



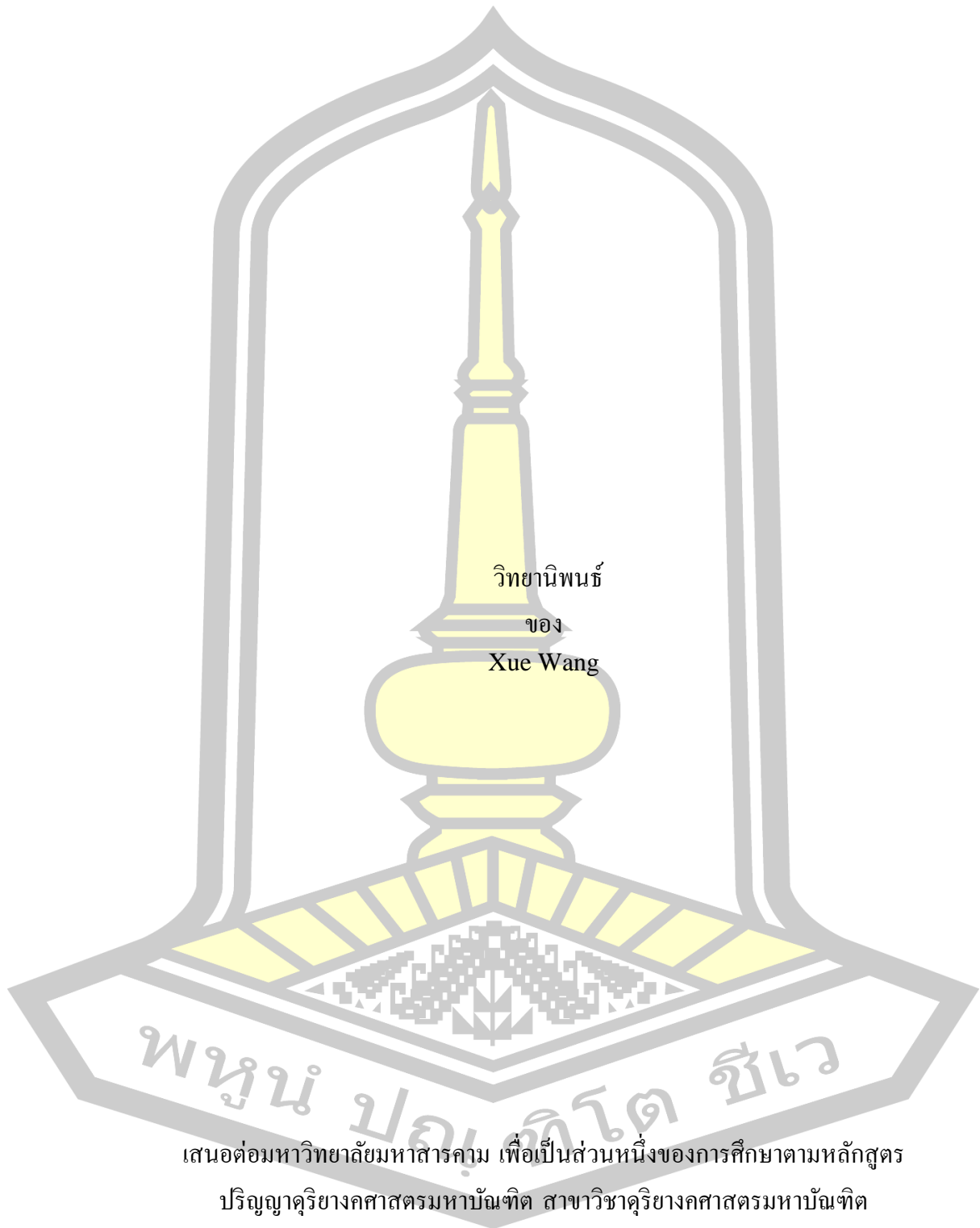
The Singing Techniques of Long Baoling in Huangmei Opera, Anhui, China

Xue Wang

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of Requirements for
degree of Master of Music in Music
February 2025

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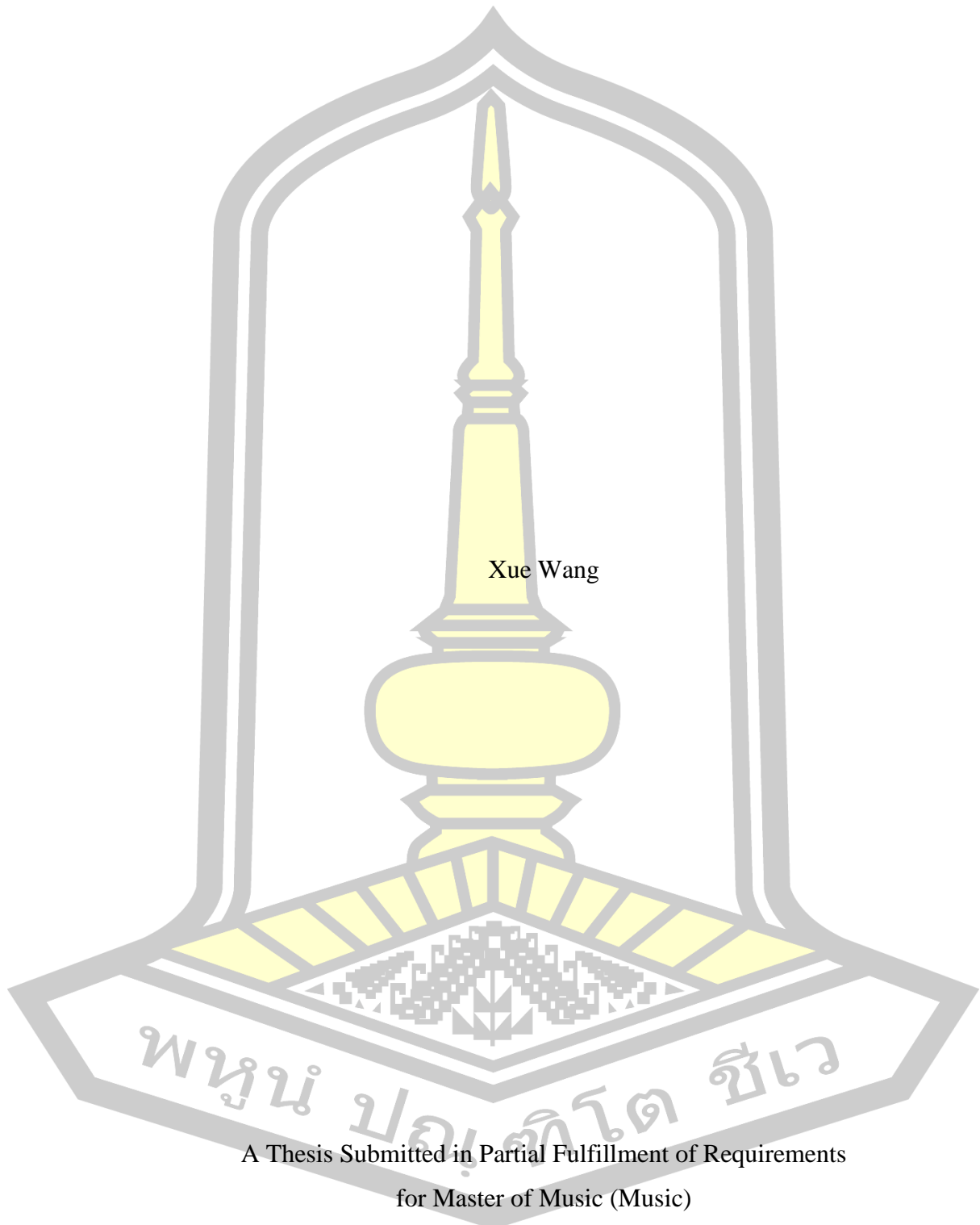
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ลิขสิทธิ์เป็นของมหาวิทยาลัยมหาสารคาม

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February 2025

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ABSTRACT

This research applies methods from anthropological theory, musicology, ethnomusicology, historical musicology, and theater theory to explore the characteristics of Huangmei Opera. The study includes field research and interviews with renowned performer Ms. Long Baoling. The two primary objectives are: 1) to examine Ms. Long Baoling's life and work from 2020 to 2024, and 2) to analyze her singing techniques.

From 2020 to 2024, Ms. Long Baoling has made significant contributions to the development of Huangmei Opera through her performances, teaching, and artistic innovations. She has preserved traditional techniques while introducing modern adaptations, ensuring the art form remains relevant. Her influence extends through mentoring young artists and expanding Huangmei Opera's reach. Her vocal techniques including Breathing, True Voice, Chest Voice, Crying Tone, Vibrato, and Ornamentation enhance emotional expression and storytelling, preserving and evolving the art form.

This study focuses on how Ms. Long Baoling's dedication to performance and mastery of these techniques has sustained and evolved Huangmei Opera, keeping it vibrant in the contemporary era.

Keyword : Huangmei Opera, The Life and Work of Ms, Long Baoling, Singing Techniques

พหุบัณฑิต ชีเว

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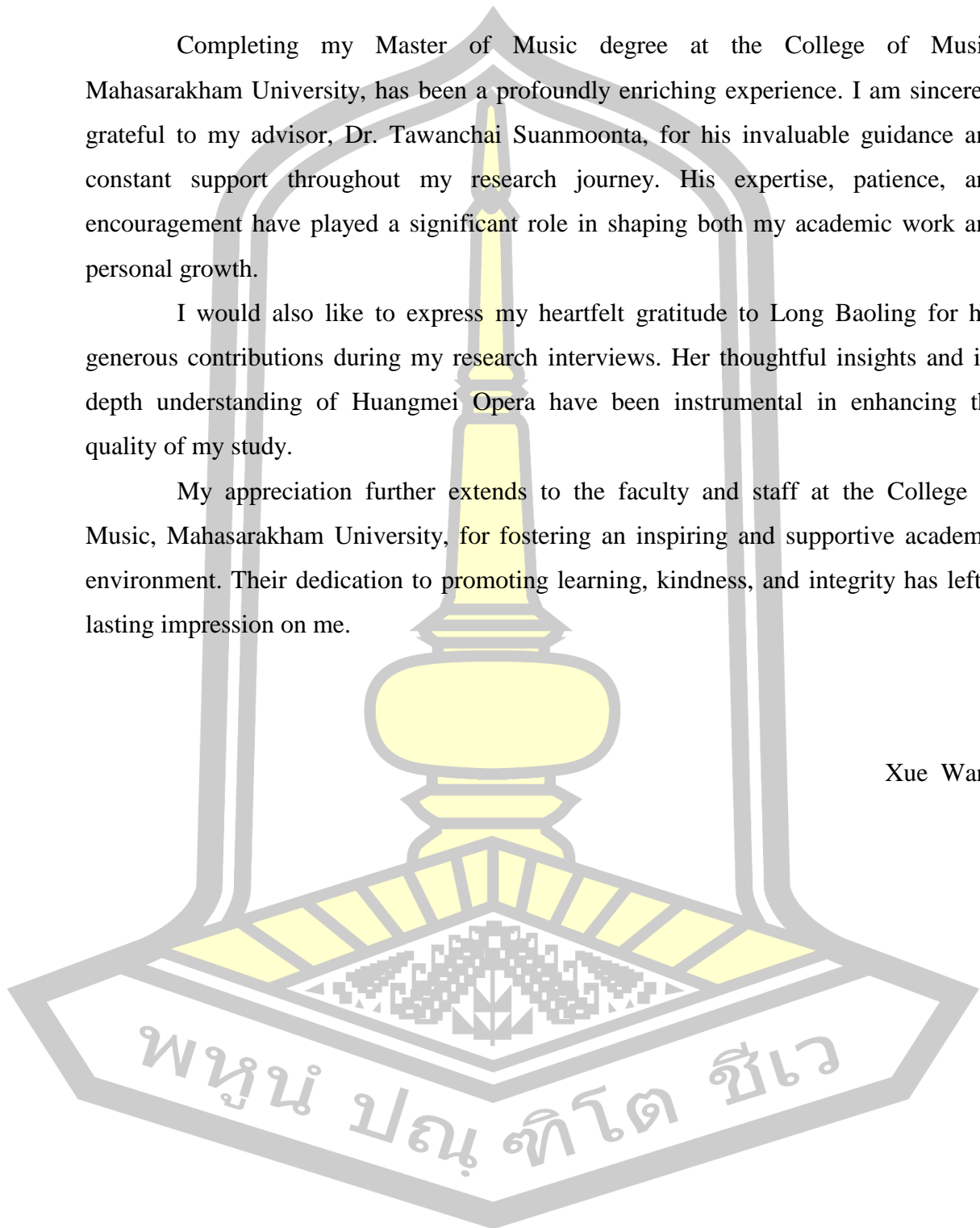
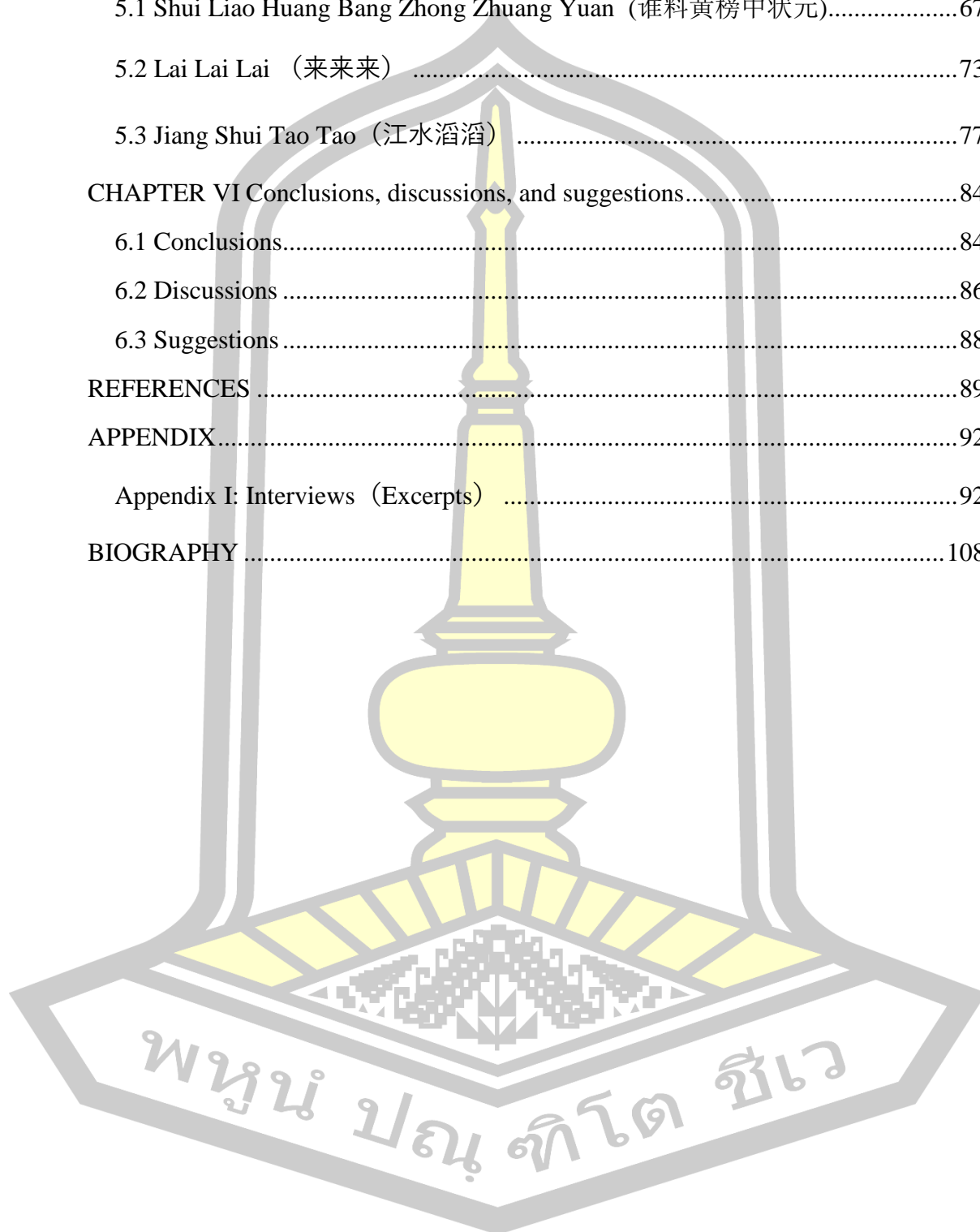


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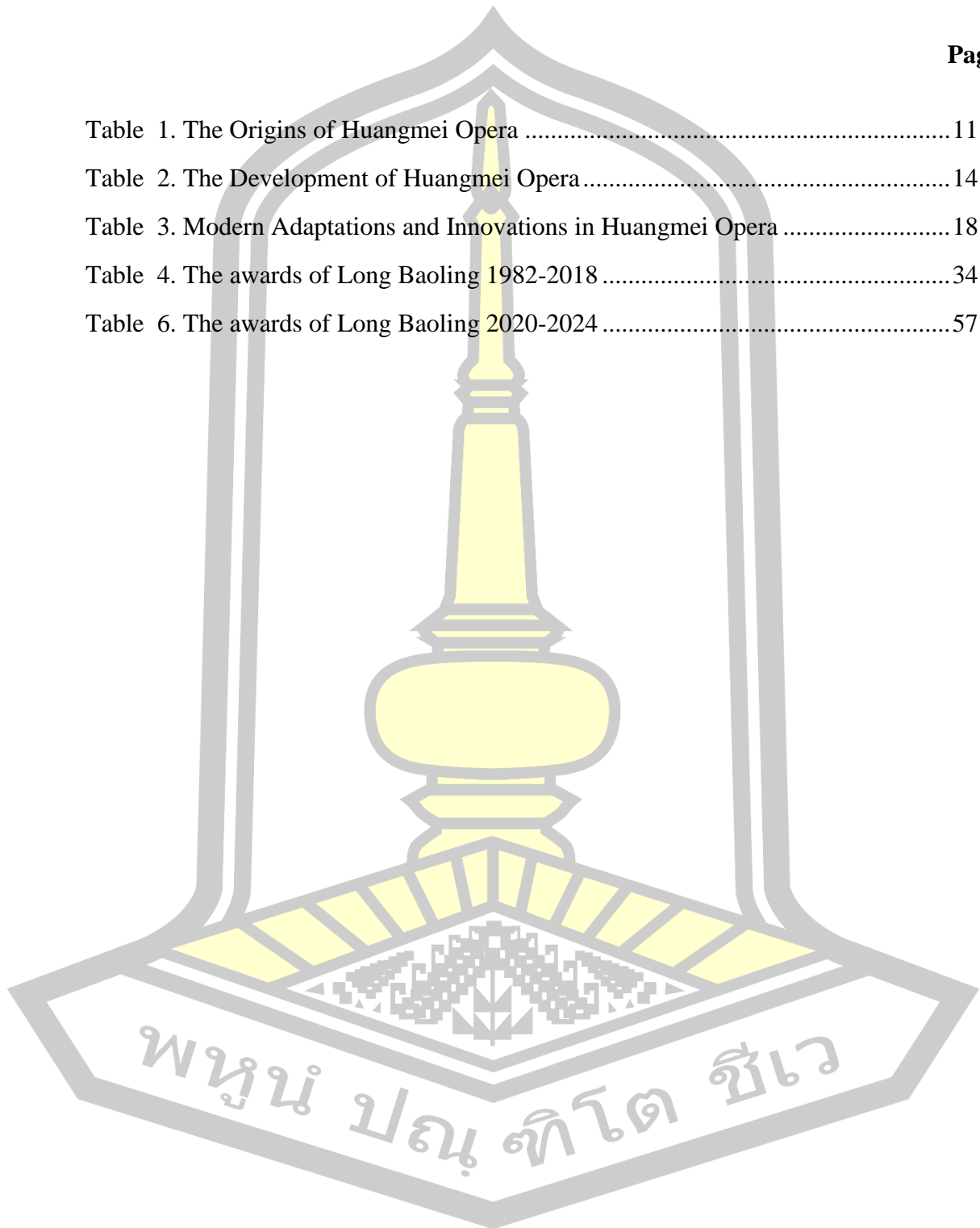
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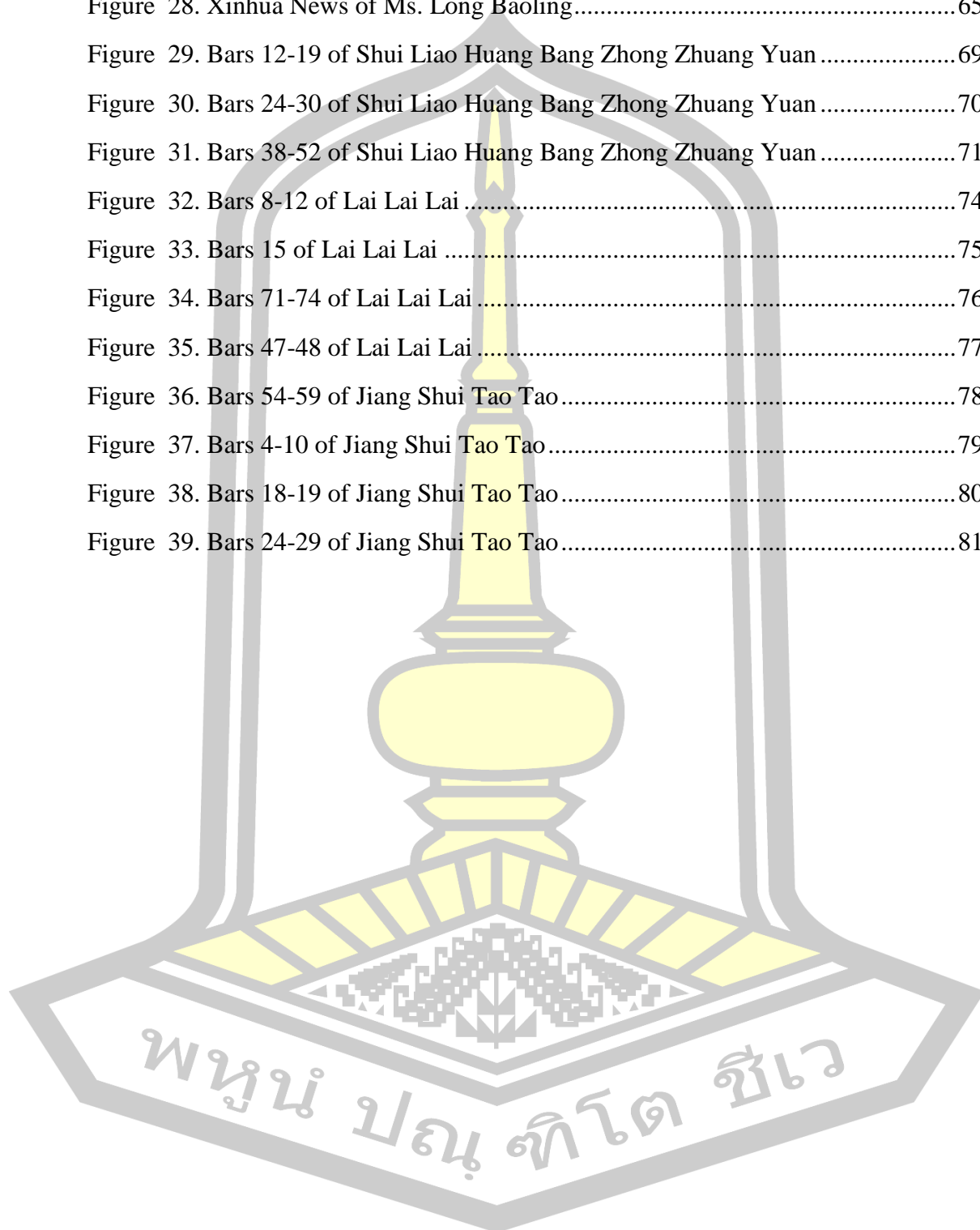
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CHAPTER I

Introduction

1.1 Research Background

The title of this paper is "The Singing Techniques of Long Baoling in Huangmei Opera, Anhui, China." This research focuses on an in-depth examination of Long Baoling's life, career, and artistic contributions to Huangmei Opera, with particular attention to her unique singing techniques. Long Baoling is a celebrated figure in Huangmei Opera, known for her technical precision, emotional expressiveness, and ability to bridge traditional performance methods with contemporary audiences. By studying her vocal artistry, this research aims to explore how individual performers contribute to the sustainability and modernization of traditional Chinese opera.

Huangmei Opera, one of China's most cherished regional folk operas, has played a vital role in shaping Anhui's cultural identity. Its origins trace back to the late 18th century, when it was performed by farmers and local villagers during festivals. Over time, it evolved from a rural folk tradition into a formal theatrical genre, gaining popularity beyond Anhui Province (Zhang Xiaoli, 2013). During the 20th century, professional troupes helped standardize performances, expanding the opera's repertoire and enhancing its artistic appeal (Wang Yifan, 2018). Government recognition further promoted its development, leading to formal educational programs aimed at training new generations of performers (Li Qi, 2016). Despite these advancements, Huangmei Opera faces challenges in the modern era, including shifting audience preferences and competition from digital media (Zhang Haixia, 2019). These factors make it crucial to examine the work of influential artists like Long Baoling, who have played an essential role in revitalizing the art form.

