and drums, door gongs and drums, atmosphere gongs and drums, body gongs and drums, and emotional gongs and drums. The performances of Qingyang Opera in Hukou, Jiujiang City, are in a ten-color system: first, second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth, tenth, and later added Rock Dan, Two Shoulders, Three Shoulders, Wawasheng, etc.



The State Council gave the go-ahead for Qingyang Opera to be a part of the initial group of national intangible cultural heritage on May 20, 2006. The country's intangible cultural heritage is an important way to show the spirit and emotions of the Chinese people. It also helps keep the country together and shows how wise people are. But the modern wave and the way people live their lives, as well as the influence of other cultures, have caused many intangible cultural heritages to lose their original soil and social environment. Qingyang Opera is one of them. Qingyang Opera, which once flourished, is in danger of being lost for various reasons. 1) The old artists have passed away one after another, and there is no successor to Qingyang opera skills, and the performance team is not connected. 2) Huangmei Opera essentially controls all opera performances, and the Qingyang Opera Troupe has gradually disintegrated. 3) The rich and colorful modern cultural life is impacting the living space of ancient operas. With the popularization of television, the influence of new culture, and the development of new aesthetic habits, rescue and support funds are short, researchers have nowhere to go, etc. These main reasons have led to the shrinking and landslide trend of the Qingyang cavity in recent years. Maybe it won't be long before it's gone. We must actively face this urgent and realistic problem, so the protection and inheritance of Qingyang Opera are imminent (Jing, 2012).

3. Results

The Qingyang Opera is a bridge between the classical and modern styles of Chinese opera. It has helped the art of opera become more popular by breaking the strict rules of the existing qipai system. It has also improved and elevated the aesthetic value of Chinese opera.

Because of their different natures, different types of traditional opera have different ways of being passed on and different effects when they are passed on. From the point of view of how traditional opera spreads, there are "internal" transmissions and "external" transmissions. From the point of view of how traditional opera spreads, there are "formal" and "informal" places of communication. Both play an important role in how traditional opera spreads: 1) Informal Transmission: Private School, Private Transmission, and 2) Formal Transmission: Art Research Institute, College/University.

3.1 Informal Transmission

Private transmissions are important social and cultural groups engaged in drama performances, generally composed of the informant and his family, local villagers, bands, and other performers. The performers and staff of the private transmission come from factories, rural areas, etc. As a representative organization of regional folk culture and characteristic culture, a private school is closer to the masses, more down-to-earth, and has great affinity for and cultural penetration with the local people.



Figure 1. Key informant Yin WuHuan transmitted Qingyang Opera in Hukou County
Source: Jiaqi Mei

Private schools cannot get more financial and material support from the state. The theater troupes pay for suitcases, stage vehicles, props, lighting, and other equipment. "Profit and loss, self-development" are the main features; the amount of income is directly linked to the number of performances, and the income of actors is mainly from the share of the play money. Informants are mainly active in various folk activities, producing and performing repertoires according to different activities and the needs of the common people. In addition to the classic old plays, there are also some transplanted repertoires and a few new original ones. From the perspective of the overall development of opera, although there are certain problems in the artistic production and economic operation of private transmission, which are far inferior to state-owned theater troupes, private transmission has undertaken the important task of disseminating excellent Chinese opera culture among the grassroots. It has attracted a large number of new and old opera audiences and potential opera enthusiasts.



Figure 2. Qingyang Opera Performance in Hukou County
Source: Jiaqi Mei

If the relevant departments can give more policy support, economic support, and personnel training assistance to private schools, the private transmission of Qingyang opera will exert greater energy to promote the protection and transmission of traditional operas.

3.2 Formal Transmission

The main part of opera transmission that is based on scientific research is the art research institute. Its job is to study the rules of traditional opera transmission and innovation and to help the main group of opera creators make art. The China National Academy of Arts, which is in charge of the National Academy of Arts, has done a lot to preserve traditional operas at the moment. The Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the People's Republic of China runs the China National Academy of Arts, which is a state-run art research center. It is the first group of doctoral and master's degree-granting units that the State Council has told the public about. Most local art research institutes are set up by local governments to spread and improve folk opera and other arts in the area.

Over the years, the Chinese National Academy of Arts and local opera institutes have helped develop traditional opera theory in Qingyang by working with opera performance groups on opera performances, academic seminars, lectures, and the publication of anthologies and data collections. The mode of combining practices has also greatly promoted the spread of opera art.

As an organization that works on all aspects of art development, the public art group has made it easier for Qingyang opera to spread and grow. The main work content of the public art group has four aspects: one is to collect, organize, and research intangible cultural heritage, carry out general surveys, carry out display and publicity activities of intangible cultural

heritage, and guide communicators to carry out learning activities; the other is to compile and recommend suitable singing materials and business learning materials needed for mass amateur art activities; the third is to cultivate and improve the working ability of art cadres in cultural centers (stations) and cultural palaces (clubs) in a planned way, so as to cultivate the backbone of amateur art through them; the fourth is to organize and instruct the masses to carry out literary and artistic creations to promote the development of mass art activities; the fifth is to promote the main aspects.

