

Morphological study of Hulusheng music in the wedding ceremony of the Lisu people in Dechang

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Abstract

The Article aimed to study (1) To study the morphological characteristics of Hulusheng music in the wedding ceremonies of the Lisu people in Dechang. (2) To explore the performance forms of Hulusheng music. (3) To analyze the function and significance of Hulusheng music in weddings.

The authors conducted a field study of Lisu weddings in Dechang, and after analyzing the collected Hulusheng music, the following results were found:

1. Hulusheng music in the wedding ceremony has a leading role in the ceremony. Several parts of the wedding ceremony are completed by Hulusheng music together with dance, and this form of dance music marks the end of the ceremony. It shows that Hulusheng music plays an essential role in the Lisu wedding ceremony in Dechang.
2. Hulusheng music is often combined with dance to form a form of dance music. This dance music is called Guaqie by the Lisu people and is necessary for weddings. In addition to this form of music, Hulusheng solos also appear in ceremonies. The dance music and the solo in the ceremony reflect the unity of the ceremony through one melodic material.
3. The use of Hulusheng music in wedding ceremonies reflects the original religious beliefs of the Lisu people and their identification with the musical culture of their people.

Keywords: Hulusheng; Dechang Lisu People; Wedding Ceremony; Morphological Characteristic.

Introduction

The Lisu are an ethnic group with a long migration history due to war and other reasons. Today in China, the Lisu people are mainly found in Yunnan and Sichuan, in the country's southwest. Dechang has the largest Lisu population in Sichuan Province and has a population of over

7,000, according to the 2021 census. The Lisu people of Dechang have been separated from their community for over 300 years. Because of their remote living environment, their culture, especially the traditional wedding ceremony, is relatively well preserved.

Hulusheng music plays a significant role in the wedding ceremonies of the Lisu people in Dechang. It is under the guidance of Hulusheng music that the wedding ceremonies are carried out in their entirety. A morphological study of Hulusheng music in Lisu wedding ceremonies belongs to ritual music studies in the southwest. It can enrich and expand the cultural research latitude of this regional music.(Y. Yang, 2020) At the same time, the study is also conducive to revealing the regional and ethnic characteristics of Hulusheng music and preserving the musical culture's diversity.

The author will combine three field studies of Lisu weddings in Dechang with an in-depth discussion of the morphological characteristics of Hulusheng music in Lisu weddings in Dechang, analyzing its musical structure, musical elements, and performance forms, as well as its value and significance to Lisu culture in Dechang with the role of Hulusheng music in wedding ceremonies and its cultural context.

Research Objectives

1. morphological characteristics of gourd-sang music in the wedding ceremony of the Lisu people in Dechang
2. the performance form of gourd-sang music
3. the function and significance of gourd-sang music in wedding ceremonies

Literature Review

The Hulusheng is an ancient musical instrument, and the Bronze Hulusheng, now on display at the Yunnan Provincial Museum, has a history of more than 2000 years. It is still widely used among the minority groups of southwest China and is often used in ceremonies of various ethnic groups. Hulusheng music is also essential to the music culture of the Lisu people in Dechang.

1. Literature on the study of Hulusheng

In the article Hulusheng, the author compares the ancient literature on Hulusheng and distinguishes between the two easily confused instruments, the Lusheng and the Hulusheng, through the literature. The article presents a detailed description of the Hulusheng artifacts excavated in the last century as evidence of the long history of this instrument.(Li & Qin, 1980)

Through extensive literature analysis, Deng(Deng, 2006) points out that the Hulusheng is a vehicle for transferring gourd culture and that the instrument has the mythological qualities that gourds possess. The author discusses the relationship between the two through the lens of musical anthropology and proposes that the Hulusheng and the gourd cultural imagery have the exact origin. The paper examines the origin of the Hulusheng cultural imagery and cultural deposits, starting with the materials used to make them.

The Making of Laku Hulusheng and Its Transmission in Folklore(Liu, 1997), The Protection and Innovation of Hulusheng in the Context of "Intangible Cultural Heritage"-Interview with Mr. Wu Xueyuan(Wu, 2019), A Study of the Preservation and Transmission Strategies of the Lisu Hulusheng Music Culture in Dechang, Sichuan(Hu, 2016a), The above article focuses on the transmission and development of the gourd-sheng in the cultural contexts of different ethnic groups.

