

Nurtured and Nurturing: Traditional and Contemporary Cultural Contexts of Jiangzhou Drum Music

Ji Lingzhu¹ & Yin Haojie²

Abstract:

Shanxi is the cradle of drums in China with rich varieties of drum music. Xinjiang County, situated in the south-western part of Shanxi, has the most outstanding Drum Music, Jiangzhou Drum Music. The successful revival and development of Jiangzhou Drum Music has won itself the reputation of *National Folk Music Treasure*. Based on the results from the related document studies and field investigations, the present research discusses the traditional and contemporary contexts of Jiangzhou Drum Music, and argues that although the emergence of the folk music owed to the traditional cultural context, it has been feeding the local cultural environment reversely after being modified by the joint efforts of the locals and professional musicians, especially after being added to the national list of intangible cultural heritage and included in the world database of oral and intangible heritage of humanity.

Key words: Jiangzhou Drum Music; folk cultural context, traditional, contemporary

Acknowledgements

1. A phased achievement of the project funded by the Publicity Department of Shanxi Provincial Party Committee: **Significance of Shanxi Drum Music Culture in Contemporary China and the World (Grant No.2020YY222)**
Project leader: Prof. Ji Lingzhu
2. A phased achievement of Key Project sponsored by China Social Science Funds: **Genealogy of Folk Cultural Resources in Shanxi, Shaanxi and Henan Provinces and the Empirical Studies of Its Innovative Development (Grant No.19ZDA185)**
Project leader: Prof. Duan Youwen
3. We are deeply indebted to the help of Mr. Wang Feng (Chairman of Xinjiang Music Association), Mr. Hao Shixun (Provincial Inheritor of Jiangzhou Drum music), Mr. Liu Baomin (retired director of Xinjiang Cultural Bureau), Mr. Gao Hongqi (General Manager of Shanxi Chong Dao Yuan Cultural Communication Co. Ltd), and all the villagers interviewed.

Introduction

Jiangzhou Drum Music, a traditional folk music genre originated from the south-western part of Shanxi province in China, is a good example of dynamic inheritance of traditional Folk culture. Nurtured by the local history and culture, the folk art has kept interacting with folk activities in the ever-changing regional environment. In history, due to relatively isolated environment, the traditional music had performed limited functions of worshipping Gods, immortals and deities, entertaining people, serving the life rituals according to the local customs, and warding off the evil spirits. After the music being refined and upgraded by the professional musicians during the 1980s, the drummers practiced very diligently to improve their beating skills, and had won many awards in various folk performing art competitions at different levels. The traditional music has revitalized within and out of its original ecosystem. The artisans are often invited to perform at different kinds of celebrations such as business occasions, art shows and recreational activities. They even won themselves the precious opportunities to perform for the national and international occasions such as Opening Ceremonies of Beijing Olympic Games in 2008, Shanghai World Expo in 2010 and international music festivals. They have already performed in nearly forty countries in the world.

Jiangzhou Drum Music, although born from the farmland in the southern part of Shanxi, gained reputation of **National Art Treasure**, and was added to the list of the National Intangible Cultural heritage in 2006. The

¹ Taiyuan Normal University, City of Jinzhong, 030619, Shanxi Province, P.R. China. Email: margaretlingzhuji@aliyun.com

² Taiyuan Normal University, City of Jinzhong, 030619, Shanxi Province, P.R. China

successful revival of the folk music has drawn attention of the scholars from different fields: music, history and culture etc, whose researches centered on the following aspects: 1) regional characteristics and playing techniques¹; 2) the historical and cultural origin²; 3) development of Jiangzhou Drum Music Troupe: performing styles, the musical structure and the setup of the band³ ; 4) teaching situation and training of professional and part-time drummers⁴.

The present research focuses on the cultural contexts of the drum music. From the limited document records, interviews with the drummers and drummer trainers and local elderly and other forms of field investigations, the authors tried to dig into its traditional and contemporary cultural contexts, and find out the ways and directions of the interaction between the drum music and the local context .

1. The traditional cultural context

1.1 Archeological discovery

Jiangzhou Drum Music can be dated back to the late Neolithic period. In Taosi Site in Xiangfen County, only twenty kilometers away from the County town of Xinjiang, the ancient wood drums, pottery drums and even the treasure of drums, Tuo Gu (鼉鼓 in Chinese, drum made of crocodile leather), were unearthed by now. This archeological discovery confirms that drums came into being at least 4,000-5,000 years ago around Xinjiang County.⁵



