

# 陕北信天游与剪纸

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***Folksongs  
and Papercuts***

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# Folksongs and Papercuts

## 陕北信天游与剪纸



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## Preface

It has been a great pleasure for me to be able to share these folk songs and paper-cuts of northern Shaanxi Province – an old and mysterious place where these two kinds of arts have been handed down from ancient times. Like a blast of northwest wind, folk songs that originated on the loess plateau have spread over the whole of China and now the world. And what could be more appropriate to illustrate these songs than the traditional folk art of Northern Shaanxi paper-cuts that also have evoked such tremendous admiration among people worldwide who have seen them?

We have made every effort to present the lyrics and melodies of the folk songs according to the traditional style people have sung them, and to present the papercuts according to the original designs as executed by the artists who cut them. By being true to the original in both cases, we hope we have been able to share with readers something of the rich spiritual world of the local people and their colorful life on the loess plateau in a way that has been enjoyable as well as informative.

## 序

陕北是个古老神奇的地方。黄土地孕育的陕北人，勤劳、果敢、极富创造力，他们执着地追求和向往美好的生活，创造并传承了人类宝贵的文化遗产——民歌和剪纸。

我喜欢陕北的民歌，也喜欢陕北的剪纸。

它们从远古时代流传至今，信天游（陕北独有的山歌形式），似一股强劲的“西北风”从黄土高原吹遍了全中国，吹遍了整个世界；让人着迷的“活化石”——剪纸，令无数踏上这块土地的人惊叹。一幅幅剪纸、一首首信天游，记录了我们父辈生活过并留下他们追求和梦想的那个年代，画面包容了大千世界，曲调荡气回肠。

为使能让更多的读者了解陕北民歌和剪纸的原生状态，书中的信天游词曲都是根据民间“原汁原味”所唱记录、整理的，剪纸也同样保留着它本来的面目。为的是将陕北人丰富的精神世界和黄土高原多姿多彩的淳朴的生活画卷如实地向读者展示。

# Folksongs and Papercuts of Northern Shaanxi

By Hei Jianguo

The folksongs and papercuts of the loess plateau in northern Shaanxi Province in Western China have evoked tremendous admiration in people who have heard them and seen them. These two popular folk arts are living manifestations of ancient dreams as well as real happenings in one of the oldest areas of China – one of the cradles of ancient Chinese civilization. In recent years, a new generation of northern Shaanxi master paper cutters is turning to local folksongs for papercuts themes. In this book, we present some of the best examples of these papercuts in their original design, each accompanied by a selection from the folksong that inspired it, along with the tune. This is followed by the complete lyrics of the folksongs in translation and in the original according to the way they are sung by local people.

Papercuts, folksongs and dance of the harvest are the most popular forms of traditional entertainment in the countryside in northern Shaanxi. Of these, papercuts and folksongs are like inseparable twins. It is common in northern Shaanxi to hear people sing folksongs as they apply their scissors to papercuts. Many papercuts in this collection were produced in this way. Closely related to the local people's everyday life, folksongs and papercuts often appear together at celebrations like festivals and other ceremonial occasions.

## Folksongs

Folksongs of northern Shaanxi have been passed down

and sung by people through hundreds of years in an area where, for historical reasons along with its special geographical location, many kinds of cultures have collided and mixed to create a rich cultural legacy. Over 100 nationalities such as Huaxia, Rongdi, Xiongnu, Xianbei, Qiang and Dangxiang have made their home here in the high mountains and deep valleys of the loess plateau, an 80,000 sq km area covered with thick yellow soil and sand. It is here that the ancestor of the Chinese people, Emperor Huangdi and his tribe lived. According to historical documentation, Emperor Huangdi was buried on the Qiaoshan Mountain in north Huangling County in Shaanxi. Northern Shaanxi became a strategic position where the Han people resisted the southward invasion of outside peoples, which resulted in wars and turmoil. At the same time, it has been a central place for the exchange and mixing of the Han people and the northern minority peoples.

Singing has helped entertain, inform and generally raise the spirits of people for untold generations in northern Shaanxi, an area that includes the cities of Yan'an and Yulin and their 25 districts and counties in northern Shaanxi Province. The loess plateau on the north borders the Mu Us Desert where dunes alternate with grassland; on the south, the plateau includes plains, mountains and valleys. Relics have been discovered in northern Shaanxi from the Stone Age; the Yangshao Culture, a prototypical Chinese culture of the Neolithic period; and the Qijia Culture, a culture of the Chalcolithic period



at the time of the disintegration of primitive society – establishing this land as one of the cradles of human civilization. Ancient sites and tombs scattered over northern Shaanxi include a wide distribution of grottoes from the Northern Wei (386-534), Tang (618-907), Song (960-1279), Yuan (1271-1368) and Ming (1368-1644) dynasties. The many stone tools discovered in Yulin, Shenmu, Zichang, Yanchuan and other places in northern Shaanxi reveal the prevalence of fishing and hunting in the Neolithic Age when there was a warm climate, plenty of water and flourishing subtropical plants. People lived mainly on gathering and hunting.

