

# Application of Ethnomusicology Research Methods in Chinese Music History

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**ABSTRACT.** *This paper takes the history of Chinese music as the research object and the application of ethnomusicology research methods in the history of Chinese music as the research goal. First of all, the research methods of national music and Chinese music history are sorted out and elaborated. Secondly, it focuses on two research methods of ethnomusicology, namely “field work” research method and “diachronic and synchronic” research method in the specific application of Chinese music history, hoping to bring some help to the research of Chinese music history.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Chinese music history, Ethnomusicology, Research methods*

## 1. Introduction

In recent years, with the improvement of people's appreciation level, ethnomusicology has developed rapidly. Influenced by the development of ethnomusicology, the position of Chinese music history in Colleges and universities has been further improved. Therefore, how to better explain Chinese music history is a problem that teachers should pay attention to. Ethnomusicology adopts a simple and effective method, which takes “living diachronic materials” as the research object and “field work” as the research method. Therefore, the research method of ethnomusicology is the forerunner of Chinese music history. Teachers can use this point for reference from ethnomusicology research. The teaching of Chinese music history is to expound music for students through the history, culture and background of music, and analyze the emotion when the author creates music with the experience of the author, so that students can better understand Chinese music and fully understand Chinese music history.

## 2. An Overview of the Research Methods of Chinese Music History and Ethnomusicology

From the perspective of Chinese music history, its basic methods are mainly divided into two kinds, namely, literature method and textual research method. These two research methods are closely related to the research methods of ethnomusicology. With the continuous progress of the times, the development of disciplines tends to be diversified. Such as the qualitative and quantitative research of Chinese music diachrony, the micro research method, comparative research method and diachronic macro research method. To a certain extent, these research methods are gradually developed from other disciplines, including ethnomusicology. The research of Chinese music history will not only adopt one research method, but also use a variety of research methods. Due to the different purposes and contents of music history research, it is necessary to apply a variety of research methods. For the research of Chinese music history, we should sort out and sort out its general idea by some or several research methods, and then draw lessons from the “field work method” and “diachronic and synchronic method” of ethnomusicology, so as to achieve a clear research path, which can also reflect the advantages of comprehensive application of various research methods [1].

From the perspective of ethnomusicology, it is a theoretical discipline under the discipline of musicology, which mainly studies the traditional music of various countries and nationalities in the world. The basic feature of ethnomusicology is to explore the existing traditional music of a nation on the basis of its specific natural and social environment. In the research, the historical background of the ethnic group or individual in creating, using, disseminating and developing their national music can be used to deeply investigate and analyze the traditional cultural characteristics of the ethnic group and the artistic characteristics of music. However, no matter how to analyze and study ethnomusicology, the choice and application of its research methods are very important to achieve the progress in depth and breadth. At the same time, because of different research objects, the specific application of research methods is also different in the process of analyzing and studying ethnomusicology, and its application has certain diversity and complexity. Systematically speaking, the research methods of

ethnomusicology come from three aspects: Humanities, society and natural science. At present, the systematic application of its research methods has not formed a conclusion. But from the perspective of its research methods, many works regard “field work method” and “diachronic and synchronic method” as the main research methods of ethnomusicology. Among them, “field work method” specifically refers to the field investigation, while “diachronic and synchronic method” specifically refers to the time concept of musical events [2].

### **3. An Analysis of the Research Methods of Applied Ethnomusicology in Chinese Music History**

#### ***3.1 The Application of “Field Work Method” in Chinese Music History***

The basic goal of the “field work method” of ethnomusicology is to investigate on the spot and obtain the real and reliable data of music culture, and realize the objective understanding and understanding of these data. As a very important research method of ethnomusicology, the specific application of “field work method” requires researchers to face specific society and people in real life, rather than isolated musical phenomenon. Therefore, when learning Chinese music history, how to gain the trust of people in a strange environment will be a difficult problem in the field research of Chinese music history, and also a bottleneck in the application of “field work method” in the teaching process of Chinese music history. In the study of Chinese music history, it is very important to make an objective analysis of “integration” and “jumping out” by using “field work method”. The so-called “integration” refers to the integration of different cultures, while “jumping out” refers to the objective analysis of this culture, so as to achieve the balance of internal and external roles [3].

In the research of Chinese music history, we should not only pay attention to the research of theory and technique, but also carry out on-the-spot investigation to strengthen our own music art accomplishment. This requires researchers to be able to integrate into the national culture as “insiders” in the field investigation, and conduct in-depth observation and analysis of the national music culture from the subjective perspective, so as to obtain the spiritual feelings reflected by the national music, which is the first-hand research data of the field work. After collecting the data, we should make an objective analysis of these data from the perspective of “outsiders”, and deeply analyze and feel the story content, emotion and power expressed in each section and each note of national music, so as to restore the most original face of the work. Therefore, it can be seen that the application of ethnomusicology “field work method” in the study of Chinese music history can play a very important role [4].

#### ***3.2 The Application of “Diachrony and Synchrony” in Chinese Music History***

“Diachrony” in the research method of “diachrony and synchrony” specifically refers to the vertical research on musical things based on the dimension of time; while “synchrony” refers to the horizontal research on musical things based on the dimension of space within the same time range. Time, place and musical metaphor are three-dimensional methods proposed by rice in 2003 to study musical ethnography. The purpose of this research method is to make a longitudinal comparative study on the subjects of ethnomusicology based on the time-space framework, and to explore the specific development process and change and development of the subjects of Ethnomusicology in different time-space scope. In addition, when ethnomusicologists study and analyze any musical thing, they need to place this musical thing in the same time range for horizontal comparison, and then summarize the relationship between this musical thing and the factors of politics, economy, culture and other disciplines at that time through analysis and comparison [5-6].

In the study of Chinese music history, the first step is to grasp the overall background of music creation, including the life experience and experience of music creators. Through the background of the times, the cultural essence, politics and economy reflected in the works are analyzed. In order to achieve a comprehensive and systematic interpretation of the works, we must apply the concept of “synchrony” to a horizontal understanding of the works. Secondly, to study the history of Chinese music, we need to make a longitudinal analysis from the time dimension. By using the diachronic view, we can make a comprehensive understanding of the history of Chinese music from its birth and development to the whole process of change, and then effectively grasp its development law. Diachronic and synchronic method is that we graft the research methods of ethnomusicology into the research of Chinese music history, so that we can carry out comparative research from the vertical and horizontal aspects of Chinese music history, achieve a comprehensive interpretation of the information contained in Chinese music history, and finally lay a solid method foundation for students to study and explore Chinese music history [7-8].

#### 4. Conclusion

When learning music, we should not only learn the music itself, but also the culture of music. Several research methods of ethnomusicology can let students learn a lot of knowledge beyond music. Therefore, when teaching Chinese music history, teachers can make proper use of the research methods of ethnomusicology to make learning more lively and interesting, which is also helpful for the promotion of music. The research method is only a means, but it is very important. "The progress of new research methods can bring about the discovery of new research materials, which can give new stimulation to the enthusiasm and consciousness of research subjects, and the results can also promote the new development of historical research.". Research methods and research objects are closely linked. Different research methods are needed for different research objects, so the innovation of research methods also paves a new way for the research of various "historical objects". The author believes that the special advantages of these research methods of ethnomusicology can just make a supplement for the research of Chinese music history and become a strong backing of history. The "double evidence method" put forward by Mr. Wang Guowei has injected fresh blood into the historical research and made great contribution. The research method brought by ethnomusicology naturally becomes the "third evidence method".

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