

The Evolution of Ideas and Behaviors of Wan Bang Inheritors from the Perspective of Oral History

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Abstract: *Wanbang is a kind of opera in Nanyang, Henan Province. It is mainly popular in Neixiang county and has a history of more than 300 years. The repertoire is mainly played in the historical dynasties, with a unique high-octave "heaving sound" patternwork, coupled with the characteristic instrument "Banghu", whose timbre is euphemistic and clear, just like birdsong. From the perspective of oral history, this paper interviewed the representative inheritors of Wanbang in the old, middle and young generations, and further analyzed the changes of the inheritors' ideas and behaviors in the course of The Times.*

Keywords: *Oral history; Wanbang; Inheritor; Concept and behavior*

1. Brief introduction of Wanbang

Wanbang, commonly known as "Old Bangzi" "Chirp Bang" and "Hu Shao Bang" in the old days, was officially renamed "Wan Bang" in 1960 and was listed in the first batch of national intangible Cultural Heritage protection in 2006. Wanbang's rich singing style is characterized by Coloratura, the highest tone of Coloratura to the sol of the three groups of small characters on the piano, which exists in various lines. But at present, only girls can sing coloratura, and the highest note is lowered to the three small characters mi. At present, Wanbang is mainly passed on through "Neixiang Wanbang Art Heritage and Protection Center" and "Nanyang Wanbang Art Secondary Vocational School".

2. Three generations of Wanbang inheritor oral history collection

The Neixiang Wanbang Troupe has gone through more than 70 years since its establishment. It bears the sweat and crystallization of generations of Wanbang performers. The interview, selecting Wanbang representatives of the three generations of people, through the form of oral history records they Wanbang learning career, can be directly reflect wan bang nearly 60 years of development and innovation.

2.1. Remember the tradition -- try my best to carry it forward

Fan Yinglong, born in June 1943, was a native of Chaqu, Neixiang County. In September 1957, he entered Wanbang Troupe of Neixiang and began to study opera. In October 2012, he was designated as a national representative inheritor.

The way to learn drama: In 1960, he studied under Xing Deshan, and after three years of hard work, he inherited the nine tones and 18 tunes of Wan Bang in a systematic and accurate way. I spent as long as a month to grope, every morning before dawn to tighten the belt and go to the river to practice voice. In my opinion, before the use of coloratura, it is necessary to have sufficient support of Dantian breath. By using the machine of air exchange, the oral qi should be pressed down, and then the Dantian Qi bounced out from the upper pressure through the chest to the top of the larynx and the back of the head. The qi is squeezed into a vomiting sound, and the vomiting sound of different levels is produced by the control of breath. On the basis of inheriting Master Master's singing style, I also cleverly absorbed the excellent singing style of teachers such as Zhai Daosan, Cui Xifu and Zhang Gangquan, and formed my own Wan Bang singing style in practice. In addition to the timely use of singing, stealing breath, word flashing plate, Yin and Yang stop, word group arrangement, character spout, five tone adjustment, half speaking and half singing and other skills, more popular and accepted by the audience, there are still some fans singing my happy singing.

As for body skills, Master taught me all the skills he had learned about legs, such as one leg, two legs,

three legs, twisting silk legs, pushing against the air, flying forks on high tables, riding horses, and pulling legs, as well as how to handle and how to use them. Master especially stressed that the eyes should not be used carelessly, but must be used in the proper heat. One thing I regret is that I didn't leave my job for one day to further my study in opera before I retired. But practice makes perfect, and it's not necessarily a bad thing to be on the stage all the time^[1].

Working history: Since 1957, he started to work with the Wanbang Troupe, and has participated in nearly 100 plays and played the leading role in the performing arts practice for more than 60 years. For example, Zhou Yu in "Yellow Crane Tower", Wu Zixu in "Around the State of Chu", Luo Cheng in "Fighting the Flower Spear", Tang King in "Striking the Golden Branch", Lin Chong in "pressing up Liangshan Mountain", Zhou Yuanliang in "Qingming Case", and Li Yuhe, Guo Jianguang, Yang Zirong, Yan Weicai, Bethune, Jiao Yulu, Li Shixing and so on in modern drama. In 1980, "Pear Flower Returning to Tang" directed by me was recorded and published as a New Year picture on a four-color screen. The 1983 performance of Guan Yu's Solo Ride was recorded and broadcast on television.

For me, the most memorable years were between 1983 and 1993. Facing the sudden tide of reform, the national drama troupe was paralyzed in Qinyang Theater without any preparation at that time. At that time, the Party Committee of the Cultural Affairs Bureau decided to appoint me as the head of the organization to overcome the difficulties and resolutely preserve the only Wanbang Troupe. Faced with many difficulties and difficulties, I felt a great sense of responsibility when I was appointed. Then I led all the team members to carefully analyze the situation and situation of the institute, repeatedly plan and demonstrate, and work out a three-year short plan. After full discussion and approval, they should push forward the implementation as planned. For the sake of Wan wooden clappers' survival, the Wan wooden clappers failed to enter their houses for several years, not only three times, but even ten times. After three years of hard work, Wan Bang was ranked among eight advanced groups among 246 professional troupes in the province in 1990. In 1992, I led the troupe to Zibo, Shandong Province to participate in the Rare Opera competition. Wan Bang won the first prize and six individual awards in the national collective performance of a few kinds of operas with its traditional play Beating the Golden Branch, and the honorable title of "the First Troupe under Heaven".

