

The Music Traits of Traditional Dulong Folk Songs Music Learning in China

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Abstracts

Dulong nationality is an ethnic people living cross-border between China and Myanmar. In China, located in Dulongjiang Township, Gongshan County, Nujiang Prefecture, Yunnan Province is the main settlement of the Dulong ethnic group. It is a minority of people that are developed from old tradition to modern society make a living in a special geographical and natural environment and still preserve its early folk song traditional form. The lyrics record the early life state of the Dulong, and the tune shows the traditional pentatonic mode. The title of the song is usually named after a person, the melodic range is mostly in intervals of the sixth, and the high register of voice often appears in the song, which are the characteristics of the traditional folk songs of the Dulong nationality. The researcher describes the musical traits of Dulong folk songs in a kind of ethnomusicological analysis using music score examples based on the field record.

Keywords: The Music Traits of Traditional; Dulong Folk Songs Music Learning; China

Introduction

This article is part of a dissertation entitled "Studying the Dulong Folk Songs in Nujiang, Yunnan for Preservation." *Dulong* nationality is a cross-border ethnic minority in China and Myanmar. Chinese *Dulong* People live in Gongshan County, Nujiang Prefecture, Yunnan Province. Due to the special natural environment, the research of relevant scholars on *Dulong* folk songs has been hindered. In June 2021, *Dulong* folk songs promoted China's intangible cultural heritage. Through field investigation, the researcher found that singers are very old, and the number of existing singers is very small, the *Dulong* folk songs are declining, and the types and number of folk songs are decreasing.

Yunnan has always been known as the "hometown of colorful clouds." It is rich in products, picturesque mountains and rivers, and charming scenery is one of China's important border provinces, bordering Myanmar in the West, Laos, and Vietnam in the south, with a total national boundary of 4060 km, including China Myanmar border of 1997 km, China Laos border of 710 km, and China Vietnam border of 1353 km. (Lu, 1996 : 361-365).

Gongshan Dulong Nu Autonomous County of Yunnan Province is located in Southwest China and the northwest corner of Yunnan Province. According to the fifth national census in 2000, the population of Dulong is 7426, which is one of the ethnic minorities with a small population in China (Yang, 2016 : online). As for the origin of the Dulong nationality, there needs to be a clear context for the history of Dulong nationality because Dulong does not have its written language.

Research Objective

The objective is to describe the music traits of Dulong folk songs in Nujiang, Yunnan, PR China.

Literature Review

There are three forms of *Dulong* ballads. One is called *Menzhu* in the *Dulong* language. "Menzhu" is the general name of folk songs without accompaniment to the dance. The singer usually sits by a bonfire and sings his/her songs alone or hums while working. The second kind of *Dulong* folk song is called *Pu*, which is a kind of ballad that usually accompanies dance; the singer is singing and dancing at the same time. Generally, a lead singer sings a song and follows the rest of the people, who will sing in unison to follow the leader. It is a kind of call-and-response manner. The third one is called *Aa Chang Qiao* in the *Dulong* language. It is a kind of ballad singing dedicated to the deceased person. It usually puts the dead person's name in front of the term *Qiao* and is used as a song's title for a family's remembrance. These three kinds of ballads can be divided into labor songs, custom and etiquette songs, current politics songs, life songs, love songs, and children's songs according to the lyrics to imply the songs' content. (Li, 2014 : 7).

Research Methodology

The research methodology is ethnomusicological qualitative research doing fieldwork in Dulongjiang Township, Gongshan County, Nujiang Prefecture, Yunnan Province. The researcher gathered data by interviewing four key informants, recording music, and videoing the performances, then transcribing the sound of music into staff notation for analysis.

Research Results

The Dulong people living in Dulongjiang Township, Gongshan County, Nujiang Prefecture, Yunnan Province, still have a small amount of traditional Dulong folk songs. The number of existing traditional Dulong folk songs disappears with the death of the elderly. The traditional Dulong folk songs express the lifestyle, emotional concepts, and social activities of the Dulong people in primitive society. It has important historical and social significance. The traditional Dulong folk songs recorded in the field include love songs, narrative songs, carols, and lullabies.

China's *Dulong* People mainly live in Dulongjiang Township, Gongshan County, Nujiang Prefecture, Yunnan Province. *Dulong* folk songs are mainly distributed in six villages from upstream to downstream of the Dulong River, namely Di Zhengdang Village, Longyuan village, Xianjiudang village, Kongdang village, Bapo village, and Maku village. The researcher did fieldwork in Dulongjiang Township and found knowledge of got *Dulong* folk songs, as listed in Table 1 below.

