

# Inheritance and Development of Yuncheng Qin Opera

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**Abstract:** Yuncheng Qin Opera in Heze was born out of Qinshu, and combined with a variety of local operas to form a local drama with unique characteristics of Yuncheng. The local people in Yuncheng have always loved ballads and operas. The people in streets and alleys can hum a few words when they open their mouths. Therefore, more than ten kinds of operas have been handed down in Yuncheng. This paper focuses on Yuncheng Qin Opera. Qin Opera has been circulating in Yuncheng for more than 600 years. However, under the impact of various kinds of popular music and electronic music, traditional folk music is becoming less known and gradually forgotten, which is extremely unfavorable to the inheritance and development of traditional Chinese culture, such as Qin Opera. This paper makes a general introduction and summary of Yuncheng Qin Opera, and puts forward some suggestions on its propaganda, development, inheritance and protection.

**Keywords:** Yucheng piano drama; Origin; Development and inheritance; Characteristics; Repertoire

## 1. Introduction

Qin Opera exists in many regions of China, each region has its own historical background and performance characteristics. The operas in Shandong area are well preserved and inherited, such as Lv Opera, Shandong Bangzi, Qinshu, Liangjia Xian and Zhuizi opera. However, some local operas, which spread in small areas such as counties and towns, are not protected and inherited systematically, and are facing the risk of losing their inheritance. Only a few operas are still struggling to survive among the people. This paper focuses on the development and inheritance of Yuncheng Qin Opera in Heze City, Shandong Province, and strives to attract more scholars to pay attention to the inheritance and development of folk songs.

## 2. Origin of Yuncheng Qin Opera

### 2.1. Introduction to Yuncheng

Yuncheng County, located in the southwest of Shandong Province, belongs to Heze City, Shandong Province. According to Chun Qiu Zuo Zhuan, "Winter City in the Fourth Year of Chenggong." After the Five Dynasties, the Tang Dynasty was named Yuncheng County, and the Sui and Tang Dynasties established Yuncheng as the prefectural government twice. Yuncheng County has a strong historical and cultural heritage, including the tombs of Suzhuang Han Dynasty and the Tang Pagoda of the Five Dynasties. The well-known Songjiang Wushu School is located in the southwest corner of Yuncheng. The story in Water Margin, one of China's four famous works, is also deduced on this land. Song Jiang in the Water Margin has served as county decree of Yuncheng.

The film "Water Margin" has also made the main scenery of "Water Margin Hero City" in Yuncheng Scenic Area. There are more relics and sites related to "Water Margin" still exist today [1].

In the stories of the Water Margin, Yuncheng has the saying of "One hundred and eighty generals in Liangshan, seventy-two in Yuncheng". In the field of zither art, Yuncheng enjoys the reputation of "the mountain of books, the sea of operas and the land of Zhengqin". Yuncheng is also the land of Wushu, and the "GouWa makes spring" performed by Songjiang Wushu School in CCTV Spring Festival Gala is a powerful propaganda for Yuncheng's Wushu. In the art of opera, Yuncheng is also the birthplace of Liuzi Opera, one of the four ancient operas in China. It is also the birthplace of Shandong Bangzi, Liangjiaxian and Shandong Zaoju, which enjoy high reputation throughout the country[2].

On the one hand, water and soil nurture one side of the people, and the various historical stories, operas, literature and art of Yuncheng bring up the characteristics of the people of Yuncheng, which are warm and hospitable, literary and military, bold and simple, and make the culture of Yuncheng have distinct local characteristics.

### 2.2. Origin of Yuncheng Qin Opera

Yuncheng Qin Opera was originally called Qinqu, which means "Qin Zheng Qingqu", and has a history of more than 600 years. According to the records of Yuncheng County, "Qinqu originated from the scholarly family...". Legend has it that Li Zishen, born in the early Ming Dynasty in Yuncheng, was a scholarly family. He was good at catching zither and playing Qin, and created many music compositions. After several generations of evolu-

tion and development, "Qin Zheng Qingqu" gradually broke through the circle of literati and refined scholars, and spread to the peasant class. From the elegant "Carrying friends" at first to the self-entertaining "Crop play" or "Play game" at leisure or festival gatherings[3]. By the end of the Qing Dynasty, this kind of amateur playground was usually called the Qin Opera Concert Club, which was common in the rural areas around Yuncheng. The singing characteristics of this period basically maintained the characteristics of advocating literary grace and paying attention to music in the past. Although its performance aims at entertainment, it pays attention to the beauty of singing, the number of music cards, and the level of musical instrument playing skills. It has a strong interest of literati and elegant scholars in playing and singing, and lacks folk flavor. It is from the past singing section to singing section, to short, medium and long bibliography.

