

# Research on the Inheritance and Development of Sichuan Qingyin\*

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**Abstract**—Taking the inheritance of Sichuan Qingyin as the research object, this paper explores how to inherit and carry forward Sichuan Qingyin in today's society through the analysis of its inheritance mode, purpose, change of songs and change of audience groups.

**Keywords**—Sichuan Qingyin; contemporary environment; cultural inheritance

## I. INTRODUCTION

Sichuan Qingyin prevailed during the reign of Qianlong in the Qing Dynasty. It centered on Luzhou and Xufu, and spread all over towns and villages. Originally known as pipa singing and yueqin singing, it is a traditional form of music in Sichuan. It has both the name of elegance and the meaning of Qingyin. In the late Ming and early Qing Dynasties, Sichuan experienced frequent wars, severe famines, plagues and other natural disasters, and the number of people decreased dramatically. By the years of Shunzhi, the imperial court began to migrate people to Sichuan from Hunan, Hubei, Guangdong and Guangxi in a planned way. According to General Survey of Chengdu, ancestors of Chengdu people today were all from other provinces. Immigrants brought production technologies, customs and so on to Sichuan, and also brought their own local tunes. By the end of Kangxi, immigrants had settled down, the economy in Sichuan began to recover, and local artists sang songs to earn a living. These people went to teahouses and restaurants and sang minor tunes, with few works, low skills and low social status, similar to begging artists. Many artists sang Sichuan Qingyin to earn a living. "Artists sang yueqin singing in streets and alleys, and tea houses and taverns were crowded with audiences". Sichuan Qingyin was in such a prosperous situation, creating a generation of famous artists. Sichuan Qingyin was sung in Sichuan dialect. It was mainly popular in the cities and countryside with Chengdu as the center. The music was very rich. Artists often went to Sichuan accompanied by merchant ships for performance. They sang mainly in tunes and ditties, and people called them "ditty singer" and "tune singer". They used yueqin or pipa for accompaniment in their singing, so they were also known as "yueqin singer" and "pipa singer".

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## II. THE CHANGE OF INHERITANCE WAY

Since the Qing Dynasty, Sichuan Qingyin has undergone many social changes, such as the 1911 Revolution, the May 4th Movement and the War of Resistance against Japan. Some amateurs started full time to make ends meet. They either took a family as a team, or combine freely as a team, or "adopting girls" wandering in major cities and towns, known as "family group" and "nest group". At first, apprentices came to master to learn art. Masters used the method of oral and heart-to-heart teaching. Masters taught and sang one phase orally, and apprentices imitated and sang one phase along. Although this way of inheritance is primitive, the master could teach apprentices personally. The apprentice could master the singing of tune and the change of action by imitating the master. Up to now, the method of oral teaching is still an important teaching method in the study of Qingyin. In the 1950s, with the widespread use of the notation system in China and the emergence of the Qingyin score, people began to consciously record the Qingyin melody, which have not only promoted the standardization and accuracy of the Qingyin tone, but also provided a text form for the inheritance of the Qingyin. With the emergence of music score in Qingyin, we have a more intuitive reference in teaching, and students can sing more standardized. It pays attention to the charm of the voice, and matches the changes of expression and body in singing. No matter whether the music score is meticulous and standardized, the teacher's singing and performance are still an important means of teaching in Qingyin. In modern Qingyin teaching, teachers still retain the teaching method of oral and heart-to-heart teaching to a certain extent. Students can not only combine clear music score, but also intuitively listen to the teacher's singing and feel the change of vocal rhyme. They can not only learn the original vocal singing skills, but also accurately and quickly grasp the melody of the singing.

Qingyin belongs to singing in the three major categories of "storytelling, singing and scherzo". It was developed from folk songs minor. It sings more, speaks less, and is good at lyricism but not good at narration. Singers can sit, stand or walk whiling singing, and there is no fixed form. Mostly it is based on the content of the singing. In the past, it was basically solo, but there were also antiphonal singing, unison and chorus. Single stand singing performance is the most, basically formed a fixed form: "curtains open; three to five people in the band sit on the left side of the oblique row; set drum shelf and small

