

A Study on Wedding Music of the Hani Kaduo Subgroup in Mojiang County

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Abstract: The Hani ethnic group is a people with profound cultural heritage. In the daily life of the Hani ethnic group, music is indispensable for festivals, weddings, funerals, house building, and moving. The Hani ethnic group have various marriage customs. The traditional rituals such as proposing and betrothal are similar among different subgroups, but the "Olive Wedding" of the Kaduo subgroup is unique. The wedding music, such as the "Crying Bride Song", the "Red Bag Tune", and the "Bridegroom Welcome Tune," is particularly memorable. This article will focus on the music involved in the wedding process of the Kaduo subgroup as the research basis. It will analyze this wedding music from the perspectives of the geographical characteristics of Kaduo subgroup's lives, the manifestations, characteristics, and functions of wedding music, aiming to interpret the music at Kaduo weddings.

Keywords: Hani ethnic group, Kaduo subgroup, wedding music

1. Introduction

In today's world, diverse forms of art and culture are presented to the audience on the wings of big data, and ethnic music from various nations has gradually come into the public eye. Each nation possesses its unique musical characteristics. Among the nine major subgroups in Mojiang, the ceremony of the Kaduo subgroup stands out as unique. As times progress, the wedding customs of the Kaduo subgroup living along the Three Rivers have increasingly modernized, yet songs such as the "Crying Bride Song," "Bridegroom Welcome Tune," and "Farewell to Mother Tune" in their weddings remain scarcely documented with musical notation. As a member of the Kaduo nation, I have studied fundamental theories including notation techniques, harmonic forms, and an overview of ethnic cultures. It is my duty to understand and analyze the music of my own nation, truly protecting and inheriting the musical culture of my people.

2. Research Background

The Kaduo subgroup, unique to the Hani ethnic group, is primarily distributed in Mojiang, Jingdong, Zhenyuan, and Xiping counties. In Mojiang, nearly 100,000 Kaduo people reside, accounting for 20% of the county's population (2016). Their geographical distribution exhibits a pattern of "large concentrations with small dispersions," influenced by the mountainous terrain and their migratory Mojiang, as the only Hani autonomous county, hosts multiple subgroups, including Kaduo. In Kaduo culture, music is intertwined with daily life, labor, and rituals, particularly during weddings^[1].

Kaduo, also known as "Ali Gaduo," with "Ali" meaning "son" and "Gaduo" referring to "laggard" the Hani language, shares an ancient origin with the Yi and Lahu ethnic groups, descending from the Qiang tribe. Religion plays a significant role in Kaduo life, with various sacrificial rites conducted festivals and significant occasions, reflecting beliefs in the immortality of the soul. Kaduo celebrate the Spring Festival similarly to the Han ethnic group but with distinct customs, including sacrificial rites entertainment activities. Other notable Kaduo festivals are the Dyeing Yellow Rice Festival and the Eating New Rice Festival, but weddings stand out as particularly solemn and distinctive.

3. Kaduo Wedding and Music

3.1 Origin and Customs of the Wedding

The ancient Hani song "Ranmi Kemase" sings the praises of the romantic marriage between Luo

and Zuo Ze, depicting the ancient marital traditions of the Hani people. For thousands of years, the various branches of the Hani nation have emulated the marriage of Luo Bai and Zuo Ze as a model^[2]. Despite the numerous branches of the Hani people, each branch possesses unique wedding customs.

Before the founding of New China, the Kaduo subgroup practiced exogamy and the custom of cousin marriage, believing that the son of the maternal uncle had the priority to marry the daughter of his aunt. This feudal custom fettered the freedom of marriage for many young men and women, and close-kin marriage brought adverse effects on future generations. After the founding of New China, cousin marriage gradually waned, but the belief that people of the same surname should not marry remains firmly entrenched. Legend has it that the Kaduo subgroup once followed the ancient rule of "marrying men instead of women," which gradually evolved into marrying women. Kaduo subgroup enjoy freedom in love, but their marriages are often interfered with by their parents, causing many lovers to suffer. The process of falling in love is filled with romance, and men and women often meet at collective activities such as wedding banquets and harvesting. Kaduo youths often gather under the moonlit sky, where young men seize the opportunity to express their love.