In addition, during the national census of the intangible cultural heritage, I introduced a lot of materials and information about Wanbang, especially the "Nine tones and 18 tunes" of Wanbang, and submitted a complete copy to the census team. At the same time, more than 60 excellent Wanbang traditional plays and adapted and transplanted creative plays, with a total of about 100 pieces, were collected and filed, providing a strong guarantee for the successful election of Wan Bang to the National protection unit.

After retirement, a lot of emphasis was placed on the singing course professors of Wanbang Opera School. The school lacked teachers, so it hired excellent Wanbang inheritors including myself to teach singing, reciting, music theory, makeup and other courses.

2.2. Remember the inheritance - through the ancient Bo today has a long history

Wu Xinjian, born on August 6, 1980, has a bachelor's degree. Currently, he is the director of Wanbang Art Heritage and Protection Center of Neixiang County, a national third-level performer, a municipal inheritor, and a member of Henan Provincial Dramatists Association.

Learning experience: I was admitted to Wanbang Opera School in 1996, and joined the school when Wanbang Opera was at its most depressed and on the verge of extinction. I passed the exams of performing suona and sheng. After joining the band, I first played the flute for more than a year, and also learned the cello. At the end of 1998, there was a shortage of Bang-hu players, the main stringed instrument of Wan Bang Band, and only one player, my master Zhou Kuiyuan, was available. On the recommendation of the principal of the school, I began to learn how to play Bang-Hu. There were no extra bangs. My first bangs were made by my father. Every detail was polished to carry my father's faith in me. Since that time until 2015, I main bang hu play and play the flute. After 2015, as the head of the regiment, I managed various affairs in and out of the regiment, and gradually my performances became less and less.

Work experience: In 2012, he took over the post of assistant to the troupe leader and led the "First Team" of Wanbang Troupe, performing while working. In May 2015, he was transferred to the "Second Brigade" of Wanbang, led the brigade for three months, and took charge of the overall work of Wanbang in mid-August.

During these years of work, I have witnessed Wan Bang's ups and downs. In 1997, I started to perform with the group. No matter in spring, summer, autumn and winter, our young boys would lie on the top of the truck to protect the props and build the stage by themselves. In the past, the weather was particularly prone to rain and snow, and the road was muddy, so we walked through the snow, covered with mud, and the sweat on our hair became ice. Outside the performance encountered rain, no place to sleep, just wait until dawn. Moreover, the company had only a little more than two hundred dollars for each performance. We actors per show subsidy is fifty cents, a month to pay sixty yuan living expenses, then gradually rose to eighty, one hundred, one hundred and two^[2].

In 1998, Wanbang Theater Company achieved a great success. Its production of the Forbidden Covenant Tablet in the Three Courts won the Gold medal in the Seventh Opera Competition of Henan Province. But the development was still very sluggish, this year the troupe was divided into two teams, the first team insisted on opera, the second team performed drama, to ensure that they could survive on a meager income. The real improvement came after 2015, when the Neixiang County government purchased 300 performances a year for the development of Wanbang. The government paid people to watch the performances, which were performed in various towns and villages in Neixiang County. In 2014, the project fund of "Wanbang Art Training Hall" was obtained from the central government with RMB 21.6 million, which was used to build "Neixiang Wanbang Art Center" and "China Wanbang Opera Art Museum", thus giving Wanbang a real working unit. In 2016, the local historical drama Gao Yiyong, the Governor of the County, which was newly composed by Wan Bang, won the gold medal of the 8th Nanyang Opera Competition and the Gold Medal of the 7th Yellow River Drama Festival of Puyang Cup. In 2017, it took Wan Bang's famous play "Tongtai Pass" to Beijing "Mei Lanfang Grand Theater" to perform, which was warmly received by the audience. In the following two years, more and more Wanbang was invited to perform. I was honored to participate in the "2018 Tsinghua University Campus Opera Festival -- Henan Opera Art Week and Rare Opera Performances", and specially held the Wanbang Seminar to discuss plans for the inheritance and development of Wanbang.

Inheritance practice: At present, I make full use of various network platforms, every performance will be live broadcast, timely understand the opinions of the public, but also accumulated a fixed group of fans. In addition to publicity, I think we should focus on our own improvement. The following two points are very important in my opinion.

