

# Exploring the Artistic Characteristics and Social Functions of Spring Gongs in Pingxiang, Jiangxi Province under the Perspective of Intangible Cultural Heritage

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## Abstract

As a national intangible cultural heritage item, the spring gongs of Pingxiang, Jiangxi Province, China, have unique artistic characteristics and diversified social functions, which make them a typical case for the study of the inheritance and development of intangible cultural heritage. This paper deeply analyzes the folk cultural background of Pingxiang spring gongs, discusses its historical origin, cultural ecology and inheritance forms, and analyzes the artistic characteristics of spring gongs in terms of performance forms, artistic styles and cultural symbols, showing its unique regional characteristics and artistic charm. The results of the study show that by analyzing the core functions of spring gongs in maintaining local memory and cultivating cultural identity in the strategy of rural revitalization, and revealing its role as a medium of grass-roots cultural governance in promoting community education and the integrated development of culture and tourism, the study can provide a decision-making basis for the local government to build a living non-genetic inheritance system and for cultural workers to innovate their communication mode, which is important for exploring the effective paths for the traditional art to intervene in the governance of the contemporary society.

**Keywords:** spring gong, non-heritage, social function, artistic characteristics, education and dissemination

## 1.Introduction

Intangible cultural heritage (ICH), as the “living cultural heritage” advocated by UNESCO, not only carries the memory of human social development and historical civilization, but also is an important carrier of national cultural heritage, and a core cornerstone of regional cultural identity and social cohesion (Guo Cuixia, 2023). As one of the national intangible cultural heritage programs, the Pingxiang spring gongs in

Jiangxi Province, China, have become a typical case study for the inheritance and development of intangible cultural heritage by virtue of their “living” artistic characteristics and diversified social functions (Guo Jianbo, 2022).

The UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage explicitly lists “enhancing community cohesion” and “promoting sustainable development” as the core objectives of ICH safeguarding, which provides an international policy context for understanding the social functions of spring gongs. Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage (2018) and China's Opinions on the Implementation of the Rural Revitalization Strategy (2018) emphasize the role of NRH in “cultivating new energies for rural development” and the “14th Five-Year” Intangible Cultural Heritage Protection Plan (2021), emphasizing the special role of NCH in “cultivating new impetus for rural development” and “innovating grass-roots social governance”, highlighting the realistic expectation of NCH social functions at the policy level. In recent years, domestic scholars have carried out a wide range of research in the field of intangible cultural heritage. analyzes in-depth the impact of modernization on the cultural heritage and its protection, describes the changes, evolution, and re-creation of non-legacy culture in the process of historical development, and analyzes the nature, form, structure, function, and value of the non-legacy culture in the social relationship(WU Fengzhu, 2024). Li Songzhi, Lu Youran & Li Lan (2023) argue that intangible cultural heritage is both a cultural industrial resource for rural revitalization and a spiritual driving force for rural revitalization.

Especially for the unique folkloric performance form of spring gongs, there is a lack of systematic and in-depth exploration from the perspectives of cultural ecology and social function. In this context, in order to explore the effective path for the intervention of traditional non-heritage art in contemporary social governance in Pingxiang, Jiangxi Province, this study takes the spring gongs in Pingxiang, Jiangxi Province, China, as the object, and comprehensively explores the manifestation of spring gongs in local culture and their multifunctional value from the perspectives of artistic characteristics and social functions. This study aims to analyze the inheritance forms and social functions of spring gongs, to reveal their role in community building and cultural identity, and to provide a theoretical basis and practical reference for the preservation and inheritance of intangible cultural heritage in China.

The research value of Pingxiang spring gongs lies not only in the unique artistic expression, but also in the deep interaction with the local cultural ecology and social functions. Compared with other regional forms of non-heritage (e.g. the narrative tradition of Jiangsu commentary, or the technical inheritance of Sichuan opera's face-changing), Pingxiang's spring gongs are characterized by the core features of

“improvisational narrative”, “dialectal rap” and “ritual performance”, which can be distinctly regional and dynamically adapted. With “improvisational narrative”, “dialect rap” and “ritual performance” as its core features, the Pingxiang Chunluo presents distinct regionality and dynamic adaptability, and can become an effective tool for community cohesion, education and governance.

Based on this, this paper argues that Pingxiang Chunluo provides a replicable practical path for traditional art to intervene in contemporary social governance through the two-way interaction mechanism of “artistic characteristics - social functions”. This paper utilizes literature analysis, fieldwork, interviews and case studies to explore the following questions: First, how does the art form of the spring gong construct local cultural memory and what kind of artistic characteristics does it present? Second, how do its ritual performances and community interactions translate into cultural governance?

