



Zhuang Opera in Guangxi Province, China

Zhang Jian

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of Requirements for
degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Music
January 2021
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จิ้งโอเป่าในมณฑลกว่างซี ประเทศจีน

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation is a study of Zhuang opera in the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region in China. There are three general genres of Zhuang opera – the North Zhuang opera, South Zhuang opera, and Shigong Zhuang opera. The themes of the repertoire of Zhuang opera are about encompassing love, ethics, history, and myth. The analysis of selected musical pieces of these four types focuses on the music structure of *Pingban* melody, the relationship between *Bayin* music and opera melodies, and the ‘waist-foot’ rhyme of the song texts. This study is a pioneering work on the Zhuang opera's musical form as there is currently no published work on the music of the opera and its association with related music categories. Except for very few research collections on national opera, most studies mainly focus on the history, literature, and folklore of traditional Zhuang Opera. In the process of long-term changes and development, Zhuang Opera artists have always maintained free artistic ideas, fused and integrated various cultural and artistic elements, and created a contemporary form of artistic performance, religious ritual, folk music and performances, dances, and many other literary arts. In general, this study utilized new research methodologies producing different results from previous research, while at the same time, confirming earlier studies on the music and performance styles of the opera.

Keyword : Chinese opera, Zhuang music, Music characteristics, Transmission

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Zhang Jian

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

Zhuang Opera has high historical, literary, and artistic values while condensing within itself rich aesthetic connotations and profound cultural connotations. In the long and tortuous life course of the Zhuang Opera, the literati and entertainers have carefully crafted it, introducing brilliant instrumental music, vocal melodies, and performing styles. Further, it once swept throughout the society. Whether at the peak or low tide of development, the Zhuang Opera vividly recorded the social life of the ancient Zhuang people in China and kept its aesthetic characteristics, which profoundly affected the formation and development of other Zhuang arts. In addition, Zhuang Opera has always been respected as a model of operatic art for ethnic minorities. Zhuang Opera is the essence of Chinese Zhuang culture and the precious spiritual wealth of humanity (Li Fuqiang, 1999).

In May 2006, Zhuang Opera was listed in the first group of the national intangible cultural heritage list approved by the national council of China. In this context, on the one hand, people have a deeper understanding of the artistic value of Zhuang Opera. It has gained recognition in the entirety of China, indicating that it is a representative of the Zhuang culture. All walks of life have given keen attention and multi-faceted support to Zhuang Opera, which has solved its pressures to survive (Liao Mingjun, 2008).

The value of Zhuang Opera contrasts greatly with the difficult and poor living conditions of many of the people at the time. How to understand the value of Zhuang Opera and its deserved status, and how to transmit and disseminate the traditional national culture represented by Zhuang Opera, is related to its survival and reflects the contemporary people's attitude towards traditional culture and the foundation of national survival. Thus, it is of practical significance to explore the transmission, dissemination, and development of Zhuang Opera in modern society.

As the ethnic minority with the largest population in China, there is still a lack of research on the national Zhuang arts. Most of the research is aimed at a single aspect, and there

are few systematic studies on Zhuang Opera (The State Council of The People's Republic of China, http://www.gov.cn/guoqing/2015-07/23/content_2901594.htm).

After more than two hundred years of transmission, Zhuang Opera gradually developed into a mature opera. Singing in the Zhuang language gives it a distinctive regional color. It is based on the Zhuang folktale story's repertoire, which makes it more intimate. The costumes that are hand-painted with vivid colors reflect the unique aesthetics of the local Zhuang people. How to preserve and disseminate those aesthetics became a severe problem faced by Zhuang Opera at that time. The preservation and transmission of intangible cultural heritage depends on the government's commitment and correct guidance. One must find a more suitable path for its continuous transmission and development (Qu Liuyi, 1987).

On the other hand, the contradiction between ancient Zhuang Opera and contemporary social life has a long history, meaning that the contemporary social background and ancient Zhuang Opera have set forth new requirements for each other. Under the impact of multiculturalism, all kinds of fashion-stimulating entertainment and leisure-time activity are overwhelming, especially for young people who prefer film and television, the internet, and other entertainment methods that allow them to vent their emotions. At the same time, the talent training and performance practice of Zhuang Opera require not only low investment costs but also long-term training. Therefore, although the current situation of Zhuang Opera has become better, the various crises it faces still exist (Liao Mingjun, 2008).

First of all, Zhuang Opera's artistic genre, as an object of research, is based on relatively weak academic research on Chinese opera, mostly that of ethnic minority opera. China's opera culture can be traced back to the Qin (221-207 BCE) and Han (202 BCE - 220 CE) dynasties. It has a long history, and is broad and profound. Operas, novels, poetry, and prose are listed as the four major literary genres. However, as other arts continue to improve and develop today, opera art has not received enough attention. Russian dramatist Ukharizev (1989) noted that: "Opera itself has duality; in other words, there are two lives in opera. One of its lives exists in literature, and the other of its lives exists on the stage." His point of view shows that the study of opera can be divided into two dimensions: literary and stage performances.

When usually referring to opera, people always think of the Song and Yuan dynasties, the Yuan and Ming dynasties, the Ming and Qing dynasties, and the local operas such as Peking

Opera, Zhuang Opera, *Huizhou Opera*, *Sichuan Opera*, *Jin Opera*, *Yue Opera*, and *Henan Opera*. For a long time, due to various factors such as linguistic differences and geographical isolation, the spread and research of the various forms of Chinese operas are rooted in specific soils, and are limited to a certain extent because most of them originate from rural areas. It is irreplaceable in other forms of literature. Excluding this long-term aspect, active folk operas from the scope of literary studies will significantly reduce the scope of Chinese opera study and will make the Chinese opera research database to be defective to a certain extent.

Secondly, the Zhuang Opera is a representative of minority opera in China, as the research object is based on exploring the critical influence of nationality and regional characteristics on artistic creation. Due to differences in history and culture, and geographical environmental differences, people of various ethnic groups differ in their lifestyles, customs, arts, characteristics, and ideologies. The production and development of art are closely related to its living soil, and it is precisely because of these differences that the art of different regions has formed different styles. Zhuang Opera is the leading traditional opera in the Zhuang area. It is a comprehensive art form created by the Zhuang people by integrating their folk literature, music, dance, and culture. It is the crystallization of the wisdom and strength of the Zhuang nationality and its ancestors.

In recent years, there has been an increasing amount of academic research on Zhuang Opera. There are many monographs and academic papers, but most of them are on ethnology and folklore from the perspectives of its historical origin, transmission, and its development of vocal and stage performance arts. There are relatively few studies focusing on the contemporary development of Zhuang Opera, and there are no monographs or dissertations to study contemporary Zhuang Opera systematically.

Based on the above information, whether for the Zhuang Opera or the other ethnic minority arts, the systematic research results are relatively few. Therefore, it is necessary to systematically research Zhuang Opera. By analyzing Zhuang Opera's development in the new era and the different classifications according to the development direction, this dissertation aims to provide a new direction and angle on the study of Zhuang Opera.

1.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- 1.2.1 To investigate the music characteristics of Zhuang Opera.
- 1.2.2 To classify the repertoire of Zhuang Opera according to theme.
- 1.2.3 To analyze the selected music pieces of Zhuang Opera.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- 1.3.1 What are the musical characteristics of Zhuang Opera?
- 1.3.2 How does one classify the repertoire of Zhuang Opera according to thematic matter?
- 1.3.3 What are the music elements of selected musical pieces from Zhuang Opera?

1.4 IMPORTANCE OF RESEARCH

- 1.4.1 So that one may know the music characteristics of Zhuang Opera.
- 1.4.2 So that one may know the classifications of the repertoire of Zhuang Opera according to its themes.
- 1.4.3 So that one may know the music elements of selected music pieces from Zhuang Opera.

1.5 DEFINITION OF TERMS

1.5.1 Zhuang Opera

Zhuang Opera refers to a kind of ethnic minority opera which is mainly famous in the Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region. It is a representative opera of the Zhuang people.

The classification of Zhuang Opera is still under discussion. Many scholars have proposed different classifications from different angles: some think that Zhuang Opera includes the five varieties of: Tianlong Zhuang Opera, Jingde Zhuang Opera, Hanlong Zhuang Opera, Nasang Zhuang Opera and Shigong Opera. Some have classified it into Long Lin Zhuang Opera, Tian Lin Zhuang, Jingde Puppet Zhuang, Shigong Opera, Mai'ai Zhuang Opera. Some are divided into Shigong Zhuang Opera, Zhuang Folk Opera, Jingxi Puppet Opera, and Debao Zhuang Opera. Others are divided into Shigong Opera, North Zhuang Opera, South Zhuang Opera, and Debao Ma'ai Opera. It is more common to classify it as North Zhuang Opera, South Zhuang Opera, and

Shigong Zhuang Opera based on the different dialects and performance styles (Zhang Jiannian, 1987).

1.5.2 Music characteristics

General definitions of music characteristics include common elements such as pitch, melody, harmony, rhythm, and dynamics (which means loudness or softness), as well as the sound quality of the tone and texture, sometimes referred to as the 'color' of the tone. Music is performed with a vast range of instruments and vocal techniques ranging from singing to rapping. There are solely instrumental pieces, solely vocal pieces such as songs without instrumental accompaniment, and pieces that combine singing and instruments.

Since Zhuang Opera has a history of more than two hundred years from the Qing dynasty to the present, this study must discuss its historical development. Therefore, in this research, the music characteristics refer to the period of time from the original to the present, as well as vocal music, instrumental music, ensemble music; and the musical forms, music structures, melodies, and rhythms, as well as the study of the development process of music, along with the aesthetic study of Zhuang Opera.

1.5.3 Zhuang *Bayin* music

The word *Bayin* initially originated from the eight types of classification of the ancient Chinese musical instrument taxonomy, which refers to the material characteristics of ancient Chinese musical instruments. In this dissertation, the research is mainly focused on *Bayin* music, which is popular in the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region.

1.5.4 *Shuanghuang* opera

Shuanghuang opera refers to a kind of opera which is two-actor performance; when actors perform on the stage, they only pay attention to the performance physical movements, and the singing is performed by other singers hidden behind the scenes.

1.5.5 *Ma guhu*

The *magu-hu* is a Zhuang stringed instrument which is a representative instrument of Zhuang nationality, and is widely used in the Zhuang area of Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region. A *magu-hu* is made of a horse's leg bones, 10-12 cm long and 5 cm in diameter. Its tuning is d1 and a1 with two strings, and the range is d1-e3, ranging more than two octaves.

1.5.6 *Fenggu* drum

The *fenggu* drum (蜂鼓) is a percussion instrument, mainly used in Shigong Zhuang Opera.

1.5.7 *Yue qin*

The *yueqin* is a traditional Chinese plucked instrument, which originated in the Han Dynasty. The soundbox is round, and the neck is short. It has a full length of 62 cm, with a soundbox diameter of 36.3 cm.

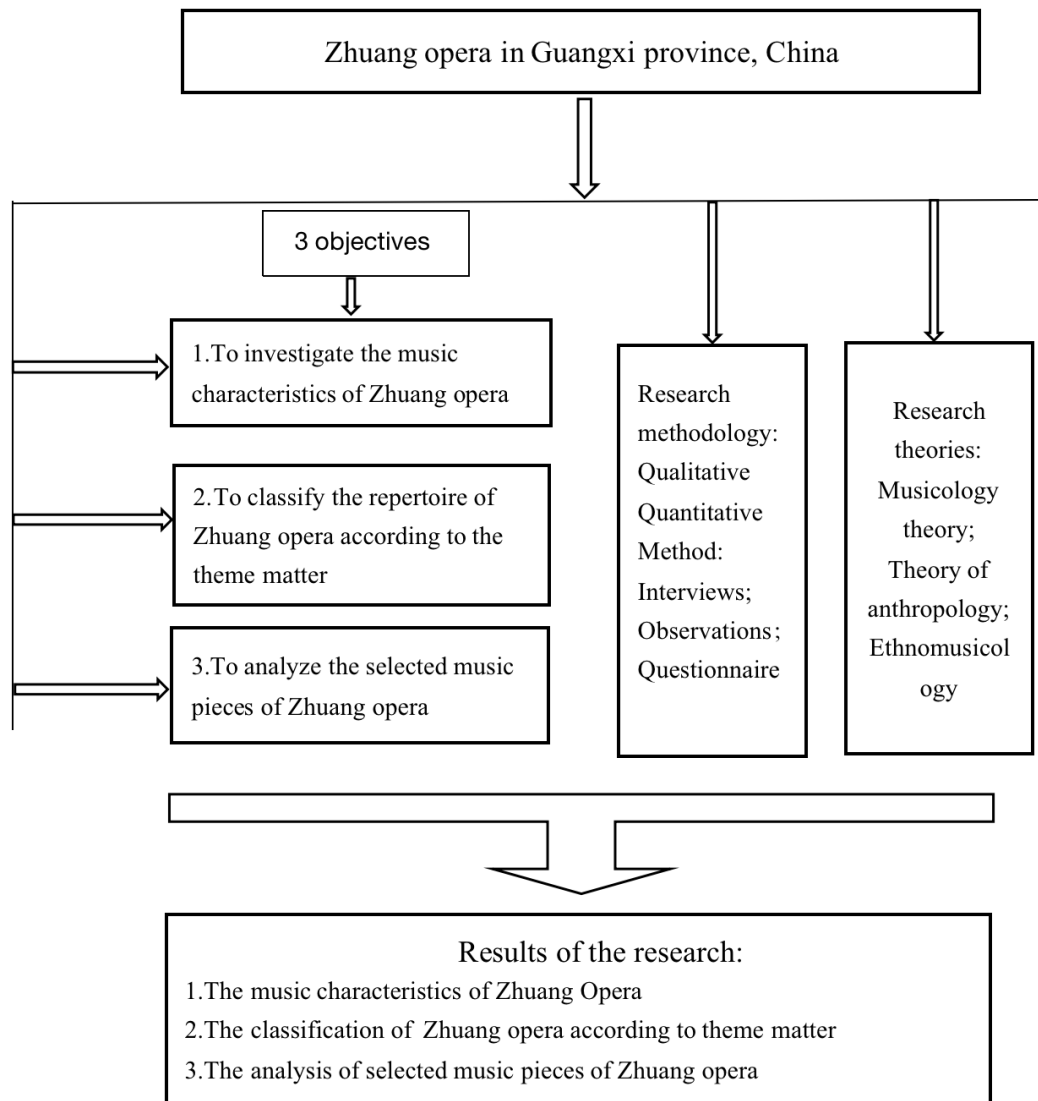
1.5.8 *Huluhu, tuhu*

Huluhu and *tuhu* refer to a kind of stringed instrument of the Zhuang people.

1.5.9 *Tu xi* opera

Tuxi opera refers to the early form of Zhuang Opera, mainly circulated in the Zhuang area of Jingxi County, using the native Zhuang dialect and local music.

1.6 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Zhuang opera is a form of performing art among Zhuang people, it exudes a unique charm in their folk practices. Since the beginning of the 1950s, some scholars have studied the art of Zhuang Opera from different angles. As an essential part of ethnic minorities' opera, Zhuang Opera has received many scholars' attention and has produced many research results.

In the subject of this research, “Zhuang Opera in Guangxi province,” the researcher reviewed all the written sources to obtain a comprehensive information for this dissertation. A review of the various literature falls into the following topics:

- 2.1 General research on Zhuang Opera in Guangxi province
- 2.2 Research on the musical characteristics of Zhuang Opera
 - 2.2.1 Research on the history of Zhuang Opera
 - 2.2.2 Research on the artistic forms of Zhuang Opera
 - 2.2.3 Research on linguistics and culture of Zhuang Opera
- 2.3. Research on the elements of the music of Zhuang Opera
 - 2.3.1 Music theory of the pentatonic scale
 - 2.3.2 Research on the music of Zhuang Opera
 - 2.3.3 Research on Zhuang nationality religious beliefs
- 2.4 Research on Zhuang Opera repertoire
 - 2.4.1 Research on Zhuang Opera performing arts
 - 2.4.2 Research on Zhuang Opera in modern society
- 2.5 Summary of the research
- 2.6 Research site review
- 2.7 Research theory
 - 2.7.1 Anthropology
 - 2.7.2 Ethnomusicology
- 2.8 The related reviews

2.1 GENERAL RESEARCH ON ZHUANG OPERA IN GUANGXI PROVINCE

In 1980, the Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region opera research office edited and published the “Guangxi Opera History Essays Collection,” which recorded related research papers and memoirs of historical materials, including Guangxi *Gui* Opera, *Caidiao* Opera, *Nuo* Opera, and Zhuang Opera, including six articles on the study of music, origin and artistic characteristics of Zhuang Opera.

In 1984, the Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region opera research office organized and compiled the “Zhuang Opera Art Collection,” which included research papers on Zhuang Opera from the 1950s to the 1980s, and which involved the historical development of Zhuang Opera, music aria, and language. As well as issues such as the performing arts, this material is both a follow-up to Zhuang Opera's history and an outlook for its future development.

Wei Wei (1990) wrote the first monograph on the art of Zhuang Opera. This book explores its origin and development from the aspects of its birth, growth, and decline. Moreover, they made its detailed and systematic elaboration from the aspects of its repertoire, music, performance, stage art, and revitalization, which provided a useful reference for future generations to understand and study its art.

The “Chinese Ethnic Minority Opera Research Essays,” edited by Fang Hechun (1997), is the first thesis on Chinese operas, which covers 14 operas, the Zhuang Operas' distribution, historical origins, and artistic skills.

The thesis edited by (Liao Mingjun (2008)), “Zhuang Opera Art and the Preservation of Intangible Cultural Heritage,” is a review of past Zhuang Opera research and a supplement to the research results of Zhuang Opera under the background of the preservation of intangible cultural heritage. The content is mainly focused on its study, which has excellent guiding significance for its transmission and development in the contemporary period.

The Guangxi North Zhuang Opera tutorial edited by CPPCC Tianlin County Committee (2011) compiled and described the basic situation of the North Zhuang Opera from various aspects, including its origin and development, and its characters, music, musical instruments, makeup, costumes, stage art, and performance customs comprising relatively comprehensive North Zhuang Opera performance teaching materials.

The book, “Watching the Grassroots: A Study of Transmission and Development of Zhuang Opera from a Folk Perspective” by Li Fuqiang (2014), is based on the “Zhuang Opera Transmission and Social Medical Culture” jointly implemented by the Guangxi University for Nationalities and the Tianlin County Cultural Bureau. The latter is based on the “development of experimental projects,” the historical and artistic characteristics of North Zhuang Opera, the transmission of the folk troupes and inheritors in Tianlin County, and the implementation of the project, which are detailed in the book. It describes that Zhuang Opera's transmission and development must follow the path of transmission and innovation, as well as points out the direction for its further development (Li Fuqiang, 2014).

2.2 RESEARCH ON THE MUSIC CHARACTERISTICS OF ZHUANG OPERA

2.2.1 History of Zhuang Opera

At the outset of the academic world's attention to Zhuang Opera, the research focus and general focus were mainly on discussing its history and origin. So far, a large number of academic papers have discussed its sources and issues.

Pan Mingxun (1986) divided the Zhuang Opera into Shigong Zhuang Opera, Zhuang Puppet Opera, North Zhuang Opera, South Zhuang Opera. These four categories are based on the criteria of the popular area, the language of singing, the music style, and the performance. In addition, their historical sources are discussed.

Li Xuanchun (1987) wrote “My View of the Origin and Development of the North Zhuang Opera” to explore the history of the North Zhuang Opera through each stage's history and presentation arts in each period. Li Guien (1989) wrote the “Re-exploration of the History of Zhuang Opera” and believes that the time when Zhuang Opera in Yunnan and Zhuang Opera in Guangxi formed the same way, also have both historical origins and coincidental characteristics.

Liu Shiren (2008) analyzed the differences and connections of Yunnan Zhuang Opera from its origin, language use, and opera melodies in the article "The Origins and Differences of Yunnan Zhuang Opera." Liu Lingling (2011) who wrote “A Study of Bouyei Opera in Guizhou” has pointed out the explicit analyses the origin of Bouyei Opera and the North Zhuang Opera.

2.2.2 Research on the artistic form of Zhuang Opera

Zhuang opera gradually formed a complete performance system in its long development process. Many scholars have made remarkable achievements in research on its growth environment, musical style, performing arts, and language characteristics.

Yi Ding and Gui Mei (1988) analyzed from the three aspects of repertoire, music, and performance, noting that these two operas have similarities in origin and artistic form. Lin Peiyan (1991) pointed out that the performance art of Zhuang Opera originated from the three aspects of North Zhuang Opera, South Zhuang Opera, and Zhuang Folk Dance.

Wei Qizhi (1992) wrote "A Brief Introduction to the Art of Zhuang Opera's Acoustic Singing" from the perspective of stage art, which study summarized Zhuang's music characteristics of vocal music, and described the importance of vocal reform and innovation. Li Fang (2007) explored the close relationship between geographical environment, custom environment, social environment, and Zhuang Opera.

Luo Haiyan (1998) wrote "On the Evolution of Guangxi Zhuang Opera Singing Method," and Dong Junping (1998) wrote "On the Enlightenment of the Development of Contemporary Opera." Jin Jie wrote "The Cultural Change of Zhuang Opera Music Viewed from the Musical Instruments of Zhuang Opera," while Wei Wei's (1990) "On the Music of North Zhuang Opera" and other papers have studied the art form of Zhuang Opera from different aspects.

2.2.3 Linguistics and Culture Studies of Zhuang Opera

Language is the basis of performing operas, and Zhuang Operas are divided into different types due to the differences in dialects and regions.

The similarities between music and language have prompted scholars to designate this relationship as necessary to ethnomusicology. Jaap Kunst (1974) includes music and language as an area of research that he did not discussed thoroughly in his monograph on ethnomusicology, but still considerably as essential.

Alan Merriam (1964) ,in his seminal work "The Anthropology of Music," states that "it is a truism to say that music and language are interrelated and that the study of this interrelationship is thus a task for the joint energies of the ethnomusicologist and the linguist."

Formal efforts at using linguistic concepts in music analysis find their starting point in the beginnings of ethnomusicology with a paper by (Ellis, 1885). His analysis of pitch sets from around the world using a monochord and dividing the octave into cents led to the conclusion that “the Musical Scale is not one, not ‘natural,’ nor even founded necessarily on the laws of the constitution of musical sound, but very diverse, very artificial, and very capricious.”

The relationship between text and melody in music, in form as well as in content, has been of concern to composers and a subject of study for musicologists. Among the many aspects of this relationship, that of the text's linguistic tones and the melodic contour of the music is of particular interest for songs in tonal languages (Yung B, 1991).

Each Chinese dialect has a small number of linguistic tonal categories, into which fall all the syllables that are spoken in that dialect. For example, the Cantonese dialect, spoken in the Southern coastal region, has nine tonal categories (Chao, 1947).

Chinese is a so-called tonal language, one in which pitch is used not only as intonation for speech but also as a syllable-differentiating agent, serving the same distinctive function as vowels or consonants. The relative pitch levels, the contour of pitch movement, and the pitch duration may all be phonemically significant in the spoken language. A 'linguistic tone' refers to these pitch properties of a spoken syllable (Yung B, 1991).

Xi Qixiong (1986) discussed that Zhuang language is the essential element for Zhuang Opera's performance and development. It also showed different types of Zhuang Operas due to the complexity of Zhuang language.

Lu Guangjie (1991) believes that the Zhuang language is based on Zhuang Opera performance, and the Zhuang language should always be used in the performance. This is also one of the characteristics that distinguish this opera from other operas.

Luo Yihua (2002) wrote “On the Cultural Differences of 'Zhu Yingtai' Between the Woman's Song and Zhuang Opera” pointed out the ethnic-cultural differences and women's roles identification issues reflected in the Liang Zhu story in the Zhuang Opera, and analyzed the issues in each ethnic group. The emergence of differences in different nationalities' characteristics and cultural dissemination channels has led to unique ethnic, cultural forms, and internalities reflecting cultural differences.

Chen Liqin (2011) explored the development of Zhuang Opera from the aspects of folk beliefs, festivals, customs, life etiquette, language, and other folk cultures, and proposed that to preserve the sustainable development of Zhuang Opera, it is necessary to safeguard its cultural and ecological environment for survival and development.

Zhou Xioumiao (2011) pointed out that the languages used in Zhuang Opera were mostly poetry and ballads, which reflected more rhythmic characteristics and could be used for reference. Further, she proposed that the expressive style of western opera could promote its the innovation and development.

Zhou Xioumiao (2012) pointed out that 'the language of the North Zhuang Opera has ethical characteristics of rhetoric, poetics, personalization, and inflection; so when promoting Zhuang Opera, one must pay attention to grasping the 'truth' principle and 'expressive' principle of the national culture in the translation process.

2.3 RESEARCH ON THE ELEMENTS OF THE MUSIC OF ZHUANG OPERA

2.3.1 Music theory of pentatonic scale

The pentatonic scale pattern in China called the *Wu-sheng* scale (五声调式), which consists of the scale notes termed as *gong* (宫), *shang* (商), *jue* (角), *zhi* (徵), and *yu* (羽). This basic Chinese scale pattern may be compared to a scale using the western syllables such as do-re-mi-sol-la, mi-sol-la-do-re, or sol-la-ti-re-mi. The notes of the *Wu-sheng* scale are traditionally called *Zheng-sheng* (正声), which is comparable to 'diatonic scale' in western music. Another term, *Pian-sheng* (偏声), can be regarded as a 'chromatic scale' (Li Chongguang, 2000).

The *Wu-sheng* scale is widely used in traditional Chinese music, including Chinese opera, and is mainly composed of the *Wu-sheng* scale's primary-notes of *gong*, *shang*, *jue*, *zhi*, and *yu* which are integrated into the melodies (Shen Jianguo, 2008).

