

# Field Investigation of Yao Sacrifice Music Culture in Nanling Region

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**ABSTRACT.** *Sacrifice culture is an important part of national culture, and it is also an important symbol that distinguishes a nation from other nations. It has important cultural heritage value. Yao nationality is a typical mountain nomadic people shouldering mountains. Its special production, life style and social form make its ancient sacrificial activities prosperous for a long time. Such various sacrificial activities undoubtedly contain rich music and dance. In slave and feudal society, sacrifice, like war, is the top priority of the country and is related to the survival of the country. It occupies an important position in Yao culture. This article through the author personally examines the Nanling Yao nationality resident present situation, participated in the local Yao nationality compatriot sacrifice activity, on this foundation investigation interview, records studies its sacrifice music culture.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Yao nationality, Sacrifice music culture, Investigation*

## 1. Introduction

Ruyuan is a fertile cultural soil in Shaoguan. After a long migration history of 1,000 years, the mountain-crossing Yao people stopped their long migration in the Nanling Mountains and multiplied. In hundreds of years, they gave birth to the splendid culture of the mountain-crossing Yao people in Ruyuan. Under the background that people are worried about the gradual convergence of economy and culture in various regions brought about by China's modernization process, ethnic ideographic culture will gradually converge and ethnic characteristics will gradually disappear [1]. Yao nationality is a typical mountain nomadic people shouldering mountains. Its special production, life style and social form make its ancient sacrificial activities prosperous for a long time [2]. Such various sacrificial activities undoubtedly contain rich music and dance. On the basis of on-the-spot investigation, this paper uses the theoretical methods of ethnomusicology, and combines the relevant materials of music history and the first-hand materials such as folk oral and religious scriptures to carry out research. Through learning to sing local sacrificial music, we can have a deeper understanding of its folk customs and appreciate the charm of Yao folk sacrificial music.

## 2. Sacrifice Culture of Yao Nationality

Sacrifice culture is an important part of national culture, and it is also an important symbol that distinguishes a nation from other nations. It has important cultural heritage value. It is a common life style and cultural tradition created by a large number of groups in a nation. It usually exists in a special context, such as folk festivals, rituals and various sacrificial ceremonies [3]. In slave and feudal society, sacrifice, like war, is the top priority of the country and is related to the survival of the country. It occupies an important position in Yao culture. The Yao nationality long drum dance originated from the religious sacrifice of the Yao nationality, has a long history and has long been used in the religious sacrifice of the Yao nationality, which contains rich and profound historical and cultural connotation. The national characteristics of Yao people's sacrificial activities are also very obvious. Qing Ming Festival, Danu Festival, Yue Ban Festival, Pan Wang Festival and other traditional festivals that offer sacrifices to ancestors are all national festivals. The "Pan Wang Dance" and "Single Person Restore Long Drum Dance" performed in the ceremony are mainly performed by offering sacrifices to ancestors, offering gratitude and entertaining gods. They have strong utility. The Yao nationality, like other nationalities, has experienced extremely different and complicated personification in the historical development process. They have their own national sacrificial objects, are different from the sacrificial places of other nationalities, and have sacrificial characteristics [4]. Such as danu festival, pan Wang festival, not to mention the public memorial ceremony for the ancestors of the nation, no matter Hunan, Guizhou, Guangxi, Guangdong, the surrounding counties, all came to attend. These sacrificial festivals are the times when the family is most united, the nation is most harmonious, and the traditional culture is most prosperous.

### **3. Artistic Features of Yao Sacrifice Music in Nanling Region**

#### ***3.1 Musical Morphological Characteristics***

The music form of the song reflects the music style of the song to a certain extent. Although song and dance music in the religious sacrificial activities of the Yao nationality is dependent on the religious sacrificial rituals and styles of the Yao nationality, the first is an important part of each procedure of the ritual and legal affairs, and the object of performance is god, but the content reflected is by no means limited to doctrine and ritual and god. Generally, long drums are used to keep company. When dancing King Pan dance, the jumping and rotating are all changing with each other. In fact, most of the dancing movements are imitating the labor movements such as sowing seeds, cutting down mountains and afforestation, exploiting wilderness, hunting, etc. [5]. In their eyes, a fierce death is a difficult task for a wild ghost to possess himself. It is necessary to bury him quickly and simply. It is also necessary to prevent him from returning to his clan or reuniting with his ancestors, leaving his soul nowhere to support itself [6]. The Yao people regard Pan Wang as the ancestors of the Yao people in opening up their territory, the heroes of the nation and the gods who impart knowledge of production and life. On this basis, they have formed a unique Pan Wang culture. The purpose of this relationship is to

describe the content of the lyrics and make people easily know the ideology expressed by the singer. Different ritual links in the sacrificial ceremony have their own specific cultural meanings, and the suona tunes correspond to them. Bringing the blessed clean water into the altar, the inner and outer altars are wound around with the nine steps, and the mantra of purifying the altar is recited, making the altar especially pure between heaven and earth.