### **3. The Development of Yuncheng Qin Opera**

#### **3.1. The development of Yuncheng Qin Opera**

Yuncheng Qin opera absorbs the essence of many families, and constantly improves itself. Its singing is gentle and melodramatic, its lyrics are easy to understand, and its melody is rich and beautiful. It has both the high pitched beauty of Shandong Bangzi and Zao bang, and the soft and delicate features of Siping tone and Liangjia Xian.

In the sixty years of Qing Emperor Qianlong (1795), Liu Daoyou, the fourth generation of Qin Opera, descended from the disciples Chen Tingzhan, who inherited the traditional Quyi art, absorbed the artistic essence of Shandong opera, Shandong Zao bang and Liangjia Xian, and tried to divide the Qin Opera into roles and make-up performances, which was commonly known as "Makeup dulcimer", also known as "Topped dulcimer". During the reign of Daoguang Period of Qing Dynasty (1848), Chen Laiyuan and Li Lingyuan co-founded the Qin Opera Society with Shandong Bangzi actor Li Xianliang (born in Yuncheng) at Lama Temple in Pengjie, Beijing,. In the early 1920s, Chen Huaijiao and Han Tinggui, the seventh generation heirs, founded the Qin Opera Troupe in Yuncheng, which was renamed "Luxi Qin Opera", and developed from Amateur play bureau to professional theater troupe "Performing on stage". In the years of development, folk artists have also created and adapted many popular new plays. They have also made improvements in the way of performance, singing skills and other aspects, enriching the content of singing. In the late 1970s, Han Tinggui and his disciple Han Guangxue founded the "Han Yiqin Opera Club" in Hanyu Town, Liangshan County, Shandong Province, which has been active in surrounding villages and enriched the cultural life of the masses. As the Amateur Play Bureau has de-

veloped into a professional theatre troupe of "performing on stage", this change in the nature of singing has brought about significant changes in the content, form and Musical Singing of Yuncheng Qin Opera. Artists created and transplanted a large number of popular new programs, enriching the content of singing. By the early 1990s, Chen Naiduan, the eighth generation master, had spent most of his life in compiling more than 20 long plays, more than 100 medium-length plays, more than 600 book caps, poems, quotations and more than 1500 Qupai based on the plays performed by masters of previous dynasties. In the spring of 1993, in order to further develop the art of Qin Opera, Zhao Zhihua, the ninth generation heir, assisted his master Chen Naiduan in establishing the Qin Opera Troupe of Caozhou, which recruited 25 new students. With the support of the county Party committee, the county government, the cultural department and the broad masses of Qin Opera enthusiasts, after several years of efforts, " Qin Opera Troupe of Caozhou " has emerged in the southwest of Shandong Province and become a unique local artistic troupe [4].

#### **3.2. The inheritance of Yuncheng Qin Opera**

There is an epic historical song of Qin Opera which is widely spread in Yuncheng and is well known to women and children. The song says, "In Yongzheng's 13th year ago, Wang Shangtian, the elder master, is proficiency in piano painting and calligraphy and well-known in Dongping Lake; Chen Xingshun, the second generation master, was good at playing Qin and passing on art in Shuibao for the 18th year during Qianlong period, and went home to teach Chen Dajun; Chen Dajun, the third generation master, was good at calligraphy and Qin theory, passed on his disciples to Hankou first, and then to Liu Daoyou, his nephew. Liu Daoyou is the fourth generations of master, in Qianlong's 60th year, he went to Shanxi, walked three passes to Bianliang, and sing in Huaihe and Fengyang; the fifth generation master, Chen Tingzhan, sing Fengyang with fast, medium and slow speed, in Daoguang's 28th year, Qin art was passed to Chen Laiyuan; the sixth generation master, Chen Laiyuan, in Guangxu's 18th year, taught the whole set of singing and playing, and passed the skills to the seventh generation master Chen Huaijiao; Chen Huaijiao grasped all the skills, and was known as Tiezui Hard Silkworm, Northeast China, Inner Mongolia, Shanxi, Sichuan and Hebei, Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Henan and Anhui all had his footprints; Chen Naiduan, master of the Eighth Dynasty, can sing and write, arrange more than 100 scripts, and quote more than 600 Book cap poems..." This catchy poem clearly shows the development process of Qin Opera over the past several hundred years.