Long Baoling stands out as a performer who has successfully preserved the traditional essence of Huangmei Opera while integrating innovative elements to attract contemporary audiences. Her vocal techniques are characterized by a delicate balance between tradition and adaptation, allowing her to maintain authenticity while resonating with modern listeners. She employs a refined approach to breath control,

phrasing, and tonal modulation, which enhances the emotional depth of her performances. Her ability to blend classic melodies with nuanced vocal expression has helped her establish a distinctive artistic identity within Huangmei Opera.

Beyond her singing technique, Long Baoling has also contributed significantly to the transmission of Huangmei Opera through teaching and mentorship. She has actively engaged in training young performers, ensuring that the traditional aspects of the art form continue to be passed down while allowing room for creative reinterpretation. Her role in the opera community extends to research and collaboration with other musicians, further enriching the art form's modern development.

Based on the collection of previous data, researchers found that the artistic development of Huangmei Opera faces challenges in modern times, including shifting audience preferences and competition from digital media. This research aims to investigate the singing technique of Long Baoling, analyze the vocal characteristics that define her artistry, and provide guidance on the preservation and transmission of Huangmei Opera. The goal of this study is to offer theoretical support and reference for future research on the sustainability and modernization of Huangmei Opera in China.

1.2 Research Objectives

- 1.2.1 To study the life and work of Ms. Long Baoling from 2020 to 2024.
- 1.2.2 To analyze the singing techniques of Ms. Long Baoling.

1.3 Research Questions

- 1.3.1 What is the life and work of Ms. Long Baoling from 2020 to 2024?
- 1.3.2 What are the singing techniques Ms. Long Baoling?

1.4 Research Benefits

1.4.1 This research will document the life and artistic achievements of Ms. Long Baoling, offering valuable insights into her contributions to Huangmei Opera and preserving her legacy for future generations.

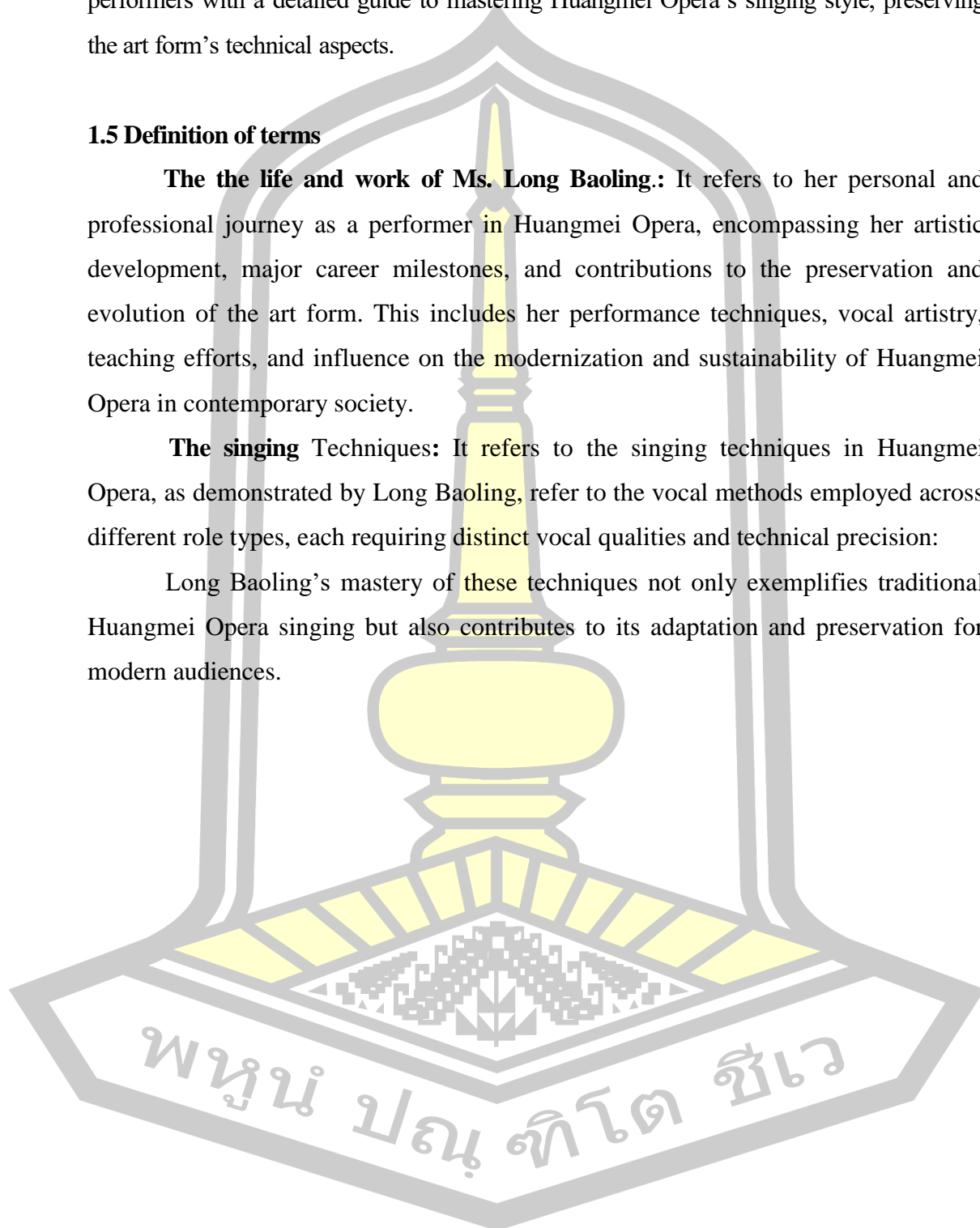
1.4.2 Analyzing Ms. Long Baoling's technique will provide future generations of performers with a detailed guide to mastering Huangmei Opera's singing style, preserving the art form's technical aspects.

1.5 Definition of terms

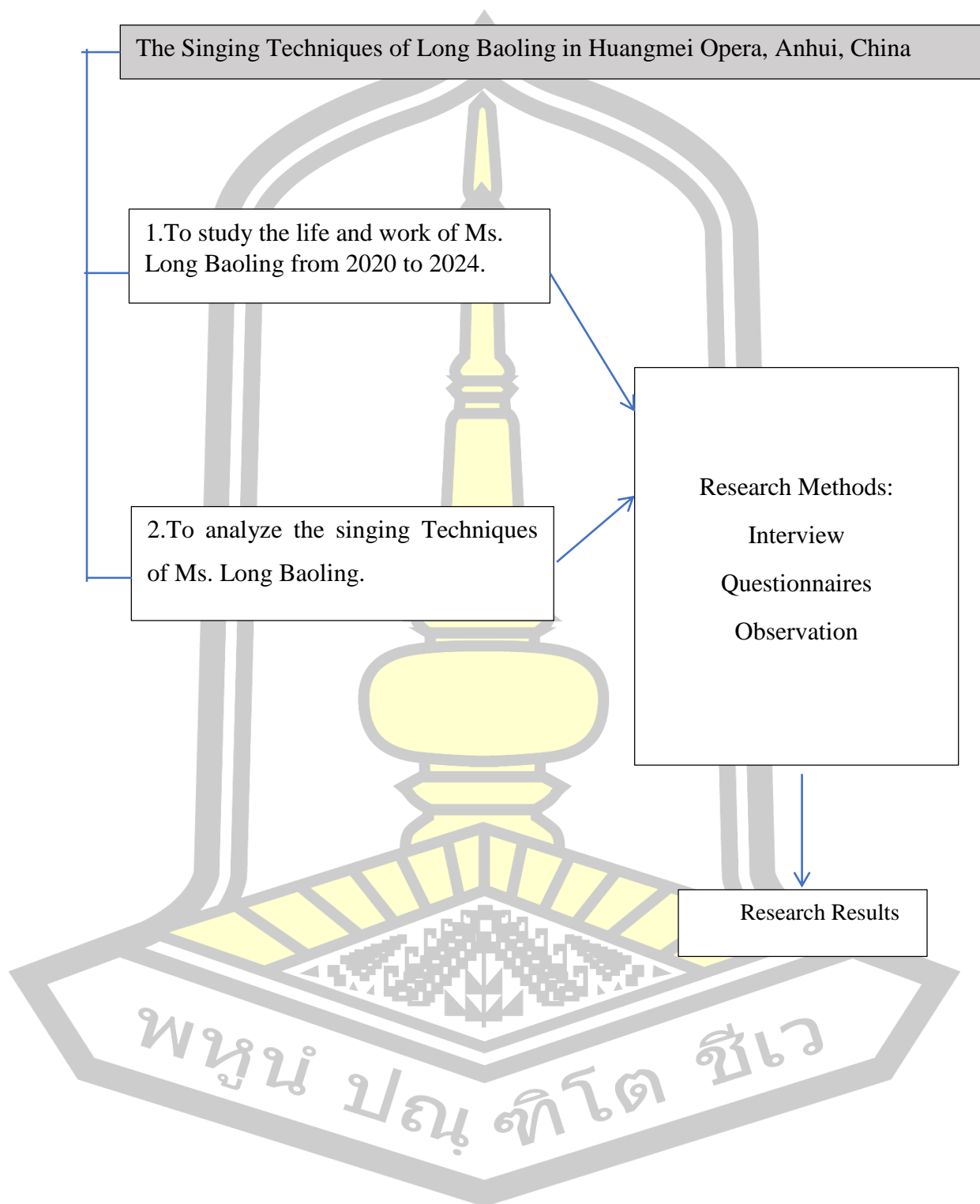
The the life and work of Ms. Long Baoling.: It refers to her personal and professional journey as a performer in Huangmei Opera, encompassing her artistic development, major career milestones, and contributions to the preservation and evolution of the art form. This includes her performance techniques, vocal artistry, teaching efforts, and influence on the modernization and sustainability of Huangmei Opera in contemporary society.

The singing Techniques: It refers to the singing techniques in Huangmei Opera, as demonstrated by Long Baoling, refer to the vocal methods employed across different role types, each requiring distinct vocal qualities and technical precision:

Long Baoling's mastery of these techniques not only exemplifies traditional Huangmei Opera singing but also contributes to its adaptation and preservation for modern audiences.



1.6 Conceptual Framework



CHAPTER II

Literature review

This chapter pertains to the literature review for the analysis of Huangmei Opera, a folk art from Anhui. To gather the most comprehensive information for this research, the researcher has reviewed the relevant materials according to the study's theme and purpose.

2.1 Huangmei Opera

2.2 Folk song in Anhui, China

2.3 Ms Long Baoling

2.4 Singing techniques

2.5 The theory used in research

2.6 The related research

2.1 Huangmei Opera

2.1.1 Huangmei Opera

Huangmei Opera, one of China's most cherished traditional forms of opera, has a long and intricate history that spans several centuries. With its origins in the rural areas of Anhui Province, it has evolved from a simple form of folk music into a sophisticated theatrical art. Known for its lyrical beauty, accessible themes, and cultural depth, Huangmei Opera has maintained its popularity throughout China, withstanding the test of time and undergoing multiple transformations. In this essay, we will explore the origins, development, rise, key contributors, decline, revival, and modern-day significance of Huangmei Opera in detail (Dai Hongming, 2015).

Huangmei Opera traces its roots back to the late 18th century during the Qing Dynasty (1644–1911). It originated as a form of folk entertainment among peasants in the rural areas of Anhui Province, particularly in regions around Huangmei Mountain, from which it derives its name. However, unlike many of the other forms of Chinese opera that were shaped in cities or royal courts, Huangmei Opera was born in the fields, closely linked to agricultural life (Li Guangzu, 2012).

The opera's beginnings can be found in the "tea-picking songs" (Chai Cha Diao), which were sung by farmers, especially during the tea harvest season. These folk songs were simple in structure, featuring light melodies and repetitive tunes. The themes were also grounded in daily life, including love stories, family issues, and rural hardships. As the melodies grew in popularity, these songs began to be performed during festivals and celebrations, gradually becoming a form of entertainment that combined music, dance, and storytelling. What set Huangmei Opera apart in its early stages was its grassroots nature. Unlike more formalized art forms such as Peking Opera, which were associated with royalty and nobility, Huangmei Opera was performed by ordinary people for ordinary people. It was highly accessible, with songs performed in local dialects and simple, relatable plots that resonated with the audience. This made it distinct from other forms of Chinese opera that were more stylized and esoteric (Zhang Xiaoli, 2010).

By the mid-19th century, the folk tradition of tea-picking songs had evolved into a more structured form of performance. As Huangmei Opera spread from Anhui to neighboring provinces such as Hubei and Jiangxi, it began to incorporate elements from other regional operatic forms, including Kunqu and Peking Opera. This period of cross-pollination marked a significant turning point in the development of Huangmei Opera, as it started to become a formal theatrical art. One of the most important changes during this period was the standardization of character roles, much like other Chinese operatic traditions. Huangmei Opera adopted the classic role types found in Chinese opera: sheng (male roles), dan (female roles), jing (painted-face roles), and chou (comic roles). These role types allowed for greater variety in storytelling, as they brought with them a set of established conventions for acting, singing, and costuming. Among these roles, the dan (female lead) became especially prominent, with the qingyi (a refined, dignified woman) becoming a staple role in many Huangmei Opera productions (Huang Xiangpeng, 2018).

The music of Huangmei Opera also became more sophisticated during this time. While it retained the simple, melodic qualities of its folk origins, the tunes were embellished with more intricate melodies and rhythms. Traditional Chinese instruments such as the erhu (two-stringed fiddle), pipa (lute), and dizi (bamboo flute) became standard accompaniments in performances, adding richness to the musical

experience. The songs were typically light and graceful, often accompanied by dialogue and simple dance movements that enhanced the emotional depth of the stories being told. Thematically, Huangmei Opera continued to focus on everyday life, but the scope of its stories expanded to include historical tales, legends, and moral fables. This transformation from rural folk music into a more polished theatrical form set the stage for Huangmei Opera's rise to prominence in the early 20th century (He Hua, 2016).

The early 20th century marked a period of rapid growth and expansion for Huangmei Opera. As urbanization increased and more people moved to cities, Huangmei Opera spread beyond its rural origins and gained a foothold in urban theaters. Anhui's neighboring provinces, including Hubei and Jiangxi, became important centers for the performance and evolution of the opera, as traveling troupes began to perform in larger venues for a more diverse audience. By this time, Huangmei Opera had become a recognized and respected form of traditional Chinese opera. It was no longer viewed as a purely rural or folk art, but as a sophisticated performance that could compete with other major forms of opera such as Peking Opera and Yue Opera. This was also the period when some of the most famous works in Huangmei Opera's repertoire were created, including "The Marriage of the Fairy Princess" (Tianxian Pei) and "The Female Consort" (Nv Fu Ma) (Feng Jue, 2018).

One of the reasons for Huangmei Opera's growing popularity during this period was its unique balance of accessibility and artistry. While the themes and stories remained simple and easy to understand, the performances were marked by a high level of musical and theatrical skill. Audiences appreciated the blend of folk tradition with more refined operatic techniques, which made Huangmei Opera both familiar and fresh. However, it was in the 1950s that Huangmei Opera truly reached its golden age, thanks in large part to the contributions of several key artists and the promotion of the genre by the Chinese government (Liu Siwei, 2019).

The 1950s and 1960s are often considered the golden age of Huangmei Opera. During this time, the art form reached new heights of popularity, not only in Anhui and surrounding regions but throughout China. One of the most important figures in this period was Yan Fengying, who is widely regarded as the greatest actress in the history of Huangmei Opera.

Yan Fengying was born in Anhui in 1930 and began performing Huangmei Opera at a young age. Her extraordinary talent and unique singing style quickly made her a national sensation. She is best known for her roles in "The Marriage of the Fairy Princess" and "The Female Consort", both of which remain among the most beloved works in Huangmei Opera's repertoire. Yan Fengying's voice was known for its clarity, warmth, and emotional depth. She had a remarkable ability to convey the inner feelings of her characters through her singing, and her performances were noted for their grace and subtlety. Her portrayal of female leads, especially those caught in situations of love, sacrifice, and moral conflict, captivated audiences across China. In addition to her stage performances, Yan Fengying helped popularize Huangmei Opera through film. In 1955, she starred in the film adaptation of "The Marriage of the Fairy Princess", which was an instant success and brought Huangmei Opera to a wider audience. The film's release marked a turning point in the history of the art form, as it introduced the opera to people who had never seen it performed live. The film's success spurred a wave of new productions and performances, further solidifying Huangmei Opera's place in Chinese popular culture. During this period, the Chinese government also played a significant role in promoting Huangmei Opera as part of its efforts to support traditional Chinese arts. Cultural policies encouraged the preservation and development of traditional opera, and Huangmei Opera benefited from increased resources and attention. Performances were organized in major cities like Beijing and Shanghai, and Huangmei Opera became one of the "Five Great Operas" of China, alongside Peking Opera, Yue Opera, Pingju, and Cantonese Opera (Zhao Ying, 2017).

The Cultural Revolution (1966–1976), a tumultuous period in Chinese history, posed significant challenges to Huangmei Opera, as it did to many forms of traditional Chinese art. During this time, much of China's cultural heritage was targeted for destruction, and traditional opera was seen as "feudal" and "counter-revolutionary." Many operas were banned, and performers faced persecution. Huangmei Opera, like other operas, suffered during this period. Many troupes disbanded, and performers were sent to the countryside for "re-education." The themes of Huangmei Opera, which often focused on love, family, and personal morality, were deemed incompatible with the political ideologies of the Cultural Revolution, which

emphasized revolutionary struggle and class conflict. As a result, many classic operas were no longer performed, and some artists were forced to abandon their careers. Despite these challenges, Huangmei Opera was not entirely extinguished. Some troupes continued to perform, albeit under significant constraints, and a few productions that conformed to the revolutionary ethos were allowed to take place. However, the vibrant and flourishing art form of the 1950s had been severely diminished by the time the Cultural Revolution ended (Cheng Xiang, 2020).

After the end of the Cultural Revolution in 1976, China entered a period of reform and opening up, during which efforts were made to revive the country's traditional arts. Huangmei Opera, which had been nearly destroyed during the previous decade, began to make a comeback. In the 1980s, government policies shifted toward the preservation of traditional culture, and there was renewed interest in Huangmei Opera. Cultural festivals, competitions, and government-sponsored performances helped reintroduce the art form to a new generation of Chinese audiences. New productions of classic works like "The Marriage of the Fairy Princess" and "The Female Consort" (Wang Ling, 2014).

2.1.2 The history of Huangmei Opera

Huangmei Opera originated in the Anqing region of Anhui Province, China. It evolved from folk mountain songs and ditties in the border areas of Hubei and Anhui. Its predecessor was the "Tea-picking Opera," which was initially performed for local entertainment and often associated with festivals and agricultural activities. During the mid to late Qing Dynasty, Huangmei Opera gradually absorbed elements from other regional operas and became widely popular among the people.

Early Qing Dynasty (1644–1735): The Foundations of Folk Songs

Huangmei Opera can trace its earliest roots to the agricultural folk songs sung by tea-pickers and farmers in the Huangmei region of Anhui Province during the early Qing Dynasty. These folk songs, known as "tea-picking tunes" (采茶调), were informal, melodic, and reflective of everyday rural life. The tunes often focused on themes such as love, harvest, and local customs. They were characterized by their repetitive, rhythmic patterns that helped coordinate the labor of tea-picking, planting, and other farm work. The folk songs were not initially considered a formal art form

but instead served as a form of leisure and expression for villagers. Performances were spontaneous, with participants singing in call-and-response patterns, often accompanied by simple body movements or rhythmic clapping.

Mid-Qing Dynasty (1735–1820): From Folk Songs to Performance Art

During the reigns of Emperor Qianlong (1735–1796) and Jiaqing (1796–1820), the tea-picking tunes evolved into a more structured performance art. Influences from neighboring provinces, particularly Hubei and Jiangxi, introduced storytelling elements to these folk songs. Gradually, performers began incorporating dialogue and simple dances, blending song and narrative into a proto-drama. This period saw the emergence of localized theatrical traditions. These performances were often held during village festivals or temple fairs to celebrate agricultural milestones, such as planting, harvesting, or the arrival of spring. Performances remained deeply rooted in local dialects and customs, making them accessible and relatable to rural audiences.

Late Qing Dynasty (1820–1912): Formalization of Huangmei Opera

By the late Qing Dynasty, the tea-picking tunes began evolving into a distinct opera form, with “Huangmei Diao” (黄梅调) recognized as a unique regional genre. This development was catalyzed by increased interactions between rural performers and traveling troupes from neighboring regions, particularly Han Opera (汉剧) in Hubei Province and Gan Opera (赣剧) in Jiangxi Province. These influences introduced theatrical techniques, such as role types, plot structures, and musical motifs. Performances began moving from purely rural areas to town markets and small urban theaters, allowing for broader exposure. Performers started charging audiences for entry, marking the transition to semi-professional troupes. Musical accompaniment evolved from simple percussive rhythms to include stringed instruments, such as the Erhu and Sanxian (三弦, a three-stringed lute). The melodies became more sophisticated, blending the simplicity of folk tunes with the expressive qualities of instrumental music. Themes began to move beyond agricultural life, incorporating popular folklore, historical tales, and moral parables. By the end of the Qing Dynasty, Huangmei Opera was recognized as a structured art form distinct from

its folk origins. However, it remained primarily a regional art form, closely tied to the cultural and linguistic identity of the Huangmei area.

Early Republican Period (1912–1949): Transition to Urban Settings

With the fall of the Qing Dynasty and the modernization of Chinese society, Huangmei Opera entered a new phase of development. Performers began traveling more extensively, bringing the art form to major cities such as Wuhan, Nanjing, and even Shanghai. The opera started attracting a more diverse audience, including urban middle-class patrons. Dedicated Huangmei Opera troupes were established, featuring trained performers who traveled to perform in cities and rural areas alike. Influences from Peking Opera and Kunqu Opera introduced more elaborate costumes, makeup, and stage designs, enhancing the theatrical appeal of performances. While retaining its rural charm, Huangmei Opera began addressing contemporary social issues, such as gender roles, family conflicts, and changing cultural values. By the 1940s, Huangmei Opera had become one of the most popular regional opera forms in southern China, setting the stage for its further national and international recognition in the mid-20th century.

Table 1. The Origins of Huangmei Opera

| Period | Key Developments |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Early Qing Dynasty (1644–1735) | Origins in Huangmei County, Anhui Province as rural tea-picking folk songs (茶歌). Informal singing by farmers and tea-pickers to coordinate labor and express emotions. Strong agrarian and rural cultural influence, reflecting themes of harvest, love, and seasonal festivals. |
| Mid-Qing Dynasty (1735–1820) | Transition from folk songs to performance art with storytelling and basic role types. Influences from neighboring Han Opera and Gan Opera |

| | |
|--|---|
| | introduced narrative elements and stagecraft. Performances became a staple of temple fairs and agricultural celebrations. |
|--|---|

Huangmei Opera transitioned from a rural folk art into a more sophisticated theatrical form during the late Qing Dynasty and early Republic of China period. It incorporated elements from other regional operas, refined its performance techniques, and expanded its repertoire. In the mid-20th century, it gained national recognition, with iconic performances such as *The Heavenly Maid* and *the Mortal* helping to popularize the genre. Modern adaptations and the establishment of professional troupes further contributed to its evolution, making Huangmei Opera an important part of China's cultural heritage.

Late Qing Dynasty (1820–1912): Expansion and Early Refinement

During the late Qing Dynasty, Huangmei Opera began evolving from its rural folk roots into a structured and refined theatrical form. This transformation was driven by social, cultural, and economic changes that allowed for greater mobility of performers and audiences. Labor migration played a significant role in spreading Huangmei Opera. Farmers and tea-pickers from Huangmei County traveled to neighboring provinces, taking their local performance traditions with them. These travels facilitated interactions with other regional opera forms, particularly Han Opera (汉剧) in Hubei Province and Gan Opera (赣剧) in Jiangxi Province. Performers borrowed stylistic elements such as vocal techniques, role types, and plot structures from these forms. In this period, amateur performers began organizing into semi-professional troupes. These groups toured villages and small towns, performing for larger audiences during temple fairs, festivals, and weddings. Performances started incorporating more sophisticated narratives and theatrical elements, such as the use of props, backdrops, and more elaborate costumes. The inclusion of Erhu, Sanxian, and Dizi added depth and texture to the musical accompaniment. Performers introduced dramatic devices, such as the division of roles into archetypes like sheng (male roles), dan (female roles), and chou (comic roles). This system borrowed heavily from

Peking Opera and Han Opera. Introduction of moral and didactic themes, such as filial piety and loyalty, alongside traditional stories of love and rural life. Development of stylized singing techniques that distinguished Huangmei Opera from purely folk traditions.

