

On the Inheritance and Development of Yan'an Yangge during the War of Resistance

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Abstract: *The Yan'an Yangge is a combination of dance drama music comprehensive art form, its intellectual community grounding Yan'an red gene, with regional cultural revolution culture, literati culture characteristic, etc Yan'an formation and development of Yangge during the Anti-Japanese War marked the further exploration of folk art, also reflects the time faced the reality of the struggle situation, through the Yangge performances form, to convey the positive upward, the brave spirit of revolution, the development of the new age Yan'an Yangge embodies the people's yearning for a better life, an important influence on later revolutionary cultural heritage*

Keywords: *Yan'an Yangge, Anti-Japanese War, Yan'an spirit*

1. The Origin and Overview of Yan'an Yangge

1.1. The connotation of Yangge

The Yangge is a folk dance that has been widely practised in China, and is representative of the masses, with various localities having corresponding titles, styles and styles. It is mainly performed in squares during the traditional Lantern Festival on the 15th day of the first month of the lunar calendar. For example, the Northern Shaanxi Yangge highlights the simplicity, optimism and generosity of the people, and has profound cultural value. In addition to this, every large festival, such as New Year's Day and the Lantern Festival, rice-singing teams are organised in urban and rural areas to pay their respects, wish each other well and provide entertainment. In the performance of the Yangge, for the grasp of colour, the costume performance is more remarkable, with strong contrasting colours, highlighting the national style, with red, yellow, blue and green. The people sing and dance to the accompaniment of the Yangge, expressing their aspirations for a better life. On 20 May 2006, the Yangge was included in the first national list of intangible cultural heritage by the State Council.

There are different stories about the origins and claims of the Yangge. One is that the Han people began to sing when they were doing their usual farming work in order to share the physical stress, and this slowly evolved into the Yangge; the other is that the Yangge originated from the struggle against the floods, when people living by the Yellow River, armed with flood fighting tools, fought the floods collectively and were so happy to win that they danced to celebrate, and as more and more people participated, the movements and tunes of the Yangge took shape. The third is that according to the Yan'an Prefecture Records, "the spring festival is commonly known as Yangge", so it is possible that the song originated as a ritual for the land lord.

1.2. Types of Yangge

There are many different types of rice-songs in China, each with different origins and characteristics, so the characteristics, content and form of rice-songs vary, and they are mainly divided into Northeastern rice-songs, Hebei rice-songs and Shaanxi rice-songs according to region.

According to the the following table, the main features, performance forms and contents of the Shaanbei Yangge present a magnificent atmosphere different from those of the northeast and Hebei. The musical style is mainly based on the folk music style of Shaanbei, which is bold and exuberant, and is loved as one of the representatives of revolutionary culture.

name	trait	performance form	musical instruments	Music and morphological characteristics	content
northeast yangko	Humour bold and unrestrained fierce humor	Two people singing	percussion instrument	Run a music Go a music Music cap	On the one hand, it is related to the work and life of planting rice seedlings and plowing fields; on the other hand, it is related to the integration of ancient carols sung when praying for rites and praying for disasters. The elements of farm songs, folk martial arts acrobatics and opera are constantly integrated into the song, and Yangko is originally sung, which later evolves into Yangko
Hebei yangko	To sing Yangko opera - based, singing on the stage in the shed, which to Jidong Yangko simple, lyrical the most important	Diyangko and stilts	Drum percussion, suona blowing	Small music drum percussion suona blowing	Most of them originated from folk dances, with folk humanism and their own aesthetic sense. Later, they gradually evolved and transformed, and were presented in many large-scale activities and enjoyed by people
shanbey angge	Large scale atmosphere warm action vigorous mood cheerful bold and unrestrained	Twist, cross	The sound musical instrument	Mainly in monophonic, mainly in vocal music, lyrics and a multi-purpose song selection, mainly in the style of northern Shaanxi folk music	In terms of music, it is mainly the folk music style of northern Shaanxi. In terms of content, the Yangko is diverse, mainly to show the simple and positive characteristics of the people of northern Shaanxi, with obvious historical and cultural sentiment

2. The formation and connotation of Yan'an Yangge during the War of Resistance

2.1. The formation of Yan'an Yangge during the war period

As a traditional folk dance, it is performed in Yulin, Suide, Miri and Yan'an, each with its own distinctive style, but with an overall grand, simple and exuberant character.