## **2. Folk cultural background of Pingxiang spring gongs**

### **2.1 Historical origin**

Pingxiang is located in the junction of Jiangxi and Hunan, since ancient times, it has been called “the thoroughfare of Hunan and Jiangxi” and “the throat of Wu and Chu”, and its unique geographic location has made it an important hub for north-south land transportation. Pingxiang has always been a place of war, frequent wars and population migration has promoted the convergence and fusion of different regional cultures, forming a social pattern of “five mixed parties”. This historical background on the language, beliefs, customs and other aspects of the local culture of Pingxiang has had a far-reaching impact, shaping its unique and distinctive folk culture characteristics. For example, “Address Names of Pingxiang City, Jiangxi Province” records the migration history of 5069 natural villages in Pingxiang, covering the remains of natural villages built before the Tang Dynasty.

The idea that Pingxiang spring gongs originated in the Qing Dynasty of China can be supported by relevant records such as “Pingxiang County Records” and “Zhaoping Zhiliao”. However, for the specific form of Pingxiang spring gongs, there are two main statements in the academic world. One point of view that the spring gong is initially “spring” form. During the Qing Dynasty, the government would dispatch government officials according to the 24 seasons, holding gongs and drums to villages and households, sounding gongs to inform the agricultural affairs and seasonal changes, to enhance the people in a timely manner to planting and farming. This activity was called “sending spring”(Fang Kaixin, 2025). With the popularization of calendars, the function of reporting spring gradually faded and eventually evolved into a form of

festive worship and entertainment. Another viewpoint is that the spring gong originated from the form of “asking for food”. It is believed that two Pingxiang merchants (surnamed Zhou and Wu) faced difficulties due to unfavorable business conditions in Changsha and ran out of money when they returned to their hometown. In desperation, they sawed a drum in half and sang and performed while beating it, begging for food and money along the streets, and finally managed to return home. As a result, this form was gradually spread, and indirectly presented the original artistic characteristics and social functions of Pingxiang spring gongs. Although the literature has not yet clearly indicated the exact source of these statements, but according to the “Pingxiang County Records” and the traditional spring gongs can be found in the singing of the relevant basis, such as the “Chinese Opera Tone Integration (Sun shen, 1984)”, “Chinese Local Opera Integration - Jiangxi Province Volume (Chinese Dramatic Association, 1962)”, “China Folk Songs Collection (Lv Ji, 1996)” and other writings, there are spring gongs sung in the relevant records and lyrics. These records, not only data supporting the historical development of Pingxiang spring gong culture, but also presents the fusion of Pingxiang spring gongs with local operas in the subsequent dissemination, which not only shows that Pingxiang spring gongs have distinctive and unique artistic characteristics, but also has a certain social function.

## 2.2 Cultural ecology

The formation of Pingxiang's ecological culture is deeply influenced by its geography and natural environment, which has bred rich historical traditions and cultural relics. Pingxiang City Museum Comrade Chen Quanchang in 1979 in Pingxiang City, Luxi County, Duanli Village archaeological discovery, this place for the Neolithic site. This argument has some correlation with the reproduction of Pingxiang's “Three Miao Clans”, which deduces that Pingxiang has an early cultural system. These sites reflect the survival mode of human beings who carried out farming and fishing activities in the hills and river valleys (Zou Songlin, 2017).

The development of Pingxiang culture is not only influenced by the natural environment, but also deeply reflects the dynamic evolution of social form and cultural system. According to the record of “Provincial Chronicle”, there were only three cities in Jiangxi during the Shang Dynasty (Wu Cheng, Niutou Cheng and Tanzhong Ancient City). The discovery of the Santian Ancient City site not only overturns the traditional view that the Shang culture did not cross the Yangtze River, but also further proves the depth of interaction between early culture and the natural environment in the Pingxiang area (Tang Jigen & An Baopeng, 2011). The studies of Liu Minhua (1991) and Ao Yousheng (2005) on the site of Tianzhong Ancient City further confirmed the

evolutionary trajectory of Pingxiang culture under the influence of the ecological environment. These archaeological results are highly compatible with Steward's theory of cultural ecology, which emphasizes the dynamic interaction between human beings and the environment, and provide a reliable empirical basis for the analysis of the cultural ecosystem of Pingxiang. With the change of dynasties and social changes, Pingxiang culture gradually absorbed and integrated Ru Shi Tao and other thought systems, forming a multifaceted coexistence and distinctive cultural ecological pattern. For example, the spread of Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism culture in Pingxiang is a typical embodiment of the evolution of cultural adaptation. According to "Zhaoping Zhilu - school - school palace" records: "Tang Wude, the county magistrate Tang Zun first built the county school in the county south of Baoji Temple left." This historical fact reflects the spread of Buddhist thought, but also marks the institutionalization of the Confucian education system, which further promotes the formation of cultural integration and the pattern of thought transmission.

