

# The Development of Song-dynasty Guanben Zaju and Chinese Popular Literature and Art

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**Abstract**—In Song Dynasty, because of its special historical background, all kinds of popular literature have been developed indifferent degrees, and the development of each literature has been perfecting itself on the basis of drawing on the strength of each other. In the process of literature dissemination as a literary form, the Song-Dynasty Guanben Zaju also influenced the development of other popular literature accordingly.

**Keywords**—Song Dynasty; Guanben Zaju; popular literature

## I. INTRODUCTION

The Song-Dynasty Guanben Zaju has shown its own story-enhancing and musical completeness in the title of the text; in the most important stage performances of theatrical performance, whether it is from the performance structure, role division or stage dress, it can be seen that the current mature operas draw lessons from it, which further shows the imprint of Song-Dynasty Guanben Zaju becoming mature. As a kind of popular literature and art Song dynasty, the development of Song-Dynasty Guanben Zaju was not alone, but it learned and developed with other literary forms of the same period.

## II. INTERACTIONS BETWEEN LITERATI AND AUDIENCE PROMOTE THE DEVELOPMENT OF POPULAR LITERATURE

In Song Dynasty, because of its special historical background, all kinds of popular literature have been developed indifferent degrees, and the development of each literature has been perfecting itself on the basis of drawing on the strength of each other. In the process of literature dissemination as a literary form, Song-Dynasty Guanben Zaju also influenced the development of other popular literature accordingly. This article studies from the author's creation, audience acceptance, social impacts and other aspects of the literature communication, in order to glimpse the influence of Song-Dynasty Guanben Zaju for the popular literature at that time.

### A. Literati Creation

The Song dynasty has a special historical background, because the rulers attach importance to culture and education, more and more people recognize words and it enhances people's aesthetic ability. At the same time, some talented people who failed in the imperial examinations have turned to the masses to create popular literary works to promote the

development of opera and popular literature. Chinese traditional operas gradually matured during the Song Dynasty. Under the influence of such social reality, the relationship between literati and opera became more and more close. These can be seen in opera creation, opera commentary, etc., while the opera influence the literati's mentality in turn and has a corresponding impact on their literary creation. Due to the special historical background of the Song Dynasty, a large number of literati were emerged. They absorbed a large number of poor writers from lower class to write scripts. They were called book talents. They cooperate with the artists, who understand the needs of the stage, and the writer can satisfy the audience's aesthetics. Therefore, the script created by them is naturally loved by the public.

### B. The Tendency of the Audience

The traditional form of Chinese opera is a literary form that flourished with the rise of the citizen class. From the 12th to the 13th century, China's commodity economy developed abnormally, a number of prosperous cities emerged at that time. Many Washe Goulan appeared in the city for the public enjoyment. The initial opera was created in this environment to satisfy the citizens' entertainment, and once it is created, it always remembers that its existence is to meet the entertainment needs of the public. Therefore, whether it is in screenwriting or performance, Chinese traditional opera is changing to meet the needs of people's aesthetic tastes. Chinese traditional opera as an entertaining opera, it existed for entertainment purposes. Without the imagination of the audience, traditional Chinese opera will be difficult to develop. This is why on the stage of traditional Chinese opera performances, only a few people were able to express the scene of a huge number of troops, benches and tables are mountains, one paddle means row a boat for miles, even under the bright light, they could also perform the fight in darkness. All of these are based on the imagination of the audience, so the development and growth of traditional Chinese opera cannot be separated from the interaction of audiences under the stage. The audience plays an indelible and important role in the process of Song-Dynasty Guanben Zaju becoming mature.

