

# A Comparative Study of the Art Forms and Masks of Nuo Opera (Costume) in Various Villages of Wu An City

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## ABSTRACT

With the change in history and culture, Wuan Nuo opera has the problems of low cognition and small scope of cultural dissemination. This paper cuts from the area of Wuan Nuo opera costumes. First, it analyzes the similarities and differences between the main rural Nuo opera costumes and masks in Wuan City, then sums up the cultural elements of the Wuan Nuo opera costumes and shows, and finally discusses the Wuan Nuo opera costumes and masks cultural aspects of the application of the modern clothing design, aimed at promoting the dissemination of the culture of Nuo opera in Wuan, and to provide a reference for the contemporary design of clothing.

**Keywords:** Wuan Nuo opera; clothing; mask; art form; costume design

“Nuo” is one of the three ancient religious rituals in China, but also very representative of Chinese culture. After thousands of years of development and evolution, Nuo culture is still prevalent in China. In Wuan City, Hebei, there are two Nuo cultural heritage villages: Gu Yi and White House. The local Nuo opera mainly consists of “catching yellow ghosts” and “pulling the dead ghosts,” two kinds of costumes and masks that are essential parts of Nuo opera and symbols of Nuo culture. Wu an Nuo opera costumes, in general, look simple and rugged shape, with a simple and solemn feeling, but also have a strong sense of vernacular colors, its style according to the plot and the characters of the specific circumstances; kind to the Ming Dynasty costumes; rich, bright and colorful, mainly contrasting red, yellow, green, black-based; Wu an Nuo opera masks styling rustic, hideous. To better inherit Nuo opera costumes, we must keep abreast of the times, absorb fresh blood, and further excavate Nuo opera costume masks in the cultural elements applied to modern clothing design to promote the dissemination of Nuo culture. Therefore, this paper analyses and compares the Nuo opera costume masks of the main villages in Wu an City based on their cultural elements and their application to modern clothing design.

## WU AN VILLAGES NUO OPERA COSTUMES MASK COMPARISON

### The comparison of Nuo opera costumes

Clothing in the opera is the most reflective of the character’s personality. Wu an Nuo opera costumes’ overall modeling is relatively simple. The village’s Nuo opera costumes also have their characteristics.

Gu Yi Nuo Opera Costumes. The most gorgeous costumes are python robes. The fabric is generally satin, with a shawl round neck, wide corset, and robe. Python robe is the center of a four-legged python, surrounded by seawater, clouds, the sun and mountains, and other patterns around, embroidered with gold or

silver thread or colorful silk thread, glittering. In the solid Nuo opera, wearing a python robe characters are the Jade Emperor, Yan luo, palm bamboo, Cao official, Gu an Gong, White Eyebrows three Lang, and Zhao Gongming. Python clothes” in the drama are colorful and often related to the character’s identity, status, and age. Different python robe colors for other characters, such as gold python robe for the emperor’s exclusive dress, to show the grandeur and majesty. In the Gu Yi Nuo opera, the “golden body” is commensurate with the characters are: Jade Emperor, Yama, white eyebrows; palm bamboo is wearing a big red python robe, brightly colored, more festive, in line with the subject matter of the entertainment activities; like Cao Guan and Zhao Gongming, such as the role of the official wear ink python robe, looks majestic, solemn; Guan Gong role in green python robe is the symbol of the Saints of the martial arts, let the spirit of the people to lift. Lifts one’s spirits. In addition to the python robe, the kangshi is a standard costume in “Catching Yellow Ghosts” and is usually used in group dances. For example, the waistcoats worn by the first and second ghosts are made of bright yellow silk with a black tiger pattern, which is very majestic. Yellow ghosts are wearing tight yellow shoulders and look thin.

