

# *Current Analysis of Lvju Utilized in Teaching*

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**Abstract:** In recent years, although intangible cultural heritage has received national attention, the preservation and inheritance of intangible cultural heritage still pose certain difficulties. Lvju, as a regional form of intangible cultural heritage, still requires attention from various sectors of society in terms of protection, inheritance, and promotion. This paper employs literature review, case analysis, and comparative methods to analyze and research the inheritance and development of Lvju in schools as a medium of dissemination. The analysis covers three aspects: the historical origin of Lvju, the current status of Lvju's dissemination and development on campus, and the utilization status of Lvju by the school where Lvju originated. The aim is to promote the protection, inheritance, and promotion of Lvju and to garner attention from various sectors of society towards Lvju.

**Keywords:** Intangible Cultural Heritage, Lvju, Inheritance, Protection

## 1. Introduction

Lvju, as a form of intangible cultural heritage, constitutes an indispensable part of Chinese national culture. It chronicles a segment of the development history of the Chinese nation, serving as a collective memory for the people. Examining the content of Lvju reveals the production and survival methods of the Chinese people during a specific period, documenting the way of life of the people in that era throughout the historical course. Passed down orally from one generation to the next by inheritors of Lvju, it has become a means of transmission. This paper delves into the historical origins of Lvju to gain insights into its historical development, laying a theoretical foundation for the future promotion and development of Lvju. Simultaneously, the societal context of globalization in information and logistics has led to a diminishing number of Lvju inheritors, with the intrusion of novel elements putting some intangible cultural heritage on the brink of extinction. By analyzing the current status of Lvju promotion in its place of origin, this paper aims to attract widespread attention from the government and various sectors of society, intending to open up more possibilities for increasing Lvju inheritors and promoting the dissemination of Lvju.

## 2. Overview of Lvju

Since Lvju was declared a national intangible cultural heritage, it has garnered considerable attention, particularly in its place of origin, Shandong. In recent years, research and discussions on Lvju have been steadily increasing. A focal point of discussion revolves around the origin of Lvju, its founder, and the specific timeframe of its emergence. Clarifying these issues is crucial for providing a

significant theoretical and historical basis for the inheritance and protection of Lvju.

Lvju is a typical genre of drama in Shandong, evolving from "Shandong Qinshu" (山东琴书). "Chinese Opera Chronicles: Shandong Volume" (《中国戏曲志·山东卷》) records, "Lvju was formerly known as 'makeup yangqin' (‘化妆扬琴’) and 'qinxi' (‘琴戏’). It evolved from the folk singing art of 'Shandong Qinshu' (zuoqiang yangqin)." [1] Shandong Qinshu originated in Heze, Shandong, initially as small tunes played for leisure by literati. Later, it gained popularity among ordinary people and farmers as it spread. Shandong Qinshu performances involved multiple individuals playing various instruments, accompanied by singing, sometimes interspersed with dialogue. [2] The most common instruments in Shandong Qinshu were yangqin, pipa, guzheng, and sihu, with yangqin being the most widely used accompaniment instrument. Therefore, it was also known as "sing yangqin" or "makeup yangqin." Tracing back to this, the true origin of Lvju can be understood, arising from the establishment of plate-tone structure and the combination of makeup performances.

As one of the only two national-level intangible cultural heritages in Dongying City, Lvju has a history of over a century, evolving from the initial popularity of "donkey plays" and "luo plays" in the northern region of Shandong to becoming the primary genre of drama in Shandong. It carries the cultural sentiments of Shandong's rural flavor, reflecting the rural people's pursuit of a happy life and spiritual aspirations. Regarding the origin time of Lvju, there are various claims: 1800, 1894, 1900, and 1915.

The first claim, recorded in "Boxing County Annals," (《博兴县志》) recounts that due to the absence of flood defenses in the lower reaches of the Yellow River, coupled with continuous floods and plagues, farmers faced hardships. In 1880, villagers led by Sun Zhongxin and Liu Luanfeng resorted to singing small tunes as a means of livelihood. Later, artists like Sun Zhongxin and Liu Luanfeng adapted these tunes to the Shandong Qinshu style, added storytelling elements, and introduced makeup performances. They left behind representative works such as "Stepmother Beating the Child" (《后娘打孩子》) and "Trial of Qing Yang." (《审青杨》)

The second claim, in 1894, Jiaodong artist Weng Laoming performed "Su Bao Song Mei" (《苏保送妹》) from "San Da Si Quan" (《三打四劝》) in Penglai in a form known as "makeup running in a circular field," which locals referred to as "bengbengxi." After determining the genre's name as "Lvju," Jiaodong's bengbengxi also changed its name to Lvju.

The third claim, provided by Dongying locals, suggests around 1900 in the present-day areas of Dongying, Guangrao, and Niuzhuang. Artists led by Shi Dianyuan changed the sitting-tone form similar to Shandong Qinshu into makeup singing. They presented Shandong Qinshu's "Wang Xiao Gan Jiao" (《王小赶脚》) to the audience in makeup singing form, referred to locally as "donkey play." The actors themselves called it "makeup yangqin." It later developed and spread to Jinan and other places.