Tuo Gu unearthed in Taosi Site ⁶
Courtesy of 360 pictures

1.2 The economic and cultural environments

Xinjiang County is situated in the valley of Fenhe River in south-western Shanxi and used to be the capital city of ancient Jiangzhou Prefecture. At present, it is the only Historical and Cultural City at the state level in southern Shanxi, and the sole model county for intangible cultural heritage inheriting of Shanxi Province. The development of Jiangzhou has experienced three development climaxes in history, namely, the periods of the Qin and Han, Sui and Tang, and Ming and Qing Dynasties. Its prosperity benefited from the location and transportation advantages of water and land terminal. In the Sui and Tang Dynasties, Jiangzhou was an important water and land wharf to Changan (today's Xi'an), the capital then, as a significant defending city. Officials, merchants, literati, and craftsmen all gathered here; It is even the distribution center of goods and people in the Ming and Qing Dynasties, which further promoted its economic and cultural development. From Western Han Dynasty to Tang and Song Dynasties, then to the middle of the Qing Dynasty, Jiangzhou had been the center of product processing and exchange for places like Shanxi, Shaanxi, Henan, Beijing and Tianjin etc, known as the city of "seventy-two trades".⁷

The development of Jiangzhou Drum Music benefited from economic booming and cultural exchanges in this area. The Music embraced its first peak in Tang Dynasty (618-907A.D.), which was glorious in Chinese history both economically and culturally. During that period, Jiangzhou led the country in handicraft industry and

commerce because of its geographical advantages. Political stability and economic development promoted the prosperity of arts. Massive influx of foreign cultures from different regions during this period provided opportunities for Jiangzhou Drum Music to draw nutrients from other cultures and became more developed and diverse in its themes and styles.

1.3 Business development and frequent temple fairs

The salt business produced the earliest businessmen in Shanxi and even China during Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods. From then on, business seemed to be planted in the genes of Shanxi people. Once there was proper soil, the seeds would sprout and grow quickly. While the Ming and Qing Dynasties (1368-1912) witnessed Jiangzhou's third peak of development in economy and culture. For over 500 years in Ming and Qing Dynasties, Shanxi business had prospered. Over the years, for the convenience of production, transportation and marketing, business gradually evolved into various kinds such as cotton, cloth, tea, and medicinal materials etc. Shanxi business people expanded business to other places in China and even foreign countries like Russia and Japan, and they became the synonyms of riches. The commercial channels helped Yellow River Culture to spread to the outside world and the influx of the essence of cultures from other places home and abroad. Various forms of arts had been widely exchanged and flourished. Jiangzhou Drum Music became more mature and prosperous than ever before.

Historically, there had been many different temples for spirits, immortals and deities of different religions and folk believes in Jiangzhou, and temple fairs were frequently held. Among these, more than twenty temple fairs were for the Gods of different industries, since Jiangzhou was named *A City of Seventy-two Trades* due to its prosperity in crafts and businesses. The temple fairs (庙会 *in Chinese*) in Shanxi, originally for harvests in spring and thanksgivings in autumn and winter, became partly occasions for business exchanges and folk arts performing at that time. Drum music had always played the leading roles in different kinds of temple fairs, at which the drummers competed with each other, exchanged their beating skills and innovated their drum music scores.

1.4 Jiangzhou drum music and idolatrous procession for harvest-praying and thanksgiving

In 1981, a tomb of Jin Dynasty was unearthed in the village of Nanfanzhuang at the foot of Jiuyuan Mountain in Xinjiang County. There are 33 brick carvings on the south wall of the tomb. The picture of twenty-four filial piety stories were carved on the upper wall bricks, and the pictures of music playing and dancing in **Shehuo** were carved on the lower wall bricks. There were bass drums, Jie drums and waist drums in these pictures. Gong-beating, drum-beating and clapper-playing figurines are carved on both the east and west walls, regarded as the living fossils of Jiangzhou drum music in folk activities.

The idolatrous procession is the tradition in the witch culture of the Yao (one of the Five August Emperors in ancient China) period. People would pray for peace in times of war or famine, and reward deities in the years of harvest. Temples and memorials had been built in Jiangzhou for the Heaven, Earth, Spirits, as well as the representatives of loyalty, filial piety, morality and righteousness. There are masters of each of the "seventy-two trades" and every temple has its sacrifice day. In the early years of the Republic of China, there were nearly 500 temples throughout the county. Jiangzhou people attach great importance to agriculture, and temples of the God of Earth were built in nearly every village. Harvest praying in spring is a big holy event to the locals. They would start the rehearsal of drum play in full swing in the winter, slack season in farming. According to Xinjiang County Records, "The celebration of the idolatrous procession cannot be grander than in lunar March. The 3rd is the Medicine God's Day; The 8th is the Nuwa's Day; The Qingming (Chinese Memorial day, falls on late lunar March or early April) is the Water Goddess Day; The 15th is the Day of Earth and the Day of the Dragon King; The 22nd is the Day of the Three August Ones; and the 28th is the Tai Shan Festival."⁸ Detailed descriptions of the local idolatrous procession can also be found in the records of Wenxi County which used to be governed by Jiangzhou Prefecture. "Each village has its own deity to worship. The big villages sacrifice for their deities by themselves, while the small ones would have the religious procession cooperatively. Furthermore, the ritual sometimes would be sponsored by different villages in turn. On the big day, there would always be a grand gathering with the music of gongs and drums, flower carts and drum carts."⁹

