

THE ORIGINS OF XIPING FOLK CULTURAL SONGS: QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

Xiping folk song is the second batch of national intangible cultural heritage approved by the State Council of China. But what is Xiping folk song? What is the origin of this title? What is the relationship between the appellation of "Xiping folk song" and "Luo Gu Qu" and "Hua Gu Zi" in the mouth of local people? There is no clear definition in academia. This paper studies the relevant literature through the historical literature research method, and interviews the relevant parties by using the field investigation method. This paper finds that, in a broad sense, Xiping folk songs refer to oral songs collectively created and handed down from generation to generation by the working people of Xiping town. In a narrow sense, Xiping folk song refers to the folk song activities held by the working people of Xiping town during the Spring Lantern Festival accompanied by folk song and dance performances such as "riding Zhuma", "rowing Hanchuan", "carrying Huajiao", commonly known as "Luo Gu Qu" and "Hua Gu Zi". On the one hand, the research results explain the concept of Xiping folk song as a "folk song", on the other hand, it expounds the concept of Xiping folk song as a comprehensive folk activity. It will provide theoretical support for the further study of Xiping folk song heritage and non-material folk song heritage.

Key words: Xiping folk song; Luo Gu Qu; Hua Gu Zi; Intangible cultural heritage

Introduction

Xiping folk song is an oral poem created by the working people of Xiping town and handed down from generation to generation. In recent years, there have been three climaxes in the development of Xiping folk songs. They are after the victory of the Anti-Japanese war in 1945, after the founding of the people's Republic of China in 1949 and after the reform and opening up in 1978 (Zhang, 2018). In recent years, with the development and changes of society, the original living soil of Xiping folk songs has disappeared. The old artists who sang and performed Xiping folk songs were too old or died one after another. Under the impact of new

media, young people lost interest in this traditional folk music. Xiping folk songs are on the verge of extinction, and the inheritance and development of Xiping folk songs are threatened (Lin & Chai, 2019). In order to better protect this traditional music culture, on June 7, 2008, with the approval of the State Council of China, the "Xiping folk song" of Xixia County, Henan Province was included in the second batch of national intangible cultural heritage list (Xin, 2018).

After Xiping folk songs were listed as national intangible cultural heritage, local governments and ordinary people began to have the awareness and action to inherit and protect this traditional folk music. Xixia County has set up a protection fund for Xiping folk songs, established a Xiping folk song performance team, and protected and inherited Xiping folk songs by holding Xiping folk song competition and cultivating inheritors. (Editorial Board of *dazhongyuan* cultural readings series, 2018). Colleges and universities, such as the Conservatory of music of Nanyang Normal University, the Conservatory of music of Nanyang University of technology, and the art school of Zhengzhou Shengda Economic and trade management college, began to have relevant scientific researchers enter Xiping town for academic research, and tried to study, inherit, and protect Xiping folk songs from the academic level. The current scientific research achievements focus on the collection of Xiping folk songs and the inheritance and protection of Xiping folk songs. In view of the lack of research results on the noumenon of Xiping folk songs, the representative research results are the paper on Xiping folk songs published by Zhao Jun in 2010 and the research on the artistic characteristics of Xiping folk songs from the perspective of ethnomusicology published by Chai Zhanhong and Lin Lijun in 2021 (Lin & Chai, 2020).

As a traditional folk music in Xiping Town, Xiping folk song has rich connotation. However, the current academic research on Xiping folk songs is still in its infancy. People try to interpret Xiping folk songs from different angles (Lin & Chai, 2020). In the process of study, research, and folk research, the authors found that the name of "Xiping folk song" may be a new appellation. From the perspective of official or academic research, people call it Xiping folk song (X. Y. Zhou, personal communication. October 7, 2021), but in the process of folk wind collection, people do not call it that way. They will call Xiping folk song with "Luo Gu Qu", "Hua Gu Zi" (X. J. Wei, personal communication. August 18, 2017). Moreover, in a general sense, most people will think that Xiping folk songs are folk songs. However, local people believe that Xiping folk songs do not only refer to folk songs but should be a series of folk activities related to Xiping folk songs (S. L. Wu, personal communication. October 6, 2021). It can be seen from the above description that there is an objection in the use of the appellation of "Xiping folk song", and the content referred to by "Xiping folk song" is ambiguous. So, what is Xiping folk song? Where does the appellation of Xiping folk song come from? What are the similarities and differences between Xiping folk songs and traditional appellations "Luo Gu Qu" and "Hua Gu Zi"? What exactly does "Xiping folk song" refer to? This paper decides to make a further discussion on the above issues around the "definition of Xiping folk song". The aim of the study has three points. First, explore the origin of the appellation of Xiping folk songs. The second part discusses the relationship between Xiping folk songs and "Luo Gu Qu". Third, explore the relationship between Xiping folk songs and "Hua Gu Zi".