An Analysis of the Tone Series and Performance Patterns of the HuluSheng in the Baoai Block--A Case Study of Music Patterns in Southern China No. 2, The author provides an insightful analysis of the Hulusheng music of the Wa ethnic group, from finding the core tune to analyzing its musical rhythm to morphological analysis of the tune. The author provides a more thorough case study of the Hulusheng music and the pitch of this Hulusheng, providing a more specific research method for this genre.(Zhou, 2021)

An Analysis of The Musical Form of the "Gaqie" of the Lisu people of Dechang, the author analyzes the musical form of the Guaqie music played by the Lisu people of Dechang with Hulusheng. The tunes chosen by the author in the paper are mainly tunes of productive labor, and no analysis of the ceremonial music of weddings.(Hu, 2016b)

2. Research on Lisu ritual music

Research on Lisu ritual music has focused on the Nujiang region of Yunnan, where many Lisu are Christian, and studying their ritual music is relevant to the Christian faith. In A Field Study of Lisu Christian Ritual Music in Lisu Town, Lushui, Nujiang, the authors analyze Christian ritual music in the region through a combination of internal and external sources, focusing on the changes in Lisu Christian ritual music in the region.(Shi, 2014)

In the article New Variations in Christian Ritual Music of Yunnan Minorities, the author explains the phenomenon of variation in the Christian ritual music of Yunnan minorities from five aspects. In making specific comparisons and interpretations, the Christian ritual music of the Lisu people becomes the focus case study.(M. Yang, 2011)

Yu Yanjun's master's thesis(Yu, 2018), A Study of the Sound and Cultural Interpretation of Lisu Wedding Rituals in Dechang County, Sichuan

Province, provides an interpretation of the sound in the wedding rituals of the Dechang Lisu people. The author focuses on all the sounds in the wedding ceremony, and the music of the Hulusheng is part of the sounds. The author notates the Hulusheng music she examines and describes some related musical elements. In the text, the author needs to provide a more detailed and in-depth analysis of the form of Hulusheng music in wedding ceremonies and its essential role.

The complete performance of the wedding ceremony of the Lisu people of Dechang cannot be done without the music of the Hulusheng, and there is further room for the study of the music of the Hulusheng at their wedding ceremony, which will be analyzed and interpreted from the perspective of musical morphology in this study.

Research Methodology

This study uses a qualitative approach to analyze the melody, rhythm, harmony, structure, and performance form of the Hulusheng music of the Dechang Lisu wedding ceremony from the perspective of musical morphology. The study will also analyze the music of the wedding ceremony and the cultural context of the Lisu people of Dechang to produce as comprehensive a picture as possible of the Lisu wedding ceremony in Dechang and how the music interacts with other parts the ceremony. (Nettl, 2012, p204)

The authors specifically used fieldwork and music analysis methods in their study.

The authors visited Dechang thrice for traditional Lisu wedding ceremonies in February 2022, December 2022, and January 2023. During the ceremonies, the authors recorded Hulusheng music and video recordings of the wedding ceremonies. During the ceremonies, the author also spoke with Hulusheng players and other performers and gained a deeper understanding of Lisu culture.

The author compiled the recorded video and audio and checked the notated scores to ensure that the core tones were as correct as possible, thus ensuring the validity of the analysis. "Morphology is the study of form." (Levarie & Levy, 1983) The author will analyze the form of Hulusheng music in wedding ceremonies starting from the various elements of music.

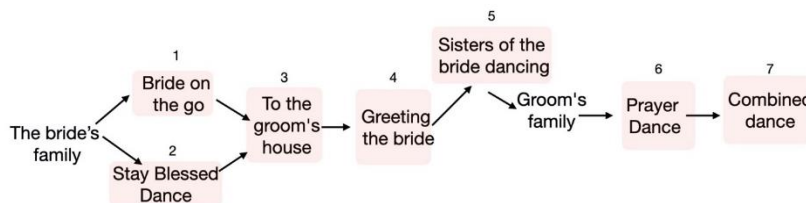
Research Results

Objective 1. Morphological characteristic of Hulusheng music in wedding ceremonies

Traditional weddings of the Lisu people in Dechang are grand and lively, with wedding ceremonies that are very ethnic. After attending three weddings, the author found that there is a fixed framework for the wedding ceremony of the Lisu people of Dechang. The framework includes procedures such as sending off the bride, welcoming the bride, paying homage at the ancestral hall, drinking the wedding wine, giving a new name, and performing the closing dance.