By the early 20th century, folksongs were flourishing at a time when people lived an extremely hard life in northern Shaanxi. They inhabited cave dwellings excavated in the mountains along river courses and lived on subsistence farming. [Today, 90 percent of the residences in Yan'an still are cave dwellings, the largest number of such dwellings in China. For a description of their design see *Traditional Chinese Residences* in the "Culture of China" book series from the Foreign Languages Press.] Year in year out, men cultivated land, herded sheep and cattle or went to work in the west regions, including Inner Mongolia and Ningxia Province, to eke out a living. Women spent their lives in the cave dwellings, taking care of their husbands and bringing up children. In this environment, men couldn't help singing out what they heard, saw and thought; women chanted their joys and sorrows as they sat sewing under dim oil lamps.

An important contribution to the vitality of northern Shaanxi folksongs is that their lyrics and melodies are all improvised, their composers and singers all local people. The songs tell stories of an inner world and real

life in simple spoken language, with sincere and heartfelt emotions and lively rhythms that entertain both the singers and listeners. In the folksong, *Going to Work in the West Land*, a porter from Shaanxi asks: "In this cold day when the east-to-west wind blows, where can I find a warm home to spend the night?" The wife left at home sings in *Husband Missing*: "I don't care to go to bed when all I see is a pillow where once a person lay." In *Herding the Flock*, a young man sings out in a joyful voice: "We are separated by the mountain and valley. We cannot speak to each other, yet we can wave at each other." An old man working nearby overhears and sings with gusto: "The young are attracted to the young; as for long-bearded old men, no way."

In general, Chinese folksongs are laden with emotion as the singer tells a story based on every day life. And among all Chinese folksongs, those of Northern Shaanxi are held in particularly high esteem: They are among the most important in China, according to *Folksongs*, the textbook of the China Central Music Institute in Beijing. The folksongs of northern Shaanxi are admired for their style, melody and tune and because the songs are still popular among local people.

Rich in tone and with free rhythm, wide range and lively melody — Northern Shaanxi folksongs are divided mainly into two types. One expresses a single emotion, for instance, *A Girl in Love Cries Alone*. The other tells a story with a complete plot, for instance, *Sanshilipu Village*, which uses the form of a couplet, with the first line creating a specific atmosphere which the second line explicates, thus creating a meaning and emotion similar to that of ancient Chinese poems. The lyrics of this kind of folksongs are usually composed of lines with seven

Chinese characters — but lines with eight, nine or even 10 characters also are common because in the local dialect people tend to double some words.

The themes in Northern Shaanxi folksongs cover a wide range of subjects including social inequality and the cruelty of war, but many of the best-known folksongs are love songs. These songs tell of aspirations for a happy life, resistance to arranged marriages, and despair at separation. They include heartbreaking stories of tragic fate as love is pursued in the face of great danger: “With mutton in hand and cakes under my arm, I run to my lover’s house at the risk of losing my life.” Some love songs express feeling in a straightforward way, such as: “In your home, the lamp can light only half the house, and there is so little rice that it can be measured by wine cups. Still, I love you no matter what.” Some use metaphor, for example: “Although it is of no significant height, the glossy ganoderma [a kind of bracket fungi] by the Yellow River grows healthy and strong.” Some express deep resentment about arranged marriages: “Your parents love nothing but money. They marry you into a wealthy family as if they were selling a donkey.” Others express women’s point of view in the struggle against forced marriages and the authority of the husband. The love songs in northern Shaanxi are simple and natural with distinct themes, including many about lovesickness after a lover’s departure and happiness when the couple gets together again. These songs fully manifest the local people’s yearning and pursuit of the true, the good and the beautiful nature of love.

Folksongs of northern Shaanxi describe other aspects of life in a wide range of subjects with rich content. Especially after 1935, when the Workers’ and Peasants’

Red Army led by Mao Zedong arrived in northern Shaanxi in the Long March, the mood of the folksongs changed greatly to include revolutionary themes that celebrated the cause of national liberation. These folksongs are full of revolutionary spirit, as in: “Red flags flutter in the sky, and we follow the Communist Party in the revolutionary cause.” And: “Like thunder and lightening in the sky, the red flag fires people with faith and hope.”

