

Han Opera's Influence on the Han Embroidery Between the Late Qing Dynasty and Early Minguo Period

Hanjun Zhang^{1,*}

¹ School of Design, Jiangnan University, Wuhan, Hubei 430056, China

*Corresponding author. Email:535701996@qq.com

ABSTRACT

This article explores the role of Han opera in promoting Han embroidery costumes after entering the Hankou market between the late Qing Dynasty and early Minguo Period, and in those aspects, which influenced the art of Han embroidery. Here, the article studies the above issues through physical investigations, field investigations, and data indexing. It was discovered that with the commercialization of Han opera after entering Hankou, Han embroidered had a remarkable change in technique, color use, and decorative patterns to conform with the performance of Han opera, forming their distinctive features. This correlation and mutual influence between different intangible cultural heritage provide a better research perspective for the paradigm of visual cultural communication.

Keywords: *Late Qing Dynasty and Early Minguo Period; Hankou; Han opera; Han embroidery; the embroidery technique*

1. THE DEVELOPMENT OF HANKOU BROUGHT THE PROSPERITY OF HAN OPERA

1.1. The Impact of the Opening of Hankou

In terms of space, Hankou town was small, but the transportation was convenient. It can go up the Yangtze River to western Hubei and Sichuan, and down the Yangtze River to Anhui and beyond. Because of this special environment that Hankou could combine its excellent geographical location with the unstoppable commercial power of the late feudal society, attracted a large number of merchants from all over the country, and became a material distribution center and commodity production base at that time.

Hankou was officially opened as a port in 1861, Britain and Hankou began to trade, and Hankou's commercial influence began to spread internationally. After the signing of the Treaty of Shimonoseki in 1895, Germany, the United States, France, Denmark, the Netherlands, Spain, and other countries also came to Han for business. After Zhidong Zhang's supervision of Hubei, the opening of a large number of factories and the navigation of ships and long-distance trains further promoted the commercial and trade development of Hankou.

Hankou became an immigrant city that followed the commerce development. As a new class, urban residents had more chances to express their hobbies. They created Hankou's civic culture atmosphere. Watching opera was an

important entertainment activity for the citizens of Hankou, prompted Han opera to enter the city from the countryside, brought the prosperity of the entire Han opera industry.

1.2. Han Opera's Development and Prosperity

The businessperson from different territories rushed to Hankou to engage in various commercial activities; Different guild was founded according to the style of different trades, region, and vocation for a convenient deal. These clubs had trade and social operas, and Han operas performed all of the theatrical performances. The scale of the performance was large enough for three or five performances could be performed simultaneously, and each performance could last for five or six days or more than ten days.[1] The guild or industry associations paid for the cost of the drama at that time, the public did not pay for a show, so the performance gathered a large number of people to watch the play. Here, the center of the Han opera performance quickly shifted from Shashi to Hankou. In the Guangxu Emperor twenty-three years (1897), the Han opera's famous actor Hongyuan Yu left Shashi to join Xinguo Yuan's new Fuxing class in Hankou. Soon, Shuangxi Hu, Tianzhong Wang, The Great Monk, Hongkui Yu, and other actors also came to Hankou. These Han operas' famous actors performed in Hankou, partly because Hankou provided a broad market for Han operas, they had plenty of opportunities to perform, and partly because their income in Hankou multiplied.

In 1899, Hankou Dangu tea house opened, on behalf of Han opera performance into tea House era. In this period, the audience entered the theater, choose different seats to take a seat, tea House following the audience seats charged different fees. Around 1900, Han opera entered the theater

era, the audience bought tickets to see the shows, a large number of ordinary audiences could see the performance of the famous actors of Han opera on account of cheaper ticket prices. The audience's enthusiasm continued to rise for watching the shows and produced a large number of popular theater fans. Following the prosperity of Han opera and the Han embroidery costumes, Han embroidery as A regional embroidery style began to know around the world.

2. THE TRANSFORMATION OF HAN OPERA AND THE PROSPERITY OF HAN EMBROIDERY COSTUME

The Han opera was originally performed in rural areas and was a festival or social performance essentially. After entering Hankou, there were a large number of shows in the guild and industry association. With Hankou Tea house and the new-style theater gradually became a regular entertainment center and performance center, the public entertainment industry entered the period of commercial operation.[2] To face the new performance stage and many ordinary urban audiences, the Han opera had drastically changed from the inside to the outside.