Overall, the style of Nuo theatre and the Ming Dynasty costumes are the same, such as robes, official robes, placketed robes, placketed robes, and so on. This kind of costume is also more common in other theatre because it is relatively simple and easy for performers to wear, as long as the clothes are draped over the body to perform on stage. This paper will be based on the performance process of Gu yi Nuo opera, summarised in the play, several vital characters dress, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Gu’yi Nuo opera character costumes

CHARACTERS	WEAR
the big-headed monk	Mask, purple shirt, duster.
palm bamboo	Dressed in a red python robe, wearing a theatre crown, with thin-soled boots, holding a two-foot-long theatre bamboo.
official in charge of small government	Wearing a black python robe embroidered with dragons and a jade belt at the waist, similar to the official uniforms of the Ming Dynasty
master sleuth	Yellow tiger-skin patterned shoulders, purple trousers, fast boots, brass rings on wrists
Liu Cui	Mask, red embroidered cardigan, red trousers
Zhao Gongming	Mask, black back, black python, red trousers, iron whip.
Hei Hu	Masks, black backs, red robes, iron whips.
lit. white eyebrow and three Langs	Wearing a yellow python robe with a backrest flag behind him and holding a bone hammer
King Zhou of Shang	Yellow Robe
Eight officials	Chinese-style clerical robes and short coats
“yellow ghost”	<p>Wear a yellow short-sleeved cotton jacket and cotton shorts, yellow cotton shoes and a yellow wig.</p> <p>wearing a yellow wig, and painting the exposed parts of the body in yellow, and inserting sharp knives into the limbs, with fresh chicken blood painted on the cuts where the limbs meet.</p> <p>and the exposed parts of the body should be painted yellow, with sharp knives inserted into the limbs and fresh chicken blood applied to the edges of the knives where they meet the limbs.</p>

“big ghosts”	Dressed in a yellow tiger-skin patterned kangaroo and single trousers, with a belt around the waist and a brass wrist rings, and holding steel forks and chains
collaborator with the enemy	Clothes similar to Ogre’s. Wielding a steel sword.
jumping ghost	Dressed in black, similar to the official uniforms of the Qing Dynasty, with a folding fan in his right hand holding a token in his left hand
translation of Sanskrit: Yama Raja	Dressed in a gold-coloured python robe, with a chest patch in the pattern of coiled dragons, and a jade belt around his waist

Baifu Nuo opera costumes. Baifu village of Nuo opera “Pulling the Dead Ghost” was originally to drive away wandering in the town no one sacrifices, endangering people and animals of the wild ghosts, and finally the dead spirits were pulled with firewood and paper money bags piled up “Artemisia” on the burned to death, reflecting the legacy of the ancient fire worship. The “catching yellow ghosts” is different. In the village of Baifu Nuo, in the opera “Pulling the Dead Ghosts,” costumes are not so elaborate, mainly including wearing blue official clothes, a black crown on the head of the road god wearing a white robe, lead with a tall white hat of the white ghosts. Wearing big red official clothes, head wearing a black veil of the flat official, is a Ming Dynasty official image; black clothes and black hat, holding a sad staff of the Black Impermanence; holding a team in the hands of the White Impermanence; white garments and white crowns, having chains of the White Impermanence, these roles of the dress is not a specific system, as long as the fit can be.

### Nuo opera mask comparison

Gu Yi mask costume. In Nuo opera, the mask is a more commonly used prop, usually referring to cover the face masks. There are also parts of the face painted on the front. Goodyear Nuo Village Nuo opera “Catching Yellow Ghosts” performs face play (mask play), generally wearing a mask, and the rest of the team plays a race play role, mainly painted face. In “Catching Yellow Ghosts,” team theatre in the yellow ghosts, big ghosts, two ghosts, and other characters are painted faces, its character image as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Gu’yi Nuo opera “catching yellow ghosts” role masks

CHARACTERS	“big ghosts”	collaborator with the enemy	“yellow ghost”
<b>THEATRICAL FORM</b>	Wearing a head covering with long, unkempt hair and a face painted in blue and white stripes	The image of the face is also almost identical to that of the Great Ghost identical	The Yellow Ghost face is simple, painted yellow all over. A yellow wig with some blood on the head is sufficient.