From 1935 to 1945, as the leading centre of the Chinese people's war of resistance against Japan, the general rear of the war of liberation and the holy land of the revolution, Yan'an was a pioneer, forerunner and advocate of revolutionary culture, producing a number of excellent revolutionary cultural works. They mastered the basic rhythms and dance elements of the rice-song, transforming it into a regular, edifying rice-song activity, and turning it into a new rice-song art activity. Led by workers and peasants as the main image, holding props such as scythes and axes, the new Yangge opera was given new content, such as 'Brother and Sister Opening the Land' and 'Husband and Wife Knowing the Words'. After the reformation of the Yangge, such as "Nanniwan" and "A Good Place in the Border Area", they were welcomed by the masses. During the war period, they played a role in inspiring the fighting spirit and uplifting the military and the people. The folk dances were so popular that they began to spread around the region, and people added local names to the front of the songs to distinguish them from one another.

The Yan'an Yangge, a branch of northern Shaanxi, has a unique cultural charm that is reflected in the special historical circumstances of the war period. In the flood of artistic and cultural development, the Yan'an Yangge combines the wartime culture of the war period with the life of the people, and then incorporates new musical elements to make the Yan'an Yangge of the war period radiate red light, promote the red revolutionary spirit, and play a very big role in inspiring the people to unite and fight bravely.

2.2. The connotation of Yan'an Yangge during the war period

As China's proletariat grew, the Yan'an Yangge became the most powerful ideological weapon for promoting the spirit of the revolution, and its expression embodied a strong patriotic spirit that mirrored the theme of the war. Yan'an, as a sacred place of revolution, has a rich red culture, and the Yan'an Yangge was expressed in the best possible way during the war, in line with the mainstream direction of culture at the time, as advocated by Mao Zedong's 'Speech at the Yan'an Symposium on Literature and Art'. The Yan'an Yangge was not only a form of cultural art, but also a political one, and as times changed, it was given a new connotation, as people used it to present their joy at the victory of the war. The Yan'an rice-song was therefore naturally imbued with a revolutionary consciousness and had revolutionary attributes. It is recorded that "During the Communist civil war from 1945-1949, the rice-song was always a highlight of the massive celebrations that immediately followed the liberation of each city by the Chinese Communist Party." After the founding of the country, the Yangge continued to be a major performance at various large events. The Yan'an Yangge during the war was combined with political elements, and because it was mostly used to celebrate war victories, it was also known as the Victory Yangge. It was a milestone in the development of literature and art, both in breaking with the old and in creating the new. There is no doubt that the Yan'an Yangge represented the revolutionary art of the time in the countryside and the intellectuals represented urban civilisation.

As the attributes of the Yan'an Yangge change, so do its connotative features. This is manifested in the following ways.

First, it is distinctly ideological. After the Speech at the Yan'an Symposium on Literature and Art, literary and artistic policy began to serve politics, and literary and artistic workers in the liberated areas of Yan'an took the lives of workers, peasants and soldiers as the basic starting point for literary and artistic creators. The Yan'an Yangge, which emerged during the War of Resistance, was inevitably guided by the propagation of the culture of the border area, and was both a radical rewriting of the traditional Yangge and ascribing to it a red revolutionary culture, showing a distinct ideology.

The second is its outstanding mass nature. The Yan'an Yangge of the war period reflects its realistic revolutionary attributes, yet it is cheerful and lively, reflecting the optimism of the people. It also gives the people an intuitive sense of the concern and love of the central leadership, coming from the masses and going to the masses, and so massness is another characteristic of the Yangge. As it became a powerful weapon for propagating revolutionary culture, its political connotations changed significantly. In the old rice-character songs, the props used were umbrellas, coloured lanterns, handkerchiefs and red flowers, whereas in the transformed rice-character songs they were transformed into weapons with revolutionary symbols, such as the sickle and the axe. The clowns portrayed in the old rice-songs are replaced by heroic figures who are celebrated, and the relationships between the characters in the rice-songs range from the complex to the innocent, all expressing a distinct ideology.

