

A Preliminary Study On The Inheritance And Development Of Lingbao Taoist Music A Take On Jiangxi Lingbao School Taoist Dharma Music

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Abstract

In summary, Lingbao Taoism belongs to one of the Taoist sects in China; namely the Lingbao sect. The Lingbao School was founded in the last era of the Eastern Jin Dynasty (Dated from 266-420 AD) in China. The classic "Lingbao Jing" in it advocates fasting and straightening merits and persuading virtue into people and therefore enlightening them to penance. It had a significant impact on the history of Taoism in China. In Lingbao Taoism, its fasting ritual music is deeply influenced by various terms of music including: court music, buddha music, opera, and many other musical cultures. Moreover, it has profound connotations in the form of musical expression. It can be said that Lingbao Taoist ritual music has become a critical part of China's traditional/ritual music culture, and every link in its development has carried and precipitated the rich national cultural essence. This article will discuss the basic composition of Lingbao Taoist music, analyze its cultural connotation, function, and most importantly, Inheritance and development strategy of Lingbao Taoist music.

Keywords: Lingbao Taoism; ritual music; basic composition; cultural connotation; function; inheritance and development

Preface:

Lingbao Taoist music, which was previously stated as the most important part of ritual music, is also known as "faculty music" and "dojo music". It is very prominent in embodying the spiritual characteristics of Taoist music. Objectively speaking, the research on the development of Lingbao Taoist music at the historical level is relatively weak, and there is a problem in the traditional method of oral transmission which led to divergent ideas due to individual differences. Therefore it was made difficult to be recorded in the historical annals. Furthermore, with the serious decline of Taoism in China since the late Qing Dynasty due to

political impact, Lingbao Taoist music also lost its development and inheritance momentum for a time. Luckily, In 1979, Taoism in China officially resumed work, and Taoist culture was able to resume its development and inheritance. Lingbao Taoist music has gradually recovered under the influences of various Taoist activities organized by Gezao Mountain and Gexian Mountain, and some of the scattered folk Lingbao Taoist ritual activities have also fully resumed. Therefore, the collection, arrangement, and inheritance of Lingbao Taoist music has been fully rejuvenated and achieved exceptional results ever since.

I. The basic form of Lingbao Taoist music

(1) The basic composition of Lingbao Taoist music

Generally speaking, the basic composition of Lingbao Taoist music is the same as other Taoist ritual music, including musical instruments, melody, musicians and orchestras. First of all, it is worth mentioning the unique musical instruments. Lingbao Taoism mainly uses stringed instruments in the process of performing ritual music. The instruments include wooden lutes, dulcimers, flutes, casting scepters, drums, conjuring bells and so on. Among them, the Fa bell (Conjuring bell) is the most distinctive. It refers to the small copper bell held by the master in the process of performing rituals. With thrice honed chimes comes with the meaning of "Circled dancers of the aged god's tribute" In fact, in addition to adding musical effects to Taoist music performances, it's more important role is to exorcize evil spirits [1].

Secondly, the music. Lingbao Taoist music is divided according to the genre and attributes of music. It is primarily split into vocal music and instrumental music. In the category of vocal music, scripture chanting has the most tunes, and it is called "jingyun". However, the instrumental music includes a variety of melodic harmonization as well as wind and percussion. Taking vocal music as an example, the vocal music in Lingbao Taoist music is quite particular about the chanting form. According to contrasting rhymes and rhythms, the lyrics are also distinctive. In different ritual music, the singing method and the melody shows extreme intensity but yet the sheer exquisiteness sprouts in between as if gold and glory were fused together as a whole. There are many eloquence and few words, and the lyrical performance is evident. In addition, there are also Taoist choruses, accompanied by stringed instruments and conjuring instruments. The more classical

rhyme pieces include "Bou Xusheng", "Golden Light Mantra", "Sutra Praise" and so on. Furthermore, there is also a form of chanting in the music, which is applied to the narration and anecdote at the beginning, middle or end of the ritual. It can also be understood as a kind of opera rhyme. Of course, the content of instrumental music in Lingbao Taoist music is indeed quite rich. Most of it is mainly melodic instrumental music including "Chaos in Yangzhou", "Small Cut", "Small Door", "Qi Zi Allegro" and so on. The other is percussion music; Lingbao Taoist percussion music has a very high status. On the basis of commanding and controlling the overall situation of music, it continuously changes the relationship between scripture rhyme and wind and percussion music, and has outstanding performance in coordinating and unifying musical styles [2] .