<p><b>PICTURES</b></p>			
<p><b>CHARACTERS</b></p>	<p><b>Translation of Sanskrit: Yama Raja</b></p>	<p><b>official in charge of small government</b></p>	<p><b>jumping ghost</b></p>
<p><b>THEATRICAL FORM</b></p>	<p>The head is crowned with a blue and white striped face, with open ping pong ball half shells glued to each of the left and right eyes, protruding from the eyeballs</p>	<p>The head wears a long-winged black veil, with a blue and white striped face, and the right and left eyes bulge out similar to those of King Yama</p>	<p>wearing a red tasseled hat with a round pointed collar and a black veil over his face, with his eyes, nose and lips painted white</p>
<p><b>PICTURES</b></p>			

Wu an Nuo theatre masks are the most critical symbols in Nuo opera in China. Goodyear Village Face plays with different sizes of masks. The largest is the mask of longevity, 40cm high, with a width of 30cm; the smaller size of the five gods mask, with a height width of 30cm. Because the mask is much larger than the performer's head, the mouth in the mask is often fixed with leather straps, so in the Goodyear Nuo opera, most of the pantomime.

Bai fu Nuo opera masks. In the solid Nuo opera "Catching Yellow Ghosts," compared to the village of Bai fu "Pulling Dead Ghosts," the show does not have any special requirements; most of the faces the makeup is often changed, and only a few roles will wear masks, and at the same time "Only a few characters wear masks, and the shows are kept more casually.

## WUAN NUO OPERA COSTUMES AND MASKS IN THE CULTURAL ELEMENTS

### Wuan Nuo opera costumes of cultural elements

Clothing styles Wu an Nuo opera costumes and the style of the Ming Dynasty costumes are roughly the same. Male characters of the outfit are mostly long shirts and various types but still maintain an oversized lapel, correct overlap, wide sleeves, skirts and knees, and other morphological features. Perhaps because of the influence of the people's clothing habits of the Ming Dynasty, Wu an Nuo opera characters also wore robes on the upper body, the lower half of the trousers, outside a cloth skirt, which reflects the long history of Wu an Nuo opera, is invented by the intelligent and hard-working people, and the general public relationship is very close to the people, conveying people to drive away evil spirits and epidemics, and praying for the wind and rain of the simple feelings: In addition, there is also a class of Wu an Nuo Nuo opera dress by the official clothes have a significant influence on, such as jumping ghosts wearing Qing Dynasty clothes, the official clothes are perfect—for example, jumping ghosts wearing the Qing Dynasty Tartar clothes, city gods, judge wearing the Ming Dynasty official clothes. This role in the distinction of social status, directly on the Nuo opera costumes, has a profound impact on women performing Nuo opera,

usually the upper half of the body wearing a waist, wide, right-over-the-forehead jacket, the lower half of the body to wear a skirt, covering the jacket tied under the chest. In short, the traditional clothing is loose, with natural external beauty and “good” and “reasonable.” the beauty of the mood can be found in Wu an Nuo opera costumes.

### **Clothing colour**

In viewing Wu an Nuo opera, the first to enter people’s eyes are brightly colored costumes, colorful flags, and paper cuttings. Wuan Nuo opera costumes are colors by the concept of yin and yang, which are red, black, and yellow-based. The most striking is red, from the performance of costumes to the implementation of utensils and then to the candles dyed red. Ancient people used “Red,” “Dan,” “Zhu,” and “Jiang” to represent different shades of red, and later “Red” and “Red” were used to describe different shades of red. And “red” has no difference. In Wuan Nuo opera costumes, “red” is the most common color, representing the sunrise, and the color of the sun is the color necessary for the growth of all things. Red represents yang, represents justice.

On the contrary, black represents Yin, and the plague represents evil. Wuan Nuo opera costumes use red, which symbolizes the sun and fire, to inhibit the yin. Therefore, from the color point of view, red is the primary color of Nuo opera costumes to drive away evil spirits and avoid epidemics of the auspicious color, and the symbol of the yin, disease, and plague, bad black is also pushed to the same position as red.

