

Youth Development and Identity in Singapore's Tian Yun Beijing Opera Society

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Abstract

The history of immigration is intrinsically related to the growth of Beijing Opera in Singapore. Since the turn of the century, as China's economy has continued to grow, a growing number of Chinese living abroad have started to seek out familiar Chinese voices and deepen their links to the nation. In The Tian Yun Beijing Opera Society aggressively welcomes new immigrants while also assuming the duty of youth development. The overseas Chinese young are now dealing with difficult cultural adaptation and identity crises as a result of postmodernism and the internet information age. The Tian Yun Beijing Opera Society is actively fostering a new generation of Beijing Opera enthusiasts by encouraging secondary school students to study the opera and establishing a youth acting clubs. This makes Beijing Opera an essential link in fostering the development of overseas Chinese cultural communities and strengthening ethnic group cohesion.

Keywords: Singapore Beijing Opera, Chinese opera, identity, youth development

The impact of postmodernist thought and the Internet information age have been felt by Singapore's Chinese youth as a result of the growing globalization process, and they now face difficult difficulties related to cultural adaptation and identity. The Tian Yun Beijing Opera Society has put in place relevant and practical programs to support the development and identity of the Chinese cultural community and ethnicity in Singapore. The organization has a thorough awareness of the issue facing the Chinese youth population. The Tian Yun Beijing Opera Society trains Chinese youth in the art of Beijing Opera, and in this paper, we examine how the Society has created model youth training strategies in the current social environment to actively nurture successors in the art of Beijing Opera and support the identity and cultural acculturation of Chinese youth living abroad.

1. Tian Yun Beijing Opera Society Promotes the Culture of Beijing Opera

Beijing Opera is a broad form of art that includes martial arts, music, dance, history, culture, and other elements. You can learn truth, honesty, and beauty from a well-written play. Professor Zhuang Guotu (2011) suggests that culture or traditional culture is a culture with a stable form formed by a group in the process of long-term historical development, including ideology, way of thinking, value orientation, moral sentiment, lifestyle, ritual system, customs and habits, religious beliefs, literature and art, education and science and technology.

Chinese opera is one of the artistic expressions of traditional Chinese cultural values, and in Singapore, where the Chinese community is disproportionately large, Chinese opera has developed into a part of the Singaporean Chinese's sense of cultural identity. With the goal of "cultivating new blood to inherit and promote the excellent art of Beijing Opera," the Singapore Tian Yun Beijing Opera Society was founded in 1992. In the second year of its existence, the society began teaching Beijing Opera to secondary school students at Tak Ming Government Secondary School. A youth section was established in 2006, and several special concerts were staged for kids to provide new life to the Club.

The Society has placed a high priority on educating young people about Beijing Opera ever since it was founded. Beijing Opera training has been provided to newcomers with the goal of preserving and advancing traditional culture. The former president Hou Shen Hu and vice president Dai Jinghu discussed the connection between traditional Beijing Opera culture and the training of aspiring Beijing Opera performers in their dedication, according to the old special editions of the "Tian Yun Beijing Opera Society 1993, 1994, and 1995." Additionally, it is in harmony with Confucianism and Chinese culture.

According to Dai Jinghu (1993), the tales of Beijing Opera productions are based on the tenets of Confucianism

and the essence of human nature: filial piety, righteousness, and loyalty. Beijing Opera includes traditional Confucianist tales, illuminating the rich and complex nature of Chinese civilization. Beijing Opera serves as a crucial link in promoting the development of a Chinese cultural community in Singapore by teaching young people the art of the performance and the understanding of Chinese culture through its stories (Chuang, 2011). As a result, Beijing Opera plays a crucial role in fostering community cohesion and fostering the development of a Chinese cultural community in Singapore.

2. Newcomers and the Impact of Postmodernism

New immigrants were hired one by one when the Tian Yun Beijing Opera Society was founded. The majority of the members of the Tian Yun Beijing Opera Society are from Fujian, with others hailing from various other provinces, and according to Li Mingming (1993), The sound of "Tian Yun" is heard on the opera stage, the society has grown quickly while taking great care to draw in new Chinese immigrants to bolster its strength. About 10% of the total members were new immigrants during the organization's first year of operation.

Zhuang Guotu (2015) discusses how the new migrants are often well educated, demonstrating a rising trend of elite group migration, the majority of which travels to developed nations, in his paper "New aspects of China's overseas migration in the era of globalization." In addition, a significant portion of incoming immigrants work as unskilled labor. "A huge number of Chinese traders and laborers, along with Chinese capital, industries, and commodities have entered Southeast Asia," according to the growth of the China-ASEAN Free Trade Area.

New immigrants bring with them a significant impact of cash flows on traditional culture and art. Members of the Tian Yun Beijing Opera Club have grown more committed to their goals and sense of duty as admirers of the previous generation of Beijing Opera artists in light of the genre's slow decline in Singapore and the absence of successors. The Tian Yun Beijing Opera Club is also more cognizant of current youth education than other Beijing Opera clubs because its new immigrant members themselves are from a generation that was heavily influenced by globalization, and thus have a greater grasp of contemporary Chinese youth. They have a thorough awareness of the contemporary cultural context in which Chinese adolescents are living, and this understanding has resulted in the creation of model programs for youth development.

