

# A Comparison of the Artistic Features of Tibetan Traditional Drama and Yuan Drama

## —Taking the comparison of performing arts as the topic

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**Abstract:** Tibet's traditional drama and Yuan Drama have formed their own artistic performance forms. The article makes a preliminary discussion and comparative study on the basic performance form of singing, reading, doing and playing in four aspects. Through the comparative study of this two dramas, the article discusses the rules of the relatively stylized and distinctive performance modes and techniques development.

**Keywords:** Tibetan drama; Yuan drama; performing arts; comparison

Countless drama actors in history have gradually explored and formed a relatively perfect and solidified stage performance rule in the long-term performance process, and developed a relatively stylized and innovative performance form, the basic content of which is "singing, reading, doing and playing", that is, the traditional basic skills of drama. The traditional Tibetan drama (hereinafter referred to as Tibetan drama) is also the same.

### 1. The characteristics of singing: singing-based drama expression mode

As the saying goes, "one minute's brilliant performance on the stage is attributed to ten years' practice under the stage", this is an incisive exposition of the importance of practicing various basic skills such as "singing, reading, doing and playing" in drama performance. Tibetan drama and Yuan drama both have the related saying of paying attention to the basic skills of drama, such as "singing, reading, doing and playing". Yuan drama has already taken on four dramatic factors of "singing, reading, doing and playing". Tibetan drama also has the saying of singing, dancing, rhyme, white, expressive, technical and "harmonious" six functions. Tibetan opera and Yuan drama both formed a complete set of stylized performance regulations with singing as the main theme. On the basis of inheriting the singing skills of the drama of Song and Jin dynasties, the scripts of the drama of Yuan dynasty, especially the Zhugong tune, a singing system of one singer was gradually formed, namely: "for every singer who sings, there is only one singer; if it is Mo, Dan doesn't appear, because there is only one singer. He has white color but no singing. " Other characters "if singing, only in wedges." Throughout the article, "The singer of the four compromises has to be the last one." One of its remarkable characteristics is that the actors in the play need not all be the main characters in the play. If the main characters in the play do not sing here, they will also take a back seat to other roles. "Even if the main actor and actress are playing in the same scene at the end of the play, they are also the lead singer of one person, while the other person can only perform in the form of chanting white. This form of singing with only one person in the whole play is of course a double test of singing skills and physical strength for the actors, and has great limitations compared with the singing methods used alternately by duets and choruses between later drama roles, but it is a huge historical progress compared with the drama of Song and Jin dynasties, and directly promotes the development of the drama performance system in which the drama of Yuan dynasty is dominated by singing and supplemented by chanting and singing. In response, Jin shengtian once commented on the drama of the Yuan dynasty when commenting on the 33rd time of "water margin": "each piece is divided into four parts, each part is divided into one solo, while all the people in the same scene are only provoked and accepted by actions and spoken parts in classical

Chinese drama."

Yuan drama, based on the popular northern music at that time, gradually developed and formed a performance mode of combined singing, generally using one set of songs at a time, and one set of songs is composed of several kinds of music cards. According to Zhou Deqing's Central Plains Rhyme, there are 12 kinds of palace tones commonly used in Yuan drama. The basic types of Yuan drama palace tune tunes are listed in the following table:

Table 1

Name of Imperial Tone	Tone characteristics	Number and name of matching tunes
Yellow bell palace	Rich and lingering	(28) Drunk flowers overcast, pairing, wind blowing ...
Masamiya	Melancholy and grandeur	(30) Be upright, roll embroidered balls, and make endless remarks ...
Great tone	Man is elegant and talented	(26) Niannu Jiao, Partridge Tian, A good Buddhism godness ...
Small stone tone	Beautiful and charming	(5) Green Apricot, Heaven Ballads, Angry People ...
Xianlu Palace	Fresh and soft	(48) Dian Jiang Lip, enjoy the flowers, Ba Sheng Gan Zhou ...
Zhonglu Palace	High and low profits	(48) butterfly, drunken spring breeze, mountain slope sheep ...
Nanlu Palace	lament grief	(24) a flower, best wish to the bridegroom buttonwood ...
Double tone	Health, agility and charm	(119) Water Fairy, Peace Order, Sunny Sea ...
Over tune	sneer.	(37) Tianjing Sand, Meier Bend, Pinglan People ...
Commercial tone	Mourning and resenting	(29) Settle down, Full Hall of Fame, Free and Happy ...
Quotient angle adjustment	Sadness is mild	(6) Yellow warbler, Gai Tian Qi, Ying Tian ...
General tone	Clean up the pit and cut into the pit	(8) Blushing, wall flowers, playing with children ...

(Note: The numbers in brackets in the table represent the number of tunes, only a few are cited for reasons of space.)

Similarly, the Tibetan opera performance program has a long history of paying attention to the actor's singing (Tibetan is "Rhonda"). "Rhonda" aria that is stories or biographies, is generally used in Tibetan opera to tell stories and express emotions through performers' singing of various "Rhonda" techniques. Due to the needs of square performances, Tibetan opera "Rhonda" has developed into a sonorous singing art with national characteristics, and is divided into four basic singing styles, namely, Darren Rhonda (i.e. long tune singing style), Da Zhen Rhonda (i.e. medium tune singing style), Da Tong Rhonda (i.e. short tune singing style) and Dang Ju Rhonda (i.e. ordinary singing style), according to the different characters' personalities and environmental atmosphere. In addition to the basic singing styles, according to the different repertoire performed, Tibetan opera will "adopt routines that are set by people and dedicated to special music (only a few common roles can be used for singing with each other), with as many as hundreds of singing styles." The basic types of Tibetan opera "Rhonda" are listed below:

By comparing with the palace tunes of Yuan drama listed in the previous table, we can see that the palace tunes of Yuan drama are quite complete and complicated, and the system is extensive and profound. There is no doubt that its tunes borrowed, inherited and developed the lyrics of the Song Dynasty and played an important role in the history of ancient Chinese literature. In contrast,

although Tibetan opera has its own singing style, it is much simpler and easier for actors to learn and master.

Table 2

Rhonda name	Structure type	Morphological characteristics
Darren Landa	Long Sentence Singing (Multiple Sentences in Parallel)	One kind sings repeatedly, the difficulty is big;The other is simple and popular, with little difficulty.
Da Zhen lang da	Chinese Tune Singing (Multiple Sentences in Parallel)	The length is not long and the melody is smooth and vivid.
Da Tong Landa	Short Tone Singing (Multiple Sentences in Parallel)	The length is not long, and the melody is simple and popular.
Xie Ba Rhonda	Singing for Praise (Trilogy)	Before and after is the loose body aria, in the middle is the rhyme body aria
Jue Lu Rhonda	Sad Melody (Multiple Sentences in Parallel)	The melody is plaintive and sad.
Xie Ma Rhonda	Song and Drama Mixed Cavity (Trilogy Structure)	The front and back is a loose-body aria, and the middle is a plate-type aria.
Xiema Dangmu Rhonda	Mixed rap cavity (trilogy structure)	Before and after for Santi aria, in the middle for rhyme read white
Jun Dang Rhonda	Conventional singing (multiple sentences in parallel)	The main characters sang with deep and smooth melody.
Dang Ju Rhonda	Common singing (multiple sentences in parallel)	Ordinary figures sing with simple and smooth melody.
Duo Qiao Rhonda	Villains Singing (Trilogy)	The villain sings with quick and smooth rhythm.
Harmonic	Folk Songs (Different Structures)	Most of them are folk songs that have nothing to do with the plot and are used to adjust the atmosphere.
Qu Cang Rhonda	Ending aria (multiple sentences juxtaposed)	The ending is special and the melody is festive and warm.