The musician Zuo Zhenguan (1990) viewed that the pentatonic scale refers to a scale with five notes in an octave. There are many types of these in the world. The five-tone scales are distributed in China, Mongolia, North Korea, and Japan. Scotland, Ireland, Hungary, and other

places in Europe also widely use these scales. Besides, American Indian and black music also use the pentatonic scale.

Du Yaxiong (1993) believes that there are many types of scales in worldwide use, which has five notes within an octave and can be roughly divided into the tonal pentatonic scale, semi-tonal pentatonic scale, pentaphonic scale, and neuter-tonal scale.

Chinese music has one of the longest histories of the development of music cultures in the world. A music theory system was formulated in its own unique way but it differs fundamentally from western music. As early as 2,500 years ago, the book “*Guanzi-diyuan Pian*” (管子·地员篇) has a record of using the 'Sanfen-sunyi' principle (三分损益) to derive scalar tones. The earliest complete account regarding the 'sanfen-sunyi' principle can be traced back to about the fourth century BCE in “The Spring and Autumn of Lv” (吕氏春秋).

Hsun-Pin Huang (1994) viewed that the Chinese Wu-sheng scale pattern is equivalent to the western five-intervals principle or the Pythagorean tone system. In this process, a scalar tone is generated by alternately multiplying $2/3$ and $4/3$ by the length of the previous tone's pipe or string.

2.3.2 Research on the music of Zhuang Opera

The world of music is a broad category that encompass the merging of music with other forms of arts, such as literature, images, movement, to make larger performance-worlds. “Strengths and weaknesses are as operative in musicology as everywhere else” (Seeger, 1977).

The Zhuang nationality's representative stringed instrument is the *maguhu* (马骨胡), which is two-stringed, and uses a hollowed-out horse femur for a resonator. In both academic and popular literature, the *maguhu* is commonly referred to as a uniquely Zhuang instrument played in instrumental ensembles and in the Zhuang Opera (Widman, 2019).

Lu Guomin (2008) wrote “The Development of Zhuang Opera and the Formation of Music” in which they mainly discussed the formation of Yunnan Zhuang Opera, its music structure, and vocal characteristics.

Sun Jie (2008) explained the unique national artistic value of Zhuang Opera from the aspects of vocal melody type, song structure, and melody color of North Zhuang Opera music.

Yang Danhua (2013) analyzed traditional and modern singing methods from two different eras and then obtained the folk singing, chanting, and physical styles used in Zhuang Opera singing. The author points out that one must pay attention to the suitable combination of singing form and content.

2.3.3 Research on Zhuang nationality religious beliefs

Huang Qingyin (1984) pointed out the evolution of Zhuang's religious thoughts the worship of totems, heavenly gods, and ancestors and he believed that the trend of evolution was toward the confluence of indigenous religion and Taoism. Further, gradually Taoism and this evolution were likely to have been in the late Tang and early Song dynasties.

The second issue of Guangxi ethnic studies published by Zheng Chaoxiong (1987) discussed why Buddhism in the Guangxi Zhuang region had not been widely promoted, and he attributed the reasons to the following four points: 1) the spread of Buddhism among Zhuang people had no social basis; 2) the Zhuang people were at odds with Buddhist cosmology; 3) the ethics of the Zhuang people versus Buddhist thoughts (more people respected filial piety but Buddhism was indifferent); 4) the folk customs of the Zhuang ethnic group were at odds with Buddhist claims.

The third issue of “Guangxi Nationalities Research” was published by Zheng Chaoxiong (1988). It contained the article “Exploration on the Origin of Zhuang People's Concepts of Immortality of Souls and Worship of Ghosts and Gods” that explore the origin and development of immortality of souls.

The first issue of Guangxi national studies published by Wu Huimins (1989) was “On the Causes of Buddhism's Prolonged Spread in Guangxi,” and argued that because the Zhuang people clashed with Buddhist thoughts on the universe, moral ethics, and folk customs, Buddhism could not spread in Zhuang area. The third issue was published as Ling Shudong's “Conflicts between Zhuang's Indigenous Religion and the Construction of Socialist Spiritual Civilization-reflection on Jingxi Monthly Worship.” Lastly, the fourth issue was Li Ganfen's “Observation of the Culture of Zhuang indigenous religion.”

The second issue of Guangxi ethnic studies included Fang Sumei's (1990) “Combination of Indigenous Religion, Taoism, and Zhuang culture.” This article believed that the Zhuang people did not have a unified religion of their beliefs. The most important characteristic of their

society was the combination of indigenous Zhuang religion and Taoist religious behavior and ideas. The fourth issue of Qin Caizhi's (1990) "On Zhuang's Nature Worship" also stated: "Due to historical reasons, the Zhuang people have not formed a unified religion, and believe in the spirit of all things, the immortality of the soul, and the belief in multiple gods."

The "Journal of Guangxi University" (philosophy and social science edition) No. 4, and the 43rd issue contained Huang Shijie's (1992) "Analysis of Guangxi Zhuang ghosts." The article treats spirits as a dynamic cultural phenomenon. It examines it against the background of the Zhuang people's history and culture, which led to its development and carried out cultural accumulation analysis and preliminary scientific research.

Guangxi education press published Qiu Zhensheng's (1996) "Zhuang Totem Examination," and "Guangxi National Studies" Issue 3 containing Fan Honggui's "Zhuang and Thai Ethnic Groups 'Belief and Worship.'" The first issue of Guangxi ethnic studies published Shao Zhizhong's (1997) "Life and Death Worship and Zhuang Goddess Culture," Liao Mingjun's "Zhuang Ethnic Worship Culture, and the second issue of Wei Xiaoming's "Exploration of Zhuang Society God."

2.4 RESEARCH ON ZHUANG OPERA REPERTOIRE

The study of the repertoire is an indispensable part of the study of opera. Many experts and scholars have researched the repertoire of Zhuang Opera and have obtained specific results.

Pan Jian (1998) analyzes the storyline, plot conflicts, and characterization of the Zhuang Opera "Jinhua-Yinhua," and proposes the relationship between the accumulation of the construction of the repertoire.

Gu An (1986) discussed how the opera "Golden Flower and Silver Flower" changed from the mythical song and dance opera "Snake and Lang." It discusses the development history of the Zhuang Opera.

Qiu Zhensheng (1998) reviewed and explored the development of Zhuang Opera thirty years after the establishment of the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region in 1958, which pointed out that an essential factor for the rapid development of Zhuang Opera is to continuously create unique and useful repertoire, and summarize the common characteristics of these repertoires.

Gu Lezhen (1989) believes that national operas' national characteristics are determined to a certain extent by the nationality of the plays. Therefore, the plays' creation should reflect the Zhuang national history and culture and give full play to the national characteristics.

Yan Jinzhong (2007) wrote “Declaration of the Structure and Love Words of Six Zhuang Operas,” based on the “Zhuang opera of *Baiyun* village” as a case, which explored how to pay attention to the innovative conception and proper vocabulary in the adaptation of Zhuang Opera.

Yue Chao (2014) analyzed the artistic characteristics of “Rainbow” from the aspects of poetic expression, symbolism, Zhuang nationality, the transmission and innovation.

Yang Yahu (2014) explored the Zhuang ethnic elements in the Zhuang Opera “The King of Songs,” such as costumes, food, totems, ideas, folklore. Differences in customs and ideas at that time from the Zhuang Opera absorbed the essence of the “Book of Songs” as an entry point to explore the two-way communication process of Zhuang and Han culture.

Huang Shouheng (2015) studied the pedigree of his teacher's biography by sorting out the content of “Tai Ping Chun,” the founding work of North Zhuang Opera, and by tracing its origins. His other thesis “*Zhuang Zi* Ancient Books ‘*Tai Ping Chun*’ language studies” detailed an analysis of its phonetic system, vocabulary and rhyme rhetoric.

The other studies on this topic are the following: Gu Lezhen's (1987) “Characterization and Director's Handling of Zhuang Opera *Yu Renmeng*,” Mei Shuaiyuan's (1990) “Creation From Reality to Mythology: A Zhuang Opera ‘People's Dreams Creation Thoughts,’” Ding Shibo and Chen Limei's (1994) “Zhuang Opera: National Features of Liang Shanbo and Zhu Yingtai,” Ding Shibo's (1995) “Tai Ping Chun,” a Vocal Copy of the Zhuang Opera,” Luo Yihua's (2002) “On the Cultural Differences Between the Songs of *Nvshu* (*Zhu Yingtai*) and Liang Zhu.”

2.4.1 Research on Zhuang Opera performing arts

In its development, Zhuang Opera has formed a set of self-contained artistic performance forms through artists' talents. Now, in a new situation, researchers are concerned about preserving the traditional art form of Zhuang Opera and have proposed to innovate and develop new performance methods gradually.

Some Western scholars believe that studying Zhuang music can help one go beyond the music itself and explore the cultural background behind it, that is, “humanly organized sound” to “sounded possible worlds” (Blacking John, 1971).

Bi Kejian and Ding Shibo (1991) pointed out that Zhuang Opera should focus on the innovation of its music, the collection of various Zhuang music materials, and the creation of new vocal melodies. As to the latter, it should integrate the music, applying them to Zhuang Opera innovation measures to preserve its national characteristics.

Lin Peiyan (1991) pointed out that the performance style of Zhuang Opera comes from three aspects: North Zhuang Opera, South Zhuang Opera, and Zhuang Folk Dance.

Wei Qizhi (1992) believes that one's study should start from the music style characteristics of different Zhuang Opera melodies, and further proposed that the researcher should pay attention to the training and development of the singing style, achieving the same sound in the performance, and striving to integrate singing. At the same time, the author also believes that the creation of outstanding plays combined with excellent performance technique is a crucial way to revitalize Zhuang Opera.

Shanlin (1995) analyzed the tuning method of the *maguhu* (the representative instrument of Zhuang Opera), explaining the tuning method of North Zhuang Opera music.

Luo Haiyan (1998) discussed Zhuang Opera from three aspects: background, music structure, and singing language, which have influencing factors and express the style of the times. The viewpoint described how to develop a heritage and return to its original artistic essence.

There are also some western scholars who have thought that although cultural cadres were restored after the Cultural Revolution, and some aspects of traditional culture are mentioned in school curricula, these efforts have done little to stem the waning of traditional culture among the Zhuang (Widman, 2019).

2.4.2 Research on Zhuang Opera in modern society

To develop contemporary operas, some scholars have pointed out that one must focus on social needs and carry out various reforms based on preservation.

With the opening of China to the global economy at the end of the 1970s and the further improvement of infrastructure in Guangxi, a flood of outside influences began to impact younger Zhuang. Many young men traveled to the east coast of China to work in factories, and children of all ages began to attend schools, often away from home (Widman and John Harvey, 2019). As a result, many Zhuang have grown up in linguistic environments that are primarily Mandarin, and apart from traditional cultural events such as singing fairs. Bodomo and Adams pointed this out in

“Strategies for the Documentation and Revitalization of the Zhuang Language of Southwestern China” (Bodomo and Adams, 2007).

Huang Mingzhong (1988) pointed out that Zhuang Opera is in trouble because the innovation and development of Zhuang Opera has lost its national characteristics. Cen Longye (1991) held that the reform of Zhuang Opera must follow the rules of aesthetics and achieve the characteristics of “near, small, fine, and slow” as well as other aspects. The innovation must also carry out multi-level development in real-life situations to achieve a taste of elegance.

Tan Jiming (1991) proposed that the reform of Zhuang Opera should pay equal attention to national characteristics and artistry; and on this basis, measures should be taken to increase government support and form a Zhuang Opera troupe.

Peng Xiuqing (1991) analyzed the Yue and Zhuang Operas, proposing that the Zhuang Opera be developed by referring to the artistic expression of the Yue Opera in order to realize its multi-channel innovation.

Zhao Xiaoxiang (2009) took the Zhuang Opera troupe's *Baida Tongle* group as his research object and pointed out that this folk theater troupe should preserve and develop the traditional art of Zhuang Opera in modern society. Zhao Qiaoyan and Chen Wei (2011) pointed out that the incubation theory can be used to preserve and develop Zhuang Opera.

Zhang Lianxiu (2012), in “Research on Tourism Development of Guangxi's Ethnic and Folk Cultural Resources Taking Tianlin Zhuang Opera as an Example,” discussed the development of Tianlin Zhuang's Opera from the perspective of literature.

Tan Qin (2012) wrote “Consumption and Production Transformation of Zhuang Opera Culture in the Context of China-ASEAN Cultural Consumption” from the perspective of Zhuang Opera's cultural resources which are actually cultural capital. Cross-border cooperation and other ways carry out innovative creation to create a modern cultural form in line with mass consumption and promote the modern transformation and development of Zhuang Opera.

Li Xin (2014) noted in his work, “Tianlin Zhuang Opera Art Festival and Development of Zhuang Opera,” which took the Tianlin Zhuang Opera art festival as the research object, discusses its dual role in the development and preserves traditional art forms that promote its development.

2.5 SUMMARY OF REVIEWS

Based on the above overview, it can now be summarized that the researcher thinks the previous research on Zhuang Opera have the following ideas:

(1) Most of the researchers are not ethnomusicology scholars. When they research the Zhuang Opera, they focused on introductory descriptions of historical sources (Pan Mingxun, 1986), performance practices (Lin Peiyan, 1991), and the performance styles of the artistic forms (Luo Haiyan, 1998)). The research focused on the description and arrangement of Zhuang Opera vocal music and lacked an in-depth analysis of the overall music form and related formulaic performance forms.

(2) The description of literary theory is generally a discussion of the data collection and survey in the fieldwork, which has the characteristics of the documentary, reproduction, and objective nature (Luo Yihua, 2002; Chen Liqin, 2011). In the past, when investigating Zhuang Opera, scholars usually focused their attention on the areas with which they were familiar. The fieldwork perspective has certain limitations and lacks the characteristics of the artistic development of Zhuang Opera.

(3) Most of the studies focused on the descriptive aspects of Zhuang Opera's surface status instead of further explanations. However, scholars have collected relevant Zhuang Opera materials and have carried out their studies based on these materials (Gu Lezhen, 1989; Yan Jinzhong, 2007). Various types of Zhuang Opera documents have been collated. Some researchers' new choreography of Zhuang Operas was created based on its traditional vocal melodies combined with traditional Chinese opera melodies and other performance techniques, which all have laid a solid foundation for its future research (Liu Shiren, 2008).

(4) Although the area where the Zhuang Opera is distributed is in the Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, and the Guangnan and Funing areas in Yunnan province, due to many factors, the current research results are scattered. The research did not reach a more consistent conclusion (Yi Ding and Guimei, 1988; Wei Qizhi, 1992).

(5) From the researcher's perspective, most of the above articles belong to ethnographic research. The salient feature is the factual description of objectively existing musical phenomena based on field investigations and lack of in-depth exploration. Except for very few research collections that research the national opera, most monographs mainly focus on the historical,

literary, and folklore nature of traditional Zhuang Opera (Dong Junping, 1998; Luo Haiyan, 1998). Among them, the opera itself is limited to the research of its performance, ensemble organization, music styles, and history (Chen Liqin, 2011; Zhou Xiumiao, 2011). The only minor analysis of the two music cultures is also purely from the music styles' perspective, without deepening the opera's culture—having the background to observe, rarely extending to the transmission development of Zhuang Opera in the contemporary context (Sun Jie, 2011).

(6) Due to the difficulty in analyzing musical notation for melodies and music characteristics, the previous analysis and research on Zhuang Opera's musical form are relatively weak (Zheng Chaoxiong, 1988; Qiu Zhensheng, 1996; Qiu Zhensheng, 1998). There is currently no outstanding monograph for researching the music of Zhuang Opera and its association with related music categories.

2.6 RESEARCH SITE REVIEW

Zhuang opera is the representative art of the Zhuang people. The Zhuang is the most populous ethnic group among Chinese ethnic minorities. The characteristics of this nationality include high optimism and enthusiasm, and admirable skills at singing and dancing. The Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region is the place where the Zhuang population is most concentrated. Its distribution is dense in western Guangxi and sparse in eastern and northern Guangxi. According to the Chinese government's sixth demographic statistics in 2010, the Zhuang population totaled 16.92 million. Among them, 14.444 million live in Nanning, Baise, Hechi, and Liuzhou cities in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region

(Website: [Http://www.gxzf.gov.cn/mlgx/gxrw/qhrk/20170331-486083.shtml](http://www.gxzf.gov.cn/mlgx/gxrw/qhrk/20170331-486083.shtml). Retrieved on January 28, 2019).



Figure 1 Research site Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region,
Google Maps, <https://www.google.co.th>, retrieved on August 16, 2019.

The administrative division of Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region is divided into 14 prefecture-level cities, eight county-level cities, 63 counties (including 12 ethnic autonomous counties), 40 municipal districts, 799 towns, 319 townships (including 59 ethnic townships), and 133 street offices. The capital is Nanning. It is one of China's five ethnic minority autonomous regions and the only coastal autonomous region in China. The coastline of Guangxi's mainland is about 1595 kilometers long, and the region's transportation is convenient. Guangxi is located in the western part of South China, bordering Guangdong, Hunan, Guizhou, and Yunnan from east to west, borders Beibu Gulf in the south near Southeast Asia, and is adjacent to Vietnam in the southwest (Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region Government. Website: <Http://www.gxzf.gov.cn/mlgx/gxrw/qhrk/20170331-486083.shtml>).

Guangxi is located in Southwest China between $104^{\circ} 28'$ to $112^{\circ} 04'$ east longitude and $20^{\circ} 54'$ to $26^{\circ} 24'$ north latitude. The Tropic of Cancer runs through the middle. It is connected to Guangdong Province in the east, Beibu Gulf in the south, Hainan province across the sea, Yunnan Province in the west, Hunan Province in the northeast, Guizhou province north, and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam in the southwest. The land area of the administrative area is 237,600 square kilometers, and the area under the jurisdiction of the Beibu Gulf is about 40,000 square kilometers. Its neighboring country is Vietnam, with a border length of about 800 kilometers. The province's coastline length is about 1,500 kilometers while the total land area is

236,700 square kilometers. The percentage of China's total land area of Guangxi is 2.5%, ranking it ninth in the total land area of all provinces, autonomous regions, and municipalities in the country (website: <Http://www.gxzf.gov.cn/mlgx/gxrw/qhrk/20170331-486083.shtml>. Retrieved on February 28, 2019).

Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region has 36 universities, 35 vocational colleges (one of which is under construction), and additional education colleges. As of the end of 2018, Guangxi had 115 libraries above the county level, 124 cultural centers, 251 museums, and 108 state-owned art performance groups. A total of 50 projects in the region were included in the national intangible cultural heritage list, and 759 projects were included in the autonomous region-level intangible cultural heritage list (2018 Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region National Economic and Social Development Statistical Bulletin. Cited on February 28, 2020, <Http://www.gxzf.gov.cn/>).

The Chinese opera of Guangxi can be divided into two categories described as the Han and Zhuang ethnic groups. The Han nationality of opera, or Gui Opera, is found in the southern tea-harvesting region of Guizhou. Both opera types are popular in some Mandarin areas of Guilin, Liuzhou, and Hechi in Guangxi, and have spread to southern Hunan. The tea-harvesting theme in the opera of Southern Guizhou is a Han nationality local opera which has mainly spread to Yulin, Qinzhou, Hezhou, Guigang, and other places in Guangxi. It has a history of nearly 500 years. Several ethnic operas and local operas are the Zhuang Opera, Zhuang Huan, Nuo Opera, Miao Opera, Maonan Opera, the Zhuang puppet show, and the Zhuang teacher's opera. According to statistics, 14 ethnic minorities in Guangxi are endangered, and two are extinct. The history of tea harvesting in southern Guizhou and the play of the Zhuang ethnic group are profound. Also, the national operas that are closely related to the activities and life of the local people and their spiritual beliefs have been passed down from former generations. However, most national operas gradually faded or even disappeared in the absence of attention and succession (From website <Http://www.gxzf.gov.cn/>, retrieved on August 16, 2018).

The Zhuang people's worshiped deities are diversified, including natural gods, social gods, and guardian gods. Various rituals also vary with the gods' functions, which has also become the source of Zhuang Opera creation. The Zhuang people's early production activities mainly consisted of farming, and the Zhuang Opera is mostly performed during their leisure time

apart from farm work. The Zhuang Opera also played an entertainment role in the life of the Zhuang people (Liang Tingwang, 2000).

Zhuang Operas are mainly popular in the western Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region as well as the Funing and Guangnan areas of Wenshan Zhuang and Miao Autonomous Prefectures in Yunnan Province. The Zhuang Opera was developed based on Zhuang folk literature, music and dance, and recitative art. It has been performed during the Guangxu reign of the Tongzhi Period during the Qing Dynasty.

In the process of development, some styles have also been influenced by Han folk art and opera. Due to the differences in geographical environment, dialects, vocal melody, performance style, and accompanying instruments, the Zhuang Opera is mainly divided into two categories: the North Zhuang Opera and the South Zhuang Opera. The North Zhuang Opera is mainly popular in Jingxi, Napo, Tiandong, Tiandeng, Daxin, and other counties in Guangxi's southern dialect area. The North Zhuang Opera is mainly popular in Tianlin, Longlin, Yueye, and Lingyun counties (Li Qiang and Ke Lin, 2003).

2.7 RESEARCH THEORY

2.7.1 Anthropology

Anthropology is the systematic study of humanity to understand the science that deals with humankind's origins, physical and cultural development, biological characteristics, and social customs and beliefs. Anthropology focuses on understanding both humanity and diversity, and engages with diverse ways of being in the world. Anthropology is divided into three subfields: sociocultural, biological, and archaeological (From the website: <https://www.americananthro.org/AdvanceYourCareer/Content.aspx?ItemNumber=2150>, retrieved on August 10, 2019).

2.7.2 Ethnomusicology

Ethnomusicology is defined as a holistic investigation of music in its cultural contexts. Combining aspects of folklore, psychology, cultural anthropology, linguistics, comparative musicology, music theory, and history, ethnomusicology has adopted perspectives from a multitude of disciplines (Hood, 1969).

2.8 THE RELATED REVIEWS

In order to diversify the research methods and concepts, and in addition to the literature review of Zhuang Opera, this study also draws on and uses related research on other topics.

The history of opera is one of the crucial aspects of this research. "The General History of Chinese Opera" edited by Zhang Geng and Guo Hancheng (1981) is quite influential. The book has more than 10,000 characters, ranging from original singing and dancing discussions to Qing Dynasty local operas, combining the political, economic and cultural backgrounds of different historical periods, and discussing the ideological content and artistic characteristics of essential authors and their works, opera music, performance, and stage art. It can be called the first real "general" history of Chinese opera. The book has dedicated chapters on the history, writers' works, music, performance, and stage art of various Chinese operas.

Zhang Faying (1991) explored a new topic in the history of Chinese opera, which is a new branch of opera performance. The author explores the historical changes of the opera troupes and the relationship with the development of art from the institutional systems, and sorts out the opera troupes after the Song and Yuan dynasties. There is much content about ethnic minority operas. Judging from the writing of opera history, scholars have not entirely changed the scholarly methods and concepts of their predecessors. On the contrary, they have further analyzed based on previous research.

Zhou Yibai (1953) showed his attention to the stage of Chinese opera. Zhou Yibai was an opera performer, and naturally, he is particularly concerned about opera's artistic characteristics. He chose "stage performance" as his research point and classified opera literature's status into the opera performance system. In his discourses on the operas in the Ming and Qing Dynasties, he focused on the organization of the opera troupe, the categories of roles, the stage layout, and the performing art, without much discussion about the historical aspects of Chinese opera.

Besides, the achievements in the critical research of opera theory have attracted attention. Zhao Jingshen (1980) combed the theories of ancient Chinese opera for the first time. The author logically summarizes and judges important events and critical theoretical monographs in the history of ancient opera theory, and his views have robust realism. For instance, he once used words such as "people's nature" and "anti-feudal" to judge ancient opera theory, which reflected the value evaluation and evaluation standards of the time.

Xia Xieshi (1982) tried to grasp the development of classical opera criticism's development and stage characteristics from a macro perspective. The author closely links the ideological nature of opera with social politics and economic life in order to criticize ancient opera theorists and their theories. He criticized the severe flaws in the theoretical systems of other scholars in a way that, "his focus is often only on some artistic issues, and he does not pay enough attention to the ideological content of the works" (Xia Xieshi, 1982, p50).

Fu Xiaohang (1994) discussed representative opera theorists from ancient to modern times and their theoretical contributions. The author focuses on the development and the historical inevitability of music scores and the historical limitations of music scores. Qi Senhua (1985) selected an opera theorist's works to conduct detailed research, highlighting Chinese opera theory's characteristics. The author used Western literary theories and traditional Chinese poetry theories to modernize the nationality of traditional Chinese opera theory.

Ye Changhai (1986) made a theoretical summary of the study of ancient Chinese opera, attempting to separate the theory of ancient Chinese opera from the attachment of literary criticism and to possess an independent opera status. Zhao Shanlin (1995) deduces and summarizes opera history, composition, melody, performance, opera criticism, opera philology, and a comprehensive theoretical summary and analysis of Chinese classical opera criticism.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section describes the research methodology used in the study, including the criteria for selecting the study area and informants, as well as the process of designing the questionnaire and interview. The research construct is as follows:

- 3.1 Research scope
 - 3.1.1 Research content
 - 3.1.2 Research site
 - 3.1.3 Research informant
 - 3.1.4 Duration of research time
- 3.2 Research process
 - 3.2.1 Research tools
 - 3.2.2 Research methodology
 - 3.2.3 Data collecting
 - 3.2.4 Data management
 - 3.2.5 Data analysis
 - 3.2.6 Research results
 - 3.2.7 Research construct

3.1 RESEARCH SCOPE

The primary purpose of this study is to describe the possible origin, development, and status of Zhuang Opera and to study what changes happened in the development of traditional Zhuang Opera. Besides, this dissertation also deals with the perspective of history to study Zhuang Opera development's historical process, and to figure out how Zhuang Opera deals with the relationship between itself and the social and cultural backgrounds. The transmission and development of Zhuang Opera are analyzed under the background of social culture.