The framework reflects their traditional customs, and Hulusheng music is inseparable from several vital nodes. Hulusheng is blown seven times in the ritual nodes.

Figure 1 Performance of Hulusheng in the framework of the ceremony



source: Produced by the author

In these seven Hulusheng performances, 1, 2, 5, 6, and 7 are combined with Hulusheng music and dance, each time presented as a circle dance. Moreover, the tunes of these five blowings are the same, and the dance movements are the same.

This tune is composed of two sections of music. The first section of music is slow, and the second section is fast, with the two sections forming a contrast. The first section of music repeats three times, the circle of circle dance turns clockwise three times, and the dancers' steps move alternately with the right foot in front and the left behind. Then, in the second section of music played, the direction is still clockwise, but the dance steps are no longer walking, jumping, stomping, and turning three circles. 1, 2, 5, and 6 are like this, the last time, that is, 7, is from two circles into a circle, first each circle according to the fast and slow turn six circles, and then together into a large circle and then dance six circles, so that the wedding ceremony is officially over.

Figure 2 Score example 1



source: Produced by the author

These two pieces of music were each played 15 times during a wedding. Next, the authors analyze the two pieces of music separately.

Figure 3 Score Example 2

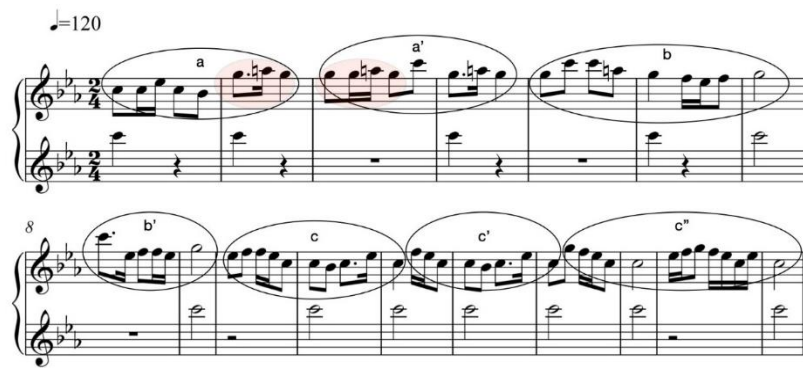


Source: Produced by the author

The first section consists of a two-measure double-toned dance piece. The two beats are like a reminder for the dancers involved in the ritual to get ready. It is followed by two phrases plus a two-bar transition to the second section. Inside each phrase is a 1+1+2 structure, and this

slow dance music ends in the key of C Zhi. This music is an expression of blessing for this wedding. Two downward transitions of the material, joined by the bE note, lead the music to a new key, where the tempo and the dance change with it.

Figure 4 Score Example 3



Source: Produced by the author

The second section of music consists of three pieces of material a, b, and c. a and a' are of equal length, and the first bar of a' and the second bar of a form of a fish biting its tail; they are variable head but not tail structures. b and b', c, c', and c' ' all use this technique. It is just that they are of different lengths, some are shrinking, and some are expanding. This method of melodic development with a changing head but not a changing tail is often used in Chinese folk music. The music is fast, the dance movements are intense, and the steps are heavier than in the first section. This heavy dance step, symbolizing the trampling of all that is bad underfoot, also reflects the original religious consciousness of the Lisu people of Dechang. This music terminates in the key of C Yu. These two music sections form a tempo shift from slow to fast, in rhythm from simple to complex, and in key from C Zhi-C Yu during the ritual. The change in musical form also causes a change in the movement and emotion of the people in the ritual.

The other two blows at the wedding, 3 and 4, are the solos of the Hulusheng, which are the tunes played on the way to send the bride to the groom's house and the tunes played by the groom's family when the Hulusheng players come out to greet the bride, the tunes are the same, but the Lisu people have different names for them. Going from the bride's house is called "Sending the Bride," When the groom's family comes to pick up the bride, it is "Welcoming the Bride."

