

The Spread of Qingyang Opera of Gan Opera in Northern Jiangxi

Interview Recording of Veteran Artist Jiang Lianzi from Jiangjia Village, Huaqiao Township, Xingzi County

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ABSTRACT

As a traditional Chinese opera with profound historical and cultural heritage, the Qingyang opera of Gan opera has attracted much attention for its unique artistic charm, rich repertoire, and important cultural value. By recording the oral accounts of the inheritors, researchers can excavate more first-hand detailed historical materials, re-infiltrate them into the research of art history, and continuously enrich their connotations in the dynamic research process of art history. These oral historical materials can provide more vivid and lively specimens for the study of art history, helping to showcase the development and internal laws of Qingyang opera. This article explores the transmission of Qingyang opera in northern Jiangxi through the oral account of the inheritor Jiang Lianzi, making a modest contribution to promoting the inheritance and development of Qingyang opera.

Keywords: *Gaoqiang, Jiang Lianzi, Hukou.*

1. INTRODUCTION

In many dictionaries in China, there is such an entry - Jiujiang Gaoqiang. Regarding the content of its article, there are mainly the following statements:

The entry "Jiujiang Gaoqiang" on page 179 of the "Dictionary of Ancient Chinese Drama" published by Heilongjiang People's Publishing House in January 1993 states that Jiujiang Gaoqiang is one of the branches of Qingyang Gaoqiang and popular in rural areas such as Hukou, Duchang, Pengze, and Xingzi in Jiangxi Province. The entry "Jiujiang Gaoqiang" on page 290 of the "Dictionary of Chinese Opera and Quyi" published by Shanghai Lexicographical Publishing House in September 1981 states that it is one of the branches of Jiujiang Gaoqiang and Qingyang Gaoqiang, popular in rural areas such as Hukou, Duchang, Pengze, and Xingzi.

The entry "Duhu Gaoqiang" on page 417 of the December 1999 edition of "Integrated Chinese Opera Music: Jiangxi Volume" by China ISBN Central Publishing House states that Duhu

Gaoqiang is a popular high pitched opera genre in counties such as Duchang, Hukou, Pengze, Xingzi, and Ruichang in the Jiujiang region. Duhu Gaoqiang embodies the characteristics of Qingyang Opera in terms of vocal style, repertoire, and artistic features. The content of the "Qingyang Opera" entry on page 290 of the August 1983 edition of the "Chinese Encyclopedia of Opera and Quyi Volume" published by the Chinese Encyclopedia Press is: ...After the establishment of the People's Republic of China, some opera genres with a connection to Qingyang opera were discovered in various regions, mainly including Qing opera and Macheng Gaoqiang from Hubei, Qing opera from Baidi Village in Wanrong, Shanxi, Gaoqiang from Duchang and Hukou in Jiangxi, and Gaoqiang from Yuexi, Anhui. (Accompanied by a still photo of Zhang Fei performed by Hukou Gaoqiang artist Wu Houde). The entry "Qingyang Opera" on page 4551 of the September 1979 edition of "Cihai" published by Shanghai Lexicographical Publishing House states that various opera genres such as Duchang, Hukou, and Pengze Gaoqiang in Jiangxi, Qingxi in Hubei, and Qingyang Opera in

Shanxi all originate from Qingyang Opera. The article "Qingyang Opera" on page 105 of the October 1998 edition of "Chinese Opera Chronicles: Jiangxi Volume" published by China ISBN Central Publishing House states that Qingyang Opera is mainly popular in counties such as Hukou, Duchang, Pengze, Xingzi, and Ruichang, and is known locally as Gaoqiang Opera.

Xingzi County is located south of Mount Lu in northern Jiangxi, on the west bank of Poyang Lake and Gan River. It is known as the "heavy county of lakes and mountains, the land of Neo Confucianism", "the right channel of the river, the majestic gateway of the south", and "the throat of the south, the key town of Xijiang". Since the early Song Dynasty, when the town was upgraded to a county and governed by the Nankang Army (Prefecture), due to convenient water transportation, the influx and flow of people from other places have increased, and the economy and culture have become increasingly prosperous. Foreign theater troupes often come to this place to perform, which has led to the rise of local folk opera customs, and theaters have been built everywhere in urban and rural areas. During the Ming and Qing dynasties, Qingyang opera was introduced from Anhui to northern Jiangxi and widely spread locally, known as "Gaoqiang" at that time.