3.1.1 Research Content

1) Music characteristics of Zhuang Opera.

This section is a study of Zhuang Opera, including the historical original form; the characteristics of Zhuang Opera; the different forms of each period of development, including what occasions they are used for in order to figure out how the development of costumes and music melodies have changed, and why these changes occurred, as well as national beliefs found in Zhuang Opera.

2) Classification of the repertoire of Zhuang Opera according to the theme.

Through the analysis of Zhuang Opera transcription, this researcher will achieve an understanding and of the rules and artistic characteristics of Zhuang Opera repertoire, and explore the measures for its preservation and transmission.

3) Analysis of the selected music pieces of Zhuang Opera.

In this section, the origin and development of Zhuang Opera music are surveyed from the perspective of ethnomusicology and systematic musicology in order to explore its characteristics from the aspect of music morphology, including elements of music characteristics, vocal melodies, tonalities, and the structural forms of music.

3.1.2 Research Site

The research area is the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, namely Baise City, Debao County, Yangshuo County, and Nanning City. The reasons for choosing these areas are:

- 1) Guangxi province is the main popular area of Zhuang Opera
- 2) These cities are the birthplace of three different types of Zhuang Opera
- 3) Nanning City is the capital city of Guangxi Province.

a) Baise City is the city in which North Zhuang Opera is widely performed.

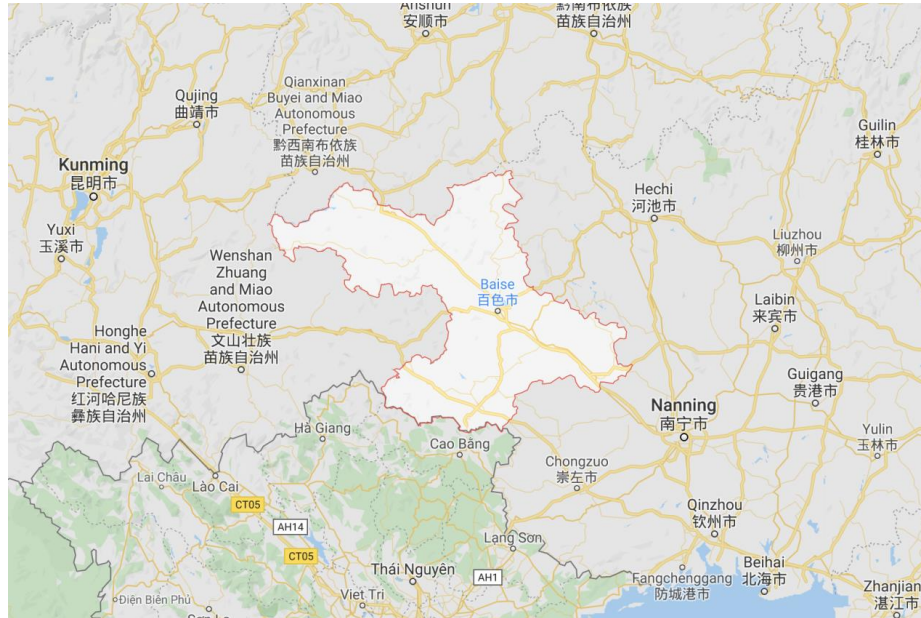


Figure 2 Research scope Baise City

Baise City, Google Maps, <https://www.google.co.th>, retrieved on August 16, 2019.

b) South Zhuang Opera, popular in Debao, Jingxi, Napo, Daxin, Tian, Tianyang, and Tiandong areas.



Figure 3 Research scope of Debao County

Debao County, from Google Maps, <https://www.google.co.th>, retrieved on August 16, 2019.

c) The Shigong Zhuang Opera is circulated within the vicinity of Guilin, Lingui, Yangshuo, Yongfu, Xing'an, and other places in northern Guangxi.



Figure 4 Research scope of Yangshuo County

Yangshuo County, from Google Maps, <https://www.google.co.th>, retrieved on August 16, 2019.

d) The contemporary Zhuang Opera is mainly performed by the Guangxi Zhuang Opera troupe in Nanning City.

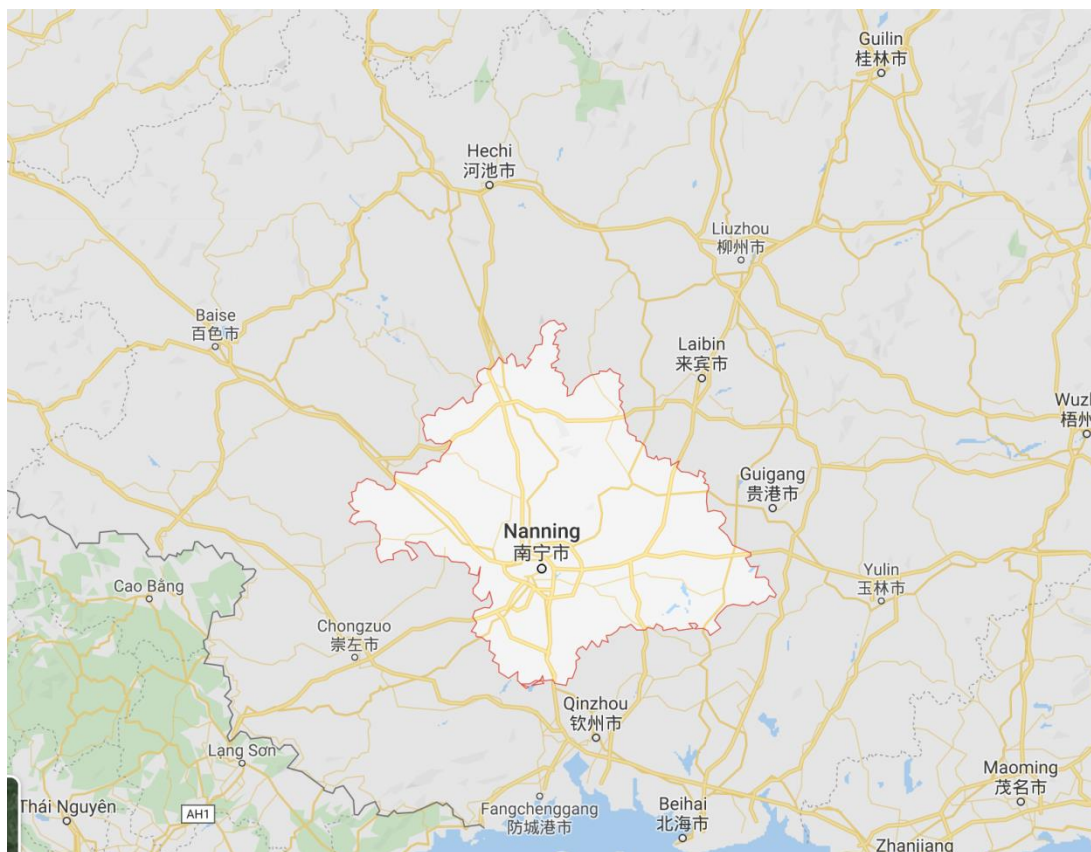


Figure 5 Research scope Nanning City

Nanning City, Google Maps, <https://www.google.co.th>, retrieved on August 16, 2019.

e) Nanning City includes the most professional Zhuang Opera troupe, and has the leading survey site. Additional sources are through in-depth interviews in order to more directly understand Zhuang Opera's survival in modern society.

3.1.3 Research Informants

In order to study Zhuang Opera, the purpose is to start with the Zhuang Opera practitioners and conduct in-depth interviews with them, attempting to find out how Zhuang Opera has developed from different perspectives in different regions. Individual interviews and

investigations are able to research Zhuang Opera in more detail. The criteria for choosing the informants are as follows:

- 1) More than 20 years of experience in the field
- 2) Is a recognized representative person in the field
- 3) Makes some essential contribution to the development of Zhuang Opera, or has won an influential award.

The selected informants of this research are four representatives of Zhuang Opera. Three informants are Bi Kejian, Zhang Qinyin, and Luo Weiming, all of whom are recognized as masters by the officials. A fourth informant is an outstanding, professional, young actor, Ha Dan, who is a professional Zhuang Opera actor in the Guangxi Zhuang Opera troupe, and is a representative of contemporary Zhuang Opera. All four informants come from the main popular area of Zhuang Opera in the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region.

a) Bi Kejian - the 10th generation within North Zhuang Opera

Bi Kejian (b. 1936), the national-level master in the North Zhuang Opera, is also the tenth-generation expert “Tai master” of the North Zhuang Opera. He has enriched and reformed the melodies, stage performances, and accompaniment of the Zhuang Opera. Bi Kejian's adapted and newly-edited scripts were popular in the Zhuang Opera Troupe and he was invited by 34 amateur Zhuang Opera troupes in Yunnan, Guizhou, and Guizhou Provinces to help train their skills, assist in rehearsal, write scripts, and participate in performances. Due to long-term research on Zhuang Opera, Bi Kejian is known as the tenth generation of new teachers of the North Zhuang Opera and is recorded in the Tianlin County Chronicle (website of the Department of Culture and Tourism of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region. <http://www.ihchina.cn>, retrieved on August 16, 2019).

b) Zhang Qinyin - the master of South Zhuang Opera

Zhang Qinyin (b. 1933), the national master of the South Zhuang Opera, has acted as heroine in Zhuang Operas such as “Baohulu,” “Jianzhucai,” “Red Copper Drum,” “Baohusheng,” “Rose,” “Qin Xianglian,” “Dou E’s Injustice,” “White Snake,” “Liang Shanbo and Zhu Yingtai” (Website: <http://www.ihchina.cn>, retrieved on August 16, 2019).

c) Luo Weiming - the representative of Shigong Zhuang Opera

Luo Weiming is the representative transmission artist of the Shigong Zhuang Opera in the autonomous region-level intangible cultural heritage project. He was ordained to become a shigong (which means wizard) at the age of seven and began to learn opera-singing at age eighteen. He is the thirteenth generation of the heirs of Zhou Luoshi's public class (Website: https://v.youku.com/v_show/id_XMjk1MzYwNzg3Ng==.html, retrieved on August 16, 2019).

d) Ha Dan - the young representative actor of Zhuang Opera

Ha Dan (b. 1975), a young actor, worked at Guangxi Zhuang Opera troupe, and is the 29th Chinese Opera Plum Award winner. The Plum Award is the highest award for Chinese opera performance art. She was born into a family of artists, and has a high level of cultural understanding, along with delicate and innovative performances. She has twice won the gold medal of the Guangxi Opera competition. In 2014, the Chinese government awarded her the title of "Advanced Artist in the National Cultural System," and she is an excellent actor within Zhuang Opera (Li Mianxin, 2016).

e) Huang Jingrun - the 11th preparatory successor of North Zhuang Opera

Huang Jingrun was born in October 1961 and had a junior high school education. Influenced by his father, he loved Zhuang Opera since he was a child. He is a student of Bi Kejian, and is the 11th generation preparatory master of North Zhuang Opera (website: <http://www.gxmzb.net>, retrieved on August 16, 2019).

f) Zhuang Opera Troupe of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region

Zhuang opera troupe is the most professional group which is directly under the culture and Tourism Department of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region government. Established in August 2012, it has been selected to be included in the national intangible cultural heritage list and is responsible for the transmission and preservation of Zhuang Opera. About 60 full-time Zhuang Opera actors are responsible for different tasks including vocal actors, makeup artists, dancers, ensemble players, composers, and directors. It is mainly engaged in the activities of Zhuang Opera, while the transmission and preservation of Zhuang Opera are the main forces for the development and prosperity of Guangxi Opera art.

3.1.4 Duration of Research

The researcher conducted fieldwork three times to Tianlin County, Jingxi County, and Yangshuo County in Guangxi Province. These places are the main birthplaces of three different types of Zhuang Opera. The researcher did interviews and investigations with the Guangxi Zhuang Opera troupe in Nanning City in December 2019. The fieldwork lasted for about eight months in total. The time line is as follows:

Table 1 Timeline for investigation

Steps	Tasks	Duration
1	Collect written information about the topic	2 months
2	Field work to interview the informants and Zhuang Opera groups with interview forms and questionnaires	2 months
3	Manage and classify the collected data about Zhuang Opera	1 month
4	Data analysis and integration	2 months
5	Formulate the results	1 month

3.2 RESEARCH PROCESS

3.2.1 Research Preparation

Fieldwork is an important research method in this dissertation. In order to collect data and ensure that the interviews are conducted smoothly, interview forms and questionnaires were used as research tools to prepare this study's questions for interviews in advance. The research tools are as follows:

- 1) Questionnaire form
- 2) Interview form
- 3) Digital video recorder
- 4) Digital voice recorder
- 5) Digital camera recorder

The questionnaire and interview were designed to refer to the characteristics of objectives, focusing on different targets. After discussion with an academic expert, revisions and

adjustments were made to facilitate more effective interviews and collect more valid information and data. The questionnaire was designed according to the following steps:

1. Create a questionnaire which relates to the objectives
2. Send it to an academic expert for checking
3. Revise it following an academic expert's suggestion
4. Use it in the fieldwork.

3.2.2 Research Methodology

Qualitative research is widely conducted in this study. The researcher did fieldwork to collect the data of the Zhuang Opera. In December 2019, the researcher started three field investigations of the South Zhuang Opera, the North Zhuang Opera, and the Shi Zhuang Opera. The destinations were Tianlin County, Jingxi County, Laibin City, and Nanning City. The researcher used the field survey method of musical anthropology to conduct field trips to investigate three different styles of Zhuang Operas, including interviews of experts and scholars, and using a video recorder to document the music performances of local operas. The aims were to collect raw data about the Zhuang Opera.

During a survey of North Zhuang Opera in Tianlin County, the researcher visited the Tianlin County Cultural Museum, recorded some materials and photos, watched the performance of the traditional North Zhuang Opera, and conducted interviews and discussions with experts. In Jingxi City, a survey of the South Zhuang Opera was conducted, obtaining much first-hand information and raw data, and a video record was made. A field survey was done in Laibin County. When it comes to the influence of Zhuang ritual music on Zhuang Opera's art, it goes back to the form of ritual music in contemporary Zhuang Opera performance.

In Nanning City, the researcher observed the performance of the Guangxi Zhuang Opera troupe, the highest level of Zhuang Opera performing art groups in Guangxi. During the investigation, the contemporary Zhuang Opera's art form and performance style was observed, and the researcher interviewed Zhuang Opera actor Ha Dan using a questionnaire used by the audience watching the Zhuang Opera. After finishing all the field surveys and interviews, the collected data was transcribed to western music so that the Chinese numbers used in traditional operas could be analyzed. This researcher transcribed all the scores used in this dissertation.

Throughout this research, the researcher re-examined Zhuang Opera from the perspectives of ethnomusicology, musicology, musical aesthetics, and music geography. The continuous absorption and expansion of other musical elements help to discover the main line of Zhuang Opera art development.

The first chapter of this dissertation made an introduction to Zhuang Opera performing arts as the leading representative of the Zhuang national opera system. It has stated the constituent elements of Zhuang Opera stage presentation. Placing this part of the content at the beginning of this study's text is to give a global perspective on its performing arts from a macro perspective. The second chapter is a literature review. Based on the literature, and reading the methods of musicology, the researcher elaborated on Zhuang Opera performance art's diverse characteristics through the collection and arrangement of historical data, books, and papers on Zhuang Opera research.

This third chapter discusses the methodology used in this study. Here, one combines the results and experiences of previous studies that are based on contemporary society. Its focus is on the transmission and development of contemporary opera, and combines the main discourse methods used in the study of opera theory to develop contemporary art forms of the opera --- a fusion of technical and theoretical research.

In the analysis of the Zhuang Opera characteristics in chapter four, three different places are visited to conduct on-site inspections, interview the research subjects and record the local Zhuang Opera's live performances. Videos and music scores collected a considerable amount of raw data about the Zhuang Opera. For example, the investigation of the development process of Zhuang Opera in section 4.2, and in studying the worship activities of Zhuang Opera and the sources of its masks, this study realizes the influence of the Zhuang ritual music on the art of the Zhuang Opera and traces back into the origins of the structure of contemporary Zhuang Opera performance.

In the fifth chapter of the dissertation, in the analysis of the structure of the Zhuang Opera repertoire, the repertoire's content structure is summarized and interpreted based on the method of traditional opera research. Furthermore, the researcher also analyzed the literary character of contemporary Zhuang Opera and its aesthetic characteristics.

In chapter six, on the study of Zhuang Opera's music, western music analysis and traditional Chinese music technology theory is used to analyze the music elements of Zhuang Opera as well as analyze the characteristics of its music modes. The representative melodies of Zhuang Opera are analyzed, and its melodic characteristics of its music are found in *Zhengdiao*, *Shiqiang*, *Huanqiang*, and *Baoqiang* melodies.

3.2.3 Data Collecting

1) Collected data from the internet and library

The researcher has searched the literature and related materials through the internet and libraries, collected the current research results, and has made full use of extant archives and written materials to learn more about the previous, relevant knowledge and theory of Zhuang Opera.

2) Collected data from the fieldwork, including questionnaires, interviews, transcript collections, and literature analyses

The fieldwork method is one of the primary research methods of this dissertation. In December 2019, the researcher went to Guangxi Province three times for in-depth fieldwork, and selected three of the most representative areas to observe the performances of Zhuang Opera while recording the music through audio and video. The researcher also visited Zhuang Opera performers and scholars to find answers to these research objectives through interviews and questionnaires. The research student has collected first-hand raw data to understand the historical process as well as contemporary musical characteristics.

3.2.4 Data Management

1) Collected the related data from the internet, library, and documents.

2) Classified valid data according to research objectives. These materials can be divided into two categories, namely the historical and the contemporary materials of Zhuang Opera.

3) The data include the evolution and history of Zhuang Opera. The repertoire of Zhuang Opera is based on the characteristics of Zhuang Opera music and its cultural content. Therefore, each research target's data are interconnected and intertwined, and need to be carefully identified and distinguished.

3.2.5 Data Analysis

According to the research objectives, the method of comparative research is used to compare the data of different periods of the development of Zhuang Opera, to analyze the gradual improvement process of contemporary Zhuang Opera and the music characteristics form based on this, and to explore how to innovate and transmit Zhuang Opera based on historical experience development.

- 1) Surveyed the documents from the internet and library relevant to Zhuang Opera.
- 2) Classified the repertoire of Zhuang Opera from the fieldwork.
- 3) Analyzed the musical notation recorded from the fieldwork.

3.2.6 Research Results

After the interviews and data collection from informants, the researcher obtained more details about the characteristics of Zhuang Opera, how the music of Zhuang is developed, and what is the situation at present. The researcher obtained several documents about Zhuang Opera, including some ancient manuscripts, music notations, and individuals' opinions about Zhuang Opera.

- 1) One will obtain knowledge about the music characteristics of Zhuang Opera in Guangxi province.
- 2) One will know the classification of the repertoire of Zhuang Opera according to theme matter.
- 3) One will know the musical elements of pieces of Zhuang Opera.

3.2.7 Research Presentation

There are seven parts in this dissertation:

Chapter 1 Introduction

Chapter 2 Literature Review

Chapter 3 Research Methodology

Chapter 4 Music Characteristics of Zhuang Opera

Chapter 5 Classification of Repertoire of Zhuang Opera

Chapter 6 Analysis of the Selected Music Pieces of Zhuang Opera

Chapter 7 Conclusion, Discussion and Suggestion

3.3 RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

As with any research study, certain factors remain beyond the control of the researcher. With any fieldwork survey, there is always the possibility that inaccurate information may be represented or that individuals may be overstating or understating the facts known to them. The possibility also exists that the individual responding to a question may not be the most knowledgeable person to participate in the institution's survey, or the timing is not quite suitable.

During the survey questionnaire development, effort was made to limit bias in the survey or interview questions and clarify the information being sought. Efforts were also made via the survey cover letter or via e-mail inquiries to clarify the survey's intent, stress its non-threatening nature, and find the most knowledgeable person in that field area who can best respond to the proposed survey on Zhuang Opera.

Besides the matters discussed an academic expert, the researcher also contacted several Zhuang Opera practitioners to pilot the survey questionnaire for clarity and comprehension. In response to a pilot survey's comments, ten questions were eliminated, shortening the survey and making it more attractive to respondents.

CHAPTER IV

THE MUSIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MUSIC OF ZHUANG OPERA

Zhuang opera is the representative musical art of the Guangxi Zhuang nationality. During the Zhuang people's historical development, they created a splendid culture, rich in folk song, dance, folk music, and religious ritual music, which provided conditions for the production of opera. Zhuang brocade embroidery and linen clothing are colorful and unique, reflecting the Zhuang people's architectural talents and providing a basis for the Zhuang Opera. Guangxi Zhuang Opera has a long history and formed its complete art form and routine in the long-term transmission process. Zhuang Opera is well-developed, and has a deep and solid foundation among the minority operas in China.

This chapter will combine the data collected from field surveys and literature reviews, comprehensively using the investigation and analysis methods of traditional Chinese music theory, and will integrate it with various related disciplines such as ethnomusicology and anthropological research methods.

The research construct is as follows:

4.1 The classification of Zhuang Opera

4.1.1 South Zhuang Opera

4.1.2 Shigong Zhuang Opera

4.1.3. North Zhuang Opera

4.2 The development process of Zhuang Opera

4.3 The performing arts of Zhuang Opera

4.3.1 Role of the characters performing in Zhuang Opera

4.3.2. Music

4.3.3 Musical instruments

4.3.4 Performance forms

4.3.5 Performance venues

4.4 The ancient manuscripts of Zhuang Opera

4.1 THE CLASSIFICATION OF ZHUANG OPERA

The Zhuang Opera is the traditional opera in the Zhuang area. It is an artistic performance form based on the Zhuang's rich folk tales, music and dance, and customs. The predecessor of Zhuang Opera was *Tu xi* opera. *Tu xi* opera is also due to the differences in geographical environment, dialect, vocal melody, performance style, and accompaniment in the Guangxi Zhuang region. After the People's Republic of China was founded (1949), it was named “Zhuang Opera” (Wei Wei, 1990).

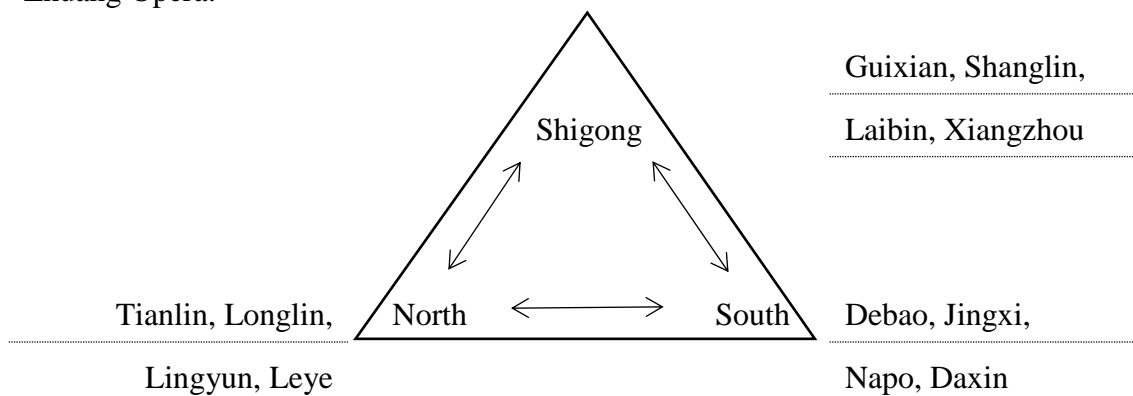
There are many different views on and approaches to the classification of Zhuang Opera. Many scholars have proposed different classification methods from different angles. Some propose that Guangxi Zhuang Operas include Tianlong Zhuang Opera, Jingde Zhuang Opera, and Hanlong Zhuang Opera. There are five varieties of Zhuang Opera and Shigong Opera (Baise Regional Culture and Education Bureau 'Present and Past Development of Zhuang Opera In the Baise Area, 1976) Others divide it into Longlin Zhuang Opera, Tianlin Zhuang Opera, Jingde Puppet Zhuang Opera, Shide Opera, and Ma'ai Zhuang Opera (History of Zhuang Literature in Guangxi, Zhuang Folk Opera in the Chinese Department of Guangxi Normal University). Still, others divide Zhuang Opera into Shigong Opera, Zhuang *Tuxi* Opera, Jingxi Puppet Show, and Debao Zhuang Opera. Lastly, other scholars divide Zhuang Opera into Shigong Opera, North Zhuang Opera, South Zhuang Opera, and Debao-mabao Opera (Zhuang Nationality's Compilation Group Zhuang Nationality Opera, 1992).

China's geographical environment has a significant influence on the formation and development of traditional Chinese music and various ethnic minorities' music. The Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region is a vast territory.

These differences are reflected in the natural geographical environment, cultural environment, the characteristics of the local dialect, and differences in the vocal melody of the Zhuang Opera. Given the different types of classification mentioned above, this research will analyze Zhuang Opera according to the following classification: North Zhuang Opera, South Zhuang Opera, and Shigong Zhuang Opera (Zhang Jiannian, 1987).

Table 2 The classification of Zhuang Opera

Zhuang Opera:



Note: This classification method will be used in this study

4.1.1 South Zhuang Opera

The South Zhuang Opera popular in Debao, Jingxi, Napo, Daxin, Tiandeng, Tianyang, and Tiandong is mainly used in Zhuang's southern language dialects. The music primarily uses the *Ping ban* melody. The main instruments are *tuhu* (fiddle) and *sanxian* (a plucked, stringed instrument), which are similar to the vocal melody distributed in the Ma'ai Township of Debao county. The South Zhuang Opera is formed based on the folk music of the Zhuang ethnic group, *Molun* music, and the puppet show (Chen Wenying, 2014).

