

## A Study of the Inheritance Groups of Hunan Flower Drum Opera

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### Abstract

Hunan Flower Drum Opera, as one of the important representatives of Chinese traditional opera, has a profound historical background and unique artistic charm. With the acceleration of modernization and changes in social and cultural environment, the inheritance and development of Hunan Flower Drum Opera is facing many challenges. As the core force for the protection, inheritance and innovation of Hunan Flower Drum Opera, the current situation and problems faced by the inherited groups deserve in-depth study and exploration. In this paper, we will discuss the current situation of the heritage group, the challenges faced by the heritage group and the development path in the future.

**Keywords:** Hunan Flower Drum Opera; Inheritance Group; Research.

### Introduction

Hunan Flower Drum Opera originated in the late Ming and early Qing dynasties, and is mainly popular in Hunan Province and its neighboring areas in China. Initially, Hua Gu Opera was a form of folk song and dance, expressing daily life and folk stories, and gradually evolved into a local opera with a complete performance system along with labor and festivals. (Zhu, 2007), Over time, the Flower Drum Opera has developed and expanded, forming a variety of genres and performance styles, and becoming a popular form of cultural entertainment for local people. After the founding of New China, with the support of national policies, Hunan Flower Drum Opera ushered in a new opportunity for development. Some excellent traditional repertoires were reorganized and staged, while a number of new repertoires reflecting the life of the people were also created. During this period, Hunan Flower Drum Opera's popularity in the country was enhanced, especially with the representative work "Liu Hai Chopping Woodcutter", which is famous throughout the country. In the 21st century, with the rapid socio-economic development and the increase of cultural diversity, the space for the survival of the traditional operatic arts is gradually shrinking. Hunan Flower Drum Opera is also facing inheritance and protection in modern society, in order to better inherit this precious cultural heritage, the author tries to conduct an in-depth research on the inheritance

group of Hunan Flower Drum Opera, and explores new paths to optimize the inheritance mechanism and the cultivation system of the inheritors.

### **The Concept of a Heritage Group**

Inheritance group refers to the creators, owners and inheritors of non-heritage projects that are jointly accomplished by two or more people. Individuals are the unit of groups, individuals form groups, and groups cannot be separated from individuals. When we look at the non-heritage projects, we should not only pay attention to the "trees", but also pay attention to the "forest" behind the trees. The main body of NHB is a combination of individuals and groups, they are a community of destiny, they complement each other, and at the same time, they are interdependent. (Li, 2021) Inheritance groups refer to individuals or groups that play a key role in the development and inheritance of Hunan Flower Drum Opera, including, but not limited to, professional actors, theater enthusiasts, educators, cultural administrators, and related supporters. These groups participate in the protection, inheritance and innovation of cultural heritage in different ways, forming a multi-level and diversified inheritance system. (Zhou,2014).

First of all, there are professional actors and non- genetic inheritors in professional troupes, which are the core force in the inheritance group of Flower Drum Opera. They have mastered the basic skills and performance techniques of Flower Drum Opera through systematic professional training and long-term stage practice. In particular, some folk artists who love the Flower Drum Opera, some of whom have been recognized by the state as non-genetic inheritors, are active in various folk arts and cultural activities through master and apprentice inheritance, which is an important force in the inheritance of the Flower Drum Opera. Secondly, there are amateur actors and enthusiasts in private troupes, and these inherited people include amateur performance teams in rural areas, which are self-organized by ordinary people who love Flower Drum Opera. Although they have not received systematic professional training, they are full of enthusiasm for the Flower Drum Opera, and have mastered the basic performance skills of the opera through self-study or master and apprentice inheritance.

Through participation in performances and publicity, they contribute to the inheritance and development of Flower Drum Opera. Further, there are educators. Educators mainly refer to teachers who are engaged in teaching Flower Drum Opera in various art colleges and training institutions. Through teaching courses and practical guidance, they have cultivated a large number of flower-drum opera professionals, providing a strong guarantee for the inheritance and development of flower-drum opera. Lastly, there are cultural administrators and researchers. Cultural administrators are those who are responsible for the protection and management of cultural heritage in the government and relevant cultural organizations. They support and promote the protection and inheritance of the Flower Drum Opera by formulating policies, allocating funds and organizing various cultural activities. Researchers, on the other hand, are engaged in the study of the history, culture and art of Hunan Flower Drum Opera and promote the development and popularization of the theory of Hunan Flower Drum Opera. Inheritance groups play a vital role in the inheritance and development of the Flower Drum Opera.