Chinese opera was originated from the folk. The folk people stays long-term at the ruled status in the society so accordingly with a low level of education. They understand that history and acquires cultural feelings are not through reading or hearing the official history books, but only through

the more intuitive Chinese folk literary forms that are handed down from mouth of ear. Early Chinese opera were mostly written by folk writers and then performed by the folk artists on stage, and finally enjoyed by folk audiences. Therefore, popular literature in its development process, including the development of traditional Chinese opera and Song-Dynasty Guanben Zaju, there is an important factor that cannot be ignored, that is the aesthetic trend of the folk audience, which leads to the development of popular literature.

### C. *Literary Influence*

The ancient Chinese popular literature system included a variety of literary styles, apart from Chinese traditional opera, there are also words such as talk, story, Zhu Gong Diao and so on. As the literary form loved by the public, drama is inevitably having a corresponding impact on other forms of Chinese popular literature. This section focuses on the influence of Song-Dynasty Guanben Zaju on the singing musical literary forms of Zhu Gong Diao and the narrative literary form story, in order to discuss the influence of the Song-Dynasty Guanben Zaju on the development of Chinese popular literature.

1) *Singing musical literature and Song-dynasty Guanben Zaju*: Various types of popular literature have been prosperously developed in Song Dynasty, and the singing literature- Zhu Gong Diao, was one of the representatives. First of all, Zhu Gong Diao as a singing literature, its development is also has a long history, which can be traced back to the record in "Bi Ji Man Zhi": "There is a person named Kong Shanchuan in Zezhou, who pioneered Zhu Gong Diao ancient story, literati and officialdom are all able to sing<sup>1</sup>". Kong Shanchuan pioneered Zhu Gong Diao and later due to its advantages, it was rapidly developed in popular rap literature in the Song Dynasty, and played a promotion role in the development of later literary forms. The subjects of Zhu Gong Diao were widely ingested, and joint all the tunes together as a whole. The stories and themes were also closely related to the society at that time, and were loved by the people. In terms of performance, Zhu Gong Diao uses the exchange of gong diao and song, and relies on the context of the storyline. It uses the story as a clue for music, during performances, chords and zithers play along with dancing and the music connect with story. This story-oriented combination of literature and music from was very popular since the Song dynasty and brought the integrity of the story and music to opera, which laid the initial pattern of Chinese opera. In Song Dynasty's "Wu lin jiu shi. Guanben dramas", it records the two operas "Zhu Gong Diao Ba Wang" and "Zhu Gong Diao Gua Ce Er", which can be seen that Zhu Gong Diao was already used to sing Song-Dynasty Zaju at that time. It laid the foundation for the maturity of Chinese opera art. At the same time, after Zhu Gong Diao entered the development rank of Song Dynasty's singing and talking techniques, it

began to increase its own narrative. This is not hard to imagine that is because of the influence of Song-Dynasty Guanben Zaju. Because operas contain two types of play and music, play is a telling a story, a complete statement of a plot, and music is its musicality. In the process of the development of opera, Zhu Gong Diao provided an important model for the development of the music part. At the same time, Zhu Gong Diao absorbed the themes of traditional Chinese opera in the process of its own development and created works that were favored by the public at that time.

2) *Talking narrative literature and Song-Dynasty Guanben Zaju*: In the style of popular literature of the Song Dynasty, talking art also occupied an important place. In the process of its own development, it is also progressing and mutually reinforcing with the Song-Dynasty Zaju. According to historical records such as "Dong Jing Meng Hua Lu" and "Du Cheng Ji Sheng", in Song Dynasty talking art is the most prosperous industry. The number of entertainers performing talking arts performances has reached more than 110, which is the highest number of people in all arts, which indirectly reflect the influence of talking arts to the society at that time. From a deep internal perspective, there is also consistency in the expression of aesthetic concepts and the choice of narrative perspectives. When the opera developed into the period of Song-Dynasty Guanben Zaju, the narrative of the story has greatly increased, and the audience can learn the narrative story content from the opera artists. From the perspective of the evolution of literary history, Chinese traditional opera and novel have been influenced by singing and talking literature to varying degrees during their own development. The singing and talking literature has developed earlier and has a wide range of subjects, the later developed opera and novel styles have drawn resources from the singing and talking literature, and continuously developed and matured themselves.