Chinese youth in Singapore today face more complex challenges of cultural adaptation and identity due to globalization and rapid economic development, particularly with the rise of postmodern culture and Internet information technology, which have had a significant negative impact on traditional Chinese culture, symbolized by Beijing Opera. Post-modern culture is in many ways impacting the values and identity of the next generation of young in this age of information boom. In order to effectively cultivate Chinese youth's understanding of cultural inheritance, we must therefore thoroughly explore and study the impact of post-modernism on youth. In the course of this research, we must also pay particular attention to the distinctive characteristics of overseas Chinese youth in an immigrant environment, specifically Chinese identity.

Five identities have formed among the Chinese diaspora, according to Wang Gungwu (1991), a Chinese academic who has long studied the survival of abroad Chinese: "the sojourner mindset; the assimilator; the regulator; the one with national pride; and the one with a drastically modified way of life." However, the question of identity does not seem to have such distinct borders for the Chinese youth in Singapore who are growing up in the twenty-first century. The question "Who am I?" is one that Chinese youth are inevitably asked from infancy on. Although the majority of Chinese families in Singapore value instilling a strong sense of Chinese culture in their children, the majority of Singapore's population speaks English, and this is also true of the country's dominant culture. Chinese youngsters experience ongoing conflict between the traditional cultural milieu in school and society and their family's Chinese ancestry.

The history, culture, and moral norms of China over the previous 5,000 years are incredibly difficult for Chinese youth to learn from their parents. The Tian Yun Beijing Opera Club, which began by teaching Beijing Opera to Chinese youth, offers a great opportunity to learn about and appreciate Chinese culture. This not only encourages the youth to become aware of and appreciate Chinese culture and the art of Beijing Opera, but also aids in the development of profound and accurate Chinese cultural values for the next generation of young Chinese.

Furthermore, Zhang Yongguang (2010) argues that Chinese youth may experience communication issues with their peers and parents in his book *Youth Formation in the Contemporary Chinese Church*. The new generation of youngsters, which is made up of both native-born individuals and recent immigrants, is incompatible with one another due to their disparate languages, cultures, and ways of thinking, which makes it challenging for them to form genuine friendships or even to reject one another. They struggle to build strong relationships with one another; as a result, they avoid each other or even exclude one another. Beijing opera can communicate the Confucian ideals of friendship and love for others, filial piety to parents, inclusiveness, and understanding of

righteousness, and this educational approach of learning through stories and opera singing is more easily accepted and understood by youth with sensitive and rebellious characteristics than verbal preaching. Beijing opera is a deeply ingrained art form in the core of Chinese culture.

According to Li Fuxin and Liu Yangfu (2010), the disappearance of the subject, the disappearance of depth, and the elimination of the sense of history in three different ways are the key repercussions of postmodernism on youngsters' viewpoint on life, values, and worldview. In the context of postmodernism, the "disappearance of the subject" refers to the flipping of conventional values. The term "disappearance of depth" describes how postmodernist artworks have given up on the idea of the depth of the work itself and have refused to delve further into the meanings of ideas.

However, postmodernism's interpretation of history is more sentimental. Zhang Pinzhong suggests that "decentralization" and "individualization" are the defining characteristics of "postmodern" Internet culture, saying that this has strengthened young people's feeling of subjectivity and had an impact on their behavior. The authors of this study contend that Internet culture has raised young people's sense of subjectivity and impacted interpersonal and natural emotional interactions.

The impact of Internet information and post-modernism on young people is growing more and more important as a result of the ongoing growth of the Internet information process and the onset of the post-epidemic period. The Tian Yun Beijing Opera Society serves as a traditional cultural orientation and implements a successful youth Beijing Opera training program, allowing overseas Chinese youth to find adaptation to Chinese culture and Chinese identity in the nourishment of the traditional art of Beijing Opera. They can also form a group of young performers focusing on the promotion of Beijing Opera culture by fusing the characteristics of youth to overcome the challenge of cultural adaptati.

3. Youth Development of the Tian Yun Beijing Opera Society

The Tian Yun Beijing Opera Society's mission is to nurture new blood to inherit and promote the excellent art of Beijing Opera, and in addition to promoting the art of Beijing Opera, we are dedicated to developing new talent. This mission is based on the unique background and cultural environment of Chinese youth in Singapore. We have been able to develop a new generation of young people who are passionate about Beijing Opera and to encourage the adaptation of traditional Chinese culture and Chinese identity among young Singaporeans, thereby forming a new generation of Chinese youth, through the training of young performers in secondary schools, the formation of youth groups, and the organization of special performances for young people.