According to a survey by the Xingzi County Cultural Center, Chixiang, Liaohua Township, and Huaqiao Township in Xingzi County sing Qingyang Opera. Among them, the Liu family of Xingwu in Xingchi Township and the archway of Liaohua Township specialize in singing Yue Fei opera in Qingyang dialect, while the newly born Gong family in Huaqiao Township specializes in singing "Mulian Saving Mother". They all sing for three years, rest for three years, and then rotate. Every year, they sing for six consecutive days during the Mid-Autumn Festival in August. The five Yue Fei plays in Jiangjiacang, Huaqiao Township are: 1. "Yue Fei Takes the Top Scholar Exam"; 2. The Battle of Niutou Mountain; 3. The Great Chaos in Zhuxian Town "; 4. Yin-Yang Realm; 5. Yue Lei's Revenge. Liu Chengguo (male, 57 years old at the time) from Xingwu Liu family in Xingchi Township said, "Our village was taught by Fu Laishi, a teacher from Duchang, during the Kangxi period of the Qing Dynasty. Previously, people here could sing seventy-two tunes (referring to 75 pieces of music), but now they can only sing a few more, such as 'The Wind Rises into the Pine', 'The Sheep on the Mountain Slope', and so on. The five Yue Fei plays we sing are: 1. 'Yue Fei Takes

the Top Scholar Exam'; 2. 'The Battle of Niutou Mountain'; 3. 'Yue Fei Hanging Up'; 4. 'Qin Hui's Visit to the Prefecture (2 Volumes)'; 5. 'The Revenge of Yue Lei'."

This interview is a live recording of an interview conducted by Liu Chunjiang on September 28, 1988, with Jiang Lianzi (82 years old at the time), a high pitched veteran artist from Jiangjia Village, Huaqiao Township, Xingzi County, Jiujiang City. It was compiled by Ouyang Shilai from the School of Arts at Jiujiang University. Jiang's family in Huaqiao Township, Xingzi County (now Lushan City), Jiujiang City, moved from Hukou County to their current residence during the Yongle period of the Ming Dynasty. According to the interviewee Jiang Lianzi, before the Jiang family moved to Xingzi County, there were five to six types of high pitched tunes in the area, and he sang one of them. At present, there are about five surviving versions, which have been passed down from our ancestors. The singing style also includes trio singing (solo and group singing).

2. INTERVIEW RECORD

- Villages Where Singing Is Passed down

(Interviewer A: Liu Chunjiang; Interviewee B: Jiang Lianzi)

A: What's your name?

B: My name is Jiang Lianzi;

A: What is your age this year?

B: 82.

A: What's the name of this village?

B: This place is called Jiangjiacang.

A: When did your ancestors move here? What era or dynasty is it?

B: I can't remember the year clearly, it should be the Qing Dynasty.

A: How many generations did they reproduce after moving here?

B: There are approximately 7-8 generations here.

A: Where did you move from?

B: Moved to this place from Jiangkunjiao in the city.

A: Do you remember where you moved to the city from?

B: It's from Waxi Dam in Hukou County.

A: Is Jiangkunjiao in the city the same as Jiangjiabao?

B: No, Jiangjiabao is located at the north gate outside the city, and Jiangkunjiao is in the city;

A: Is Jiangkunjiao in the city? What is the current location of Jiangkunjiao in the city?

B: I don't know now, it should be over at the east gate;

A: Is it the area with the surname Guo in Dongmen?

B: It's not the place surnamed Guo, there used to be places like Jiangjiabao and Jiangjialong.

- Genealogy Records

A: Where is your family tree located?

B: The genealogy of the Jiang family is all together in the ancestral hall of Jiangjiabao.

A: Where is the ancestral hall?

B: The old ancestral hall was located in the city, with Ziyangmen to the west of the city.

A: What is the size of the ancestral hall and what is the size of the family tree?

B: The size is the same as the old house before.

A: How many generations' genealogies are still kept together now?

B: The genealogy has not been revised for 41 years now.

A: Is the old genealogy still there?

B: He has a genealogy of his hometown over there, which is kept there.

A: What is the name of that play (remembered in the family tree)?

B: It is called "Gaoqiang", which has been passed down from ancestors as "Gaoqiang".

A: Is there a professional singing troupe in the village?

B: There is no professional theater troupe, they are all passed down from generation to generation by our own elderly (with) young people.

- Script and Related Role Allocation for the Era of Inheritance and Dissemination

A: How did this play start and how many years did it last?

