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ANALYSIS OF THE CURRENT SITUATION AND TRENDS IN RESEARCH ON KUNQU OPERA COSTUMES BASED ON THE CHINA NATIONAL KNOWLEDGE INFRASTRUCTURE

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The research on Kunqu opera costumes presents a diversified and multi-dimensional trend in the 21st century. This article analyzes the current situation of research on Kunqu opera costumes in China by examining the annual distribution of literature on the subject on the Chinese Knowledge Network, as well as the keywords and fluctuations in research areas. The aim is to explore the hot issues and trends in research on Kunqu opera costumes in China in recent years, in order to provide support for the protection and development of traditional theater. In the future, the focus of research will be on innovative design of Kunqu opera costumes, cultural heritage, digital technology, and multicultural studies.

Key words: *Kunqu opera costumes, intangible cultural heritage, Chinese Knowledge Network, theater heritage, innovation.*

INTRODUCTION

Kun Opera, known as the "ancestor of all operas," is a typical representative of traditional Chinese opera. In 2001, Kun Opera was listed as a "Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity" by UNESCO, highlighting the importance of its inheritance and preservation. Developed over more than 650 years, Kun Opera has undergone ups and downs, and has been influenced by northern variety shows and southern operas from the late Yuan Dynasty and early Ming Dynasty. It has also inspired a variety of local opera genres and contributed to the formation of a rigorous and systematic programmatic wardrobe system. Not only does it embody the aesthetic characteristics of Chinese opera, but it also highlights the inheritance and development of China's opera heritage.

According to a statistical analysis of the publication years and quantities of research papers related to Kun Opera costumes in China, there was a low output of relevant studies from 2006 to 2008, and the linear trend during this period was relatively stable with no significant fluctuations. After 2008, the output of research papers slowly increased, but there was a trough period from 2010 to 2012. The number of publications reached a small peak after 2015, but then rapidly declined in 2016. However, since 2017, the output of research papers has steadily increased each year.



Therefore, the study of Kun Opera costumes can be roughly divided into three stages based on two nodes, 2010 and 2017 (Fig. 1).

The first stage, from 2006 to 2008, saw a few researchers beginning to explore the topic of Kun Opera costumes, after Kun Opera was included in the first batch of national intangible cultural heritage

list in 2006. However, the research on Kun Opera costumes during this stage was limited to a small number of scholars, representing the initial phase of Kun Opera costume research.

The second stage, from 2008 to 2017, marked a new phase in the study of Kun Opera costumes as Kun Opera was included in the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2008. From 2009, there was an increase in research related to Kun Opera costumes, but the quantity of studies was not stable, showing a fluctuating linear trend.

The third stage, from 2017 to 2021, witnessed a growing interest in Kun Opera among Chinese scholars from various fields. With the development of Chinese academic research, the number of studies related to Kun Opera costumes gradually increased. Moreover, the focus on the visual representation of Kun Opera, including its costume design, led to diversified research on Kun Opera costumes.

PURPOSE

In recent years, with the revival and development of traditional culture, Kunqu opera has gradually attracted more and more attention. As an important component of Kunqu opera, Kunqu costumes also face the dilemma of innovation and inheritance in contemporary society. The purpose of this study is to explore how to solve the dilemma of inheriting and innovating Kunqu costumes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

According to the results of a literature search on the China National Knowledge Infrastructure, there are currently two different viewpoints in the academic community regarding Kunqu opera costumes. The first viewpoint believes that Kunqu opera costumes should be protected in their original form, like a family heirloom, and has a reserved attitude towards innovation and development. For example, scholar Yi Hongxue believes that accurately defining the value and heritage category of intangible cultural heritage is the key to protecting and inheriting it, and effective rescue and inheritance measures should be taken to ensure that it is passed down to future generations in an "alive" state [1]. Scholars such as Zhou Kai and Tian Ruimin believe that traditional Kunqu opera should be preserved as much as possible, including costumes, and traditional elements

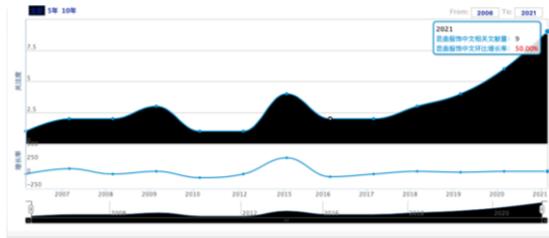


Fig. 1. Number of literature publications on Kunqu costumes and timeline in CNKI.