bamboo drum on right side of the middle, and put a pair of hardwood clappers on the drum. Actors come on stage and go to the side of bamboo drum. They salute to audiences and then take the clappers and bamboo sticks of the drum and begin to beat and sing". However, this form is not explicitly stipulated, but is formed from repeated practice over a long period of time. Sichuan Qingyin used to be sung in teahouses and taverns. The main singers sit in the middle. Other artists provided instrumental and vocal accompaniment. After the founding of New China, artists performed opera in theatre. In order to adapt to stage performances, artists gradually changed sitting singing to standing singing, and made portable bamboo drums. Singers played drum by themselves. The accompaniment instruments of Sichuan Qingyin mainly are yueqin and pipa. Later, they begin to use the instrumental ensemble of erhu, zhonghu, zhongruan, hardwood clappers and bamboo drum. In the traditional accompaniment of Qingyin singing, the accompaniment form and melody are relatively monotonous. In the 21st century, in the Qingyin singing, people began to use the accompaniment form of small band, and even use modern MIDI production as accompaniment. Some professional performing groups also combine small Western orchestras and even use symphony orchestras to accompany them, so as to achieve a richer effect in the Qingyin singing. In the aspect of dancing beauty, it adds electronic video and modern multimedia to make it more beautiful and achieve the ultimate effect in the visual sense.

### III. CHANGE OF INHERITANCE PURPOSE

Qingyin first was sung by street artists who went to teahouses and restaurants to earn a living by singing. At that time, these artists did not have a lot of songs and were not very skilled. In 1930, Chongqing established "Qingyin Song Improvement Association" and then established "Qingyin Association" and "Qingyin Labor Union" in Chengdu and Zigong. After 1930, Qingyin enjoyed a prosperous period in Sichuan. Thousands of "Haihu Troupes" in Sichuan Province shuttled frequently to large, medium and small cities for singing, performing and selling art. Teahouses around the province became the performing place of Sichuan Qingyin one after another. Luzhou City has "Conghui Pavilion", "Tianfeng Tower", "Shundong", "Jiangchun", "Qinglan", "Liuyin" and so on. Xuyong has "Jixian", "Kanjiang", "Tantian"; Zigong has "Victory Shuchang", "Pulu Garden" and so on. Yibin and Luzhou artists went to Chongqing for singing, and artists from Luzhou and Xuyong came here for performance. After 1950s, it was formally named as "Sichuan Qingyin". After the founding of New China, Sichuan Troupe of Chinese Folk Art Forms (now Sichuan Research Institute of Chinese Folk Vocal Art Forms) was established in 1968. Qingyin singer became a formal profession. Chinese folk artists worked in the public welfare enterprise troupe directly under the Sichuan Cultural Department. After entering the 21st century, due to market shrink, the performance of traditional folk art seems to be incompatible with people's modern life. The number of people who often listen to folk art is gradually decreasing, and Qingyin artists have to find other ways for living.

Until June 14, 2008, Sichuan Qingyin was listed in the second batch of national intangible cultural heritage list. In

recent years, under the influence of the state's request to carry forward the excellent traditional Chinese culture, the government has taken some effective measures to support the development of folk music at various levels and in all directions. With the vigorous support of the government, Qingyin has entered a new stage of development, and the number of full-time performers has begun to increase. Nowadays, the government implements the development policy of "the Belt and Road". Under this environment, in order to better inherit the traditional culture of Sichuan, the Sichuan Provincial Department of Education and Chengdu TV Station have also organized the activities of "non-material culture entering the campus". Primary and secondary schools invited Qingyin singing inheritors to enter the campus and teach children singing. They have more and more in-depth understanding of this traditional form of Sichuan opera, so that the new generation of children can understand the traditional culture of Sichuan through personal experience and practice. This activity has become one of the ways of inheritance and promotion of Contemporary Qingyin.

### IV. CHANGE IN AUDIENCE GROUPS

Early Qingyin audiences were businessmen from south to north. Their leisure entertainment was mainly to listen to Qingyin singing in teahouses. At that time, Qingyin singing mainly concentrated in teahouses, taverns and restaurants, and audiences mostly were local. Therefore, the regional color of Sichuan Qingyin is relatively strong. Haha tune and tongue-playing tune are the characteristic elements to be sung in Chengdu dialect, which can fully display the unique "tip of teeth" flavor of Sichuan girls, and also contain the unique "charming taste" of Sichuan.