### **4. The Basic Contents of Yuncheng Qin Opera**

#### 4.1. The characteristics of Yuncheng Qin Opera

Yuncheng Qinqin Opera is a combination of the local dialect and the local popular Liangjia Xian, Qinsu, Zhuizi, Bangzi and other folk arts developed by the people of Yuncheng. In the course of historical development, through the inheritance and improvement of several generations of folk artists, it has developed and spread to the present Yuncheng Qin Opera, which is a traditional folk art born and bred in Yuncheng.

There should be Sheng, Dan, Jing, Mo and Chou in Qin opera. Musical instruments include Zhuiqin, Jinghu, Banhu, Qin, Zheng, Sheng, flute, drum, gong, hairpin, etc. Sometimes actors can share two or more roles. Traditional singing emphasizes stability and dignity. It relies on the changeable singing voice and organic accompaniment to complete the plot expression and characterization [5].

Chen Naiduan, the inheritor of Qin Opera, summarized the singing skills according to the teaching of his predecessors and his own singing practice. In the rhythm of the head of tune, eight characters are used to make the use of tune, such as stealing, blackness, digging, turning, flashing, fixing, jumping and moving. The chord singing method of flat tone, over tone and counter-tone is expressed by the way of soft emotional expression with the speed of fast, slow, slow, sick, empty, solid, cold and hot opera.

The tunes of Yuncheng Qin Opera can be divided into basic tunes, basic music (also known as Zheng songs), major tunes, middle tunes, minor tunes and other tunes, each of which has 72 Qu cards. In fact, there are more than 1500 Qu cards. The type of tunes is complex and changeable, and the frame is rugged and strong. Traditional training footwork and procedures have such skills as pushing circles, clouding hands, crossing legs, moving legs, whirlwind feet, lifting, and straw hat playing. They are unique in expressing the bold and open personality of Yuncheng people, with distinct local characteristics and strong local flavor.

#### 4.2. Introduction to the repertoire of Yuncheng Qin Opera

The most popular music cards of Yuncheng Qin Opera are Mandihong, Manjiang Hong, Mantanghong, Wawa Tune, Pastoral Music, Butterflies in Love with Flowers, Fengyang Song, Pomegranate Flower, Kite Song, etc.

Long bibliographies include "Liangshan General", "Three Kingdoms Connecting Sections", "Biographies of Kingdoms", "Romance of Fengshen", "Songgong Case", "Records of Golden Whip"; medium bibliographies include "Biography of White Snake", "Baiyulou", "Green Peony", "Mulannu", "Double Lock Cabinet"; short bibliographies include "Longfeng Face", "Battle Luoyang", "Silt River", "Fraud Marriage"; large sections include "Loyal and Filial", "Visiting Friends with Qin" and "Widow Ma's Store", etc. There are other quotations,

classical, literary language, etc. The lyrics of Qin Opera are elegant and literary.