Northern Shaanxi folksongs carry the “scent of the yellow-soiled land” in a way that can arouse sympathy deep inside our hearts. In modern life, all people have a longing to return to nature. When people in China listen to the folksongs of northern Shaanxi, their train of thought flies to northern Shaanxi, where they stand on the loess plateau under the blue sky and white clouds, see the familiar mountains, valleys and cave dwellings, and the honest, cordial and respectable local people, and smell the scent of red lilies... The scenes described in the folksongs provide emotional sustenance for modern people.

Originally, the folksongs of northern Shaanxi belonged exclusively to the local people. During the development of folksongs over the last half-century, however, the songs have spread beyond regional limits in China to the whole country where they are appreciated as much as pop music and classical music in a populace more and more aware of their value. In nearly all countries, time-honored folksongs from every important historical period are held in esteem by the people to whom they have been passed down through time and space. Although the original events sung about are long gone, folksongs retain an artistic charm that continues to touch those who hear them.

## Papercuts

Papercuts, one of the most popular folk art forms in China, have been created throughout the ages by skilled hands using different styles and life experiences to express similar subjects and themes in various ways. Some of the works are vigorous and unsophisticated, some are free and exquisite, some clear and simple, and some complex. Papercuts, like folksongs, not only express things in everyday life, but also the life experiences of their creators. They are imbued with an intrinsic spiritual quality of human creativity in a distinctive Chinese artistic style.

Papercuts were first mentioned in *Records of the Historian* written in the Han Dynasty (206 BC-AD 220) by Sima Qian, which relates how Ji Song, Emperor Chengwang of the Zhou Dynasty, cut a leaf of a phoenix tree into the shape of a tapering tablet and gave it to his younger brother Ji Yu as a symbol of the title conferred on him of Duke of Tang. This historical event took place as early as over 3,000 years ago. A folk rhyme still heard in northern China reflects the fact that as early as the Han Dynasty, people were taking scissors to paper to make ornaments: "As the imperial concubine of the Han Dynasty played with her baby by the window, she cut phoenix tree leaves into beautiful shapes."

The earliest extant papercuts works in China are five papercuts of the Southern and Northern Dynasties (420-589) unearthed in the ancient city of Gaochang in Turpan in Xinjiang in the far northwest of China in 1959. They have different patterns of round flowers, representing a pair of deer, a pair of monkeys, an octagon, chrysanthemums and honey suckle.

An indication that by the Tang Dynasty (618-907) papercuts had gradually developed into a relatively independent art form comes in their mention by the poet Du Fu who wrote: "Hot water is for washing my feet, and papercuts are for refreshing my soul." In the Song Dynasty (960-1279), people cut dark green paper or silk into small flags with patterns. By the Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1911) dynasties, papercuts were widely used as symbols of happiness and good luck. Papercuts were not only pasted on a window or lamp, but were attached as decoration to pillars, shoes and dressing tables.

Historically, papercuts have been divided into two styles, southern and northern. The southern style is represented by works produced in Yangzhou, Jiangsu Province and Leqing, Zhejiang Province, which are characterized by their beautiful shapes and witty themes. Areas in the north of China where papercuts are popular include northern Shaanxi Province, and Yuxian and Fengning counties in Hebei Province. But the papercuts of northern Shaanxi are the most famous, characterized by their bold and vigorous style and lively appearance, with no particular conformity in pattern. Li Shangyin, a famous poet in the Tang Dynasty, wrote: "The craft of gold jewelry began in the south, while papercuts are a custom originating in the north."

A center for papercuts can be found in Yanchuan County (part of Yan'an) in northern Shaanxi, one of the birthplaces of the Yellow River civilization where bronze wares and relics of the Paleolithic and Neolithic periods have been unearthed. Villages of the Yangshao culture and Longshan culture dating back 6,000 years ago have been found here, and it is in this ancient environment that papercuts came to flourish. The importance today of

Yanchuan County to the art of papercuts is confirmed by its hosting the annual meeting on non-material cultural heritage of the China Folk Papercut Research Society in February 2002.