B: I can't figure out how many years it has been sung, there have been several generations.

A: Did it come from the mouth of the lake?

B: It's not from Hukou, it was there before. The current drama has been passed down from generation to generation from the elderly people over at Hukou.

A: Is there any record in the family tree?

B: There are records in the family genealogy, with detailed information. The genealogy was broken for 41 years, and now it is being revised again.

A: When did this play start singing and how many generations have it been sung?

B: I can't remember.

A: How many books of traditional Chinese opera can you sing?

B: This is like this, anyone with a notebook can sing it.

A: How many plays have you sung?

B: I have sung a lot. When I was only 12 years old, I started singing opera. At first, I sang Dan roles, but as I grew older in my thirties, I started singing Zheng Sheng. Several people sang together, including my father and younger brother.

A: What role does your father play? What's his name?

B: My father sings "Lao Sheng" (old gentlemen), and his name is Jiang Lirong.

A: Does your grandfather sing opera?

B: I don't know about my grandfather, but my little grandfather (grandfather's younger brother) played the drum. Later, my great grandfather also played the drum. After they both passed away, it was my younger brother who played the drum.

A: How many tunes can you sing?

B: I can sing four tunes: Zhuyunfei, Shaohanqiang, Xiangliuniang, and Hongna'ao (performed live).

A: Have you ever sung any other plays?

B: I have also sung the old man's tune, but I can't remember it clearly now and not many people know about it. If there were a notebook and that firecracker set off now, I might be able to sing a few more lines.

A: Have you sung any other plays besides the above five?

B: I haven't sung any other plays, and I even sang the opera "Force Back to the Father" with a danqiang style.

A: You have also sung opera. What role do you play?

B: Singing dan roles (female roles).

A: How many professions are there in Gaoqiang (here)?

B: There are four major roles: Dan roles (Zheng Dan, Kou Dan, and Laopo Dan), Zheng Sheng roles(male roles), Xiao Sheng roles, and Chou roles(buffoon) (many of which I don't remember).

A: How many other places do you sing this high pitched tune besides you?

B : Singing together in Liaohua, Hualin Township, Wu Family, and Chenjiawan, there are also Yidu Li Family, Fanzhuan Wu Family, and Xinchili Family.

A: Have you sung it after liberation?

B: I haven't sung since the liberation, and other places stopped earlier than here. I have stopped here for more than 40 years;

A: What era is your family tree from now?

B: It is a genealogy from the 1990s;

A: Where do the current genealogies think you came from?

B: No one remembers, the previous family tree is broken.

- Summary and Inference

A: I went to Jiang's house today to interview Jiang Lianzi, who is 83 years old. According to his recollection, the Jiang family moved from Hukou Waxiba to the county town of Jiangjiajiao during the Yongle period of the Ming Dynasty, and then moved to this place in the Qing Dynasty; According to the recollection of the elderly in Jiangjialong, they migrated from Hubei. Now we want to confirm whether it was relocated from Hukou or Hubei.

B: Jiangjialong was relocated from Hubei; Jiang Jiancang definitely didn't move from Hubei. According to the genealogy of his hometown, he moved from Waxiba; Our Jiangjiancang was also said to have been relocated from the Waxi Dam at Hukou by the elderly.

A: Where is the Waxi Dam now? We researchers, I have traveled to several provinces, including experts from Anhui and Jiangxi, all believe that this Waxi Dam came from Hukou, and even the 38th generation of Yuexi people claim to have migrated there. But now no one can say where Waxiba is exactly, and how do you write this family tree in the future? Is there any written record now? The current Waxi Dam is actually an old ferry crossing in Lianhu Township, Poyang County - Waxie Dam. We will further verify whether the Waxi Dam mentioned by the old artist in this interview is a Waxie Dam.

3. CONCLUSION

The spread of Qingyang Opera in northern Jiangxi is a process full of historical charm and cultural integration. Given that inheritors are generally older, special attention should be paid to their health status and necessary medical care should be provided. At the same time, it is necessary to explore the establishment of a pension mechanism for intangible cultural heritage inheritors to address their concerns and ensure the sustainable inheritance of intangible cultural heritage skills. Strengthening the protection of intangible cultural heritage inheritors is a systematic project that requires joint efforts from the government, society, inheritors, and all sectors. Through various measures, it creates a favorable environment for the prosperity and development of intangible cultural heritage, making it a bridge connecting the past and the future, and contributing to the construction of a community with a shared future for mankind.

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