### **Clothing pattern**

Wu an Nuo opera costumes in the “python robe” are the emperor and other dignitaries participating in essential activities worn by the dress—clothes in the middle of the dragon pattern python’s main body. In ancient China, the dragon is not only a symbol of the emperor but the mountains, the spiritual symbol of the nation, and in the exorcism costumes, it is also a symbol of exorcism to avoid the plague; there is also part of the dress to the tiger to exorcise the demons and monsters, to protect the living beings; with the sea, the sun; the cuffs, hemline on the water, clouds, clouds and other clusters. The dragon cannot leave the seawater, so the seawater and the red sun are combined with the dragon pattern, so the dragon pattern, the seawater and the red sun are integrated. The pattern matching of this brocade tunic implies the dignity and honorable status of the figure and also brings out the majestic atmosphere between heaven and earth, mountains and water. With its bold, unique, and novel conception, this out-of-the-box, alternative costume design fully embodies the spirituality and feelings inherent in traditional Chinese culture. Also, jumping ghosts on the body of the Qing Dynasty costumes, ‘ chest or shoulders have a dragon in the sleeves and skirt, and there is a pattern. Nuo opera costumes, the bottom of the skirt has many curved lines, known as “water feet.” In the water above the foot, there is a huge wave, a huge wave above, erected a mountain stone treasure, known as “seawater Jiangya,” symbolizing “the world rise.”

### **The cultural elements of Wuan Nuo opera masks**

#### **Mask color**

Wu an Nuo opera mask is colorful and rich; black, red, green, yellow, and white five colors are the most common but also contain the corresponding elements of the five features of gold, wood, water, fire, and earth. The primary color of the mask also distinguishes the character’s personality. The colors of such shows are similar to the red-loyal, white-traitorous, and black-fierce commonly used in theatre. The red color has the most robust penetrating ability and the most significant impact on human eyesight, which can easily stimulate the desire to fight. In Wu an Nuo theatre, it reflects the brave and loyal character, such as the red Gu an Gong mask. Black quickly gives people a fierce, majestic feeling in Wu an Nuo, on the surface of a grotesque, harsh, powerful, and mysterious sense, and has a strong deterrent, such as Zhao Minggong, Horse

King masks, and so on. The green color embodies hideousness, such as the mask of San lang. Most of the character picture masks are closer in color, with skin color as the fundamental tone.

### **Mask form**

Wu an Nuo's opera form is derived from human faces, with personified symbols so the viewer can enter a fantasy art world. Craftsmen use bold, humorous, imaginative face changes to show the role's character; for example, in the "ghosts and gods" face to increase horns, fangs, eyes, etc.

### **Mask Symbol**

The local people of Wu an are tasked with "wearing a mask is a god, and taking off the mask is a human being," so it is clear that the masking medium can change the identity. It is a kind of identity symbol that can promote the unity of the actor and the character and highlight the difference between humans and gods to clarify the relationship between the two. However, the role of the mask for the viewer and the performer is different. Those who are there will be convinced that those wearing masks are "ghosts and gods," believing that they have the magical power to connect with "ghosts and gods" and "heaven and earth." They think that they have the magical ability to communicate with "ghosts and gods" and "heaven and earth." For the audience, wearing a mask can increase the sense of the Nuo opera generation. The actors in the show are "ghosts and gods" images of vivid embodiment, so the actors must be in the "self" and "ghosts and gods" between the conversion, forget their own identities, and make total commitment to their roles. They must forget who they are and devote themselves to their positions.

## **NUO OPERA COSTUME MASK ELEMENTS IN THE MODERN USE OF CLOTHING DESIGN**

### **The use of Nuo opera costume style elements**

Nuo theatre costumes can be used to use the loose characteristics of modern clothing design. Every day, people expect to be able to wear wide, comfortable clothing when their bodies and minds are separated. Therefore, you can draw on Nuo theatre costumes' loose style features. The open style of Nuo theatre costumes is incorporated into modern clothing design.

First of all, the use of asymmetric design ideas to break the traditional, single form of clothing in Wuan Nuo opera costumes loose style based on length, size, elasticity, positive and negative, as well as detailed changes, reflecting the asymmetry of the dress, which is a common design means of today's clothing, a breakthrough in the traditional Chinese "symmetry" clothing aesthetics aesthetic. Designers can retain the loose style of Nuo opera costumes under the premise of changing the length of the front and back of the clothing to take the show and before of the long, long before the short style, or in the original loose manner based on the left and right symmetrical length of the Nuo opera costumes to change, showing a long left and exactly short or short left and precisely extended style features, breakthroughs in traditional "symmetrical" style, more reflective of the "modern dress" style, the "modern dress." More to reflect the "modern dress" features and more adapted to modern people's "personalized" clothing aesthetic mentality.