Local public art groups also do basic and important things to keep traditional operas alive. For example, they research the artistic status of local operas, collect scripts and musical instruments, talk to old artists, listen to singing scores and learn them by heart, and create and design operas. The hard work and dedication of artists in grassroots public art groups made books like "Chinese Opera Music Integration" and "Chinese Opera History" possible in the 1980s. Usually, universities and regional departments of arts and culture run university opera research centers. These groups work together or invite people who know how to do folk opera to join associations. In addition to putting on folk operas, it also does relate research and development work in the arts.



Figure 3. The informant is transmitting Qingyang Opera to Jiujiang University
Source: Jiujiang University

Opera research centers in colleges and universities have their own ways of spreading and studying opera. For example, some opera societies focus on specific types of opera as their research and transmission objects, while others focus on more than one type.

Jiangxi Jiujiang University and the Hukou County Government have signed an agreement to work together on researching and spreading Qingyang opera culture. They have also set up the Qingyang Opera Art Center and worked together on data mining, singing rescue, and developing and spreading opera. Jiujiang College sent special people deep into Hukou County many times to find out what was going on with Qingyang Opera Art. They also set up the Qingyang Opera Art Research Institute, the Qingyang Opera Art Exhibition Hall, and the Qingyang Opera Art Troupe of Jiujiang University to protect and spread Qingyang Opera better. Jiujiang University has the first intangible cultural heritage research base in Jiangxi Province and the "Jiangxi Province Cultural and Art Science Key Research Base" and has established the "Qingyang Opera Art Center" and "Qingyang Opera Art Teaching Practice Base". The Qingyang Opera Art Troupe of Jiujiang University created the intangible cultural heritage exhibition hall at Jiujiang University. In 2020, Jiujiang University was included in the list of institutions participating in the China Intangible Cultural Heritage Group Research and Training Program, and it is one of the five selected universities in Jiangxi Province. The purpose of holding this training class is to follow the spirit of the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China as a guide, study and implement the socialist literary thought of the new era, better protect, and transmit the national intangible cultural heritage of Qingyang

Opera, cultivate a group of outstanding young and middle-aged disseminators, and let this cultural treasure be innovatively transmitted and developed in the new era.

Jiujiang College has built a high-quality learning and exchange platform for its students. The training content is very practical and inspiring, which greatly improves the theoretical and practical levels of the students. At present, the problem of transmitting Hukou Qingyang opera is still worrying: old artists have passed away one after another, most of the young people in the village have gone out to work, and there are only old people and children living in the village, and there are few performers. Modern cultural life, which is always changing, is also always affecting, and encroaching on the living space of the Qingyang Opera. The transmission of traditional opera requires the cooperation of the whole society to solve the problems of the mechanism and effect of social groups in the transmission process as much as possible, continuously research and analyze the aesthetic needs of the public and explore the rationalization model to promote the benign transmission of traditional opera.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

Hukou Qingyang Opera is a traditional opera form that originated in the Hukou region of Jiangxi Province, China. It has a long history and is a vital part of the cultural heritage of the region. The knowledge transmission of this opera form has been an essential aspect of its preservation and continuity. Hukou Qingyang Opera is a regional opera form that has been passed down from generation to generation through apprenticeships and family lineages. The transmission of this knowledge has been a crucial factor in the opera's continued existence. According to Zhang (2021), the Hukou Qingyang Opera knowledge transmission in Jiangxi Province is a complex process that involves a combination of formal and informal education. Formal education includes the training received at opera schools and academies, while informal education involves learning through observation, imitation, and practice.

A study by Lin et al. (2019) investigated the teaching methods used in Hukou Qingyang Opera education. The study found that the traditional teaching method of "oral transmission" was the most prevalent, where teachers orally instruct their students in singing and acting techniques. The study also found that the use of modern teaching methods such as audio and video recording and online education platforms was becoming more common. Another study by Wang et al. (2019) examined the role of family lineage in the transmission of Hukou Qingyang Opera knowledge. The study found that family lineages played a significant role in preserving and transmitting the opera's techniques and traditions. It also found that intergenerational knowledge transmission through family lineages was an effective means of preserving and transmitting the opera's cultural heritage. A study by Cai and Li (2018) investigated the challenges faced by Hukou Qingyang Opera in the modern era. The study found that the opera faced significant challenges in the areas of financial support, audience development, and performer recruitment. The study recommended that efforts be made to increase public awareness of the opera and to provide more financial support to performers and troupes. Another study by Zheng et al. (2018) examined the impact of globalization on Hukou Qingyang Opera. The study found that globalization had both positive and negative effects on the opera. While globalization had increased the opera's international recognition and exposure, it had also led to a dilution of the opera's traditional techniques and style.

Finally, a study by Huang et al. (2017) investigated the use of technology in the transmission of Hukou Qingyang Opera knowledge. The study found that technology, such as mobile applications and online platforms, could be used to enhance the transmission of the opera's techniques and to reach wider audiences.



In conclusion, the Hukou Qingyang Opera knowledge transmission in Jiangxi Province is a vital aspect of the preservation and continuity of this traditional opera form. The process involves a combination of formal and informal education, including family lineages, apprenticeships, and modern teaching methods. The challenges faced by the opera include financial support, audience development, performer recruitment, and the impact of globalization. However, efforts are being made to address these challenges, including the use of technology, and increased public awareness. Overall, the Hukou Qingyang Opera's cultural heritage continues to be passed down and preserved through the efforts of its practitioners and supporters.

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