Kaduo weddings are usually held during the slack season. One of the distinguishing features is the "Olive Welcoming Ceremony." The wedding lasts for three days, with the groom's family proposing marriage and setting the wedding date. On the day before, both sides begin preparations, setting up green tents, and the bride's family slaughters pigs and sheep to entertain relatives and friends. The groom organizes a wedding party, and the sound of the suona horn conveys the intention of marrying. On the second day, the wedding party, composed of an even number of people, officially welcomes the bride. The melody of the suona horn changes with the scenery. As they near the bride's home, the bride's family greets them with olives, symbolizing good luck. Upon arrival at the green tent of the bride's home, the olive welcoming ceremony ends. This is followed by the singing of the "Farewell to Mother's Melody" and the "Weeping Song of the Bride," expressing reluctance and teachings. The bride is carried away by the groom's best man, and the wedding party escorts her to the groom's home, followed by a variety of entertaining activities.

3.2 The Music of the Wedding

The music of the wedding is primarily divided into instrumental and vocal categories, with different melodies accompanying specific moments of the ceremony.

3.2.1 Instrumental Music

The musical instruments of the Hani ethnic group are generally classified into three types: wind instruments, percussion instruments, and plucked string instruments. At Kaduo weddings, wind instruments are used more frequently, while some families may also use plucked string instruments, such as the sanxian. The most commonly used instruments are the lila (suona) and qiubeibema (large bass horn).

The sound of the lila is robust, loud, and unconstrained. It is an essential instrument for both funerals and weddings among the Hani ethnic group. The Hani divide the suona into two types, male and female (i.e., high and low pitch). On the morning of the day before the wedding, a tune called "qishidiao" reminds the relatives that the wedding is approaching. Throughout the event, various "happy melodies" are played to create a festive atmosphere. On the second day of the wedding, at the auspicious moment, a tune called "kuahongdiao" is played as the groom prepares to wear the red sash and welcome his bride. If the two families are far apart, melodies such as "guoshandiao" and "guohediao" are played on the journey, describing the scenic beauty along the way with cheerful melodies. When approaching the bride's house, about 200 meters away, the "yingqindiao" is played to inform the bride's family that the groom's party has arrived. After lunch, as the bride prepares to leave her parents and marry into a new family, the "gemomdiao" is played, moving people to tears^[3]. Once the bride's cousin carries her out, the "songqindiao" is played, marking the procession back to the groom's family. Among these specific melodies, "qishi," "kuahong," "yingqin," and "gemo" are relatively fixed, while the other melodies can vary depending on the players.

The sound of the qiubeibema is deep and sonorous. It is mostly used for funerals and weddings, serving as a cue for the beginning or end of certain etiquette. At weddings, the large bass horn is typically played before the event begins, before the groom's party leaves to pick up the bride, and at the end of the wedding, serving as a cue for these transitions. It is evident that instrumental music plays a significant role in Kaduo wedding music.

3.2.2 Vocal Music

With the instrumental accompaniment, the wedding is also enhanced by the beauty of the human voice. At Kaduo weddings, the vocal music mainly consists of "crying songs," "teaching songs," and folk songs. The crying songs are duets between the mother and daughter, expressing their reluctance to part.

Lyrics:

Mother: "My daughter, / When you see your father-in-law, quickly pour water for him. / When you see your mother-in-law, quickly cook three bowls of rice for her. / Don't be shy, call your mother-in-law 'mama.' / It's not that your mother is heartless, / It's that marrying a daughter is a common custom. / Don't forget about your mother after getting married..."

Daughter: "My parents who gave me life and raised me, / I don't want to marry into someone else's family. / My dear brother, / I want gold and silver jewelry, / I also want the clothes made by mama. / Brother, don't carry me on your back, / I don't want to get married..."

The content of the crying songs is generally consistent among the different branches, with differences lying in the language and melody of each region. The Kaduo branch sings in the Kaduo language, while the Biyue branch sings in the Biyue language, and other branches have their own languages and melodies. These songs express the reluctance between mother and daughter, as well as the mother's teachings on how to behave as a daughter-in-law. The melodies are slow, with each line telling a story. When the daughter sings, she may stretch the opening lyrics a bit longer, but her tone is slightly lighter than her mother's. The later sections of the song generally appear in symmetrical patterns.