After Sichuan Qingyin became the national intangible cultural heritage, in order to make more people know Sichuan Qingyin and better inherit this traditional folk art, Sichuan Qingyin contacted the majority of young students in the form of "intangible culture entering into campus", so that more young students could understand "Qingyin" and love "Qingyin". Students feel the charm of Sichuan Qingyin through "zero distance" in the form of listening and participating, which can arouse the love of young students on local excellent culture and traditional art, and create a strong atmosphere for the understanding of traditional culture and art. This activity also was introduced into primary and secondary school classes. Sichuan Qingyin was popularized and introduced to children in music classes, and this way of inheritance was warmly welcomed by students and parents. Chinese folk arts enter the campus so that college students, middle school students and primary school students can access to the traditional forms of Sichuan folk arts. Children can be immersed in traditional Chinese culture from an early age. In recent years, the Chengdu Municipal People's Government has also promoted People-benefiting Theatre, so that the traditional culture of Sichuan Qingyin can be extended to the grassroots people. In particular, the government retained the Teahouse Shuchang in the Dacisi Community in Chengdu, and regularly invites Qingyin performers to perform there. It also enables more hobbyists who like Qingyin to have an audio-visual feast and get Qingyin better integrated into the lives of ordinary

people. In addition, tourists to Sichuan will also go to Chengdu's most distinctive places, such as wide and narrow lanes, to find the most distinctive voice of Sichuan.

#### V. CHANGES IN SONGS

In the late Ming and early Qing Dynasties, Sichuan experienced frequent wars, severe famines, plagues and sharp population decline. During the Shunzhi period, the imperial court began to migrate some people to Sichuan in a planned way. "Encourage the people of Hunan, Hubei, Guangdong and Guangxi to migrate to the east of Sichuan and cultivate. People from north and south all over the country gathered in this city" (Records of Qing Sheng Zu). Immigrants from all over the country brought production technologies, living habits, and various schools of local tunes into this place. For example, "Little Taohong" came from Shaanxi's "Embroidering Hebao"; "Great Wall Tune" from north "Meng Jiangnu Crying Great Wall"; "Flower Tune" from Jiangsu folk song "Jasmine Flower"... Many melodies simply were named after where they came from, such as "Fengyang Song", "Wuchang Tune", "North Tune", "Northeast Folk Tune", "Guizhou Tune" and so on. Some names of tunes were not changed and same as other places, such as "Jin Niu Si", "Yin Niu Si"... This was a special phenomenon in the history owe to the immigrants from Hunan, Hubei, Guangxi and Guangdong to Sichuan. This immigration also enriched Sichuan's vocal music and songs.

By the time of Jiaqing, the development of Sichuan Qingyin had approached maturity, and there were many repertoires and names of tunes. There were about 100 pieces of names of tunes. Beyond the initial monologue, there were also cycle structure systems, such as "Yue Tune", "Beigong Tune", "Matou Tune". In addition to singing folk songs of singles, they also sang small story songs. At that time, Pihuang tune flowed into Sichuan, and the artists adopted and absorbed it, forming variant of Ban tune, such as "Han Tune" and "Fanxipi". Affected by the trend of thought of the New Culture Movement after the May 4th Movement in 1919, a number of anti-exploitation, anti-oppression and anti-feudal freedom songs appeared such as "Shuangtan Sister", "Goodbye", "Mother's Muddle" and "Little Husband". The dissemination of these songs has played a certain role in promoting social progress. During the Anti-Japanese War, Qingyin artists actively engaged in anti-Japanese and national salvation activities. They created a number of songs, such as "Wu Geng Sighing National Conditions", "Shanghai War", "Shooting Li Fuyan", "Memorizing Commander Yao" and so on, which exposed the cruelty of Japanese army and traitors, praised the anti-Japanese generals and mobilized the people to resist Japan. Their patriotic actions were praised by the society. Modern Qingyin works include "Premier Wen's Three Bows" (Sichuan Qingyin), in praise of Premier Wen's visiting affected people after the earthquake on May 12, 2008, "Flowers Blossoming All Over the Mountain", eulogizing good relationship between people and the army, "Spring to Longmen Mountain" which won the award nomination of Peony Award, the highest Chinese opera award, and "Shu Embroidery" which won the nomination award for best new artist. Qingyin works are also updated with the development of the times and are constantly integrated into people's life.

#### VI. CONCLUSION

As a well-known culture in Sichuan, Qingyin shows its rich content in the form of traditional folk art on the one hand, and is inherited by its specific essence in the form of traditional folk art on the other hand. Through repeated performances of traditional folk art and the unabated appreciation of the community from generation to generation, the traditional folk art culture can survive and develop. The development of any society is not absolutely static, and social changes will inevitably lead to changes in culture, art and other aspects. In this particular social context, Qingyin has experienced social, historical and human influences, and will also present its unique features in the new era.

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