As a representative form of local intangible cultural heritage, Pingxiang spring gong culture focuses on the interactive relationship between human and nature, culture and society. The performance form of spring gongs originates from the production rhythm and natural rituals of the farming society, reflecting the reverence and reliance on the natural environment in the music rhythm and performance content. At the same time, the inheritance of the spring gong culture depends on the local settlement structure and social network, which is highly consistent with the dynamic adaptation emphasized in the theory of cultural ecology. Therefore, the conservation of the spring gong culture should be considered from the perspective of a cultural ecological reserve and placed in the interactive system of nature, society and culture.

### 2.3 Forms of transmission

The original function of the spring gong, which was mainly active in Pingxiang, was to "announce spring" in the local dialect. With the development of the society, the spring gongs gradually evolved into an art form with the nature of performance. The performance form and content of spring gongs are relatively simple, usually based on narratives, without fixed lyrics, with improvisation as the main feature. The performance occasions are mostly related to wedding and housewarming celebrations, the number of performers is mainly single, and the inheritance method follows the traditional master-disciple system.

As the cultural adhesive of social relationship network, the generation and transmutation of spring gongs is the aesthetic reflection of the social structure change in Pingxiang area. At the level of the clan community, the spring gong performers are

embedded in the local social network in the form of mobile performances “traveling from village to village”. For example, through the creation of the “Hu Ancestral Hall Restoration Story”, the gong team of Xiabu Village in Xiangdong District reconstructed the historical memory of the family in clan rituals, so that the descendants of the Hu Clan, who live in Guangdong, Fujian, and Zhejiang, regained their cultural belonging when they returned to their hometowns in the Spring Festival. At the level of labor collaboration, farming-themed pieces of the spring gong, such as “Opening the Rice Planting Gate” and “Tea Picking Tune,” were once used as tools for rhythmic instruction and emotional regulation in collective labor. 2021, in the reclaimed rice fields of Happiness Village in Mashan, old artists improvised the “Horns of Machining,” which inherited the rhythmic structure of the traditional spring gong while incorporating elements of modern agriculture, and has become the cultural medium connecting the traditional farming civilization with modern farming techniques. At the level of community governance, the innovative practice of “spring gong mediation” implemented in Shangli County in 2023 shows that community workers adapted cases of neighborhood disputes into spring gong operas such as “The Zhang Family Builds a Wall,” which resolved conflicts through witty and humorous performances. These figurative cultural practices show that the spring gongs continue to recreate the cultural fabric and interpersonal networks of local societies through ritual performances, production collaboration, dispute mediation, and other socialized application scenarios.

### 3. Artistic Characteristics of Spring Gong

#### 3.1 Performance Forms

Pingxiang spring gong is a folk art form that integrates local language, rap, opera, music and performance. Its flexible and changeable performance form makes it an important carrier of farming culture and local folklore. In the process of long-term development, the performance form of Pingxiang spring gongs has experienced a simple form from the early single rap, gradually developed into a more complex form of duet and group performance. This dynamic evolution not only preserves the strong local characteristics, but also promotes the artistic characteristics of the spring gongs as well as the inheritance and innovation in the local culture through the more interactive and adaptable performance mode.

The performance form of Pingxiang spring gongs is mainly composed of the following aspects, firstly, the transformation of the number of performers, through the interview with Mr. Yong Kaiquan, the national intangible culture inheritor, it is understood that the performance form of Pingxiang spring gongs was initially dominated by a single person singing, and the performers, who are both drum and gong

striking and rapping, walk around the streets and lanes to carry out improvisational performances. This form is more common in village fairs or small festivals (wedding, housewarming), and can flexibly adapt to the limitations of the performance venue. However, due to the fact that the single-player performance form is relatively single, it is difficult to meet the needs of inheritance and development, and the Chunluo has gradually developed the double-player and group performance forms. The two-person performance enhances the interactivity and fun through duet singing and question-and-answer sessions. For example, in local events or celebrations such as traditional festivals, the performers usually use counterparts, groups, helpers and break-ups to highlight the festive atmosphere of the scene. Group performances further incorporate modern music and dance movements, and enhance stage presence through multi-role division of labor. This evolution from single to multiple performers not only enriches the form of performance, but also reflects the adaptability of the spring gong culture to the needs of the society.