should not be changed to cater to contemporary audience tastes. When developing new plays, attention should be paid to protecting and inheriting traditional cultural heritage while moderately integrating modern aesthetics and performance requirements for innovation and improvement [2]. The second viewpoint advocates innovation and reform on the basis of inheriting Kunqu opera to adapt to the development needs of contemporary aesthetics and the preferences of modern audiences. For example, scholars such as Zhang Xiaoyan believe that seeking a multi-level and diversified development model that is suitable for the play and the plot, and in line with contemporary aesthetic standards, is an effective approach to improving contemporary Kunqu opera costumes. This method can make the play more in line with the aesthetic needs of contemporary audiences. Therefore, exploring and innovating the character's appearance to make it more contemporary and visually appealing is a necessary direction for improving contemporary Kunqu opera costumes [3].

Keywords are the main research directions and core hotspots of the literature content. The analysis of the 90 papers' keywords included in the China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI) can quickly reveal the hotspots and knowledge associations of research on Kunqu costumes. This includes high-frequency keywords such as protection and inheritance of intangible cultural heritage, innovation of Kunqu costumes, aesthetics, and Kunqu performances. Based on these high-frequency keywords, it is possible to further analyze current focal points and foreign research trends.

Kunqu, one of the oldest traditional Chinese operas, originated in the late Yuan and early Ming dynasties and flourished in the Ming and Qing periods. Through the continuous exploration and reform of several generations of Kunqu practitioners, Kunqu has developed a unique theatrical form and become a symbol of social and cultural changes. Although the costume of Kunqu has a strict standardized paradigm, it is still able to absorb new ideas, concepts, and phenomena and integrate them into its artistic expression. Based on the above analysis, the issue of inheritance and innovation in Kunqu costume can be addressed through the following four research trends.

Research on innovative design of Kunqu costumes: With the changes of times, Kunqu costumes need to be constantly innovated in order to meet the aesthetic demands and performance requirements of modern audiences. Future research will explore how to innovate the design and production techniques of Kunqu costumes on the basis of retaining traditional elements, making them more in line with modern aesthetics and performance needs. In terms of color, designers adjust the color matching and saturation to make the costumes more vivid, layered, and three-dimensional. In terms of fabrics, they focus on selecting soft, high-quality, and breathable fabrics to increase the comfort and viewing experience of the costumes. In terms of cutting, they pay attention to highlighting the costumes' line sense and contour sense, increasing their fluency and dynamism. On the other hand, the innovative design of Kunqu costumes also emphasizes the integration of other artistic elements, such as painting, sculpture, and music, to create a more visually



impactful effect. Designers combine traditional Kunqu costumes with modern art to highlight the themes and emotional expressions of the costumes.

Research on Virtual Try-On Technology for Kunqu Costume: Applying virtual try-on technology to the field of Kunqu costume can provide a more intuitive understanding and appreciation of Kunqu costume for the audience, as well as provide more design inspiration and references for Kunqu costume designers. Firstly, virtual try-on technology can provide a better viewing experience for the audience. Through virtual try-on technology, the audience can better appreciate the beauty and details of Kunqu costume and understand Kunqu culture. At the same time, the audience can choose different costume combinations and accessories through virtual try-on technology, and truly feel the changes and charm of Kunqu costume. Secondly, virtual try-on technology can help Kunqu costume designers better present their design works. Designers can use virtual try-on technology to simulate try-ons, quickly understand the design effects, adjust design details and color matching, and better meet the needs of the audience and the market.

Research on the multicultural aspects of Kunqu opera costumes: Kunqu opera costumes not only represent traditional Chinese culture, but also have been influenced and exchanged with other cultures. This research can deepen the understanding of cultural characteristics and artistic styles in different regions, ethnicities, times, and cultural backgrounds, and promote cultural exchange and cross-cultural understanding.

CONCLUSIONS

Through analyzing the literature on Kunqu costume research in the China National Knowledge Infrastructure database, this study aims to summarize the current status of research on Kunqu costumes, explore the unresolved issues in recent Chinese research on Kunqu costumes, and identify four major trends for future research on Kunqu costumes. This analysis aims to provide assistance in the protection and development of traditional Chinese theater. The 21st century marks a new era in human civilization, and China's theater reform should follow the trend of the times and continuously advance through exploration. Theater reform should not only meet the demands of the times, but also promote the development of traditional culture, ultimately serving the social goals of the wider population.

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