Literature review

Xiping folk song

Although Xiping folk songs have been listed as national intangible cultural heritage in 2008, the special research results of Xiping folk songs are insufficient and the research depth is insufficient. At present, there are three books with Xiping folk songs as the theme, as follows: "100 Xiping folk songs" printed by Xiping town in 2007 is the earliest book that can be found to record the lyrics of Xiping folk songs, which has high research value of original materials (Wang, 2007). On the basis of collecting Xiping folk songs, Zhao Jun published the book "a preliminary study of Henan Xiping folk songs" in 2012 and began to study Xiping folk songs from a theoretical perspective, which has high theoretical value (Zhao, 2012). In 2016, the book Xiping folk songs compiled by Xixia County Bureau of culture, radio, television, press, and publication was officially published. Based on one hundred Xiping folk songs, the work added 71 Numbered musical notations of Xiping folk songs, which more three-dimensional reflected the melody form of Xiping folk songs (Han, 2016). The above three books record and study Xiping folk songs from the perspective of "folk songs", which provides a solid theoretical support for the broad definition of Xiping folk songs in this paper. With Xiping folk songs as the theme, only seven research articles can be searched on China HowNet, the largest academic network platform in China, including six academic journals and one dissertation. The research content focuses on the inheritance and protection of Xiping folk songs, such as "a preliminary study on the protection of Xiping folk songs from the perspective of we media" (Yang, 2015) and "combination of culture and Tourism - Thoughts on the productive protection of Xiping folk songs" (Lin & Chai, 2019). There are also studies on the humanistic history and artistic characteristics of Xiping folk songs, such as preliminary study of Xiping folk songs (Zhao, 2015) and Study on the artistic characteristics of Xiping folk songs from the perspective of national music (Chai & Lin, 2021). All articles take "Xiping folk songs" as the theme, researchers discuss Xiping folk songs from the perspective of "folk songs", and some study and discuss Xiping folk songs from the perspective of "comprehensive folk activities". Obviously, there is confusion in the use of the definition of "Xiping folk song" in academic research, which needs to be further standardized.

Luo Gu Qu

In the existing literature, the appellation "Luo Gu Qu" is often used to describe artistic activities similar to the existing Xiping folk song performance content and form. For example, Zhang Xiange (2012) believes that in xindianpu, Southern Henan, the folk song sung in Hanchuan and other Shehuo performances is called "Ping An Luo Gu Qu". Cheng Jianjun (2020) believes that Xichuan County's art form of performing and singing folk songs on various occasions with gongs, drums and bronze accompaniment is "Xichuan Luo Gu Qu", and most of the song contents and melodies come from local folk songs, such as folk songs and boat songs. Obviously, "Luo Gu Qu" is a general term for this kind of folk activities. The origin of this term is more because gongs, drums and bronze instruments are used to accompany the whole performance process. Xiping folk songs are also mainly accompanied by gongs, drums, and bronzes, which are also called "Luo Gu Qu" among the people. This paper will further

study the relationship between Xiping folk songs and "Luo Gu Qu".