The rhythm of Yao sacrificial music in Nanling area is usually free rhythm (loose plate). With the progress of music or the needs of performance, the rhythm phenomenon of asymmetrical bar length is formed, which makes the sentence structure of music irregular. The performers of these song and dance music, with the help of lyrics, dance movements and music performances, expressed many vertical and horizontal aspects of the social life of the Yao nationality from ancient times to the present by means of humanization of gods and deification of human beings. The rhythm is varied, fast and slow merger, sometimes fast and sometimes slow. The sound line is tapering, the volume is not big, the speed is fast, one word for one sound, one breath for one sentence, the end sound of each sentence is prolonged, and it is decorated with glide. Due to the increasing oppression and exploitation by the feudal ruling class, class conflicts and ethnic conflicts are intensifying. Yao people are migrating to Guangdong, Guangxi, Yunnan and Guizhou. Song for letter came into being to transmit information and strengthen group ties. Its melody is monotonous and almost colloquial, similar to rap music. Most of them have a fast rhythm, unique national style and beautiful tunes. Because the ancestor of King Pan lived in a relatively primitive period, with no incense and no fruits planted artificially. All the things used were taken from nature, which fully demonstrated the true reducibility of the sacrificial ceremony.

### ***3.2 The Creative Features of Lyrics***

Yao people have their own language. Yao language belongs to Yao language branch of Yao language family of sino-Tibetan language family. more than half of the people speak “mian” language, which belongs to Yao language branch of Miao Yao language family. Chang ning Yao people speak “mian” language. In the music of Yao's religious sacrificial songs and dances, some vague memories of ancient life are precious. During the festival, they will invite King Gan to come out to help the Yao people relieve the disaster and protect the healthy growth of the Yao people [7]. If there were no drum music playing and sound, the ceremony would look monotonous and messy. Singing Yao songs is an important cultural activity of the Yao people for a long time, and festivals are an important opportunity for the spontaneous formation of Yao song festivals. The formation of song festivals adds a strong atmosphere to traditional festivals, not only helps to promote banquets, but also provides an artistic leisure space for the Yao people before and after tea. Music and dance ran through the night and was the main music and dance to please the king of the Pan. It was in line with the style of music and dance in ancient Yao sacrificial ceremonies. Before offering Huang Ni drum music dance to pan Wang, the teacher should propose a toast to Huang Ni drum, which is called “blowing

sound”. There are many taboos about yellow clay drums that have been opened up as musical instruments. It sounds not only high-minded, but also rough, broad and bold. It is an independent pure instrumental performance with the main purpose of pleasing the spirit and used as an introduction, epilogue and interlude accompaniment in the singing performance connecting various rhymes, tunes and plays.

In the whole sacrificial ceremony of “dancing drum altar” of the Yao people in Badong, dance runs through all the time with rich and colorful postures. These dance forms are collectively called “ancient altar dance”. The impromptu nature of the lyrics reflects the freedom of the Yao people to “sing” everywhere. The most important part of Yao's religious sacrificial song and dance music, the more fixed stylized performance, is undoubtedly the ritual ceremony of religion and the artistic exercise of canon doctrine. Wong Nai Drum is a group dance, which is performed by the cooperation of male drum and female drum. The performance form of female drum and male drum is different. The female drum beats on the waist while the male drum is picked up and beaten. With the ups and downs of music accompaniment, the changes of movements are complicated and interlaced. It is only when people get pleasure from beating drums with sticks when they tell the gods to entertain them, and get comfort and joy from body and mind, that the music of playing through the gods gradually becomes the art of entertaining people [8]. It is the cultural symbol and cultural behavior of Yao nationality identity and activation of group consciousness, and it is the hidden cultural operation mechanism to maintain the ethnic community. Yao Song, a traditional culture, has gradually withdrawn from the production and living space of Yao people. The withdrawal of Yao Song has resulted in the festival culture gradually losing its distinctive elements of unique cultural characteristics. And speed up the dilution of traditional festivals.

