

# A Study on the Development and Transmission of Filial Culture in the Legend of Ding Lan Carved Wood

WANG Bo

Jiangsu University, Zhenjiang, China

At present, the protection of the legend of Ding Lan Carved Wood is declining and fails to give full play to its function of building filial culture. Combined with the examination of the contemporary inheritance and protection of the legend of Ding Lan Carved Wood, we make full use of the existing resources of the legend of Ding Lan Carved Wood in urban areas and unite the cities of Xuzhou, Xingping, and Jiaozuo to put forward practical and favorable suggestions for development and inheritance, and jointly promote the exploration of the development and inheritance path of the filial culture of the legend of Ding Lan Carved Wood.

*Keywords:* Ding Lan Carved Wood, filial piety culture, protection, inheritance

## Introduction

In *Filial Piety and Chinese Culture*, Mr. Xiao Qunzhong states, “Filial culture refers to the sum of Chinese culture and the content and manner of Chinese people’s filial consciousness and filial behavior, as well as their historical process, political attribution and extensive social derivation” (2001, p. 247). To a certain extent, it can be said that the main cultural foundation of Chinese traditional culture is filial culture. The spirit of filial piety contained in the legend of Ding Lan Carved Wood is also an important component of contemporary filial culture. Taking the legend of Ding Lan Carved Wood as an example, this paper explores the culture of filial piety carried by the legend, combines it with an examination of the contemporary preservation of the legend of Ding Lan Carved Wood, considers the effective path for the adequate preservation and transmission of the legend of Ding Lan Carved Wood, and at the same time provides a case study for the preservation and transmission of intangible cultural heritage in contemporary filial culture.

## Ding Lan Carved Wood Legend Content

Ding Lan Carved Wood legend in historical records there are some differences, but the basic structure is generally consistent, which all have the following plot: Ding Lan lost his parents when he was young, and carved wood to serve his relatives, offerings such as life; to wife unfilial or neighbors false object events as an example, showing the efficacy of the wood man psychic; wood man was humiliated, Ding Lan revenge was convicted; Ding Lan because of filial piety was appointed by the court. In the folk legends of different regions, there are only some local colors attached to the storyline: Ding Lan was irritable when he was young and often scolded his mother; Ding Lan repented after seeing the scene of animal performing filial piety; when his mother saw Ding Lan running to herself while serving rice, she thought she was going to be scolded again and crashed

into a tree and died; Ding Lan was so remorseful that he cut down the tree that killed his mother, carved wood to serve his mother, and worshiped her day by day. In the folk oral story, Ding Lan was at first an unfilial son who often scolded his mother, but he repented because he saw the animal performing filial piety, but the unknown mother was afraid of scolding and hit the tree and died, so Ding Lan carved wood for his mother and worshipped her every day. It can be said that the reason why Ding Lan carved wood for his mother to worship every day is largely due to his remorse for his previous unfilial behavior, and he experienced a change from “unfilial” to “filial”.

### The Current Situation of the Protection and Development

The locations of the legend of Ding Lan Carved Wood are all cities with a strong historical and cultural flavor in China. These cities have a deep cultural heritage and rich heritage resources. Moreover, the legend of Ding Lan Carved Wood itself has rich cultural connotation, and the filial piety propagated is an important part of contemporary filial culture.

Table 1

#### *Ding Lan Carved Wood (Mother) Legend Inheritance*

Time	Time	City of inheritance
The Second Batch of Provincial Intangible Cultural Heritage in Henan Province	2009	Jiaozuo City, Henan Province
The Second Batch of Municipal Intangible Cultural Heritage in Changde City, Hunan Province	2010	Linli County, Changde City, Hunan Province
The Fourth Batch of Provincial Intangible Cultural Heritage in Shaanxi Province	2013	Xingping, Shaanxi Province
The Fourth Batch of Provincial Intangible Cultural Heritage in Jiangsu Province	2016	Feng County, Xuzhou City, Jiangsu Province

The content of the legends circulated in different regions varies somewhat, which is directly related to the local geographical environment, customs, and culture, and shows the significant regional culture and the cultural perception and emotion of the local people. Departments at all levels in these areas have protected and developed the legend of Ding Lan Carved Wood to a certain extent under the guidance of relevant national policies and regulations, and have also obtained corresponding effects.