The original script used by the talking artist-script for story-telling, as a genre of popular novels since the Tang and Song dynasties, it represented an aesthetic style of the times. Ancient storytelling novels and operas shows mutual influence situation based on similar forms of textual form. Both the storytelling novel and the opera were initially developed in the form of oral transmission in folks. In the course of their development from the oral transmission stage to the writing stage, the two slowly found themselves the most suitable form for development and became a social trend, which has a wide range of influence to the society. The story-telling novels of the Song Dynasty continued to draw on nutrients from the dramas of the Song Dynasty to enrich and develop them. Under the influence of the Washe culture of the Song Dynasty, the story telling and other talking arts, due to the maturity of their own narrative thinking, tactics, concepts, etc., so they were absorbed by the Song-Dynasty Guanben Zaju in its development process, in order to further enhancing its own ability for story expression. It is also achieved the nourishment and promotion of story themes and narrative abilities of the novel, so that the narrative capabilities of the Song-Dynasty Guanben Zaju could continue to progress and have a

<sup>1</sup> Chinese Traditional Opera Research Institute. "Integration of Chinese Classical opera works", Chinese traditional opera Press, 1959, the first episode " Bi Ji Man Zhi", p115.

presentation system that expresses the complete story. And it gradually breed a literary character to evolve from technical quality to literariness, also shows its own influence on popular literature.

### III. INHERITANCE AND INNOVATION OF SONG-DYNASTY GUANBEN ZAJU AND YUAN-DYNASTY JINYUANBEN ZAJU

As an important part of traditional Chinese opera, the Song-Dynasty Guanben Zaju became a more mature literary form after absorbing the influence of the ancient opera before Song Dynasty, Tang Daqu and popular literature and art in the same period. It provided templates of topics and formats for the development of Jinyuanben and Yuan-Dynasty Zaju, as well as the development of later literature.

#### A. *The Inheritance and Innovation of Jinyuanben for Song-dynasty Guanben Zaju*

Tao Zongyi from Yuan Dynasty once said in the “Nan Cun Chuo Geng Lu” that: “Yuanben and Zaju were actually the same, it was divided into two parts since Yuan Dynasty”<sup>2</sup>. Along with the prosperity of the Southern Song Dynasty’s opera, it is also very popular in the North Jin Dynasty, which is the Zaju so-called Yuanben.

Jinyuanben and Song-Dynasty Guanben Zaju come down in one line, but also they have their own unique characteristics. This is where the problem to be addressed in this section. First of all, Jinyuanben’s formality is the same as that of Song-Dynasty Guanben Zaju. Second, as the cast configuration of Song-Dynasty Guanben Zaju, there are also five roles in the Jinyuanben. Thirdly, regard to the content of Jinyuanben, 690 kinds of titles are recorded in the “Nan Cun Chuo Geng Lu”. From the perspective of the present titles, they are also very similar to the titles of Song-Dynasty Zaju, and some of them even the same.

Compared with the Song-Dynasty Zaju, there are two unique features of Jinyuanben: First, the titles marks with Daqu, Faqu, and lyrics are less than Song drama. The second is that Jinyuanben’s Yan Duan is relatively rich in forms, in addition to the cuan, there are also Chongzhuang yinshou, Shuan chu Yan Duan, Da lue Yan Duan and various Jia men, and the connection between Yan Duan and serious drama is even closer.

In Jin Dynasty, there is also a unique singing and talking art called Zhu Gong Diao. According to the document in “Russian Collection of Heishui City Literatures”, “Liu Zhiyuan Zhu Gong Diao”<sup>3</sup> is recorded, and from the 42nd volume of residuary chapters, Zhu Gong Diao at that time has already been affected by opera creation. The correspondence of music and lines and the completeness of story narrative are all affected by the previous Song-Dynasty Zaju. It continues to develop and mature which represent the develop model of

<sup>2</sup> (Yuan) Tao Zongyi. “Nan Cun Chuo Geng Lu”. Shanghai Ancient Books Publishing Company, 2012, p276.