## 2. The combination of rhyme and prose: The performance system with monologue as an important supplement

Monologue refers to the spoken words of the characters in the drama and is an important supplement to singing. Compared with singing, monologue is in a subordinate position, so it is also called spoken parts. Tibetan opera and Yuan drama both attach great importance to the unique function of chanting white in their performances, and cooperate with singing to promote the development of story plot and express the feelings of characters. The art of reciting white in Yuan drama is relatively developed, but in terms of scattered white, there are many forms such as dialogue, monologue, white insertion, white band, narration, white division, etc. In the Yuan Dynasty, there were many masterpieces with excellent music and white, and even some dramas, such as "Scattered wealth is a gift to the old man" and "Dongtang Old Advocates the Children of Broken Families", won by reciting white alone and became brilliant with lyrics. For example, the beginning of the wedge, the first fold and the third fold in "Dongtang Old Advocates the Children of Broken Families" are long passages of several pages long, and monologues, dialogues and back-to-back dialogues are used interactively, which is very interesting.

"Yun" in Tibetan opera is equivalent to "Yun Bai" in Yuan drama. However, there is a saying of "white" corresponding to "scattered white" in Yuan drama. The "rhyme" of Tibetan opera means

that the rhyme word is pronounced white, also known as "xiong", and its forms are various. Different from the drama of the Yuan Dynasty, which relies on the action of characters and the recitation of white words to promote the development of plots, Tibetan drama usually sets up an outsider who does not play any role in the drama. The story narrator "reads the story and introduces the actors to perform by saying" xiong ", while the characters in the drama use relatively less dialogue. "White" is colloquial. Generally speaking, comedy roles are used in plays, and expressions and tones are exaggerated and humorous. Tibetan opera performances before the democratic reform were not used much. After the democratic reform, especially since the reform and opening-up, Tibetan opera has gradually increased in colloquial forms by learning from the performance methods of mainland Peking opera (in a broad sense, Peking opera can also be regarded as a variant of Yuan drama). In Tibetan opera performances, some clown actors will also lose no time to punctuate some impromptu colloquial expressions. For example, in "Zhuowa Sang Mu", clown actor Deng Zhen Ge Sang of the autonomous region Tibetan opera troupe plays a maid to look for Zhuowa Sang's children. During the performance, she "reported later that when people who climbed to the top of the building to watch the play took off their sheepskin coats, lice on the sheepskin coats jumped out", and later came back to report that "some people were distracted, their necks cocked and their legs twisted." Tibetan opera is a funny and exaggerated form of oral performance, which not only makes people laugh, but also effectively shortens the distance with the audience.

### **3. The most important thing is nature: The unremitting pursuit of flexible and diversified work**

Doing refers to doing work. In the early stage of Chinese drama performance, there has always been a tradition of paying attention to doing work and entertaining audiences with exaggerated and funny body movements. For example, in the Tang Dynasty, the military drama was performed purely with funny and teasing movements, and the telling and playing of the story took a secondary place instead. With the gradual development and maturity of dramatic art, actors have developed stylized performance techniques such as hands, eyes, body and steps during performance, and have developed flexible and varied performance techniques such as beards, hair, sleeves and end of bricks. In Yuan drama, the expression of actions and expressions is called Ke Fan, also known as Ke Jie. Generally, there are categories of actions such as cry Ke, smile Ke, sadness Ke, happiness Ke, etc. Compared with later dramas, the classification is not very standardized and detailed, and sometimes martial arts actions that later generations have classified as "fighting" are also included. For example, the fourth compromise in Gao Wenxiu's Xiangyang Club has the text label of "Four Generals' Scuffles". Sometimes it is also called "gag" together with make gags. Both Li Yu and Wang Jide have commented on "valuing nature" with making gags. Li Yu pointed out: "Although gag is necessary, it is not intentional..... Wonderful in follow, cat's paw from dew "; Wang Jide said: "The gag must be done skillfully and well. If you are good at telling jokes, it is wonderful to be quiet and stunning. It's not too cold to disturb the scene, so you can insert a subject between the ugly and the clean. It's also the eye of the play. " It can be seen from this that apart from explaining the action of the characters and promoting the development of the plot, Yuan drama plays a unique role of making jokes and funny jokes.