Table 2

#### *Conservation of the Ding Lan Carved Wood Legend*

Area	Site remains	Current conservation efforts
Xingping, Shaanxi Province	In the village of Zixiao in Xingping, Shaanxi, there is the “Ding Gong Ancestral Hall”; the tomb of Ding Lan in a nearby field; and the Filial Piety Cultural Park.	(i) In the village of Zixiao, there is the “Ding Gong Ancestral Hall” in memory of Ding Lan, in which a statue of Ding Lan is enshrined. (ii) In the fields near Zixiao village, there is a well-preserved tomb of Ding Lan, which is visited by people every year to pay homage. (iii) The creation of a filial piety cultural park.
Xuzhou, Jiangsu Province	Ding Lan Tomb, the ruins of Ding Gong Ancestral Hall and ancient monuments exist in Ding Lan Ji Village, Fengxian Fengcheng Town; Ding Lan Temple Incense Assembly.	(i) The relevant departments are working hard to compile the legend of Ding Lan’s carved wood. (ii) The authorities concerned are excavating and restoring Ding Lan’s tomb, Ding Gong Temple, and other relics and sites. (iii) The government is taking the initiative to restore the annual Ding Lan Temple Incense Assembly on the third day of the lunar month and the third day of March.

Table 2 to be continued

Changde City, Hunan Province	Official Pavilion Temple and Carved Wood Niang in Carved Wood Mountain Township, Linli County.	(i) In 2015, the film “Ding Lan Carved Wood” was produced to tell the legend of Chinese filial piety in it. (ii) Applying for a prefectural project to build the Immediately Wooden Mountain Forest Park. (iii) Incorporating elements of local folklore such as the Jinghe Opera and the Li Zhou Drum.
Xiangfan City, Hubei Province	The “Filial Piety Bridge” monument and the spring weir in the village of Spring Weir, Jiuji Town, Nanzhang County, were destroyed by flooding.	Preserving the stone monument of the Filial Piety Bridge and passing on the culture of filial piety.
Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province	Ding Lan Memorial Hall in Dingqiao Town, Jianggan District.	(i) The Ding Lan Memorial Hall was established in Gaoting Mountain Scenic Area to introduce the deeds of Ding Lan and to pass on and promote the culture of filial piety. (ii) Dingqiao Town, Jianggan District, with its simple folk style of “filial piety in life, filial piety in fun”, was selected as one of the “Filial Piety First—Contemporary Zhejiang Filial Stories”.

The protection and development of the legend of Ding Lan Carved Wood in these areas have achieved certain results, but there are still some problems. There are only a few landscapes related to the legend of Ding Lan Carved Wood in these areas today, and they are basically very dilapidated, or the dilapidated landscapes are restored. At the same time the landscape is featureless and does not have the characteristics of the legend. Therefore, it is difficult to attract people outside the local area and its surrounding areas, and to a certain extent, it is difficult for tourists to resonate and promote economic consumption. Due to the rapid development and changes of the times, traditional performing arts cannot attract the young people of today, and the heirs of traditional performing arts such as opera are getting old and will soon develop to a situation where they will disappear because there is no one to inherit the folk culture skills.

### The Dilemma Facing the Development of the Contemporary Heritage

In recent years, with the fusion and overlapping of modern culture and various foreign cultural values, filial piety culture is not as valued as before and its development has been hindered. The dilemmas to be faced in promoting the culture of filial piety in the legend of Ding Lan Carved Wood are mainly the following.

Firstly, the people do not fundamentally value the filial culture contained in the legend of Ding Lan Carved Wood, and they are increasingly negligent in carrying forward the filial culture idea in the legend of Ding Lan Carved Wood. In the ancient society, the “filial culture” restrained the behavior and morality of children, and the ancient society also had the sanction of the law of words and deeds for the people who were “unfilial”, and as children, they had to satisfy their parents completely. However, with the development of society, people’s understanding of filial culture has also changed, and the contemporary thinking of filial culture is no longer fully compatible with the traditional filial culture, and the importance of filial culture has gradually weakened.

Second, Ding Lan Carved Wood legend of filial culture is weakening in the new era of modern society. In today’s society, people are more in pursuit of the satisfaction of material life, often neglecting the needs of the spiritual world. In ancient times, the culture of filial piety passed down from generation to generation and the unique political system had a profound influence on people’s values. At that time, people identified with the ideology and culture of “family and nation as one, loyalty and filial piety as one” from the root. Nowadays, people’s pursuit of material things has led to a gradual spiritual emptiness, which has also led to the inability of folklore to spread and develop, and the legends are gradually facing an endangered situation.

Third, the modern emerging media impact on the cultural connotation of the legend. Due to the rapid takeoff of new media communication on the Internet, the media are more willing to filter, produce, and disseminate information according to the public's preference. The traditional culture that was once widely circulated among the people is being ignored and forgotten. Emerging media are unmatched by traditional communication methods, both in terms of content and speed of dissemination. In the past, when people listened to legends, they did so through traditional means, such as oral narration by the elderly to the young. But now people are turning to the new media, and the pace of life has become faster, so people are no longer using the traditional methods, which is bound to bring impact.