Hua Gu Zi

In the existing literature, "Hua Gu Zi", "Hua gu deng", "Hua gu Diao" and other appellations are often used to describe artistic activities similar to the existing Xiping folk song performance content. For example, ye Wencheng (2018) believes that Hua gu deng is popular in the Huaihe River Basin. It is a comprehensive folk art activity that combines dance with dengge, Gong and drum music and folk operas. The Xixia County Chronicle points out that Hua Gu Zi is a tune often sung in folk dance performances such as stilts, colored boats, and floats in Xixia County. Hu Hong and Wei Ling (2016) believe that "Hua Gu Zi" is a general term for folk songs and dances. Folk dances and folk songs are performed simultaneously, singing and dancing, which is particularly common in southern China, also known as "Hua Gu Zi", "Da Hua gu ", "Di Hua Gu ", etc. The word "Hua gu" comes from the south, which is called Hua gu in the South and Yangge in the north. Hua gu and Yangge are originally one thing. Hua gu in the South sings and Yangge in the North performs make-up performances with recreational nature (Liu, 2016). Obviously, the word "Hua gu" is used in these descriptions. This paper needs to further explore and study the relationship between Xiping folk songs and "Hua Gu Zi".

Research methodology

This research belongs to qualitative research. This research use the methods of historical literature research, reasoning, field investigation and induction. Xiping folk song is a folk art in Xiping town. Its main participants are ordinary people. It has been spread by oral and heart to heart. Few literati have sorted out or recorded matters related to Xiping folk song. Therefore, the authors need to find clues in folklore, and more accurate evidence needs to be supported by local historical records (Wang, 2021). Therefore, in order to verify the above problems, the authors need to use the historical literature research method to deeply study the relevant phenomena, and then use the reasoning method to further elaborate. For the research on the folk activities related to Xiping folk songs, the authors need to use the field survey method to interview the relevant personnel of Xiping folk songs, and then make further arrangement by induction on the basis of the interview.

According to my research purpose, the authors interviewed two types of people. The first category is the relevant government staff, because the application of Xiping folk songs to become a national intangible cultural heritage is organized by Xixia County Cultural Center. From the initial folk collection to the printing of the first important reference material of Xiping folk songs, Xiping folk songs one hundred, and then to the publication of Xiping folk songs, Xixia County government staff took the lead and music professionals participated in the implementation. In this study, the authors interviewed Zhou Xiaoyan, the curator of Xixia County Cultural Center, Cao ganglin, the former head of Xixia County rap troupe and composer, and the former head of Xiping town cultural station "Wei zhian". For them, the authors focus on three questions. First, what is the origin of the name of Xiping folk song? Second, what is the process of Xiping folk song's application for national intangible cultural heritage? Third,

what are Xiping folk songs? The second category is the folk artists in Xiping town. They are participants in Xiping folk song activities, and their interpretation of Xiping folk songs is more authoritative. This time the authors interviewed Wei Xiuju, the national inheritor of Xiping folk songs, Li Xianglan and Yao Shucheng, the provincial inheritors of Xiping folk songs, and Wu Shaolian, Zhao Guohong, Tian Chengzhou and Niu Zhiliang, the folk artists in Xiping town. With the development of society, Xiping folk song, as a traditional folk-art form, is on the verge of extinction due to the disappearance of its original living soil. The relevant folk artists are old or dead (Yang, 2015), so the number of people who can be interviewed is limited. For folk artists, the authors focus on three questions. First, what is your career experience? Second, what folk performances are there in Xiping folk song singing? Third, what does Xiping folk song refer to?

Results

The appellation of Xiping folk songs

Xiping folk song is an official appellation, including all the folk songs of Xiping town. "Luo Gu Qu" and "Hua Gu Zi" are folk appellations, which refer to folk songs sung with the accompaniment of Luo and Gu. "Luo Gu Qu" and "Hua Gu Zi" are included in Xiping folk songs. Sometimes, people use "Luo Gu Qu" and "Hua Gu Zi" to refer to Xiping folk songs. Specific textual research is as follows:

According to the current published historical documents, the appellation of "Xiping folk song" was first used in the book "Nanyang memorabilia 2006" edited by Xie Xianfeng in December 2007, which lists the "provincial" intangible cultural heritage projects of Nanyang in 2006, the first of which is Xiping folk song (Xie, 2007). It can be inferred that as early as 2006, Xixia County applied for the provincial intangible cultural heritage of Henan Province with the appellation of "Xiping folk song". However, this appellation was not found in earlier documents. Therefore, the authors infer that the appellation of Xiping folk song may be a new appellation around 2006. This view needs to be further investigated and confirmed by local people.