Early Republican Period (1912–1937): Transition to Urban Centers

With the fall of the Qing Dynasty and the establishment of the Republic of China, Huangmei Opera underwent significant changes as it expanded beyond its rural origins and gained popularity in urban areas. Economic modernization and urbanization during this period drew performers to cities like Wuhan, Nanjing, and Shanghai. Urban audiences brought new demands for professionalized performances, including refined staging, enhanced musical arrangements, and larger theatrical productions. Exposure to Peking Opera (京剧) and Kunqu Opera (昆曲) inspired Huangmei Opera troupes to adopt more elaborate costumes, stage designs, and acting techniques. New musical elements, such as intricate arias and expanded instrumental arrangements, were incorporated to appeal to sophisticated urban audiences. While traditional stories like *The Cowherd and the Weaver Girl* (牛郎织女) and *The Butterfly Lovers* (梁祝) remained popular, new scripts were written to address contemporary social issues. Themes such as women's emancipation, family conflicts, and class struggles began to appear in the repertoire, reflecting the changing societal landscape of the Republican era.

1.2.3 The 1940s: National Recognition amidst War and Hardship

The 1940s marked a turning point for Huangmei Opera as it gained recognition as a distinct and important regional art form, despite the challenges posed by the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937–1945). During the war, many rural and urban areas suffered from disruptions, but Huangmei Opera persisted as a form of escapism and morale-building. Performances often emphasized themes of resilience and hope, resonating with war-weary audiences. Regional governments in Anhui and Hubei began to recognize Huangmei Opera as a cultural asset, offering financial support to troupes. Efforts were made to document and preserve the traditional repertoire, ensuring its survival in the face of societal upheaval. The 1940s saw the

first experiments with professional training for performers, focusing on vocal techniques, choreography, and stage presence. Directors began introducing innovations in stagecraft, such as improved lighting and sound systems, to enhance the theatrical experience.

Late Republican Period (1945–1949): The Path to Modernization

The post-war years leading up to the establishment of the People's Republic of China were marked by significant strides in the professionalization and popularization of Huangmei Opera. Huangmei Opera troupes began touring outside southern China, performing in major cities such as Beijing and Shanghai. These tours exposed new audiences to the art form and elevated its status. Some troupes also performed for international audiences, showcasing Huangmei Opera as a representative of Chinese traditional culture. The burgeoning Chinese film industry started adapting Huangmei Opera performances into cinematic productions. These early films helped broaden the opera's appeal, reaching audiences who had never attended a live performance. Scripts began incorporating modern themes while retaining the lyrical and emotional essence of traditional Huangmei Opera. Collaborations between Huangmei Opera performers and artists from other disciplines, such as visual arts and literature, paved the way for the dramatic innovations that would define the art form in the 1950s and beyond.

The development of Huangmei Opera during the late Qing Dynasty and early Republican era represents a dynamic process of adaptation and transformation. From its rural origins as a folk tradition, it evolved into a refined theatrical form with a diverse repertoire, sophisticated musical techniques, and a growing urban audience. Each phase of development contributed to the richness and versatility of Huangmei Opera, laying the groundwork for its golden age in the mid-20th century.

Table 2. The Development of Huangmei Opera

| Period | Key Developments |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Late Qing Dynasty (1820–1912) | |
| | Formalization of 'Huangmei Diao' (黄梅调), recognition as a distinct regional |

| | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| | opera genre. Expansion of performance settings to small urban markets and indoor theaters. Introduction of Erhu, Sanxian, and Dizi for musical accompaniment. Themes included moral tales, local legends, and everyday rural life. |
| Early Republican Period (1912–1937) | |
| | Migration of performers to cities like Wuhan and Shanghai, expanding urban appeal. Integration of Peking Opera and Kunqu Opera elements, such as costumes, makeup, and staging. Modern social themes, including women's roles and family conflicts, became part of the repertoire. Formation of professional troupes to meet the demands of larger, diverse audiences. |
| 1940s | |
| | Recognition as a valuable cultural heritage amid the Second Sino-Japanese War. Performances used to boost morale and foster community resilience. Early documentation and preservation efforts initiated by local governments. |

In recent decades, Huangmei Opera has undergone significant modernization to appeal to contemporary audiences. This includes integrating modern themes, experimenting with new staging techniques, and blending traditional melodies with modern musical styles. The use of multimedia and creative set designs has enhanced its visual appeal, while collaborations with other art forms have broadened its reach.

These efforts, along with performances on international stages, have helped preserve and revitalize Huangmei Opera in the modern era, ensuring its continued cultural significance.

1950s: The Golden Era of Huangmei Opera

The 1950s marked a turning point for Huangmei Opera, as it transitioned from a regional folk art to a nationally celebrated opera form. This transformation was facilitated by the active support of the newly established People's Republic of China (PRC) government, which emphasized the importance of preserving and modernizing traditional art forms as part of its cultural policy. The government provided financial support to Huangmei Opera troupes, enabling the establishment of professional organizations like the Anhui Provincial Huangmei Opera Troupe in 1953. Performance venues shifted from rural open-air stages to well-equipped urban theaters, significantly enhancing the audience experience. Formal academies were founded to train performers, focusing on vocal techniques, body movement, and dramatic interpretation. Training programs combined traditional oral transmission methods with modern pedagogy, ensuring consistent quality and professionalism among new performers. In 1953, *The Heavenly Match* (天仙配), one of the most iconic Huangmei Opera films, was released. This marked the first time Huangmei Opera was presented on the big screen. The success of Huangmei Opera films, which combined traditional music with modern cinematic storytelling, brought the genre to a nationwide audience.

1960s: Challenges and Preservation during the Cultural Revolution

The 1960s, particularly during the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976), presented both challenges and opportunities for Huangmei Opera.

Traditional themes of love and morality were deemed “feudal” and “bourgeois” by the government, leading to the temporary suppression of many classical Huangmei Opera works. Troupes were encouraged to create performances aligned with revolutionary ideals, focusing on themes like class struggle and socialist heroism. Many performers and playwrights faced persecution, resulting in a decline in the creative output of Huangmei Opera during this period. Despite these challenges, some troupes preserved traditional techniques and melodies in private or adapted

them subtly within government-approved works.

1970s–1980s: Revival and Innovation

Following the Cultural Revolution, Huangmei Opera experienced a dramatic revival as China reopened to cultural exploration and innovation. Classic works like *The Heavenly Match* (天仙配), *The Cowherd and the Weaver Girl* (牛郎织女), and *The Emperor's Female Son-in-Law* (女驸马) were restored and restaged. Older performers played a critical role in mentoring a new generation of actors, ensuring the continuity of traditional skills. In response to changing societal values, Huangmei Opera began incorporating contemporary themes such as urbanization, generational conflict, and women's emancipation. New scripts were written to reflect modern lifestyles, while preserving the melodic and lyrical beauty of the genre. During this period, Huangmei Opera gained international acclaim through cultural exchange programs. Troupes performed in countries across Asia, Europe, and North America, introducing global audiences to its unique blend of simplicity and emotional depth.

Films such as *The Love Eterne* (梁山伯与祝英台) showcased Huangmei Opera's potential as a medium for cross-cultural storytelling.

1990s–2000s: Technological Integration and Modern Stagecraft

The rapid advancement of technology in the late 20th and early 21st centuries brought significant innovations to Huangmei Opera, particularly in stagecraft, music, and audience engagement. Performances began incorporating sophisticated lighting, sound effects, and multimedia backdrops to create immersive visual experiences.

Traditional open-air settings were replaced with high-tech theaters equipped to handle large-scale productions. Some productions experimented with blending traditional Huangmei melodies with modern musical styles, such as orchestral arrangements, to appeal to younger audiences. Collaborations with contemporary composers introduced new instrumental textures while retaining the essence of Huangmei Opera. Digital archives of Huangmei Opera scripts, music, and performances were created to preserve the art form for future generations. Social media and streaming platforms enabled troupes to reach global audiences, ensuring the continued relevance of Huangmei Opera in the digital age.

2010s–Present: A Balance Between Tradition and Innovation

In recent decades, Huangmei Opera has strived to maintain its traditional roots while embracing modern adaptations. Traditional works are regularly restaged, often with modernized interpretations that resonate with contemporary audiences. Festivals dedicated to Huangmei Opera, such as the China Huangmei Opera Art Festival, celebrate its historical and cultural significance. New works explore socially relevant topics, such as environmental conservation, technological innovation, and cultural identity. These themes reflect contemporary issues while maintaining the opera's emotional depth. Huangmei Opera troupes collaborate with other artistic forms, such as ballet, contemporary theater, and film, creating hybrid performances that attract diverse audiences. Partnerships with educational institutions ensure the art form's continuity by introducing it to younger generations. Troupes continue to perform internationally, representing Huangmei Opera as a vital part of China's intangible cultural heritage. Efforts to translate scripts and subtitle performances have made Huangmei Opera more accessible to non-Chinese-speaking audiences.

Throughout the 20th and 21st centuries, Huangmei Opera has adapted to changing societal, technological, and cultural contexts while preserving its core simplicity and emotional depth. From its rise as a national treasure in the 1950s to its resurgence after the Cultural Revolution, and its embrace of global outreach and technological innovation, Huangmei Opera has demonstrated a remarkable capacity for renewal and reinvention. This delicate balance between tradition and modernity ensures its continued vitality in a rapidly evolving cultural landscape.

Table 3. Modern Adaptations and Innovations in Huangmei Opera

| Period | Key Developments |
|--------------------|--|
| 1950s (Golden Era) | Establishment of professional troupes, such as the Anhui Provincial Huangmei Opera Troupe (1953). The success of 'Tian Xian Pei' (天仙配) film brought nationwide recognition. Formalized training programs for performers. Emphasis on preserving simplicity while professionalizing stagecraft. |

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| 1960s (Cultural Revolution) | |
| | Traditional themes suppressed; focus on revolutionary and socialist themes. Challenges in preserving traditional repertoire due to political restrictions. |
| 1970s–1980s (Revival Period) | |
| | Restoration of classical works like 'Nv Fu Ma' (女驸马). Inclusion of contemporary themes like urbanization and women's emancipation. International tours introduced Huangmei Opera to global audiences. |
| 1990s–2000s | |
| | Technological innovations in stagecraft, including modern lighting and multimedia backdrops. Fusion with orchestral arrangements and collaborations with contemporary composers. Digital archives and online platforms made performances accessible worldwide. |
| 2010s–Present | |
| | Continued exploration of modern themes such as environmental conservation and cultural identity. Revitalization of traditional works through modern interpretations. Cross-disciplinary collaborations with other art forms. Subtitled performances and international tours expanded global accessibility. |

2.1.3 Role Categories and Vocal Techniques in Huangmei Opera

Huangmei Opera is one of the five major traditional Chinese opera styles, characterized by its melodic fluidity, folk music influence, and expressive storytelling. Unlike Peking Opera, which strictly classifies roles into sheng (male), dan (female), jing (painted face), and chou (clown), Huangmei Opera adopts a more flexible classification. This paper explores the major role categories and their vocal techniques, referencing authoritative studies.

2.1.3.1 Xiaosheng (Young Male Role)

Role Characteristics: Xiaosheng often represents young scholars, noblemen, or warriors, known for their elegance and intellect. Example includes Dong Yong in Tian Xian Pei. The voice should be light, bright, and fluid, emphasizing lyricism and emotional nuance (Zhu, 2012). True voice is predominantly used, with occasional falsetto to express inner emotions (Zhang, 2015). The melodic lines are smooth, requiring stable breath control, as seen in "Birds Singing in Pairs", which demonstrates the natural, free-flowing vocal style.



Figure 1. Dong Yong in Tian Xian Pei

Source: https://web.chinamcloud.com/kqt_html/yw/60941152.shtml

2.1.3.2. Laosheng (Old Male Role)

Role Characteristics: Laosheng typically portrays elderly men, including scholars, officials, and father figures, such as the Land God in Tian Xian Pei. Deep, resonant voice with a steady breath to convey wisdom and authority (Chen, 2017). Emphasis on clear articulation, with a rhythmic delivery that reflects dignity and seniority. Songs are performed in low to mid vocal registers, avoiding excessive vibrato.



Figure 2. The Land God in Tian Xian Pei

Source: <https://www.douyin.com/zhuanti/7458443803612153882>

2.1.3.3 Huadan (Lively Young Female Role)

Role Characteristics: Huadan represents young, lively, and often mischievous female characters, such as Feng Suzhen in *The Female Prince* or the Seventh Fairy in *Tian Xian Pei*. Bright, agile voice, with light and playful articulation (Xia, 2019). Frequent ornamentation, such as grace notes and glides, to create a sense of movement and liveliness. A mix of true and falsetto voice is used, especially in higher registers, to enhance delicate and emotional expression (Hu, 2020). Songs like "Fu Qi Shuang Shuang Bai Jia Huang" incorporate a folk song style, making them approachable and melodic.



Figure 3. Feng Suzhen in Nv Fu Ma

Source: <https://news.jstv.com/a/20190815/1565851842222.shtml>

2.1.3.4 Qingyi (Dignified Female Role)

Role Characteristics: Qingyi, or "the graceful lady", represents virtuous and noblewomen, including mothers, wives, and high-born maidens, such as Chunxiang in *Chun Xiang Nao Xue*. Full-bodied, deep, and smooth vocal quality,

with a preference for rich resonance and stable pitch (Zhao, 2018). Slower tempo, emphasizing controlled breath support and expressive vibrato. The melodies feature sustained notes to reflect the character's depth and emotional intensity.



Figure 4. Chunxiang in Chun Xiang Nao Xue

Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bznzjw0TSnU>

2.1.3.5. Laodan (Elderly Female Role)

Role Characteristics: Laodan portrays elderly female characters, such as mothers, grandmothers, or noblewomen. Low, slightly husky voice, using chest and abdominal resonance to create an aged sound (Wang, 2016). Slow-paced delivery, often with a mournful, reflective quality. The vocal inflection often mimics sighs or exclamations, intensifying the dramatic effect.



Figure 5. Laodan in She Tai Jun Kang Hun

Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8MMadJIY8_g

2.1.3.6 Chou (Clown Role)

Role Characteristics: Chou serves as the comic relief, often playing clever and humorous figures, such as Zhang Er in *Fu Qi Guan Deng*. Exaggerated, comedic tone, with frequent shifts in pitch and rhythm (Liu, 2021). Incorporation of regional accents and slang to enhance comedic elements. Rapid articulation and flexible breath control, enabling a highly expressive performance.



Figure 6. Zhang Er in *Fu Qi Guan Deng*

Source: <https://www.baik.com/wikiid/778906442338193629>

Huangmei Opera's vocal techniques are highly expressive and folk-influenced, differing significantly across role categories. Each character type has a unique vocal approach, reflecting personality, social status, and dramatic needs. These elements contribute to Huangmei Opera's distinctive charm and accessibility, making it a beloved Chinese opera form.

2.2 Folk song in Anhui, China

Folk songs in Anhui, China, are a vital part of the province's rich cultural heritage, deeply rooted in its history, traditions, and agricultural lifestyle. Anhui's folk music has been shaped by its natural landscape, particularly the rural, mountainous areas, and is characterized by its simplicity, emotional depth, and close connection to the daily lives of local people. These songs reflect various aspects of the region's culture, from work and love to nature and festivals, providing a window into the spiritual and emotional life of its people (Yang Yi, 2014).

Tea-Picking Songs (Chai Cha Diao): One of the most well-known types of folk songs in Anhui is the tea-picking song, which has its roots in the province's extensive tea-growing regions. These songs were traditionally sung by women while working in the tea fields. The rhythmic nature of these songs helped workers coordinate their movements while picking tea leaves, turning the often monotonous work into something more enjoyable. Tea-picking songs are often light and cheerful, focusing on themes of love, nature, and rural life. Apart from tea-picking, Anhui's farmers and laborers have also developed work songs for other agricultural activities, such as rice planting and harvesting. These songs served both practical and social purposes, helping to synchronize the efforts of workers and providing a sense of community and shared purpose. They are often call-and-response songs, where a lead singer would sing a line, and the rest of the group would respond in chorus. The lyrics typically reflect the challenges and rewards of rural life, celebrating the labor and the land (Wang Ling, 2016).

Anhui is known for its picturesque mountains, including the famous Huangshan (Yellow Mountain), and these natural surroundings have inspired a genre of folk music called "mountain songs" (Shan Ge). These songs often express admiration for nature's beauty and deal with themes such as solitude, yearning, and longing for a loved one. The melodies are typically long and drawn out, echoing the vastness of the mountains, with singers using their voices to convey both the grandeur of nature and the emotions tied to it. Like many regions in China, Anhui has a rich tradition of love songs, often woven into everyday life. These songs frequently focus on young couples expressing their emotions, whether in happiness or sorrow. Courtship, separation, longing, and the pain of unrequited love are common themes. Love songs in Anhui tend to be heartfelt and sincere, with simple lyrics and expressive melodies that capture the emotional depth of personal relationships (Hu Zhen, 2018).

Anhui's folk songs are also closely tied to festivals and celebrations, such as the Chinese New Year and harvest festivals. During these times, people gather to sing songs that celebrate good fortune, family unity, and the bounty of the harvest. Festival songs are often lively and joyful, incorporating traditional instruments like drums and gongs, and are performed in public gatherings, enhancing the communal spirit of

these events. Anhui's folk songs are known for their straightforward and unpretentious style. The melodies are often simple but highly expressive, reflecting the province's rural culture. They are typically performed in a free rhythm, allowing the singer to convey emotion and meaning through subtle variations in tempo and pitch. The lyrics are usually in the local dialect, further emphasizing the deep connection between the songs and the people of Anhui. The vocal style in Anhui folk songs is clear and direct, often featuring natural, untrained voices. Singers use their vocal range to great effect, with many songs featuring high-pitched, extended notes that evoke the feeling of open spaces and expansive landscapes. This is particularly true for mountain songs, where the echoing quality of the voice adds to the sense of awe and reverence for nature.

Folk songs in Anhui have had a significant impact on the development of Huangmei Opera, one of China's most beloved traditional operatic forms. Huangmei Opera evolved from the folk music traditions of Anhui, particularly the tea-picking songs. The melodic simplicity and lyrical nature of these folk songs were incorporated into the operatic form, giving Huangmei Opera its distinctive, accessible style. The folk origins of Huangmei Opera helped it retain a close connection to the everyday lives of ordinary people. This connection has been one of the key reasons for the opera's enduring popularity, both in rural and urban areas. The emotional depth and relatability of the folk songs that inspired Huangmei Opera continue to resonate with audiences today (Zhang Xue, 2017).

In recent years, there has been a renewed interest in preserving Anhui's folk song traditions, which are seen as a vital part of the province's cultural heritage. Local governments and cultural organizations have made efforts to document and promote these songs through festivals, performances, and educational programs. Folk song competitions and exhibitions are held in various parts of Anhui, providing a platform for both older generations to pass down their knowledge and younger people to engage with their cultural roots. Additionally, some of these folk songs have been recorded and studied by ethnomusicologists, helping to preserve them for future generations. With the rise of digital media, recordings of Anhui's folk music are now more accessible to a global audience, contributing to the appreciation and recognition of this rich tradition beyond China. Folk songs in Anhui, China, represent a rich and

diverse tradition that reflects the province's history, culture, and natural beauty. Whether in the form of work songs, mountain ballads, or love songs, these folk melodies have played an essential role in the daily lives of the people of Anhui. They have not only provided entertainment and emotional expression but also helped foster a sense of community and shared identity. Today, these songs continue to be an integral part of Anhui's cultural heritage, with efforts being made to preserve and promote them in the modern world (Gao Tian, 2021).

2.3 Ms. Long Baoling

2.3.1 Early Life and Education

Long Baoling was born in the 1977 in Anhui Province, China, into a family with deep ties to the arts, particularly Huangmei opera. Growing up surrounded by traditional music and performing arts, she developed a natural affinity for the art form. From an early age, she exhibited exceptional talent, particularly in singing and performing traditional Chinese opera. Recognizing her potential, her family encouraged her pursuit of a career in Huangmei opera, a genre rich in melodic traditions and storytelling.

Her formal training began at a young age when she entered a local opera school, where she studied under the guidance of experienced masters. The rigorous training she underwent included mastering both vocal techniques and the intricate gestures that define Huangmei opera performance. Her teachers recognized her outstanding abilities early on, and she quickly became one of the brightest students in her cohort.

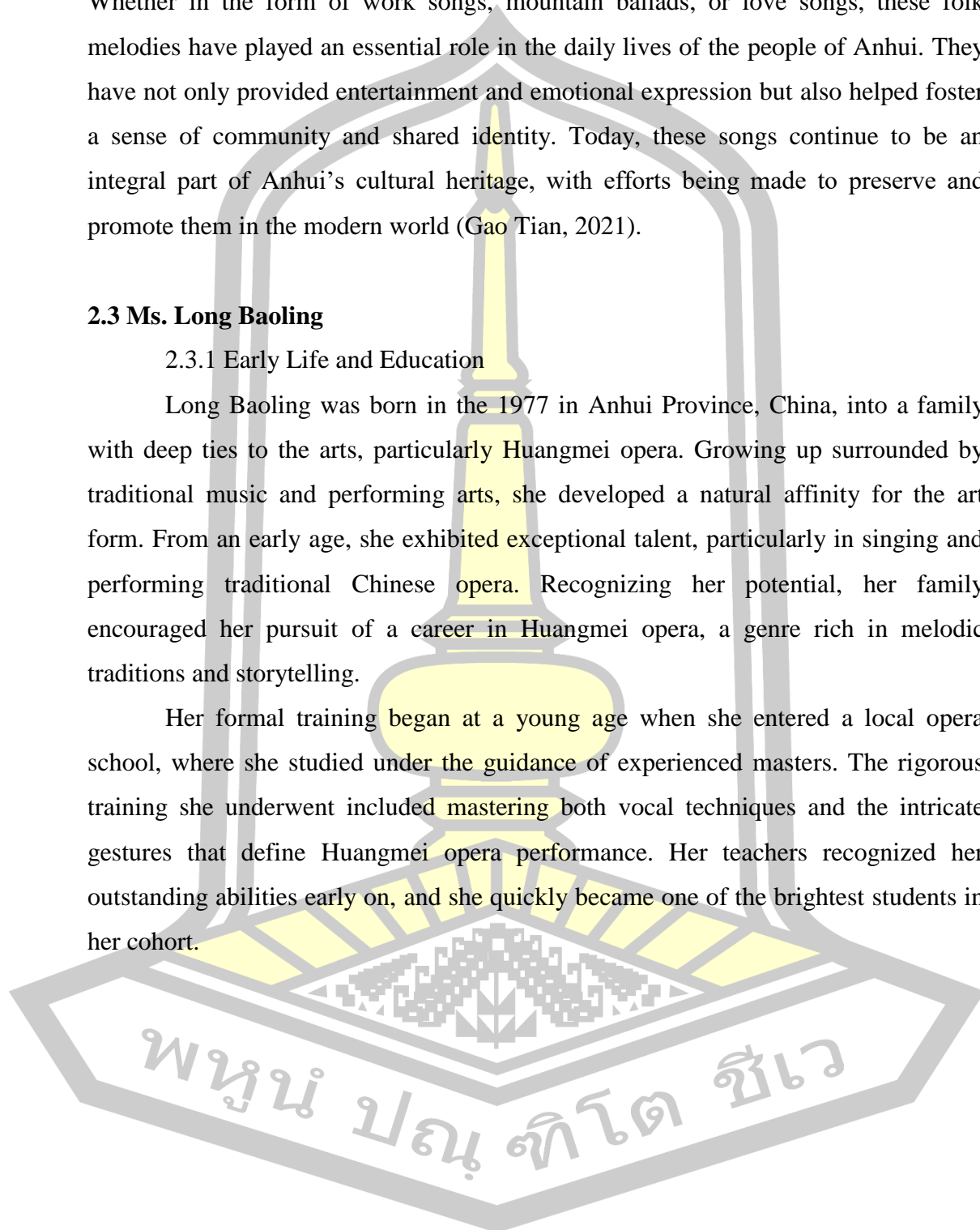




Figure 7. Ms. Long Baoling

Source: Long Baoling

2.3.2 Career Beginnings in Huangmei Opera

Long Baoling's professional career in Huangmei opera began in the late 1990s. After completing her studies, she joined the Anhui Huangmei Opera Troupe, where she made her debut in several notable productions. Her early roles showcased her ability to balance dramatic expression with the delicate nuances of Huangmei opera's music and lyrics. It was during these years that she became known for her exceptional vocal range, emotional depth, and ability to connect with the audience.

Her breakout performance came when she played the leading role in the opera *The Butterfly Lovers* (梁祝), one of the most famous and tragic love stories in Chinese literature. This performance not only elevated her profile within the Huangmei opera community but also earned her recognition beyond Anhui Province. Her ability to convey the profound emotions of the characters through her singing became a hallmark of her style.