Northern Shaanxi papercuts are made with scissors only. And with scissors as the only tool applied to plain paper, the results are both simple and evocative. Images seen today feature domestic animals, auspicious wishes, fertility symbols, local customs and folk tales. Earlier popular themes included prayers for a good harvest and affluent life with images of animals, other living things, legendary characters like Emperor Huangdi, myths and historical events such as the Cowherd and the Weaving Girl's meeting on the Magpie Bridge and stories about the 24 filial sons. Traditional papercuts from northern Shaanxi might feature a child with hair in two buns, fish playing among lotus flowers, a pair of bowls one upside down on top of the other, tigers, lions, Chinese unicorns, the jade rabbit, pomegranates and peonies.

Northern Shaanxi papercuts originally were made as window decorations, mostly by women. Today – particularly after the 1980s – papercuts have evolved into an art form with various decorative uses and themes. Their main function still is decoration, which may be explained in part by the fact that so many paper cutters still are women. But men also enjoy making papercuts, and the master artisans of the form include both men and women. By the early 1990s, the older generation of master paper cutters in the countryside in northern Shaanxi had gradually passed away, leaving a more educated new generation to take its place. These folk artists have brought renewed vigor to papercuts in a way that should have lasting influence. Their work includes in recent years a

large number of papercuts using subjects from northern Shaanxi folksongs.

Gao Fenglian, a UNESCO “master of the Chinese folk art of papercuts,” is the most prominent among the many paper cutters in Yanchuan. During her lifelong commitment to her art, Gao Fenglian has accumulated a deep understanding of the folk customs and culture of northern Shaanxi. Whenever she cuts out the figure of a human or an animal, she gives elaborate attention to their heads in decorative detail full of cultural connotation. A sense of endless growth in nature, and the pursuit of life are fully expressed by her creative art: One human figure or flower can be embodied in another, and flowers are used both as decorations or cut into other flowers. She never draws a sketch before making a papercut. Every piece of her work is cut as a whole without stopping, which demonstrates her mastery of the art. In a style she created by combining Chinese philosophy and totem culture, Gao Fenglian works in her papercuts within traditional form whether the theme is a traditional or an contemporary one. For example, her work based on the folksong  *Holding Hands*  represents the traditional male and female,  *yang*  and  *yin* , in a modern way. In this papercut, a young man and a young woman hold hands and whisper about finding a secluded place to kiss. Surrounding the couple are birds that no longer sing in the trees but listen quietly.

Another artist admired for her skill is Gao Fenglian's 30-year-old daughter, Liu Jieqiong. Liu Jieqiong began to make papercuts relatively late since she didn't like papercuts as a child. With more life experience and under her mother's influence, Liu Jieqiong took up the art and in only four or five years' time has established her

own reputation. Currently, she is studying the folksongs of northern Shaanxi and combining their contents in skillful papercuts that contain new approaches and rich interpretations. Examples are Liu Jieqiong's papercuts of the folksongs *Going to Work in the West Land* and *Lan Huahua*.

Guo Rulin, a young man who lives in rural Yanchuan by the Yellow River, brings a highly intelligent mind to his brisk and dynamic papercuts. Influenced by modern painting, the papercuts of Guo Rulin mirror the realities of modern life but within inherited traditions. As they take shape under his scissors, Guo's bold papercuts express a vigorous strength, full of spirit. His renditions of people in particular reveal the influence of earlier master artisans. *A Horse Running High* is a representative work from his folksong series, with a design that is simple and concise. The lyrics of this song are: "A horse running high along the top of a wall still thinks it isn't high enough: Face-to-face we sleep, and still I miss you." Guo Rulin's portrait of the couple in bed expresses his creative ingenuity: The man and women are covered by a quilt

with patterns that correspond to their lower bodies. On the woman's side is a lotus flower with a bird resting on it; on the man's side is a lively fish. This is particularly brilliant in that it provides a metaphor for "fish playing with the lotus," a traditional Chinese phrase for reproduction.

Folksongs and papercuts of northern Shaanxi are as inseparable from each other as they are inseparable from the life of the people they represent. These two traditional arts are treasures not only of the local culture, but also of the surrounding regions. We sincerely hope that our approach in this book of combining papercuts with the folksongs that inspired them will help readers appreciate the authentic folk traditions of Shaanxi in a way that reflects the rich spiritual world of the local people and their life on the loess plateau.

Yanchuan, Northern Shaanxi  
December, 2002

\* Born in 1953 in northern Shaanxi, Hei Jianguo, a member of the Chinese Photographers' Association, works at the Cultural Center of Yanchuan County, Shaanxi Province. His photographs have been published in over 100 newspapers and magazines, and his publications include books such as *Papercuts of Yanchuan in Shaanxi*, *A View of Northern Shaanxi*, and *A Collection of Papercut Works of Western China* by Gao Fenglian.