#### 4.3. Performance practice of Yuncheng Qin Opera

During the Spring Festival of 1994, the Qin Opera Troupe of Caozhou made its first performance in Yuncheng Theater, which won unanimous praise from the audience. Subsequently, news units such as Yuncheng TV Station, Heze TV Station, Heze Daily, Shandong TV Station, Mass Daily, CCTV's "Shenzhou Style" production team and "Culture Daily" successively conducted interviews and reports on it. Chen Naiduan, head of the troupe, and his predecessor Zhao Zhihua were awarded the Prize of Inheritance and Arrangement of Literary and Art Heritage in Heze District in 1980, the Honorary Prize for National Key Research Projects in Art Science awarded by the Ministry of Culture, the Committee for Ethnic Affairs and the Leading Group of China Art Science Planning in 1988, and the Prize for Art Science awarded by the Shandong Cultural Department, Shandong Literary Federation and the Shandong Ethnic Affairs Commission in 1989. In 1991, they were awarded the "Celebrity Entry Award" by the Ministry of Public Security, and the Prize for Exhibiting Works by the Editorial Committee of the Chinese Academy of Drama [6]. In addition to the award-winning performances, the Qin Opera Clubs in Yuncheng District are currently mostly active in various townships. On holidays, rural temple fairs, rallies and so on, members of the Qin Opera society will go to the stage to perform.

#### 5. Inheritance of Yuncheng Qin Opera

Yuncheng Qinqin Opera is very popular with the masses. There have been several glorious and prosperous periods in its history. But in 1993, it was reported in newspapers that it was on the verge of being lost (as shown in Figure 1). In recent years, due to the impact of modern pluralistic music, opera culture and the transfer of aesthetic taste of the audience, the author went to investigate the development status of the Qin opera in Yuncheng area, and found that the financial constraints, loss of personnel, and subsequent lack of people are in serious danger.

The formation and development of Yuncheng Qin Opera provide us with vivid and real historical materials and sound sources for the study of Yuncheng traditional opera and folk opera. After hundreds of years of history, Yuncheng Qin Opera is not easy to spread. In today's pluralistic world and a society with strong accommodation, we can not abandon the traditional opera. Therefore, in view of the current situation that the Qin Opera is on the verge of being lost, this paper puts forward the following suggestions, in order to protect and inherit of Yuncheng Qin Opera, and to contribute their modest efforts diligently.



Figure 1. Report on Yuncheng Qin Opera

In terms of publicity:

Apply for the attention of the local cultural departments, to provide more opportunities for the performance of Qin Opera, and publicize Qin Opera to the public.

On the basis of inheritance, we should make certain innovations to make people more receptive to tradition. For example, we can compile new element scripts on the basis of Qin opera, and combine them with pop music or other operas to make "crossfire" to expand the influence of communication.

Use the Internet for propaganda. For example, we can use the "Weibo" and "Douyin" which young people like to shoot opera performance fragments and the daily practice fragments of theatre performers, and write small stories about the opera to provide the public interest in the opera.

Participate in and sign up for exhibitions of intangible cultural heritage in various places, and promote Yuncheng Qin Opera to let more people know.

Make use of the local favorable resources, such as during the festival and holidays, when the "Water Margin's Hero City" held performance activities, to participate in the performance and increase publicity efforts.

In terms of inheritance:

Search for the successors, and try to target the young people who like opera and traditional culture. During the holidays, the exchange activities of Qin Opera can be carried out in local squares and parks to attract people who love opera.

Let Qin Opera enter the local school-based curriculum and popularize Yuncheng Qin Opera in primary and secondary schools.

Organize the competition of Qin Opera, improve the performance level of Qin Opera's performers, and increase the popularity of Qin Opera.

Carry out the activities of learning to sing Qin Opera during the holidays and report on learning to sing. With the support of the local government, prizes are awarded to the winners by means of donations from enterprises and non-governmental organizations.

## 6. Conclusions

As a project of intangible cultural heritage, Yuncheng Qin Opera has its own inheritance value and significance. The formation and evolution process of Yuncheng Qin Opera provides us with living and historical data for the study of the development process of Shandong folk art, which has high historical and cultural value. Many traditional plays still retain a deep impression of the times, play an important role in the study of Shandong folk culture, and have high artistic value. Yuncheng Qin Opera also has important practical value. The music and performance of Yuncheng Qin Opera have a strong flavor of life, close to the masses and reality. In response to the Party's call and propaganda of the Party's principles and policies in different periods, it has played an important role in the construction of spiritual civilization and the aesthetic and moral education of the masses. Finally, we advocate that we preserve the only blood of Qin Opera,

and carry on its long-standing inheritance and development.

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