Secondly, the performance environment of Pingxiang spring gongs is also diversified with the evolution of social form. In the early days, spring gongs were mostly performed in the countryside market or in the fields and countryside, although the performance venues were flexible and changeable, they were scattered and in poor conditions, and their spread was relatively limited. However, with the development of local economy and the enhancement of regional cultural identity, the spring gongs gradually broke through the limitations of the early performance environment. In particular, based on the increase in numbers and the richness of performance forms, the spring gongs began to be integrated into more formal occasions, such as local celebrations, community activities, and regional cultural festivals (Chen Yanwei, 2023). This change not only enhances the spread of the spring gongs, but also promotes their wider acceptance as local cultural symbols. For example, spring gongs are invited to perform at important festivals in the Pingxiang region every year, and the fixed stage venues and audience groups have made them gradually become an important part of regional cultural activities. This transformation of the performance environment from “unfixed” to “fixed venue” fully demonstrates the adaptive ability and dynamic evolution of the propagation path of spring gong culture driven by social support and cultural policies.

Again, the performance content of Pingxiang spring gongs has gradually shown a diversified development trend. The performance content of traditional spring gongs is relatively single, mostly focusing on festive and cheerful themes, with limited artistic infectious power and forms of expression. With the ever-changing needs of society, the performance of spring gongs gradually breaks through the limitations of traditional



themes and incorporates more themes with contemporary characteristics and social significance to increase the performance content (Guo Jianbo, 2022). For example, social hotspots such as school safety, epidemic prevention and control, patriotic education, food safety and local culture have made the spring gongs closer to contemporary society and the audience's lives, enriching their cultural connotations. This transformation not only enhances the social function value of spring gong culture, but also promotes its dissemination and inheritance in the new era.

Finally, in order to adapt to the development needs of modernization, Pingxiang spring gongs constantly innovate their artistic expression, through the fusion of singing elements (the antiphonal tune of tea picking opera and the high cadence of Xiang opera), traditional folk music and the introduction of modern music (electronic music), which enhances their artistic expressiveness and ornamental power on the basis of maintaining the traditional cultural characteristics. This kind of diversification of performance content not only broadens the artistic expression space of spring gongs, but also injects new vitality into its inheritance and dissemination in the modern society. The transformation of the performance form of Pingxiang spring gongs from single person to group, from countryside to city, and from single content to diversified themes fully demonstrates its adaptability and vitality as an intangible cultural heritage in the dynamic evolution.

### 3.2 Artistic style

The artistic style of Pingxiang spring gongs not only originates from the diversity of performance forms, but also reflects the cultural and artistic qualities such as the improvisation of the language narrative behind the performance, the diversity of the singing voice and the variability of the music. These artistic styles have been gradually formed in the historical evolution of the spring gongs, and have become the important symbols distinguishing them from other folk performing arts.

The language of Pingxiang spring gongs is improvisational and narrative style. The language of Pingxiang spring gongs is centered on the local dialect, which is not only close to the local life, but also has a strong improvisational narrative, which is a distinctive feature of the artistic style of Pingxiang spring gongs. In the interview with the inheritor, the inheritor mentioned, "The spring gong is seven parts vernacular and three parts singing, saying is the core of the spring gong, only through saying the common people can understand, just like nagging the family as a narrative, the content must be close to the daily life, so that not only can Ranjin people laugh out, listen to, and also can be able to enliven the atmosphere of the scene." This improvisational narrativity endows the spring gong performance with a vibrant sense of life, and



through the use of local dialects, it brings the performance and the audience closer together, while also carrying rich local cultural memories as well as collective meanings (Wang Xiubo, 2019). Developed through fieldwork, this style of improvisational narrative can be flexibly performed according to different environments. For example, in campus culture dissemination activities, Pingxiang spring gongs combine modern culture with practical ideas, and through improvisation narrative content covers campus safety, etiquette education, environmental protection and other topics. This kind of improvisation makes the spring gong not only a form of entertainment, but also assumes the social function of thought dissemination and education. It can be seen that the narrative improvisation not only highlights the artistic characteristics of Pingxiang spring gongs, but also draws the distance between the performance and the audience through the use of local dialects, showing its multiple values in inheritance and innovation.