# 陕北信天游与剪纸概述

黑建国

历史上把陕西省北部的延安，榆林两市二十五个区县通称为陕北。这是一块被厚厚的黄土和黄沙所覆盖的八万多平方公里的土地，是中国四大高原之一——黄土高原的一部分。它的北部是毛乌素沙漠的边缘地带，沙丘草滩交错分布，南部原、峁、沟、梁起伏纵横。

在陕北境内曾发现有石器时代遗址，仰韶文化遗址，齐家文化遗址等，这些说明陕北这块古老的土地曾是人类文明的摇篮之一。

## 信天游<sup>①</sup>

古时陕北优越的自然环境为人类提供了生存的必要条件。这里曾居住过华夏、戎狄、匈奴、鲜卑、羌、党项等多达百余个民族，曾是华夏人文初祖黄帝及其部族长期活动的地方。据《史记·五帝本纪》记载，黄帝死后，就葬在陕西黄陵县城北的桥山上。

黄土地为陕北信天游的产生与流行提供了适宜的土壤。新石器时代的陕北，气候温暖、水源极为丰富，亚热带植物茂密生长，先民们以采集和狩猎为生，在榆林、神木、子长、延川等地发现的大量石器足以说明陕北昔日渔猎经济的繁荣。陕北一直是汉民族和北方少数民族融合交流的中心地带，是汉民族抵御外来民族南下的边陲重地，战乱频仍。由于历史的原因和特殊的地理位置，使多种文化在此撞击、融合，从而产生了内涵丰富的当地文化。古遗址、古墓群遍布境内，北魏、唐、宋、元、明石窟艺术分布甚广，民间剪纸、刺绣更是丰富多彩，而诞生在这块黄土地上的陕北民歌信天游，则纯朴明快，优美婉转，艺术魅力经久不衰。陕北民歌在中国民间歌曲中占有无法替代的重要位置，信天游则是陕北民歌之中的精华。

20世纪初，是陕北信天游兴旺的年代。这里属黄土高原丘陵地带，山高沟深，亘古苍凉，交通极其闭塞，文化滞后，民众生活悲苦之极。人们顺河道依山傍水，掘穴而居，以面对黄土背朝天的原始耕作方式生存着，劳动和生活十分繁重。男人们年复一年地垦荒种地，放牛拦羊，赶牲灵，走西口<sup>②</sup>，为的都是柴米油盐；女人们则一生在窑洞里围着锅台劳作，伺候着自己的男人，养育着子女。这种日复一日的重复单调的生活使人们的精神感到压抑和沉闷，人们为了寻求慰藉和排解苦闷，男人们会情不自禁地唱出所闻、所见、所想，女人们会在昏暗的油灯下一面做针线一面低吟心中的哀怨苦闷。逢春入夏，农人耕作于沟壑梁峁之上，山间空旷无人，寂寞难耐，放开嗓子唱上几段信天游，一曲终了，群山回应，心情便舒畅了许多。

陕北信天游，经历了数百年仍然传唱着，很重要的一个原因就是，歌词都是即兴编唱的，它的作者、歌手都是陕北人自己。他们用口语化的朴实语言，真挚强烈的情感，自由活泼的多样形式来表达自己的内心世界和亲身经历的生活。信天游既可自娱，又可娱人，唱者在自娱上达到了最高境界时，恐怕正是极好地渲泄了自我的时候。《走西口》的脚夫怎能不思念家乡的妻儿老小，于是唱出了：“西北风刮的冷森森<sup>③</sup>什么人留下个出门人<sup>④</sup>”；《想丈夫》的婆姨<sup>⑤</sup>在灯火如豆的油灯下挑灯补衣诉衷肠；“有心脱衣无心睡，长<sup>⑥</sup>下一个枕头少下一个人。”《赶牲灵》<sup>⑦</sup>的小伙引吭高歌：“一个在那山上一个在沟，探不上拉话<sup>⑧</sup>招一招手。”山岭上耕地的老汉用他那拦羊的嗓子回牛<sup>⑨</sup>的声吼着：“年轻人看见年轻人好，白胡子老汉毡势<sup>⑩</sup>了。”在陕北，无论男女老少都能哼上几句信天游，他们既是作者，又是歌手。