Next, the musicians and the orchestra. At present, there are 16 Taoist priests in the Great Longevity Chongzhen Palace of Gezao Mountain in China. They are good at playing Lingbao Taoist ritual music, and together they form the Jingyun Orchestra to accompany the ritual process. In the orchestra, all members can play a variety of musical instruments, but their average age is 60 to 70 years old or even above. It can be said that there are certain problems in the succession of musicians; while the Taoist priests in the Gexian Mountain Yuxu Temple in Shangrao has 18 Taoist priests, most of whom specialize in the content of Lingbao Taoist rituals. For the band members of Lingbao ritual music, they often borrow retired artists from nearby song and dance troupes or national orchestras, or some young and middle-aged performers who made a special trip to participate in the live performance of the Lingbao ritual event.

The music performance of Lingbao Taoist Orchestra includes walking music and sitting music. Among them, sitting music is also divided into Wen Yue (Literary music) and Wu Yue

(Physical/bodily Music). The musical style of Wenyue is quite delicate and euphemistic. On the other hand, Wuyue (Aka martial arts music) are mostly percussion music, among which the use of percussion instruments such as gongs and drums is particularly common, and the music style is more majestic and rough. During the practice process, the orchestra mainly performed the music in the order of “Zuo Wenle, Right Wu Le” (e.g. Wenyue displayed on the left hand side and Wuyue on the right), which mainly represented the whole process of inviting and sending spirits in Lingbao Taoism [3].

(2) The basic form of Lingbao Taoist music

The basic elements of Lingbao Taoist music are rich in content, including mode, pitch, scale, sound sequence and range, etc. Its melody morphological characteristics are determined according to the style of the music. As far as Gezaoshan Lingbao Taoist ritual music is concerned, most of its repertoires are traditional pentatonic and hexatone scales with special upper and lower levels. This makes the rhyme and rhythm of the whole music changeable, even ups and downs. As far as the typical melody type in Lingbao Taoist music is concerned, it has a high repetition rate and strong generalization performance, which almost plays a decisive role in the performance of the music. Objectively speaking, Lingbao Taoist music is constantly changing, but it can also achieve a unified charm. It pursues rhythm changes in the process of adding and subtracting sounds and adding tidbits. These melody types are mainly used at the beginning and middle of the music and the end position.

Of course, in Lingbao Taoist music, there are a lot of chanting and annunciations. As a special form of musical expression, the rhythm is more free and slow. During the extension process, it is supplemented by musical instruments and rhythmic musical instruments. There is a

common phenomenon of voice dragging in the above, which makes the lengths of the dragging in the rhyme come together, and there are often two or three beats in a word. Generally speaking, Lingbao Taoist music is relatively flexible in musical form, and its melody, rhythm and musical structure are balanced and symmetrical, thus forming a sense of mutual echo, especially pursuing the aesthetics of seeking change while maintaining stability. Therefore, its aesthetic style is also a combination of feminine and soft, which reflects the greatness of the traditional aesthetic thought of the ancient Chinese culture [4].

2. The cultural connotation and basic functions of Lingbao Taoist music

(1) Cultural connotation of Lingbao Taoist music

For many years, Lingbao Taoist music has pursued inheritance and development. It carried forward the ritual culture in its own music and demonstrated the connotation of its religious thoughts. In fact, its cultural connotation is also reflected in the two aspects of sanctity and secularity. The first is sanctity. Lingbao Taoist music itself is very sacred, and it is the awe and worship of Taoist gods. Therefore, its musical image is exactly the same as the content of Taoist rituals. During the process of creating a solemn and an atmosphere ritual, it also hopes to express a unified taoist ideology. This act completely obeys the specific development needs of Taoism, and it shows an immeasurable amount of skill in singing and an extremely complex rhythm. The melody and rhythm are strikingly remarkable, showing the very pious and faithful emotion of Taoists. For example, in “Praise of the Classics”, the rhyme and rhythm of the music tend to be simple but pursue change, and yet seek unity in change. In the introduction and the tail cavity, loose plates are used from one end to the other, and the echoes are quite neat. Singing in such a classical and artistic musical atmosphere is very

powerful; even shocking as we are mere mortals. In fact, the sacred Lingbao Taoist music, whether it is instrumental music or scripture rhyme, does not fail to show its special style and aesthetic conception. It also shows its musical characteristics in the process of expressing the belief of Taoist believers. It is also for the purpose of conveying religious views [5].