#### **4. Cultural Connotation and Function of Yao Sacrifice Music in Nanling Region**

##### ***4.1 Interpretation of Sacrificial Music Culture in Ceremony***

Yao nationality has many branches and different customs, and the time, place and sacrifice for gods and ancestors vary from place to place. Costumes, props, movements, rhythms, music and so on in the ritual activities all provide necessary preconditions for the development and characterization of dance. However, in the process of historical development, it gradually evolved from a single ancestor worship to a large-scale Yao sacrificial activity with multiple functions such as sacrifice, fulfillment of vows, praying for good luck and eliminating disasters, and teaching. Yao people believe that the soul of their ancestors is hidden in the drum. Jumping the drum can express their feelings with their ancestors, which means offering sacrifices to their ancestors. It establishes a “cultural map” of Yao ethnic group with the corresponding sacrificial ceremony “tiaopang emperor”, which is the cultural boundary dividing “my ethnic group” and “other ethnic groups”. Seven days before the start of the “dance of the king” ceremony is lent day. the ritual executors,

such as the teacher and yellow drummer, are forbidden to have sex. If anyone or livestock gives birth in the home, they will also be disqualified from participating in the ceremony. The singing style of traditional folk songs is influenced by many factors such as national history, language habits, living environment and so on during the historical development of Yao nationality. The language singing text and its instrumental music text contrast the whole ceremony atmosphere, especially the content of the singing text is the real representation of the specific ceremony content. Sometimes people work in groups up the mountain. When they see a group of people working on the opposite mountain, they sing to each other. They sing to each other while working. The whole day goes by.

#### ***4.2 Multiculturalism of Sacrificial Music in Ceremonies***

The song sung at the worship ceremony for the ancestors was the song that Yao people sang when they were still “praying to the king”. The ritual of “king of counter-offer” is widely spread in the branch of pan Yao. Yao people worship their ancestor pan Wang as a blessing. The king of counter-offer is a typical manifestation of Yao ancestors' worship. We can analyze the composition of a nation's body and spirit from the dance of religious ceremonies. The presence of ceremony can be felt everywhere music is displayed. As for the sound of drum music itself, it can also create atmosphere and render atmosphere for the ceremony. When people hear drum music, they can be infected by this special sound emotion. As a result, Tiaochanggu has objectively become an important way for Yao people to socialize both in and outside the sacrificial ceremony. Therefore, in people's mind, the successful completion of various ceremonies in sacrificial activities requires the protection of ancestors and gods. People use dance to call heaven, earth, gods and ghosts to come down to earth and share happiness with people. Every time a wild animal is caught, the master must be invited to make a sermon. Only after the whole animal is sacrificed can the animal be split for food. In addition, wine, tea and fruit are also used for sacrifices. It relieves boredom and gets fun from watching others play. At the same time, it also gives a little comfort to the sad hearts of the owners and relatives who are busy at home and abroad, and a little relief to their exhausted body and mind.

#### ***4.3 The Function of Sacrificial Music in the Ceremony***

No matter whether they worship the gods or the dead, they are presided over by teachers, Taoist priests and godmothers. Their system of learning from teachers, ritual instruments, texts of ritual instruments, spells and steps, and sacrificial performances are all mysterious. The ritual robes worn by the dancers, the props used in the ritual instruments, the songs sung in the genealogical documents, the dancing of the five dancers, the sequence of entertaining the gods and offering sacrifices to ancestors, the strict procedural content of the dance segments and the reverence and awe of the dance postures all reveal a nation's religious beliefs. With the progress of social civilization and the rapid development of science and

technology, feudal superstition has gradually weakened. People are increasingly pursuing the diversification of life, depending on the original psychology of folk activities, and gradually turning to entertaining people. It not only realizes the spiritual communication between dancers and spectators, and harmonizes the relationship between them, but also improves the communication between different branches and villages. Apart from architecture and costumes, other cultural expressions and constructions, including music and dance, have their unique features, through which subconscious ethnic identity is often continuously activated and strengthened. Yao nationality is a people who can sing well. no matter how sad, happy, engaged in labor, leisure, love, sarcasm, advice, resistance to oppression and so on, they cannot do without singing. men, women, old and young can sing, and songs are everywhere all the time. singing has almost become an indispensable spiritual life in the daily life of Yao people.

## 5. Conclusion

In short, a nation's sacrificial culture carries all aspects of the nation's culture. Compared with other nations, the time, place, content and form of sacrificial ceremonies have both commonness and individuality, but more are its particularity and locality. At the same time, it is also the basis for dividing group boundaries. Most of the time, members of Yao live in their own families, and the ethnic groups are only loosely combined. This article through the author personally examines the Nanling Yao nationality resident present situation, participated in the local Yao nationality compatriot sacrifice activity, on this foundation investigation interview, records studies its sacrifice music culture. The whole sacrificial ceremony contains the religious beliefs, moral concepts and national thoughts of the local Yao people. It is an excellent composite material for the study of Yelang culture and the development history of Yao folk customs. Finally, we need to think seriously about the positive and negative impacts brought by the protection and inheritance of Yao sacrificial music in Nanling region.

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