3. The inheritance and development of Yan'an Yangge during the War of Resistance

3.1. The transmission and development of Yan'an Yangge art during the war period

The Yan'an Yangge of the war period was loved and practised by the people not only because it inspired people to move forward and unite in their expression, but also because it was constantly pushing the boundaries of artistic form.

First. In terms of content and form. The Yan'an Yangge, in terms of content, drew closer to the social life and struggle environment faced by the Shaanxi-Gan'ning border area at the time, reflecting the voices of the people at the time and inspiring the spirit of unity and sense of resistance among the masses at the time. As the song "Brothers in the Wilderness" goes, "Take up the hoe and go to the hillock, the hillock is beautiful. I stand tall and see far, our hometown has become a good place now." The lyrics are enthusiastic and cheerful and inspiring. The Yan'an Yangge was mainly presented to the public in the form of a song and dance drama during the war period, and a plot and characters were added to the Yangge to form a more complete narrative performance, which was mainly used at small and large festivals, such as the Spring Festival and the Lantern Festival. It conveys a sense of freedom and health to the people.

Second. In terms of organisational forms and characters. In order to be close to real life, official organizations in Yan'an have organized rice-singing activities for mass entertainment, such as party and government organs, literary and artistic groups, schools, factories, etc. From the former free and loose

folk organizations to the later officialization, with government leadership, it became "a collective dance of the people, a chorus of the people, which wants to express the collective power [Zhou Yang. Expression of the new era of the masses. Liberation Daily. 1944, p. 2...] ." The change in characters also reflects the newness of Yan'an Yangge during the war period, in which the main focus is on war heroes, folk heroes, workers, peasants and soldiers, for example in "Embroidering the Golden Plaque": "The golden plaque is embroidered with the saviour Chairman Mao, one embroidered with Chairman Mao, two embroidered with the Commander-in-Chief, and and the third embroidered with Premier Zhou." Its main characters are all heroes who led the people and made great contributions to people's happiness, and they are celebrated and praised as esteemed people.

Third. Props and tunes. In the Yan'an Yangge during the War of Resistance, the image of workers and peasants holding sickles and axes was used to replace the traditional image of the umbrella head leading the dance in the Yangge. The sickle and axe represent the emblematic motif of the Communist Party of China, which in turn symbolises the leadership of the Party and expresses the deeper meaning of the workers' and peasants' organisation. There are also new props such as the five-pointed star, the five continents motif and portraits and plaques of leading figures. Although the Yan'an Yangge of the war period has some continuity with the traditional Yangge in terms of singing tunes and singing style. However, because of the changes made to the repertoire subject matter, it inevitably transformed and refined the song tunes and singing methods, taking the essence and removing the dross, creating bright and innovative repertoire, and adding some elements of northern Shaanxi folk songs to the repertoire. Some typical pieces, for example, are Zhou Zishan [Shuihua. Wang Dahua. He Jingzhi. Ma Ke. Theatrical Music Zhou Zishan Yang Opera. Music Publishing House. 1958 edition. p. 121...] The music of the opera is a beautiful melody with a cheerful rhythm, such as "Carrying Salt" and "Nanniwan".

In comparison with the old rice-song, the reformed rice-song has undergone a huge change in both content and form. While the main purpose of the old rice-song was to entertain the gods, the reformed rice-song has broken through the limitations of the old one, fully conveying the content of the time and revealing the life of the masses at that time. In the early 1940s, when the Shaanxi-Ganjiang-Ningxia border area was under pressure from both the Kuomintang and the Japanese, the government launched the Great Production Movement, and with it the Yan'an Yangge of the war period took on a distinctly ideological character, which is reflected in many of the works of the time. For example, The Brothers Open the Land was based on the labour hero Ma Pi'en and was used to inspire the working people to defend their country. By contrasting the hard work of Liu's wife and Li's wife with the laziness of the latter, the song conveys the idea that only through hard work can one lead a good life.

In general, the Yan'an Yangge of the war period shows in many ways that it is different from the old Yangge, and also expresses in various ways that the Yan'an Yangge of the war period conveys a positive energy to the people and reflects the profound cultural connotations of the Chinese nation.