According to Dai Jinghu (1997), he founded the club to carry out his vision and pursue his interest of opera in a more serious and sophisticated way, as well as to assist a group of aspiring artists in understanding Beijing Opera as a profound and sophisticated kind of cultural art. This objective, which was the original aim of the members, has remained constant throughout the development of the Tian Yun Beijing Opera Club. Throughout the development of the Tian Yun Beijing Opera Society, this goal has never changed and has always been the original intention of the members of the society. In a transcript of an interview with the President of the Tian Yun Beijing Opera Society, Luo Luo Min, Liu Qiu Feng and Liu Wei (2009) wrote it is the common wish of the founders and the current President and Executive Committee of the Tian Yun Beijing Opera Society to inherit and carry forward the excellent traditional Beijing Opera culture of the Chinese race in a multi-racial and harmonious country like Singapore, which reflects the great importance and responsibility that the Tian Yun Beijing Opera Society places on the training of young people, and the effectiveness of the training of young people in Beijing Opera is inextricably linked to the determination of the members of the society to achieve their goals.

The Tian Yun Beijing Opera Society trains young actors who have a strong love for Beijing Opera culture, a lifelong interest in acting, and even join the youth group for formal performances, developing a group of young friends with a strong cultural identity with the traditional Chinese art of Beijing Opera. The main distinction between the Tian Yun Beijing Opera Club and other Beijing Opera clubs, according to an article by Liu Qiufeng and Liu Wei (2009), "No effort spared in promoting the national essence - an interview with Luo De Min, President of the Tian Yun Beijing Opera Club," is that it has been teaching Beijing Opera to secondary school students at Tak Ming Government Secondary School since 1994. After graduating, these students who had joined the Beijing Opera group of the Tak Ming Government Secondary School's Chinese Language Society are still very interested in the ancient form of Beijing Opera. Despite the fact that many young, aspiring Beijing Opera performers were not able to continue their Beijing Opera activities because of academic graduation or other environmental factors, a sizable portion of those who were supported by the Tian Yun Beijing Opera Society joined the Tian Yun Affiliated Youth Beijing Opera Group in 2006, injecting They have now become the future

successors of the new generation of Beijing Opera.

As a result of the Beijing Opera Club's introduction of numerous young performers to its repertoire, Singapore now has the first Beijing Opera company composed completely of young aficionados. The young actors' and singers' excellent vocal and acting prowess, as well as their interpretation of Beijing opera storylines, are enlightening to the audience and aid the performers in developing their cultural confidence while also having a positive influence on the young audience on stage. According to Wang Hui (2013), the vivacious and graceful young actors on stage delivered potent performances that effectively communicated to the audience the genuine emotions of the characters. The audience is given optimism by the Beijing Opera's legacy in Singapore. It is clear that the Tian Yun Beijing Opera Society has had great success with its young development.

The concept of "cooperation between the old, middle, and young generations" was first proposed during the early stages of the society's formation. It was specifically suggested that "the older generation should not be ostracized" and that the goal was "to study authentic Beijing opera and cultivate new talents." Studying "genuine Beijing opera and developing new talents" is the key goal. We want our current members to teach young people locally while also studying with and exchanging ideas with well-known Chinese Beijing Opera performers in order to develop their skills. The Club has improved its training methods and repertoire in recent years, attracted new Chinese youth generations to join, and trained new talent to carry on the traditional art of Beijing Opera. It has also been successful in understanding the values and aesthetic preferences of the new era of theatre.

The young Beijing Opera aficionados of Tian Yun have created a Chinese cultural cluster with the art of Beijing Opera at its core that forcefully addresses many of the difficulties that have been influenced by post-modern thought, such as social anxieties and communication obstacles. They have formed a feeling of duty and a mission to transmit and promote their traditional culture as they master the art of Beijing Opera and discover their Chinese culture and identity. A young actress with a flowery face named Zhang Fan declared that "Beijing Opera is a symbol of Chinese culture and a national treasure of China." "I have sparked a passion for Beijing Opera and a pride in this culture within me," the author claims. I aspire for the people around me to catch the culture's bug and adore it. "To introduce the world to China's national treasure." On the other hand, Jasper Lan, a Hua Dan performer, demonstrated in his Beijing Opera performance "the passion and perseverance of cultural paranoia."

The Tian Yun Beijing Opera Club's training of young people fundamentally instills Chinese culture and identity, and it acts as a model for the cultural education of young people abroad. Chinese adolescents are educated to learn and understand traditional culture through the art of Beijing Opera, which helps them develop a feeling of identity with Chinese culture and strengthens ethnic solidarity in order to support the development of a Chinese cultural community.

4. Conclusion

The development of Beijing Opera in Singapore is inextricably linked to the history of immigration. In the new century, with the continued rise of China, a large number of overseas Chinese have begun to seek out familiar voices from China and strengthen their ties with the country. While actively including new immigrant members, the Tian Yun Beijing Opera Society has also taken on the responsibility of youth development. The impact of post-modernist thinking and the Internet information age has left overseas Chinese youth facing complex cultural adaptation and identity dilemmas. By guiding secondary school students to study Beijing Opera and setting up a youth group of actors, the Tian Yun Beijing Opera Society is actively nurturing a new generation of Beijing Opera enthusiasts, making Beijing Opera an important link in strengthening community cohesion and promoting the building of a Chinese cultural community.

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