Where there are temple fairs, there are bound to be sacrifices of incense burning and abundant offerings and Shehuo (festival entertainments, usually during the Chinese lunar new year period) performances, such as lion dance, dragon lanterns, yangko dance, pole playing, gongs and drums, juggling, etc. Both the opening and finale programs are music show of gongs and drums, and the other performances are accompanied by drum and gong music. Drummers playing Multi-skill drum beating and the Drum drama in traditional costumes communicated with each other and improved their drum-beating skills.

Nanguan Village was the former guardian of the southern gate of Jiangzhou. It had been closely related to Jiangzhou City since ancient times, and witnessed the commercial prosperity of the ancient Jiangzhou. In Fanzhouzhiyi (thousands of boats transporting grains from State Qin to State Jin via rivers of Weihe, Fenhe and Huihe), the village was naturally chosen to be the most important transfer station, leaving its name in the record of first large scale inland water transportation in Chinese history (647 B.C.).

On the sixth day of the sixth lunar month in 2019, the *Fifth Temple Festival* of Worshipping the Deity Cui Ziyu was held in the newly built Fujun Temple. The ritual started by incense burning, followed by drum shows: army drums, flower drums, multi-skill drum beating, drum drama in traditional costumes and bass drums. Yangko dance, land boat-dancing and fan-dancing were accompanied by drum music. The crowds gathered together in front of the Fujun Temple for the village religious day, seeming to reproduce the hustle and bustle of Nanguan wharf with merchants and travelers assembled in the past.

1.5 Life rituals and ethical education

Affluent life and prosperous economy provided people time, money and motivation for well-prepared, magnificent life rituals. Celebrations for birth, wedding and funerals had been very elaborate in Jiangzhou for many years. According to the *County Records* printed in Qing Dynasty, at weddings or funerals, drum music was indispensable no matter for the rich or the poor. Otherwise, people in the neighborhood would laugh at them, and they would feel excluded from the community and lose the sense of belonging and presence.

At weddings, the bands would play happy drum music pieces, folk songs or local opera. Funerals have been most important for the locals since it is the ritual that marks the end of a life. The tombs of Yuan Dynasty unearthed in the villages of Nanfanzhuang and Zhaili were designed, built and decorated much better than many houses in other areas of the same period. Villager drummers volunteered to help whenever there was a funeral in the village no matter how busy they were. Drum music was more commonly used at funerals together with folk wind music. The pieces played expressed either Confucian filial piety of the descendants and the honor for the deceased, Taoist blessings for the later generation and warding off evil spirits, or Buddhist reincarnation and Karmic repetition. Until now, in Xinjiang County, there are still many religious venues of five religions: Confucious' Temple in the county town, Taoist temples of many kinds (scattered in many villages), Buddhist temples (scattered in many villages), Catholic Cathedral in the county town, and Islamic mosques in Moslem residential areas. However, Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism are very popular with the general masses.

In different kinds of rituals (life, community, extended family or folk believes), the Chinese traditional virtues, such as loyalty, filial piety, chastity, righteousness, have been passed from generation to generation. In local people's eyes, at specific rituals, drum music played at the rituals functions much better than simple verbal preaching, teaching and commanding since the atmosphere and sound effect created could reach the soul and heart of everyone present.

2. Jiangzhou drum music from our field investigations

2.1 Jiangzhou Drum music in legends

In our field investigations, the local people provided some relevant legends.

2.1.1 Horse treading on Drum Water

In Gudui, a village to the north of Fenhe River in Xinjiang County, legend has it that Prince of Qin (Li Shimin, later the first emperor of Tang Dynasty) once led a thousand cavalries marching through Jiuyuan Mountain, heading towards the Mashou Mountain. When he rode through the watercourse, his horse stamped on the water and hit the stone, making drum-like sounds which echoed loudly in the valley. The sound was so sonorous and unrestrained that it sounded like the battle drum. Upon hearing which, the soldiers galloped forward. The sounds of thousands of horses' stamping on the stones and water composed a piece of magnificent drum music symphony. Hence, from then on people named the water course Drum Water.

2.1.2 Jiuyuan Drum Mountain

The name of the Drum Mountain is also from a legend. It is said that during the Spring and Autumn and Warring States period, once the gale blew for seven days and nights after an earthquake, and the flying sand and rocks darkened the sky. The capital city of Jin Kingdom became a ruin overnight. But later nine mounds emerged at the boundary between Xiangfen and Xinjiang with two streams of spring water flowing below.