Since 2016, I have invited graduate students from the National Academy of Chinese Opera or Henan opera masters to give lectures every year, and created opportunities for troupe members to study outside. For example, in 2018, the troupe sponsored actress Wu Xinru from "First Group" to participate in the National Arts Fund project "Sichuan Opera Wensheng Performance" in Sichuan Province. At the end of September, the troupe assigned ten outstanding actors to attend the training class of intangible cultural heritage in Henan Vocational Art School. I approved Liu Xuxi to study "Wumei" for one year and Zhu Shuangshuang, a young actor, to study "Opera Source Makeup" in the province. I gave them all support, settled their tuition fees and paid their salaries as usual. In August 2018, we invited the famous Henan opera artists Meng Xiangli, Guan Xiaoyu, Fan Jing and other leading experts to come for one-to-one guidance. On September 10, we held Wanbang Dizi Opera reporting performance in the Xianya Square of Neixiang County to give back to the masses.

In 2017, I set up the stage car and invited a video company to conduct professional video recording. I conducted personal interviews with the surviving veteran Wanbang artists and recorded and saved representative Wanbang passages, so as to memorize the impression of Wanbang pieces from their perspective, preserve their classic and excellent passages, and save materials for the inheritance and development of Wanbang Pieces. I'm currently bringing in people and setting up a records office.

At the end of 2018, "China Wanbang Opera Art Museum" was initially established. The museum is divided into three parts. First, the introduction of Henan opera culture and the background of Nanyang Opera; Second, introduce the whole Wanbang Troupe and display the honors and awards of the state-owned Wanbang Troupe; The third is to collect and exhibit the historical plays and scripts of Wanbang, and inherit the hand-written, audio-visual materials, used props and other precious objects.

2.3. Remember the art of learning - the fire is passed down from one generation to another

Liu Mengjiao, female, 15 years old, studied in the theater school for three years. In 2018, she transferred to the theater company and began her internship. The learning mode in the theater school is also very intense, there are morning classes and evening classes. There are many courses to learn, such as singing, basic Gong, holding zi, figure, martial arts, reciting, makeup, music theory, Chinese, history

and other cultural courses. We learned what the teacher taught us. For example, Tang Jinhuan taught us to sing sentence by sentence in the singing class. After learning the singing, each of us would sing separately and Tang would correct the mistakes. At the beginning of the learning process, the most difficult thing was to figure out the role in the play and the change and shaping of the character. However, through the teacher's words and deeds and accumulated practice, I gradually realized the emotional expression of Wanbang's performance. I think these skills are all connected and ultimately need to be combined to perform fully.

Since I entered the troupe as an intern, I have found that there are many places to learn. When I rehearsed Wan Bang's traditional opera, I not only had a personal feeling of Wan Bang's traditional repertoire, but also found motivation in practice. In the future study, I will try my best to inherit the artistic essence of Wan Bang, make good use of the good advantages of the current cultural development, and let more people appreciate the charm of Wanbang.

3. Summary

The above interviews with representative Wanbang artistes of the aged, middle-aged and young generations reveal the development of Wanbang in the past 60 years in miniature. The three generations of inheritors, namely Fan Yinglong, the old, the middle and the young, showed changes in their behaviors and ideas during the development of Wanbang inheritance: from Fan Yinglong's "adherence to tradition" to Wu Xinjian's "minor innovation" to the "relative passivity" of young actors.

As a national representative inheritor, Fan Yinglong's Wanbang singing art has a high excavation and research value. Teacher Fan's behavior and ideas convey to us that inheriting tradition is the foundation of Wan Bang's development. Only when the "root" is completely preserved can the "soul" of Wan Bang's art be retained. His adherence to tradition also represents the ideas and persistence of Wan's older generation. In the current classroom teaching of opera school singing, he still sticks to the traditional singing, and believes that innovation is always based on inheriting the tradition. On the way of inheriting the tradition, Teacher Fan also made some minor innovations in singing, forming his own Wanbang artistic expression, which is also the need of the development of The Times.

As the backbone of the Wanbang Troupe, Chairman Wu Jianxin carried out a more systematic inheritance and development of the Wanbang Troupe. Timely interview and recording of the old artists, so that Wanbang descendants do not have no data to find. While inheriting the tradition, we encourage people to go out for further study. Only by seeing more can they go further. It opened up new ideas for performance, polished the music, refined and innovated the performance, techniques and stage beauty of Wan Bang, expanded its artistic expression and influence, and made outstanding contributions to the development of Wanbang in the course of The Times.

It can be seen from the oral materials of the teenagers that their current learning state is relatively passive, one is because of their young age, the other is the change of the education mode, has changed from the former "oral teaching, teaching by word and example" state to the "systematic, scientific, diversified" school education state of professional colleges. The change in the middle has advantages and disadvantages. The advantage is that learning is more systematic and professional; The disadvantage is that the "master-apprentice" mode of teaching skills has changed to the general teacher-student teaching mode, and the guidance mode from "individual" to "group" has lost the strictness and intimacy between the inheritance of masters and apprentices.

The inheritance of Wanbang will definitely fall on young people. The predecessors have built a good learning platform for them, and firmly believe that they will bring more possibilities to Wanbang in the future. The younger generations only need to maintain a positive attitude, follow the steps of Wanbang people in the past, and maintain their love and dedication to Wanbang, so that Wanbang can continue to be inherited and developed benignly^[3].

References

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