Figure 8. Ms. Long Baoling

Source: Long Baoling

2.3.3 Early Exposure to Huangmei Opera

Background Introduction: From an early age, Ms. Long Baoling was immersed in the culture of Huangmei opera, having been born in the region where this art form is deeply rooted. Her family, particularly her elders, had a strong interest in Huangmei opera, which significantly influenced her upbringing. Her early exposure to this art form came not only from her family but also from the general cultural atmosphere in her community.

Initial Learning: Growing up in an environment where Huangmei opera was widely appreciated, Ms. Long was often found singing simple tunes from the opera at home. Though these early experiences were informal, they laid the foundation for her future artistic journey and her eventual pursuit of Huangmei opera as a professional career.

2.3.4 Joining the Huangmei Opera Troupe

Joining the Troupe: As a young woman, Ms. Long joined a Huangmei opera troupe, marking a pivotal moment in her career. This decision solidified her path in the performing arts and allowed her to further develop her skills within a professional setting.

First Performances: In the troupe, Ms. Long began performing in various productions, gradually gaining recognition for her vocal talent and acting abilities.

She was quickly established as a core member of the troupe, showcasing both her technical skills and her deep emotional understanding of the art form.

Repertoire and Notable Works: Throughout her time with the troupe, Ms. Long starred in many iconic Huangmei opera works, such as "Tian Xian Pei" and "Nv Fu Ma." Her performances were highly praised for their depth and artistry, and she became widely recognized for her ability to bring the characters to life on stage with grace and power.



Figure 9. Ms. Long Baoling

Source: Long Baoling

2.3.5 Significant Performances and Artistic Achievements

Key Performances: Over the course of her career, Ms. Long participated in major performances that contributed significantly to the prestige of Huangmei opera. She performed in both domestic and international venues, earning acclaim for her portrayal of classic roles and introducing Huangmei opera to global audiences. Her voice, expressive performances, and technical skills brought an entirely new level of attention to the art form.

Artistic Achievements: In addition to her domestic success, Ms. Long achieved notable recognition internationally. Her performances helped bring

Huangmei opera to a wider audience, and she became one of the most celebrated figures in the genre. She received numerous awards and honors for her artistic contributions, cementing her legacy as one of the leading figures in Huangmei opera.

2.3.6 Teaching and Passing on the Tradition

Teaching Career: Beyond her career as a performer, Ms. Long became an influential educator. She dedicated a significant portion of her life to training young artists and ensuring the future of Huangmei opera. Her teaching methods emphasized not only technical mastery but also an appreciation for the cultural and historical aspects of the art form.

Challenges in Education: In the face of modern-day challenges, including the declining interest among younger generations in traditional forms of performance, Ms. Long worked tirelessly to adapt Huangmei opera to contemporary sensibilities. She integrated innovative methods in her teaching, encouraging students to develop both their vocal techniques and acting skills while instilling a deep cultural understanding of Huangmei opera.

Nurturing New Talent: Ms. Long's role as a teacher extended beyond merely imparting knowledge; she sought to shape her students into artists with a strong sense of identity and pride in their heritage. By fostering creativity and encouraging students to develop their own artistic voices, she has played a crucial role in ensuring the continued evolution of Huangmei opera.

2.3.7 Promoting Huangmei Opera: Legacy and Contributions

Cultural Advocacy: Ms. Long Baoling has been an advocate for Huangmei opera throughout her career, actively promoting the art form across a variety of platforms. Her advocacy has contributed to a broader appreciation of Huangmei opera not only within China but also internationally.

Artistic Innovation: While deeply respectful of the tradition, Ms. Long was also open to innovation. She has worked to modernize the presentation of Huangmei opera, incorporating new interpretations and creative elements while maintaining its core traditions. This balance between preservation and innovation has allowed her to reach new audiences while ensuring that the essence of Huangmei opera remains intact.

Public Engagement and Outreach: In addition to her teaching and performances, Ms. Long has engaged in public outreach, working with media outlets and through live performances to expand the reach of Huangmei opera. She has been instrumental in using television, the internet, and social media to engage younger generations and keep the art form relevant in the modern world. Her commitment to the spread of Huangmei opera ensures that future generations will continue to experience its rich cultural legacy.

Ms. Long Baoling's career is a profound example of dedication to the preservation, performance, and innovation of Huangmei opera. From an early age, she was immersed in the cultural and artistic traditions of Huangmei opera, a foundation that would guide her throughout her life. Her journey as a performer began with her joining a Huangmei opera troupe, where she quickly established herself as one of the leading figures of her generation. Through numerous iconic performances, she became renowned for her vocal prowess, emotional depth, and ability to embody the complex characters in Huangmei opera.

However, Ms. Long's influence extended beyond the stage. As an educator, she dedicated much of her life to passing on the traditions of Huangmei opera to younger generations. She developed teaching methods that emphasized not only technical skills but also the cultural essence of the art form, ensuring that students understood both the performance techniques and the rich history that underpinned their craft. Her commitment to nurturing new talent and adapting to contemporary trends helped sustain Huangmei opera in a rapidly changing world.

In addition to her contributions as a performer and educator, Ms. Long played a crucial role as an advocate for Huangmei opera. She worked tirelessly to promote this traditional Chinese art form, both within China and internationally. Her efforts in outreach and media engagement have ensured that Huangmei opera continues to thrive in the modern era, reaching new audiences and preserving its cultural significance for future generations.

Overall, Ms. Long Baoling's legacy is one of innovation, dedication, and cultural preservation. Through her performances, teaching, and advocacy, she has made significant contributions to the future of Huangmei opera, ensuring its relevance in a modern world while staying true to its historical roots. Her work has helped

bridge the past and present of this cherished art form, and she remains a pivotal figure in its ongoing development and appreciation.

2.3.8 Rising Fame and Key Performances

Long Baoling's career continued to ascend as she became one of the most prominent and beloved figures in the Huangmei opera world. Her performances were characterized by their authenticity and emotional depth, qualities that won her both critical acclaim and a loyal following. In particular, her portrayal of iconic characters such as Bai She Zhuan (白蛇传) and Yue Liang Xian Zi (月亮仙子) cemented her as one of the foremost exponents of the genre.

Her interpretations of these characters demonstrated not only her technical vocal skills but also her ability to embody the complex emotions of the roles. She blended traditional stylings with innovative touches, making her performances both timeless and contemporary. Long Baoling's ability to captivate audiences with her charisma and profound emotional expression set her apart as a leading figure in Chinese opera.

In addition to her stage performances, Long Baoling was involved in numerous cultural events, including national and international performances. Her tours took her to countries such as Japan and the United States, where she introduced Huangmei opera to audiences unfamiliar with the genre. Her performances abroad were widely praised for their artistry and for showcasing the richness of Chinese traditional performing arts.

2.3.9 The Awards of Ms. Long Baoling

Early Recognition in Huangmei Opera : Long Baoling began her career in Huangmei Opera at a young age, and her remarkable talent was soon noticed. Early in her career, she received local recognition for her distinctive voice and exceptional acting skills. She was celebrated not only for her vocal prowess but also for her ability to portray complex characters with depth and emotional resonance. These early accolades laid the foundation for the prestigious awards she would later receive.

Major National Awards: As Long Baoling's career flourished, she began to gain attention on a national scale. Her performances in major theaters across China earned her numerous awards in recognition of her contribution to the preservation and

promotion of Huangmei Opera. Some of the notable national awards she received include:

The National Best Actress Award – For her outstanding performance in several key Huangmei Opera productions, Long Baoling was awarded the prestigious title of Best Actress in the field. This award is one of the highest recognitions an actress in Chinese opera can receive.

The National Huangmei Opera Arts Award – This award is given to individuals who have made significant contributions to the development and dissemination of Huangmei Opera. Long Baoling was honored with this award due to her role in revitalizing the art form and mentoring younger generations of performers.

The Golden Bell Award for Best Actress – Known as the "Oscar of Chinese Opera," the Golden Bell Award is one of the most prestigious honors in the Chinese performance arts industry. Long Baoling received this prestigious award for her incredible artistry and commitment to the Huangmei Opera tradition.

Regional and Local Awards: In addition to her national recognition, Long Baoling has been lauded at the provincial and local levels. Her work in both classic and contemporary Huangmei Opera productions has made a significant impact in her home province and beyond. Some of these regional awards include:

The Outstanding Artist of Anhui Province Award – As a prominent figure in the cultural scene of Anhui, her home province, Long Baoling was recognized for her outstanding contribution to the arts in the region.

The Huangmei Opera Heritage Award – This award was given in recognition of her efforts to preserve and promote the traditional aspects of Huangmei Opera, especially its unique musical style and cultural significance.

Special Honors and Distinctions: Throughout her career, Long Baoling has received several special honors from cultural institutions and governmental bodies. These include:

The Lifetime Achievement Award for Chinese Theatre Arts – Recognizing her long-standing commitment to the development of Chinese theatre and opera, this prestigious award acknowledges her enduring influence on the art form over decades of practice.

Honorary Titles from Cultural Academies – Long Baoling was awarded honorary titles from various prestigious cultural institutions, such as the Chinese National Academy of Drama and the Academy of Traditional Chinese Opera. These recognitions emphasize her esteemed position in the broader Chinese arts community.

International Recognition: Long Baoling’s influence has not been confined to China alone. She has performed internationally, and her contributions to the arts have garnered recognition abroad. Some key international awards include:

The Global Chinese Arts Award – Presented by an international body of Chinese cultural organizations, this award honors those who have promoted Chinese culture on the world stage. Long Baoling’s work in international performances helped spread the beauty of Huangmei Opera beyond Chinese-speaking communities.

The World Theatre Excellence Award – This award recognized Long Baoling for her excellence in Chinese opera on a global platform. It celebrated her ability to connect with audiences around the world, demonstrating the universal appeal of Huangmei Opera’s themes and performances.

Table 4. The awards of Long Baoling 1982-2018

| Decade | Year | Award | Description |
|--|------|---|---|
| 1980s: Early Recognition and Rising Talent | 1982 | National Excellent Performance Award | Recognized for breakthrough performances in Huangmei opera, marking the start of her prominence in Chinese opera. |
| 1990s: National and Regional Awards | 1994 | Outstanding Artist Prize at the National Chinese Drama Awards | Honored for exceptional contributions to preserving and promoting traditional opera across China. |
| | 1997 | Best Actress Award at the National Huangmei Opera Festival | Recognized for powerful portrayals in classic Huangmei operas, showcasing skill and dedication. |

| Decade | Year | Award | Description |
|------------------------------------|------|---|---|
| 2000s: High-Profile Recognition | 2001 | Chinese Cultural Medal | Awarded by the Ministry of Culture for profound impact on the development and modernization of Chinese opera. |
| | 2004 | Lifetime Achievement Award in Performing Arts | Given at the China National Arts Festival, celebrating her extensive career and enduring influence. |
| 2010s: Prestigious National Honors | 2010 | National First-Class Performer Title | Awarded in recognition of exemplary skills and contributions to Chinese opera. |
| | 2015 | Golden Plum Award for Best Actress at the National Chinese Theatre Festival | Honored for a leading role in a renowned Huangmei opera production. |
| International Recognition | 2012 | International Arts Award from the European Cultural Association | Recognized for global influence in opera following performances in Europe. |
| | 2018 | Best International Artist Award by the Asia Pacific Arts Council | Celebrated for significant contributions to arts and cultural exchange on an international scale. |

2.4 Singing techniques

2.4.1 Breathing (呼吸)

Breath control plays a crucial role in traditional Chinese vocal arts and is regarded as the "driving force" of singing. As one of the representative Chinese opera

genres, Huangmei Opera places great emphasis on the proper use of breath support and phrasing. Mastery of scientific breathing techniques ensures vocal fluency, rhythmic precision, and artistic expressiveness.

2.4.1.1 Deep Breathing and Breath Support

Huangmei Opera requires deep and full breathing, emphasizing the technique of "qi sinking into the dantian" (气沉丹田), which involves diaphragmatic control to store breath efficiently.

Instead of relying solely on chest expansion, singers engage the diaphragm to draw breath downward, causing slight expansion of the lower abdomen. This technique allows for greater breath capacity and control.

A well-known phrase among traditional vocal practitioners states: "Inhale in a large area, exhale in a single line" (吸气一大片, 用气一条线). This describes the Huangmei Opera breathing principle, where inhalation is broad and deep, while exhalation is steady and continuous.

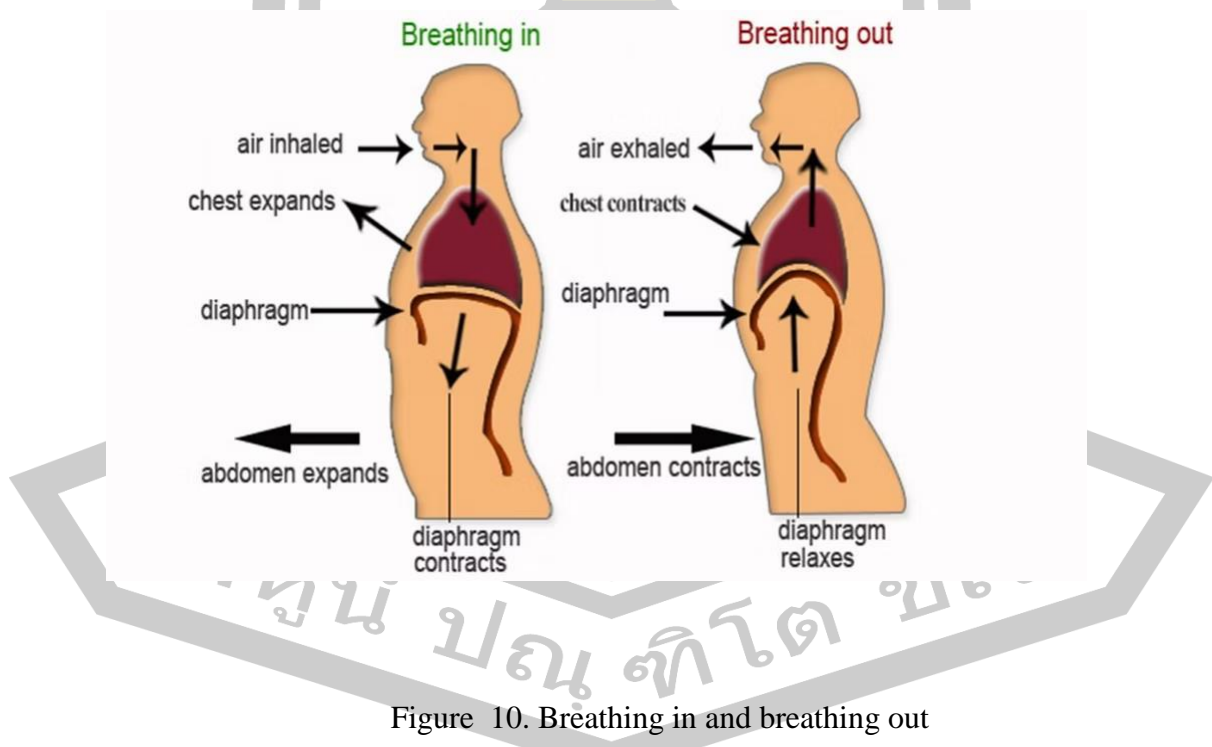


Figure 10. Breathing in and breathing out

Source: <https://www.rockitvocalstudios.com/single-post/the-incredible-benefits-of-proper-breathing-technique>

2.4.1.2 Stability and Control of Breath

Maintaining steady breath flow is essential for Huangmei Opera singing, ensuring the voice remains smooth and uninterrupted. Proper coordination between the diaphragm and abdominal muscles enables singers to regulate airflow, preventing irregularities such as sudden breaks or unstable pitch. In long phrases, the technique of "sustained breath" (托气) helps maintain vocal stability while shaping melodic progression and emotional depth.

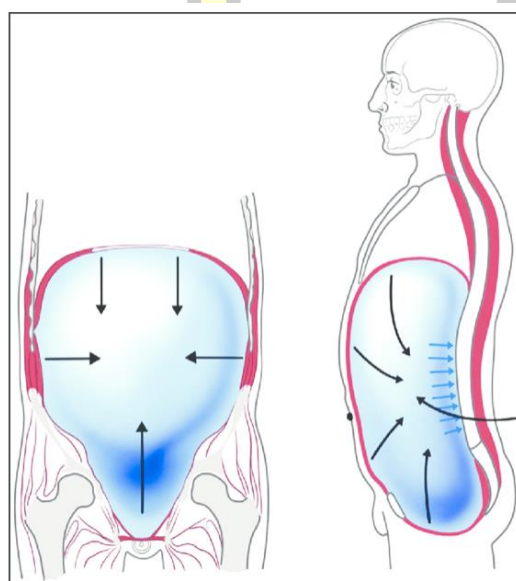


Figure 11. Stability and Control of Breath

Source: <https://helixwa.com/diaphragmatic-breathing-for-core-and-lumbar-stability/>

2.4.1.3 Strategic Breath Phrasing

The placement of breath pauses, or qi kou (气口), is a crucial element of Huangmei Opera singing, as it directly affects the fluidity and expressiveness of vocal delivery. The initial breath intake before singing is particularly important, requiring sufficient time for preparation to ensure a seamless vocal entry. In extended melodic lines, breath intake should occur at natural pauses in the lyrics to maintain clear articulation and musical integrity.

2.4.1.4 Practical Application of Breathing Techniques in Huangmei Opera

Breath Control in Different Singing Styles: Lyrical Passages (e.g., Female Prime Minister, The Fairy Couple): These require stable and smooth breath support,

allowing the voice to remain mellow and expressive. Dramatic Passages (e.g., Female Prime Minister – The Wedding Chamber): Such segments demand explosive breath energy and quick breath adjustments to convey intense emotions effectively. Ornamental Passages (e.g., Cutting Grass): These involve rapid and agile phrasing, requiring flexible breath control to maintain a light yet resilient vocal tone.

2.4.1.5 Breathing Training Techniques

Dantian Breath Training: Exercises focusing on deep inhalation and slow, controlled exhalation enhance breath support, promoting even and stable airflow.

Breath Coordination with Physical Movement: Many Huangmei Opera performers integrate breath training with stage movement, using controlled body motion to facilitate natural breathing. To depict sorrowful emotions, singers use fragmented breath release, creating a sense of discontinuity. For joyous or lighthearted expressions, light and buoyant breath control ensures a flexible and dynamic vocal delivery.

Breath Control: Producing natural voice requires good breath control. In Huangmei opera singing, the breath should not be too strong or too weak but should be steady and sufficient, helping the voice to be transmitted clearly and naturally.

Diaphragm Usage: Performers need to control the flow of breath using their diaphragm, maintaining a steady airflow and avoiding abrupt or intermittent breaths.

Deep Breathing: Deep and prolonged breathing is essential during singing, using abdominal (low) breathing to ensure a continuous supply of air to support stable vocalization.

2.4.1.6 Breath Techniques in the Performances of Huangmei Opera Masters

Yan Fengying, a renowned Huangmei Opera artist, was known for her meticulous breath training, which allowed her to produce clear and resonant tones even in large theaters without amplification. In *Little Pawnshop*, she employed steady breath support to deliver smooth and nuanced vocal lines. Conversely, in *Female Prime Minister – The Wedding Chamber*, she demonstrated exceptional breath control to transition seamlessly between soft lyrical phrases and dramatic climaxes.

Originally trained in Peking Opera, Wang Shaofang incorporated Peking Opera's "continuous breath flow" technique, enhancing the clarity and projection of his voice. He particularly emphasized "breath continuity," ensuring that even in lengthy phrases, his breath support remained uninterrupted while maintaining precise articulation.

Huangmei Opera singing demands a high level of breath control, encompassing breath storage, stability, regulation, and phrasing strategies. Through systematic training, singers refine their ability to sustain deep, steady, and expressive breath support. The traditional wisdom passed down by Huangmei Opera masters—such as "sinking breath into the dantian" and "inhaling in a large area, exhaling in a single line"—remains highly valuable for contemporary performers. As Huangmei Opera continues to evolve, scientific and strategic breath control will be essential for further enhancing vocal artistry and performance quality.

2.4.2 True Voice (真声)

True voice refers to a purer, more natural sound, unaltered by excessive technical embellishments. This term emphasizes the sincerity and purity of the voice, often used to showcase the singer's most authentic and natural expression.

2.4.3 Chest Voice (胸声)

Chest voice establishes a strong and grounded tone, representing the resilience of the lower class. It provides a solid and full sound, creating a connection with the character's deep emotions and hardships. This technique is often employed in Long Baoling's performances to convey the raw and unembellished strength of the character. (Liu, 2018)

2.4.4 Crying Tone (哭腔)

The crying tone amplifies the character's suffering, allowing the audience to feel the depth of pain and despair. By using subtle vocal tightness and slight wavering in pitch, this technique mimics sobs, making the emotional expression more authentic and moving. (Zhang, 2020)

2.4.5 Vibrato (颤音)

Vibrato adds emotional depth, highlighting key moments of reflection and sorrow. It enhances the emotional intensity of the performance, creating a sense of

tension or release, depending on the character's emotional state. This technique is essential for emphasizing moments of heartache, nostalgia, or regret. (Liu, 2018)

2.4.6 Ornamentation (装饰音)

Ornamental embellishments are subtle melodic variations and expressive slides that add elegance to the performance. These embellishments, often used throughout the work, maintain the traditional style while adding layers of beauty and emotional depth to the music. By incorporating these nuanced variations, the singer can create a more dynamic and expressive rendition, enhancing the overall aesthetic of the piece. These techniques preserve the delicate balance of Huangmei Opera's classical style while amplifying its emotional resonance.

2.5 The theory used in research

2.5.1 Musicology Theory

This approach focuses on the study of music as an academic discipline, analyzing the structure, elements, and styles of Huangmei Opera. It investigates the musical aspects, including melody, rhythm, harmony, and instrumentation, to understand how they contribute to the opera's identity. Through musicological analysis, one can appreciate the technical aspects of performance that characterize Huangmei Opera and differentiate it from other operatic forms (Hu Zhigang, 2018).

2.5.2 Ethnomusicology

Ethnomusicology combines the study of music with anthropology, focusing on the cultural and social aspects of music-making. In the context of Huangmei Opera, this theory examines how the opera functions within the community, including its role in rituals, celebrations, and social gatherings, as well as its relationship to local folk music traditions. This perspective emphasizes the significance of community involvement and the shared experience of music as a cultural practice. Songs of the tea fields: The cultural significance of tea-picking songs in Anhui. Anhui Educational Publishing House (Wang Lin, 2016).

2.5.3 Historical Musicology

This theory looks at the historical development of Huangmei Opera, tracing its origins, evolution, and influences over time. It situates the opera within the broader

historical context of Chinese music and performing arts, identifying key events, figures, and trends that have shaped its growth. Historical musicology provides insights into how Huangmei Opera has adapted and transformed throughout its history, reflecting broader cultural shifts within Chinese society (Zhou Yi, 2015).

2.5.4 Chinese Traditional Music Theory

This approach specifically addresses the unique characteristics of Chinese music, including scales, modes, and performance practices. It examines how Huangmei Opera incorporates elements of traditional Chinese music, such as the use of specific instruments, singing techniques, and melodic structures, which contribute to its distinctive sound. Understanding these traditional elements is crucial for appreciating the cultural significance of Huangmei Opera and its roots in the rich tapestry of Chinese musical heritage (Chen Ming, 2020).

2.6 The related research

Cultural Studies Theory examines how cultural practices, including performance arts like Huangmei Opera, are shaped by and reflect social power dynamics, identity politics, and cultural narratives. This theory can provide insights into how Huangmei Opera interacts with local and national identities and issues of representation within the broader Chinese cultural context (Hall, S, 1997).

Aesthetic Theory focuses on the principles of beauty and artistic expression within a cultural context. This theory can be applied to analyze the artistic choices made in Huangmei Opera, including the visual aspects of performance, set design, costumes, and how these contribute to the overall aesthetic experience (Danto, A, 1981).