The mounds were high and round like drums, producing drum-beating sounds when walked on by people and animals.

2.1.3 The Memorial Hall of Magistrate Liang Gui

In the 16th year of the Sui Dynasty (596 A.D.), Liang Gui, the hardworking and devoted magistrate of Linfen County (Xinjiang belonged to Linfen county at that time), led the villagers to dig mountain to build irrigation project, and over 3,000 hectares of land in the Drum River basin became irrigable. To memorize Mr. Liang's contributions, the local people built a memorial hall for him, and thanked him with beautiful drum music.

As early as 1986, in field investigation, Mr. Yang Mingsuo from Yuncheng Museum interviewed Mr. Guo Chunlin (deceased), an old folk artist in Sanquan Village. According to Mr. Guo, "Generations of elders in the village repeated that the music of gongs and drums here emerged in Tang Dynasty. The multi drum-beating skills came into being in Sui Dynasty after Magistrate Lian Gui completed the irrigation project, when people performed drum music annually at the Memorial Hall of Liang Gui for his good deeds."⁷ Later artists and local people basically adopted this view for the origin of the drum music.

Drums had been worshipped as a totem by the locals. They built a temple near the Drum River, and put a big drum inside, which would be used in every praying and sacrificial ceremony.

2.2 Harvests Praying and Rain Rituals

China is traditionally an agricultural society. In ancient times, due to the underdevelopments in science and technology, it was nearly impossible for the people to build irrigation projects and develop drought resistance technologies. Agricultural output was solely decided by the amount of rain. Therefore, rain-praying became a drought-resistance measure concerned by the government as well as the common people.

2.2.1 Thunder-like drum sounds

The ancestors of mankind performed sacrifices with drums, and they believed the sounds could reach up to the heaven and down into the earth. After entering the agrarian age, the ancient Chinese peasants had spring and autumn rituals to pray and thank for harvests with drum beating for protections from the deities and immortals. It would thunder around the Spring Equinox each year. The drum-body was made of wood, and the surfaces of leather, because the ancients expected the drums to produce the sounds of thunder.

2.2.2 Emperor Li Shimin and rain-praying

On the way to capture Chang'an, Li Shimin once accommodated on the Gudui Mountain. When he crossed the Yellow River for the second time, he hoarded soldiers in Baoli Village, Xinjiang County and quelled Liu Wuzhou's rebellion in the area east of the Yellow River, and brought peaceful life back to the people. Therefore, he enjoyed great love and esteem from the locals. The prototype of the most famous national court music piece of Tang Dynasty, *Prince of Qin Crashing the Enemy's Battle Line* (秦王破阵乐), was composed at this time, borrowing some elements from the folk drum music in Jiangzhou. The drum music opera played every year at the local Spring harvest praying season, *Rain Praying Ritual of Emperor Li Shimin* (唐王出城), represents the scene that Emperor Li Shimin prayed for rain in person with his princes as well as officials in the Dragon King Temple in the year of drought, which has annually become a last and best program in the Shehuo (a traditional celebration of Spring Festival among Chinese Han people) in the villages of Gushui River basin. There are more than a hundred of drum and gong performers in this team, playing the parts of Li Shimin and his entourage. They are dressed in the costume of the Tang Dynasty in line with the roles of emperor, officials and princes etc. The majestic band uses percussion instruments, such as big drums, snare drums, gongs, cymbals, and clappers.

2.2.3 Rain ritual in the village of Zhaili

There will be a big event in Zhaili Village, Xinjiang County every year on the first day of the eighth lunar month, and the most important part of the ritual is to worship the Dragon King of the lotus pond with performing "Yin-Yang Gongs and Drums". Xinjiang is a wheat-producing area, and the beginning of August in lunar calendar is wheat-seeding season. The Dragon King worshipping ritual is to pray for rain, ensuring the water needed for wheat sowing and germinating. In the ancient era, Yin and Yang referred to woman and man, so this ritual is also a reflection of ancient reproductive worship, hoping for harvest and increasing members in the family.

2.2.4 Rain-praying at the Temple of the Dragon King in the village of Beidong

The temple fair of rain-praying is annually held in Beidong Village, Xinjiang County at the Temple of Dragon King on the second day of the second lunar month. The village is located at the southern foot of Mashou Mountain. The people there have made their living on farming, relying on rainfall to feed their crops since the ancient times. It is said that, at the beginning of the Wanli period in the Ming Dynasty (about 400AD), it was arid

and rainless. The crops were widely sowed but scarcely harvested. So the elders in the village suggested forming a rain-praying group of ten males born in the year of dragon. To show their piety and sincerity, they set out before dawn without shoes, but abundant sacrifices, to the “Yunju Temple” located half way up the Mashou Mountain 2.5 kilometers away from the village, to ask the Dragon King for mercy and rain. The next day, the Dragon King offered spring rain charitably as expected. To express their gratitude, the villagers spontaneously donated food and money, and contributed labour and materials to build the grand Dragon King Temple.