Figure 5 Score Example 4



source: Produced by the author

The tune is languid and does not follow a regular rhythm to a specific beat but is relatively free. In this tune, the phenomenon of polyphony appears. Another vocal part no longer resembles the previously mentioned music, which is just a rhythmic apposition but carries out a melodic imitation. However, in the blowing, the difference in the musicians' technique and the quality of the Hulusheng can lead to differences in the final perception of the effect we all hear. The author has listened to many versions and found that musicians who account for the melodic lines of the vocal parts in their playing are only seen at some weddings. Nevertheless, the tone at the heart of the music is still played by most musicians at weddings.

In the tune of the gourd pith solo, the material comes from the material of the dance music. We can compare score examples 2 and 4, and then we will find that the beginning of score example 4 is the same as the melodic material of score example 2. It becomes the unifying material for the gourd shofar in the wedding ceremony music.

The Hulusheng solo, however, has the same tune but a different name, reflecting the sense of ceremony in a Lisu wedding and the Lisu concept of family. To send off the bride, the bride's family and friends will accompany the bride to the groom's home. It reflects everyone's blessing and concern for the bride and their reluctance to part with her. The link of sending off the bride is also a sign of respect and maintenance of the bride and her family by relatives and friends. The welcoming ceremony expresses the groom and his family's welcome to the bride and symbolizes the groom's family's acceptance and respect for the bride.

Objective 2. The form of playing Hulusheng music

In addition to the music within the framework of the ceremony, there is also the Lisu dancing, called Guaqie (/ˈgwaːˈtʃe/) in Lisu, which is not within the framework of the wedding ceremony but is an integral part of

the Lisu wedding. When transportation was less developed, Lisu people attending weddings would dance all night and not return home individually until early the following day. It was also the main arena in which Hulusheng music was played.

Guaqie music is much richer than the music within the ritual framework. The Lisu people of Dechang believe that they used to have 72 Guaqie pieces of music. Today the author has collected over 40 songs. In the fieldwork, the author found that very few people can play ten or more Guaqie tunes today; the author met with 15 Hulusheng players, and fewer than five could play ten tunes; most Hulusheng players often play 3-5 Guaqie tunes over and over again.

Hulusheng player plays Guaqie music in single song cycles and groups. A tune is played a dozen or more times in a single loop. After playing, the Hulusheng player will take a break and play another tune. They can also play a single tune and then play a group. The selection and order of the group are arbitrary, depending on the Hulusheng player's familiarity with the Guaqie tunes. He chooses 3-4 Guaqie tunes that he is familiar with and plays them. When playing, each tune is repeated 3-5 times, depending on the length of his breath, and then the next tune is taken. There is no transition or connection between each tune, the music is not interrupted, and the first tune is repeated immediately after the second. After this set of tunes, the Hulusheng player takes a break to change his breath and starts playing a new set of tunes. This time it can be the same as the previous set or a new set of tunes. It depends on the number of tunes the Hulusheng player has stored. The Hulusheng player's breath determines the number of repetitions of each tune, and each performance lasts about 2 minutes, sometimes longer.

During the performance, Hulusheng players do not strictly perform musical repetition; they use variation repetition by adding ornamental notes or using a variable head and no tail. If we think of a Guaqie tune as A, the repetition will take the form of A-A1-A2-A3...de. This form of performance adds some aural freshness to the music. However, its changing head and tail format keeps the music unified, adding impetus while retaining the core tones and a sense of constant momentum for the dancers. However, the amount of repertoire stocked by the Hulusheng player greatly influenced the legacy of Guaqie's music.

Objective 3. The Function and Significance of Hulusheng Music in Weddings

Hulusheng music plays an indispensable role in the wedding ritual of the Dechang Lisu people, and it has essential functions and meanings.

Hulusheng, Hulusheng player, and Hulusheng music become an organism in the Dechang Lisu wedding ritual. Hulusheng music is closely associated with several points of the wedding ceremony, guiding the

ceremony during the sending and welcoming of the bride and groom and marking the end of the ceremony with Hulusheng music and dance.

Hulusheng music, which represents the traditional wedding custom of the Lisu people of Dechang, also expresses their own cultural identity. Hulusheng music is essential for the complete preservation of the wedding ceremony.