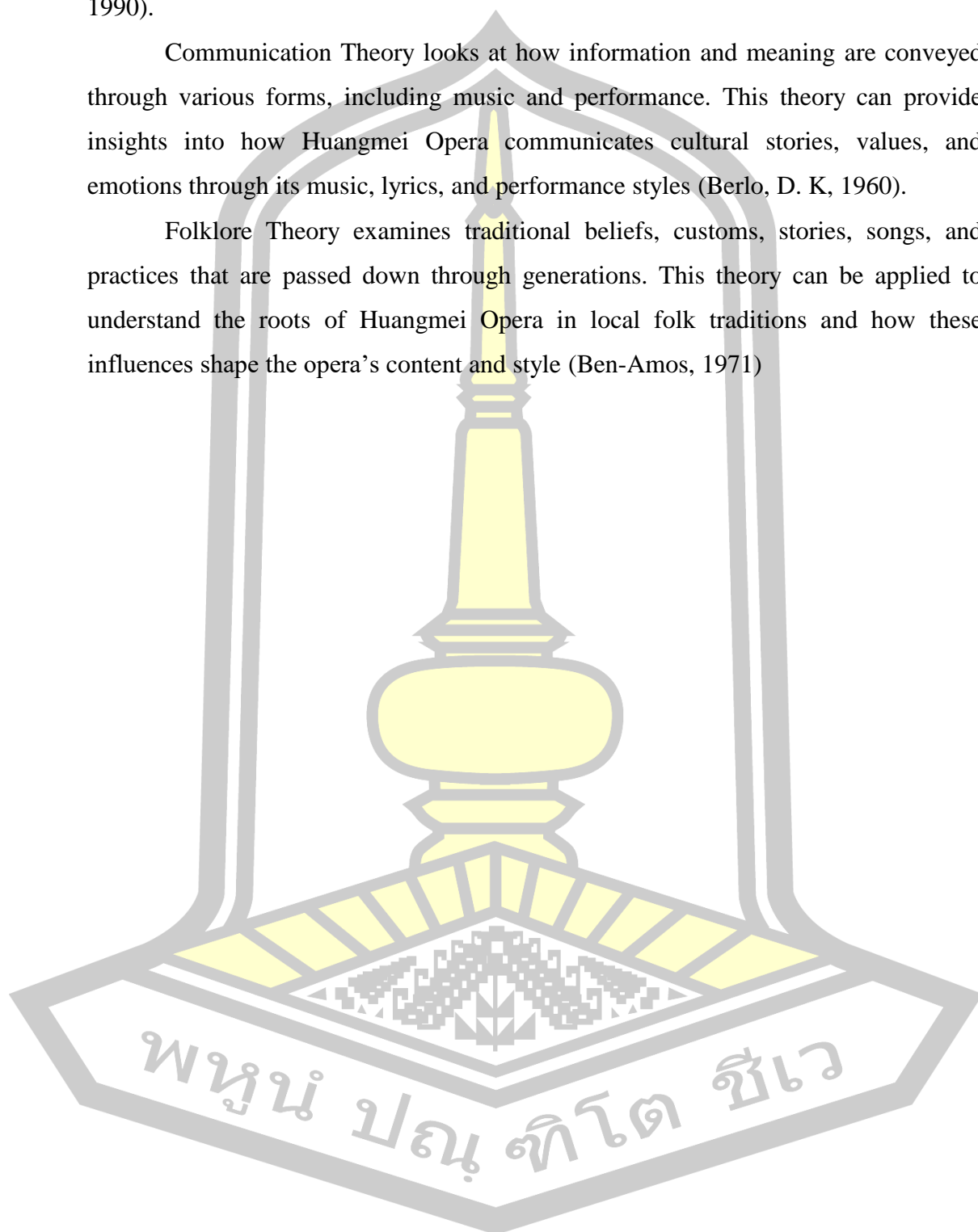
Performance Studies Theory explores the act of performance itself, examining the interactions between performers and audiences, the context of the performance, and how meaning is constructed in the moment of performance. This theory can help analyze the dynamics of Huangmei Opera performances, including audience engagement and the role of tradition in contemporary practice (Schechner, R, 2002).

Gender Studies Theory investigates how gender roles and identities are represented and constructed in cultural forms. This theory can be applied to analyze the representation of gender in Huangmei Opera, including the roles of male and

female characters, and how these roles reflect or challenge societal norms (Butler, J, 1990).

Communication Theory looks at how information and meaning are conveyed through various forms, including music and performance. This theory can provide insights into how Huangmei Opera communicates cultural stories, values, and emotions through its music, lyrics, and performance styles (Berlo, D. K, 1960).

Folklore Theory examines traditional beliefs, customs, stories, songs, and practices that are passed down through generations. This theory can be applied to understand the roots of Huangmei Opera in local folk traditions and how these influences shape the opera's content and style (Ben-Amos, 1971)



CHAPTER III

Research Methodology

- 3.1 Research Scope
 - 3.1.1 Scope of content
 - 3.1.2 Scope of research site
 - 3.1.3 Scope of time
- 3.2 Research process
 - 3.2.1 Selection Research site and key informant
 - 3.2.2 Research Tools
 - 3.2.3 Data Collecting
 - 3.2.4 Data Management
 - 3.2.5 Data Analysis
 - 3.2.6 Presentation

3.1 Research Scope

3.1.1 Scope of Content

3.1.1.1 To study the history and development of Huangmei Opera, a folk art in Anhui, China.

3.1.1.2 To Analyze the singing techniques of Ms Long Baoling.

3.1.2 Scope of Research Site

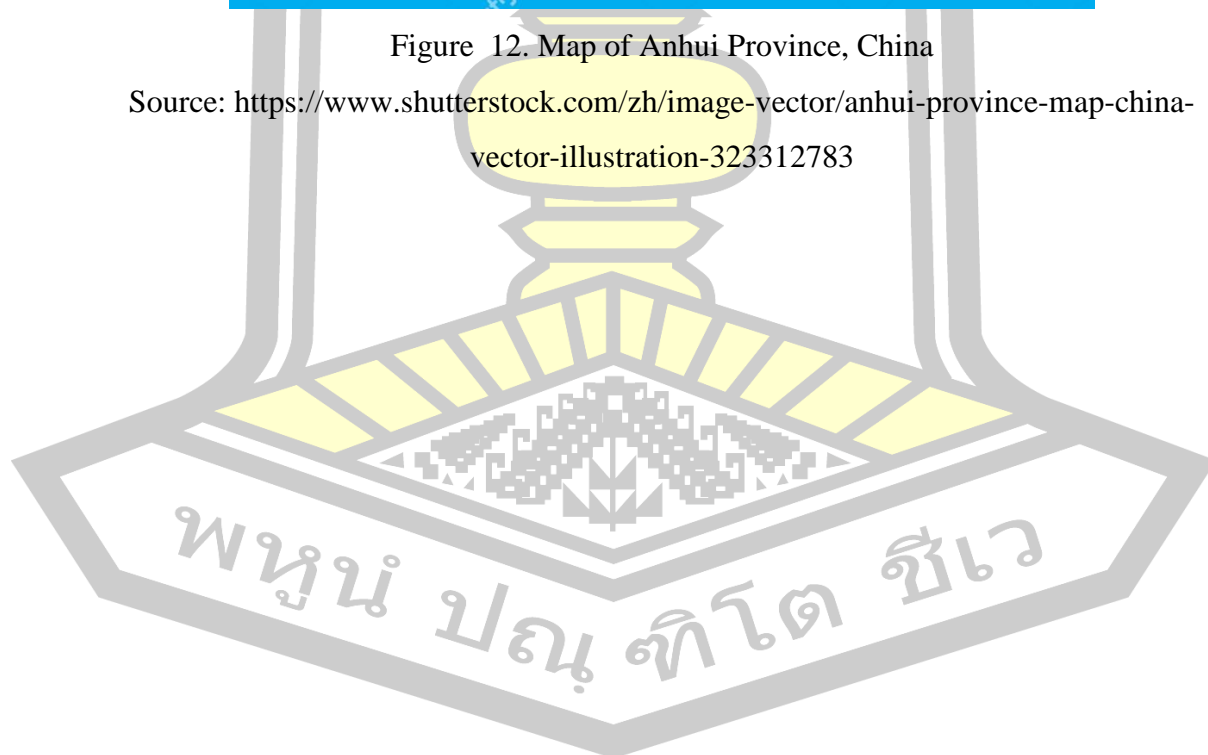
The researcher chose Anqing City, Anhui Province, for the study on Huangmei Opera because Anqing is considered the birthplace and cultural center of Huangmei Opera. The city's deep historical connection with this folk art form makes it an ideal location for research. Anqing has been a cultural hub for Huangmei Opera since its origins in the late Qing Dynasty. The opera developed and thrived in this region, making it a primary source of information on its evolution and artistic traditions. Anqing City has preserved many traditional practices of Huangmei Opera, providing researchers with authentic materials, performances, and local artists who can offer insights into the art's historical and cultural context. Artists like Long Baoling, who may have a significant connection to Anqing, are integral to the study of

the opera. The research on Long Baoling in Anqing allows the researcher to explore his contributions within the cultural environment that shaped his career.



Figure 12. Map of Anhui Province, China

Source: <https://www.shutterstock.com/zh/image-vector/anhui-province-map-china-vector-illustration-323312783>



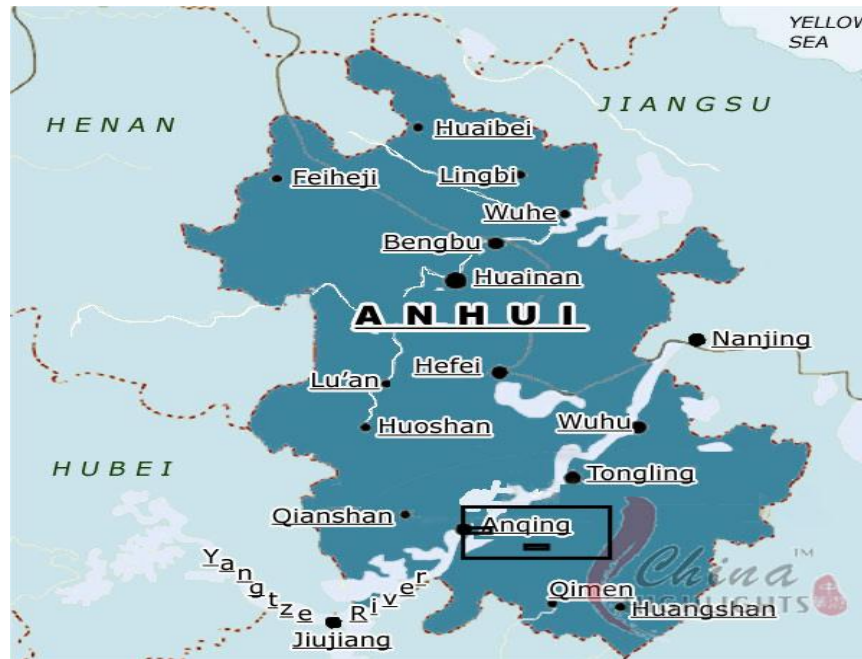


Figure 13. Map of Anqing City, Anhui Province

Source: <http://cfguide.cn/prov/anhui.htm>

3.1.3 Scope of time

The researcher studied from June , 2024 to March 31, 2025

3.2 Research process

3.2.1 Selection site and key informant

Research Location: Anqing City, Anhui Province, China

Anqing, a city located in Anhui Province, is widely recognized as the cultural hub and heartland of Huangmei Opera. Although Huangmei Opera originated in the rural areas of both Anhui and Hubei provinces, it was in Anqing that this regional opera style evolved, flourished, and gained widespread recognition. Anqing played a pivotal role in the development and popularization of Huangmei Opera. In the 18th and 19th centuries, as the opera gradually transitioned from rural folk performances to more formalized theatrical productions, Anqing became the center where these changes took root. Anqing has retained its cultural importance as the "home" of Huangmei Opera. Today, the city serves as the primary location for both the preservation and modernization of this art form. In recent years, efforts have been

made in Anqing to preserve the traditional aspects of Huangmei Opera while also adapting it to modern tastes. For the people of Anqing, Huangmei Opera is more than just an art form—it is a deep-seated cultural symbol. The opera has become an integral part of the city's identity, with its music, stories, and performances deeply embedded in the lives of the local people. Anqing continues to serve as a vibrant center for Huangmei Opera, offering both traditional performances and contemporary adaptations. Its importance as a cultural and historical hub ensures that the art form will continue to thrive and evolve.

Key informants :Ms Long Baoling



Figure 14. Ms. Long Baoling

Ms. Long Baoling, born in 1977, hails from Anqing City, Anhui Province. She holds a bachelor's degree and graduated from the Performance Department of Anhui Huangmei Opera Vocational Art College in 1997. Long is a member of the Anqing Musicians Association and the Anhui Provincial Dramatists Association. She is a leading actress at the Anqing Zaifeng Huangmei Opera Art Theater and serves as the Secretary-General of the Huangmei Opera Association in California, USA.

The background music uses three songs, as follows:

- 1) "Shui Liao Huang Bang Zhong Zhuang Yuan (谁料皇榜中状元) ”
- 2) "Lai Lai Lai (来来来) ”
- 3) "Jiang Shui Tao Tao (江水滔滔) ”

The selection of these three pieces for analyzing Long Baoling's singing techniques is highly purposeful, as they are representative works that showcase her profound skills and unique style in Huangmei opera. From a learning perspective, these pieces are valuable for understanding different aspects of Huangmei opera, including melody, emotional expression, performance integration, and technical mastery.

3.2.3 Research Tools

The research tools used in this dissertation are mainly interviews and observation. In order to obtain the research data, the researcher designed the questionnaire and designed the corresponding interview form and observation form according to research objects.

Process of making the questionnaire (based on research objective)

- 1) Create a questionnaire for key insiders
- 2) Submit the file to the researcher's tutor for review
- 3) Hand it over to the key information to see if the file is comprehensive
- 4) Revise it based on the advisor's feedback.
- 5) Send it to an expert for evaluation prior to use.
- 6) Make adjustments according to the expert's suggestions

Finally, the file is used for research tools.

3.2.3 Data Collection

The researcher gathered three Huangmei Opera performances related to the key informant, Ms. Long Baoling, with one being particularly well-known locally.

Observation: The researcher immersed themselves in the residential areas of Anqing City, observing Ms. Long Baoling's teaching and Huangmei Opera performances. Additionally, the researcher observed the integration of Huangmei Opera into the daily lives of local residents, laying the groundwork for upcoming interviews. The observation focused mainly on the inheritors residing in Anqing City.

Interviews: Through a series of interviews, the researcher documented Huangmei Opera. A structured set of interview questions was used, allowing the researcher to ask specific questions and personally record the responses on an interview form. The interviews targeted three groups: directors of local cultural centers, actors, and inheritors of the art form.

The first research objective involved conducting a field study the life and work of Long Baoling in Anqing City, gathering information through observation, interviews with insiders, and reviewing relevant literature and online resources.

The second objective was to use Ms. Long Baoling as a key informant, focusing on collecting media data and information on her singing techniques in Huangmei Opera.

In terms of data collection, the study followed its research objectives. To gather information on the current state of Huangmei Opera in Anqing City, the researcher first conducted a literature review to find original sources and then interviewed key insiders for contemporary insights. Verbal information was organized from both literary and field sources to prepare the data for analysis.

Additionally, the research focused on Ms. Long Baoling's singing techniques. The researcher used the literature review method to collect foundational materials and continued to accumulate relevant data. Simultaneously, the researcher conducted interviews with Ms. Long Baoling, recorded her live teaching sessions and performances in both video and audio formats, and compiled these recordings for further data analysis.

3.2.4 Data Management

The researcher organized the data gathered from Anqing. Video and audio recordings can be transcribed using Sibelius software to aid in subsequent musical analysis. Interview data were structured and saved in a Word format for better organization. Data management involves efficiently gathering, storing, processing, and applying information. The primary goal of managing data is to extract valuable and meaningful insights from large volumes of unstructured and disorganized information. Through the researcher's field study of Anhui's Huangmei Opera, local audio recordings, videos, and images were categorized and systematically managed. Books were sorted based on their focus on history, the contemporary status of

Huangmei Opera, musical elements, characteristics, preservation, and dissemination. The large amount of collected information was further classified by time period, musical themes, humanistic aesthetics, and other relevant factors to support future analysis.

3.2.5 Data analysis

The researcher analyzed the data with two objectives.

For the first objective, the researcher analyzed Long Baoling's background, career development, and the historical context in which she lived, we can understand how her achievements were influenced by the social, cultural, and political environments. This approach can reveal her growth in the field of Huangmei opera and how she adapted to the artistic trends of different periods.

For the second objective, the researcher studied Ms. Long Baoling's vocal techniques through traditional Chinese music analysis methods. The researcher took notes and conducted interviews with Ms. Long Baoling, followed by an analysis of the musical melody and the structure of her singing techniques in preparation for the thesis.

3.2.6 Presentation

Chapter I Introduction

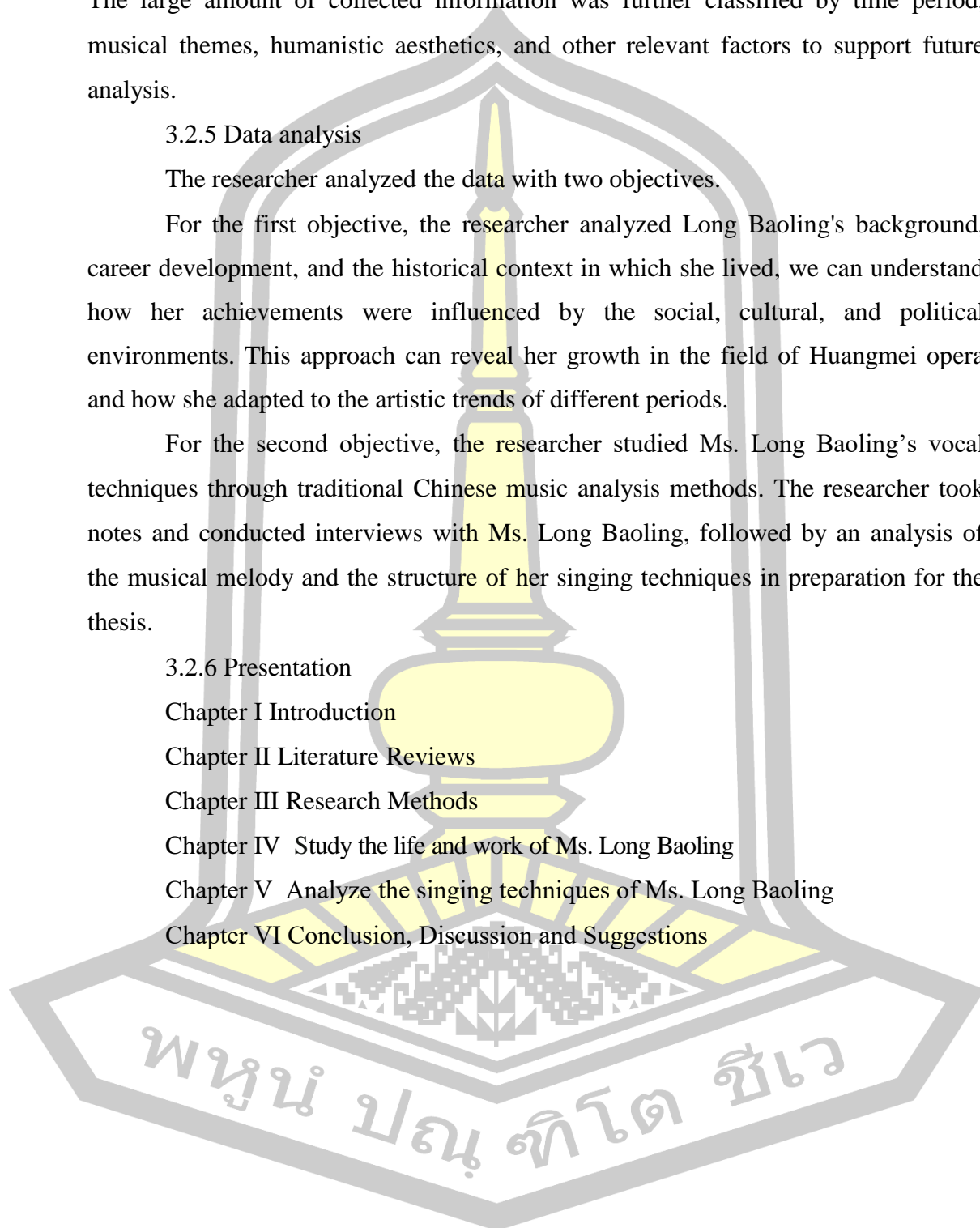
Chapter II Literature Reviews

Chapter III Research Methods

Chapter IV Study the life and work of Ms. Long Baoling

Chapter V Analyze the singing techniques of Ms. Long Baoling

Chapter VI Conclusion, Discussion and Suggestions



CHAPTER IV

The study work and life of Ms. Long Baoling from 2020 to 2024

- 4.1 The Work of Ms. Long Baoling
 - 4.1.1 Teaching and Passing on the Tradition
 - 4.1.2 Promoting Huangmei Opera
 - 4.1.3 The Awards of Ms. Long Baoling
- 4.2 The Life of Ms. Long Baoling

4.1 The Work of Ms. Long Baoling

The achievements of Ms. Long Baoling from 2020 to 2024 build on the strong foundation she established in her earlier years. Her commitment to preserving Huangmei Opera and advancing its development through teaching, performances, and artistic contributions has paved the way for the significant accomplishments in the years following 2020. The following sections explore her contributions to the art form in this period, showcasing the continued growth and impact of her work.

Building on her earlier teaching and promotional activities, Ms. Long Baoling continued to champion Huangmei Opera's growth in the period from 2020 to 2024. Her established reputation as a mentor and advocate of the art form laid the foundation for her more impactful outreach and engagement with newer generations of performers and audiences.

This section highlights Ms. Long Baoling's career, with a particular focus on her contributions as an actress in Huangmei opera, her achievements in the field, and her role as an educator in preserving and promoting the tradition of Huangmei opera.

พูน บุญเกิด ชีวะ



Figure 15. Ms. Long Baoling's interview
Source: Xue Wang , from research fieldwork (2024)



Figure 16. Xue Wang and Ms. Long Baoling
Source: Xue Wang , from research fieldwork (2024)

4.1.1 Teaching and Passing on the Tradition

Teaching Career: Beyond her career as a performer, Ms. Long became an influential educator. She dedicated a significant portion of her life to training young artists and ensuring the future of Huangmei opera. Her teaching methods emphasized not only technical mastery but also an appreciation for the cultural and historical aspects of the art form. (Fieldwork, 2024)



Figure 17. Ms. Long Baoling

Source: Xue Wang , from research fieldwork (2024)

Challenges in Education: In the face of modern-day challenges, including the declining interest among younger generations in traditional forms of performance, Ms. Long worked tirelessly to adapt Huangmei opera to contemporary sensibilities. She integrated innovative methods in her teaching, encouraging students to develop both their vocal techniques and acting skills while instilling a deep cultural understanding of Huangmei opera. (Fieldwork, 2024)



Figure 18. Min Zhong Huangmei Opera Gong Yi Da Xue Tang

Source: Xue Wang , from research fieldwork (2024)

Nurturing New Talent: Ms. Long's role as a teacher extended beyond merely imparting knowledge; she sought to shape her students into artists with a strong sense of identity and pride in their heritage. By fostering creativity and encouraging students to develop their own artistic voices, she has played a crucial role in ensuring the continued evolution of Huangmei opera.

4.1.2 Promoting Huangmei Opera

Cultural Advocacy: Ms. Long Baoling has been an advocate for Huangmei opera throughout her career, actively promoting the art form across a variety of platforms. Her advocacy has contributed to a broader appreciation of Huangmei opera not only within China but also internationally.

Artistic Innovation: While deeply respectful of the tradition, Ms. Long was also open to innovation. She has worked to modernize the presentation of Huangmei opera, incorporating new interpretations and creative elements while maintaining its core traditions. This balance between preservation and innovation has allowed her to reach new audiences while ensuring that the essence of Huangmei opera remains intact.

Public Engagement and Outreach: In addition to her teaching and performances, Ms. Long has engaged in public outreach, working with media outlets and through live performances to expand the reach of Huangmei opera. She has been instrumental in using television, the internet, and social media to engage younger generations and keep the art form relevant in the modern world. Her commitment to the spread of Huangmei opera ensures that future generations will continue to experience its rich cultural legacy.