2.1. Han Opera's Innovation

Han opera became a purely commercial act, which had been accompanied by the commercialization of Hankou, the great changes were reflected in three aspects:

First, the role system converts to a famous star system. Before the Late Qing Dynasty and Early Minguo period, the structure of the Han opera troupe mainly was based on the role and formed a "Ten role" on this basis. In this form, The actors could play the main character could also play the supporting roles in the performance, whether he had a reputation or not. In the theater period, The famous star appeared on the stage with the market operation. The renowned actor in Han opera became the core of the organization and operation of the opera troupe, and their popularity and performance directly determined the theater's audience rate. [3]

Although the star appeared in the middle and late Qing Dynasty, they did not become mainstream and appeared for a short time. By 1920, all the top actors of Han opera entered the Hankou performance market. At this time, all the theaters in Hankou had famous actors on stage. It can be said to be extremely flourishing.

Second, the actors separated from the theater. The early Han opera had been based on the opera troupe as the main body of the performance, the troupe owner invested and built a troupe. He invited actors, determined the location of the performance, charged fees, and other related matters. The money pay for the actors was lower at the time, only to make ends meet. After entering the theater period, the actors responded to the performance and signed a performance agreement with the theater. The Theatre owner managed the general matters of the performance, the

actors only focused on the performance. The actors and theater use the method of fixed fees or took part income from full performance fees. The payment method maximized and stabilized the artist's income.

Third, the ticketing system began to appear. With the maturity of the theater management system, Hankou theatre began implementing the ticketing system, the audience with the tickets purchased before the performance orderly took his seat according to his ticket. The vigorous implementation of the ticketing system had resulted in a marked increase in the number of spectators at the major theaters in Hankou. This way also shows that the cost of open and transparent performance attracted more ordinary people to the opera, which in turn promoted the star effect of famous actors.

Looking at the entire history of the development of Han opera, it was not difficult to find that the late Qing Dynasty and the early Minguo were the most creative period in the history of Han opera. During this period, Han opera artists were pragmatic and progressive, dared to accept new things. Under the specific background of urbanization to adapt to the environment of the new period, Han opera had continuously adjusted and initiative reformed its performance form, so that it can quickly integrate into the fiercely competitive market, which directly promoted the overall and sustained prosperity of Han opera And related industries.

2.2. The Prosperity of Han Embroidery Costume

The Qing Dynasty was an important period for developing Chinese opera. From this period, opera was no longer the exclusive entertainment of the upper class, but began entering the folk, and local operas in various regions rose from this period. With the rise and prosperity of local opera, the costume industry began to flourish with the prosperity of the opera. It was referring to that after Han opera entered the Hankou market, along with the commercialization of Han opera, the development of Han opera costumes had also entered a mature period, which had led to the development of Han embroidery.

In the traditional drama industry, the costumes were an extremely important prop when the actor played a role. Different costumes show the characteristics of different roles, which could help actors performing and transforming roles. Although the costumes came from the daily lifestyle of the past, for the needs of stage performances, the style of clothing colors and pattern patterns were exaggerated and beautified. The decorative pattern sewing in the costume was expressed through embroidery, in this case, patterns and embroidery were closely combined, forming a distinct feature of Han opera's costume.

Han embroidery and Han opera were accompanied by each other and in pursuit of common development. They promoted the costumes to become the most important category of Han embroidery art and created a "Hubei costume based on Han embroidery" unique phenomenon.

According to the Wuhan Crafts Elite Collection, Wuhan Arts and Crafts Industry Journal, and related historical records, from the beginning to the end of the Qing dynasty, various decorative patterns embellished on the official clothes, costumes, religious article, and daily necessities by the Han embroidery artists who mostly distributed in Wuchang. Among those embroideries, the costume was more prominent especially. After the opening of Hankou, the embroidery center was transferred from Wuchang to Hankou, and Han embroidery entered its heyday after the Han opera entered Hankou. Especially in the theater period, the development of Han opera costumes further promotes the development of Han embroidery, made the commodity embroidery represented by Han embroidery was extremely prosperous.[4]