### **Problem Statement**

#### *Analysis of the Current Situation of The Heritage Group and Its Composition*

The inheritance of Hunan Flower Drum Opera relies on the joint efforts of many groups, and different groups have different roles and contributions in the inheritance process, and there are also differences in their internal composition and status. At present, there is a lack of systematic research on the detailed composition and roles of these inheritance groups, which makes it difficult to fully understand their specific performance and contribution in the inheritance of Flower Drum Opera. Therefore, it is necessary to deeply analyze the current situation and composition of various inheritance groups in order to clarify their roles and influences in the inheritance of the Flower Drum Opera.

#### *Exploration of Challenges and Problems Faced by Heritage Groups*

Inheritance groups have played an important role in the protection and inheritance of the Flower Drum Opera, but they also face a series of serious challenges. The predicaments they have encountered have seriously constrained the development of the heritage groups and the continued transmission of the Flower Drum Opera. The root causes of these problems and their specific impact on the development of the heritage groups and the Flower Drum Opera have not yet been fully studied and explored. It is important to analyze in depth the main challenges faced by the inherited groups in the process of inheritance, and to explore their causes and impacts, in order to provide a scientific basis and reference for solving these problems.

#### *Exploration of Future Development Paths for Heritage Groups*

In order to ensure the sustainable development of the Hunan Flower Drum Opera, it is necessary to provide effective support and development paths for the heritage groups. The future development path of the heritage group has not yet been clarified, and practical solutions and measures need to be put forward in the light of the current situation and problems, so as to ensure the continuation and development of the valuable cultural heritage of the Flower Drum Opera. Therefore, it is necessary to explore the future development path of the inherited groups and put forward targeted measures to promote the inheritance and innovative development of Hunan Flower Drum Opera.

### **Objectives**

The study of the current situation of the heritage groups of Hunan Flower Drum Opera, the challenges they face, and the exploration of future development paths will help to comprehensively understand the status of the heritage of this traditional opera, and provide a scientific basis for the formulation of effective protection and inheritance strategies. It will promote the sustainable development of Hunan Flower Drum Opera in modern society and ensure the continuation and development of this valuable cultural heritage.

#### *To Analyze the Current Situation of the Inheritance Groups and Understand the Role of the Inheritance Groups*

Understand in detail the composition and role of the inheritance groups such as professional actors, theater enthusiasts, educators and cultural managers.

*To Discuss the Challenges Faced by The Inherited Groups and Analyze the Causes of the Problems*

Analyze the challenges faced by the inherited groups in Hunan Flower Drum Opera in depth, explore the causes and effects of the problems such as talent fault, market shrinkage, etc., and lay the foundation for the sustainable development of the inherited groups to put forward feasible measures.

*To Propose Future Development Paths for the Heritage Groups to Promote the Inheritance of Hunan Flower Drum Opera*

Based on the current situation and problems, effective measures such as strengthening education and training, improving social support and promoting digital inheritance are proposed to promote the inheritance and development of Hunan Flower Drum Opera in the 21st century.

**Research Methodology**

The purpose of this study is to comprehensively analyze the current situation of the heritage groups of Hunan Flower Drum Opera, to explore the challenges it faces, and to propose a development path for the future. To achieve this goal, this paper adopts a variety of research methods to ensure the systematic, scientific and comprehensive nature of the study.

**Literature Review**

Through a systematic review and analysis of existing literature, understand the historical development of Hunan Flower Drum Opera, its artistic characteristics, and the current status of research related to the heritage groups. Collect academic papers, books, government reports and other relevant materials related to Hunan Flower Drum Opera, inheritance groups, protection and inheritance of traditional operas. Focus on the characteristics of the traditional master-disciple relationship and family inheritance and their evolution, the impact of government policies and economic conditions in different regions on the inheritance of Flower Drum Opera, and the changes in the interests and needs of modern audiences for traditional opera art.