A particular type of music is sung by the Zhuang ritual specialist when she dances, commonly known as *Molun* melody, and the ritual specialist is performed in the Zhuang language. The meaning of the Zhuang word *Mo* means 'witch,' and *Lun* means narrative and connotative, and refers to the 'witch' melody which facilitates the telling of stories. *Molun* melodies are not exclusively for witches. Generally, male and female actors can sing together, and they mainly use narration to narrate personal encounters, and even later the story can develop into heroic legends. Jingxi and Debao County created this melody as the first music of the South Zhuang Opera (Gu Lezhen, 1997).

When the South Zhuang Opera performed, the actor sang on the stage with an ensemble background. The melody played by the ensemble used for the beginning and ending part of the performance aimed to create the stage atmosphere, and render the characters' emotions. There are many repertoires of the South Zhuang Opera; and among them, "*Bao Hulu*" was more influential

in the early stages. In 1954, the Debao Dongan Street Zhuang Opera Troupe adapted this repertoire and premiered with it (Wei Wei and Xiang Fan, 1990).

4.1.2 Shigong Zhuang Opera

Shigong Opera is the original opera form in Guixian, Xiangzhou, Wuyi, Laibin, Shanglin, and other counties. It is mainly performed in the Zhuang dialect (belonging to the northern dialect in Guangxi Province in the Zhuang region). It is developed based on the *Shiqiang* and *Huanqiang* melodies. The main percussion instruments are the *fenggu* drums. The repertoire has evolved over a long time based on the Zhuang people's long folk narrative poems. The performance style has the simple and rough features of Shigong songs and dances, collectively referred to as the Shigong Zhuang Opera.



Figure 6 The genealogical map of Shigong Zhuang Opera.

Source: Zhang Jian.

1) Nuo Culture as a source of Zhuang Opera

In the Qin period (221 BCE), people in the Central Plains (the central part of China) used to call primitive sacrificial rites 'Nuo' (雩). After the emperor Qin Shihuang constructed a canal, the central plains culture continued to flow into the Lingnan area (Qian Fu, 2000). The *Nuo*

culture merged with the ancient minority totems in Guangxi, and a witch sang and prayed to the gods with music. It is also called *Sei* in the Zhuang language (Qin Naichang and Pan Qixu, 1995).



Figure 7 *Nuo*

Source: https://www.sohu.com/a/6957938_127727,
retrieved on January 16, 2019.

The Zhuang people have many different kinds of totems, including the flower god, thunder god, and frog god, which constitute a polytheistic belief system that integrates plants, animals, and gods. The “master play” produced by the integration of the Zhuang culture and the Zhuang people's belief system is richer in content and form and became a popular performance form at the time. In the South Song dynasty, Zhou Qufei (1134-1189AC) served as mayor of Guilin City (1178AC), and introduced the “Guilin Nuo group” in a book “*Lingwai dai da*” which recorded the situation of the Guilin *Nuo* group at the time as follows: “the Guilin *Nuo* group has been famous for a military play which named “*Jingjiang Nuo*” since the Chengping period. In its birthplace, there are also many Nuo groups popular among the people” (Meng Guangchao, 1993).

2) The evolution from religious rituals to Zhuang Opera

The early Shigong Zhuang Opera was responsible for presiding over religious sacrifices. The original opera elements of Shigong opera appeared in the quaint sacred songs and dances. The theme of the performance was mostly related to the gods. The classic play *Gongcao-qingsheng* originated from the Republic of China's sacrifice ceremony and was played by four actors wearing different masks. The actor simulates their character from image and movement, and dresses as a god. Such a holy ritual requires some dressing personnel, while at the same time, these dressing behaviors should integrate into a large-scale ritual. The expressions and actions of the actors include an assumed individual plot direction. More importantly, the saint in the play is to help the earthly supplicant to communicate with heaven. During the dressing process, the actors begin to have inner emotions and subjective refraction. This sacrificial ceremony is already a form of performance that contains the original theatrical beauty, with a very primitive dance style (Wei Wei and Xiang Fan, 1990).

In the Qing dynasty, the Shigong Opera was similar to the Han nationality area's sacrificial ceremony activities. It established altars to hold religious rituals and played roles in mythological stories. Like sacrificial ceremony activities, those kinds of activities have the role of expelling ghosts, delighting the gods, and entertaining the people. It gradually evolved into primarily an entertaining performance in the underdeveloped areas of Guangxi's operatic activities, and finally became a relatively simple local folk opera identified as *Tuxi* (Meng Guangchao, 1993).

During the Republic of China era (1912-1949), religious rituals began to transition from religious sacrificial rituals to Zhuang Opera. In 1933 during this era, the Guangxi provincial government formally promulgated the "Rules for the Improvement of Customs in Guangxi," which stipulated, "You must not greet the gods... or the vestments of monks will be confiscated." Forced by the current situation and life, the performer is no longer a professional who welcomes the gods, but a folkart singer. At this time, some folk artists edited folklore operas with stories, characters, chanting, singing, and dancing to create plays such as "The King of *Moyi*," "King of Gan," "Four Sisters," "*Huajisongzi*," "*Songjimi*," "*Damacao*," and other folk custom operas. As the scope of performance of the Shigong Zhuang Opera gradually expanded, it is separated from the form of the sacrificial song and dance in the development process. This is done by adding

realistic social themes, which show interest in real life, is close to the lives of the masses, and builds the prototype of Guangxi Zhuang Opera (Meng Guangchao, 1988).

4.1.3. North Zhuang Opera

North Zhuang Opera is mainly popular in Tianlin, Longlin, Lingyun, Napo, and other places. It mainly uses the northern Zhuang dialect language for singing.

The *Zhengdiao* and *Heiyadiao* are the melodies, and the accompaniment instruments are mainly the *maguhu*, *huluhu*, and *yueqin*. Similarly, artists from several counties can perform on the same stage; thus, the Zhuang Opera in this area are collectively referred to as the North Zhuang Opera (Gu Lezhen, 2002).

North Zhuang Opera has a history of nearly 300 years. After ten generations of theatrical succession, North Zhuang Opera has gradually formed a unique artistic performance, vocal melody, character, and movement; and it has fully developed. Mr. Liang Tingwang, a Zhuang scholar, once described the North Zhuang Opera as follows: “Among all types of Zhuang Opera, the North Zhuang Opera represented by Tianlin County has the highest level of development, and possesses relatively complete operatic elements” (Liang Tingwang, 2000).

Since North Zhuang Opera's status among all Zhuang Operas has reached long-term, mature development, this chapter focuses on North Zhuang Opera, which was born, became prosperous, and was transmitted in Tianlin County.

4.2 THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS OF NORTH ZHUANG OPERA

The North Zhuang Opera originated and developed in Baise City of Tianlin County, within the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, known as the ‘Hometown of Chinese Zhuang Opera.’ Tianlin County, located in northwest Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, has a total area of 5,777 square kilometers and is the largest county in Guangxi. According to unearthed cultural relics, humans lived in Tianlin County in the Paleolithic age. The ethnic groups living in the county are mainly of the Zhuang ethnic group. The original residents of Baise City were mostly of Zhuang nationality; but since their location was in the travel crossroads of Yunnan and Guizhou, after the Tang and Song dynasties, there was a constant stream of officials, soldiers, merchants, and people in business traveling through the region (General Profile of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, 2008).

Tianlin County has a rich and unique ethnic culture. The traditional folk songs of Zhuang nationality have existed since the Song dynasty, including four vocal music styles expressed in Bagui, Lizhou, Ding'an, and Jiuzhou folk songs. Whether it is a street rally, wedding celebration, or daily life, the Zhuang people like to sing to express greetings, wishes, and respect. Folk myths, legends, and stories of various ethnic groups are also like folk songs and are widely spread among Tianlin County folk, such as “Butterfly,” “*Nongzhigao*,” “Tiger and Pangolin,” “Magpie,” “Tiger Frog and Monkey,” and “*Buluotuo*” (Tianlin County Local Records Compilation Committee, 1996).

4.2.1 Development Process of North Zhuang Opera

The source of the North Zhuang Opera is the performance of the *Bayin* melody. The stage performance formed during the thirty years of the Qian-long period (1736-1796). With all the artists' joint efforts in the past, the North Zhuang Opera has continued to develop and mature. After experiencing the looting of the Cultural Revolution, it has seen a robust revival at present; and with the support of the cultural heritage policy and the Zhuang people's joint efforts, it has gradually developed and expanded to this day (Declaration Form of The Representative Work of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, p. 3).

1) From *Bayin* music “sitting-singing” style to bench play

The North Zhuang Opera, known initially as *Tuxi*, has spread within Tianlin, Longlin, Xilin, Lingyun, and other counties in northwest Baise City. Later, to distinguish it from the *Tuxi* as sung in southern dialects in Jingxi and Debao counties, it was called “North Zhuang Opera.” Regarding the North Zhuang Opera origination point, there have always been mixed opinions, such as it being “*Long Lin Yuan Liu Shuo*” or “*Tian Lin Yuan Liu Shuo*.” Among them, “*Tian Lin Yuan Liu Shuo*” is widely recognized by academic circles. During the Ming and Qing dynasties, it was the main traffic route between Yunnan, Guizhou, and Guangxi provinces, and it was also the political, economic, and cultural background of the time. It also provided the right conditions for the formation of the North Zhuang Opera (Han Wanhong, 2017). The earliest script of the North Zhuang Opera was *Taipingchun* (太平春), which was completed in the Qing dynasty's Kangxi period. Significantly, the *Zhengdiao* melody, which developed from the folk songs of Jiuzhou Town, has been mentioned many times in this script (Xia Shibo, 1987).

The origin of the North Zhuang Opera can be traced back to the late Ming and early Qing dynasties. At that time, the Bayin had been introduced to Jiuzhou Town in Tianlin County, and other places. The so-called Bayin refers to playing with eight kinds of instruments, including the *suona*, *dizi*, *erhu*, and *pipa*; as well as four percussion instruments described as a small drum, small cymbal, small gong, and bronze bell (Han Wanghong, 2017).

In the Song dynasty, after the formation of traditional Chinese opera, *Bayin* continued to absorb fresh elements from it to enrich its artistic form and increase the performance form, which appeared as a new performance style accompanied by instrumental performance and singing, named “*Bayin* Sitting-singing” (八音坐唱). As the ancient book “*Lingwaidaida*” recorded, “Guangxi people can have fun together, sacrifice, marry, have funerals, with all participants having fun. Even while farming, they will sing-song at the same time” (Tu Youxiang, 1996).

The early time *Bayin* music group was often used in various custom ceremonies, such as weddings, funerals, and festivals; but they only played musical instruments without singing. Due to its special geographical location, Jiuzhou Town is often visited by businessmen from different places. They often hold social events or perform singing performances at their meetings, thus promoting cultural exchanges with the local area. Some *Bayin* groups have made improvements based on the folk songs of Jiuzhou Town and have created the “*ping ban*” melody. More importantly, it added some folk songs, and the performance form of “sitting and singing” appeared. At that time, the iconic script “*Taipingchun*” passed down to this day after it was also created (Han Wanhong, 2017).

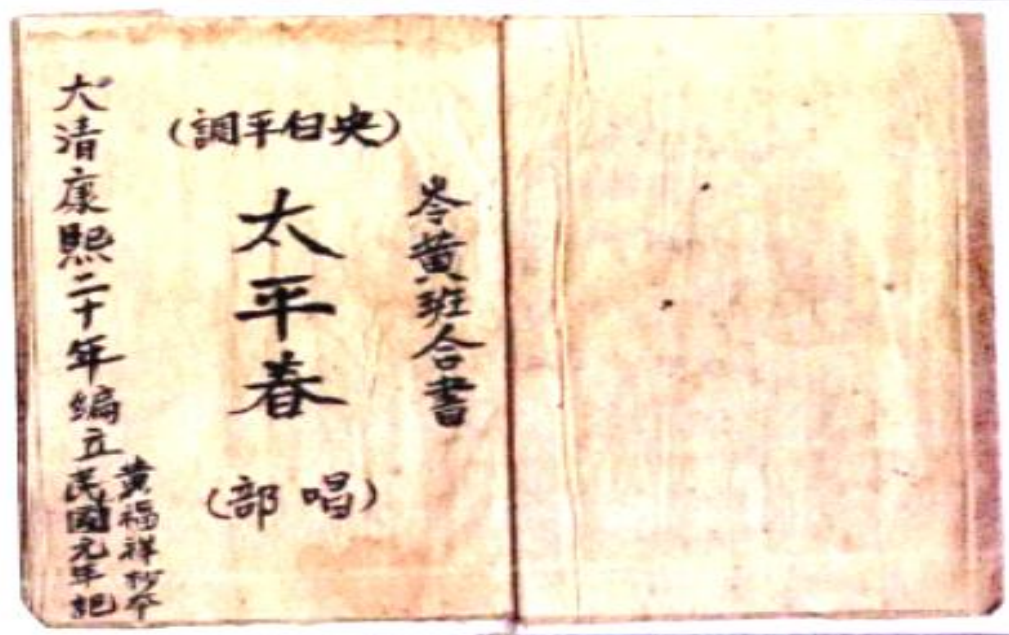


Figure 8 Ancient manuscript of “*Taipingchun*”

Source: Hang Wanhong, from Tianlin County Cultural Museum.

“Sitting-singing” is a form of collective performance of *Bayin* music. The performance is stationary, which will inevitably cause the audience's aesthetic fatigue. So the “bench play” came into being which was performed by one or two actors on the bench and was sung. Folk artists are accompanied by simple movements and expressions when they sing the songs and it begins to approach an opera-like performance style. The bench play can be said to be the main characteristic of North Zhuang Opera (Li Qiong, 2016).

2) Formation: Evolution from the front-door show to performing “*Nongjia-baotie*” on the stage

The term “doorway opera” originated from the change of the performance area of the Zhuang Opera. After moving from the doorway to the eaves, the performance venue gradually became an outdoor or open space. This shifted from a relatively closed performance environment to a larger “stage,” which helped the further popularization and development of North Zhuang Opera. The number of performers has also increased to four actors, from a single melody to a duet, and is divided into roles, constituting the performance form of subject and answer. The change in performance style has promoted the further development of the North Zhuang Opera.

The opera group was no longer limited to one occasion in a single village but instead could walk around in the streets. Whenever there is a new house or a custom event, the group will be invited to perform; thus it becomes a form of “migration performance” out of one yard into another yard. The masses call this kind of tour performance “Garden Opera” (Compiled by Tianlin County Cultural Bureau: compilation of opera materials in Tianlin County, 1986).

According to history, the first generation “Tai Master,” Yang Liulian, edited the classic North Zhuang Opera “*Nongjia-baotie*” (农家宝铁). The melody is done in the north Zhuang dialect, and has six characters, including five main positions: *sheng*, *dan*, *jing*, *mo*, and *chou*. The performance and vocal style have all changed as compared to previous eras. In the late Qian-long Period (1736-1796), the vocal melody reformed, and the four musical phrases were changed to two phrases, like subject and answer, making the melody more gentle for listening. In the early years of the Jia-qing Period (1796-1820), a new vocal melody named “*Shuzhuangdiao*” was created. At this time, the performance also paid more attention to the refinement of performance skills, requiring less singing and more performances. For this reason, several repertoires appeared as well, such as “Send Old Clothes at Night,” “*Zhu maichen*,” and “*Hua mulan*.” Moreover, during the Dao-guang Period (1820-1850), the “*Zhengban*” melody was created, which is considered to be the hallmark of the North Zhuang Opera (Tianlin County Local Records Compilation Committee, 1996).

The transcription of *Nongjia-baotie* is as follows:

Neiyungz Dizyau

内容提要

Dahsau vunzmbanj Bouxcuengh Cinz Yiyingh dwg dog nawx Cinz Fungcinh gvanbaz, aenvih saugyaeu dwggyaez、coengmingz lingzleih, yinxndaej gij hauxseng gyaegaenh seiqfueng haenx hozhaenz daeuj gouzaeu, hoeng Yiyingh cungj mbouj hanhawj saekboux. Doeklaeng, Cinz Fungcinh gvanbaz eicoengz gij geiq dahlwg, aeu gaiq fazbauj ndawranz doxcienz roengzdaeuj ndeu guh daez, doiqfwen genj lwegwiz. Doeklaeng, ginggvaq doiqfwen, bouxcoz vunzmbanj Cangh Aidenz dwksaw bouxseng'eiq Liengz Swngnyi、bouxdoegsaw Lij Vwnzcaiz le, ndaej caeuq Yiyingh guh baenz gvanbaz.

壮族农家姑娘陈玉英乃陈奉春夫妇之独生女，由于漂亮可爱、聪明伶俐，引得远近四方后生慕名前来求婚，但玉英均未应允。后来，陈奉春夫妇依从女儿之计，以家传的一块宝铁为题，对歌招婿。最后，经过对歌，青年农民张爱田击败商人梁生意、书生李文才等竞争对手，与玉英喜结良缘。

It、Seizgan: Mingzdai

一、时间：明代

Ngeih、Diegdeih: Gvangsiah Denzlinz Yen Giucouh Cin aen mbanj ndeu

二、地点：广西田林县旧州镇的一个乡村

Sam、Vunz cujyau ndawheiq

三、剧中主要人物

Goenglaux Cinz Fungcinh daxboh Cinz Yiyingh

老汉 陈奉春 陈玉英之父

Laujdan Vangz ci daxmeh Cinz Yiyingh

老旦 王氏 陈玉英之母

Siujsan Cinz Yiyingh dahlwg Cinz Fungcinh gvanbaz

小旦 陈玉英 陈奉春夫妇之女

Noengzfou Cangh Aidenz

农夫 张爱田

Bouxdoegsaw Lij Vwnzcaiz

书生 李文才

Bouxseng'eiq Liengz Swngnyi

商人 梁生意

Bouxkawjdienq Liengz Swngnhaiz

店主 梁生财

Mehmoix Lij daxmeh

媒婆 李大妈

Figure 9 The script of *Nongjia-baotie*

Source: Lan Hong, 2013.

The performance of *Nongjia-baotie* marks the formation of the North Zhuang Opera, a significant milestone in the development history of the North Zhuang Opera (Chinese Opera, Guangxi Volume, p. 233).

3) Influence of Yong Opera and Cantonese Opera on Zhuang Opera

The seventh-generation master Huang Yonggui has loved the Tuxi since childhood and once worshiped Liao Falun and Yang Lian as teachers. Huang Yonggui, the representative of North Zhuang Opera at that time, spent three years studying the puppet opera and integrated the



essence of this Han Opera into the Zhuang Opera. Thus, one can still find some Cantonese Opera elements in the performance of Zhuang Opera now (Compiled by Tianlin County Cultural Bureau: compilation of opera materials in Tianlin County, 1986, p. 21).

An essential aspect of learning from the Nuo Opera is the study of dance movement from Nuo Opera performances, which allowed the action performance style of Zhuang Opera to be improved and also boosted its performance to a higher level. Another important aspect is the absorption of the vocal melody and the creation of a new style of music such as the *Hanban*, *Nudiao*, and *Dawang* melodies. Simultaneously, in terms of the musical accompaniment, the re-use of some new instruments into such as the suona, dulcimer, big drums, and big gongs makes Zhuang Opera sound effects more consistent with the creation of the music atmosphere (Wei Wei and Xiang Fan, 1990).

4) Prosperity: from musical instrument innovation to the formation of artistic characteristics

In the late years of the Guangxu period of the Qing Dynasty (1871-1908), Huang Fuxiang, an artist of the Zhuang Opera, innovated the main accompaniment instrument's playing technique, namely the *maguhu*, a two stringed bowed fiddle, thus making the national characteristics of the Zhuang Opera more compelling. He developed *maguhu* from tuning of "semi-anti-line" to "anti-line," and created the "*Zhengban-mandiao*" and "*Choujue-diao*" melodies. He changed the imprisonment of traditional thinking by actively mobilizing women to participate in acting, innovating the costumes, making the roles of men and women fully equal, and the first time opened up Zhuang Opera male and female acting roles to be on the same stage together. Those activities have made the North Zhuang Opera to become more and more popular among the local people. People are constantly came to learn knowledge and experience of North Zhuang Opera, and the troupe is invited to perform around the country. This makes the North Zhuang Opera widely popular in the regions of Baise, Xilin, Longlin, Napo, Lingyun and other counties. It has also spread to Funing, Yunnan, Heng, Guizhou, Xingyi and other surrounding provinces and regions, which is also a kind of indication highlighting the prosperity of the North Zhuang Opera (Fang Hechun, 1997).

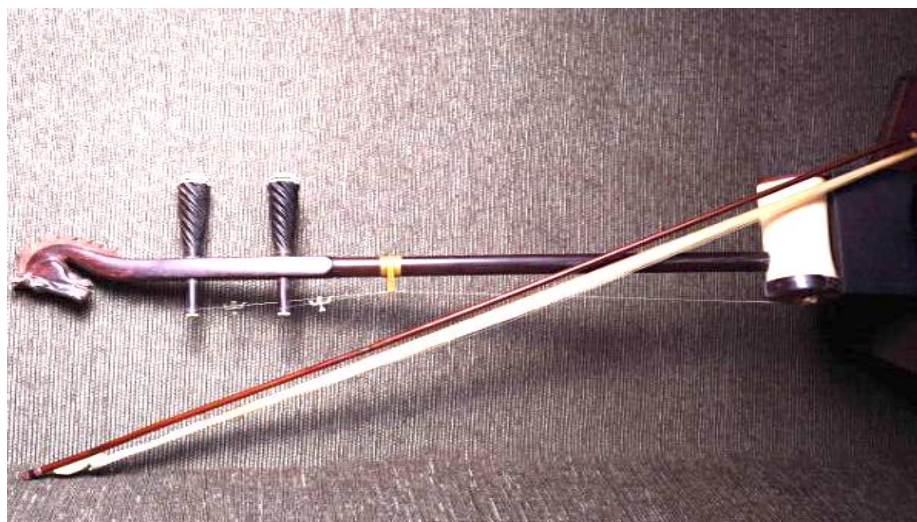


Figure 10 *Maguhu*, two-stringed bowed fiddle.

Source: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maguhu>, retrieved on January 16, 2019.

5) The decade of the Cultural Revolution

During the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), folk songs were banned, and Zhuang Opera was regarded as a wrong art. Many artists were criticized, and many scripts, musical instruments, costumes, and plaques were burned. However, some old artists disregarded their safety to collect scripts and costumes, hide them in beehives, wine tanks, and roof beams, and send some things left by old artists to risk their lives to preserve Zhuang Opera. According to incomplete statistics, there were more than 900 scripts confiscated and burned during the Cultural Revolution, including more than 600 costumes, 300 costume hats, more than 50 *maguhu*, and more than 70 *huluhu* (a two stringed bowed fiddle). Traditional Zhuang Opera was banned for more than ten years (Qu Liuyi, 1987).

6) Revival: from the end of the Cultural Revolution to the intangible cultural heritage

After the Cultural Revolution ended, art activities gradually resumed, and Zhuang Opera also ushered in a new spring. Rural amateur troupes have sprung up. According to 1989 statistics, the county has 106 amateur literary and artistic teams and more than 2,300 amateur actors. The number of amateur actors was 100 per 1000 people at the time, and its prosperity can be seen. In May 2006, Zhuang Opera was embodied in the national intangible cultural heritage preservation list. Tianlin County has held a Zhuang Opera art festival since 2011. According to

2016 statistics, there are 107 amateur Zhuang Opera troupes in Tianlin County. With the support of both national policies and the masses, Zhuang Opera has further prospered and developed, has established a foothold in modern society, and has ushered in a new climax of development (Han Wanhong, 2017).



Figure 11 Zhuang Opera Culture and Art Festival 2011.

Source: <http://gx.people.com.cn/n2/2018/0517/c179430-31593755.html>, retrieved on January 16, 2019.

4.3 THE PERFORMING ARTS OF ZHUANG OPERA

Based on traditional music, folk songs, and dance, Zhuang Opera has gradually absorbed the performance forms of related operas, and has gradually formed its diverse performing arts and unique acting style.

4.3.1 Role of the characters in Zhuang Opera

For a long time after the emergence of Zhuang Opera, there was no clear division of actors, only some simple characters. From the fourth generation artist, Huang Congshan, a simple division of characters was named *sheng*, *dan*, *jing*, and *chou*. It was not until the seventh generation of artists that Huang Yonggui's imitation of puppet opera helped complete the development of four leading performers in Zhuang Opera. Consequently, there were more

detailed and precise divisions. Now, there are *xiaosheng*, *zhengdan*, *huadan*, *yaodan*, *caidan*, and *wujue* which have taken precedence over *xiaowu*, *laowu*, *wudan*, *shan*, and *wang*. Each character represents a specific position; and according to the character's age, appearance, personality, and other characteristics, it has its unique makeup, costumes, and performance movements (CPPCC Tianlin County Committee, 2011).



Figure 12 The character of Zhuang Opera.

Source: <http://www.xi-qu.com/zjh/hz>, retrieved on January 16, 2019.

4.3.2. Music

In the early stage of Zhuang Opera development, there were only two musical melodies, namely *Guochang* and *Zhengdiao*. The seventh-generation master Huang Yonggui absorbed the Yue Opera's advantages and combined with local folk music to create or adapt it, forming nine music melodies; one of them is the *Daguochang* melody used at the beginning of the performance.

The transcription of the *Daguochang* melodic segment is as follows:

Da Guo Chang

The image shows a musical score for 'Da Guo Chang' in 2/4 time. It consists of four staves, each representing a different instrument. The first staff is for 'mu yin-teng lu hu zheng xian1-5', the second for 'gong yin-tu er hu fan xian3-6', the third for 'mu yin-xiao zu hu zheng xian5-2', and the fourth for 'gong yin-ma gu hu fan xian6-3'. The notation includes various rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. A '5' is written above the first staff in the fourth measure, indicating a fingering or breath mark.