It took them three years to complete the construction. According to the elders in the village, the Dragon King Temple covered an area of more than 6,000 square meters. It is a pity that the Japanese invaders burnt it down in the fall of 1940.

The temple fair of rain-praying in Beidong Village has lasted for hundreds of years and continues to prosper. On that day, tens of thousands of people gather here from the villages of Xinjiang County, and the neighboring counties such as Jishan, Xiangning and Fencheng. It is widely known for its varieties of sacrificial performances: short Huagu opera, land boat dance, drum carts drawn by horses or oxes, stilt-walking and lion dances, etc.

The competition of *man-drawn drum-carts*, unique in the over twenty villages around Mashou Mountain situated at the north border of Xinjiang County, usually led the temple fair sacrificial activities to the climax. None of the locals interviewed could make it clear when this folk form of sport came into being, neither was there any documented evidence. One villager joked that in the mountain village irrigating water had always been very precious, and villagers pulled the drum carts to scramble for the water from the melting snow on Mashou Mountain. His joke partly solved my confusion. However, there are other ways to demonstrate their strength for more water. Why did pulling the drum cart become their choice? A reasonable inference is that the same as the *mule and horse-drawn cart drums, the man-drawn drum carts* evolved from the ancient war drums, related to Emperor Li Shimin. When the foot-soldiers in the army fought against their enemies, they had to run very fast in the battlefield with their equipments when they heard the sounds of war drums. Some local elders thought this ritual would ward off the evil spirits and bring the villagers blessings and good luck. At the Eve of the Lunar New Year, the big drum was put on the cart which was then drawn by some strong runners with ropes. Accompanied by the pounding drum-beatings, and the pullers ran as fast as flying to the rhythm of the drums. The demons and ghosts would all be scared away on hearing the sounds, therefore, the villagers would be blessed in the coming year. People-drawn cart drum competition can also be found in villages of the neighboring counties. The main factors to determine the winner are the strength of the pullers and their coordination and cooperation.

2.3 Jiangzhou drum music and farming season

In *the multi-skill drum beating performance* in the villages to the north of the Fenhe River in Xinjiang, there are generally 24 flat drums, representing the 24 solar terms of the year. There are also two splints and two clappers, symbolizing four auspicious animals, namely, the loyal cattle, brave tiger, mighty lion and propitious kylin (a Chinese mythical animal). In the ancient past, the splint and clapper performers were dressed in the corresponding masks and shoes in the shape of hooves of the four animals while dancing harmoniously to make the scene more magnificent and impressive. The performance served to pray for the reasonable operation of the natural cycle, good weather, annual harvest, as well as peace and good luck for the people.

The origin of the multi-skill drum beating was not recorded in any historical books. There are two local versions in Jiangzhou. One is from the Memorial Hall of Liang Gui in the Sui and Tang Dynasties, and the other is the Memorial Hall of Niangniang (local water goddess) in the Yuan Dynasty. Both of them were connected with farmland irrigation by the Gushui River. Moreover, Jiangzhou is located in the west turning area of Fenhe River, where the agricultural civilization has long developed and prospered. The murals in Jiyi Temple in Yangwang Town, Xinjiang County, are in honor of “The Three Saints”. Specifically, the three saints in the mural on the east wall are the Yellow Emperor, Fu Xi and Shen Nong (known as the Three August Ones), and those on the west wall are Dayu, Houji and Boyi (water god in the Xia Dynasty). The murals, very rarely found in China, recorded the stories of the pilgrimage farmers, the legend of Jiyi, the burning of wasteland and hunting, mountains and rivers etc, which actually form a historical book of ancient Chinese agriculture. The ancient people in Jiangzhou already understood the impact of natural cycles and seasonal changes on agricultural production, and demonstrated their agricultural and meteorological knowledge in the folk activities of rewarding the immortals and entertaining people. Similar to Xinjiang, there are also twenty-four drums in the Drum Tower in Beijing, rebuilt in the fifth year of Jiaqing (1800A.D) in Qing Dynasty, representing the 24 solar terms.

3.Changes brought by Jiangzhou Drum Music to local performing bands, customs and improvements of the people's appreciation

The formation of the Jiangzhou Drum Music is concerted action of multiple factors (geography, history, economy and culture etc). During 1000-plus years it has been nurtured by the fertile soil and also performed its role in the local culture. In a relatively isolated region and specific environment, folk customs passed on from generation to generation, local people observe them and keep repeating them in their life. However, in the circulating cycle, some changes are happening quietly. People's life in Jiangzhou has experienced several stages of change due to the fast economic and social development, and the drum music has absorbed some different kinds of elements from the outside as well after many times of tour shows and competitions home and abroad.