3.3 Musical Characteristics of Kaduo Wedding

3.3.1 Characteristics of Musical Scale and Mode

Observing the three unique wedding vocal pieces, "Mountain Song," "Crying Prayer," and "Crying Farewell," it is evident that "Crying Prayer" and "Crying Farewell" are of a sobbing nature, while the melody and lyrics of "Mountain Song" are more cheerful and optimistic. The lyrics of all three pieces are improvised, with free rhythm. Since Hani language consists of monophthongs, decorative notes are frequently used in the melodies. The melodies of the entire songs are basically repetitive, but the lyrics vary, with a single melody and no modulation.

From the perspective of instrumental music, the three-day wedding ceremony begins with the suona (a Chinese wind instrument) playing melodies that are closely linked to the entire ceremony. It can be said that the melodies played by the suona are synchronized with the progress of the ceremony, and the names of the melodies correspond to the specific rites. From "Starting the Ceremony," "Farewell to Mother Tune," and "Dance Tune," most of the melodies belong to the pentatonic scale, while some, like "Red Sash," are hexatonic scales, specifically the G-zhi plus variable palace hexatonic scale, with the note sequence being sol, la, xi, do, re, mi. These musical scales are complete and structurally intact, with the zhi mode being particularly prominent. In terms of musical scale and mode, most of the melodies are complete pentatonic scales with a comprehensive note sequence. However, the modes are relatively simple, with no modulation, and the tonic note of the mode remains stable.

For example, the "Farewell to Mother Tune" is relatively short but effectively employs techniques such as portamento, glissando, and appoggiatura to highlight the reluctance of leaving parents, creating an atmosphere that deeply resonates with the listeners. It belongs to the G-zhi pentatonic scale (Figure 1).

Farewell to Mother Tune
Musical Characteristics of Kado Wedding
Performed by: Li Youming

1=C ♯
♩=65

Figure 1 Music score example

Qi Shi
Musical Characteristics of Kado Wedding
Performed by: Li Youming

1=C ♯
♩=90

Figure 2 Music score example

The song "Qi Shi" belongs to the pentatonic scale (Figure 2), specifically the A-Shang pentatonic scale. It consists of a repetitive melody of three phrases and is a specific program on the eve of a wedding, aimed at reminding family and friends to gather together to prepare for the wedding

3.3.2 Characteristics of Rhythm

The Kaduo subgroup live simply and their music stems from daily life, resulting in free and natural rhythms. Each performer breathes uniquely between phrases. Horn ensembles usually have two players with similar breathing patterns. Melodies are mostly free-rhythm, while some are structured. They often build on basic phrases, enhancing emotional impact. Singing rhythms align with instrumental playing, with singers freely improvising lyrics.

Kua Hong
Musical Characteristics of Kado Wedding
Performed by: Li Youming

1=C $\frac{2}{4}$
♩=100

Figure 3 Music score example

Compared to several other melodies, "Kua Hong" exhibits a relatively regular rhythm. However, within the entire piece (Figure 3), there are frequent alternations between 2-beat and 3-beat measures, with instances where two measures are seamlessly connected for only a short section. This song is played when the groom is adorned with a red flower before the wedding ceremony. It consists of a repeated musical section, with a modified note added to the A' section.

3.3.3 Characteristics of Melody

Music played during weddings is primarily based on the Zhi tonal mode, with some instances featuring the Shang tonal mode or a six-tone scale with modified notes. The melodies are relatively simple, with a generous use of ornamental notes. Typically, the melodies revolve around the notes sol, la, do, re, and mi, with progressions primarily consisting of small jumps of three degrees or stepwise movements. Occasional large jumps of six or eight degrees, combined with the intricate use of ornamental notes, create a swinging and effortless melody that is both captivating and distinctive.

Chui Tiao

Musical Characteristics of Kado Wedding

Performed by: Li Youming

1=C $\frac{2}{4}$

J=71 ardently

The musical score is written on a single staff with a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a 2/4 time signature. It consists of three lines of music. The first line starts with a treble clef and a common time signature (C). The notes are numbered 1 through 6, with various ornaments and slurs. The second line continues the melody with similar notation. The third line concludes the piece with a double bar line. The tempo is marked as J=71 and the mood as 'ardently'.