Figure 13 The notation of a *Daguochang* melodic segment.

Source: Guangxi Zhuang Opera Troupe.

For example, the music of the *Daguochang* is an instrumental musical form. Its functions are comprised of four aspects: first, it is used as the introduction melody, while the other is at the ending of the performance. The third is used as an intermezzo, and the fourth is background music. It is mostly used to render and enhance the atmosphere of the performance, such as the actor's movement, the beginning and ending of the performance, the confrontation between two armies, praying and worshipping a god, and exorcising ghosts. All these use the *Daguochang* melody (See Chapter Six for more analysis.).

Traditional Zhuang Opera ensembles are called *Pengmian*, which means “sheds,” which is usually comprised of four players. The drummer plays wooden blocks (木鱼) and drums (板鼓) to control the tempo and rhythm. The main melody is played by string instruments such as the *maguhu* (fiddle, see figure 10), *huluhu* (fiddle), or *tuhu* (fiddle). Percussion instruments such as gongs and cymbals are responsible for adding ornamentation, and sometimes are played as a solo fragment. Meanwhile, some of actors play musical instruments when they are not on stage, such as small gongs. Later, the bamboo flute, or *dizi* (笛子); wood leaves, or *muye* (木叶), the *suona* (Chinese double-reed horn), and other wind instruments gradually were added (Han Wanhong, 2017).

North Zhuang Opera mostly uses *maguhu* and other string instruments to accompany the melody. There are various forms of accompaniment, which can either follow the main theme of the melody, or improvise the vocal music according to the needs of the plot; or in some music segments, allow it to achieve the purpose of contrasting with the atmosphere of the music. For instance, Zhuang Opera often uses gongs and drums to shape characters' emotions, and sets up gongs to shape the dignified personality of Tsing Yi. It uses the percussion gong to express brave characteristics, or uses the gong and drum embedded between characters which cannot only make the vocal more articulate, but also can better create the stage atmosphere (Wei Wei and Xiang Fan, 1990).

The transcription of the *Zhengdiaogaoban* melody is as follows:



Figure 14 *Zhengdiao-gaoban* melody.

Source: Guangxi Zhuang Opera Troupe.

The *Zhengdiao-gaoban* melody is the main vocal music of the North Zhuang Opera. It belongs to the melody-type with a slow tempo. The melody is gentle and suitable for lyricism. In traditional Zhuang Opera, the use of the *Zhengdiao* melody is the same as that of the *Pingdiao* melody. Music is performed at a slower tempo. The *Zhengdiao* melody is based on a five-character phrase (there are also seven-character phrases), and the upper and lower phrase is

regarded as a single theme (subjective-answer), with usually no less than four musical phrases (see Chapter Six for more analysis).

4.3.3 Musical instruments

There are two categories of musical instruments used in the North Zhuang Opera: a percussion instrument and an orchestral instrument. Percussion instruments include drums and gongs, and a wooden block while orchestral instruments include *maguhu*, *huluhu*, *erhu*, *dizi*, *suona*, and *sheng*. The orchestral music is used in the entire melody, and percussion mainly is used in martial movements and dance. Among all the musical instruments, the most distinctive is the *maguhu* (see figure 10). It has a resonance box made of a horse's leg bone and hard, thick gourds. They have a unique timbre and are unique accompaniment instruments of the Zhuang Opera. The *fenggu* drum is also the distinctive percussion instrument of Zhuang Opera (Edited by the Tianlin County Committee of the CPPCC, 2011).



Figure 15 *Fenggu* drum.

Source: Zhang Jian.

4.3.4 Performance form

After a long development progress, Zhuang Opera has refined its unique techniques, which are summed up as “four skills and five methods.” The “four skills” refers to singing, dance, and martial movement, which are also the basic skills shared by many other operas. The “five methods” refers to rules, eyes, body, footwork, and hands. They are the main components of the North Zhuang Opera's performance form, and each activity has its unique, necessary skills.

Artists of all ages have paid great attention to practicing and preaching by words and actors are required to practice these four skills and five methods before performing on stage (Edited by the Tianlin County Committee of the CPPCC, 2011).

4.3.5 Performance venue

The performance venues of the North Zhuang Opera are generally flat, temporary, and fixed stages. The flat platform refers to the earth platform built on relatively flat ground in the village street. The temporary platform refers to the rural villages' stage temporarily during built for the new year or other holidays (Li Fuqiang, 2014). With the Zhuang people's support from the government, many townships in Tianlin County have now built new stages for Zhuang Opera. According to statistics in June 2009, Tianlin County has built 65 rural theaters, of which there are 59 roofed venues and six simple theaters. Some amateur theater troupes are equipped with lighting, sound, and instruments, providing good practice and performance for people everywhere.



Figure 16 The ancient Zhuang Opera theater in Guangxi Province.

Source: www.baidu.com.



Figure 17 Outdoor simple stage in the countryside.

Source: Zhang Jian.

4.4 THE ANCIENT MANUSCRIPTS OF ZHUANG OPERA

A script is a written text from an opera. In the past, the Zhuang Opera was mainly passed down from generation to generation through the folk arts. Some artists draw up an outline before the performance and then explain it to the actors from beginning to end. The actors grasp the content of this play to improvise on stage with simple cues.

The performance of Zhuang Opera was most prosperous from the end of the Qing Dynasty to the beginning of the Republic of China. After investigation, it was found that there are mainly three existing scripts of the North Zhuang Opera: one is the old surviving version, the other is the collated version of the old artist based on memory, and the third is the created literary text. The number of ancient records is not large, and they are also seriously damaged due to age. At present, only the names and performances of North Zhuang Opera, the *Taifu* (台符), which means a kind of incantation, is the earliest form of Zhuang Opera repertory known as *Taipingchun*, and the script *Nongzhigao* (Han Wanhong, 2017).

Also, there are some ancient versions of the “*Tuxi-taifu*,” “*Dingguo-zhu*,” “*Taipingchun*,” and “Digging Gold and Silver Bricks,” which are kept in the hands of other artists, and have been transmitted to nowadays, as shown below:



Figure 18 Ancient manuscript of “*Tuxi-taifu*” and “*Taipingchun*.”

Source: Hang Wanhong, from the Tianlin County Cultural Museum.



Figure 19 Ancient manuscript of “*Dingguo-zhu*” and “Digging Gold and Silver Bricks.”

Source: Hang Wanhong, from Tianlin County Cultural Museum.

Those scripts are from an old artist who has organized the plays' contents based on the memory of his past actions or by watching the opera. It retains the original form of the contents of the play as much as possible. For instance, “Baohulu” and “Sanda-sanchuandong” were collected and sorted out by Bi Kejian based on circulated costume plays. The pictures of manuscript are as follows:

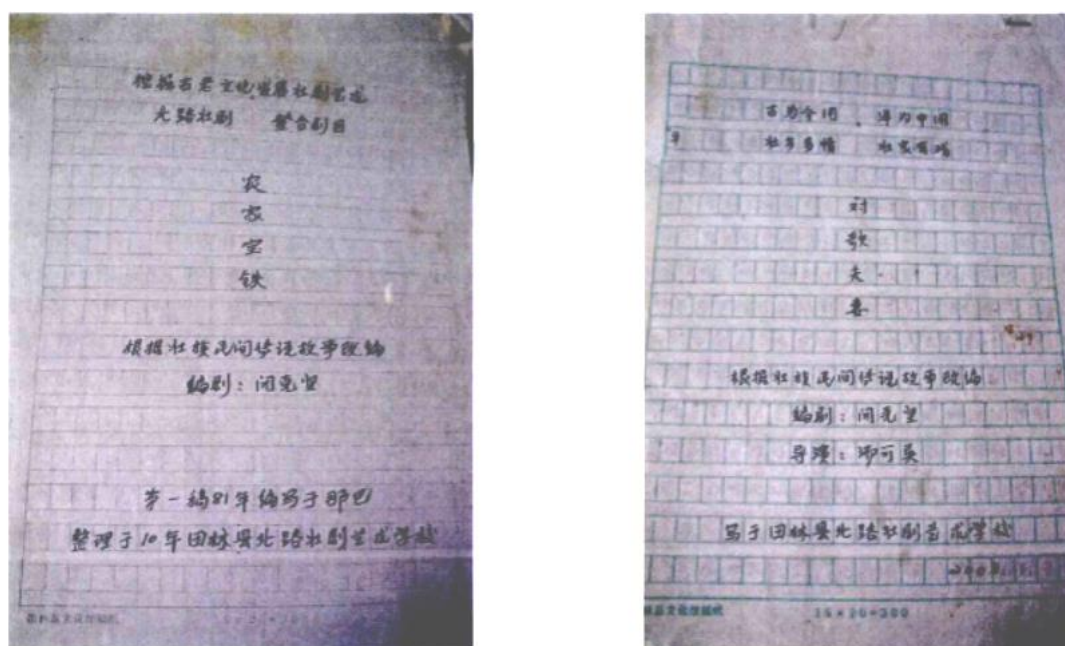


Figure 20 The ancient manuscript of “Nongjia-baotie.”

Source: Hang Wanhong, from Tianlin County Cultural Museum.

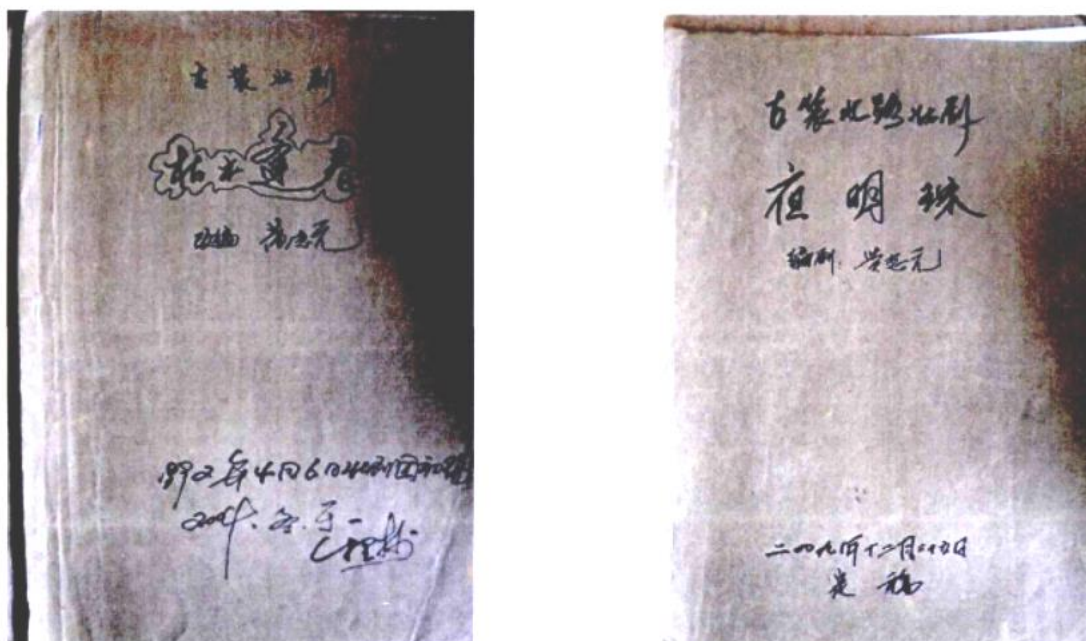


Figure 21 Ancient manuscript of “Yeming-zhu.”

Source: Hang Wanhong, from Tianlin County Cultural Museum.

Repertories have sprung up since the founding of the People's Republic of China (1949), and most of them are literary texts. Folk artists with a particular cultural level and experience can all create works, but there will be uneven situations depending on the level. The scripts used by most of the theater troupes in Tianlin County were created by Zhuang Opera master Bi Kejian and Huang Zhiyuan, and some were written and directed by members of the local troupes. Most of these scripts are manuscripts with clear handwriting.

CHAPTER V

CLASSIFICATION OF THE REPERTOIRE OF ZHUANG OPERA

Chinese opera culture can trace back to the Qin (221-207 BCE) and Han (220-8 BCE) dynasties. The traditional opera is rich in content; a wide range of materials covers all aspects of life. Harizel (2003) said that: “The opera is a kind of literature... opera itself has two ambiguities, or that opera has two lives. One of its lives exists in literature, and its other life exists on the stage.”

This research is conducted with the main discourse methods used in the study of opera theory and develops a technical and theoretical fusion of the artistic form of Zhuang Opera. According to the research method of opera, the Zhuang Opera repertoire's content and structure are summarized according to the theme, and the literary and aesthetic characteristics of the Zhuang Opera are further understood from the analysis of the concrete representative opera.

In this chapter, the use of the literature review method for in-depth analysis of the text, the Zhuang Opera script, history, and folk customs information, is in order to have a more comprehensive understanding and grasp of Zhuang Opera research, in the analysis of the Zhuang Opera script, the combination and difference of the content, and the structure of each script which are summarized according to theme matter. The characteristics of the script creation of Zhuang Opera are summarized. Besides, this also combines aesthetics, ethnology, folklore, sociology, and other aspects of the views and theories to analyze the repertoire.

The theme is the primary matter to be considered in the study of opera. There are many classification methods about opera. One is according to the source of the subject matter that is divided into adaptation and original opera. Another is according to the subject matter where content can divide into historical opera, love opera, and mythical opera. Therefore, according to Zhuang Opera's characteristics and actual situation, this chapter will analyze the traditional repertoire from the source of the subject matter. The research construct is as follows:

5.1 The source of the theme

5.1.1 Transplanted repertoire

5.1.2 Adapted repertoire

5.1.3 Local Zhuang nationality element repertoire

5.2 The classification of the repertoire

5.2.1 Love theme

5.2.2 Ethics theme repertoire

5.2.3 History theme repertoire

5.2.4 Myth theme repertoire

5.3 “*Taipingchun*” the earliest form of Zhuang Opera repertoire

5.1 THE SOURCE OF THE THEME

There are three primary sources of the subject matter of the traditional opera where one is to transplant the plays of other kinds of opera, and another is to adapt classical novels into opera. A third is based on folk myths and legends, historical stories, life, and current affairs as the subject of the original. Based on these three forms, the Zhuang Opera is a continuous production of various types of operas, presented to the Zhuang people to provide a rich and colorful spiritual food, and to see the wisdom and spiritual strength of these folk artists (Han Wanhong, 2017).

5.1.1 Transplanted repertoire

Opera is a kind of comprehensive art form. The interaction between different kinds of repertoire is representative of many aspects from the beginning of its formation. Zhuang Opera is influenced by Han cultures such as Yong and Cantonese operas, from which one has learned the advantages of their performing arts and introduced many excellent repertoires. Transplantation is one of the main sources of the early Zhuang Opera, which is more convenient than taking material from life, and has a formed character composition and storyline. The representative repertoire of the Zhuang Opera transplant include: “*Liang shanbo-zhuyingtai*,” “*Jieqin-pei*,” “*Qinxiang-lian*,” “*Hongsi-cuo*,” “*Limao-huantaizi*,” “*Cuopei-yuanyang*,” “*Yesong-hanyi*,” and “*Wuhu-pingnan*” (Wei Wei and Xiang fan, 1990).

However, the transplanted repertoire is not an unconditional copy and a full collection. Rather, in communication and learning, according to the standards of their ethnic customs, psychological identity, aesthetic observation, and other criteria, it is to select the part suitable for the opera and the nationality characteristics. For instance, “*Liangshanbo-zhuyingtai*,” one of the four folk legends, has been arranged into many plays and performed on the stage (Xia Shibo and

Chen Limei, 1997). Zhuang Opera transplanted it, but when Liang Shanbo and Zhu Yingtai met for the first time, they added a plot of folk songs. Choosing a spouse is a unique marriage custom of young men and women of the Zhuang nationality. Other Han operas use this part. Zhu Yingtai is no longer a shy girl, but a Zhuang girl who dares to express her true feelings directly; this is the embodiment of the Zhuang people's romantic feelings.

5.1.2 Adapted repertoire

The early artists were not highly educated, and it was difficult for them to draw materials from their lives for script creation. Therefore, the adaptation of classical novels has become another significant creative way rather than transplanting plays. Some scholars once said, "Chinese novels and operas have been a relatively independent and unified artistic whole for a long period of history..." (Liu Hui, 1988).

Zhuang opera adapted from the novel such as "*Liang Shanbo-Zhu Yingtai*," "*Jieqinpei*," "*Qinxiang-lian*," "*Hongsicuo*," "*Limaohuantazi*," "*Cuopei yuanyang*," "*Yesonghanyi*," and "*Wuhupingnan*." The artists either choose the classic fragments or cut down the whole novel to make it more simple and to create a suitable screenplay for the stage performance. For instance, the Zhuang Opera compressed a hundred and twenty sections of "*Hong loumeng*," to focus on the interpretation of Baoyu and Daiyu that is read in poetry books for love scenes. Also, "Jia Baoyu" and "Xue Baojiao" were married scenes, focusing on the expression of feudalism on the bondage of free love marriage, instead of describing the reality of material life (Huang Fuxiang, 2012).

Not all novels can be used as the material for the adaptation of Zhuang Opera. Only those with positive content, having a particular practical significance, and aligning with the Zhuang people's aesthetic necessity and collective will of the storyline will attract the attention of folk artists. For example, the "*Bao Gongqian*" celebrates the integrity of Bao Gong, and reflects the Zhuang people's desire for uncorrupt officials. "*Wuzi-baishou*" educated people to respect the elderly at home. The storyline of these novels is close to the lives of the masses; so they are adapted and moved to the magnificent opera stage.

5.1.3 Local Zhuang nationality element repertoire

If an opera is only through transplantation and adaptation to create the play, there will be no lasting vitality. Only by cultivating the playwright with the creative level, constantly creating a representative play with the characteristics of this play, and taking the original as the main source

of the play, can the play always maintain vitality and competitiveness. In the Zhuang Opera, most of these original plays are based on the Zhuang folk myths, historical storytelling, and the lives and current affairs around the people. There are more original plays, such as “*Dieyan-dieping*,” “*Nongjia-baotie*,” “*Tunnv-jialong*,” “*Ayashan-chuanqi*,” “*Bainiaoyi*,” “*Baohulu*,” “*Langzi-xiachang*,” “*Nongzhigao*,” and “*Yushouzhuo*” (Gu Lezhen, 2002).

The material of “*Zoulongjian*” in Zhuang Opera derives from the folk story “*Shelang*,” and the play “*Butterfly and Ping*” which presents a play with the folk story. “The play of the same name,” “*Nong Zhi Gao*” and “*Xilin-jiaoan*” are created and processed from history. These Zhuang Operas are based on folk stories, historical events, and trivial life. While exposing and demonstrating various bad ideas and destructive behaviors, they also showed excellent nationality characteristics such as being hardworking, simple, kind, upright, generous, and tolerant of their noble qualities. These fully expressed the Zhuang people's concepts of right and wrong, good and evil, and beauty and ugliness.

5.2 THE CLASSIFICATION OF THE REPERTOIRE

The earliest classification of opera themes in the existing materials is the Yuan Dynasty opera artist Xia Tingzhi's “*Qinglouji*,” which lists the miscellaneous operas “*You jia tou*,” “*Gui yuan*,” “*He er*,” “*Hua dan*,” “*Pi bing*,” “*Po shan er*,” and “*Yuan lin*” (Xia Tingzhi, 2006).

Lu Tiancheng (1956) divides *Nanxi* (南戏) into six groups: “One is loyalty and filial piety, one is festival, one is style, one is valiant, one is meritorious, and one is immortal Buddha.” The classification of Chinese classical opera is more comprehensive and detailed, which has a particular reference value for this research. Based on the classification methods of previous opera themes, and based on the actual situation of the traditional operas of Zhuang Opera, it divides into four categories: love and marriage opera, ethics opera, history opera, myth opera, and the earliest repertoire “*Taipingchun*” (Chen Liqin, 2011).

5.2.1 Love theme

Love and marriage have always been the preferred material for all types of literary works and also the focus of various opera performances. There are many operas on love and marriage in Zhuang Opera, accounting for more than half. According to the plot of the story and the principal contradictions, it can divide into three categories: one is that the female and the male protagonist

fall in love, and they are smoothly combined; the second is that feudal parents or feudal ethics blocks them; and the third is that evil forces damage upon them.

In the first type of love and marriage operas, the hero and heroine's bonding process are not hindered by external forces, and it is relatively smooth. They love each other or fall in love while singing folk songs; the conflicts are relatively smooth and short. The ideal of free love has created many bold and delightful characters. Representative repertoires include “*Ang you de gu shi*,” “*Xie cheng kang*,” “*Zhang bao tong*,” “*Nong jia bao tie*,” “*Qiao qu yang yang*,” “*Jua gu yuan*,” “*Jia yang niao*,” “*Hong mao jin*,” “*Ge shu liang yuan*,” “*Jie mei yi jia*,” “*Xi jie liang yuan*,” “*Mei hua shan qing yuan*,” “*Hua yuan ding hun*,” and “*Sheng si xiang yi*” (Huang Youxia, 2008).

The transcription of the “*Kudiao*” melody is as follows:

Ku Diao
from *Carp Maid*

Senza Misura

Figure 22 An excerpt of the *Ku diao* melody transcription.

Source: Guangxi Zhuang Opera Troupe.

In the second type of love and marriage operas, young men and women pursue a free love marriage which is subject to intervention and obstruction from feudal parents or feudal ethics. The contradictions and conflicts were obvious; the plots were ups and downs, gripping, and shaped a group of loyal families, as well as demonstrating loyalty to love. The image of the children in the operas are those who extol the good character of “brave and love.” Representative plays include “*Liang shan bo yu zhu ying tai*,” “*Kong que dong nan fei*,” “*Hong lou meng*,” “*Xue lei yin yuan*,” “*Shuang hun pei*,” “*Nv qi ma*,” “*Hong si cuo*,” “*Qing xi yao shan*,” “*Lao yu yang*,” “*Zheng qi*,” “*Jia xu zhen pei*,” “*Yi lv ma*,” “*Tao hua nv*,” “*Hua yuan zeng shan*,” “*Hui qu yuan lai yi jia qin*,” “*Jia bai tang*,” “*Lei sa xiang si*,” “*Dong fang tui hun*,” “*Mo chou nv*,” and “*Liang meng yuan*” (Han Wanhong, 2017).

An excerpt of the “*Huanle-diao*” melody transcription from “*Liang shan bo yu zhu ying tai*” is as follows:

Huan Le Diao



Figure 23 A portion of the “*Huanle-diao*” melody transcription.

Source: Guangxi Zhuang Opera Troupe.

Among them, “*Mochou-nv*” is a rare Zhuang Opera ending in tragedy. In the long feudal society, the marriage of young men and women of the Zhuang ethnic group is remarkably restrained. They can freely socialize and fall in love, but marriage cannot be autonomous. These young men and women fled, were interrogated, and resisted in the struggle against feudal parents. They deeply criticize and spurn arranged marriages, feudal etiquette, and feudal regulations.

In the third type of love and marriage opera, the central contradiction comes from the exploitation and preemption of civilians by local evil forces. Usually, in a series of struggle stories, the landlord, the rich, or other influential people want to forcibly separate a pair of lovers and take possession of the woman. Representative plays include “*Dui ge fu qi*,” “*Xian nv jiu a li*,” “*Feng quan qing*,” “*Fu qi tuan yuan*,” “*nan zhong qi yuan*,” “*Wen long yu xiao ni*,” “*Ai zhuang yuan*,” “*Wang lao hu qiang qin*,” “*Lao xiao mei de hun shi*,” “*Yuan pei xiang feng*,” and “*Tao hua yi jiu xiu chun feng*.” Among them, “*Wenlong-xiaoni*” has been staged at several Zhuang Opera art festivals, which has won the masses' favor (Gu lezhen, 1997). Stills of “*Fu qi tuan yuan*” is as follows:



Figure 24 The love theme Zhuang Opera.

Source: Guangxi Zhuang Opera Troupe.

Looking at the love and marriage operas of Zhuang Opera as a whole, it does not focus on the sweetness and romance of love, but strives hard for the love. The Zhuang young men's and women's infinite desire and the persistent pursuit of free love marriage suffers with the interference of feudal ritualism which relentlessly tramples on them. On the other hand, there was

a fierce contradiction between the two, which was extremely dramatic. Most of the plays focus on the heroine's image. Some of them are poor women from the farmhouse, and others are ladies born in a wealthy family. They all use the young men's excellent qualities as the criterion for choosing marriage objects and pursue free love that fits their needs. The farmhouse's poor women are at a relatively equal level with the man in love, and have a high degree of freedom in love. Although the heroines are from rich people, they are different from the spoiled ladies. They dare to express their love to the lower-ranking hero. When love conflicts with material or social status, they will recklessly choose the ideal love life of coarse tea and light rice because of the "higher price of love," expressing the expectations of Zhuang young men and women to demand freedom of marriage (Wei Da, 2007).

5.2.2 Social relations and ethics reflected in the themes of the opera

The Zhuang people's ethics are the crystallization of the Zhuang people's continuous pursuit of truth, kindness, and beauty in the long historical process. It is the spiritual force by which to maintain the social operations of the Zhuang people. It is mainly reflected in the respect for hard work, justice, lightness, respect for the elderly, love for the young, and family. Also are values of harmony, maintaining the motherland's unity and national unity. Among the traditional operas of Zhuang Opera, there are not a few operas about ethics, which divided into family ethics and social ethics.