On the other hand, talking about secularity, in Lingbao Taoism, there are many Taoist priests, and a large number of Taoists are scattered among the people. Therefore, religious activities are also influenced by folk culture, which creates good conditions for its development and inheritance. In this process, folk Taoists are often immersed in the rich folk music culture environment. Therefore, Lingbao Taoist music itself also absorbs a lot of folk music cultural connotations. Over time, it is full of changes in the form of music expression, there are many changes in tune, form, singing and playing style. Objectively speaking, Taoist music and folk music are similar with minor differences, and the two attract and learn from each other, which further reflects the secular side of Lingbao Taoist music. For example, folk dramas and folk instrumental music are obviously added to songs like "Little Door", "Raising in Yangzhou", etc. Compared with the very solemn and elegant classical rhyme music, the folklore color it shows is more passionate.

From the perspective of opposition, although there are contradictions in Lingbao Taoist music in the process of fasting rituals and events, it may seem that the sacredness and the secularity are opposed to each other, but in fact the two have achieved a perfect fusion, which carries more for the secular people. Belief in religion and infinite yearning for a better life [6].

(2) Basic functions of Lingbao Taoist music

As a kind of fasting ritual music, Lingbao Taoist music presents a very rich content of basic functions. First of all, it can exaggerate the atmosphere, and it creates a relatively dignified and solemn atmosphere of religious and legal affairs in the ritual activities. For example, in the process of opening the altar and building the fasting ceremony, the bells and drums are firstly toll to show a certain majestic momentum in the dojo. At this time, the Daoists must calm down their drums and enter a state of piety and solemnity and pray for the lonely ghosts. At this time, the instrumental music shall begin, and the singing was inclined to be low-pitched and tactful, giving people a mournful and sad atmosphere.

Moreover, it is an important medium for communication between humans and divinities. It ensures normal spiritual communication between the devout and "Lingbao Tianzun"(The Divinity), creating a rather sacred virtual space. In Lingbao Taoism, ritual music is mainly responsible for serving the role and forming a "media platform", which not only fulfills the purpose of the ritual, but also effectively connects different links in the ritual. If analyzed from the outside, Lingbao Taoist music is more effective in reflecting the continuity of ritual links and the role of integral elements. All vocal and instrumental music forms can be presented and run candidly throughout the rituals with singing, reciting singing, reciting chanting, etc. They are of course expressed in the form of sound, and the melody is expressed through string music and wind music, forming a sound pattern that completely transcends language, and is linked with rhythm and rhythm, controlling the entire process of the ritual ceremony [7].

3. Inheritance and development strategy of Lingbao Taoist music

There were historical faults in the process of inheritance and development of traditional Lingbao Taoist music, especially under the impact of the current reform and the rapid social and economic development. In terms of traditional inheritance methods, the use of folk Taoist apprenticeships, cooperation and exchanges, etc., can no longer meet the current requirements of music development. And with the continuous reduction of the number of folk Taoists, the inheritance and development prospects of Lingbao Taoist music are also facing many difficulties. For this reason, this article focuses on the study and consideration of the three inheritance methods of Lingbao Taoist music [8]:

(1) Upgrading traditional inheritance methods

The inheritance and development strategy of Lingbao Taoist music focuses on family inheritance, such as inheriting the father's business from the son, learning the arts from teachers, etc. As mentioned above, these inheritance methods pursue oral teaching and following the script. In the process of popularizing the inheritance of ritual music, it is also hoped that it could achieve "according to modernity/science to explain things", and emphasizing "rhyme" to this one-to-many modern collective teaching form. In fact, this is an upgrade and evolution of traditional school education. It adopts a one-on-one teaching form on the basis of scripted teaching. Also a chance to demonstrate mock-performances while in the process of guiding students to appreciate the subtleties of music, so as to ensure that students can understand better about the charm and subtle technical content in the works. As far as the Great Longevity Chongzhen Palace of Gezao Mountain is concerned, they are currently being repaired and rebuilt. They hope to take this opportunity to carry out the inheritance and education of Lingbao Taoist ritual music and better solve the

problem in cultivating the inheritors of Lingbao Taoist education.