信天游以长盛不衰的生命力顽强地扎根于民间的土壤之中，作为一种地域性的民歌形式在广大人民中口头传诵，表达的形式主要有两种，一是单一叙情的，如《小妹妹想你由不得哭》，一种是带有情节性的，讲述一个完整的故事，如《三十里铺<sup>[11]</sup>》。它多采用上、下对句的结构，上句以比兴营造氛围，点明特定环境，下句叙事、点题构成一个完整的意思和情绪，这种方式在中国古代诗歌里以比兴手法传达，而在信天游里，自然物态已明显地烙上了表达者的情感，这种感情已经与自然物态完美地揉合在一起。这在中国民歌的形式中是十分独特的。信天游的歌词字数以七言为主。由于陕北方言中常用叠字、重字、重词，如“兰格英英<sup>[12]</sup>”、“白格生生<sup>[13]</sup>”、“红格彤彤<sup>[14]</sup>”等等，所以也常见一些不规则的如八字、九字，乃至十多个字的词句，节奏自由，音域宽广，旋律大起大落，高亢奔放。

中国中央音乐学院的教材《民歌音乐》将陕北民歌列为最主要的民歌之一，这已足可见证陕北民歌的地位与价值。陕北信天游的风格、旋律、曲调都堪称民歌的典范。信天游十有八九为情歌，其余多为慨叹贫富不均或痛斥战争残忍等。爱情是人类永恒的主题，自古以来，陕北的青年男女一直为赢得幸福的爱情而苦苦地追求着，“手提上羊岗怀里揣上糕，拼上性命我往哥哥家里跑。”这种不惜以付出生命为代价的对爱情的追求和向往在信天游里表现得尤为突出。对纯挚的爱情的追求，对幸福生活的向往，对包办买卖婚姻的反抗，对妇女悲惨命运的控诉在信天游中也得到了充分的反映。有的直抒胸臆，充满激情：“鸡蛋壳壳点灯半炕炕明<sup>[15]</sup>，烧酒盅盅量米不嫌哥哥穷。”有的借物寄情，比喻巧妙：“黄河畔上灵芝草，长的不高生的好。”有的表达了对“买卖婚姻”的深恶痛绝：“你妈妈你大<sup>[16]</sup>把钱爱，生下一个女儿当驴卖。”有的唱出了妇女对不自主的婚姻的抗争和对“夫权”的诅咒：“对面沟里拔黄蒿<sup>[17]</sup>，我男人倒让狼吃了”；“二升燕麦一包药，我给我丈夫推炒面

<sup>[18]</sup>。”陕北情歌，质朴自然，内容鲜明，其中最多的是咏唱男女之间分离后的相思和相聚时的欢悦，充分反映了陕北人民在爱情生活中对真、善、美的向往和追求。

信天游的内容不光是表现了爱情，同时也反映了陕北人生活的方方面面，题材广泛，内容丰富。特别是1935年，毛泽东率领工农红军长征到达陕北之后，信天游内容和词曲的意境为之大变，如火如荼的革命运动，波澜壮阔的人民革命战争和民族解放事业在民歌信天游中都得到了生动而鲜明的反映，例如，“一杆杆红旗空中飘，跟上共产党把革命闹。”“千里的雷声万里的闪，红旗一展天下都红遍。”等新民歌充满革命的激情。

在民歌领域，陕北信天游带有浓郁的地方特色，充满了“黄土的芳香”，每首信天游都可以使人感到一种心灵上的共鸣。在现代都市生活中，远离大自然的人们渴望回归自然，可一听到信天游，顷刻间人们的思绪便会随着歌声飞向陕北，仿佛置身于蓝天白云之下的黄土崆上，看到那亲切的山川塬峁、土窑石磨和行走在黄土高坡上老实巴交可亲可敬的陕北人，闻到那山丹丹<sup>[19]</sup>的芳香……信天游中的景致。成为现代都市人回归大自然的一种感情寄托。

民歌中的所唱虽已时过境迁，但它的艺术魅力依然不减，不仅中国如此，几乎世界各国在每一个重要的历史时期，都有具有时代特点的民歌问世，并一代代传唱下来，因它有广泛的群众基础，所以能够超越时空，至今依然能打动人。

虽然原来只是陕北特有的民歌，但近半个世纪以来，它已超越了地域的界限，流传到全国各地，如今，更是与流行歌曲和美声精典作品一起登上了高雅的音乐殿堂，越来越受到人们的关注和欢迎。

## 剪纸

剪纸是中国最为流行的民间艺术之一。按照地域可分为南北两派，南派以江苏扬州和浙江乐清的出品为代表，其特点是构思巧妙，秀美多姿，玲珑剔透，妙趣横生；北派剪纸主要出自陕北、河北蔚县和丰宁，其风格大胆夸张，浑厚粗犷，造型生动，不拘一格。北派又以陕北为最。