The performing styles, musical structure and setup of the band have been changing, although the drummers have tried very hard to adjust their performance to the local needs when they are invited to perform at home. Most of the local people responded positively to the changes, only the seniors complained that Jiangzhou Drum Music could no longer return to their good old days.

Thanks to the reform and opening-up policy in China in late 1970s and early 80s, communication and multi-media technology developed in leaps and bounds with the economic, social and scientific progress, televisions, internet and cell-phones had gained popularity among the ordinary people. Consequently, people have more choices for entertainment and ways of travelling, which led to gradual open-up of the relatively closed environment of local cultural context.

3.1 Female drummers, female drum band and the changes in the locals' way of thinking



Leading lady drummer of Chong Dao Yuan Cultural Communication Co.Ltd

We may interpret cultural prosperity of ancient Jiangzhou in another way: greater and longer lasting influences of traditional ways of thinking, such as the issue of gender inequality. A deep-rooted tradition in Xinjiang County was that when there were male guests, women were not supposed to dine at the same table. At temple fairs, women were not allowed to play drums. In daily life, women were expected to reduce their public exposure as much as possible. Until now, at gatherings such as weddings or funerals, male and female guests are still invited to sit at separate tables. If a woman sits at a table for men and has a drink with them, she will be regarded as an alien, and the other women will keep a distance from her.

When Jiangzhou Drum Music Troupe was established in 1988, Mr. Wang Qin'an, the late former leader, took great efforts to convince the parents of some young girls in their teens to join the troupe. The success and delightful development in life and career of the girl drummers helped to remove the feudal bondage of over one thousand years on women, and broke the fetters that locked the local people's way of thinking (only in the case of drumming). Now there are more and more professional lady drummers from Xinjiang active on the national and international percussion music shows. Female drummers of **Eastern Jiangzhou Drum Music Troupe** in Shanghai enjoy popularity in many business celebrations. Parents no longer stop their daughters from learning to play drums, and some even encourage them to work hard by promising to pay for their competition

trips to Hong Kong and Macau. My niece's daughter, Xiao Zhang, had practiced drum-playing for five years during her primary school years and been to Hong Kong twice to attend drum music shows. Drum practicing and playing didn't distract her from the normal school work, instead, she became more diligent and persistent than before. Last year with outstanding academic records, she was admitted into an excellent senior high school in the City of Yuncheng.

3.2 Breakthroughs of Jiangzhou Drum music in Shanghai show business world

In 2002, Jiangzhou Drum Troupe, led by Mr. Wang Qin'an, moved to Shanghai to enter the circle of professional show business. Although Shanghai has always been open for different kinds of performing arts, western music is more popular among the audience because of the long term impacts of foreign cultures. Unlike in Northern China, audience in Shanghai are in favor of light and lively drum music pieces such as *The Mice Wedding* and *The Rolling Walnuts*. Female drummers are more popular with the audience. To cater for the aesthetic needs of Shanghai market of performing arts, Jiangzhou Drum music troupe added some elements of feminine beauty to its originally grand and earth-shaking style, and reformed the female drummers playing styles, adding dancing and or Peking Opera style acting while beating. They rehearsed more waist drum performing (dancing drum beating), and invested more money in the costumes of female drummers: clothes representing Shanxi folk culture, opera costumes or those tailored to specific programs. The innovations and investment with female drummers yielded good returns: the highest proportion of the troupe's profits. Improvement of folk arts' aesthetics and different aesthetic orientation of audience in Shanghai bring about both opportunities and challenges to the Jiangzhou Drum Troupe¹⁰.

3.3 Changes brought to the local context

3.3.1 Differences between traditional and modern Jiangzhou Drum music

The gross and coarse folk music which had naturally existed for thousands of years has experienced a spectacular transformation and expanded its existing space from rural temple fairs and life rituals to national and international stages. From the development of Jiangzhou Drum Music Troupe in the past thirty years, there have been a lot of changes with the music itself, structure of the staff and audience as well as functions of served by the music.

The instruments used change to a combination of drums, splints, gongs, cymbals, blowpipes, plucked and stringed instruments from the traditional four (flat drum, big drum on cart drawn by mules, horses, ox, and men, splints and clappers). The traditional multi-technique drum-beating has been inherited and innovated. The music structure and texture have been modified and upgraded, and the number of performers becomes more flexible from 1 to 100. The new drummers are trained in a more systematic and formalized model, including general knowledge teaching and music theory in both traditional and modern drum music scores.

Although the music changed from the traditional folk drum music to a combination of the traditional and those newly composed by the drummers and professional musicians, the common themes such as folk tales and historical stories and legends are the favorites of the audience from all walks of life, although the troupe often prepares some pieces with the cultural elements of places where they perform during their tour show home and abroad.