For now, the construction of temples around Gezao Mountain is still continuing. In the process of building a folk belief system, it also hopes to provide an occasion for the inheritance of Lingbao Taoist music culture and custom activities. A large number of ritual activities are held every year to pursue various large-scale developments in the inheritance and development of Taoist music. [9].

(2) Develop the inheritors of Lingbao Taoist music

Lingbao Taoist music inheritors should include both family and non-familial types. Among them, family inheritance cannot be continued under the impression of various social causes. It has little effect on the inheritance of Taoism and ritual music. Because the traditional inheritance model of oral transmission can no longer be in use. At present, the non-family inheritance method is popular. In the process of developing Lingbao Taoist music inheritors, the Taoist altar is the center, and the teacher-apprentice inheritance method is also adopted, which can attract a large number of Lingbao Taoist fans to come and worship freely. Learn the arts and expand the scope of inheritance and development of Lingbao Taoist music. Objectively speaking, although non-family inheritance is unfavorable to the development and inheritance of Lingbao Taoist music in the long run, it may be deviated from the track due to the different cultural environment of the number of inheritors, but its advantage is that it can attract more non-family inheritance Taoists to devote themselves to it. This idea invests in the learning and training process of Lingbao Taoist ritual music, thoroughly grasping the content and artistic expression of music results, and ensuring its long-term development on the basis of upgrading and expanding inheritors. Of course, people's beliefs and thoughts will change

to a certain extent under the non-family inheritance model, which is more helpful to the public's love for Taoist belief and ritual music in the new era. From the current point of view, domestic Lingbao Taoist music inheritors are developing in the direction of aging. Among them, the number of Taoists aged 60-70 accounts for more than 80%, while the number of Taoists aged 40-50 only accounts for 10%, and there are only few Taoists under the age of 40. It is quite necessary to actively carry out the non-family Lingbao Taoist music inheritance model. It hopes that people from every stratum in the society can participate in it to ensure that the music form and content are passed on from a broader level, and then finally realize the importance of inheritance and continuation of Lingbao Taoism itself [10].

(3) Enrich Lingbao Taoist music in the form of show-style protection

Lingbao Taoist music is an auditory art that should be protected as a traditional type of music. In the opinion of this article, the protection of Lingbao Taoist music must also be adopted in the process of inheritance, and the effective protection and inheritance of Lingbao Taoist music should be recognized in the process of increasing the intensity of various exhibitions and performances.

The first is the comprehensive performance protection of intangible cultural heritage. It is necessary to make good use of the annual "cultural heritage day", and combine the local government and cultural departments to enrich the content of the comprehensive performance of intangible cultural heritage, so as to realize the effective protection of Lingbao Taoist traditional music. It is necessary to continue the exhibition and performance activities, actively mobilize the inheritance units to actively participate, and form a comprehensive exhibition and perform a way of intangible cultural heritage, so as to promote the

protection and inheritance of Lingbao Taoist music [11].

The second is the innovative performance protection. In this form of protection and inheritance, Lingbao Taoist music elements and other Taoist music elements should be integrated, and even some modern music elements should be added to form relatively innovative performance works. It is very beneficial for more people (especially young people) to pay attention to Lingbao Taoist music. This method of inheritance and protection has certain challenges. It is very bold in the process of displaying the content of Lingbao Taoist music. It hopes to create a more contemporary music culture ecology on the basis of always retaining the authenticity of music. This is a beneficial way of inheritance and development of Lingbao Taoist music.

At this time of international exchange and performance protection, it hopes to bring Lingbao Taoist music culture to the international environment. This is to follow the continuous practice process of intangible cultural heritage protection in the world, and the international exchanges of traditional music intangible cultural heritage are becoming more and more frequent. In the opinion of this article, Lingbao Taoist music should go abroad and introduce traditional Chinese music to all parts of the world. Of course, we can consider joining forces with other fraternal provinces and regions to step out of the country and the world together, so that more countries and ethnic groups can understand the traditional Taoist music culture [12].

Summarize:

Afterall, Lingbao Taoist music is worthy of praise both in history and in the cultural development process of modern society. The sacredness and secularity it shows are equally shocking to human nature and plays an important role in the process.

Therefore, the inheritance and protection of Lingbao Taoist music must be carried out in an all-round way, and the breakthrough point of development and inheritance must be found from all levels of society, and the level of its development and inheritance must be continuously improved.

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