

Unit 7

Reading A

Chinese Opera 《中国戏曲》

An Overview of Chinese Opera

1 Chinese opera together with Greek tragic-comedy and Indian Sanskrit Opera are the three oldest dramatic art forms in the world. During the Tang Dynasty (618-907), the Emperor Taizong established an opera school with a poetic name Liyuan (Pear Garden). From that time on, performers of Chinese opera were referred to as “disciples of the pear garden”. Since the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368) Chinese opera has been encouraged by court officials and emperors and has become a traditional art form. During the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), Chinese opera became fashionable among ordinary people. Performances were watched in tearooms, restaurants, and even around makeshift stages.

中国戏曲与希腊悲喜剧、印度梵剧并称为世界三大古老的戏剧文化。在唐朝（618—907），唐太宗创立了一所具有诗意名称的戏曲学校——梨园。从那时起，中国戏曲演员被称为“梨园弟子”。自元朝（1271—1368）起，中国戏曲受到朝廷官员和皇帝的鼓励，成为一种传统艺术形式。在清朝（1644—1911），中国戏曲在普通百姓中流行起来。人们在茶馆、饭馆甚至临时搭建的舞台周围观看演出。

2 Chinese opera evolved from folk songs, dances, talking, antimasque, and especially distinctive dialectical music. Gradually it combined music, art and literature into one performance on the stage. Accompanied by traditional musical instruments like the erhu, the gong, and the lute, actors present unique melodies — which may sound strange to foreigners — as well as dialogues which are beautifully written and of high literary value. These dialogs also promoted the development of distinct literary styles, such as zaju in the Yuan Dynasty. For Chinese, especially older folks, listening to this kind of opera is a real pleasure.

中国戏曲由民歌、舞蹈、说唱、滑稽戏等演变而来，尤其是独特的地方音乐。它逐渐将音乐、艺术和文学融合于舞台表演之中。在二胡、锣、琵琶等传统乐器的伴奏下，演员们呈现出独特的旋律（对外国人来说可能听起来很奇怪）以及优美且具有很高的文学价值的对白。这些对白也促进了不同文学风格的发展，例如元朝的杂剧。对于中国人，尤其是老年人来说，听这种戏曲是一种真正的享受。

3 What appeals to foreigners most might be the different styles of facial make-up, which is one of the highlights of Chinese opera and requires distinctive techniques of painting. Exaggerated designs are painted on each performer’s face to symbolize a character’s personality, role, and fate. This technique may have originated from ancient religions and dance. Audiences who are familiar with opera can know the story by observing the facial painting as well as the costumes. Generally, a red face represents loyalty and bravery; a black face, valor; yellow and white faces, duplicity; and golden and silver faces, mystery.

最吸引外国人的可能是不同风格的脸谱，这是中国戏曲的亮点之一，并且需要独特的绘画技巧。每个演员的脸上都画着夸张的图案，以象征一个人物的性格、角色和命运。这种技巧可能起源于古代宗教和舞蹈。熟悉戏曲的观众可以通过观察脸谱以及服装来了解故事。一般来说，红脸代表忠诚和勇敢；黑脸代表刚猛；黄脸和白脸代表奸诈；金脸和银脸代表神秘。

4 Besides color, lines also function as symbols. For example, a figure can be painted either all white on his face, or just around the nose. The larger the white area painted, the more viperous the role.

除了颜色之外，线条也起着象征作用。例如，一个人物的脸可以全涂成白色，或者只在鼻子周围涂白色。涂成白色的区域越大，这个角色就越恶毒。

5 Another technique that fascinates people is the marvelous acrobatics. Players can make fire spray out of their mouths when they act as spirits, or can gallop while squatting to act as a dwarf. This reflects a saying among actors: "One minute's performance on the stage takes ten years' practice behind the scenes".

另一种让人着迷的技巧是精彩绝伦的杂技表演。演员们在扮演神仙时可以从嘴里喷出火来，或者可以蹲着马步疾驰以扮演矮人。这反映了演员们的一句话：“台上一分钟，台下十年功。”

6 Over the past 800 years, Chinese opera has evolved into many different regional varieties based on local traits and accents. Today, there are over 300 dazzling regional opera styles. Kun opera, which originated around Jiangsu Province, is a typical ancient opera style and features gentleness and clearness. This enabled it to be ranked among the World Oral and Intangible Heritages. Qinqiang opera from Shaanxi, known for its loudness and wildness, and Yu opera, Yue opera, and Huangmei opera are all very enjoyable. Peking opera, the best-known Chinese opera style, was formed from the mingling of these regional styles.