中国民间剪纸历史悠久，最早见于《史记》中“剪桐封弟”的故事，周成王姬诵用梧桐叶剪成玉圭的图像赠予其弟姬虞，作为封命之书，封虞为唐侯，至今已有三千多年了。中国现存最早的古代剪纸实物，是1959年新疆的吐鲁番高昌故城出土的南北朝时期（公元420—589年）的五幅剪纸团花<sup>[20]</sup>：对鹿团花、对猴团花、八角形团花、菊花团花和忍冬纹团花。“剪纸”一词首先出现于唐杜甫《彭衙行》一诗中：“暖汤濯我足，剪纸招吾魂。”李商隐在《人日》中也吟道：“镂金做胜传荆俗，剪彩为人起晋风。”可见剪纸在唐朝（公元618—907）已逐渐成为相对独立的一个艺术品品种。宋代（公元960—1279年），民间多用青纸或青绢剪制小幡。到了明（公元1368—1644年）清（公元1644—1911年）剪纸在民间广泛用作挂签、窗花、团花、灯花除寄托接福纳祥外，还在枕头、鞋、梳妆镜等物品上贴上喜花，以渲染气氛。“汉妃抱娃窗前耍，巧剪桐叶照窗纱。”这是至今还在西北地区流传的一句民谣它反映早在两千多年前的汉代人们已能巧用剪刀类工具制做小件饰品。

陕北民间剪纸制作的唯一工具是剪刀，由于是用剪刀在一张平面的红纸上进行造型，所剪出的花鸟鱼虫、禽兽蔬果和人物等，均带有一种朴素而夸张的美感，剪纸经过陕北广大劳动妇女（也有极少数男人）和艺术家的创造，在长期的流传过程中，形成了多种多样的表现手法。民间剪纸的题材内容非常丰富，不仅表现了人们所熟悉的事物，也反映了他们丰富的艺术想像力。在那些造型生动，画面优美的剪纸中，有祈愿农事丰

收、生活富裕的，如五谷丰登、六畜兴旺、吉祥如意、连年有余、鲤鱼跳龙门等，也有表现动植物形象的如艾虎、狮子、麒麟、玉兔、石榴、牡丹；还有传说中的人物和神话历史故事场景，像黄帝、鹊桥会、二十四孝故事等；更有表达人们对生命的礼赞的作品，抓髻娃娃<sup>[21]</sup>、鱼戏莲花<sup>[22]</sup>和扣碗<sup>[23]</sup>。从广大妇女的剪纸作品中不难看出人们对生活、对生命的热爱之情是多么的强烈。

陕北剪纸以延川、安塞为代表。位于黄河西岸的陕西北部的延川县，高天厚土，人杰地灵，是积淀深厚的黄河文化的发祥地之一。自古以来就有“武了三边<sup>[24]</sup>、文出两川<sup>[25]</sup>”之说，早在六千年前，先民们就在延川这块土地上繁衍生息，这里有仰韶文化、龙山文化的古村落遗址，有新旧石器时代的遗存和青铜器出土。由此可知，剪纸艺术之花能在这片土地上生发滋荣，绝非偶然，并被专家称之为人类历史的活化石。2002年2月中国民间剪纸研究会非物质文化遗产年会在延川召开，从而确立了延川剪纸在陕北民间剪纸中的地位。

很早以前陕北的剪纸只有“窗花”，形式单一。至20世纪80年代始才有一批人将剪纸作为一门艺术去探讨、发展。如今，延川剪纸的内容丰富多彩，形式多种多样，剪得最多的是他们生活中频繁接触的马、牛、羊、鸡等和那些吉祥如意、生殖崇拜，连年有余，民俗风情，故事传说。尤其是近两年来创作了一大批以陕北信天游为题材的剪纸作品在国内外广为流传。老中青三代众多的剪纸能手用各自不同的风格和生活经历创作同一题材的作品，其表现方法却不尽相同，有的粗犷、淳朴，有的精巧、洒脱，有的明朗、简练，有的夸张变形。这些作品充分体现了人类艺术最基本的审美观和精神品质，具有鲜明的中国本土艺术特色和浓郁的生活气息。

剪纸、信天游、闹红火<sup>[26]</sup>是陕北乡下最为流行的三种娱乐形式。剪纸同信天游却像一对孪生姊妹紧紧相随。陕北婆姨手里剪着剪纸，嘴里唱着信天游，这在乡