According to Wei Zhian, the former cultural stationmaster of Xiping Town, because Xiping folk song is a folk song of Xiping Town, the appellation of "folk song" has always existed in Xiping town. Relatively speaking, local literati use the appellation of "Xiping folk song" more, and ordinary people use the appellations of "Luo Gu Qu" and "Hua Gu Zi" more. Xiping folk songs contain more extensive contents, such as folk songs, Luo Gu Qu, funeral songs, etc. (Z. A. Wei, personal communication. October 4, 2021). From this definition, Xiping folk songs include "Luo Gu Qu". The difference between Xiping folk songs and "Luo Gu Qu" and "Hua Gu Zi" is more the different appellations of local folk songs by literati and ordinary people.

This statement that scholars and ordinary people have different appellations for the same folk art has also been further verified in the interview. For example, Niu Zhiliang, former director of Xiping town teaching and research office and head of Xiping Folk Song Art Troupe, habitually uses the appellation of "Xiping folk song" (Z. L. Niu, personal communication. December 30, 2018), while folk artists Li Xianglan and Wei Xiuju are more accustomed to

using the appellations of "Luo Gu Qu" and "Hua Gu Zi". Li Xianglan also specifically mentioned that she once asked Wei Zhian why Luo Gu Qu was called Xiping folk song. She said that Wei Zhian answered her, "it was the leader who asked him to use the appellation of Xiping folk song" (X. L. Li, personal communication. August 18, 2017). Zhou Xiaoyan, curator of Xixia County Cultural Center, believes that the appellation of "folk song" is more modern and easier to be understood by the public (X. y. Zhou, personal communication. October 7, 2021). Zhou Xiaoyan's answer also proves Li Xianglan's statement.

In addition, if Xiping folk song is an official appellation, it should also be something in recent years, because in the most representative local documents Xixia County annals (Xixia County Local History Compilation Committee. 1990) and Xichuan County annals (Wang, 1990) published in 1990, there are no appellations about "Xiping folk song", but there are appellations of "Hua Gu" and "Hua Gu Zi". Therefore, the authors speculate that it is likely that in order to declare the national intangible cultural heritage, Xiping folk song became an official appellation with the promotion of local government departments around 2006. However, this statement was also orally approved by Cao ganglin, the former head of Xixia County quyi Troupe (G. L. Cao, personal communication. April 3, 2017).

In addition, "Luo Gu Qu" is because the main accompaniment instruments for performing Xiping folk songs are "Luo" and "Gu". People simply call it "Luo Gu Qu" (G. L. Cao, personal communication. April 3, 2017). Xiping Town, located in the southwest of Henan Province, once belonged to Xichuan County (X. y. Zhou, personal communication. October 7, 2021). Its main artistic expression form is the same as that of Xichuan Luo Gu Qu, and its singing content is similar (Zhao, 2012). Therefore, the authors think Xichuan Luo Gu Qu and Xiping folk songs should refer to the same folk art in the folk. However, when Xiping town was no longer subordinate to Xichuan County, Xixia County to which Xiping town belongs used the appellation of "Xiping folk song" to declare the national intangible cultural heritage, but Xiping folk song refers to "Luo Gu Qu" in the folk.

The appellation of "Hua Gu Zi" may come from southern China, such as Hunan Hua gu, Jiangsu Hua gu, Yangzhou Hua gu, Fengyang Hua gu, Huaiyang Hua gu, etc. the artistic expression forms of these Hua gu are similar to those in Xiping folk songs (Liu, 2016), which may be related to the geographical location of Xiping town. The Hanjiang River basin to which Xiping town belongs is in the transitional zone of climate and culture in North and South China, its music culture is naturally influenced by the music culture of southern China (Dai, 2018). But in Xiping Town, "Hua Gu Zi" and "Luo Gu Qu" are common names for Xiping folk songs.