在过去的 800 年里，中国戏曲根据地方特色和口音演变成了许多不同的地方剧种。如今，有 300 多种令人眼花缭乱的地方戏曲风格。起源于江苏省附近的昆曲是一种典型的古老戏曲风格，具有温柔、清新的特点。这使其得以入选世界口头和非物质文化遗产。来自陕西的秦腔以其高亢、豪放而闻名，豫剧、越剧和黄梅戏也都非常精彩。最著名的中国戏曲风格——京剧，就是由这些地方剧种融合而成的。

Peking Opera

7 Peking opera is the most representative of the various types of Chinese traditional theatres, so much so that it has been honored as China's national theatre. On November 6, 2010, it was listed by UNESCO as part of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

京剧是中国各类传统戏剧中最具代表性的，以至于它被誉为中国的“国剧”。2010 年 11 月 6 日，京剧被联合国教科文组织列入人类非物质文化遗产代表作名录。

8 Peking opera took shape in Beijing in the late Qing Dynasty, around 1840. Despite a comparatively short history of development, Peking opera absorbed and was influenced by musical and performance characteristics of other local and earlier theatrical forms, and thus grew rapidly. It attained its heyday in a mere hundred years through the devotion and innovation of several generations of performers and musicians carrying forward the legacy of their forebears. In this process, a large number of well-known masters emerged on the Peking opera stage. The numerous vivid artistic characters they created and the sum total of their rich experience have added brilliance and magnificence to the traditional Chinese arts.

京剧于晚清时期（约 1840 年）在北京形成。尽管发展历史相对较短，但京剧吸收并受到了其他地方及早期戏剧形式的音乐和表演特色的影响，因而迅速发展。经过几代演员和音乐家

对前辈遗产的传承、奉献和创新，京剧在短短一百年间达到了鼎盛时期。在这个过程中，京剧舞台上涌现出了大量著名的大师。他们所创造的众多生动的艺术形象以及他们丰富经验的总和，为中国传统艺术增添了光彩与辉煌。

9 The most salient artistic feature to be noted about Peking opera is that its performance is a complex and comprehensive art. In fact, opera in general (no matter what its type) is a comprehensive art form, in that it comprises literature (the script), performance, staging, lighting, and other theatrical arts. And so, as expected, if we include the music, fine arts (including makeup, masks, stage design, settings, and so on), lighting, costumes (embroidery), and stage properties, Peking opera is definitely a very complex and comprehensive art.

京剧最显著的艺术特点是其表演是一种复杂而综合的艺术。事实上，一般来说，戏曲（无论何种类型）都是一种综合艺术形式，因为它包括文学（剧本）、表演、舞台布置、灯光以及其他戏剧艺术。所以，不出所料，如果我们把音乐、美术（包括化妆、面具、舞台设计、布景等等）、灯光、服装（刺绣）以及舞台道具都算在内，京剧绝对是一种非常复杂而综合的艺术。

But that is not what is being referred to when speaking of the comprehensiveness of Peking opera. Rather, in this context, it refers to four categories — song, speech, dance-acting, and combat. Though music and singing are important components of Peking opera, they cannot represent the whole artistic structure. Aside from the script, stage art and other components common to any dramatic art form, the artistic structure of Peking opera is most representatively reflected in the artistry of the players, which is the comprehensive application of singing, speaking, dance-acting, and combat. Singing is just one of the components. Although singing is important, if the importance of recitation, acting and acrobatic fighting is neglected, Peking opera will lose its distinctiveness.

但这并不是在谈论京剧的综合性时所指的内容。相反，在这里，它指的是四个类别——唱、念、做、打。虽然音乐和演唱是京剧的重要组成部分，但它们不能代表整个艺术结构。除了任何戏剧艺术形式都共有的剧本、舞台艺术和其他组成部分之外，京剧的艺术结构最具代表性地体现在演员的艺术表现力上，即唱、念、做、打的综合运用。演唱只是其中一个组成部分。虽然演唱很重要，但如果忽视了念白、表演和武打杂技的重要性，京剧就会失去其独特性。

10 Since the components of Peking opera performance are complex and comprehensive, it takes tremendous effort to train an actor. An excellent actor must be a performer, singer, and dancer, and even acquire a foundation in martial arts, sports, and acrobatics. A good actor must be trained from an early age. Years of practice are required before he can present Peking opera, this comprehensive art, in front of an audience.

由于京剧表演的组成部分复杂而全面，培养一名演员需要付出巨大的努力。一名优秀的演员必须是表演者、歌手和舞者，甚至要在武术、体育和杂技方面打下基础。一个好的演员必须从小接受训练。需要经过多年的练习，他才能在观众面前呈现京剧这一综合艺术。