1) Family ethics repertoire

"Family is the basic unit of the congregation formed by a combination of fixed marriage, blood relationship, or adoption relationship" (Han Wanhong, 2017). Among the opera repertoires are: 1) those who reflect abuse, such as *"Bai mei lian," "Huang jin ying," "Jing xi wang yu lian," "Die yi,"* and *"Gu yan feng chun;"* 2) those who show marital conflicts, such as *"Zhu mai chen," "Fu qi xiang hui," "Lang zi xia chang," "Quan fu jie du,"* and *"Yan du de jie ju;"* 3) there are talks about brotherhood, such as *"Gu rou qing huai," "Tong hai ge shan," "Qian cai yu ren yi," "Li hua jie tao," "Ku jin gan lai," "Ren qing leng nuan,"* and *"Jie mei qing yuan;"* 4) those who have been reunited after being separated, such as in *"Guan yin tang hui mu," "Fu nv tuan yuan," "Li mao huan tai zi," "Yu shou," "Shi ba shuang xiu hua xie,"* and *"Yi xiang tuan ju;"* 5) *"Bu huo"* and *"Clever Woman Being the Leader,"* which cleverly use wisdom

to solve family problems; 6) and “Admirers and Beggars” and “Cotton Tears” which battle against feudal superstition (Gu Lezhen, 2002).

A piece of the “*Maocha-diao*” melody transcription from “*guan yin tang hui mu*” is as follows:

Mao Cha Diao

Bu Guo Da Niang Yi Duan



Figure 25 An excerpt of *Maocha-diao* melody transcription.

Source: Guangxi Zhuang Opera troupe.

In family ethics operas, the relationships between various family members are reflected through these plays, either to promote the importance of family harmony from the outset or to warn the world of the severe consequences of family relationships' destruction. Their purpose is to arouse the masses' reflection to guide everyone to create a harmonious family atmosphere, leading people to realize only one harmonious “small family” can jointly create a harmonious “everyone.”



Figure 26 The stills of ethnic theme in Zhuang Opera.

Source: Guangxi Zhuang Opera Troupe.

2) Social ethics and moral repertoire

Social ethics and morals are manifested in social life and are mainly reflected in what happens between members of social relations such as monarchs and ministers, officials and people, and among the people themselves in the traditional operas of Zhuang Opera. In the social ethics and morals opera, there are “*Qin xiang lian*,” “*Bao gong pei qing*,” “*Zhi fu miao lian jie xian ling*,” “*Xue xie yuan*,” “*Zi fen mei jing*,” “*Hua yuan xue an*,” “*Sheng si pai*,” and “*Shuang ding ji*.” There are also “The second Bloom” and “The Wu Family Offering Treasures” which praise loyal subjects and good people. Further, there are “A Pair of Zhuang Brocades” and “Flowers Full Moon” admiring hardworking and kindness. There are “*Taika-lishi*,” “Stealing Justice and Returning Love” and “A Branch of Flowers.” There is also a “Fighting Rich Lady” and “Treasure Gourd,” which are wise wealthy men who punish evil and do works of charity (Han Wanhong, 2017).

A piece of the “*kuaixi-diao*” melody transcription segment is as follows:

Kuai Xi Diao



Figure 27 A piece of the “*kuaixi-diao*” melody transcription segment.

Source: Guangxi Zhuang Opera Troupe.

The ethical and moral operas in Zhuang Opera's traditional plays mainly aim to punish evil and promote goodness and sympathy for the weak. They embody the Zhuang people's moral concepts and aesthetic trends as well as the beautiful wishes of the Zhuang people. The concept of ethics and morals are formed in a long-term social development process that invisibly regulates people's words and behaviors and plays a vital role in social order stability. “As a special ideology and superstructure, morality is to create a certain state of mind and guide people by the methods of creating public opinion, forming social trends, setting up moral examples, shaping ideal personality, and fostering internal beliefs. Certain concepts of good and evil determine their behavior” (Wang Shide, 2001).

5.2.3 History theme repertoire

There have been many disputes in academic circles about the definition and scope of historical operas. In summary, there are two prominent voices: one is that historical operas must be faithful to history, relying on historical figures and historical events, and details can be embellished; but there must be a historical basis. Some scholars even believe that not only the main characters cannot be fictional, but the supporting characters must also be real. Another view is that it does not need to be based on history books entirely. At the same time, one should pay attention to the opera's artistic quality while pursuing historical authenticity. It is a historical

person as the main character, the storyline is a folk-circulated story, and its authenticity needs to be studied.

These two viewpoints are the difference between historical opera in a narrow sense and historical opera in a broad sense. According to the actual situation of traditional Zhuang Opera, this article adopts historical operas' viewpoint in a broad sense. Representative plays include “Nongzhi gao zhao bing,” “Nongzhi gao qi y,i” “Xi lin jiao an,” “Liu er da fan gui,” “Xue xia shan zheng xi,” “Zheng ce bai hua shan,” “Yang jia jiang,” “Xue gang fan tang,” “Mu gui ying gua shuai,” “Yang kou nv jiang,” and “Mu gui ying da nao hong zhou.” These operas have created a group of heroic figures who have the courage and wisdom to look at death (Liao Mingjun, 2008).

A piece of “yang jia jiang” transcription segment is as follows:



Figure 28A piece of “yang jia jiang” transcription segment.

Source: Guangxi Zhuang Opera Troupe.

Nong Zhigao was a great peasant uprising leader in Guangxi. He rose against the corrupt Song Dynasty and was a hero of the Zhuang ethnic group. Many stories about Nong Zhigao were circulated in the community in early times, but they were lost because no one collected them. During the Guangxu Period, there were six acts about Nong Zhigao arranged by the Zhuang

Opera artist Huang Yonggui. The acts “*Nong mu tao nan*,” “*Nu sha qin fu*,” “*Nong zhi gao fan jiao*,” “*Nong zhi gao zhao bing*,” “*Nong zhi gao qi yi*,” “*Nong zhi gao fan song*,” and only two scenes of “*Nong zhi gao zhao bing*” and “*Nong zhi gao fan song*” have been passed down. Both these operas celebrate Nong Zhigao's heroism and his deeds for being right; and they are the main repertoire of martial Zhuang Opera (Han Wanhong, 2017).

A piece of the “*Maban*” melody from “*Nong Zhigao*” transcription is as follows:

Ma Ban
Nong Zhi Gao Yi Duan



Figure 29 A piece of “*Maban*” melody transcription in “*Nong Zhigao*.”

Source: Guangxi Zhuang Opera Troupe.

“*Xilin-jiaoran*” was compiled with real stories that took place in Xilin County, Guangxi. In 1853, French Catholic priest Marais sneaked into Xilin County illegally and carried out aggression under the banner of preaching religion. The local people suffered a lot. According to the villager's complaints, Zhang Mingfeng of Xilin County investigated and arrested 26 illegal believers, including Ma Lai, and sentenced him to death according to law. The French government used this as an excuse to provoke the war of aggression against China. This incident is also the fuse that triggered the Second Opium War (1856-1860). The play “*Xilin*” indeed showed the audience the history of that period, providing a more intuitive way for people to learn about history (Han Wanhong, 2017).



Figure 30 The historical theme in Zhuang Opera.

Source: Guangxi Zhuang Opera Troupe.

The historical operas in Zhuang Operas are not many compared with the operas of other themes, but the tall images of these heroes play an important role among the Zhuang people. They all have the spirit to defeat all enemies, and they have a Zhuang will that never burns, with a revolutionary spirit that never fails. They made huge sacrifices for their national and collective interests and even for their lives. It is with these heroes at the front that human beings have a bright future. In the Zhuang Opera, some operas praising historical heroes are the embodiment of the patriotism and the spirit of struggle of the entire Zhuang ethnic group.

5.2.4 Myth theme repertoire

Generally, operas based on folk myths comprise a substantial part of the number of operas of all ethnic groups in China. When the first people could not explain certain phenomena or could not achieve certain goals by realistic means, they often made up ideal stories and interpretations based on their own imagination, and many magical elements were added to them, which are myths. The folk myths of the Zhuang people are extremely rich. From the origin of a mountain to the naming of a river, from the fairy in the sky to the dragon in the sea, these are the wisdom of the ancestors of the Zhuang people.

Representative operas of the mythical Zhuang Operas are: “*Tian luo gu niang*,” “*Wei nv jia qiao*,” “*Liu ming yu long nv*,” “*Haigu nian*,” “*Ye ming zhu*,” “*Da ya shan chuan qi*,” “*Niu lang zhi nv*,” “*Qi xian nv xia fan*,” “*bai niao yi*,” “*She lang*,” “*Tao hua xian zi*,” “*Hu fu*,” “*Zhang si jie liu lian fan jian*,” “*Ji xiang ru yi*,” and “*Xin bai she chuan*.” As long as there are

divine characters involved, or mythical operas that fall into this category, these magical elements must be the characters who play an important role in the play, and the main plots can be called mythical operas. Although the opera based on mythology uses imagination to express people's ideas and wishes, the occurrence of the story often takes the background of real-life and the daily trivia as the plot, which still reflects the passionate pursuit of real life (Liao Mingjun, 2008).

An excerpt of the “*Ye ming zhu*” transcription of the “*Shi diao*” melody is as follows:

Shi Diao



Figure 31 An excerpt of the “*Ye ming zhu*” transcription of the “*Shi diao*” melody.

Source: Guangxi Zhuang Opera Troupe.

“*Tianluo Girl*” is a relatively classic play. Many ethnic groups have a “*Tianluo Girl*” folk tale. Zhuang Opera has brought this well-known myth to the theater stage. This play is mainly about Farmer Cheng Fu who rescued a field snail in the field and put it in a water tank to feed it. Every time he returned to work, he found steaming meals on the table. He secretly observed that the snail he had rescued turned into a girl to cook and do laundry for him. The local county official wanted to kidnap the *Tianluo Girl* as a concubine and sent his family to kill Cheng Fu. Fortunately, Cheng Fu escaped and rushed to the capital to report the incident. The *Tianluo Girl*

was finally rescued, and the couple reunited. Similar to this repertoire, there are the operas “*Hai bang gu niang*,” “*Li yu yu gu niang*,” and “*Shui lu jie qin*” (Han Wanhong, 2017).



Figure 32 The mythical theme Zhuang Opera.

Source: Guangxi Zhuang Opera Troupe.

“*Bainiaoyi*” is a widely circulated repertoire. The play tells a story about a young man fighting a feudal ruler for love. What is different from the ordinary love-themed opera is that the heroine here is a fairy in the sky. This play has undergone many adaptations and re-creations since its creation. There is a play “*New Bainiaoyi*” which reduces the description of magic on the basis of the original storyline; the mainlines through the class struggle between the ruler and the working people, shows the contradiction between good and evil (Mei Shuaiyuan, 1990).

The stills of “*Bai niao yi*” is as follows:



Figure 33 The stills of “*Bai niao yi*.”

Source: Baidu, www.baidu.com.

A piece of “*Bai niao yi*” transcription is as follows:

Xi Diao



Figure 34 A piece of “*Bai niao yi*” transcription.

Source: Guangxi Zhuang Opera Troupe.

5.3 “*TAIPINGCHUN*” --- THE EARLIEST FORM OF ZHUANG OPERA

“*Taipingchun*,” which means "Peace spring," is written in ancient Zhuang characters, using five-character sentences and waist-feet rhyme (will be discussed in Chapter Six). Because of the content, it is a tribute to the peaceful and prosperous scene of the Qing Dynasty emperor Kangxi's succession, hence the "Peace Spring" (Li Qiong, 2016).

“*Taipingchun*” has no story content, no characterization, and no opera conflict. It cannot regard as an opera in the traditional sense. However, due to the particularity and importance of its historical status, it cannot be excluded from the discussion of Zhuang Opera, and it classified as a separate discussion. Some scholars have carried out a detailed analysis and research on the content of their singing and explored the generation of Zhuang Opera and its costumes, makeup, and characters, which are all essential for studying the history of Zhuang Opera. This is a rare opera relic in the history of Zhuang literature (Huang Shouheng, 2015).

“*Taipingchun*” was compiled in the 20th year of Kangxi Period in the Qing Dynasty (1681). It is the earliest form of the North Zhuang Opera. It has been transmitted for over 300 years. It eulogizes the era of prosperity during emperor Kangxi’s period, praises spring, and pursues a better life, hence the name “*Taipingchun*.” The ancient manuscript was handwritten by the eighth-generation artist Huang Fuxiang. He wrote on old, yellow grass paper with a brush, and the cover reads “Cen Huang Ban He Shu” (Ding Shibo, 1995).

It was compiled in the first piece of the “Traditional Chinese Opera Integrated Tianlin Volume,” which includes “Beginning Song,” “Happy Song,” “New House Song,” “*Baozhai* Song,” “*Zan Baogong*,” “*Zan Shennong*,” “The Praises of Guanyin,” “Praise to the Emperor of the Tang Dynasty,” “New Year Song,” and “Praise to the Emperor of the Qing Dynasty,” each with a length ranging from 16 to 56 sentences, with a total of 308 lines. The content is mainly the singing of various praises and congratulations (Ding Shibo, 1995).

The transcription of the “Beginning Song” of “*Taipingchun*” is as follows:

- 1: (土俗字) 场 台以 亥 欢 鲁
 2: (壮文) Cangz Daih'it Hai Fwen Nduj
 3: (直译) 场 第一 开 歌 头
 4: (意译) 第一场 起头歌

众爷【唱】

(土俗字) 吴呢 楼 弹 唱 众 况 楼 骂 廖 → Line:a

(壮文) Ngoenznix raeuz danz cang, cungq gvang raeuz ma liuh.

(直译) 今日 咱 弹 唱 青 年 咱 来 玩

(意译) 今日来弹唱, 年轻人相聚。

(土俗字) 国 欢 么 改 心 弹 唱 骂 改 欢 → Line:b

(壮文) Gueg fwen moq gaij saem, danz cang ma gaij mbwq.

(直译) 做 歌 新 改 心 弹 唱 来 改 闷

(意译) 畅心唱山歌, 开心来弹唱。

(土俗字) 海 中 爷 吕 方 海 甫 老 利 梅 → Line:c

(壮文) Haej cungqyez ndaej faengz, haej buxlaux ndi maez.

(直译) 给 众 爷 得 乐 给 大 人 好 恋

(意译) 让诸爷高兴, 让大人入迷。

Figure 35 The transcription of the earliest form of Zhuang Opera repertoire “*Taipingchun*.”

Source: Collection of Chinese Traditional Opera, 2013.

- Key:**
- 1: The ancient character of the local Zhuang area.
 - 2: The characters written in Zhuang language.
 - 3: Direct translation according to the words.
 - 4: The translation according to the meaning.

English translation of the lines:

Line a: Today young people gather together for singing.

Line b: Sing open heart and happily

Line c: Cause everyone to have enjoyment, make everyone happy.

In another instance, in the section of “*Bao zhai song*,” it is sung:

English: My village is very beautiful.

It is rich for thousands of years and everything always goes well.

All years are better than the years before, and all generations are happy.

There are banyan trees to protect the villages and longan trees to protect the streets.

Zhuang: *Mbanj raeuz ndi lienz ndi, cien bi lij funghyungz.*

Miz gorungz bauj mbanj, miz go 'nganx bauj gai.

.....

Although there are specific characters in the “*Zan Baogong*,” “*Zan Shennong*,” “*Zan Guanyin*,” “*Zan Tang Emperor*,” and other parts, they also contain praises for the protagonist without any storyline. For instance, “*Zan Baogong*” is translated as follows:

English: In the past, Bao Wenzheng was truly fair.

Sincere to the people, he is a father without officials.

Kindness Bao Wenzheng is a well-known official.

Everyone in Kaifeng is fair.

Zhuang: *Mwhnduj Bauh Vwnzcingq, naengh saeq ndaej goengcingq.*

ngj cin, buxbienga ing lumj boh.

Saemsoh Bauh Vwnzcingq, cin miz mingz cingguen.

Naengh saeq Gaihfunghfuj, buxbux naeuz goengdauh.

.....

Note: The quotes of the opera lines are from the integrated Tianlin Volume of Traditional Chinese Opera Plays, 2013.

This segment content is chanting from “*Zan Baogong*.” Through simple examples of events, it praises Bao Gong's honest character with extremely concise words. The words show the respect of the people. The other chapters contain similar tribute and congratulations without repeated examples.

The themes of Zhuang Operas are rich and varied. We can clearly understand each type of opera's leading content and ideas through the above classification and analysis. Generally, there are more operas about love and hatred between men and women in Zhuang Opera, and they are more involved in various themes. There is a more literary but less martial theme repertoire.

Martial arts mainly exist in historical operas, and there are also some martial arts scenes in other themes; however, they are mostly just used as plot aids. Different themes have different style characteristics, but both of them have complete text structures.

CHAPTER VI

ANALYSIS OF SELECTED MUSIC PIECES OF ZHUANG OPERA

In this chapter, the researcher used the method of musicology to explain the theory of traditional Chinese music and the Chinese pentatonic scale music system named the *Wu-sheng* scale pattern (五声调式). After fieldwork investigation and literature reviews, some of Zhuang Opera's most representative music pieces were selected for analysis. The origin and development processes of Zhuang Opera music selections were analyzed from the perspective of ethnomusicology and musicology, as well as the music characteristics from the aspect of music analysis, including melodic motif, vocal melodies, tonalities, and music structures.

The selected music pieces of Zhuang music used in this study were recorded during the fieldwork, and some were taken from other publications, which the researcher was not able to record. In the following analysis, the researcher will analyze these according to the research of Chinese music scholars, including traditional Chinese music, especially Zhuang music. However, according to the literature survey, almost all of their studies have not explained the process of the Chinese opera modes which they have recognized. Rather, they just identify the Zhuang music mostly by using the *gong* and *zhi* mode. Given this, these important musical characteristics will need further study in the future which is not in the scope of this research, as this research is mostly concerned about music characteristics as described below.

There is no clear definition of the origin of the pentatonic scale in published literature. Hungarian music historian Bence Szabolcsi believes: "The various pentatonic scales known today are only reminiscent of an undiscovered primitive era in tonal materials..." (Bence Szabolcsi, 1965, p. 268). Chinese scholar Du Yaxiong believes that "the origin of the pentatonic scale is plural rather than unitary, confirming that the origin of the pentatonic scale is diversified, and the veneration of the number "five" is a very old concept." Different regions in the world have different pentatonic naming methods, and different pentatonic scales have different structures, as well as showing different logical modes of musical thought (Du Yaxiong, 1995).

Du Yaxiong (1995) believes that the pentatonic scale is a cultural choice of people and does not represent a certain stage in the evolution of music: “When I did fieldwork in Daxing County, Beijing, I found that local folk musicians had changed some tones because they felt that such changes would make the melody better. It can be seen that the structure of the different scales reflects the characteristics of randomness and arbitrariness” (Du Yaxiong, 1993).

Concerning the essential musical elements and major music pieces of Zhuang Opera, studies have used music analysis and traditional Chinese music theory to analyze Zhuang Opera's music characteristics. The most popular used in the Zhuang Opera are those such as the “*Zhengdiao*” melody, “*Shiqiang*” melody, “*Huanqiang*” melody, and “*Baoqiang*” melody.

The research construct is as follows:

- 6.1 Theory of pentatonic scale
- 6.2 Chinese pentatonic: *Wu-sheng* scale
- 6.3 Music analysis of South Zhuang Opera
 - 6.3.1 Original musical form of South Zhuang Opera
 - 6.3.2 Evolution of music in South Zhuang Opera
 - 6.3.3. Analysis the music mode of South Zhuang Opera
- 6.4 Music analysis of Shigong Zhuang Opera
 - 6.4.1 Analysis of the music of *Shiqiang* melody
 - 6.4.2 Analysis musical features of *Baoqiang* melody
 - 6.4.3 Analysis of *Huanqiang* melody
- 6.5 Music analysis of North Zhuang Opera
 - 6.5.1 Analysis of the origin of North Zhuang Opera from *Bayin* Music
 - 6.5.2 Analysis of *Zhengdiao* melody in Zhuang Opera
- 6.6 Rhyme patterns of Zhuang Opera

6.1 THEORY OF PENTATONIC SCALE

Regarding the discussion of Chinese music modes, the “Yellow Bell” (黄钟) system was known as early as the Zhou Dynasty (1122 BCE - 256 BCE). Although the twelve equal temperaments have appeared in Chinese music, they are still not suitably called tonality, since they are only characteristics of Chinese music; thus, the researcher tends to identify them as

modes. As one may know, China has gone through several dynasty changes in history. At the same time as each dynasty change, many valuable documents were destroyed. So what academia knows is not complete yet, but what has survived today are some documents of the Tang Dynasty (618 CE - 907 CE). The significance of these documents is that they are still in China, South Korea and Japan and researchers can reference them, being able to discover more essential details in the future (Zuo Zhenguan, 1990).

Tracking back to the history of Zhuang Opera, there are two sources: local Zhuang music, and influence from other operas. These operas are mixed in the performance of Zhuang Opera today, and the current of the modes in Zhuang Opera are exemplified and analyzed in this study. In a broad sense, the pentatonic scale refers to a scale with five notes in an octave, and there are many types in the world. The pentatonic scale is the most widely distributed in the Far East countries of Asia (such as China, Mongolia, North Korea, Japan), and is also widely used in Scotland, Ireland, Hungary and other places in Europe. Besides, American Indian and black music also use the pentatonic scale (Zuo Zhenguan, 1990).

The pentatonic scale has a unique character and is complete in terms of tonality. One construction takes five consecutive pitches from the circle of fifths, for instance: starting on C, these are C, G, D, A, and E tones. Transposing the pitches to fit into one octave, rearranges the pitches into the major pentatonic scale: C, D, E, G, A.

Generally, there are many scales with five notes within an octave, which can roughly divide into hemitonic and anhemitonic.

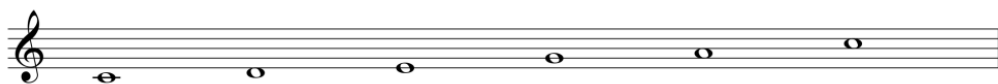


Figure 36 The register of the pentatonic scale

6.2 THE CHINESE PENTATONIC: *WU-SHENG* SCALE

Chinese music has one of the longest histories of the development of all music cultures of the world. It is named the *Wu-sheng* scale pattern (五声调式). Chinese music theory was formulated in its unique way, differing fundamentally from its Western music counterparts. As early as 2,500 years ago, the book “*Guanzi-diyuan pian*” (管子·地员篇) has a record of

using the “*Sanfen-sunyi*” principle (三分损益) to derive the scalar tones. The earliest complete account regarding the “*Sanfen-sunyi*” principle can be traced back to about the fourth century BCE in “The spring and autumn of *Lu*” (吕氏春秋, 221 BCE).

The *Wu-sheng* scale pattern is comparable to the western circle of fifths principle or the Pythagorean tone-system. In the process, scalar tones are produced by alternately multiplying $2/3$ and $4/3$ by the length of a tube or string of the preceding tone (Huang Hsun-Pin, 1994).

The Chinese pentatonic scale, called the *Wu-sheng* scale, consists of five notes as *gong* (宫), *shang* (商), *jue* (角), *zhi* (徵), and *yu* (羽). The Chinese pentatonic scale pattern is approximated to a scale using the western syllables as do-re-mi-sol-la, fa-sol-la-do-re, or sol-la-do-re-mi. The tones of the *Wu-sheng* scale are traditionally called “*Zheng-sheng*” (正声), which can be regarded as the “diatonic-tone scale” tones in western music. Another term, “*Pian-sheng*” (偏声), is used in contrast to “*Zheng-sheng*” and is comparable to chromatic-tone altered tones (Li Chongguang, 2000).

The *Wu-sheng* scale is widely used in China. A closer look at the interval structure in this scale pattern reveals some essential features. There are eight different intervals in the *Wu-sheng* scale pattern, C-D-E-G-A, (which tones refer to do-re-mi-sol-la) is comparable to the anhemitonic, which means it either contains no semitones or contains semitones where none of the semitones appear consecutively in the scale order of the pentatonic scale: 1) major second, 2) major third, 3) minor third, 4) perfect fourth, 5) perfect fifth, 6) major sixth, 7) minor sixth, and 8) minor seventh. Comparing this interval set with that in the western diatonic heptatonic scale reveals that the former lacks the minor second, augmented fourth, diminished fifth, and major seventh intervals (Li Chongguang, 2000).

The *Wu-sheng* scale, widely used in traditional Chinese music, including Chinese opera, is mainly composed of the *Wu-sheng* scale of the primary tones *gong*, *shang*, *jue*, *zhi*, and *yu* (Shen Jianguo, 2008).

Zhuang Opera music is mainly composed of the *Wu-sheng* scale pattern, including *gong* (do), *shang* (re), *jue* (mi), *zhi* (sol), and *yu* (la). Each tone in the scale can be used as the prime-tone of the mode (similar to the term of the tonic note in western music theory). Prime-tone refers to the note that occurs as a starting note or ending note of a melody. These five modes are called

gong mode (*gong* as the prime-tone), *shang* mode (*shang* as the prime-tone), *jue* mode, *zhi* mode, and *yu* mode, which are the primary modes that appear throughout this study and which the researcher will briefly discuss below.

Among these intervals in the *Wu-sheng* scale, one can tell that the major third between *gong* (do) and *jue* (mi), as well as its inversion of the minor sixth, appears only once and is the most significant feature of this scale pattern. The lower tone of the major third becomes the *gong* (do) of the scale (Du Yaxiong, 1993) Thus, the *gong* tone of a *Wu-sheng* scale is clearly determined by identifying these two intervals. For instance, the following are the different modes in the Chinese *Wu-sheng* scale pattern.

6.2.1 Gong mode scale

Regarding C as the prime-tone (*gong*) in the *Wu-sheng* scale; the major third is between C and E, which can constitute the C *gong* mode; the model register is following: *gong* (do), *shang* (re), *jue* (mi), *zhi* (sol), *yu* (la).