Secondly, take the traditional Wuan Nuo opera costume modeling in the details of the application of modern technology means, reflecting the integration of national and folk elements of modern costume design style. The so-called modern technology mainly refers to the "pleats," through the natural shape of loose clothing to get pleated lines, forming a raw hemline, or from various parts of the clothes, such as the shoulders, the sides of the body or the cuffs, trouser legs, etc., the natural formation of wrinkles, thus changing the texture of the fabric shape, creating a special three-dimensional Effect, which produces a strong visual and tactile effect, highlighting its modernity.

## **The use of color elements of Nuo opera costumes**

Of the many external elements of clothing, the first to enter the audience's vision is the color, which is also the most able to change the style of clothing characteristics of the factors. Chinese clothing in the use of color will be subject to the restrictions of the ruling class and the people's thinking, to a certain extent, reflecting the Chinese people's character traits. Among them, red and black, a typical expression of the color of Chinese costumes, is the most reflective of Nuo opera costume elements. Therefore, the traditional red and black fusion of contemporary clothing design is also reasonable.

In Nuo opera costumes, red symbolizes Yang Qi, Ji", hope, and life. On the other hand, Black represents intimidation, solemnity, and solemnity. In Chinese history, the Qin Dynasty honored blacks. In addition, the color black perfectly expresses the ceremonial nature of Nuo opera and can best stimulate people's feelings. There can be an extensive range of red as the leading tone, with a small amount of black as an auxiliary, the use of contrast on the color block, and Nuo opera costumes have a religious meaning in modern clothing.

## **The use of Nuo opera clothing pattern elements**

Chinese traditional clothing pattern contains human thought and emotion, cultural concepts, moral etiquette, and aesthetic concepts, has a particular symbolic significance, implies a unique feeling for a better life. In modern clothing, the use of the Nuo opera dress pattern can be carried out from two levels: First, the Wuan Nuo opera costumes on the water, cloud, and rattan pattern for direct use. The second is the use of various modern methods for the benefit of designs, such as exaggeration, clutter, unity, gradient, and other techniques. For example, simple cloud and rattan patterns can appear asymmetrically on the back of the garment, hemline, one side of the cuffs, trousers, and other asymmetrical places in a disorderly manner. In the design language of modern clothing, discarding the pompous components and delicate decorations can strengthen the audience's visual effect, give people a different feeling, and let people's souls return to the state of simplicity and tranquility. Another example is that you can add floral modeling accessories in line with contemporary aesthetics and design concepts so that the beauty of the ancient Nuo opera flower-shaped patterns is in a fashionable form compatible with the current needs of modern clothing.

## **The application of Nuo opera mask elements**

Nuo opera masks are people by their thoughts on the state of real life and thoughts and feelings of processing and sublimation obtained, is a concentrated reflection of human aesthetics, Nuo opera masks of imaginary, mysterious, ethereal, "plausible, but not" is the modern mind to find the paradise. Nuo opera masks symbolize human and celestial integration of material symbols, both as a carrier of the spirit and have a masking effect. Everything is permeated with a metaphysical flavor. In combining traditional Nuo opera costumes with modern costumes, the mask can be used to connect the unique medium of the role. For example, we can use a strong modernity of the half mask, with its special decorative effect, so that the dress is full of Nuo theatre, which is unique to the mysterious and ethereal feeling but also full of modernity.

## **CONCLUSION**

In summary, Nuo opera costumes as one of China's traditional costumes, its style of modeling, color, pattern, fabric, craftsmanship, etc., are full of cultural connotations, costume masks, these external form elements visible, touchable, the actual existence of the objective, both to show its essential role and its aesthetic awareness. With the continuous development of national culture, combining traditional costume cultural elements with modern costume design can reflect the traditional costume and aesthetic meaning and improve the cultural connotation of modern costumes. Only in this way can we design stylish clothes with full Chinese artistic flavor to better meet people's clothing aesthetic requirements.

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