Table 1, List of inheritors of Dulong folk songs

List of inheritors of <i>Dulong</i> folk songs (独龙族民歌传承人名单)					
	Name	Gender	Age	Address	level
1	Jiang Lian 江良	Male	1972 (49)	Ma ku Village 马库村	State level 州级
2	Ken Yuzhen 肯玉珍	Female	1953 (68)	Kong dang village 孔当村	provincial level 省级
3	Kong Xiuzhen 孔秀珍	Female	1959 (62)	Di zhengdang Village 迪政当村	State level 州级
4	Yang Mingdi 杨明迪	Male	1933	Ba po Village 巴坡村	county-level 县级
5	Mu Wenying 木文英	Female	1940	Kong dang village 孔当村	county-level 县级
6	Dang Qi 当齐	Female	1945	Long yuan Village 龙元村	county-level 县级
7	Jiang Linqing 江林清	Female	1945 (76)	Long yuan Village 龙元村	county-level 县级
8	Long Yufang 龙玉芳	Female	1958	Long yuan Village 龙元村	county-level 县级
9	Wang Kouci 王口此	Male	1944	Xian jiudang Village 献九当村	county-level 县级
10	Bing Xiufang 丙秀芳	Female	1938	Kong dang village 孔当村	county-level 县级
11	Li Yuxiu 李玉秀	Female	1921(100)	Long Yuan Village 龙元村	county-level 县级
12	ZhangGuixiang 张贵香	Female	1934 (87)	Long yuan Village 龙元村	county-level 县级
13	Meng kai 孟开	Male	1946 (75)	Ba po Village 巴坡村	county-level 县级

According to the above list, the researcher visited six villages and found that these inheritors were very old, some of whom had died. Finally, the following list was obtained.

Table 2 Information of people who can sing Dulong folk songs

Information of people who can sing <i>Dulong</i> folk songs					
	Name	Gender	Age	Address	Remarks
1	Li Yuxiu	Female	1921 (100)	Long yuan Village	
2	Tai jie	Female	1943 (78)	Di zhengdang Village	Tattooed Female
3	Li Wenshi	Female	1946 (75)	Di zhengdang Village	Tattooed Female
4	Kong Xiuzhen	Female	1959 (62)	Di zhengdang Village	Can't find
5	Jiang Linqing	Female	1945 (76)	Long yuan Village	Tattooed Female
6	Zhang Guixiang	Female	1934(87)	Long yuan Village	Can't find
7	Ken Yuzhen	Female	1953 (68)	Kong dang village	
8	Ken Guoqing	Male	1947 (74)	Kong dang village	
9	Meng kai	Male	1946 (75)	Ba po Village	Can't find
10	Jiang Lian	Male	1972 (49)	Ma ku Village	
11	Yao Nan	Male	1936 (85)	Ma ku Village	
12	Mu Lanying	Female	1943 (78)	Ma ku Village	

Key informants



Figure 1, Left, Tai Jie; right, Li Wenshi: Photo by Zhu Dingyu 2021

Tai Jie: 78 years old, born in 1943. She is a tattooed female who lives in Di Zhengdang Village.

Li Wenshi: 75 years old, born in 1946; she is a tattooed female living in Di Zhengdang Village.

Tai Jie: 78 years old, and **Li Wenshi:** 75 years old. They are both tattooed women and were childhood playmates. Li Wenshi and others met with the Chinese president on behalf of the *Dulong* ethnic group. They had compiled *Dulong* folk songs, which were extolled and supported by the Communist Party's help of their generation. The youngster and senior people in their village usually sing the songs they have compiled.

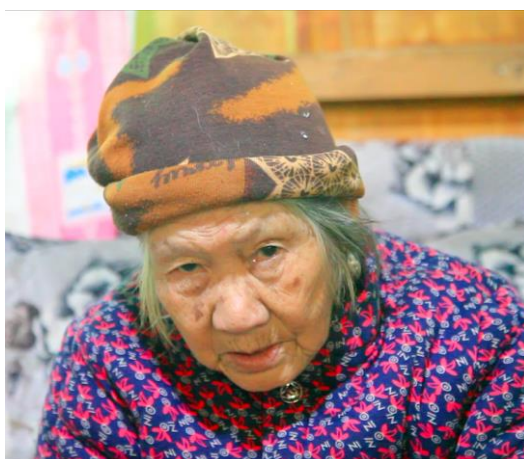


Figure 2, Li Yuxiu, photo by Zhu Dingyu 2021

Li Yuxiu: 100 years old, born in 1921, live in Long Yuan village and she is the inheritor of county-level folk songs.