**Field Research**

Through field research, we obtain first-hand information and gain an in-depth understanding of the current situation of Hunan Flower Drum Opera heritage groups and the specific problems they face. Select representative flower-drum opera troupes, art colleges, cultural management departments and community performance teams in Hunan Province as research objects. Select some representative characters to conduct in-depth interviews to obtain more detailed information. The interviews include personal experience, inheritance experience, current problems and views on future development.

**Participant Observation**

Directly observe the operation of the inheritance mechanism and training system by participating in the daily training and performance activities of the Flower Drum Opera. Observe the rehearsals and performances of Hunan Flower Drum Opera to directly observe the working condition and performance of the inheritance group and obtain intuitive feelings. Analyze the interview records and observation notes to extract key information. Combining the results of the literature review and field research, a comprehensive analysis is conducted

to summarize the current situation of Hunan Flower Drum Opera heritage groups, the challenges they face and their causes.

### **Interviews**

In-depth interviews were the primary data collection method. These interviews were carefully designed to explore multiple dimensions, including inheritance experiences, personal perspectives, perceived challenges, and future visions related to the Flower Drum Opera. Through in-depth interviews, the researchers conducted in-depth interviews with inheritors, performers, and heads of cultural institutions to understand the practical problems and needs they encountered in the inheritance process.

### **Recording of Information**

During the course of the fieldwork, archival materials were carefully collected, including photographs, audio recordings, and video footage of the Hunan Flower Drum Opera heritage group. These documents served as visual and auditory records that supplemented the qualitative data and provided historical and visual context for the study.

### **Results and Discussion**

#### *Analysis of the Current Situation of the Heritage Group and its Composition*

Through literature review and field research, we have analyzed the current situation and composition of Hunan Flower Drum Opera inheritance groups in detail. The results show that the inheritance groups are mainly composed of professional actors, amateur actors, Hunan Flower Drum Opera enthusiasts, educators and cultural administrators. Various inheritance groups play different roles in the inheritance and development of Flower Drum Opera, as follows: professional actors are the core force of the inheritance of Flower Drum Opera, mainly coming from Hunan Provincial Flower Drum Opera Theatre and Flower Drum Opera troupes in different cities. Research data show that professional actors have mastered the basic skills and performance techniques of Flower Drum Opera through systematic artistic education and long-term stage practice. They are not only the direct inheritors of Flower Drum Opera, but also important promoters of artistic innovation. For example, the Hunan Provincial Flower Drum Opera Theater is a famous professional group whose actors maintain a high level of performance of Flower Drum Opera through strict selection and training, and it is through their efforts that the artistic essence of Flower Drum Opera is passed on to the audience. Amateur actors and theater enthusiasts are mainly found in the amateur performing groups in communities and rural areas. They actively participate in the performance and promotion of Flower Drum Opera through self-study or master and apprentice transmission. Despite the lack of systematic professional training, they are passionate about Flower Drum Opera and are an important force in its widespread dissemination among the people. Educators undertake the teaching of Flower Drum Opera in art colleges and training institutions. Survey results show that a number of art colleges and universities in Hunan Province have offered specialized courses in flower-drum opera, and through theoretical teaching and practical guidance, they have cultivated a number of flower-drum opera professionals. These students systematically learn the theoretical and practical knowledge of flower-drum opera during their school years, and after graduation, they become the backbone of flower-drum opera, which provides a strong guarantee of talents for the continued inheritance of flower-drum opera. Cultural managers and researchers are responsible for the protection and management of the Flower Drum Opera in the government

and related cultural organizations. Cultural administrators play an important role in the promotion and social recognition of the Flower Drum Opera. They conduct research related to Hunan Flower Drum Opera through policy support, financial investment and the organization of cultural activities, promoting the inheritance and development of Flower Drum Opera.

### **Challenges Faced by Heritage Groups**

Inheritance groups play an important role in the protection and inheritance of Flower Drum Opera, but they also face a series of serious challenges. Through field investigation and in-depth interviews, we found the following main problems:

firstly, the inheritance group has a talent fault problem, and the research data shows that the reason is the diversified development of modern society and the diversified interests of the young generation, which makes the cultivation of flower-drum opera professionals face difficulties. Young people's interest in traditional arts is gradually weakening, resulting in a lack of succession of flower - drum opera professionals.