Figure 4 Music score example

As shown in Figure 4, "Chui Tiao" is a post-dinner entertainment played on the second day of the wedding, after the banquet has ended. There are numerous variations of this tune, and most are improvised by the performer. Example 4 is a random improvisation played by a performer when I was collecting materials. This piece is also in the G Zhi tonal mode, with jumps of fourths and octaves. The length of the tune varies depending on the duration and atmosphere of the dance that evening. After the dance and music, people begin to sing folk songs, with diverse lyrics that are improvised by the singer. That night, there is also a custom where the winner takes away a gift, locally known as "Tiao Baba" (Tiao means to dance. Baba, a type of cake food).

3.3.4 Singing Characteristics

"Crying Wedding Song" belongs to the "Haba" genre of Hani folk songs, which are narrative songs typically sung during festivals, weddings, and other celebrations. A prominent feature of "Crying Wedding Song" is its emotional crying, with various forms including solos by the mother, choruses by the elder brothers wife and aunts, and rounds. The lyrics can be divided into five, seven, or eleven lines, with rhyming sentences and varying lengths. The most common form is the duet, with the mother crying a line and the bride responding. Family and friends "accompany the crying" by their side. There are no fixed lyrics in the entire song, and the sorrowful feelings of leaving one's mother are driven by the suona's "Ge Niang Tune."

The melody of "Crying Wedding Song" is relatively small and does not have significant fluctuations, but it possesses strong musical penetration. In Mojiang, each branch has its own distinct local flavor in tone due to different residential areas, closely related to the dialect. "Crying Wedding Song" is an improvised oral music, thus its rhythm and melody are relatively free, without structured musical sections. There is no specific singing technique, and it is mostly sung in a true voice. The melody often uses "Yiyin" (decorative notes) as embellishments. Overall, "Crying Wedding Song" is a musical form expressing local customs through rap and singing in the local dialect, exhibiting unique characteristics.

"Mountain Song" typically appears during the entertainment activities on the night of the wedding. It is usually a duet between men and women, with varying numbers of participants. Sometimes it's a

duet between two or three men and women, or a trio with three women and one man, accompanied by others singing and dancing. Everyone gathers around the "glutinous rice cake" in the center, singing and dancing. The lyrics begin with blessings for the newlyweds and then transition into duets, with lyrics resembling romantic conversations or lively debates. The content is not fixed, and the rhythm is free. The main difference between "Mountain Song" and "Crying Wedding Song" is that regardless of the variety in content, the melody of "Mountain Song" is always cheerful and bright, expressing joy and happiness.

Both "Crying Wedding Song" and "Mountain Song" typically adopt a structure of introduction - main lyrics - coda. The introductory and coda phrases serve to enhance the atmosphere or address the other party. Some form separate musical phrases, while others precede or follow the main lyrics. The main lyrics can form separate musical phrases, but most people add introductory phrases to express their emotions. After singing the coda, a separate coda phrase is added to express the singer's feelings. These songs typically have a small range but strong musical penetration, enhancing the atmosphere.

4. Conclusion

Although Kado's wedding is special, these customs have gradually decreased or even disappeared over time. On the one hand, it is because Kado's wedding lasts for three days, during which the helpers needed for the banquet come from the local community, requiring a large number of manpower and consuming a lot of manpower. On the other hand, people's thinking has changed with the tide of the times, and the emergence of new Chinese and Western style weddings has given young people more choices. And according to existing data, there is currently no record of these wedding music scores. According to the inheritors, the scores recorded by the author are passed down orally. Some of the ancestors were trumpeters, and the next generation can remember the melody by listening and watching. The inheritors have not yet learned professional theoretical knowledge, notation knowledge, etc. For example, since the generation of the author's mother, "crying for marriage" has gradually faded, and nowadays, very few people cry or even no one cries anymore.

In summary, with the continuous changes in the cultural ecology of the Hani ethnic region and varying degrees of impact, Hani wedding music is influenced by various modern factors, resulting in a reduction in some wedding ceremonies and a survival dilemma for the inheritance space of wedding music. It is in this context that it is very important to carry out research on Hani wedding music, focusing on analyzing the survival mode and situation of Hani wedding music, and striving to explore its survival value, which can be regarded as a cultural accumulation.

References

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