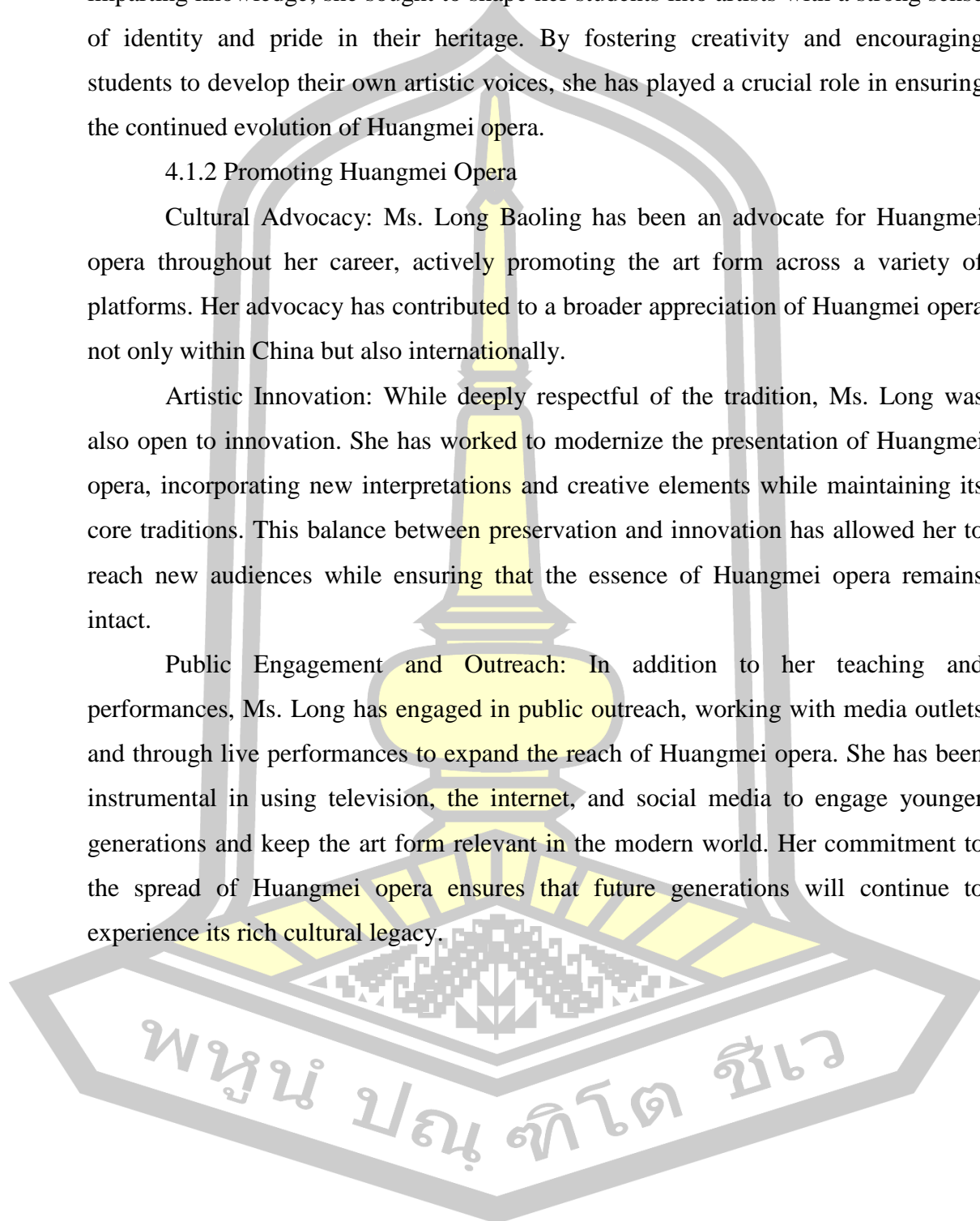




Figure 19. TV shows of Huangmei Opera of Ms. Long Baoling and her students

Source: Ms. Long Baoling

Ms. Long Baoling's career is a profound example of dedication to the preservation, performance, and innovation of Huangmei opera. From an early age, she was immersed in the cultural and artistic traditions of Huangmei opera, a foundation that would guide her throughout her life. Her journey as a performer began with her joining a Huangmei opera troupe, where she quickly established herself as one of the leading figures of her generation. Through numerous iconic performances, she became renowned for her vocal prowess, emotional depth, and ability to embody the complex characters in Huangmei opera. (Fieldwork, 2024)





Figure 20. Ms. Long Baoling

Source: Xue Wang, from research fieldwork (2024)

However, Ms. Long's influence extended beyond the stage. As an educator, she dedicated much of her life to passing on the traditions of Huangmei opera to younger generations. She developed teaching methods that emphasized not only technical skills but also the cultural essence of the art form, ensuring that students understood both the performance techniques and the rich history that underpinned their craft. Her commitment to nurturing new talent and adapting to contemporary trends helped sustain Huangmei opera in a rapidly changing world.



Figure 21. Ms. Long Baoling

Source: Xue Wang, from research fieldwork (2024)

In addition to her contributions as a performer and educator, Ms. Long played a crucial role as an advocate for Huangmei opera. She worked tirelessly to promote this traditional Chinese art form, both within China and internationally. Her efforts in outreach and media engagement have ensured that Huangmei opera continues to thrive in the modern era, reaching new audiences and preserving its cultural significance for future generations.

Overall, Ms. Long Baoling's legacy is one of innovation, dedication, and cultural preservation. Through her performances, teaching, and advocacy, she has made significant contributions to the future of Huangmei opera, ensuring its relevance in a modern world while staying true to its historical roots. Her work has helped bridge the past and present of this cherished art form, and she remains a pivotal figure in its ongoing development and appreciation.

4.1.3 The Awards of Ms. Long Baoling

Over the past few decades, she has earned widespread recognition for her exceptional contributions to Huangmei opera, Chinese performing arts, and arts education. Her remarkable career has spanned several decades, during which she has continuously innovated while staying deeply rooted in tradition. Her awards reflect not only her skillful performances but also her influential role in preserving and modernizing traditional Chinese opera for future generations.

Starting in the 1980s with early recognition for her breakthrough performances, she rapidly gained prominence in the Chinese opera scene. Throughout the 1990s, she garnered national and regional accolades for her dedication to preserving the cultural heritage of Chinese opera. In the 2000s, she received high-profile honors, such as the Chinese Cultural Medal and Lifetime Achievement Award, which further solidified her status as a leading figure in Chinese arts.

In more recent years, from 2020 onward, she has continued to receive prestigious awards acknowledging her lifelong dedication to both the performance and education of Huangmei opera. Notable awards include the Cultural Heritage Award, the Lifetime Achievement Award at the China National Opera Awards, and the Excellence in Artistic Education Award, reflecting her continuous commitment to enriching the arts and mentoring the next generation of artists. In 2024, her regional

influence was further recognized by the Guangdong Lu Xun Literature and Art Award, emphasizing her enduring impact on the cultural arts in China.

Through her outstanding contributions, she remains a pivotal figure in the evolution and preservation of Chinese opera, setting new standards of excellence while nurturing the future of the art form.

Table 5. The awards of Long Baoling 2020-2024

| Decade | Year | Award | Description |
|-----------------------------------|------|---|---|
| 2020s: Continued Excellence | 2020 | Cultural Heritage Award | Acknowledged for pioneering role in preserving and modernizing Huangmei opera, ensuring the continuation of traditional arts for future generations. |
| | 2022 | Lifetime Achievement Award at the China National Opera Awards | A major recognition of her lifetime contributions to modern Chinese opera. |
| Additional Honors | 2023 | Excellence in Artistic Education | Recognized for innovative work in arts education and nurturing emerging artists through educational programs. |
| | 2024 | Guangdong Lu Xun Literature and Art Award | Honored for contributions to cultural arts and performances in Guangdong Province, reflecting her influence within both regional and national artistic communities. |

Cultural Heritage Preservation and Innovation: In 2020, she was awarded the "Cultural Heritage Award" in recognition of her pioneering role in preserving and modernizing Huangmei opera, ensuring the continuity of this traditional art form for future generations.

Lifetime Achievement and Influence: In 2022, she received the "Lifetime Achievement Award" at the China National Opera Awards, a prestigious acknowledgment of her lifetime contributions to the development of modern Chinese opera.

Innovative Contribution to Arts Education: In 2023, she was honored with the "Excellence in Artistic Education Award" for her innovative work in arts education and her active role in nurturing emerging artists through educational programs.

Regional Cultural Contribution: In 2024, she was awarded the "Guangdong Lu Xun Literature and Art Award" for her significant contributions to cultural arts and performances in Guangdong Province, reflecting her influence within both regional and national artistic communities.

These awards demonstrate her ability to balance tradition and innovation, as well as her enduring contributions to arts education and cultural development.

4.1.4 Her Impact on the Development of Huangmei Opera

Long Baoling has not only achieved fame through her performances but also played an instrumental role in reshaping Huangmei opera. She successfully blended traditional elements with modern innovations, breathing new life into the art form and making it accessible to a wider, more diverse audience. Through her performances, she has preserved and transmitted the core principles of Huangmei opera, making her work an essential reference for aspiring performers.

Her dedication to the preservation and evolution of Huangmei opera is most evident in her efforts to teach and mentor the next generation. As a teacher, Long emphasized the importance of mastering the traditional techniques while also encouraging creativity and innovation. Her holistic approach to training has helped countless young artists develop a deeper emotional and cultural connection to the art form. Long's belief in nurturing young talent extends to her founding of the Huangmei Opera Public School in 2015. This initiative aimed to provide free opera education, especially in rural areas, where access to such training is often limited. Through this school, Long has not only trained future performers but has also helped cultivate a new generation of opera enthusiasts and audience members, ensuring the future of Huangmei opera.

Long Baoling's dedication to Huangmei opera is not confined to the classroom. Her efforts have been pivotal in elevating Huangmei opera to international recognition, further solidifying its place as an essential branch of Chinese opera. Her performances and international educational workshops have raised awareness of the genre and its cultural significance. As she continues her journey, Long's influence on the art form remains profound, and her legacy is one of innovation, education, and cultural preservation.



Figure 22. Students and Ms. Long Baoling

Source: Ms. Long Baoling

4.2 The Life of Ms. Long Baoling

4.2.1 Long Baoling's Attitude Towards Life: Simple Yet Full of Wisdom

Long Baoling's approach to life is simple yet full of wisdom, fully reflecting her passion for art, her love for life, and her pursuit of inner peace. She closely integrates her lifestyle with her artistic creation, focusing not only on the inheritance and teaching of Huangmei opera but also treating every aspect of daily life as a source of artistic inspiration. In her daily routine—whether teaching, livestreaming, gardening, cooking, or conversing with flowers and trees—she approaches life with mindfulness, drawing inspiration from it.



Figure 23. Ms. Long Baoling
Source: Xue Wang , from research fieldwork (2024)

4.2.2 The Seamless Connection Between Art and Life

Long Baoling mentions that her artistic inspiration comes from everyday life, especially from the warmth of the kitchen and the subtle changes in flowers and plants. Through her interaction with these natural elements, she experiences the rhythm and beauty of life. This close connection with nature enriches her artistic works, infusing them with vitality and spirit. She believes that art cannot be detached from life; it must be rooted in reality, perceptive of the changes and beauty of the world, in order to create soulful works.

Her life is full of simple yet profound rituals: morning exercises, tending to plants, cooking, drinking tea, reviewing lesson plans, and studying artworks. Each day, she lives with a peaceful mindset, harmonizing with herself and the world. Her life does not pursue luxury or complexity but rather seeks to understand the essence of life through simple activities. She asserts that maintaining a love for life and a grounded attitude is key to continually drawing from the wellspring of art. (Fieldwork, 2024)

4.2.3 From Teacher to “Art Promoter” in Life

In addition to traditional teaching roles, Teacher Long Baoling also works to promote Huangmei opera through online livestreams and offline classes. She uses livestream platforms to interact with opera enthusiasts, repeatedly advocating her philosophy: "Let opera inherit civilization, let art enter the public, and cultural

heritage is everyone's responsibility." This approach helps bring Huangmei opera beyond professional actors and fans, aiming to introduce this traditional art form to a broader audience.

She emphasizes that the slogan of her school, "Sing Chinese opera well, be a good Chinese person," reflects her belief in using art to transmit respect and responsibility for Chinese culture. She hopes that everyone who encounters Huangmei opera will first develop an interest, then cultivate a love for the art, and eventually form a sense of respect and responsibility for Chinese culture.



Figure 24. Yan Qinag Long Yun Huangmei Opera
Sheng Qiang Yi Shu Chuan Xi Shuo

Source: Xue Wang , from research fieldwork (2024)

4.2.4 The Original Intention and Purity of Art

Throughout Teacher Long Baoling's artistic career, she has always maintained a pure original intention. She does not pursue fame or wealth, nor is she fixated on status or identity. Her artistic creation is not about catering to public taste or seeking commercial success, but about expressing her love for art and reflections on life. She describes herself as a very "simple" person, and "meaningful moments in life" are her most cherished memories. She maintains a curiosity and innocence about life, and

whether on stage or in daily life, she holds no superior attitude, fostering a close and harmonious relationship with fans and students.



Figure 25. Teaching by Long Baoling

Source: Xue Wang , from research fieldwork (2024)

In her home, in everyday scenes like the market, garden, or tea room, she maintains close connections with her audience and fans. She enjoys cooking at home, sharing tea and conversation with fans, and even invites them to visit her small garden. Her fans do not idolize her status or position but respect her art and her sincere attitude toward life. This affable personality and disregard for formalities allow her art and life to blend seamlessly, creating a unique charm.

4.2.5 Solitude and Inner Dialogue

While Teacher Long Baoling's life appears simple, she values an important spiritual space—solitude. She enjoys being alone with her thoughts, quietly interacting with nature, flowers, and trees. In solitude, she finds inspiration and strength, maintaining her purity and love for artistic creation. She mentions that many artistic ideas are born during these moments of quiet contemplation, when she is conversing with nature and herself. This deep connection with the world allows her works to not only express external technique but also the natural flow of inner emotions and thoughts.

Long Baoling also emphasizes the importance of "staying grounded." In modern society, much artistic creation is "isolated" in the creator's enclosed space, lacking genuine perception of life. She believes that only by truly entering life, experiencing the movement of the stars and the changing of all things, can art possess spirituality and reflect the truth and beauty of humanity.

Long Baoling's life philosophy and artistic principles are profound. By meticulously observing daily life, she extracts inspiration from every small detail and transforms it into the creation and inheritance of Huangmei opera. Her life attitude is both simple and wise, demonstrating that artistic creation is not just about performance on stage but is reflected in every moment of life. She insists on serving the people with art and transmitting the essence of Chinese culture with a sincere, passionate heart.

Her studio is not only a place of teaching but also a warm platform for spreading the culture of Huangmei opera. Her life is filled with simple but genuine joy, and it is this simplicity and authenticity that imbue her artistic works with warmth and spirituality. Her story teaches us that art and life are inseparable, and only by deeply connecting with life and nature can we create the most vibrant art.

4.2.6 Contributions Beyond the Stage

Long Baoling's contributions to Huangmei opera extend far beyond her performances. As an educator, she has dedicated much of her life to teaching and mentoring young performers. She founded the Huangmei Opera Public School in 2015, which aims to provide free opera education to students from all walks of life, particularly in remote areas of China. Long's commitment to spreading Huangmei opera to these underserved communities underscores her belief that opera should be accessible to all, regardless of their background or geographic location.

พหุบัณฑิต ชีว



Figure 26. Ms. Long Baoling and her students

Source: Ms. Long Baoling

Her approach to education integrates traditional methods with modern techniques, ensuring that students not only master the technical skills of Huangmei opera but also understand the cultural and emotional depth of each performance. Many of her students have gone on to achieve success in the field, crediting Long with helping them develop both as performers and as cultural ambassadors for Huangmei opera.

In addition to her work as an educator, Long has been a passionate advocate for cultural exchange. Through her international performances and teaching workshops, she has brought Huangmei opera to global audiences, raising awareness of its importance as a significant part of China's cultural heritage. Her international endeavors have positioned her as a cultural ambassador for Huangmei opera, and her work continues to inspire both Chinese and international audiences alike.





Figure 27. TV shows of Liang Xiang Ba, Huangmei Opera Teenagers

Source: Long Baoling

In summary, Long Baoling's influence on Huangmei opera is far-reaching and multifaceted. Her contributions as a performer, educator, and cultural ambassador have not only enriched the art form but have also ensured its continued relevance and recognition on the global stage. Her passion for Huangmei opera and her tireless efforts to preserve and promote it have made her a leading figure in the field, and her legacy will undoubtedly continue to shape the future of this treasured art form.

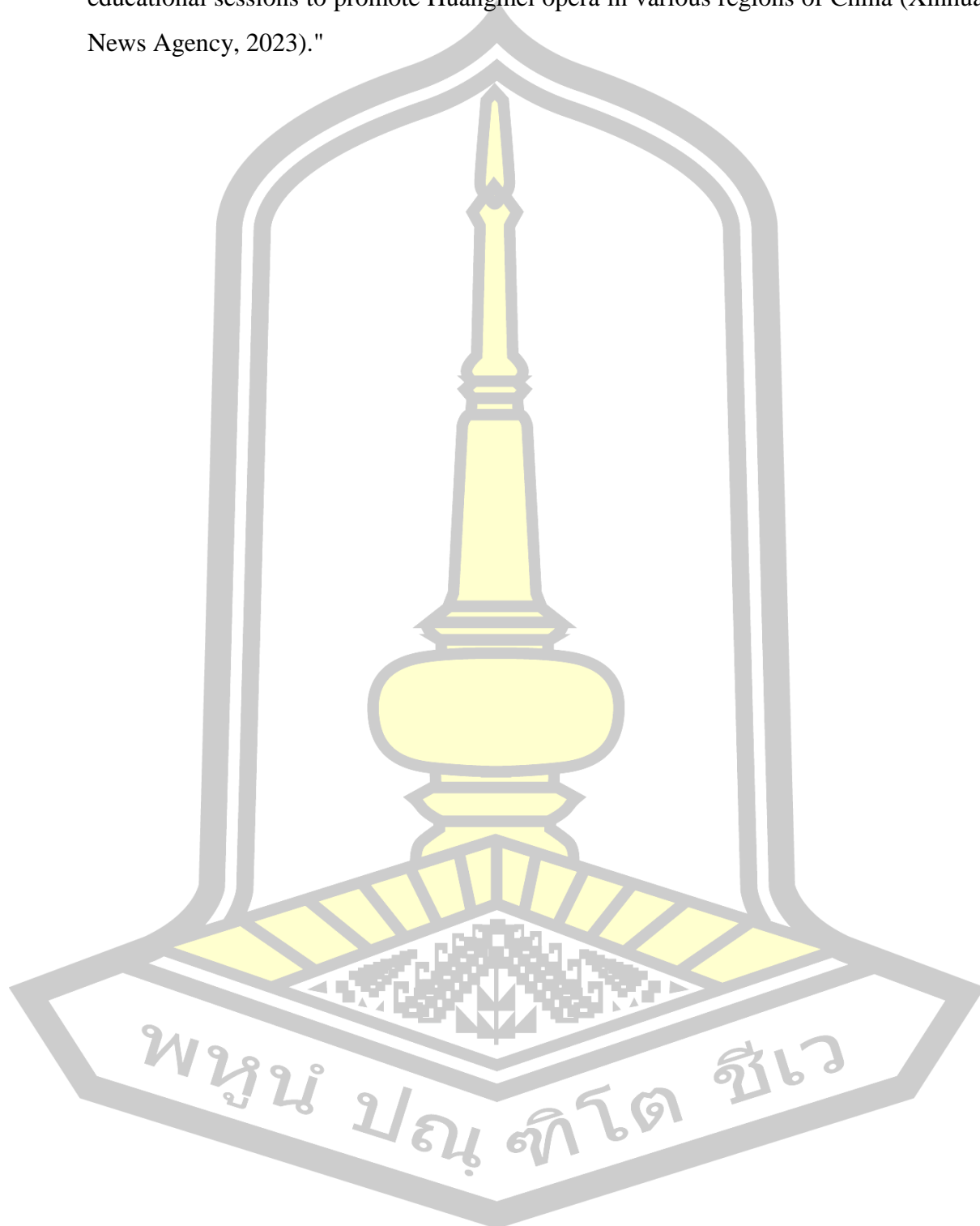


Figure 28. Xinhua News of Ms. Long Baoling

Source: Xinhua News Agency (2023)

"Long Baoling's dedication to Huangmei opera education has been widely recognized, with several media outlets covering her contributions. According to a

report by Xinhua News Agency (May 25, 2023), she has conducted numerous free educational sessions to promote Huangmei opera in various regions of China (Xinhua News Agency, 2023)."



CHAPTER V

The Analysis of singing techniques of Ms. Long Baoling

5.1 Shui Liao Huang Bang Zhong Zhuang Yuan (谁料黄榜中状元)

5.2 Lai Lai Lai (来来来)

5.3 Jiang Shui Tao Tao (江水滔滔)

5.1 Shui Liao Huang Bang Zhong Zhuang Yuan (谁料黄榜中状元)

The “Shui Liao Huang Bang Zhong Zhuang Yuan” piece from Huangmei Opera showcases a delicate blend of emotional expression and vocal techniques. Using the lively “Dressing Table Tune,” the song captures the inner joy and outward composure of the character Feng Su Zhen, a woman who disguises herself as a man to win the title of Top Scholar. The “Dressing Table Tune” is a lively, flowing, and elegant melody commonly used in Huangmei Opera to express feelings of joy, confidence, and agility. In the piece “Zhuangyuan”, this tune not only enhances the emotional depth of the music but also cleverly reflects the dual nature of the character Feng Su Zhen and her inner emotions. The performance employs true voice, which adds resonance and clarity, while also utilizing delicate enunciation, grace notes, and slides to enhance the expressiveness of the music. The piece's emotional depth is amplified through subtle ornaments and vibrato, which help convey Feng’s complex emotions of excitement and restraint. The combination of these technical elements reflects the character's dual identity—her joy as a scholar and her feminine grace. At the heart of the performance lies the singer's ability to deeply understand and express the character’s emotional journey, ensuring the performance resonates with the audience both technically and emotionally.

5.1.1 Breathing

Fast Rhythm and Breath Coordination: The fast rhythm, with quarter notes and dotted quarter notes, demands quick and precise breath control. The singer needs to inhale quickly and efficiently during short pauses between phrases, ensuring enough

breath reserve for upcoming fast musical passages. The challenge lies in timing the breaths so that they do not disrupt the flow of the melody, while still providing sufficient air to sustain the vocal performance.

Stable Breath Flow: With the fast tempo, maintaining stable breath flow is crucial. The singer must use diaphragmatic and abdominal muscle support to ensure continuous airflow without breaks or interruptions. This breath stability allows the singer to maintain clarity in each note, especially during quick dotted quarter notes, where the flow of breath must be steady to avoid any gasping or wavering of sound.

Flexible Use of Breath: Despite the fast tempo, the singer must use breath flexibly. For dotted quarter notes, where the note duration is slightly extended, the singer needs to manage the airflow to avoid either overextending the note or cutting it short. Precision in breath usage ensures that every note is crisp and well-articulated, without losing the emotional intent or clarity of the melody.

Breath and Emotion Integration: Even with a faster rhythm, "Shui Liao Huang Bang Zhong Zhuang Yuan" carries intense dramatic and emotional content. Breath control serves not only as a technical tool but also as a means of enhancing emotional expression. The singer can adjust the breath's intensity and speed to reflect the inner emotional shifts of the character, using breath to emphasize moments of tension, determination, or resolve.

Through precise breath control and smooth breath flow, the singer can navigate the fast tempo and deliver the emotional depth and clarity required for the performance, enhancing both the technical and emotional impact of the piece.

5.1.2 True Voice

The entire piece is sung in true voice, which enhances the fullness and resonance of the sound, giving it greater clarity and allowing it to penetrate through the music more effectively. This aligns well with the melody of the Dressing Table Tune, making the performance more deeply connected to the theatrical style of Huangmei Opera.

In this piece, Long Baoling predominantly employs true voice, ensuring that every phrase carries a full, natural resonance. Unlike many contemporary singers who resort to falsetto for high notes, she maintains a consistent, natural vocal production

even in the upper range. This technique allows her to convey the protagonist's emotions with clarity and emotional depth.

In the climactic phrases, she sustains high notes with full vocal cord engagement rather than thinning the sound with falsetto. This maintains the character's composure and determination, reinforcing her strength in the narrative.

Breathing and True voice

8

wei jiu li lang li jia yuan,
为 救 李 郎 离 家 园,
wo ye ceng fu guo qiong lin yan,
我 也 曾 赴 过 琼 林 宴,

16

shui liao huang bang zhong zhuang yuan,
谁 料 皇 榜 中 状 元,
wo ye ceng da ma yu jie qian,
我 也 曾 打 马 御 街 前,

Figure 29. Bars 12-19 of Shui Liao Huang Bang Zhong Zhuang Yuan

Source: Xue Wang , from research fieldwork (2024)

(1) Sweet and Delicate Enunciation

As a signature piece of Huangmei Opera, the performance requires particular attention to clear and delicate enunciation, ensuring each word is distinct and melodically beautiful. In the higher notes, the tone is bright and full, but not harsh. In the lower notes, the voice remains soft and smooth, maintaining the elegance of Huangmei Opera:

(2) The Dual Nature of the Character — Balancing Lightness and Steadiness

Long Baoling emphasizes the need to balance the dual identity of Feng Su Zhen in the performance:

Femininity: As a woman, her voice should not be overly harsh, so certain notes should be softened with glides and ornaments to make the melody more fluid and graceful.

Scholar's Dignity: As a scholar, her voice must not be too light or playful. The singer should maintain stability in tone and breath control to convey her external poise and confidence.

Balancing Lightness and Steadiness: The melody must achieve the balance of being lively yet not frivolous, steady yet not dull, which reflects the character's complex emotional layers.

