

HOLIDAYIMAGE

TAIPING LANTERN OPERA LIVES ON WITH LONGSHAN TOWNSHIP'S GRASSROOTS TROUPE

Traditional performance has endured for more than 300 years



By ZHAO RUINAN
zhaoruinan@chinadaily.com.cn

Deep in the mountains in Longli County in southwest China's Guizhou Province, a grassroots troupe performing Taiping lantern opera in Longshan Township has a history of more than 300 years.

The members of the troupe, vary in age from 8 to 87 years old and most of them are farmers. They are usually busy in the fields and only gather together after their farm work to rehearse, advance their performance and teach the ancient art to younger generations.

On holidays, they visit nearby villages to perform for villagers, enriching their cultural lives. The troupe members are always greeted with a warm welcome by the locals.

Taiping Huadengxi, or Taiping lantern opera, combines singing and dancing. It is a traditional local opera in Guizhou's Longli County and was enlisted as a provincial intangible cultural heritage in 2019.

Taiping lantern opera, now under the protection of the local government, has developed into a more diverse art form that includes opera singing, martial arts and interactive performances with the audience.

Performers, painted with exquisite face masks and wearing ancient costumes, are loved by the audience for their graceful singing, superb performance and authentic style. The audio-visual spectacle has been passed down from generation to generation.

Clockwise from Top: Members of a local opera troupe head for a rehearsal in Longshan Township, southwest China's Guizhou Province in February; Members of a local opera troupe rehearse in Longshan Township; Members of a local opera troupe rehearse in Longshan Township; Members of a local opera troupe rehearse in Longshan Township in the afternoon; A child plays with a drum in Longshan Township; A villager holds high a lantern in Longshan Township. PHOTOS BY YANG WENBIN / FOR CHINA DAILY