Hulusheng music creates a lively and peaceful atmosphere for a Lisu wedding in Dechang. Whenever Hulusheng music is played, everyone gathers and begins to dance, and the music and the dancers heighten the lively atmosphere of the wedding. From the folklore about Hulusheng, five bamboo pipes represent the five brothers, Hulusheng symbolizes reunion, and the music of Hulusheng expresses the meaning of longing. In the oral literature of the Lisu people of Dechang, the Hulusheng helped a younger brother defeat a vicious dragon and rescue his sister. It helped a father find his daughter's savior and make him his son-in-law. According to these legends, Hulusheng music symbolizes bravery, strength, and good fortune.

Food and offspring are the basic needs for the survival and continuation of a community. Pursuing food has led humans to hold festivals and celebrations in different seasons. On the other hand, the need to reproduce offspring gradually evolved into wedding ceremonies. (Harrison, 2008) Hulusheng music is required at wedding ceremonies because it represents the good wishes and wishes of the Lisu people of Dechang and reflects the original beliefs of the Lisu people of Dechang.

Discussion:

The Hulusheng music of the Lisu people of Dechang is passed down entirely by word of mouth, which makes it a challenge to store the volume of the repertoire. It requires an environment for Hulusheng players to listen to and play regularly. Currently, except for traditional wedding ceremonies where the Hulusheng is played live, many Guaqie dancing occasions are played on the stereo with music from Yunnan, and still very different from the Hulusheng music of Dechang. It is a considerable influence on the transmission of local Guaqie music.

The performers of the Dechang Lisu Hulusheng are all men. With many men currently working outside the home, the traditional production methods of farming and hunting have changed, and the ecology of Hulusheng music has been affected by the change in production methods. Those who go out to work do not have the environment to play Hulusheng; over time, those tunes fade into oblivion.

One of the reasons that Hulusheng music in the framework of wedding ceremonies is better passed on is the small amount of repertoire and because the Lisu ethnic group identifies with traditional wedding

ceremonies, which provides an excellent ecological environment for Hulusheng music in ceremonies. Moreover, the fact that music in the framework is played in wedding ceremonies and can be rewarded with red envelopes is a positive factor.

Conclusion

The wedding ceremony music of the Lisu people in Dechang is characterized by Hulusheng music. Hulusheng music is mainly combined with dance; the two are not separated. In the process of sending and welcoming the bride, the solo of Hulusheng appears, and in the solo of Hulusheng, there is an element of polyphony, which is not found in music when it is with dance.

The dance and solo music in the wedding ceremony have unity in the material, but the two kinds of music are different. Other Guaqie music is more varied and is played as single cycles and groups, but the amount of repertoire that the Hulusheng player can play currently needs to be extended.

The transmission of Hulusheng music forms in the framework of wedding ceremonies is better than that of Hulusheng music outside the framework. There are more occurrences of Hulusheng music at weddings, but the total number of tunes is only two, one for song and dance and one for Hulusheng solos.

The excellent transmission of ceremonial Hulusheng music is due to the integrity of the Lisu wedding custom framework preservation. The relatively stable transmission of Hulusheng music at weddings also protects the integrity of wedding customs. Wedding ceremonies and Hulusheng music provide each other with a space for survival.

The Guaqie music outside the framework reflects the absorption and integration of foreign music by the Lisu people of Dechang. According to the results of the fieldwork, the Dechang Lisu have absorbed a great deal of their music from the Yunnan region and less from other ethnic groups in the same region of Liangshan.

Recommendation

1. Innovation and Heritage

The wedding customs of Dechang Lisu are an excellent subject for the creation and could become the mother lode of a stage play, a musical. By refining the essence of its ethnic characteristics, it can be combined with modern sound technology and digital music production methods to improve the expressiveness and infectiousness of ethnic wedding ceremony music.

2. Policy Support

Relevant departments should provide policy and financial support for Lisu music performance, education, research, and heritage. They should also encourage businesses and social organizations to protect and promote ethnic music culture to achieve diversified support and development.

3. Integrating Resources

The Lisu people should take the initiative to use Internet technology to make their wedding folklore easily accessible to more people and to spread the word about wedding ceremony music.

Relevant departments can organize various ethnic music events, such as performances, lectures, and seminars, regularly to enhance the influence of ethnic music.

Strengthen cross-regional and cross-ethnic music resource sharing: Share and exchange music resources across regions and ethnic groups to promote the development of ethnic wedding ceremony music through the exchange, cooperation, and joint creation.

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