间随处可见，这本集子中的不少剪纸作品就是在这种背景之下产生的。

高凤莲这位延川剪纸群众中的佼佼者，曾获得过联合国教科文组织授予的“中国民间剪纸艺术大师”的称号。她将中国的本源哲学同图腾文化有机地结合起来，创造了新的艺术形象。高凤莲的剪纸艺术包容性极强，她既剪民间传统形态的剪纸，同时也剪以民间传统表现现代生活题材的新剪纸。信天游《拉手手》<sup>[27]</sup>是她这类题材中的精品，她把象征阴阳相合的男女用现代青年谈情说爱的方式表现出来。你看那青年男女窃窃私语，感情一时冲动偷偷的拉起手来，紧接着就是要到“圪塆里亲口口<sup>[28]</sup>”，为的是不让那些走路的人儿和在大树后面好事的人窥视，鸟儿也不再叽叽喳喳，静静地倾听着。高凤莲在她长期的劳动实践中对陕北民情民俗和民间文化有深刻的了解和认识，这就极大的丰富了她剪纸艺术的文化内涵，不论是人物，还是动物，她都要把头部装饰得非常华丽，这种看似随意的装饰都是有讲究和用意的。在她剪纸作品中表现出来的那种你中有我，我中有你，以花剪花，花里剪花的剪纸手法，是一种生命意识的完美体现。她所有的剪纸作品，从不起画稿，剪起来却胸有成竹，一气呵成，表现出剪纸大师的艺术风采。

而立之年的刘洁琼，是高凤莲之女，孩提时代的她并不喜欢剪纸，在她为人妻之后，母亲出了名，她也见多识广起来，受到母亲的熏陶，四五年间即颇有心得，拿起剪刀，洒脱自如。近年来她对陕北信天游潜心研读，将信天游歌曲中的内容同剪纸这种民间形式完美的结合起来，她边唱边剪。她创作的《走西口》、《兰花花》<sup>[29]</sup>等一大批以信天游为题材的剪纸作品重内涵，富有新意，造型生动，剪功娴熟。

在陕北也有极少数男人也在从事这一门艺术，如延川的郭如林。这位喝黄河水长大的农村青年，颇具灵气，由于受现代绘画的影响，思想活跃，一面继承传统，

一面面对现实，在他的剪刀之下，各类题材都表现得浑厚苍劲，具有慑人魂魄的力量。在表现人物的剪纸中，人们不难看出“先辈”的影子。他创作的“信天游”系列和“陕北风情”系列剪纸，令人感到天宽地广，心旷神怡。《墙头跑马还嫌低》即是“信天游”系列中的一幅，其画面及人物造型极其简练概括。这首信天游的歌词为：“树叶儿你落在一个树根底，红火<sup>[30]</sup>你就在一个那二十几。墙头上跑马还嫌低，面对面睡觉呀还想你。”画面所表现的是“面对面睡觉”时的情景，若是细细品味，不难看出作者对画面的经营是何等的用心良苦，一床花被将二人的下身盖的严严实实，花被上的装饰图案却颇有深意：在与女子的下部相对应的位置上装饰着莲花，莲花上落着一只鸟儿；与男下部相对应的被面上装饰着一条活生生的鱼。作者用“鱼戏莲”暗喻生殖的传统题材作为这幅剪纸的点睛之笔，不能不令人为之叹服。男女相交、阴阳相合，人类才得以生生不息，他这种借助剪纸独特的语言形式，巧妙地将生命意识，繁衍意识溶入自己的作品中，确实难能可贵。

陕北的剪纸是乡土艺术，参与者大多是农村妇女，女人的天性是爱美，所以陕北剪纸的主要审美特点是装饰，单调的“锯齿牙”装饰已不能满足今天广大剪纸作者的需要，他们试图用各种花草、鱼、虫来装饰所剪的剪纸，借用一切装饰手段使自己所剪的剪纸美起来，“女人一枝花”，他们愿自己的剪纸像花一样美。作者们除剪他们共同的生活及生活伙伴如娶亲、放羊、喂猪、纺线、织布、马、牛、羊、狗、鸡等以外，他们也常将自己的生活经历反映在剪纸作品中，这种个性化的作品在如今陕北剪纸中显得尤为成熟。

上世纪90年代初陕北老一辈的农村剪纸能手已相继故去，代之而起的是有文化的新的一代，从而给这一民间本土艺术注入新的活力，这无疑会对有着悠久历史的民间剪纸艺术的传承和发展起到无可估量的作用。

陕北信天游和剪纸，两者形影不离，往往同时并