The singing style of Pingxiang spring gongs is distinctive, and according to the inheritor, “singing” is the essence of the art style of spring gongs, and its unique flavor reflects the unique style of spring gongs, and it is also an important symbol for distinguishing other folk arts. Through field investigation, it is found that the singing style of Pingxiang spring gongs is a fusion of local language and various elements of opera, such as Cai Cha Opera (anti-emotional tone), Xiang Opera (high accent), etc. Such a fusion is not a simple splicing, but a set of art system gradually formed through long-term practice. In the specific use of singing, Pingxiang Chunluo has a strict art (Yu Lanlan, 2019). It requires a full resonant cavity and good breath control, and also emphasizes the standardization of the biting words. For example, the rhythmic composition of the spring gong singing needs to pay attention to the combination of sound rhyme, key rhyme, word rhyme, score rhyme, rhythm, love rhyme, body rhyme and other levels. For example, in the vocal rhyme, usually adopting the double number as the main, with two, four, eight lines a rhyme, highlighting its singing in the performance of the flavor. The coordinated use of this multi-level rhyme not only strengthens the artistic infectiousness of the singing, but also increases the distinctive flavor, and highlights the unique localization and deep integration of the elements of the opera. In addition, its highly standardized artistic expression has become a unique symbol of the artistic style of Pingxiang Chunluo. This feature highlights the important cultural and artistic value of Pingxiang spring gongs as intangible cultural heritage.

Finally, the musical style of spring gongs has distinctive and rich expressive power. According to the literature and field research, the earliest musical style of Pingxiang spring gongs was based on single-melody percussion, and its main instruments were small gongs and drums with a diameter of about 15 centimeters; the style of music was

centered on the rap dialect, and the melody was based on the feather tone, which consisted of the 6, 1, and 3 tones. The rhythm is in 4/2 time, and the performance is accompanied by passing music. For example, the introductory piece “Spring Gong”。

### 引子（春锣鼓点）



The basic rhythmic form of this form is two beats per measure, with two beats of drums, then two beats of gongs, and a total of eight beats repeated in a cycle. And the melody is the same. This musical form, characterized by single melodic percussion and feuilletons, constitutes the musical style of the early traditional spring gongs. However, with the continuous development of society and the impact of multiculturalism, the performance of spring gongs has gradually declined. In order to reverse this situation and continue this traditional art form, Yong Kaiquan, the inheritor of the national intangible cultural heritage of spring gongs, has made positive adjustments and innovations to the spring gongs. According to Yong Kaiquan;

### 3.3 Cultural symbols

Based on the definition of UNESCO's Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, the ICH symbolic system should contain the three dimensions of material carriers (tools/costumes), behavioral modes (performance routines), and meaning systems (values). As a linguistic local culture, Pingxiang Chunluo's linguistic narrative is characterized by a unique combination of consonants, rhymes and tones based on speech and dialect to express life situations and narratives. Among them, the tones are mainly composed of four tones: yinping (low ascending or descending), yangping (high level), supersonic (high ascending), and descending (low descending). For example, in Pingxiang dialect, the character's name and its pronunciation are characterized as follows: Father: (YaYa) yinping plus low-pitch, Mother: (EnGa, NiangLaoZi) yinping and high pitch, Son: (Walk a few) ShangSheng and high pitch, Infant: (MaoMao a few) yangping, Boy: (NaiGu a few) ShangSheng and DeSheng, Girl: (MeiGi a few) DeSheng and low-pitch, Pretty: (polite) yinping and low-pitch. These daily life terms not only

reflect the flavor of Pingxiang dialect, but also reflect the link between people's emotions in the local culture. Pingxiang spring gongs formally rely on this foundation to build the core of the performance, singing and music, for example; artifact symbols by the special brass gongs (diameter 28cm yin and yang gongs), bamboo gongs and red ribbons composed of “a gong and a drum” combination, the brass material symbolizes the farming civilization of the metal worship, the red elements metaphorical auspicious culture; voice symbols Containing three basic singing styles, namely, “flat”, “high” and “rapid”, in which the fixed starting phrase of the flat style, “the spring gong is struck repeatedly”, constitutes an auditory symbol. Among them, the fixed starting phrase of the plainchant, “the spring gong is struck loudly and continuously,” constitutes the auditory logo; the narrative symbols, such as “Cross Song” and “December Flower,” with “four lines and one rhyme” as the core, construct the cognitive framework of farming time sequence through the numerical sequences.