The fourth claim, explained in the "Chinese Music Dictionary," (《中国音乐词典》) states, "Lvju originated from the narrative form of Shandong Qinshu (zuoqiang yangqin). Around 1915, performers in Guangrao County, including Shi Dianyuan and Tan Binglun, performed 'Wang Xiao Gan Jiao' (《王小赶脚》) in makeup, incorporating the performance style of folk donkey running, thus called 'donkey play.'" This claim is more of an artistic analysis. [3]

Connecting these points with Sun Zhongxin as a reference, it appears that Lvju's formation began around 1800 when artists, inspired by Shandong Qinshu, sought innovation. During this period, Lvju's embryonic form already had the presentation style of Shandong Qinshu's plate-tone structure and makeup performances. In the early stages of development around 1894, Jiaodong artist Weng Laoming's "makeup running in a circular field" can be considered a continuation of Lvju's initial spread. The prosperous period of Lvju's development likely occurred in Dongying around 1900 and

1915, led by Shi Dianyuan. As for Lvju's birthplace, it should be in the Huimin area where Zibo Boxing and Dongying Guangrao and Niuzhuang intersect.

### **3. Current Status of Lvju's Dissemination and Development**

"Dramatic art is the art of performance." [4] Particularly for distinctive regional genres like Lvju, which are rich in local flavor and primarily presented through performances, it is challenging to gain societal recognition. Without social benefits, it is difficult to ensure the inheritance and protection of Lvju by the general public. Therefore, the development of Lvju requires social attention and promotion among the younger population. Consequently, introducing Lvju into schools becomes a more practical approach to promote its dissemination.

As one of the only two national-level intangible cultural heritages native to Dongying City, Lvju has garnered significant attention from both the government and the public. Reflecting the lifestyle and production methods of the regional people in Shandong, Lvju serves as a "living fossil" handed down through oral tradition. This method of transmission restricts the cultivation of inheritors to the age group of children and teenagers. Therefore, integrating Lvju into school culture becomes imperative.

In the approach of bringing performances to schools, genres such as Peking Opera, Cantonese Opera, and Xiju have long been incorporated into classroom settings. Chinese drama award winners like Yang Shuaixue, Fang Suzhen, and young huqin players like Zhang Fuzhong have frequently visited various universities, colleges, and high schools in Taiwan, such as Taipei National University of the Arts and the Chinese Music Department of the Taiwan Academy of Arts. [5] Therefore, on the path of cultural transmission and inheritance, focusing on the school environment, especially targeting children and teenagers, becomes crucial to promote and spread excellent Chinese culture.

### **4. Current Development of Lvju in Schools in the Birthplace - Dongying City**

Since Lvju was successfully declared a national-level intangible cultural heritage in Dongying City in 2008, it has received significant attention and strong support from the government. The present-day development of Lvju has also garnered attention and emphasis from various schools. Starting from 1999, Niu Zhuang Town Central Primary School and Dongying District Second Middle School initiated Lvju into Schools series activities. Combining unique regional cultural characteristics with the contemporary context of preserving intangible cultural heritage, the town's primary school engaged renowned Lvju artists and professionals from the opera industry to research Lvju teaching materials suitable for elementary and middle school students. After careful consideration, the classroom textbook "Lvju" and the children's reading book "Lvju Art" have been successfully released and distributed, serving as specialized teaching materials for Lvju courses in town primary schools. [6]

In recent years, Lvju entering school activities have become extremely popular. On June 25, 2018, Dongying Lvju Troupe visited Dongying District Experimental Kindergarten, and in 2019, the Municipal Party Committee Propaganda Department, Municipal Culture and Tourism Bureau, and Municipal Education Bureau extensively carried out Lvju entering school activities across the city. In recent years, Dongying Lvju Troupe has brought professional Lvju culture to kindergartens, primary schools, middle schools, high schools, and Shengli College of China University of Petroleum in Dongying City, making significant contributions to enriching campus culture and spreading Lvju culture.

### **5. Conclusion**

Understanding the history of Lvju and researching its current development lay the foundation for the

inheritance of Lvju. Conducting these foundational studies plays a crucial role in promoting, protecting, inheriting, exchanging, and sustaining cultural diversity within the context of Lvju. The rational utilization of campus culture to explore and utilize local culture not only safeguards the inheritance of cultural traditions but also serves as a driving force for the development of campus culture. The mutual benefit between the two ensures their rational development. In the era of information globalization, various industries contribute to the inheritance, dissemination, development, and utilization of Lvju culture, increasing the number of Lvju inheritors and driving innovative mechanisms for Lvju dissemination. This provides a multifaceted platform and diverse methods for promoting Lvju culture. Therefore, it is essential to understand Lvju, promote Lvju, and then pass on the heritage of Lvju. Through measures such as retracing Lvju's history, introducing Lvju into schools, cultivating inheritors, and establishing comprehensive platforms for Lvju dissemination, we can effectively protect and inherit intangible cultural heritage. This contributes to the safeguarding of Lvju's heritage and promotes the flourishing development of China's national culture.

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