5.1.3 Ornamentation

Ornamentation is an important aspect of Huangmei Opera and helps enhance the expressiveness of the music, making the melody more fluid and rich. In the piece “Zhuangyuan”, the use of ornaments is particularly effective in the following ways:

(1) Grace Notes and Slides Between Words

Grace Notes: At the beginning or transition points of certain phrases, short grace notes are added to create a sense of fluidity and to emphasize the emotional expression of the piece. For instance, in singing the words “Zhuangyuan” (Top Scholar), a brief grace note might precede or follow certain syllables to highlight their significance.

Portamento (Slides): In transitions between words, subtle slides are used to make the melody smoother. For example, in the word “Yuan” or “Wa,” a slight slide might be used to reflect the character's fluctuating emotions.

Ornamentation

23

zhongzhuangyuan zhehong pao,mao chagonghua hao wa hao xinxian na.
 中 状 元 着 红 袍, 帽 插 宫 花 好 哇 好 新 鲜 哪。
 ren ren kua wo pan an mao,shuizhi sha mao zhao wa zhaochanjuan na.
 人 人 夸 我 潘 安 貌, 谁 知 纱 帽 罩 哇 罩 婵 娟 哪。

Figure 30. Bars 24-30 of Shui Liao Huang Bang Zhong Zhuang Yuan

Source: Xue Wang , from research fieldwork (2024)

(2) Sustained Notes and Vibrato at the End of Phrases

Sustained Notes: At the end of many phrases, there are extended notes that give the melody more emotional weight. For example, words like “Zhuangyuan” or “Zhong” (to succeed) may have a longer note at the end to highlight the character’s triumphant joy.

(3) Short Ornamented Notes

In certain sections of the song, quick, ornamented notes are added between phrases to give the melody more vitality and rhythmic variety. For example, in the phrase “Spring breeze, swift hooves,” short notes may be used to enhance the rhythm and make the music more lively and agile.

5.1.4 Vibrato

These extended notes often carry a natural vibrato, adding emotional depth and richness to the sound. The vibrato enhances the feeling of joy and accomplishment, making the final phrase more impactful without feeling too rigid.

The image shows two staves of musical notation for the song 'Shui Liao Huang Bang Zhong Zhuang Yuan'. The tempo is marked as ♩ = 83. The word 'Vibrato' is written above the first staff. The lyrics are written below the notes, with red circles highlighting specific characters: 'guan', 'wei', 'mingxian', 'wo', 'wei', 'zuo gao', 'guan', 'wei', 'hao', 'yue er yuan', and 'na'. The lyrics are: 我考状元不为把名显，我考状元不为做高官，为了多情的李公子，夫妇恩爱花—好月儿圆哪。

Figure 31. Bars 38-52 of Shui Liao Huang Bang Zhong Zhuang Yuan

Source: Xue Wang, from research fieldwork (2024)

Long Baoling highlights that a classic performance relies not only on technique but on the deep emotional understanding of the character:

Understanding the Character’s Inner World: Feng Su Zhen’s current emotions are a mixture of “joy and restraint.” If the singer merely sings the melody without understanding the character’s emotional journey, the performance will remain superficial and lack true emotional impact.

Expressing Complex Emotions: The singer must express both her internal excitement and her external composure. This requires careful control over tone, pitch, and breath to convey the character's inner conflict and transformation.

Avoiding Technique Over Emotion: Many later singers may possess technical skill, but if they fail to understand the emotional depth of the character, their performances may lack soul and fail to resonate with the audience.

Long Baoling's performance in *Shui Liao Huang Bang Zhong Zhuang Yuan* is a prime example of her refined vocal technique and deep emotional engagement. By maintaining true voice throughout, she ensures clarity and authenticity in her interpretation. Her ornamentation techniques subtly enhance the expressiveness of the piece, while her breath control and emotional nuance create a compelling and immersive performance. This mastery of traditional Huangmei Opera singing reinforces her reputation as one of the most skilled interpreters of the genre.

Long Baoling's handling of the melody is marked by her mastery of tonal contrasts and her ability to adjust her voice to reflect the character's emotional state. In the high-pitched segments, she employs a bright and clear tone, emphasizing the character's emotional highs. Conversely, in the lower registers, she adopts a more subdued, introspective tone that brings out the character's moments of reflection and inner restraint. Particularly in the final notes, Long Baoling often extends the phrasing with subtle turns and sustained tones, conveying the complexity of Feng Suzhen's emotions while maintaining the freshness and fluidity of the melody. Her vocal control allows for a nuanced performance that mirrors the depth of the character's internal world.

Ms. Long Baoling mentioned during her explanation that the singing technique in this passage particularly emphasizes the sweetness and delicacy of articulation. She stressed that when portraying the character Feng Suzhen, it is essential to convey her androgynous nature—being a woman dressed in a top scholar's robe—while also expressing her inner delight and outward composure. Therefore, when singing, one must balance lightness and steadiness in tone, capturing both the softness of a woman and the dignity of a top scholar.

5.2 Lai Lai Lai (来来来)

The song "Lai Lai Lai" from Xiao Ci Dian is a classic segment in Huangmei Opera, rich in emotional depth and expressive vocal techniques. Long Baoling's rendition showcases the character's sorrow, helplessness, and reluctance to part. Her performance not only preserves the traditional essence of Huangmei Opera but also incorporates delicate singing techniques to create a multi-layered musical experience. Below is a detailed breakdown of the vocal techniques used in this performance.

5.2.1 Breathing

Slow Tempo and Breath Control: The slow tempo of "Lai Lai Lai" allows the singer to fully embrace each note, drawing out long phrases that require precise breath management. The singer needs to ensure that each sustained note is supported with steady, controlled airflow, avoiding any interruption or wavering in sound. This provides a smooth, uninterrupted vocal line that mirrors the reflective, storytelling nature of the piece.

Sustained Long Notes: The song features numerous long notes that require the singer to manage their breath effectively over extended periods. Controlled inhalation and exhalation are necessary to maintain a consistent tone throughout each long note, while also ensuring that the phrasing remains emotionally charged. The challenge lies in sustaining the note while maintaining the beauty and clarity of the sound, avoiding any rush or lack of breath support.

Gradual Unfolding of the Narrative: "Lai Lai Lai" is characterized by its storytelling quality, and the slow tempo gives the singer the space to express each word and note with a sense of intimacy. The long, sustained phrases allow the singer to weave a narrative that feels reflective and personal. Effective breath control helps emphasize the sense of introspection and contemplation in the lyrics, contributing to the song's emotional depth.

Breath as a Tool for Expression: In a slower, more reflective piece like "Lai Lai Lai", breath is not just a technical element—it is integral to the emotional delivery. By controlling the pace of the breath, the singer can manipulate the emotional dynamics of the performance, gradually building intensity or softening to

reflect moments of tenderness or longing. This breath control allows for a more intimate connection with the audience, enhancing the emotional storytelling.

5.2.2 Chest Voice

The entire piece is primarily sung in chest voice, creating a solid, resonant, and full-bodied sound that carries strong emotional weight. Huangmei Opera traditionally emphasizes a smooth and rounded tone, and Long Baoling ensures that her voice remains stable without excessive breathiness, making every note land firmly on the melodic line.

Lower register: Soft and natural, with a conversational tone to maintain intimacy.

Middle register: Slightly increased volume, maintaining clarity and resonance to enhance emotional expression.

Higher register: Instead of switching to falsetto, the chest resonance is intensified, making the voice richer and more powerful.

In the first few lines of "Lai Lai Lai", the vocal dynamics remain steady, using a soft but firm chest voice. but as the phrase progresses to “Ni Zen Me Ren Xi Jiang Wo Diu?”, the sound intensifies, revealing the protagonist’s emotional turmoil.

Breathing and Chest voice

7

lai lai lai lai lai shang qian
来 来 来 来 来 上 前

10

dai zhu le ke ren de shou, xu xu ni wo dang chu。
带 住 了 客 人 的 手, 叙 叙 你 我 当 初。

Figure 32. Bars 8-12 of Lai Lai Lai

Source: Xue Wang , from research fieldwork (2024)

As the phrase progresses to “Jian Bei Bao Guo”, the sound intensifies, revealing the protagonist’s emotional turmoil.

Ascending chest voice

13

ceng ji de ke ren ge dian qian yi zou, jian bei bao guo
曾记得客人哥店前一走，肩背包裹

Figure 33. Bars 15 of Lai Lai Lai

Source: Xue Wang, from research fieldwork (2024)

5.2.3 Crying Tone

Crying tone ("qiang yin") is a signature technique in Huangmei Opera, mimicking the sound of sobbing through controlled breath, vocal quivers, and tonal constriction. It creates a heartbreaking, weeping effect that enhances the portrayal of grief and desperation.

Breath control: The key to a natural crying tone is manipulating airflow, allowing intermittent breath breaks to mimic gasping or trembling speech.

Tone shaping: Slight tightening of the vocal cords results in a delicate, wavering tone that evokes genuine sadness.

Pauses and phrasing: Slight delays or drawn-out syllables enhance the sensation of sobbing.

In the line “Tian Chang Di Jiu, Ge Wei”, the voice tightens and shakes slightly, simulating sobs. The transition from a strong high note to a softer, breaking tone mirrors the character’s heartbreak, making the pain more palpable.

พหุ ประถมศึกษา

69

shì zhǐ wàng wǒ men pèi fū qī tiān cháng
实指望我们配夫妻天长

Crying tone

72

dì jiǔ, gē (wēi)! gē (wēi)!
地久, 哥(喂)! 哥(喂)!

Figure 34. Bars 71-74 of Lai Lai Lai

Source: Xue Wang, from research fieldwork (2024)

5.2.4 Vibrato

Vibrato is used sparingly but effectively, giving warmth and dimension to the vocal line. A natural, delicate vibrato enhances emotional delivery, rather than serving as mere technical decoration.

Natural vibrato: Achieved through subtle throat oscillation, not excessive pitch shifts, ensuring an authentic effect.

Emotional weight: Applied on sustained notes, particularly at the ends of phrases, to intensify dramatic impact.

Breath coordination: Controlled airflow ensures smooth, gradual vibrato rather than an abrupt or artificial tremor.

In the sustained “Ni Shuo Dao”, the vibrato starts subtly and grows in intensity, creating a mourning, lament-like effect.

พหุ ประถมศึกษา

Vibrato

45 $\text{♩} = 60$

ni shuo
你 说

48

dao
道

wu you qi zi zai jiang hu piao liu.
无 有 妻 子 在 江 湖 飘 流。

Figure 35. Bars 47-48 of Lai Lai Lai
Source: Xue Wang, from research fieldwork (2024)

Long Baoling's masterful execution of these techniques elevates "Lai Lai Lai" from a simple melody to a deeply touching musical experience, capturing the essence of the character's despair and resilience. Her performance not only demonstrates exceptional vocal skill but also connects with the audience on an emotional level, making this piece a timeless highlight in Huangmei Opera. (Fieldwork, 2024)

5.3 Jiang Shui Tao Tao (江水滔滔)

In Long Baoling's discussion of Huangmei Opera singing techniques, she emphasizes the balance between vocal control, emotional expression, and technical execution. The aria "Jiang Shui Tao Tao" (江水滔滔) exemplifies these principles, making it an excellent case study for analyzing vocal techniques in relation to her approach.

5.3.1 Breathing

พหุ ประถมศึกษา

54

ye neng gou ren shou. bu shi (a) die die
也 能 够 忍 受。 不 是 (啊) 爹 爹

Breathing

57

jian gu tou, er (na) 衣 打·打
贱 骨 头, 儿 (呐)

Figure 36. Bars 54-59 of Jiang Shui Tao Tao
Source: Xue Wang , from research fieldwork (2024)

The use of spoken interludes (念白) in Long Baoling's performance adds depth and drama to the storytelling, showcasing a nuanced approach to emotional expression. These moments of speech, woven between sung lines, rely heavily on controlled breathing to maintain clarity and emotional consistency. The smooth transitions between musical phrases and spoken lines are achieved through breath support, ensuring that the spoken parts are not only clear but also emotionally charged.

By incorporating 念白, Long Baoling allows for a more intimate connection to the character's internal thoughts and emotions. Breath control plays a crucial role here, enabling her to sustain these moments of reflection, frustration, or resolve with vocal stability, and drawing the audience deeper into the character's emotional journey. The subtle shifts in breath provide the necessary tension and release, which makes the character's feelings more genuine and relatable. This seamless integration of singing and speech emphasizes the complexity of the character's emotional arc, enriching the overall narrative and enhancing its emotional impact.

5.3.2 Chest Voice

Long Baoling emphasizes: Chest voice ensures a solid, full, and expressive sound, forming the core of a singer's vocal projection.

In "Jiang Shui Tao Tao", the character Lao Jin Song primarily uses a deep and resonant chest voice to convey the weight of his burdens and the struggles of life.

Connection to Long Baoling's Style: This aligns with her approach in Xiao Ci Dian, where she prioritizes chest voice for emotional grounding rather than relying on head voice or excessive ornamentation.

4

jiang shui tao tao xiang dong
江 水 滔 滔 向 东

Chest voice

8

liu, er de ri zi
流 儿 的 日 子

Figure 37. Bars 4-10 of Jiang Shui Tao Tao
Source: Xue Wang , from research fieldwork (2024)

The use of chest voice in this performance serves as the foundation for a solid, full, and expressive sound. It provides a deep resonance, which allows the character's emotions to feel grounded and sincere. Chest voice is often used to convey raw emotion, creating a sense of power and intensity in the character's expression. This technique not only strengthens the emotional delivery but also enhances the overall clarity and depth of the performance. It forms the basis for conveying complex emotional states, from sorrow to determination, making the character's experiences feel tangible and authentic.

5.3.4 Crying Tone

Long Baoling highlights: The crying tone intensifies emotional expression, making the character's pain raw and authentic. In "Jiang Shui Tao Tao", the crying

tone is used to illustrate Lao Jin Song's internal struggles, particularly in moments where he laments his fate and sacrifices for his daughter.

Connection to Long Baoling's Style: This mirrors her interpretation of "Lai Lai Lai" in *Xiao Ci Dian*, where she employs subtle crying tones to build up emotion gradually instead of over-exaggerating sadness.

In the line "Dao Chu Zou," the **crying tone** is expressed through several key vocal techniques. The voice tightens at the start, creating emotional tension, with a slight shake or vibrato to mimic sobbing. This is visually represented in the score with a crescendo leading into the high note, accompanied by accents and wavy lines to indicate vibrato. As the phrase progresses, the voice shifts from a strong high note to a softer, breaking tone, mirroring the character's emotional breakdown. This is notated with a *decrescendo*, slowing the tempo (*rallentando*) and a glissando to show the vulnerability and fragility of the voice. The final expression captures the essence of heartbreak, with the voice softening and breaking, highlighted by *decrescendo* and *fermata*, allowing the emotion to resonate.



Figure 38. Bars 18-19 of Jiang Shui Tao Tao

Source: Xue Wang, from research fieldwork (2024)

These techniques, when incorporated into the score, bring out the character's emotional depth and pain, making the crying tone an essential tool in conveying heartbreak through the music.

5.3.4 Vibrato

Long Baoling teaches: Vibrato should not just be a technique but a tool for adding warmth and emotional peaks to the performance.

In "Jiang Shui Tao Tao", vibrato is strategically used at key points to highlight moments of resignation, sorrow, and reflection.

Connection to Long Baoling's Style: Similar to her work in *Xiao Ci Dian*, she advocates for vibrato to emerge naturally from breath control and phrasing rather than being forced.

24

sui shui liu. zong suan ni kao le yi fu jiu
随水流。总算你靠了义父就

Vibrato

27

zha xia le gen, tuo li ku (wa) hai
扎下了根，脱离苦(哇)海

Figure 39. Bars 24-29 of Jiang Shui Tao Tao

Source: Xue Wang, from research fieldwork (2024)

The use of vibrato at the end of each sentence often emphasizes the emotional climax. For example, as a sentence reaches its end, the vibrato can express the character's inner turmoil or unresolved emotions, allowing the feeling to linger and be fully conveyed. Additionally, vibrato at the sentence's conclusion showcases the character's inner conflict, choking emotion, or hesitation. The subtle oscillations of the voice not only enrich the melody but also extend the character's emotional depth, making it easier for the audience to empathize. In this way, vibrato at the end of each phrase brings emotional complexity and enhances the dramatic impact, making it a key technique in the emotional expression of Huangmei Opera, enabling the audience to resonate with the character's emotions.

As Long Baoling suggests, Huangmei Opera is not just about singing techniques—it is about fully inhabiting the character's emotional world. To truly bring "Jiang Shui Tao Tao" to life, one must understand the character's fate, emotional complexity, and societal backdrop, allowing the performance to transcend mere vocal execution and become a powerful artistic statement.

Singing Techniques Across Three Works

Through an analysis of Long Baoling's performances in three representative pieces—《谁料皇榜中状元》 (Shui Liao Huang Bang Zhong Zhuang Yuan) from *Nv Fu Ma*, 《来来来》 (Lai Lai Lai) from *Xiao Ci Dian*, and 《江水滔滔》 (Jiang Shui Tao Tao) from *Jin Yu Nu*—the following singing techniques are observed, ranked by frequency of use:

Breathing is a fundamental vocal technique that is essential for maintaining vocal stability, power, and clarity. Long Baoling utilizes controlled, deep breathing to ensure her voice remains steady and powerful throughout her performances. Proper breath control allows for smooth phrasing and clear articulation, particularly during emotionally intense passages where she needs to sustain longer phrases. It enhances the overall vocal endurance and emotional delivery of the songs, allowing her to maintain vocal consistency without strain.

True voice, characterized by a clean and natural tone, is one of Long Baoling's signature techniques. This technique emphasizes purity and sincerity, free from excessive vocal ornamentation or manipulation. By utilizing true voice, Long Baoling conveys the most authentic and heartfelt expression of the characters, making her performances deeply engaging and resonant. The use of true voice highlights the emotional core of her portrayals, adding a sense of honesty and authenticity to her vocal interpretation.

Chest voice provides a strong and grounded vocal quality, enhancing the clarity and authority of the singing. This technique is used extensively in all three works, particularly in portraying the determination and resilience of the characters. It deeply conveys the inner strength of the roles, making the performance more expressive and impactful. Through the use of chest voice, the audience can better feel the emotional depth and power of the characters.

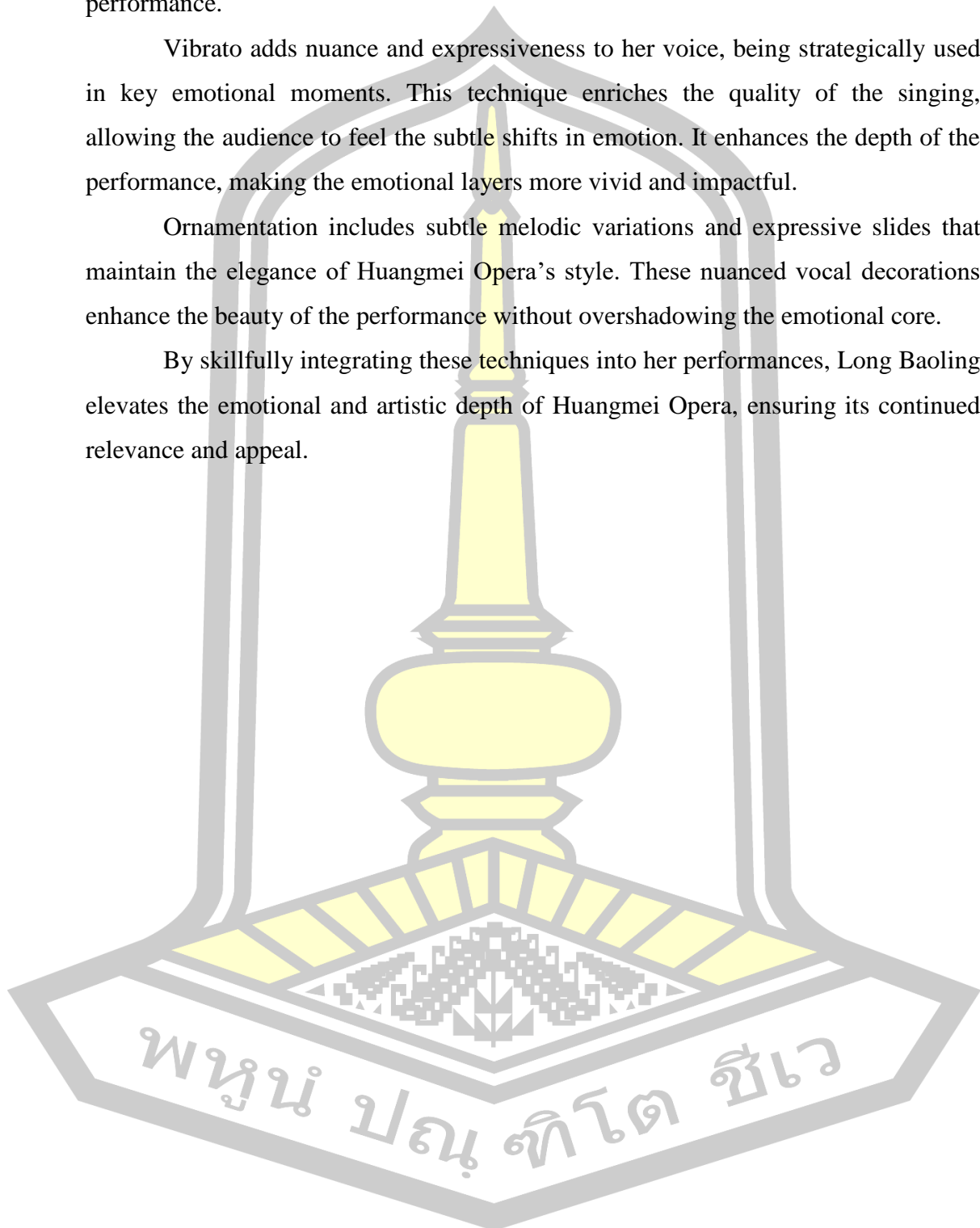
The crying tone is used to convey deep sorrow and emotional intensity, making her portrayal of grief and longing highly expressive. This technique is most prominent in "Jiang Shui Tao Tao" and "Lai Lai Lai," where it amplifies the emotional weight of the characters' suffering. It adds an extra layer of poignancy,

deeply resonating with the audience and intensifying the emotional impact of the performance.

Vibrato adds nuance and expressiveness to her voice, being strategically used in key emotional moments. This technique enriches the quality of the singing, allowing the audience to feel the subtle shifts in emotion. It enhances the depth of the performance, making the emotional layers more vivid and impactful.

Ornamentation includes subtle melodic variations and expressive slides that maintain the elegance of Huangmei Opera's style. These nuanced vocal decorations enhance the beauty of the performance without overshadowing the emotional core.

By skillfully integrating these techniques into her performances, Long Baoling elevates the emotional and artistic depth of Huangmei Opera, ensuring its continued relevance and appeal.



CHAPTER VI

Conclusions, discussions, and suggestions

6.1 Conclusions

This study explores the work and life of Long Baoling, a distinguished performer in Huangmei Opera, focusing on two core aspects: her artistic career and her unique singing techniques. Through an in-depth analysis of her performances, career milestones, and vocal style, the following conclusions are drawn:

1.1 Study of Ms. Long Baoling's Life and Work from 2020 to 2024

Long Baoling has made significant contributions to Huangmei Opera, dedicating her career to both preserving its traditions and introducing artistic innovations. Her influence extends beyond performance, shaping the modern interpretation and appreciation of the art form.

Ms. Long Baoling's contributions to Huangmei Opera are multifaceted and profound. Her early exposure to the opera set the foundation for a lifelong dedication to the art form. Joining the Huangmei Opera Troupe marked the beginning of her professional journey, where she honed her skills and gained recognition for her powerful performances. Through her significant achievements on stage, she elevated the opera's appeal, blending tradition with personal artistic expression. In addition to her on-stage success, Ms. Long has played an essential role in teaching and passing on the tradition of Huangmei Opera to younger generations. Her commitment to education ensures the preservation of the opera's techniques, style, and emotional depth, ensuring its continued vitality. Moreover, her efforts to promote Huangmei Opera, through performances and cultural initiatives, have left a lasting legacy, cementing her role in the opera's growth and development.

Ms. Long's early life and education laid the foundation for her exceptional career. Her passion and natural talent, combined with her disciplined training, propelled her from humble beginnings to national acclaim. As her career progressed, she became a leading figure in Huangmei Opera, celebrated not only for her performances but also for her artistic integrity and contributions to the opera's development. Ms. Long's rising fame was accompanied by numerous awards and

recognitions, which reflect her significant influence on Huangmei Opera. Beyond her performances, her broader impact on the genre is evident through her teaching and her promotion of Huangmei Opera to national and international audiences. Her legacy continues to inspire both artists and audiences, ensuring that Huangmei Opera remains an essential part of Chinese cultural heritage. The life and work of Ms. Long Baoling highlight the profound connection between an artist and the tradition they represent. Her contributions to Huangmei Opera extend beyond her remarkable performances to include her vital role in preserving and passing on the art form to future generations. Her impact is not only measured in the acclaim she received but also in the enduring legacy she has created for Huangmei Opera, ensuring its place in the evolving landscape of Chinese performing arts.