Drum music show of Yang's Female Warriors,

Shanxi Chong Dao Yuan Cultural Communication Co. Ltd in Malaysia, 2016,

3.3.2 Changes of the local environment

The local people used to practice drum beating during the winter slack season for entertainment as well as preparation for the idolatrous processions of harvest praying and thanksgiving. Every village had its own drum band. Temple fairs were also a season for local drum competitions. Drummers from the same village could produce very different drum music, even with the same Qupai (the names of the drum music tunes). However, the villagers' slack seasons have now been occupied by working in the big cities, traveling or engaging in home-based small-scale manufacturing. The recent years have witnessed returning of more and more temple fairs in Xinjiang county, but the number is still small compared with that in the past. Therefore, this has narrowed the traditional existing space of the folk Drum Music. Many local amateur drummers can only take part in the annual celebrations during the Spring Festival and the Lantern Festival (including lion dance, dragon dance, yangko and so on). A possible consequence might be disappearing of more and more traditional Qupai (drum music tunes), since the drummers only practice and play the limited number of Qupai they are familiar with. However, these amateur drummers are the soul of Jiangzhou Drum Music

3.3.2 Changes in functions of drum music in folk activities.

Drum music in Jiangzhou used to perform the functions of blessing, warding off evil spirits and entertaining Gods in folk activities during temple fairs and festival celebrations, which had always been connected with certain kind of ritual. Rituals and drum music were interdependent and reinforced each other: profound connotations and their external expressions.

Nevertheless, drum music's function of rewarding Gods has become weaker and weaker, and temple fair goers even have no knowledge of which God is worshipped in a temple, let alone the relation between the drum music qupai and a God, and mysterious legends of those Gods. It is more to entertain people, who appreciate and judge the music from the artistic perspective. For example, the "Yin and Yang Drums" in Zhaili village, rain-praying in the past, has already been adapted to joyous drum music with multi beating skills. Such change reflects that the drum music is moving further and further away from the original purposes of god-worshipping and rain praying, and becoming more and more for artistic expression and entertainment.

3.3.2.1 At the Spring Festival celebration of 2019 in Dizhuang village of Xinjiang county, While the primary school children were playing the drum music *Prince of Qin Reviewing his Army*, I asked a young man standing next to me whether he knew who Prince Qin was. He shrugged his shoulders and answered, "Of course Emperor Qinshihuang (the first emperor in Chinese history)." He did not even know Emperor Li Shimin had once been the Prince of Qin, it was impossible for him to know the story that Li Shimin once stationed his army in Baibi village in Xinjiang. However, he expressed his love for the rhythm, the beautiful drums, the beating skills of the children and the children's costumes, and especially the atmosphere of so many people gathering together.

3.3.2.2 According to Mr. Wang Dengke from Beidong village in Xinjiang County, if there are 10,000 people attending the **Dragon King Temple Fair** in his village, they can be sorted into the following four categories:

- 2,000 theatre-goers will go directly to the stage, watching the local opera and enjoy themselves with the opera stories;
- 3,000 of them come shopping for daily necessities and farming tools ;
- 2,000 people come just for fun;
- 3,000 people come for local snacks. ¹¹

The Man-drawn Drum Cart Competition is the climax of this temple fair, yet few people know the historical and cultural origin.



The Man-drawn Drum Cart, picture from the local website

The two examples show us that the festivities of temple fairs and festivals are a carnival for the villagers, in which people enjoy the relaxing activities and performances, relieving themselves from daily pressures and restraints, forgetting all inequalities and misfortunes in their life.¹²

3.3.3 The development of local drum music bands

The success of Jiangzhou Drum Music Troupe founded by Mr. Wang Qin'an in 1988 in either business show circle in Shanghai or competitions sponsored by different governmental or professional organizations encouraged local semi-professional or farmers' amateur music bands. They quickly learned the modified percussion skills and the upgraded music pieces. The drummers for temple fairs, weddings, funerals or business occasions no longer play for help, but are paid according to the quality of their performing, and they are even invited to play in the neighboring counties.

Every year, the Cultural Bureau of Xinjiang County or Xinjiang Drum Music Association will sponsor competitions around Chinese Lantern Festival, Peach flower Festival in spring or Harvest Day in autumn, on which the local drummers compete with and learn from each other. New varieties of drums and drum music emerge one after another. Those award-winning pieces of drum music from competitions home and abroad will soon be imitated and revised by the local bands.