3.2. The Nature and Function of Yan'an Yangge during the War

The Yan'an Yangge of the war period is rich in the regional characteristics of northern Shaanxi and, as a revolutionary feature of the revolutionary base areas, is also heavily influenced by the intellectuals and has a cultural pluralism. As an important weapon for propagating the spirit of Yan'an, the Yan'an Yangge during the war period is themed on the representation of real life struggles, mainly conveying the main ideas of the love between the army and the people, external resistance, the organisation of the labour force, the rejection of feudal superstition and the increase of productivity. As sung in "The Flower Drum for the Army", "The world-famous Commander Zhu, who loves the people, has launched a great production campaign to make our lives beautiful, Hiya Meicuihua, Hiya Haitanghua [Li Wei. Selected Yangge. Spring Wind Publishing House. 1981 edition. p.56.] ." But more importantly, the Yan'an Yangge of the war period mainly inherited and developed the nationalized and popularized literary tradition after the May Fourth Movement, expressing the revolutionary and historical attributes of the Yan'an Yangge.

The Yan'an Yangge during the war period took on a whole new dimension, and it played a huge role in propagating the masses, inspiring the war effort, carrying out large scale production, and supporting the people and the military, with good repertoire coming out of it. For example, in the song "Haunting the Yangge" it is described that "When the spring wind blows in the yellow land, the Yangge of northern Shaanxi makes a fuss, and the streets and alleys are swarming with people, like that giant dragon tossing in the rain." The song shows that the people of Yan'an are like a dragon, struggling against the enemy even under difficult circumstances, and conveying to the people that the people of Yan'an must unite and fight together. The song is about a girl from the north of Shaanxi. This song

describes the appearance of women in Shaanxi in their pursuit of happiness in life, and also expresses their aspiration for a better life. The tune is gentle and slow, which can show the watery tenderness in the bones of women in Shaanxi. "It follows that the Yan'an Yangge conveys to the people that they embraced the Communist Party and Chairman Mao, that they created a happy life for the people and were loved by them, and that the development of the Yan'an Yangge during the war period was the way of the people; it guided the way forward and progressed with the development of society.

3.3. *The heritage and development strategy of Yan'an Yangge in the new era*

First. Promoting the main theme of the times in keeping up with the times. Through the study of the Yan'an Yangge before and after the war, innovations in form and tune have led to more practice of the Yangge, which has become a popular form of activity and has led people to actively engage in the development of the Yangge, in which they forget all their unpleasantness and worries in a situation that allows them to dance to the rhythm of the gongs and drums in an unrestrained and entertaining way. The Yan'an Yangge of the war period presents the current situation faced by the people of that time in the form of a literary performance, which combines the nature of the time, shows a strong vitality and presents the situation faced by the Chinese people during the war period and the tenacious spirit of resistance in them.

Second. Inherit new elements of regional culture in the exclusion of the old and the new. The Yan'an Yangge of the war period abandoned the exaggerated dance postures of traditional Yangge, and focused more on the cultivation of behavioural norms than before.

Third. Promoting the innovative development of Chinese culture in the passing of the flame to the next generation. The Yan'an Yangge of the war period was more focused on cultivating the revolutionary consciousness of the masses to integrate their small selves into their larger selves, a form that both propagated revolutionary ideas and entertained the masses, making the two closely integrated and continuing to develop in response to the needs of the times, so that the Yan'an Yangge of the war period sought to feel the great collective cohesion in the lively and joyful trend of red art, thus inspiring the masses to love the motherland and defend the border areas. The Yan'an Rice-Songs are a great example of how to keep up with the demands of the times.

4. Conclusion

General Secretary Xi Jinping pointed out that without the prosperity of Chinese culture, there would be no great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. The heritage and development of Yan'an Yangge in the new era should always adhere to the creative purpose of "people-centred", take meeting the spiritual and cultural needs of the people as the starting and ending point of literature and art work, infuse the spirit of the times into the culture of Yangge, and constantly push out new ideas, so that more excellent works reflecting the call of the times, uplifting the national spirit and cultivating noble sentiments can be presented. We will continue to push the boundaries of our culture, so that more outstanding works can be produced that reflect the call of the times, uplift the spirit of the nation and cultivate noble sentiments.

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