The definition of Xiping folk song

Xiping folk songs are defined in narrow sense and broad sense. Xiping folk song in a broad sense refers to the oral poetry collectively created by the working people of Xiping town and handed down from generation to generation (Wang, 2007). Xiping folk song in a narrow sense refers to the folk activities held by the working people of Xiping town during the Spring Lantern Festival with the accompaniment of "Wen loudspeakers". During the activity, accompanied by folk song and dance performances such as "riding Zhuma", "rowing

Hanchuan", "carrying sedan chair", folk artists sang local folk songs (Chai & Lin, 2021). Specific textual research is as follows: From the above description, it can be seen that Wang Peili's view emphasizes three key points. First, Xiping folk songs are sung in daily life or gatherings; Second, the performance venue is not fixed and distributed in all corners of life; Third, the lyrics of folk songs involve all aspects of people's life (Wang, 2007). There are three key points in Chai Zhanhong and Lin Lijun's interpretation of the definition of Xiping folk songs: first, the main performance time of Xiping folk songs is during the Spring Lantern Festival; Second, the performance place is the door or square of each family; Third, in addition to singing folk songs, Xiping folk songs include relevant folk activities, such as "rowing Hanchuan", lifting Huajiao, "riding Zhuma" and other dances. Obviously, Wang Peili defines Xiping folk songs from the perspective of "folk songs". Xiping folk songs are songs created and sung by the people in Xiping town in their daily life. Chai Zhanhong and Lin Lijun believe that the current Xiping folk songs refer to the comprehensive folk performance activities related to folk songs during the Spring Lantern Festival, which defines Xiping folk songs from the perspective of comprehensive folk activities. This leads this paper to define Xiping folk songs from a broad and narrow perspective.

Xiping folk song in a broad sense. From the content of Xiping folk song lyrics collected at present, Xiping folk song lyrics include diverse contents, including labor songs, current political songs, love songs, historical and legendary songs, children's songs, funeral songs, and other distinct types. For example, "donggeng" and "Caicha" describing labor (X. J. Wei, personal communication. August 18, 2017), "shiai" and "shihen" describing love (X. L. Li, personal communication. August 18, 2017), "Jian She Hui Zhu Yi Xin Nong Cun" describing current politics (X. H. Yu, personal communication. October 5, 2021), "Zheng Yue Nao Yuan Xiao" and "Duihua" describing life (C. Z. Tian, personal communication. February 1, 2019), "Liang Shan Bo Yu Zhu Ying Tai" describing historical figures (G. H. Zhao, personal communication. February 1, 2019), "Xiao Chuan Dai" describing children's life (S. C. Yao, personal communication. August 16, 2017). The description content is closely related to various life scenes of the people. It is suitable for performing in different venues to express the joys and sorrows, joys, and sorrows of the people. In terms of content, it expresses personal feelings, and there are also forms of duet between two people, such as "Xiao Dui Hua", "Da Dui Hua" (X. J. Wei, personal communication. December 31, 2018). Obviously, from the perspective of the diversity of performance contents, the uncertainty of performance venues and the privatization of performance forms, this is very in line with the original natural form of folk songs and the broad definition of Xiping folk songs mentioned in this paper.

Xiping folk song in a narrow sense. According to the results of the authors field investigation, in the modern context, the lyrics and melody of Xiping folk songs have not changed much, but the performance venue, performance function and performance form of Xiping folk songs have changed greatly. Subsequently, the choice of Xiping folk songs by singers on various occasions has also changed. According to the introduction of folk artists Wei Xiuju, Li Xianglan, Zhao Guohong and Wu Shaolian, the performances of Xiping folk songs have the following characteristics since the 1960s: the main performance time of Xiping folk songs is during the Spring Lantern Festival; Xiping folk song performers perform in groups. The number of performers is uncertain. When there are many people, it can reach about one hundred. The