Tibetan opera also attaches great importance to the performance and presentation of dramatic movements. The performing arts that express movements are called "dance", "expression" and "skill". Among them, "dance" refers not only to the dance that has nothing to do with the drama content and regulates the performance atmosphere, but also refers to the "stylized dance body movements" of some actors, which are quite different from folk dances, "the limbs are open and the movements are large", and generally "most of them come from imitating labor, life and animal movements". The "expression" of Tibetan opera is the performance part that basically corresponds to the Yuan drama genre, and also has the artistic expression of relatively stylized realism or centralized refinement of social life. "skill" refers to acrobatic performances such as acrobatic

acrobatics interspersed in Tibetan operas, which are similar to acrobatic performances interspersed in the performance of Yuan drama. Tibetan opera combines the above three performing arts and refines and forms up to 33 kinds of relatively stylized postures to perform special effects according to the characteristics of different role types in the performance process. The commonly used postures of male horns are called Bo Chou, and the commonly used postures of female horns are called Mo Chou. Some aspects are obviously influenced by acrobatic performances in mainland China. For example, in the opening scene of Jiongba's troupe, "Bo Wa Duo Xia", one Weimba was lying on the ground during the performance, and then put a stone strip on his belly. Another Weimba was arranged to break the stone strip with a big hammer, and the smashed Weimba was unharmed. This acrobatic performance is also common in the mainland.

#### **4. Simple and plain: the art of setting up martial arts scenes**

Yuan drama and Tibetan drama performance are not very developed in the aspect of "fighting". Yuan drama is only interspersed with relatively simple martial arts actions in a few dramas such as Water Margin drama and Romance of the Three Kingdoms drama. It has not yet formed a system. Sometimes it is called ke Fan together with "do" and sometimes it is simply explained in lyrics or chants, which is far less colorful than the description of martial arts scenes in later dramas. For example, in "Li Kui in Liangshan", Li Kui and Lu Zhishen described the martial arts action when they went to Apricot Flower village with old Wang Lin to capture Song Gang and Lu Zhien. They only used five simple actions, namely, "fight as soon as you see", "fight as soon as you see", "fight as soon as you go", "catch up with and fight as soon as you catch up with" and "fight as soon as you catch the second thief". A short paragraph of text explained the plot of this story, highlighting the historical reality of the martial arts technique design in the early Yuan drama.

Because of the limitation of religious content, compared with the Yuan drama, the martial arts scenes in Tibetan drama are also limited to fighting demons and catching monsters. For this reason, martial arts are not separately classified into six categories: singing, dancing, rhyme, white, table, skill and "harmony". Only in the above-mentioned figure performance are some figure performance forms related to martial arts movements refined and designed. For example, Bo Chou evolved from the hunter's archery and archery. During the performance, the actor made rhythmic jumping movements with pauses and rubbing steps while his hands kept pulling strings. Other stylized performances, such as Daxuan Dong Chase, which imitates horseback riding, and Langqin Yazhui, which shows fighting among animals, involve simple and plain martial arts.

It can be said that both Tibetan opera and Yuan drama have scenes of martial arts. However, the Yuan drama further strengthened the art of setting up martial arts scenes, and profoundly reflected the unique Chinese martial arts and the vivid embodiment of the Chinese nation's long-standing "martial arts" spirit on the stage.

To sum up, Tibetan opera and Yuan drama developed and formed various performance arts with different characteristics around the basic performance forms of "singing, reading, doing and fighting". The performing arts of Yuan drama have accumulated experience for various forms of drama in later generations and have been further developed after being inherited. Tibetan opera performing arts are still performed among the people, and have been continuously developed and improved, especially since they have been successively listed on the list of autonomous district, national and UN intangible cultural heritage protection, and have been better inherited and protected.

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