1.2 Analysis of Singing Techniques of Ms. Long Baoling

1.2.1. Breathing

Breathing plays a crucial role in Long Baoling's vocal technique, particularly in managing the flow of air and supporting sustained notes. Controlled breathing ensures that Long Baoling can navigate both fast-paced and slow-paced passages with ease. Her ability to use breath efficiently supports her vocal techniques, allowing for seamless transitions between notes and maintaining the power and clarity of her voice. Proper breath support also allows her to sustain long phrases without losing tone quality or emotional expression.

1.2.2. True Voice

True voice refers to a more pure, natural vocal quality, one that is unadorned by excessive technique or manipulation. This technique emphasizes the sincerity and authenticity of the performer's voice. Long Baoling utilizes true voice to convey a sense of emotional honesty and clarity, ensuring that the character's emotions are expressed in a genuine and relatable way. By using true voice, she is able to connect deeply with her audience, delivering a performance that feels both natural and emotionally truthful.

1.2.3 Chest Voice

Chest voice is a technique Long Baoling frequently uses to create a strong, grounded sound. It is particularly prominent in portraying characters who are resilient and determined. This technique provides a full, powerful tone, giving the performance

an authoritative and emotionally potent quality. It highlights the internal strength and resilience of the characters, making the portrayal more impactful and relatable.

1.2.4 Crying Tone

The crying tone is used to convey deep sorrow and emotional distress. Long Baoling employs this technique to simulate the sound of sobs, amplifying the emotional pain and suffering of the character. It creates an intense, raw vocal quality that allows the audience to deeply empathize with the character's emotional journey. This technique is particularly effective in enhancing moments of grief, longing, or inner turmoil.

1.2.5 Vibrato

Vibrato adds nuance and emotional depth to Long Baoling's singing. It is strategically used during emotional peaks in the performance, such as moments of reflection or sorrow, to intensify the emotional expression. The slight variation in pitch introduced by vibrato enriches the tonal quality, making the character's feelings more complex and relatable. Vibrato helps to convey emotional complexity and creates a more dynamic and engaging performance.

1.2.6 Ornamentation

Ornamentation involves subtle melodic variations and decorative vocal flourishes, especially at the end of phrases. These embellishments enhance the emotional expressiveness of the performance, adding a layer of intricacy to the melody. They emphasize the character's inner emotional states, such as conflict, yearning, or tenderness. Ornamentation enriches the overall sound, making the performance more captivating and emotionally vivid.

These six techniques form the core of Long Baoling's vocal style, blending technical skill with emotional depth. They enable her to convey the complex emotional narratives in Huangmei Opera and create performances that resonate deeply with her audience.

6.2 Discussions

2.1 Discussion on the Work and Life of Long Baoling from 2020 to 2024

This section examines the continued development and evolution of Ms. Long Baoling's work and life during the period from 2020 to 2024. Her efforts to preserve

and promote Huangmei Opera during this time are a natural progression of her achievements before 2020. The foundation laid by her earlier contributions, such as her teaching, mentoring, and performances, has enabled her to significantly expand her influence during this period.

During these years, Ms. Long Baoling not only continued her traditional work but also sought to innovate and adapt Huangmei Opera for modern audiences. Her teaching and mentorship have been instrumental in training the next generation of artists, ensuring the art form's sustainability. She has worked to bridge the gap between traditional performances and contemporary adaptations, preserving the essence of Huangmei Opera while introducing new elements to keep it relevant.

Additionally, her involvement in promoting Huangmei Opera globally through performances and outreach activities has elevated the visibility of this traditional art form, expanding its audience base. Ms. Long's continued recognition through various awards during this period highlights her outstanding contribution to the preservation and evolution of Huangmei Opera. Her role as a cultural ambassador has not only solidified her legacy but also ensured Huangmei Opera's place in the future of Chinese traditional arts.

2.2 Discussion on Her Singing Techniques

In this section, we analyze the core singing techniques that have been pivotal to Ms. Long Baoling's performances and her continued success from 2020 to 2024. These techniques are not only a hallmark of her artistry but also a reflection of the rich tradition of Huangmei Opera. Her ability to integrate traditional techniques with contemporary interpretations has kept the art form dynamic and emotionally resonant.

Key elements of her vocal technique include Breathing, True Voice, Chest Voice, Crying Tone, Vibrato, and Ornamentation. These techniques are often employed in a delicate balance, allowing her to convey a wide range of emotions, from deep sorrow to triumphant resilience. The use of Breathing and True Voice emphasizes naturalness and purity, enabling her voice to flow seamlessly through various emotional landscapes. Chest Voice is frequently used to give her singing strength and depth, conveying the characters' inner strength and determination.

The Crying Tone is another defining aspect of her technique, allowing her to express the characters' pain and sorrow in a way that resonates deeply with audiences.

Vibrato and Ornamentation are strategically used to add emotional nuance, elevating the emotional depth of her performances and highlighting key moments in the narrative. These techniques are a testament to her deep understanding of both the technical and emotional aspects of Huangmei Opera, and their skillful application ensures that her performances remain not only technically impressive but emotionally compelling.

Through her mastery of these techniques, Ms. Long Baoling has effectively conveyed the complexities of Huangmei Opera characters and their stories, maintaining the relevance of this art form in contemporary times.

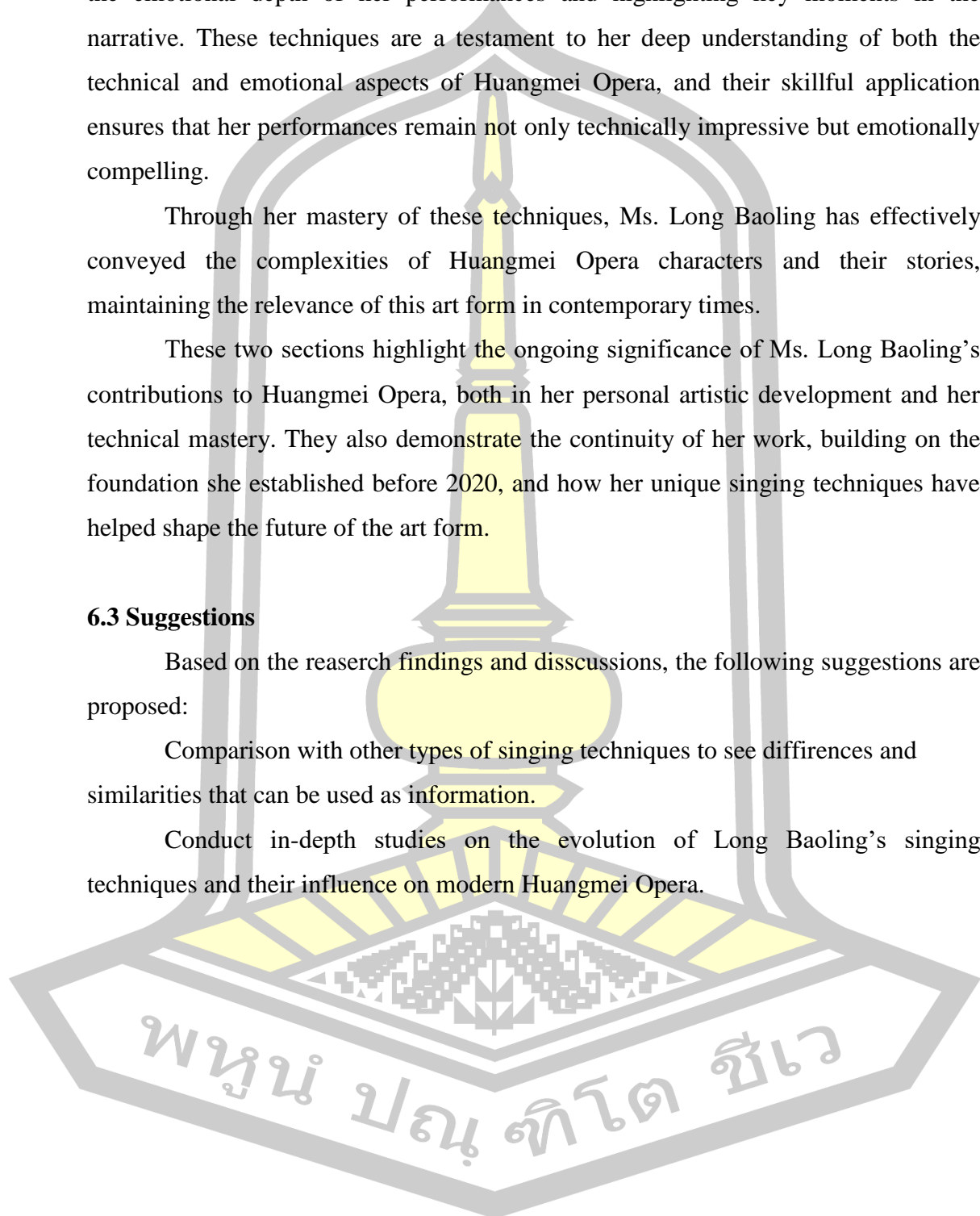
These two sections highlight the ongoing significance of Ms. Long Baoling's contributions to Huangmei Opera, both in her personal artistic development and her technical mastery. They also demonstrate the continuity of her work, building on the foundation she established before 2020, and how her unique singing techniques have helped shape the future of the art form.

6.3 Suggestions

Based on the reaserch findings and disscussions, the following suggestions are proposed:

Comparison with other types of singing techniques to see diffirences and similarities that can be used as information.

Conduct in-depth studies on the evolution of Long Baoling's singing techniques and their influence on modern Huangmei Opera.



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APPENDIX

Appendix I: Interviews (Excerpts)

Interview Record 1

Interview Time: 14:00 p.m on July,01, 2024

Location: Long Baoling's Huangmei opera studio

Interviewee: Long Baoling

Interview content:

Interviewer: Hello, Long Baoling! It's an honor to have this conversation with you. First, could you share how you were first exposed to Huangmei Opera?

Long Baoling: Of course. I grew up surrounded by Huangmei Opera. It's a traditional art form in my hometown, and I was introduced to it through family and the performances of neighbors. Although I didn't receive formal training at the start, I was deeply captivated by this art form.

Interviewer: How did you join the Huangmei Opera Troupe? How did this impact your artistic career?

Long Baoling: I decided to dedicate myself to Huangmei Opera when I was a teenager. After multiple auditions, I eventually joined a local Huangmei Opera troupe. Being part of the troupe provided me with more performance opportunities and artistic training, which greatly enhanced my skills and shaped my artistic style.

Interviewer: Throughout your career, were there any performances or artistic achievements that particularly stand out to you?

Long Baoling: There are a few performances that I will never forget, especially my role in Nv Er Cun (Daughter's Village). That performance marked a significant turning point in my connection with Huangmei Opera. These works allowed me to grow from being a regular performer to becoming one of the most recognized figures in the art form.

Interviewer: You've made significant efforts in passing on Huangmei Opera. Could you share your teaching experiences?

Long Baoling: I believe that teaching is not just about passing on technical skills but about continuing the cultural legacy of Huangmei Opera. I teach my students not only

the technicalities but also how to emotionally connect with the characters and performance. My teaching emphasizes the integration of practice and emotion, encouraging students to embody their roles authentically on stage.

Interviewer: You've contributed greatly to promoting Huangmei Opera. Could you talk about your efforts in this regard and your future plans?

Long Baoling: Promoting Huangmei Opera is one of my missions. I have organized performances, lectures, and public service activities to expand the influence of Huangmei Opera. Additionally, I am focused on using modern media platforms to bring this art form to a wider audience, making it accessible to people from different backgrounds and ensuring its growth.

Interviewer: How did your early life and education influence your development in Huangmei Opera?

Long Baoling: My hometown and early life had a huge influence on my emotional connection to Huangmei Opera. From a young age, I was exposed to the music and stories of Huangmei Opera, which sparked my love for the art. My family also encouraged me to pursue the arts, which was crucial for my growth as a performer.

Interviewer: In the early stages of your Huangmei Opera career, what challenges did you face, and how did these challenges shape your career?

Long Baoling: In the beginning, I faced many challenges, including financial difficulties and the intense competition in the field. However, these hardships strengthened my resolve to pursue the art, and they pushed me to continuously improve. Eventually, these experiences helped me build a solid foundation in Huangmei Opera.

Interviewer: Your rise to fame seems to be closely linked to certain key performances. Could you share one or two of your most impactful performances?

Long Baoling: One performance that stands out for me is Gu Sao Bian (The Sister-in-law Contest), where I had to collaborate with a partner on a very challenging role. This performance not only earned me the audience's admiration but also established my position in the world of Huangmei Opera.

Interviewer: You've received numerous awards and recognition for your work. How do you view these achievements and their significance for Huangmei Opera?

Long Baoling: These awards are a great honor for me, and they signify that my work is appreciated. More importantly, they represent a broader recognition of the value of Huangmei Opera. These honors don't only belong to me—they belong to the art form and the entire Huangmei Opera community.

Interviewer: What are your thoughts on the future development of Huangmei Opera? What further efforts do you think are needed to promote this art form?

Long Baoling: I believe Huangmei Opera has a bright future, but it needs more young people to join the field. We must continue to cultivate new talent, encourage innovation in performance, and at the same time, protect and preserve the traditional elements of Huangmei Opera to ensure it is passed down through generations.

Interview Record 2

Interview Time: 10:00 a.m on December,08, 2024

Location: Long Baoling's Huangmei opera studio

Interviewee: Long Baoling

Interview content:

Interviewer: Can you share your thoughts on the iconic excerpt "Shui Liao Huang Bang Zhong Zhuang Yuan" from Nv Fu Ma?

Long Baoling: In this segment, I delve into the classic piece "Who Would Have Gussed the Top Scholar" from the well-known Huangmei Opera The Female Imperial Consort. I discuss the importance of both tradition and innovation in performing this piece. I begin by highlighting that classic works like The Female Imperial Consort and The Heavenly Couple are not simply born overnight. They are the result of several generations of artists' continuous exploration and refinement. For example, when the piece "Shui Liao Huang Bang Zhong Zhuang Yuan" was first performed, it didn't fully express the emotional depth of the character Feng Suzhen. It was only after repeated performances and revisions that the version we know today was formed. I specifically mention Yuan Dashu and Chen Xueqin's contributions. Yuan Dashu felt that the original melody couldn't fully convey Feng Suzhen's complex emotions: she was both a woman and someone dressed as a top scholar, which created a conflict between her external identity and internal joy. At the suggestion of Chen Xueqin, the "dressing table tune" (a lively and agile melody) was introduced, capturing both her inner joy and external top

scholar identity. This adjustment became a classic and laid the foundation for the opera's widespread popularity.

When explaining the singing techniques, I emphasize the importance of sweet and delicate articulation. While portraying Feng Suzhen, it's necessary to show both her femininity and the dignified manner of a top scholar. The singing should balance lightness and steadiness, portraying her beauty while highlighting her scholarly grace.

I highlight that classic works are not just about melody but also the result of culture, wisdom, and love. The predecessors, through difficult times, continuously refined their craft, and it is because of their dedication and passion that we have these enduring classics. I feel it is my responsibility to inherit these classics, honor the works of our forebears, and ensure they continue to flourish in modern society.

I also emphasize that the essence of artistic creation lies not in the pursuit of fame and fortune, but in serving art and creating thoughtful, meaningful works for the audience. I observe that some contemporary artists focus too much on awards and box office success, overlooking the spirit behind the work. Truly classic works are those created for the sake of art, with depth, thoughtfulness, and human spirit.

I point out that the hallmark of a classic singing style is not simply singing the melody but truly understanding the emotions and stories behind it. Only then can the performance become rich and subtle, allowing the audience to feel the character's inner turmoil. Many singers perform beautifully but without a deep understanding of the story, which results in a surface-level skill that fails to touch the audience's soul.

In conclusion, I express my deep respect for the pioneers of Huangmei Opera. They contributed immensely to its inheritance and development. Our generation should take up their legacy with reverence and work to preserve, pass on, and promote these classics.

Interviewer: Could you elaborate on the song “Lai Lai Lai ” from Xiao Ci Dian?

Long Baoling: Little Farewell Shop is a representative work in Huangmei Opera, depicting the tragic fate and emotional awakening of a lower-class woman. The piece is not just a simple love story, but a reflection on societal oppression and class injustice. In the famous excerpt "Lai Lai Lai" the female protagonist is faced with the sorrow of her

lover leaving her, compounded by the revelation that he is departing with his wife. Her sadness is not just about losing love but about her helplessness and oppression as a woman in that feudal society. This powerful emotion is beautifully conveyed through the singing style of this piece. The context of Little Farewell Shop is set in the late Qing dynasty, during a time when societal norms severely repressed women. The protagonist, a small restaurant owner, endures her husband's cruelty but yearns for true love. Eventually, she embarks on a short-lived affair, which ultimately leads to tragedy because of the social constraints and class oppression of the time.

Interviewer: Could you share your insights on the excerpt “Jiang Shui Tao Tao” from Jin Yu Nu?

Long Baoling: "Jiang Shui Tao Tao" is a classic male vocal piece in Huangmei Opera, sung by the character Lao Jin Song, a working-class father struggling to support his daughter. This song was created by the folk artist Wu Laibao, who was a dock worker. His life experiences inspired the creation of this melody, which was later incorporated into the opera Jin Yu Nu. In the song, the powerful singing technique reflects the father's deep sorrow, resilience, and his sense of helplessness in a social system that offers little hope for the lower classes. The piece is not about flashy techniques, but about capturing the raw emotions of hardship and struggle.

Interviewer: How does the piece reflect social realities?

Long Baoling: The song Turbulent Rivers reveals the struggles of common people, particularly the sacrifices parents make for their children. It highlights the social injustices and poverty of the time. The piece evokes deep emotions, showcasing the silent resistance and hardships faced by the working class. This piece is more than just a musical performance; it serves as a commentary on the inequities of society. It resonates today as a reminder of the struggles of the disadvantaged and the sacrifices made for family and duty.

Shui liao huang bang zhong zhuang yuan 谁料皇榜中状元

haung mei xi 《nv fu ma》 xuan duan
黄梅戏《女驸马》选段

Transcription by Xue Wang
from fieldwork in 2024

(中快 欢乐地)



wei jiu li lang li jiayuan,
为 救 李 郎 离 家 园,
wo ye ceng fu guo qiong lin yan,
我 也 曾 赴 过 琼 林 宴,



shui liao huang bang zhong zhuang yuan,
谁 料 皇 榜 中 状 元,
wo ye ceng da ma yu jie qian,
我 也 曾 打 马 御 街 前,



zhongzhuangyuan zhe hong pao, mao cha gonghua hao wa hao xinxian na.
中 状 元 着 红 袍, 帽 插 宫 花 好 哇 好 新 鲜 哪。
ren ren kua wo pan an mao, shui zhi sha mao zhao wa zhaochanjuan na.
人 人 夸 我 潘 安 貌, 谁 知 纱 帽 罩 哇 罩 婵 娟 哪。



♩ = 83



wo kao zhuang yuan bu wei ba mingxian, wo kao zhuang yuan bu wei zuo gao
我 考 状 元 不 为 把 名 显, 我 考 状 元 不 为 做 高



guan, wei le duo qing de li gong zi, fu fu en ai hua hao yue er yuan na.
官, 为 了 多 情 的 李 公 子, 夫 妇 恩 爱 花 一 好 月 儿 圆 哪。

Xiao ci dian • lai lai lai
小 辞 店 • 来 来 来

Transcription by Xue Wang
from fieldwork in 2024



2

22



dao bei xiang cha wo wen ge ge de qing you。
倒 杯 香 茶 我 问 哥 哥 的 情 由。

25



wo wen ke ren jia zhu he suo? ni shuo dao
我 问 客 人 家 住 何 所? 你 说 道

28



jia zhu hu bei sheng gui fu zai huang zhou。
家 住 湖 北 省 贵 府 在 黄 州。

31



wo wen ke ren gao tang fu mu ke you? ni shuo dao ni de
我 问 客 人 高 堂 父 母 可 有? 你 说 道 你 的

34



er die niang zao ba wo de ge diu。
二 爹 娘 早 把 我 的 哥 丢。

37



wo wen ke ren kun zhong you ji shou? ni shuo dao
我 问 客 人 昆 仲 有 几 首? 你 说 道

40



wu you di xiong du zhan ao tou。 wo wen ke ren
无 有 弟 兄 独 占 鳌 头。 我 问 客 人

44

qi fang ke you? che huang de gui ye!
妻 房 可 有? 扯 谎 的 鬼 咂!

45 $\text{♩} = 60$

ni shuo
你 说

48

dao wu you qi zi zai jiang hu piao liu.
道 无 有 妻 子 在 江 湖 飘 流。

51

bi shi jian wen wo de ge he shi wei lu?
彼 时 间 问 我 的 哥 何 事 为 路?

54

ni shuo dao fan cui hua zai su hang er zhou.
你 说 道 贩 翠 花 在 苏 杭 二 州。

57

wo wen ke ren jiu zhu shi jiu zou?
我 问 客 人 久 住 是 就 走?

60

ni shuo dao zhi yao sheng yi hao jiu zhu wo de dian tou.
你 说 道 只 要 生 意 好 久 住 我 的 店 头。

63

zai dian fang wo kan ni wei ren zhong hou,
在 店 房 我 看 你 为 人 忠 厚，

4





5



6

115



bu ren xiang lian nv liu. ge yao xue song bai mu
不认香莲女流。哥要学松柏木

118



si ji chang jiu, qie mo xue huang di cao
四季长久，切莫学荒地草

121



you chun wu qiu. ge yao zuo hong deng long
有春无秋。哥要做红灯笼

124



zhao qian zhao hou, qie mo xue la zhu xin
照前照后，切莫学蜡烛芯

127



dian bu dao tou. wei wo de ge ge niang jia lu
点不到头。为我的哥哥娘家路

130



san nian shao zou, wo wei ge yu qin qi peng you men
三年少走，我为哥与亲戚朋友们

133 $\text{♩} = 58$



zuo xia le dui tou. wo wei ge yu gong po
作下了对头。我为哥与公婆

136



chang chang kou jiao, wo wei ge yu qin zhang fu da ma bu xiu.
常常口角，我为哥与亲丈夫打骂不休。

140 7



qian su wan su wo su bu qing chu,
千 诉 万 诉 我 诉 不 清 楚,

143



wo hao bi
我 好 比

146



da shang le qiang dao chuan shi cuo zai
搭 上 了 强 盗 船 失 错 在

149



dang chu.
当 初。

152




Jiang shui tao tao xiang dong liu

江水滔滔向东流

jin yu nu lao jin song chang
(《金玉奴》老金松唱)Transcription by Xue Wang
from fieldwork in 2024

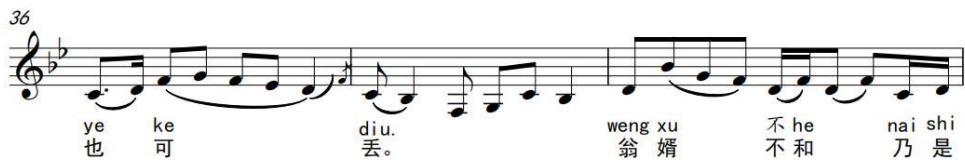
慢



衣 打 打 衣 打 打 打 空 仓 令 仓 衣 令 仓 个 令 仓 衣 令 仓 打 呆 呆

jiang shui tao tao xiang dong
江 水 滔 滔 向 东liu, er de rizi
流, 儿 的 日 子cai kai tou. ke lian ni luo di jiu
才 开 头. 可 怜 你 落 地 就sang le qin shengde mu, gen zhe wo yan men qiu qi
丧 了 亲 生 的 母, 跟 着 我 沿 门 求 乞dao chu zou. hao si (a) shui mian shang de
到 处 走. 好 似 (啊) 水 面 上 的fu ping cao, feng chui lang lang (wai)
浮 萍 草, 风 吹 浪 浪 (外)

2



45



fu qi de qing, er la ni zen neng he (wa) ta
夫 妻 的 情, 儿 啦 你 怎 能 和 (哇) 他

48



du chun qiu. zhi yao (wa) nv er ni
度 春 秋。 只 要 (哇) 女 儿 你

51



guo de hao die die wo wan jian qian nan wo
过 得 好 爹 爹 我 万 艰 千 难 我

54



ye neng gou ren shou. bu shi (a) die die
也 能 够 忍 受。 不 是 (啊) 爹 爹

57



jian gu tou, er (na) yi da da
贱 骨 头, 儿 (呐) 衣 打 打

60



衣 打 打 打 空 仓 令 仓 衣 令 仓 个 令 仓 衣 令 仓 打 采 采

63



pa de shi zai ni men fu qi (ya) zhong jian
怕 的 是 在 你 们 夫 妻 (呀) 中 间

66



tian shen gou.
添 深 沟。

BIOGRAPHY

| | |
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