<sup>3</sup> Co-edited by Institute of Oriental Studies, St. Petersburg Branch, Russian Academy of Sciences; Institute of Ethnic Studies, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences; Shanghai Ancient Books Publishing Co., Ltd.. “Russian Collection of Heishui City Literature”. Volume 6, p329.

popular literature, and also shows the influence of Song-Dynasty Guanben Zaju on Jin Dynasty’s opera and popular literature.

#### B. *The Inheritance and Innovation of Yuan-dynasty Zaju to Song-dynasty Guanben Zaju*

After the great leap-forward and high-quality integration of the Song and Jin periods, Chinese opera entered the peak period of development. It introduced the Yuan-Dynasty Zaju and presented a certain prosperity scene.

The Yuan-Dynasty Zajuis only a different name of Jinyuanben and Song-Dynasty Zaju in different eras. Yuan-Dynasty Zaju is a theatrical form developed on the basis of opera forms such as the Song-Dynasty Zaju, Jinyuanben, Zhu Gong Diao, etc. In terms of structure, the structural unit called Tao in music, called Zhe in plot, the latter name is more common. As a general rule, each of the Yuan-Dynasty Zaju has 4 zhe, which is much longer than the Song-Dynasty Zaju and Jinyuanben, it means the increase in drama capacity and dramatic plots. Contrary to the Daqu and Faqu which commonly used in Song-Dynasty Zaju and Jinyuanben, Yuan-Dynasty Zaju often used Bei Diao, which is a different concept compared with Nan Qu. In addition, compared with the Song-Dynasty Zaju, Yuan-Dynasty Zaju shows its more mature aspects in actor configuration, aria and singing, thus reflecting its inheritance and innovation of the Song-Dynasty Zaju.

The composition of the Yuan-Dynasty Zaju’s script, according to the “Du Cheng Ji Sheng” written by Nai Deweng from Southern Song Dynasty, about the mass skills in Washe: “First perform a section of Qunchang shushi, named Yan Duan, followed by a serious drama, known as Liang duan”. The last is “The Za ban ... is the San ju of opera. Villagers were hardly allowed to enter the capital city, so they wrote this section, mostly dressed as Shandong or Hebei villagers for fun”<sup>4</sup>. Song-Dynasty Zaju is divided into three sections, but the Zhengju is also divided into two sections, so there are four sections in all. The script system of Yuan-Dynasty Zaju is a four zhe for one script to narrate a complete story, and the fourth sections of Song-Dynasty Zaju, apart from the Zhengju (2 sections) may have complete and consistent story, Yan duan at the beginning and San duan in the end all tell independent stories. It can be seen that Yuan-Dynasty Zaju was improved and developed based on the inheritance of the script structure of Song-Dynasty Zaju.

### IV. CONCLUSION

The development of Song-Dynasty Guanben Zaju depends on such historical background. It was precisely because the ruler of Song Dynasty specially focus on culture and education which promote the improvement of the entire social and cultural level and increased the number of literary creations; The development of economy, the weakening of the ideology of emphasis on agriculture and restraining merchants, and the development of the commodity economy have enabled a fertile development ground for opera; At last, the aesthetic trend and

<sup>4</sup> (Song) Nai Deweng. “Du Cheng Ji Sheng”. China Business Press, 1982, p86.

cultural background of the entire society have promoted the further development of the opera. All these have promoted the development and mature of traditional Chinese opera in the Song Dynasty, and mutually promoted with other popular literary styles, thus promoting the progress of literature. It is also under the promotion of a variety of popular literary and artistic forms so that there is a mature form of the Yuan-Dynasty Jinyuanben Zaju and later operas.

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