On the one hand, many Han embroidery artists sell their embroidery around the Jiangxi guild Hall. embroidery shops used the owner's name as his signboard. With the combination of production and marketing, the shop had a type, which was the sell on the front and producing behind. This business model enabled Han embroidery workers to come together, learned, and competed with each other, prompted them to innovate base on absorbing embroidery methods from other regions, exploring and creating features that corresponded Hubei region's embroidery. Alternatively, after the innovation of Han opera, a large number of famous actors appeared and superstars were beginning to shine on the stage. Wealthy actors could buy their clothes, which wear on stage, and pay more attention to the purchase that is adorned with exquisite embroidery of costumes. Simultaneously, the theater also buys costumes for its use or rent. The demand for costumes was increasing rapidly. Follow in a franchise of embroidery shops appeared, Han embroidery formed an important industry with a large number of employees. At that time, there was Xuanqing Ren's Embroidery Workshop, Fushun Yang's Embroidery Workshop, Xiangmao Li's Embroidery Workshop, and so on. Among them, Fushun Yang and Xiangmao Li made a living specializing in making costumes, while Yuanli Hu mainly made boots and shoes, and supplemented them by making costumes. Painters Qianjin Zhang, Xinjie Yang, and others specially designed dragon and phoenix patterns for costumes. This embroidery shop's costumes were beautifully produced and well-known, loved by many famous Han opera actors, and sell well inside and outside the district. Wuhan became the main production base of Han opera costumes in China due to Han embroidery costumes. The position of the Han costumes made the influence of Han embroidery increasing regularly every single day, and the embroidery produced in short supply. All over the country to buy or customize embroidery goods were gathered in Hankou. So far, the Wuhan area has become one of the four major production bases for the production of drama clothing, but also the commodity circulation center on the Yangtze River basin drama clothing.[5]

3. THE INFLUENCE OF HAN OPERA ON HAN EMBROIDERY

The relationship between Han opera and Han embroidery was extremely close. For a long time, Han embroidery costumes were an important product of Han embroidery. In a sense, Han embroidery makes Han opera costumes become exquisite embroidery costumes, and Han opera greatly enriches the cultural connotation of Han embroidery art.

3.1. Han Opera had Promoted a Large Number of Han Embroidery Artists to Engage in Costume's Production

Han opera originated in Jingsha and prospered in Hankou. Whether it was Jingsha or Hankou, Han opera has promoted the development of local embroidery skills.

In particular, the popularity of Han opera performances in Hankou not only made great profits for famous Han opera actors but also drove a large group of Han embroidery artists to engage in the production of costumes. According to relevant records, in the early Minguo of China, the Tianfu Taiqing troupe in Macheng town had as many as forty-eight suitcases for their costumes, The huge demand for costumes made Han embroidery artists reaped the benefit of costume production.

As mentioned above, due to Han opera's popularity, the value of famous actors in Han opera had been increased constantly, such as Yuanhong Yu's acting "great and wonderful. The characters what he could play in Han operas but others could not play. It was a pity that He earned extra more than others because of his important status.[6] The actors had more salary, and they had an extra fee to buy costumes. They also strived for perfection in the requirements of costumes. The demand for embroidery costumes had further improved the Han embroidery skills, especially the superior ones, which were exquisite in materials and artisanship. The embroidery was unique and has won praise from drama artists in Hubei and surrounding areas. When Han embroidery was booming, Central South, Southwest, Northwest in china, and Hunan Province, which was famous for Hunan embroidery, all came to Hankou to order the costumes.[7]

3.2. Han Opera Promoted the Division of Labor in the Han embroidery

The production scale of Han embroidery in Hankou had been further developing and maintaining a preferable momentum. This phenomenon was inseparable from the commercialization of Hankou. The demand for commercialization made Han embroidery's commodity production from small craftsmanship and small workshops went into the Han embroidery shop which manages perfectly. These shops have a scientific operation mode, employed professional embroidery workers, and carried

out customization, and take production with a clear occupational division of labor. Different embroidery processes responded with dedicated personnel, such as the drawing designer was responsible for the pattern, the color manager was responsible for the color matching of production, and the technology worker applied the specific embroidery craft, and so on. Embroidery workshops were also divided into different professional categories according to the types of products, and different workshops have different main embroidery products. All of these have adapted to the market environment of Hankou as a commercial metropolis and formed a standardized business model of Han embroidery merchandise, which improved the commercialization of Han embroidery.