According to the inheritor Yong Kaiquan: Pingxiang spring gongs, whether in performance or expression, must be expressed in the local dialect, only in this way can be loved by the people of Pingxiang, this expression is not only friendly, at the same time, the narrative is expressed clearly, the people of Pingxiang can better understand. For example, I sing Pingxiang spring gong “Pingxiang is very good mile (praise Pingxiang)”: spring gong a record (playing) ring dong dong, long (singing) only spring gong praise Pingcheng, Pingcheng's leis (history) thousands of planting (years), digging out (out) the words (chemically) sprinkled (stone) it is sleepy (afraid of) dragons and so on”. In fact, it means that Pingxiang is very beautiful, a good place with a long history. If it is not sung in the local language, the whole performance will seem incongruous, which will lead to the common people not liking it. Therefore, the language in Pingxiang spring gongs is a bridge to unite the emotions among the people of Pingxiang, and at the same time, it is also a unique cultural symbol mark of Pingxiang. (Yong Kaiquan, interviewed on January 6, 2025)

As a symbol in local culture, Pingxiang spring gong plays an important role in regional cultural inheritance. It carries the connotation and memory of the local culture through the artistic presentation of the local dialect, and at the same time, through and connotation, it condenses the collective meaning for the social level. The Pingxiang spring gong is not only a kind of performing art, but also a symbolic symbol of the regional culture of Pingxiang, which embodies the collision and fusion of the local culture and the modern culture in the exchanges, and especially contributes to the development of the society and the revitalization of the national culture, which is a unique power.

## **4. Cultural Governance Functions of Pingxiang Spring Gongs on Communities**

### **4.1 Ceremony function**

Early spring gong ceremony “reporting spring” gradually withdrew from the stage of history, and changed into the form of close integration with real life. For example, the singing, language, music, costumes and props in the spring gongs are based on the development of modern society. All of them are gradually adjusted according to the form of modern social development. First of all, the singing and language narrative, the singing on the basis of the traditional integration of opera elements, rich in flavor, while the narrative is carried out in conjunction with real daily life, with a strong sense of modernity. Secondly, the music, through the structure of traditional folk music and modern electronic music, thus enriching the performance rituals, for example, according to the music can be adjusted for the spring gong performance, adjusted to the form of singing and dancing at the same time and so on. Once again, it is the costume, according to the results of field investigation and interview, Pingxiang spring gongs in the process of performance, especially clothing and props better reflect the sense of ceremony, but also the most representative of the ceremony. According to Yong Kaiquan, the inheritor of the national spring gong, China has paid great attention to rituals since ancient times, and has given the rituals profound meanings, especially in the rituals and the choice and matching of colors, which have important symbolic meanings. For example, the most common Chinese traditional cultural rituals and colors of red, black and yellow, they correspond to different colors in different rituals, such as the funeral ceremony corresponds to black, the national ceremony corresponds to red on behalf of the festive and enthusiastic, the awarding of honors to the ceremony of the yellow symbolizes auspiciousness and solemnity. Therefore, before the performance of the spring gongs, the performers usually wear red clothes to set off the festive atmosphere of the ceremony.

The ceremony of spring gongs, in general, respects the content of traditional Chinese culture, but also according to some occasions, such as Dragon Boat Festival, Tanabata Festival, Mid-Autumn Festival and Spring Festival, etc., with red as the main color, celebrations or anniversaries, or the government, commercial performances, etc., can be other colors to, in short, the ceremony of spring gongs according to the different atmospheres of festivals and the need for performances to be appropriate with. (Yong Kaiquan, interviewed on January 6, 2025)

Pingxiang spring gong in as a regional ceremony, not only is the form of the show, but also a culture in line with the symbol, the same is also the communication between people and society, or build social stability and cohesion of the national culture of an

important path to the whole society of a number of various fields with far-reaching impact.

#### 4.2 Community Cohesion Function

Every spring gong performance is a collective transmission of emotion, and a bond between the community and its members to obtain emotional and empathetic recognition through common rituals, thus increasing the interconnection between people in the society (Kang Hua, 2014). This form of condensation not only increases the sense of belonging between the community and the collective, but also promotes the stability and harmony between people and the community.