performance venue of Xiping folk songs is for the performance team to go to the countryside and visit households to perform at the gate, yard, or house of each household; Xiping folk song series performances were organized by "dengtou". Accompanied by "Wen Xiang Qi", folk artists performed folk songs and dances such as "riding Zhuma", "rowing Hanchuan" and "carrying Huajiao", and sang some lyrics with blessing and funny characteristics in the song and dance performance; For the content of singing lyrics, folk artists will make random adjustments according to the occupation, identity or recent events of the house owner of the performance venue, but mainly focus on blessing and funny festive content (S. C. Yao, personal communication. August 16, 2017). For example, Li Xianglan said that if the owner is in business, he would sing the lyrics of blessing the prosperity of business; If the family has joined the army in recent years, they will sing the song of joining the army and praise the glory of joining the army; If this family has a newborn this year, sing the lyrics of blessing the healthy growth of the child; If the family currently has students in school, sing the lyrics of blessing the students' golden list appellation (X. L. Li, personal communication. August 18, 2017). In public places, such as the village square, some songs with story may be sung, but because the performance is during the Spring Lantern Festival, songs with sad contents are not sung (G. H. Zhao, personal communication. October 6, 2021). For example, once, when the authors interviewed Wei Xiuju, a national intangible cultural inheritor of Xiping folk songs, at the door of a house, when the authors were ready to record Xiping folk song "xianglang", Wei Xiuju said that this song had sad content and was not suitable for singing at the door of others. In addition, in the daily performance process, there are no fixed requirements for what melody to sing and who to sing, which is more random. The basic law followed is that whoever wants to sing will sing, and whatever melody comes to mind will sing (X. J. Wei, personal communication. December 31, 2018). Therefore, in the context of modern and contemporary times, Xiping folk song is no longer a musical form that simply expresses personal feelings through singing but has become a group artistic activity. This artistic activity with performance and collective nature goes beyond the folk song itself. While expressing feelings, folk song has become a medium of this social activity, The whole artistic performance has become a collective entertainment activity of the people in Xiping town during the Spring Lantern Festival, that is, the narrow definition of Xiping folk song mentioned in this paper.

Discussions and conclusion

This paper makes a detailed interpretation of the relationship between Xiping folk songs and "Luo Gu Qu" and "Hua Gu Zi" for the first time and defines Xiping folk songs in broad and narrow sense. Thus, readers can have a clearer understanding of these concepts that are easy to be confused in the process of understanding and use. Therefore, in a broad sense, Xiping folk songs refer to oral poems collectively created and handed down from generation to generation by the working people of Xiping town. Xiping folk songs are commonly known as "Luo Gu Qu" and "Hua Gu Zi". In a narrow sense, with the development and changes of society, modern and contemporary Xiping folk songs refer to the folk song activities held by the working people of Xiping town during the Spring Lantern Festival accompanied by folk song and dance performances such as "riding Zhuma", "rowing Hanchuan", "carrying sedan chair" and so on. The definition of Xiping folk song in this paper is different from that in the past. From the

perspective of history and modernity, this paper makes a comprehensive interpretation of the definition of Xiping folk song from the perspective of broad and narrow sense and promotes the theoretical research depth of Xiping folk song.

Research limitation and future study

Historically, folk songs were transmitted by word of mouth. Therefore, the written materials available for reference are limited. So far, there is also a lack of relevant literature on Xiping folk songs in modern and contemporary times, and there are few valuable research results for reference and comparison, which brings few uncertain factors to the accuracy of the research results. The authors have limited time and energy. In order to do this research well, although the research has interviewed major folk artists in Xiping Town, whether there are more folk artists with different views in Xiping town with a total population of 35000 needs to be further explored, which brings some uncertainty to the accuracy of the description of the research results. Affected by the development and changes of modern society, the original survival soil of Xiping folk songs no longer exists. How to make this traditional art continue to be inherited and developed in the new era needs the collective wisdom of experts, scholars, government officials and people to inject new vitality into this art from different angles. For example, experts and scholars should deeply excavate the spiritual core of this traditional culture and interpret and convey it in simple terms in theory. Government officials can give more support and build more platforms for the inheritance and development of this traditional culture based on the research results of experts and scholars. People need to regain their cultural confidence, actively participate in the activities of traditional folk music culture, and feel the charm of traditional culture.

Statement of conflict of interest

Before the interview of this study, the authors clearly told all respondents that the content of this interview is only used for academic research, not for commercial purposes, and has been agreed by the respondents. There is no copyright dispute and potential conflict of interest.

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