Due to the prosperous theater industry in Hankou, it had also attracted costume makers from other places to go to Wuhan to seek business opportunities. During this period, to meet the dressing needs of different characters in Han opera, the variety of Han embroidery costumes created by embroidery artists were continued to increase, reaching 82 types, and improved varieties were more than a thousand.

3.3. Han Opera Improved the Skills of Han Embroidery

Embroidery was a crucial procedure in the production process of Han embroidery costumes which requirements of skill were surprisingly strict. An embroidery costume required a huge time for skilled and experienced masters to embroider. Therefore, the production cycle of a costume was due to the time of embroidery. It takes a long time and a production cycle of several months. For example, Han opera's python clothing, also known as formal clothing wear in the court, was used widely and frequently. "Official clothes, which were worn at court or other grand ceremonies...The embroidery sews on the front and back of clothing which was also called "bufu" on the clothes, According to fabric's colors such as red, purple, blue, moon white, and crimson distinguishes their ranks. The embroidery was full throughout the higher officials' clothing, and most of the embroidery patterns were python, Which was a similar pattern with the dragon. There were rounded python and walked python for distinguishable. The hem was embroidered with water and mountain patterns, Those patterns were called Haishuijiangya, which established class accordance with different colors. [8] It can be seen from the above that the proportion of embroidery in costumes was extremely large, especially the python robe, which was embroidered on the whole clothing.

The costume was an important basis for the audience to distinguish the role status when watching the opera, so the patterns convey critical information. These requirements make the embroidery on the costumes have a clear outline and suitable for viewing.

On the needle method, the technique of aligning stitches, and stepped layering to distinguish the color was commonly used on the Han embroidery costumes. This

technique required the color of embroidery pattern stretching layer by layer, and the colors unfolded layer by layer to form a rich color sample. A thin thread between the embroidered patterns revealed the color of the bottom of the embroidery. The thin thread was smooth and uniform, and it outlined the shape of the flower accurately the way to ensure clarity of the outline and pattern. Another technique of embroidery was "Panjin color embroidery" in Han embroidery. "Panjin color embroidery" was also an embroidery method used mainly on Han embroidery costumes. In this embroidery method, golden embroidery thread was used to draw out the outline of the patterns and then filled the colored thread within the scope of the gold thread, so that the embroidery pattern was smooth and bright, with clear borders and strong contrast. Such an embroidery method was extremely demanding, requires the use of hands, eyes, and heart, and lever the skills of the embroiderers. Ordinary people can't master.



Figure 1. "Panjin color embroidery" of han embroidery costume

On the colors of the embroidery, Han embroidered costumes were particular in the color matching of embroidery threads so that the colors of Han embroidered costumes were bright and vivid. Embroidery workshop painters choose suitable color combinations according to the appearance needs of the characters, and the costumes used "multicolor" (combination of thread colors with strong contrast) or "Alternate colors" (combinations of various colors other than traditional colors), Or "plain color" (referring to a combination of cool colors), or "three full colors" (referring to a combination of deep, medium and light levels of color) to express. Sometimes gold and silver threads were added to the colored threads to

reconcile the intensity of the color contrast of the costumes and increase their visibility on the stage. The background color of the fabrics of many costumes and the colors of the embroidery had a strong contrast coupled with the foil of gold and silver threads, making the costumes and the performances of the actors created a strong theatrical atmosphere during performances, which was suitable for the intense emotion of Han opera, and makes people very pleasant after watching.

On the decoration of the embroidery, Han embroidered costumes were decorated with abstract stripes and circles on the edges of the collar, sleeves, hem, etc., and used with continuous patterns, such as reed mat pieces, Wanzi brocade, bamboo, and Prunus mume, lantern brocade, etc. pattern. These decorations present a rich rhythm and rhythmic decorative beauty.

This decorative technique was consistent with the rhyming and rhythmic auditory aesthetics of Han opera. Here, the actor's singing voice and the decoration of the costume could be combined with auditory and visually, bringing strong resonance to the audience.

The exquisite craftsmanship, the texture produced by embroidery patterns, and the changes in shades caused by light and shadow refraction greatly enrich the performance on the stage of the costumes. It produced a unique three-dimensional visual effect. In a sense, after hundreds of years of precipitation, Han embroidered costumes and Han opera have been co-existed. Like Han opera, it has become a work of art full of profound cultural connotations.

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