Mr. Hao Shixun, the provincial level inheritor, noticed that drummers from Wan'an village used flat drums placed at different heights to imitate the sounds of the traditional Huagu (small and long drums tied to the body parts of the drummers while they are dancing, beating and doing other acrobatic actions). He expressed his gratification as well as worries for this change. It was exciting that a new variety of drum music was created, however the traditional Huagu culture might be endangered, and the nostalgic Huagu sounds might be submerged in the river of history. Mr. Hao analyzed that the situation might be caused by the market, frequent performing for profits left no time for the drummers to rehearse and compose new pieces. It also seemed to be reasonable that the traditionally well-known Huagu Opera is on the verge of extinction, maybe it is too demanding for the performers, or the lyrics are in local dialects. In the process of intangible culture inheritance, it is understandable that there are some gains and losses, we still regret the endangering of some typical folk drum music sub-genres with their original ecology.



Huagu Opera Performance, courtesy of Mr. Hao Shixun



Huagu performance, courtesy of Mr. Hao Shixun

Conclusion

Folk art and folk culture have long been symbiotic and coexisting in Chinese history. Jiangzhou drum music, reached its peak in the early Tang Dynasty, is of no exception. Benefited from the strong economic foundation, culture, art, architecture and education of Jiangzhou had all developed well, gradually merged into its customs and people's daily life. Suited both for the refined and the common, Jiangzhou drum music had been indispensable in folk activities and official festivals.

When the modified varieties of Jiangzhou Drum music gained recognition and popularity in the outside cultural contexts which are refiner and higher than the original in the eyes of the locals, such as winning at folk music competitions sponsored by the cultural departments of governments and music associations, performing at the provincial, national and international occasions, and especially being added to the list of national intangible cultural heritage and included in the world database of oral and intangible heritage of humanity, they have strengthened existing power and became adaptable to different kinds of environments.

Then they are able to feed the local cultural context reversely . “ Cultural heritage has never been a fixed establishment, instead it is a symbol empowered by the government---a reproduced social product endowed with epochal and political values”.¹⁴ From a folk art form forged by the regional environment traditionally to one that leads the development in the local cultural market, modern Jiangzhou Drum Music experienced dynamic inheritance and innovation. However, the reverse feeding causes people’s reflections on the danger of homogenization by the empowered. Maybe some space should be kept for the authenticity protection of intangible cultural heritage.

References:

- Chang Yujie (常宇杰). 2014 The function and significance of Jiangzhou Drum Music(绛州鼓乐的功能和意义) . Music Panorama(音乐大观), Vol. 2 .
- Yang Gaoe(杨高鹤). 2009. The existence and development of Jiangzhou drum Music from the local life(从民俗看绛州锣鼓在民间的生存发展). Journal of Yuncheng University (运城学院学报) .Vol.2.
- Luan Kai(栾凯). 2010. The artistic features of Jiangzhou Drum music. (绛州鼓乐艺术初探). Journal of Beijing Dance Academy(北京舞蹈学院学报). The additional edition.
- Shi Xingang(史新刚). 2015. The Development of Jiangzhou Drum Music in primary and secondary schools(绛州鼓乐在中小学的发展状况). Music Sapce(音乐时空).
- Xiao Shuzhen(萧淑贞). 2016. *Persistence of Jiangzhou: local culture for Sustainable Development*(走绛州——不是所有的故乡都在沦陷). Beijing(北京): The Commercial Press(商务印书馆).
6. https://image.so.com/view?ie=utf-8&src=hao_360, retrieved on January 25, 2021.
- Wang Qin'an(王秦安). 2015. *On Jiangzhou Drum Music and Jiangzhou* (说鼓道绛) . Beijing(北京): China Press of Culture and History(中国文史出版社).
- Temple fairs in the city and villages of Xinjiang (新绛县城乡历史庙会).2016. Xinjiang Culture(新绛文化). Special Edition of Temple fairs(古庙会专辑) 2-3.
- Yu Baozi, Yang Futian(余宝滋, 杨毓田).1919. Wenxi County Records(闻喜县志).
- Yin Ruiqiao(殷瑞乔). 2007. From Xinjiang to Shanghai: Jiangzhou drum music in change(从新绛到上海: 变化中的绛州鼓乐). Shanghai Normal University.上海: 上海师范大学.
- Wang Dengke(王登科). 2016. DragongKing Temple Fair In Beidong Village(北董村龙王庙古会). Xinjiang Culture(新绛文化), (2 -3)
- Zhou Guangshen(周广申). 2008. Study on Aesthetics of Folk Culture (民俗文化的审美研究). Mass Literature and Culture(大众文艺).(12) :188.
- Hao Shixun, Hou Xiaoping(侯小平, 郝世勋).2015. Jiangzhou Folk Huagu Lyrics(绛州民间花鼓). Self-printed materials.
- Wei Aitang& Peng Zhaorong(魏爱棠, 彭兆荣). 2011. The Politics and Identification in the Heritage Campaign (遗产运动中的政治与认同). Journal of Xiamen University(厦门大学学报: 哲学社会科学版) (5) : 1 - 8.