Figure 37 The C *gong* mode in the *Wu-sheng* scale

6.2.2 Shang mode scale

Taking D as the prime-tone within this mode scale, the major third is between C and E, the model register is *shang* (re), *jue* (mi), *zhi* (sol), *yu* (la), *gong* (do).

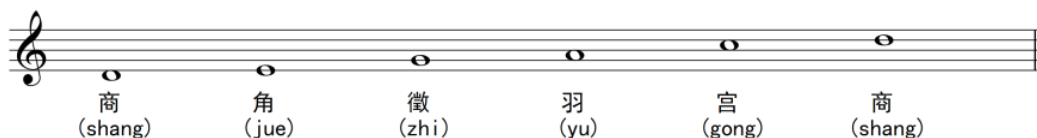


Figure 38 The D *shang* mode of the *Wu-sheng* scale

6.2.3 *Jue* mode scale

Taking E as the prime-tone, the major third will be found between C and E notes. The mode register is: *jue* (mi), *zhi* (sol), *yu* (la), *gong* (do), *shang* (re).



Figure 39 The E *jue* mode of the *Wu-sheng* scale

6.2.4 *Zhi* mode scale

Regarding G as the prime-tone, the major third is between C and E, and the register is *yu* (la), *gong* (do), *shang* (re), *jue* (mi), *zhi* (sol).



Figure 40 The G *zhi* mode of the *Wu-sheng* scale

6.2.5 *Yu* mode scale

Regarding A as the prime-tone, the major third is between C and E, the register is *gong* (do), *shang* (re), *jue* (mi), *zhi* (sol), *yu* (la).

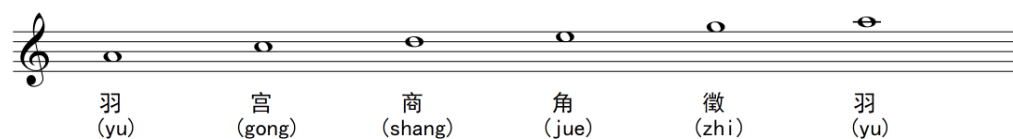
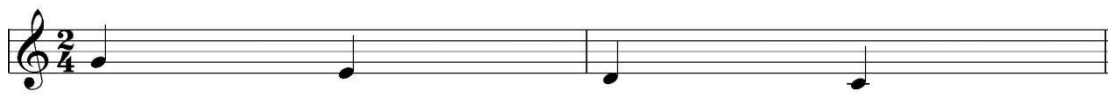


Figure 41 The A *yu* mode in the *Wu-sheng* scale

The melody descends to the prime-tone in these two kinds of cadence patterns, with the five-degree interval descending to the end. The cadence of the *gong* mode pattern is as follows:

Figure 42 The cadence of *gong* mode patternFigure 43 The cadence of *zhi* mode pattern

6.2.6 The melody of Chinese opera music --- *Qupai*

The melody of Chinese opera, namely *Qupai* (曲牌), is a significant phenomenon in Chinese music, especially in Han traditional music. All vocal music and instrumental music with text titles that are relatively standardized in structure and organization and standardized in melody, and employing lyrics or text filling, can be used multiple times and are allowed to change in circulation, thus becoming melodies. *Qupai* is a fixed music structure form with the characteristics of being programmatic, and having plasticity, reusability, and title (Qiao Jianzhong, 1990).

Qupai is a unique form of traditional Chinese music. Each *Qupai* is an independent piece of music, with a fixed musical structure, mode, tempo, and rhythm. Besides, it also contains many other elements, such as literature, singing character, and performance style (Feng Guangyu, 2004).

Each melody of *Qupai* has its music structure and mode pattern, while the ascending and descending contour of the melody may vary depending on the different tone values and the lyrics. Whether the melody is long or short, the music structure is always fixed. Even if several *Qupai* are used in combination, they are independent (Cheng Yuan, 2012).

At the end of the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), *Qupai* music has become an important part of Chinese opera, such as that with a *Haiyan* melody (海盐腔), *Yuyao* melody (余姚腔), *Kunshan* melody (昆山腔), and *Yiyang* melody (弋阳腔) (Qian Guozhen, 2005).

According to the literature survey, there are about 81 *Qupai* melodies of “Fishing Father’s Words” (渔父词), 82 of “Bodhisattva” (菩萨蛮), and 730 of “Looking at the

South River”, composed during the Sui (隋) and Tang (唐) Dynasties. Taking the *Dunhuang* (敦煌) melody as an example, under the name of “Looking at the South River,” the text means “I am Lin Chiliu from Qujiang” and “Blowing Away the Clouds on the Edge of the Moon for You” (Cheng Yuan, 2012).

However, in the “*Yunyao* collection” (云瑶集杂曲子), there are two “Bamboo” (竹枝子) melodies, which do not fit the meaning of the melody's name but sings one song each as a wandering woman and a girl who wait for the song. Also, another melody, “Cave Fairy” (洞仙歌) does not chant about a “fairy.”

Thus, it can be said that the salient characteristics of the music in the Sui and Tang Dynasties are: the melody is primary and independent, and the filling of the lyrics is subordinate to the music. It is generally believed that Sui and Tang's music are the original forms of *Qupai* (Cheng Yuan, 2012).

As a kind of minority art, Zhuang Opera has also absorbed many various musical elements in its development for more than two hundred years, forming its unique melody style. For instance, in the South Zhuang Opera, the *Ping ban*, *Xidiao*, *Xi*, and *Shidiao* melodies, belong to the *Banqiang* system. In the North Zhuang Opera, the *Zhengban* and *Kudiao* melodies are combined with some folk song music. The Shigong Zhuang Opera is derived from ritual music. “Shigong” means wizard, which is used in song and dance for sacrificial ceremonies (Yang Danhua, 2013).

Moreover, different melodies are used to represent different scenarios, such as the *Shuzhuang* melody for makeup and dress-up; the *Shaji* melody for killing chickens and labor, and the *Zhengdiao-zhengban* melody that can be used for each character (rarely used for villain characters). The *Yuansheng-tang* melody is used for officials and emperors while the *Fuya* melody is used for older adults, and comedians as well as villains. The *Baxian* melody is used for gods and the “Eight Immortals” to celebrate their birthday. For sadness, anger and other emotions, operas use the *Nudiao* melody, and the *Hanban* melody is used for warriors who perform in the battlefield. After 1949, the tenth-generation master Xin master, Mr. Bi Kejian (for more details, see Appendix 2), continued to innovate based on transmission and created a large number of new melodies according to the plot's needs. The richness of the *Qupai* promoted the performance art of North Zhuang Opera (Tianlin County Committee, 2011, p. 40).

The transcription of the *Baxian* melody, a type of *Qupai* melody, is as follows:

Ba Xian

Figure 44 The transcription of the *Baxian* melody

In general, the *Qupai* melody has a long history of development, and most of them have used the original names until present; but usually, these names are not directly related to the content, while each song indicates a specific mode and music structure. Therefore, in order to clearly understand, the terms in this study propose to use the word “melody” to refer to *Qupai* and keeps the name in Mandarin. For example, this study uses *Ping ban* melody instead of the *Qupai Ping ban*.

6.3 MUSIC ANALYSIS OF SOUTH ZHUANG OPERA

6.3.1 Original musical form of South Zhuang Opera

The South Zhuang Opera developed based on Zhuang folk songs. The evolution of the *Ping ban* melody of South Zhuang Opera can verify this feature. Formerly, in distant history, the Zhuang people chanted the “Song of the Witch” when they prayed to the gods of indigenous religion. Later, the Zhuang women used it to create a song named “Birth of the Spirit,” and then some artists adapted it into a new melody --- the *Molun-diao* melody. This melody is originally from a kind of ritual music of the Zhuang, meaning “Spirit Tale of Storytelling.” Then, the *Molun*

melody developed into the main music of the Zhuang Opera named the Ping ban melody (Gan Ling, 2008). More details of the evolutionary process will be analyzed in the following section.

The transcription of the *Molun-diao* melody is as follows:

Mo Lun

Liu San Jie Mei Po Yi Duan



Figure 45 The transcription of the *Molun-diao* melody

The *Ping ban* melody developed based on *Molun-diao* melody. It has evolved into various modes to express the characters' feelings of happiness, anger, sorrow, and excitement. There are 13 melodies mainly used in South Zhuang Opera, and four types of *Ping ban* melody which are divided into different types according to the tempo. Among them are, the *Ping ban* melody, *Tandiao* melody, and *Ma'ai-pingban* melody belonging to the adagio; the *Caihua-diao* melody and *Xidiao* melody, which belong to the andante; the *Gaoqiang* melody and *Kuaixi-diao* melody belonging to the allegro; and the *Shidiao* melody, *Kudiao* melody, and *Handiao* melody which belong to introduction (Guangxi Zhuang Opera Troupe, 1977).

The transcription of the *Ping ban* melody is as follows:

Ping Ban

Hong Tong Gu Tu Si Yi Duan

The musical score for the Ping Ban melody is presented in a single system with six staves of music. The time signature is 4/4. The melody is numbered from 1 to 24 across the staves. The notation includes quarter notes, eighth notes, and sixteenth notes, with various rests and phrasing slurs. The melody begins with a D4 quarter note in the first measure, followed by an E4 quarter note in the second measure, and continues with a sequence of notes that includes G4, A4, B4, and C5, eventually returning to the D4 tonic note in the final measure.

Figure 46 The transcription of the *Ping ban* melody

The music structure of the *Ping ban* melody can be divided into three parts (ternary form A-B-A): the introduction (bars 1-6), the main melody part (bars 7-12), and the ending part (bars 13-24). The register of this melody is: D-E-G-A-B, according to the major third interval (G-B), in which one can identify the *gong* tone which is G; therefore this melody is in the D *zhi* mode pattern. The *Ping ban* melody is the original motive of most Zhuang Opera melodies. Many other melodies are composed, based on this music material, rather than thematic development, especially the primary motif in the first two bars, which are: D, E, G, A notes (bars 1, 2). Further analysis will be presented below.

6.3.2 Evolution of music in South Zhuang Opera

As mentioned before, the *Ping ban* melody is the original musical material in the South Zhuang Opera, and other melodies are mostly developed, based on it.

The evolution of South Zhuang Opera music divides two ways: direct relationship and indirect relationship. Among them, the *Ping ban* melody → *Ma'ai ping ban* melody and *Tan diao* melody are developed directly. The *Ping ban* melody → Picking Flower melody, *Xidiao* melody → *Gaoqiang* melody, *Kuaixi-diao* melody → *Kudiao* melody, *Handiao* melody, *Shidiao* melody, *Saoban* melody, and *Sigan* melody belong to the indirect relationship category (Editorial Committee of Chinese Opera History, 1995). The analysis chart is as below.

Table 3 Original melodies in Zhuang Opera and their variations

Original melody	Variation	Relationship
	<i>Ma'ai ping ban</i>	
<i>Ping ban</i>	<i>Tandiao</i>	Direct adaptation
	<i>Ping ban-neichang</i>	
<i>Ping ban</i>	<i>Picking-flower, Xidiao</i>	Indirect adaptation
<i>Picking-flower</i>	<i>Gaoqiang</i>	Direct adaptation
<i>Xidiao</i>	<i>Kuaixi-diao</i>	
<i>Gaoqiang</i>	<i>Kudiao, Handiao</i>	Direct adaptation
<i>Kuaixi-diao</i>	<i>Shidiao, Saoban, Sigán</i>	

The *Ma'ai ping ban* melody is directly related to the *Ping ban* melody, as the mode pattern and musical structure are similar to the *Ping ban* melody. In bars 1-2, the melody is based on the notes D-E-G-A. This indicates the same motif as the *Ping ban* melody. Meanwhile, the tempo of *Ma'ai ping ban* melody is faster than the original, the music is more delicate, and some ornamentation (decorative notes) are added. This melody can express sorrowful and leisurely situations, and occupies an important position in South Zhuang Opera.

The transcription of the *Ma'ai-ping ban* melody is as follows:

Ma Ai Ping Ban

Bao Hu Lu Shi Ye Yi Duan

The musical score for 'Ma Ai Ping Ban' consists of seven staves of music, numbered 1 through 36. The notation is in treble clef. The time signatures vary throughout the piece: 2/4 (measures 1-10), 3/4 (measures 11-15), 4/4 (measures 16-20), 3/4 (measures 21-23), 2/4 (measures 24-26), 3/4 (measures 27-31), and 2/4 (measures 32-36). The melody is composed of eighth and quarter notes, often grouped with slurs. Measure 1 starts with a G4 note, and the piece concludes with a double bar line at the end of measure 36.

Figure 47 The transcription of the *Ma'ai-ping* ban melody

The *Ping ban-neichang* melody is a piece of vocal music for a female singer and the motive of the melody is G-D-E-D (bar 1). One can find that this motif is the same as the *Pingban* melody (Fig. 45, bar 2). The range of the melody is: G-A-B-D-E, according to the major third (G-B), the *gong* note is G, and the prime-tone is D (bars 1 and 17). Thus, this vocal melody could be identified as a D *zhi* mode pattern.

The transcription of the *Ping ban-neichang* melody is as follows:

Ping Ban Nei Chang (Female)

Hu Lu Bao Jiao Qi Yi Duan

Figure 48 The transcription of *Ping ban-neichang* melody

The “Picking Flower” melody and *Xi-diao* melody are in indirect relationship with *Ping ban* melody, and one can find that the motif is different but quite similar as the former: D-E-F#-A-B (bars 1-2), according to the major third (D-F#), and one can identify that D is the *gong* note of this melody. Therefore, the “Picking Flower” melody is in the D *gong* mode.

The transcription of the “Picking Flower” melody is as follows:

Picking Flower



Figure 49 The transcription of the “Picking Flower” melody

The “Picking Flower” melody has a fast tempo. Regarding this notation, one can find out that bars 1-4 are as follows: an instrumental ensemble usually plays the introduction part, and bars 5 to 22 is the vocal melody part. Further, the melody motion has fluctuated; it sounds more direct and narrative.

The “Picking Flower” melody and *Xidiao* melody evolve again, forming a *Gaoqiang* melody and *Kuaxidiao* melody (allegro). This type of music is a fixed-rhythm structure form, the beats are very stable, and the tempo is relatively fast. Then, the *Gaoqiang* and *Kuaxi-diao* melodies evolved into a more free-tempo music, with the *Kudiao* melody, *Handiao* melody, *Shidiao* melody, *Saoban* melody, and *Sigan-diao* melody. These melodies are more narrative, suitable for expressing a dramatic, tense mood, and the intensity contrast is obvious. Thus, the South Zhuang Opera’s development process of the melody is formed (Editorial Board of Chinese Opera, 1995).

The transcription of the *Kuai xi diao* melody is as follows:

Kuai Xi Diao

Hong Tong Gu Tuo Hua Lian Lu Yi Duan



Figure 50 The transcription of the *Kuaixi-diao* melody

6.3.3. Analysis of music modes in South Zhuang Opera

South Zhuang Opera music analysis, the music structure mainly includes the melody and mode pattern. South Zhuang Opera's music is mainly in the *zhi* mode pattern and gong mode pattern, and they rarely modulate to other modes (Xu Qirui, 2017).

Taking another example, the *Shidiao* melody is a kind of vocal music with a fast rhythm but singing that is slower. This is a typical feature of Chinese opera music, which is called “fast rhythm with slow singing” (紧打慢唱). The vocal melody moves with free rhythm, but the accompanying drum melody goes at a faster tempo than the vocal (see bars 2, 8, 9). Especially at bar 9, one can find that the tempo has changed and the rhythm has become more free. The notes in parentheses represent the accompaniment melody (bar 9). Although only two simple notes are repeated, the tempo is more rapid. The double drums are used while the melody is going faster and faster to make the music atmosphere more tense. The music in parentheses is by the accompaniment instrument. Between the melodies sung by the vocalist, the accompaniment melody will repeat these notes an unlimited number of times until the singer's next entrance. The “fast rhythm with slow singing” style is widely used in Zhuang Opera.

The transcription of the *Shidiao* melody is as follows:

Ye Ming Zhu Zeng Bao Yi Duan

Figure 51 The transcription of the *Shidiao* melody

6.4 MUSIC ANALYSIS OF SHIGONG ZHUANG OPERA

The Shigong Zhuang Opera music comprises the traditional *Shiqiang* melody and *Huanqiang* melody. The melodic structure is formed by ascending and descending music phrases with the *gong* and *zhi* mode patterns. The main musical characteristic is to use the ornamental notes without changing any primary notes and the mode pattern. The melody's ornamental notes make the musical mood smooth, natural, and interesting. According to the geographical area, there are musical styles of *Wushan-qiang*, *Heshan-qiang*, *Sanwu-qiang*, and *Sishan-qiang*. According to the styles of singing, there are the *Xushi-qiang*, *Shuqing-qiang*, *Kuqiang*, *Caitai-qiang*, *Pingqiang*, *Lejiao-qiang*, and *Beidiao* melodies. Laibin County's Shigong Zhuang Opera is mainly referred to as the accompanying music for vocalists; the accompanying instruments are mainly *erhu*, *dizi*, and *fenggu* drums. The main use of different musical instrumental performances are at the stage and express different emotions (Gan Ling, 2008).

Shigong Zhuang Opera is popular opera in Laibin County where the Zhuang people live. Further, the dialects, folk music, and main instruments are different in each area. Its music divides into two types designated by its melodies which are the *Shiqiang* melody and *Huanqiang* melody, mostly in the accompaniment. The overall characteristics of the music are enthusiasm and directness. Since its music was developed from the wizard dance, the original form was relatively

simple, and later was combined with folk song music. Thus, the music structure is relatively simple (Edited by Guangxi Art Research Institute, 1990).

6.4.1 Analysis of the music of *Shiqiang* melody

-*Shiqiang* melody

The *Shiqiang* melody is a part of concatenated music, meaning that its melodies are followed by different melodies, which consists of an independent section. The musical category has two basic types: the first is a single musical structure consisting of seven notes in a section (similar to unary A). This music structure makes a single section into a mode pattern and is used for a short melody, but after repeated and appropriately altered. It also can be used in a longer melody. Simultaneously, the primary tones, melody, and mode patterns will be maintained without any changes (Wei Wei and Xiang Fan, 1990).

The second is to repeat the structure (similar to binary music form A-A1). This music structure is larger than the former (unary A). It composes several sections, and there are some passing notes within the sections to balance the melodic movement. Repeat notes in the same rhythm and each phrase are used to make the pitch more concentrated and easy to remember. The transcription of the *Shiqiang* melody is as follows:

2 3 4

Chinese:嫁 到 这 家 不 算 苦
5 Zhuang:haq daengz 6 ranz neix mbouj swenq hoj

9 哎罗..... 餐 餐 吃 上
lan can1 ndad2 gwn

13 大 鱼 肉 14 bya 15 16

noh caeuq

17 18 19 20

今 年 刚 好 二 十 五
bi neix cingq cingq naeih cib haj

Figure 52 An excerpt of *Shiqiang* melody

The above notation is *Shiqiang* melody which is famous in the Wushan Township of Laibin County, within Xingbin District. The melodic structure is not very complicated. It is a kind of seven-character melody sung by the female singer. According to this notation, one can find out that there are seven words within each musical phrase (bars 1-4, and bars 6-10). The music tempo is slow and free, and the structure is regular. It is a traditional Wu-sheng scale pattern music with 2/4 beats. The third major interval is between D and F#, with D as is the primary tone regarding gong note (bars 10 and 11). The cadence note of the phrase falls on D, and it can be regarded as a D gong mode pattern (bar 16). The first music phrase starts with the gong note and then transfers into the other main tones of *zhi* and *yu*.

This descending melodic phrase sounds like a narrative. The passing notes end with the *jue* note and *shang* note, with the lower phrase starting with the *zhi* note, and the melody changes from high to low pitch. The melodies are similar to each other, but are slightly changed. The third phrase repeats the first phrase with little alteration, and the fourth phrase repeats the second phrase. Comparing them, one can realize that the music mode is very similar; in other words, the melody is repetitive, and this is one of Shigong Zhuang Opera essential characteristics.

-Wushan *Shiqiang* melody

The Wushan *Shiqiang* melody, which is composed with the *zhi* mode pattern, regards every two music phrases as a short section. At the end of each phrase, the ornamental (decoration) note is added. This type of ornamental embellishment is generally used between two phrases at a quick tempo. Some of artists said: "It is not every performance of Shigong Opera is exactly the same, but if it is all the same, it is not art" (Zhong Zeyi, 1982). This means that it is often adapted, based on the content of the script, and not limited to the natural accent of the language. More importantly, it should focus on the melody mood or onomatopoeia, which is a significant characteristic of Shigong Zhuang Opera. Such an instance is presented as below:



Figure 53 A selected notation segment of the *Wushan Shiqiang* melody

In terms of the ornamental note which appears at the beginning of the vocal segment, it enhances the dramatic musical atmosphere, makes a good foundation for the development of the musical image, and prompts the audience's emotion. Such a similar *Shiqiang* melody belongs to the seven-character rhyme, which is the most common structural form in the performance. The rhythm of the characters is '2-2-3' syllables, and the majority is used in narrative singing styles. At the end of each melody, an ornamental note is added, and is generally used with one note. The purpose is to activate the musical emotion and the melody repetition to deepen the impression and enhance the sense of cadence.

In the above example, after every two musical phrases, an erhu (Chinese fiddle) interludes for several bars which is called the *Baoqiang* melody, and which is the most common accompaniment method of *Shigong Zhuang* Opera. It can enable the singer to take a slight rest during the performance and connect the different parts of the melody.

6.4.2 Analysis music features of *Baoqiang* melody

The *Baoqiang* melody is a kind of "interlude" in *Shigong Zhuang* Opera; it is the most widely used in *Shigong Zhuang* Opera as an accompaniment. *Baoqiang* melody is generally used after the *Shiqiang* and *Huanqiang* melodies, and is also regarded as giving the singer a little rest. Sometimes the *Baoqiang* melody appears simultaneously as the last note of the previous vocal melody, which is played as a continuation and complement of the music. Then, it introduces the next music phrase after 8 bars of accompaniment (Gan Ling, 2008).

The transcription of the *Baoqiang* melody is as follows:



Figure 54 A selected segment of a *Baoqiang* melody

The above notation is one of the *Baoqiang* melodies in Wushan Township. Two erhush play it, and the textual content determines the melody tempo. In this case, the speed is moderate,

and the music style at the beginning of the music is very light and flexible. The actor's vocal melody register determines the tuning of the inner and outer strings of the erhu. The erhu is tuned to the Db and Ab tones, which is a semitone lower than ordinary. The prime-tone of the mode pattern is the Db note, and the ending note falls on the Db *zhi* note (bar 8). The register of this melody is: Db-Eb-Gb-Ab-Bb, and the major third is between Gb and Bb note. Thus, one can identify this melody as Db *zhi* mode pattern.

6.4.3 Analysis of the *Huanqiang* melody

The *Huanqiang* melody in Shigong Zhuang Opera is a kind of melody that introduced the folk songs of the Zhuang people into opera in the late Ming and early Qing Dynasties. Shigong Zhuang Opera music in the Laibin County area is used very frequently, this vocal melody is more lyrical than the *Shiqiang* melody, and its short musical phrases are more suitable for humorous themes and dance styles (Gan Ling, 2008). Each section is composed of four phrases, sung four times, and the melody is interspersed four times as an interlude in the middle.

The transcription of the *Huanqiang* melody is as follows:

Vocal

2 3 4

1 我 是 港 州 村 上 来
gou dag yung Gangj cou, daeuj naeuz

5 6 8

9 告 诉 你, 望 各 位 牢
mwngz nyi, muengh vunz lai 12 geiq

13 14 15 16

记 兰 芬 是 名 字
maenh Lamz Faen guh gu heuh

17 18 19 20

跟 建
caeuq Gen

Figure 55 A selected notation segment of the *Huanqiang* melody

The above example is the *Huanqiang* melody as performed in the Shigong Zhuang Opera. Actors sing in strict accordance with the script's lyrics. In the beginning, the composer can write either five or seven phrases according to the actual conditions at that moment. The difference is that the *Shiqiang* melody plays first when the male actor sings. In contrast, when the female actor sings, she is followed by *Huanqiang* melody. When using *Huanqiang* melody, the melody will play more regular and faster, and no ornamental notes are used within the piece.

In terms of vocal rhythm, the “five-character and four-phase” structure are interspersed with a seven-bar accompaniment after the four phrases, which means there are five words within bars 1-3, bars 4-6, bars 7-9, and bars 9-12. The actor's voice can have a rest while this accompaniment music is moving along.

The analysis chart of “Five-character and four-phase” structure in Zhuang Opera is as follows:

Table 4 The “Five-character and four-phase” rhythm structure in Zhuang Opera

Phrase	Bars	Lyrics	Characters
1 st	1-3	<i>Wo, shi, gang, zhou, cun</i>	5
2 nd	4-6	<i>Shang, lai, gao, su, ni</i>	5
3 rd	7-9	<i>Wang, ge, wei, lao, ji</i>	5
4 th	9-12	<i>Lan, fen, shi, ming, zi</i>	5

The beat of the melody is 2/4, and the whole section uses a traditional *Wu-sheng* scale pattern, which is a D *gong* mode pattern. The beginning of the section starts with the *jue* tone F#, and after the music melody ascends, with the *zhi*, *gong*, and *yu* tones (bar 1: A, D, B notes). The melodic pattern returns to become steady, finally ending in the *gong* tone (bars 12, 19). The first and fifth phrases have precisely the same pitch, and the eighth phrase is a repeat of the fourth phrase. The phrases of the entire section are full of relevance to each other. Thus, one can notice that the music's intensity did not change too much, and the ending of the melody always uses the *shang* and *jue* notes as its ending notes.