In addition, the existing professional actors and non-genetic inheritors are generally older, and the number of new generation successors is insufficient. The traditional apprentice-teacher inheritance model is less attractive in modern society, with fewer young apprentices, and the number of young people willing to learn and pass on the Flower Drum Opera has decreased significantly.

Secondly, the Hunan flower-drum opera market is shrinking. With the diversification of popular entertainment forms, the audience of flower-drum opera is gradually decreasing, and the market demand is declining. Many troupes have closed down, such as the once famous Hunan Liling Flower Drum Opera Troupe, and there are fewer and fewer professional and amateur performers, resulting in a sharp decline in the income of folk actors.

This not only affects the enthusiasm of the inherited groups, but also restricts the market-oriented development of Hunan Flower Drum Opera. The lack of systematic training programs and professional institutions makes the inheritance method more decentralized and informal, and the policy of inheritance mechanism is not perfect, which affects the inheritance and development of Hunan Flower Drum Opera.

Finally, the Hunan flower-drum opera community lacks sufficient funding, which limits creative and performance activities. Inheritance groups often face the problem of insufficient funds when carrying out the inheritance and innovation of Flower Drum Opera. The results of the research show that many troupes and art schools lack the necessary financial support, which affects the development of creation, performance and publicity activities.

### **Exploration of Future Development Paths for Heritage Groups**

Based on the above analysis, we propose a series of measures to promote the development of the heritage groups of Hunan Flower Drum Opera in order to cope with the current challenges and to ensure the sustainable development of Flower Drum Opera. The first strengthens the recording and protection of the skills of non-heritage inheritors. In order to protect the skills of folk artists, valuable cultural heritage is preserved by recording the



performing skills and repertoire of old artists through audio and video recordings. Through interviews with veteran artists, their life experiences and artistic experiences are recorded to form oral history materials. Continue to improve the master and apprentice inheritance classes, set up classes for the inheritance of the skills of the old artists, and invite the old artists to give lectures in person to pass on their skills to the younger generation.

Secondly, strengthen the education and training of Hunan Flower Drum Opera, and cultivate professional Hunan Flower Drum Opera performers and professional researchers. In order to attract and cultivate a new generation of inheritors, more young talents can be attracted and cultivated to join the Flower Drum Opera inheritance team by strengthening the professional education of Flower Drum Opera in art colleges and universities and providing more training opportunities. Outstanding students can be encouraged to study and research flower-drum opera in depth through the establishment of scholarships and funding programs. Cooperate with local educational institutions and cultural organizations to set up systematic training programs to provide professional learning paths for the new generation of inheritors. Through the organization of opera festivals, opera competitions and other activities, the appeal of Flower Drum Opera can be enhanced to attract more young people to participate.

Thirdly in order to adapt to the needs of modern audiences, innovations can be made in the form and content of performances, and by innovating the expression of Flower Drum Opera, it can increase its ornamental and entertaining qualities and attract more audiences. On the basis of traditional repertoire, modern themes and elements are incorporated make the Flower Drum Opera closer to real life. A typical success story in the research, Hunan Flower Drum Opera's Xiangdong Luzi, a branch of Hunan Flower Drum Opera, has boldly innovated in recent years, using new themes to create a new repertoire of "Flower Lanterns", which was performed with complete success at Zhuzhou Shennong Theater in Hunan Province. Its use of multimedia technology enhances the visual effect and viewing experience of Flower Drum Opera. Focusing on the aesthetics of young people, it incorporates new accompaniment methods while maintaining the characteristics of traditional musical instruments, and utilizes the technology of choreography to give new life and vitality to the traditional form of performance.