### **Development and Inheritance Path**

#### **Relying on the Landscape for Narrative**

The "landscape production" means the transformation, reconstruction, and attachment of the landscape production with the linguistic narrative as the premise of memory, local scholars and the use of merchants as the main body of production, and buildings, sculptures, billboards, guide words and other multi-dimensional forms as the narrative elements. The existing human landscape of filial culture related to the legend of Ding Lan Carved Wood contains Ding Lan's hometown, Ding Lan's tomb, Ding Lan's ancestral hall, Ding Lan's memorial hall, and so on. Through the existing basic cultural landscape, the "Filial Piety Culture Museum" will be built to exhibit Ding Lan's relics and related filial culture research materials intact and without time limit, to show the core value of filial culture and create a cultural center focusing on the promotion of filial culture. Using the landscape for narrative, fully protect the landscape resources and play the function of the landscape to awaken the legendary memory narrative.

#### **Relying on New Media and Building a Network Platform for Non-heritage**

The Internet is an important part of the new media. With the power of new media, especially the Internet, we can break the time and space limitation of non-genetic heritage and provide more personalized services for the public. The new media are incomparable to traditional methods of communication in terms of both content and speed of dissemination. There are various ways of inheritance with new media as the carrier, such as producing the film and TV works of "Ding Lan Carved Wood", adding the content of the legend of Ding Lan Carved Wood in the tourism promotion film, displaying the story on the WeChat public number for dissemination, etc. We can also use the network self-media and live broadcast platform to carry out personalized publicity display, so that people can learn about the legend of Ding Lan Carved Wood.

#### **Creating a Festival on the Theme of Filial Piety Culture in the New Era**

Nowadays, various regions in China are actively holding cultural arts festivals with regional characteristics, and the premiere of the new pear opera Ding Lan Carved Wood at the Liyuan Classical Theatre in Quanzhou, Fujian Province on December 6, 2016 is a good example of exploitation, but it can still be further developed. Combine the legend of Ding Lan Carved Wood with the Chongyang Festival. On the one hand, it can make the legend of Ding Lan Carved Wood get better inheritance and protection; on the other hand, it can highlight the characteristics of the legend of Ding Lan Carved Wood focusing on the theme of filial piety culture. This way of culture and art festival can not only meet people's spiritual needs, but also promote cultural communication between people. When the scale of the festival becomes bigger and bigger, it can also attract investment to promote the local cultural construction and gain certain economic benefits.

### Conclusion

The connotation of filial piety culture contained in the legend of Ding Lan Carved Wood is a valuable spiritual treasure of the Chinese nation and has a great impact on contemporary society. By exploring the filial piety culture carried by the legend of Ding Lan Carved Wood and combining it with the field investigation of the contemporary inheritance and protection of the legend of Ding Lan Carved Wood, we can propose practical suggestions for the full protection and rational utilization of the legend of Ding Lan Carved Wood in the context of contemporary filial culture inheritance. It is not only expected that the legend of Ding Lan Carved Wood can be better preserved and inherited, and its cultural and economic space developed, but also expected that this can provide case studies for the protection and inheritance of intangible cultural heritage, and can give new inspiration and energy to the development and progress of modern society's spiritual civilization, so that economic benefits and social culture can be harmonized.

### References

- Chen, H. (2011). The evolution of the image of filial son Ding Lan's "carving wood to serve his relatives". *The Seventh Peking University History Forum Proceedings*. Department of History, Peking University.
- Li, S. W. (2017a). On the similarities and differences between the artistic traditions of "Ding Lan carving wood" of Han and Yi. *Journal of Qinghai University of Nationalities (Social Science Edition)*, 43(4), 126-130.
- Li, S. W. (2017b). Ding Lan carving wood: A traditional practice of religious art therapy. *Ethnic Art*, 33(4), 118-123.
- Xiao, Q. Z. (2001). *Filial piety and Chinese culture*. Beijing: People's Publishing House.
- Xie, Z. C. (2013). The wind does not stop when the tree wants to be still—A discussion on the creation of the new pear opera Ding Lan Carving Wood. *Fujian Art*, 54(3), 68-68.
- Yang, Y. T. (2013). Carving wood. *Film Literature*, 56(22), 182-192.
- Yu, H. Y. (2015). The landscape narrative and language narrative of the legend of "White Snake". *Journal of Hubei University (Philosophy and Social Science Edition)*, 42(4), 97-102.
- Zheng, Z. D. (1996). *A history of Chinese popular literature*. Shanghai: Oriental Publishing House.