Figure 1 (Community spring gong performance, courtesy of the inheritor 2024.6)

As shown in Figure 1, in the picture, it is the national-level inheritor, Mr. Yong Kaiquan, hand in hand with his disciples and community members to perform the spring gong drama “Everyone's day will get better and better” on the stage beside the Guangfeng community. According to the inheritor: In order to make the community performances more colorful, I consulted with the community and disciples and decided to combine the dance with the spring gongs to improve the spectacle of the performance. Through this innovative form of combining dance and spring gongs, the performance was warmly welcomed by the community, and a large number of community residents were attracted to watch the performance at the beginning. Later, after the performance was over, many people came to ask us, hoping to see this kind of performance again, and the community dancers also hoped that they could continue this kind of performance in the following years. This kind of performance has not only pulled in the emotion between our spring gongs and the general public, but also gained the recognition of the public. (Yong Kaiquan, interviewed on January 7, 2025.) In this

interview, Mr. Yong believes that our spring gong performances inspire the common memories of the people, unite our beautiful aspirations for life, and have a certain condensing effect.

Regardless of the period of social development, the art form of spring gongs has not only not been cut off from modern culture, but has instead mingled and innovated with our lives. It not only shows us the distinctive regional cultural integration and artistic characteristics, but also plays a unique cohesive role in the process of modern social development. As shown in the figure, in terms of social cohesion, the spring gong not only crosses the gender boundary, but also breaks through the barrier of age groups. This crossing stems from the power of the spring gong as a regional culture, making it a common cultural symbol for local people. Its performances evoke the memories of the older generation as well as attracting the attention of the younger generation, thus building an intergenerational emotional bond. Therefore, the spring gong not only strengthens the communication within the society, but also promotes the cultural identity and social integration between different generations.

#### 4.3 Educational and Communication Function

According to the national inheritor, Mr. Yong Kaiquan, before I learned the spring gongs, my master warned me that before learning the art, I should learn to be a human being first, and that I should “respect my teacher, obey the law, be honest and trustworthy, and love the community”. If you can't do any of these things, you are learning the art for nothing. These words were deeply engraved in my heart and have influenced my whole life. Later on, when I started to teach my disciples, I would likewise pass these ideas to my disciples, asking them to bear in mind that to learn the art, one must first learn to be a human being, and that they must bear in mind these basic rules, or else it would be a waste of time to learn them. I have watched every performance since then and found that they have always kept these principles in mind. (Yong Kaiquan, interviewed January 7, 2025) In this interview, Mr. Yong Kaiquan believes that the transmission of the spring gongs is not only the transmission of skills, but also the transmission and continuation of the concept of nurturing, and at the same time, the transmission of a traditional culture.

In addition to the traditional way of passing on from master to disciple, Pingxiang spring gongs are also spread through a variety of ways. First of all, it is community dissemination and education. Every year, during traditional festivals such as Dragon Boat Festival, Seven Coincidences Festival, Mid-Autumn Festival, Army Day, National Day, Spring Festival and so on, Pingxiang area will invite the inheritors of spring gongs to perform according to the themes of the festivals. These performances are not only



rich in cultural characteristics, but also convey strong educational significance. For example, in the performances of the Seven Charms Festival and the Army Day, the spring gongs interpret the beauty of love and the spirit of never retreating, reflecting the deep understanding and education of traditional culture. Secondly, school education for dissemination. Primary and secondary schools in Pingxiang start spring gong classes, hold activities such as spring gong art festivals, and combine school themes (e.g., school safety, red themes, civilized etiquette, resistance to epidemics, etc.) with spring gongs to disseminate these values in the form of performances, thus further spreading the culture of spring gongs.



**Figure 2** (Spring gong performance, courtesy of the vice principal and inheritor of Pangao Township Central Primary School 2024.11)

For example, the central elementary school of Penggao Town, Jingkai District, Pingxiang City, is shown in the picture, which is a way to combine the spring gongs with teaching concepts as a way to educate students and transmit educational ideas. Through this form, the school not only lays the foundation for the subsequent dissemination of spring gongs, but also provides a practical role for the educational nature of spring gongs. This mutually integrated path of education and cultural dissemination demonstrates the multiple values of the spring gongs as an educational