Fourthly, through policy support and financial investment, enhance the support for the inheritance group of Flower Drum Opera. A special fund has been set up to support the creation and performance of the Flower Drum Opera; enterprises and all walks of life are encouraged to participate in the protection and inheritance of the Flower Drum Opera. For example, Hunan Zhuzhou Drama Inheritance Center allows opera to go to the countryside by sending it to the countryside to maintain the liking of the audience of the older generation, and opera goes to the campus to attract more audiences through interactive performances that enhance the audience's sense of participation and experience. When Xiangdong Luzi performed at the primary school attached to Zhuzhou No. 2 Middle School in Hunan Province, elementary school students were invited to perform on stage to enhance the interest of the audience. At the same time, in a new way, folk artists and troupe actors were invited into the campus to attract the younger generation of audience to have an understanding of opera.

Fifthly promote digital inheritance using the Internet and digital media platforms, Jitterbug, etc. to promote and disseminate the Flower Drum Opera. By producing and releasing teaching videos and performance videos of flower-drum opera, more people will have the opportunity to understand and learn about flower-drum opera, expanding its audience.

### **Conclusion**

As an important part of Chinese traditional opera, the inheritance and development of Hunan Flower Drum Opera not only depends on the efforts of the inheriting groups, but also requires the common support of all sectors of society. By analysing the current situation of the inheriting groups, discussing the challenges they face and proposing a path for future development, this study provides a scientific basis for the conservation and inheritance of Hunan Flower Drum Opera, aiming to promote the inheritance and innovation of Hunan Flower Drum Opera in modern society. Hunan Flower Drum Opera can flourish and contribute to the rich diversity of global cultural heritage. Main Research Findings.

#### *Diversity and Importance of Inheritance Groups*

The inheritance groups of Hunan Flower Drum Opera mainly include professional actors, non-genetic inheritors, amateur actors, theatre enthusiasts, educators, cultural administrators and researchers. All kinds of inheritance groups play different but equally important roles in the inheritance process of Flower Drum Opera, and together they constitute the supporting force of the inheritance of Flower Drum Opera.

#### *Challenges Faced by the Inheritance Groups*

Due to the diversified development of modern society and the weakening of young people's interest in traditional arts, the cultivation of professional talents for the Flower Drum Opera is facing serious challenges, and the inheritance team is experiencing a fault phenomenon. Meanwhile, with the diversification of entertainment forms, the audience group of flower-drum opera gradually decreases, the market demand declines, and the market of Hunan flower-drum opera shrinks, which affects the enthusiasm and economic returns of the inherited groups. The lack of funds for the heritage groups is also a major problem. When the heritage groups carry out the inheritance and innovation of the Flower Drum Opera, they are often faced with the problem of insufficient funds, which restricts the development of creation and performance activities.

#### *Future Development Path*

Strengthen the protection of non-hereditary inheritors and strengthen the professional education of Flower Drum Opera in art colleges and universities, provide more training opportunities, and attract and cultivate more young talents. Attract more audiences by innovating the expression forms of Flower Drum Opera, increasing its ornamental and entertainment qualities, and expanding its influence through modern media. Enhance the support for the inherited groups of Flower Drum Opera through policy support and financial investment, set up a special fund to support the creation and performance of Flower Drum Opera, and expand the market space. Using the Internet and digital media platforms to promote and disseminate the Flower Drum Opera so that more people have the opportunity to understand and learn about this traditional art.



This study provides scientific basis and policy suggestions for the inheritance of Hunan Flower Drum Opera, helps to comprehensively understand the current situation of the inheritance groups and the problems they face, and provides a reference for the development of effective protection and inheritance strategies. By deeply analysis the roles and challenges of inheritance groups and exploring future development paths, it aims to promote the inheritance and innovation of Hunan Flower Drum Opera in modern society. Future research can further deepen the exploration of the internal structure and interaction of inheritance groups, and propose more precise and actionable inheritance strategies in light of social changes and cultural policies. In addition, it can also explore how to make use of emerging technologies and digital means to better promote and disseminate the Flower Drum Opera, so that more people can understand and love this traditional art. As an important heritage of Chinese traditional culture, the inheritance and development of Hunan Flower Drum Opera requires not only the joint efforts of the inheriting groups, but also the extensive support of all sectors of society. Through scientific research and effective measures, it is believed that the Hunan Flower Drum Opera, a valuable cultural heritage, will take on a new life in the new era, and continue to bring artistic enjoyment and cultural enlightenment to the audience.

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