6.5 MUSIC ANALYSIS OF NORTH ZHUANG OPERA

Jiuzhou Town in Tianlin County is the geographical origin of traditional North Zhuang Opera, and is located at the junction of Guangxi, Guizhou, and Yunnan provinces. During the Ming and Qing dynasties, it was the transportation hub and trade distribution center of Yunnan, Guizhou, and Guangxi provinces. As well as the political, economic, and cultural center of the three provinces' border area. Jiuzhou has a wealth of folk art, which is mainly folk song art. Among them, the performance style of "singing poetry" is used to perform stories or life fragments, which method is very similar to that of the North Zhuang Opera "bench play." Furthermore, like the folk songs of the Jiuzhou, Zhuang pieces are full of lyricism, and they are the predecessors of the main vocal music or the Zheng diao melody of North Zhuang Opera. Also, the local Bayin, absorbed by various cultures, integrated the Jiuzhou folk songs into new elements and improved them, creating the main melody of North Zhuang Opera, or the *Pingdiao* melody which developed into the *Zhengdiao* melody. The following is a musical analysis of the origin of the *Bayin* musical aspect of the North Zhuang Opera (Han Wanhong, 2017).

6.5.1 Music Origin of North Zhuang Opera

Since the Song Dynasty, the Zhuang area has begun to spread the *Bayin* instrumental performance. The *Qiluodiao* melody became the main music of the *Bayin* ensemble. The traditional North Zhuang Opera was formally formed in the Qianlong Period of the Qing Dynasty (1736 - 1796). The traditional Zhuang Opera instrumental accompaniment used the same instruments and ensembles as those used for the *Bayin* music performance. Much research about Zhuang Opera's music has pointed out that the melody of Zhuang Opera's *Zhengban* melody originated from the *Qiluodiao* melody (Liu Lingling, 2011).

1) The *Qiluo-diao* melody

The *Qiluo-diao* melody is generally used in the wedding ceremony. Its melody is often performed in the *Bayin* ensemble; besides the *Bayin* melody, the Picking Flower melody and *Guochang-diao* melody are also the essential melodies of *Bayin* music (Qin Shi, 1997).

The transcription of *Qiluo-diao* melody as below:

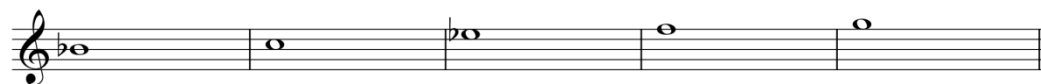
Qi Luo Diao

The musical score for 'Qi Luo Diao' is presented in a single staff with a treble clef, a key signature of one flat (B-flat), and a 2/4 time signature. The melody consists of 56 measures, numbered 1 through 56. The notation includes quarter notes, eighth notes, and sixteenth notes, with various accidentals (flats and naturals) indicating the specific pitches. The piece concludes with a double bar line at measure 56.

Figure 56 The transcription of *Qiluo-diao* melody

Figure 58 The cadence of the *zhi* mode pattern2) The *Zhengxi-diao* melody

The *zhengxi-diao* melody is from the *Bayin* ensemble in Guangxi, and it has been used in the performance of the North Zhuang Opera (Liu Lingling, 2011). The *Zhengxi-diao* melody is a *Wu-sheng* scale *zhi* mode pattern. The analysis is below:

Figure 59 The musical register of the *Zhengxi-diao* melody

The transcription of *Zhengxi-diao* melody is as follows:

Zheng Xi Diao

The image shows a musical staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (Bb). The melody is transcribed in 2/4 time. The notes are numbered 1 through 22. The melody starts with a whole note G4 (1), followed by quarter notes A4 (2), Bb4 (3), and C5 (4). The next two measures contain eighth notes: D5 (5), E5 (6), F5 (7), and G5 (8). The final measure contains quarter notes: A5 (9), Bb5 (10), and C6 (11). The melody then continues with quarter notes: D6 (12), E6 (13), F6 (14), and G6 (15). The next two measures contain eighth notes: A6 (16), Bb6 (17), and C7 (18). The final measure contains quarter notes: D7 (19), E7 (20), F7 (21), and G7 (22). The melody ends with a double bar line.

Figure 60 The transcription of the *Zhengxi-diao* melody

The *Zhengxi-diao* melody consists of four phrases. The first phrase “a” (bars 1- 5) begin from the *zhi* note and falls on the *zhi* note at Bb. Also, the *gong* Eb is emphasized for the first time (bar 3). The second phrase “b” (bars 6-9) takes the first phrase falling on note Bb as the beginning, while the melody is further developed, based on the first phrase. Simultaneously, the falling note of the *gong* Eb note shows that there was little change. Through the disjunct descent to the Eb note to emphasize the *gong* note which is back to the primary position (bar 9). The third phrase “c” (bars 10-15) continues from the “b” phrase's last note, which begins and ends at the *gong* note Eb, showing the connection between each phrase. The fourth phrase “d” (bars 16-22) synthesizes the previous motives and starts on the last note of the third phrase “c.” At the end of the melody, the first phrase “a” reappears, and falls on the *zhi* note Bb again. Overall, it belongs to the *zhi* mode pattern.

The musical structure form of the *Zhengxi-diao* melody is as follows:

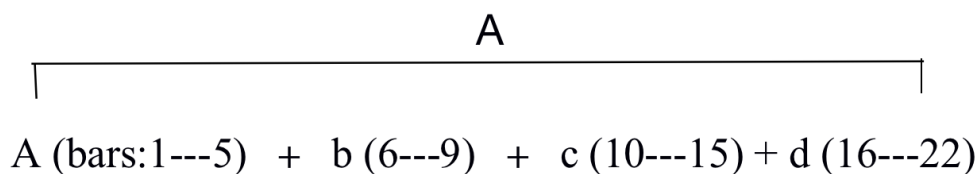


Figure 61 The musical structure of the *Zhengxi-diao* melody

The *Zhengxi-diao* melody uses the ascending notes E-F-G-B^b (bar10), the descending notes F-G-F-E^b (bar 8), and the notes Eb-C-B (bar16) as the foundational musical materials throughout the melody. The characteristic descriptions of the melody consist of “oblique” and “contrary.”

Based on the above analysis, it can be regarded that the *zhi* modal pattern is the primary type of the *Bayin* music, *Qiluodiao* melody, and *Zhengxidiao* melody. Although the *Qiluodiao* melody has different tone conversions in the different *gong* notes, and the melody is in the transition from the *zhi-gong* mode pattern to the *yu-shang* mode pattern, it finally turns into the *zhi-gong* mode pattern again and ends with the *zhi* note. It still emphasizes the *zhi* mode pattern.

6.5.2 Analysis of the *Zhengdiao* melody in Zhuang Opera

In the early period of the traditional North Zhuang Opera, the main vocal melody was only the *Zhengdiao* melody, which combines with instrumental music such as in the *Guochang-diao*, *Baban*, *Shengtang-diao*, and *Shuzhuang-diao* melodies. According to the traditional theory of opera, the main focus is on vocal melody. However, because there are many different instrumental music pieces interposed between the vocal melodies, it gives the characteristics of a complex structure to the melody. After the development of contemporary Zhuang Operas, the *Zhengdiao* melody has evolved into many variations, such as slow, medium, fast, and free-rhyme form. The *Zhengdiao* melody is a folk song in Jiuzhou Town. After some changes, it can be adapted to different music styles, and it can form a complete melody. Thus, it has the highest usage rate in the Zhuang Opera (Liao Mingjun, 2008).

The traditional melody of Zhuang Opera is mainly based on the *Zhengdiao* melody. The following is a music analysis of *Zhengdiao-zhengban* melody (Liu Lingling, 2011).

The *Zhengdiao-zhengban* melody has eight intervals, with a total of seven notes in an octave. Its basic musical register scale is:



Figure 62 The register of the *Zhengdiao-zhengban* melody

The transcription of *Zhengdiao-zhengban* melody is as follows:

Zheng Diao Zheng Ban






The musical score is written in 2/4 time. It consists of four staves, each representing a different instrument:

- zhong hu zheng xian(1-5):** The first staff, starting with measure 1 and ending with measure 5. It features a melodic line with various rhythmic patterns.
- er hu fan xian(3-6):** The second staff, starting with measure 3 and ending with measure 6. It provides accompaniment for the zhong hu.
- xiao hu zheng xian(5-2):** The third staff, starting with measure 5 and ending with measure 2. It provides accompaniment for the zhong hu.
- ma gu hu fan xian(6-3):** The fourth staff, starting with measure 6 and ending with measure 3. It provides accompaniment for the zhong hu.

The score is divided into two systems. The first system contains measures 1 through 5. The second system contains measures 6 through 11. The notation includes various rhythmic values, accidentals, and phrasing slurs.

Figure 63 The transcription of the *Zhengdiao-zhengban* melody

This melody consists of a vocal melody and prelude, of which the vocal music is the main melody, and the part of prelude can be increased or decreased at will according to the actual needs of the performance. Therefore, as far as its vocal music part is concerned, it consists of two phrases (a and b). The bars from 1-5 are the accompaniment melody played by string instruments such as *erhu*, *zhonghu*, *maguhu*, and *gaohu*. The melody of the phrase “a” (6-12 bars) emphasizes the gong modal pattern and ends with the gong note C. After that, the prelude (13-16 bars) is also in gong mode pattern. However, the music material in phrase “b” (17-25 bars) changes and develops based on the phrase “a.” Further, the *zhi* note is emphasized in phrase “b,” which makes the melody show the characteristics of the *zhi* mode pattern, and then the melody falls on the *zhi* note as the ending.

The melody takes on the main characteristic of ascending and descending patterns. The disjunct motion is taken as a development motive in the progress of the melody, such as the four-interval descending lower to the *zhi* note and the *shang* note. Also, *gong*, *shang*, *jue*, *zhi*, and *yu* notes are in the pattern: , ,  and its different notes, which become the primary material of musical elements throughout the melody, especially  and  which notes distinguish it from other melodies.

Through these analyses, although it is impossible to find a direct relationship between Zhuang Opera music and *Bayin* music, some similarities can be found from some musical structures and mode patterns. The researcher believes that this is due to the development over the period of nearly a hundred years. The music of the two has undergone great changes, and even some music has not been verified anymore. In this case, this issue still needs further research in the future.

6.6 RHYME PATTERNS OF ZHUANG OPERA

Analyzed from the structural model, the main melody of traditional Zhuang Operas is the *Zhengdiao* melody, with five-phrase and seven-phrase patterns as its text structure; the *Baxian*, *Huanhun*, *Daoban*, *Nudiao*, *Tangwang-diao*, *Gaoban*, *Xidiao*, and *Caihuan-diao* melodies are seven-phrase patterns as follows. The *Shuiyuan-diao*, *Maban*, *Pingbie-diao*, *Zhengdiao-lianban*, *Lingdong-diao*, *Ganban*, *Suban*, *Shaji-diao*, and *Xi* melodies mainly use a five-phrase pattern. The *Zhongban*, *Daku-ban*, *Shuzhuang-diao*, and *Guonian-diao* melodies are a mixing phrase pattern. In addition, the *Kuaiban* and *Shan-ge* melodies use structures such as five-character, seven-character and mixing-character in the Zhuang Opera performance as needed (Yang Danhua, 2013).

The scripts of traditional Zhuang Operas are all poetic rhythms of Zhuang folk songs. Especially, the South Zhuang Opera *Pingban* melody and *Tandiao* melody use *Yaojiaoyun* (腰脚韵) rhyme patterns (Chen Wenying, 2014) The waist-foot pattern refers to the middle (waist) rhyme characters and end (foot) position in a single line of the script text.

In Chinese, “Yao” means waist, “Jiao” in Chinese means feet, and “Yun” means rhythm, so that one can call it in English a “waist-foot rhyme” pattern. The waist-foot rhyme pattern is: the last character (foot word) of the first phrase which is rhymed with the fifth or third character

(waist word) of the second phrase (seven phrases are used for the fifth character, and five phrases are used for the third character), the last word of the third phrase rhymes with the fifth or third word of the fourth phrase (Han Wanhong, 2017).

For instance, this is used in the third movement of the Zhuang Opera, “*Bao Hulu*.” The transliteration of the sung words of the actor Jiao Da from the Zhuang dialect was selected as an example:

*Line1: Mw kai fwn de aeu gang gya (g**ai**)*

*Line2: Aet bak ha Cen mabah (m**ai**) yen kai (g**ai**)*

*Line3: De Laih raeu nyaen tai (d**ai**) meu bau (p**ao**)*

*Line4: Dang dang ndah vam kauh (k**ao**) gang kaen (g**a**)*

*Line5: Yeuh boi ha bak haig (h**a**)ying ngaen*

Table 5 The structure of the “Waist-foot rhyme” pattern

Line	Character	Position
1	<i>gai</i>	Foot
2	<i>mai</i>	Waist
2	<i>gai</i>	Foot
3	<i>dai</i>	waist
3	<i>pao</i>	Foot
4	<i>kao</i>	Waist
4	<i>ga</i>	Foot
5	<i>ha</i>	Waist

The structure of the waist-foot rhyme pattern enriches the traditional Zhuang Opera. The actor's lines of different phrase structures vividly represent the plot and the characters in Zhuang Opera.

Rhetorical techniques such as metaphor, personification, questioning, and exaggeration are often used in operatic lyrics to enhance the script's expressiveness and the vividness of the content of the play. Simultaneously, in Zhuang Opera vocal performance, ornaments are also one of the commonly used techniques. There are types of actor's lines such as exclamation, appellation, and ornamentation of various functional forms. According to the needs of different melodies, Zhuang Opera uses actors' lines with various rhyme patterns. The plot content's expression effect in the stage performance is enhanced through the use of different forms of rhyme patterns.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION, DISCUSSION, AND SUGGESTIONS

7.1 CONCLUSION

From the perspective of ethnomusicology, this research is conducted with the interdisciplinary approach to analyze Zhuang Opera in Guangxi Province. Through the analysis of the activities of Zhuang Opera, the stylistic nature of opera performances, and the interpretation of the art form of Zhuang Opera, this study is a contribution to the knowledge about the musical characteristics of Zhuang Opera, including its development process, as well its classifications according to the thematic material.

Combining literature, folk songs, dance, music, and religious ritual, Zhuang Opera is widely performed in the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region. After experiencing different historical stages, the Zhuang Opera was presented to the world with its unique artistic characteristics. It can be said that Zhuang Opera is not only an art unique to the Zhuang people but also a product of the fusion of different cultures. It is an aesthetic product of the Zhuang people's collective will, thoughts and emotions, personality characteristics, and aesthetics; and has significant research value. As a representative of Zhuang arts, Zhuang Opera contains unique regional and national culture. It plays a vital role in spreading and promoting the Zhuang traditional culture and Zhuang ethnic spirit, and it is also a meaningful form that distinguishes it from other nationalities' operas. Therefore, surveying and researching Zhuang Operas and exposing Zhuang Operas' unique artistic value in the modern context is of great significance to promoting social diversity and preserving traditional folk art.

Taking three different types of Zhuang Operas in Guangxi as the starting point, this dissertation examines the artistic characteristics, elements of music, and the transmission and development of traditional operas under different times. Based on the different sources and the data collected by many field investigations, Zhuang Opera's historical origin reveals the three different kinds of Zhuang Opera in Guangxi Province.

In terms of music analysis, the melodic characteristics are analyzed using traditional Chinese and western music theories, while the elements of Zhuang music are analyzed. At the

same time, by describing the ritual activities and the performance practices of the Zhuang Opera's, its artistic form is described. The cross-cultural study of the history and geography of South Zhuang Opera, Shigong Zhuang Opera, and the North Zhuang Opera reveals the factors of the development of the three forms, and their integration into the culture.

7.2 DISCUSSION

From this research, one can find that some aspects of Zhuang Opera remain the same, but some aspects have changed. For instance, the research results on the origin of Zhuang Opera music show that it comes from *Bayin* music, and is consistent with the research results of Liu Lingling (2011). In terms of the melodic modes, Zhuang Opera is mostly performed in the *gong* and *zhi* mode, and the finding of this study is identical to that of Xu Qirui's (2017).

Meanwhile, in modern society, Zhuang Opera has changed in other aspects. The language used in Zhuang Opera performance has changed. It is different from the research results of the scholar Xi Qixiong (1986) when at that time the opera was only sung in dialects, while today, Zhuang and Mandarin are currently used. In terms of music, it is also different from Wei Wei's (1990) study. Contemporary Zhuang Opera is not performed with specific music as previously; on the contrary, the different types of music are combined and performed together with North, South, and Shigong Zhuang Opera styles.

There are many reasons for these changes. In the process of long-term changes and development, Zhuang Opera artists have always maintained free artistic ideas, fused and integrated various cultural and artistic elements, and created a comprehensive form of artistic performance, religious ritual, folk music and performances, dances, and many other literary arts. In general, due to different research perspectives and research time periods, this research has produced different results from previous studies. This may also be due to the fact that the research location is different, or the time for collecting data in the fields is too short, or the number of interviews is not sufficient. Thus, the results of this research validate and at the same time, differ from the previous studies. The research method needs to be improved again in future research, and further-detailed investigations are needed.

7.3 SUGGESTIONS

Even though the researcher has done extensive investigation and conducted an in-depth analysis of specific subjects, there are still unavoidable lacunae like any other qualitative research. The limitations of this study are mainly reflected in two aspects: 1) For the selection of interviewees, due to different educational backgrounds and living environments, each interviewee has different views and opinions; 2) The time spent on fieldwork is not enough, due to geographic and environmental constraints. Thus, surveys in remote areas could not be conducted.

After more than two hundred years of development, Zhuang Opera has its beautiful vocal music, diverse performances, and rich cultural symbolism. The unique artistic style and the creation of active Zhuang Opera artists have made Zhuang Opera a valuable spiritual treasure of the Zhuang people.

However, even if having been designated as a national intangible cultural heritage in 2006, the current situation of Zhuang Opera is still problematic. In terms of repertoire, the text of the traditional repertoire has not been in line with the audience's aesthetic needs in contemporary society, even though some newly-created repertoires reflect the vigorous modern pursuit of contemporary times. On the other hand, the practitioners are required to create new styles to express contemporary aesthetics. There are still many aspects that necessitate improvement and study as this is also the audience's higher demand on modern society practitioners.

The transmission of Zhuang Opera is also facing some pressing issues. In the case of weak economic conditions, many troupes are disbanding. They need more funds to support the creation of new repertoires suitable for modern society, and more training is necessary to help practitioners improve their technical capabilities. These have hindered the development of the opera, especially as majority of population are aging, and the younger generation is unwilling to continue to engage in this traditional art.

Like most traditional arts, under the backdrop of global economic integration and the impact of the various modern media, Zhuang Opera, an ancient traditional art, faces severe challenges. How to transmit and develop itself in modern society and effectively maintain its uniqueness has become an urgent issue, which is a challenge for all traditional art.

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APPENDIX A CHINESE GEOGRAPHICAL TERMS

There are some issues about the term of geographic locations pertinent to this dissertation.

The Chinese administrative divisions are that units of equivalent size may still fall into different categories. Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region is in the same size category as a province but has a different relationship with the central government than a province. In a similar manner, districts and counties belong to the same size category, for instance, Tianyang District is equivalent in terms of size category to Jingxi County.

At the next level down, towns and townships are of the same size category but refer to rural (township) and urban (town) subdivisions. Usually, the aspect of the population and economy of the town is better than the township. As a result of additional complexities in Chinese administrative divisions, the list below represents those divisions that are relevant to this dissertation, the entries are not a comprehensive list. The list is presented in descending order of size category.

Table 6 China Administrative Regions

English Equivalent	Pinyin	Characters
Province	sheng	省
Autonomous Region	zi zhi qu	自治区
City	shi	市
Prefecture-level city	di ji shi	地级市
County	xian	县
County-level city	xian ji shi	县级市
District	qu	区
Autonomous county	zi zhi xian	自治县
Town	zhen	镇
Township	xiang	乡
Ethnic township	min zu xiang	民族乡
Village	cun	村
Hamlet	tun	屯

APPENDIX B

**GENEALOGY OF TEACHERS AND STUDENTS OF NORTH ZHUANG OPERA FROM
THE QING DYNASTY TO THE CONTEMPORARY PERIOD**

Table 7 Genealogy of teachers and students of North Zhuang Opera

Generation	Title	Name	Date of birth	Place of Birth	Period	Education	Contribution
1	<i>Tai</i>	Yang	Unknown	Jiuzhou Town	Qing dynasty		Founder of Jiuzhou “ <i>Datai</i> Opera” ---
	Master	Liulian		Nadu Hamlet	Qianlong period	Singer	according to the folklore repertory “ <i>Nongjiabaotie</i> ”.
2	<i>Ge</i>	Cen Ru	Unknown	Jiuzhou Town	Qing dynasty		Composed the ' <i>Pingdiao</i> ' melody.
	Master	Cen Zong		Yangbai Hamlet	Qianlong period	Singer	
3	<i>Yuan</i>	Cen Xiulong	Unknown	Jiuzhou Town	Qing dynasty		Proposed less singing and more acting;
	Master	Cen Huiming		Yangbai Hamlet	Jiaqing period	Singer	Composed <i>Shuzhuang</i> melody.
4	<i>Xian</i>	Huang Cong	Unknown	Jiuzhou Town	Qing dynasty		Innovated the <i>Pingdiao</i> to the <i>Zhengdiao</i> melody;
	Master			Yangbai Hamlet	Daoguang period	Singer	Composed the <i>Puya</i> melody.
5	<i>Zu</i>	Liao Falun	1836	Jiuzhou Town	Qing dynasty		Composed the <i>Shaji</i> melody; Started using
	Master		— 1895	Yangbai Hamlet	Xianfeng --Tongzhi period	Singer	<i>Taifu</i> worship ceremony; Further improve the “ <i>Zhengdiao</i> ,” “ <i>Daguochang</i> ” melody.
6	<i>Zong</i>	Yang Lian	1850	Jiuzhou Town	Qing dynasty		Formulated ' <i>Taigui</i> ' guidelines;
	Master		—1910	Nadu Hamlet	Tongzhi	Singer	Adapted classic novels into Zhuang Opera.



					period		
7	<i>Quan</i>	Huang Yong-gui	1855 — 1917	Jiuzhou Town Yangbai Hamlet	Qing dynasty Guangxu period	primary school	Learning from Yong Opera and Cantunese Opera; added instruments of ensemble such as <i>suona</i> , dulcimer, bass drum, and gong.
8	<i>Lao</i>	Huang Fuxiang	1896 — 1964	Bagui Township Liuping Hamlet	Republic of China-People's Republic of China	primary school	Improve the performance of the instrument <i>maguhu</i> ; Added female actors to perform
9	<i>Ji</i>	Huang Sheng-fang	1925 —?	Bagui Township Liuping Hamlet	Republic of China-People's Republic of China	primary school	Innavated the costumes and props; Added comedians.
10	<i>Xin</i>	Bi Ke-jian	1938 —2017	Lizhou Yao Ethnic Township Baida Village	People's Republic of China	high school	Added traditional scripts to contemporary scripts; Composed new melodies and repertoire.
11	Unknow	Huang Jing-run	1961 —	Liulong Town Ling Hamlet	People's Republic of China	high school	Composed contemporary Zhuang Opera repertoire, train Zhuang Opera performance groups.

Note: The information of this chart quoted from "Guangxi volume of Chinese Opera," the editorial board of Chinese opera, published by the China ISBN Center, 1995. The information of the 11th generation master was quoted from the website below, retrieved on January 16, 2020.

<https://www.baidu.com/link?url=a3fU2HlyLd58l-ulMfM5Dkse8CZ7sb2OQTOz0vvtUBoPh9qMROXbJMYoWAjihMH3wvEjrUOh4IAOclIFXKe8QShMBRWaiO6zaivKOSgNdW&wd=&eqid=fc921b0500005e02000000065fca0e15>

APPENDIX C QUESTIONNAIRE

Introduction

This questionnaire is used for the dissertation “Zhuang Opera in Guangxi province, China”

The data collection will keep secret and just used for this research only.

Part 1: The general information of the interviewee.

Part 2: The individual opinion on Zhuang opera.

Part I General Information

Name _____

Age _____

Gender _____

Email _____

Interview date _____

Place of interview _____

Where did you first hear about Zhuang opera?

Specialism

Please choose your occupation at this point. You may tick more than one box if you wish but please rank in order of preference: 1, 2, etc.

Audience

Senior fans

Practitioner

Scholar

Skills & experience

Please indicate the areas in which interest you about Zhuang opera.

Music

Costume

Dance

Makeup

Actor

Repertoire

Ma gubu

Wind instrument

Percussion

South Zhuang opera

North Zhuang opera

Shigong Zhuang

Other (please specify)

Please prioritize 3 of the above and make further explanations.

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

Expectations

Briefly identify any aspects that you hope to develop as a result of the future and/or things you would hope to inspire on Zhuang opera.

.....



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Part 2 Personal interests

Influences

Two artists, composers, designers and/or Zhuang opera directors whose work you're interested in.

1.

2.

Music

Two pieces of music you've favorite recently.

1.

2.

Performances

Two Zhuang opera performances you've seen recently.

1.

2.

Exhibitions

Two Zhuang opera exhibitions you've seen recently.

1.

2.

Other

1.

Interview checklist

- Interview questionnaire *
- I have read the **Notes for Interview** sheet

* this items will be retained for reference after the interview

Signed

Date

Thank you for your help!

APPENDIX D**A NOTE ON MUSIC TRANSCRIPTION**

The original music notation of the melodies in this study were written in Chinese number notation as obtained and practiced by the musicians of Zhuang Opera. These melodies are now transcribed into western notation for the purposes of analysis in this dissertation. There are certain differences in these two systems of notation, the first of which is that there is resulting transposition into a different register in the western notation. Second, it must be noted that the use of flats and sharps in each transcription do not imply any notion of key signature as it is the case in western music notation.

BIOGRAPHY

NAME	Zhang Jian
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PLACE OF WORK	Guangxi Opera Institute
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