tool and also spreads the art of spring gongs. Finally, there is the network dissemination. With the continuous development of modern self-media, the Internet has become an important communication medium and educational path. According to the inheritor, Mr. Yong Kaiquan, the Pingxiang spring gong has become an important part of our local culture and social life, which is loved by the people, and its functions are diverse, especially in publicity and education, which plays a positive role. For example, the publicity department of Pingxiang City will invite us to record relevant theme festivals according to relevant themes, such as education and safety, tourism promotion, laws and regulations. in order to promote the culture of Pingxiang and popularize the related knowledge. Especially in the epidemic period, the propaganda department in order to better combat the epidemic, I was invited to record the epidemic prevention and control content, hope that through the network broadcast, caution everyone in the epidemic period, don't panic, to do a good job of personal protection and good hygiene, to wash your hands diligently, more ventilation, fewer strings, don't gather and so on, to work together to fight against the epidemic, in order to achieve victory. (Yong Kaiquan, interviewed on January 7, 2025) It can be seen that Pingxiang spring gongs have fully demonstrated their important position in contemporary cultural communication. Through various forms of communication, it not only promotes the inheritance and development of local culture, but also effectively guides the public's recognition of social values and responsibility through specific cultural manifestations.

## 5.Conclusion

The artistic characteristics of Pingxiang spring gong are distinctive, reflecting its unique regional characteristics and cultural connotations. Its performance forms are flexible and changeable, developing from single rap in the early days to group performances nowadays, and the performance environment has also expanded from countryside bazaars to city stages, and the performance contents are increasingly diversified, incorporating more themes with contemporary characteristics and social significance. The artistic style of spring gongs is diversified, and the improvisation of the language narrative, the diversity of the singing voice and the variability of the music style show the rich folk culture and artistic creativity of Pingxiang area. In addition, as an important symbol of local culture, the Pingxiang spring gong carries local memories and unites the emotions of local people, becoming an important symbol of the regional culture of Pingxiang.

As an informal institutional device for community governance, the spring gongs transform artistic practice into cultural governance effectiveness through a dual mechanism. Firstly, during the performance of spring gongs, traditional values such as

respect for the elderly, love for the young, solidarity and mutual help are conveyed through fixed ceremonial processes and norms, thus invisibly guiding community residents to follow social norms and maintain community order. Secondly, the spread of spring gongs helps to shape the common memory of the community and strengthen cultural identity. During the festivals, the spring gong performance becomes a bridge connecting the past and the present, enabling community residents to form a consensus in a common cultural experience, and thus promoting harmony and stability within the community.

In addition, in order to promote the effective inheritance and protection of Pingxiang spring gongs, this paper puts forward the following countermeasure suggestions: first, adapt to global changes and transform the inheritance mechanism. Actively use modern technology and globalization platform to promote the external dissemination of spring gong culture and attract more people to pay attention to and participate in the inheritance of spring gong culture. Secondly, strengthen the ability of cultural innovation. On the basis of maintaining the traditional roots and contents, innovate with modern elements, develop cultural and creative products, and organize spring gong e-competitions to attract young people's attention and promote the intergenerational inheritance of spring gong culture. Once again, strengthen the dynamic viewpoint of protection. Strengthen public awareness of the protection of intangible cultural heritage, develop and implement inheritance incentive mechanisms and policies, incorporate spring gongs into the school curriculum, publicize the artistic value and social functions of spring gongs through various activities, and enhance the public's understanding and recognition of spring gong culture.

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## **Interview outline of the inheritor: Mr. Yong Kaiquan**

### **I. Opening and Introduction**

1. Thank Mr. Yong Kaiquan for his support.
2. Introduce the purpose and content of the interview

### **Background of Pingxiang spring gong folk culture**

1. How is the origin of spring gongs related to the local history and culture of Pingxiang?
2. What role does the cultural ecology of spring gongs play in the local social and cultural ecology?
3. What is the traditional form of transmission of spring gongs?

### **Artistic Characteristics of Spring Gongs**

1. What are the unique features of the performance form of the spring gong? How does it reflect local characteristics?
2. How is the artistic style of the spring gong formed? Has it absorbed other local cultural elements?
3. What are the cultural symbols of the spring gong? How do these symbols reflect the local cultural identity?

### **The Social Function of Spring Gongs**

1. What are the ceremonial functions of spring gongs in the process of social development?
2. How do spring gongs promote the connection and identity among community members?
3. What is the role of spring gongs in the local economy (e.g. tourism, cultural industry)?

### **Challenges and Countermeasures in the Perspective of Non-Heritage Protection**

1. What is the current status of the transmission and protection of the spring gongs?
2. What are the main challenges facing the spring gongs in the process of modernization?
3. How to protect and inherit the spring gongs more effectively, especially in the face of the impact of modernization?

### **Summarize and Prospect**

1. How do you see the future status and development of spring gongs in the protection of non-heritage?
2. What are your suggestions to the relevant governments and cultural organizations?