Figure 3, Ken Yuzhen, photo by Zhu Dingyu 2021

Ken Yuzhen: 68 years old, born in 1953, living in Kong Dang Village. she is the inheritor of county-level folk songs. She can speak some simple Chinese so communicating with her requires a translator. She can sing many traditional *Dulong* folk songs, including love, martyrdom songs, and narration.

Musical analysis

1. Nai Ge Rui

Singer: Li Yuxiu (Long yuan Village)
Transcription notations: Liu Tong
Audio recording: Zhu Dingyu

$\text{♩} = 80$

yi mo rui ei ing mou ou yo,
5 ou ya le ya a ya ou ya a ya ou ya,
9 ou la beng mo yi la ra yo.

Figure 4, Nai Ge Rui notation

- (1) Musical form: A single form
- (2) Musical medium: A female vocal solo singing.
- (2) Mode: The local mode and actual pitch is a little vary from western scale, this article is supplement by C major scale, and the song is sung in pentatonic mode.
- (3) Melody: The melodic contour is undulating. It is sung in beautiful sound and in euphemistic style. The first phrase begins with lower sound and gradually rising, the second phrase appears in highest sound and then falls in a step. The third phrase returns to calm. The melody of the end note is as same as the tonic note.

(4) Rhythm: The time signature is 2/4 beat, the stress is obvious, and the second beat of 2/4 beat is little heavier.

(5) Meaning of the song text: Nai Ge Rui is a little disappointed that he is not with his lover. He is in a sad mood. He feels that he doesn't feel any good when looking at anything. Looking at mountains is not like mountains and water is not like water. Mountains are high and roads are far. He is calling for his lover.

(6) Song background: This is sung by a man named Nai Ge Rui. The title of the song is his name. A man is not with his beloved at the end. He is very depressed and the scenery he sees has unpleasant.

(7) Function: Personal expression.

2. Love songs

Singer: Li Yuxiu (Long yuan Village)
 Transcription notation: Liu Tong
 Audio recording: Zhu Dingyu

$\text{♩} = 60$

4
 ao yi yi nen nia ze en nia yo,
 ao yo yo yo yo yo yo la yo yo,

8
 ao go go bei gia yi ya mia yole.
 gai geasen yin bei boma ma mu ei yole.

12
 ao yo la yo yo

16
 ao zen zen day mo so ga ya la ga ya ji yo,

20
 nen bro go ro ji bo jia mun yo.

23
 nen bro go ro yi ba gia mia yo,
 ao yo yo yo yo yo yo la yo yo,

This sentence can be understood as the beginning of another YO paragraph.

Figure 5, Love song notation

(1) Musical form: The song in a single form, begins with short refrain then follow by the main body of the song

(2) Scale: B major (equivalent) and feather pentatonic.

(3) The beat is still 2/4 beat, with obvious stress, and the second beat of 2/4 beat is also heavier.

(3) The whole song consists of four parts, each of which is separated by two sentences (comma and period). These four parts are basically the same but the third one is a separate part with slightly changes.

(4) The melody of this song is graceful and euphemistic. Every sentence ends softly. The two sentences are corresponding, just like a question and an answer. The melody of this song has a big jump of six degrees, which is a remarkable feature of *Dulong* folk song.

(5) Main idea of the lyrics: It tells the story of two people secretly when they first fell in love. Later, the whole village knows it.

(6) Function: Personal expression.

3. Du na

Singer: Li Yuxiu (Long yuan Village)

Transcription notation: Liu Tong

Audio recording: Zhu Dingyu

The musical notation for 'Du Na' is presented in four staves. The first staff starts with a tempo marking of ♩=132. The lyrics are: la la le du du dei xi, (measures 1-5). The second staff continues: nen gai da xie ga den yo gia, (measures 6-10). The third staff continues: a yo a yo ha yo yo yo yo yo, (measures 11-15). The fourth staff concludes: yin nuang la gen su hua yo ni. (measures 16-20). The notation includes various time signatures (3/8, 2/8, 4/8) and rests.

Figure 6, Du Na notation

(1) The scale is in D, feather pentatonic mode.

(2) The tempo is multi tempo; 3/8, 2/8 and 4/8 appear alternately. The rhythm is rapidly reflecting the sense of rhythm of three tempos.

(3) It adopts a single part form with four sentences in each paragraph (separated by commas and periods) to reflect the symmetrical form of music. The whole song has been repeated three times.

(4) The song has a wide range with a difference of nearly two octaves from the highest c to the lowest D.

(5) The main idea of the lyrics: A man's love for a woman is not as much as him.

(6) Song background: this song was first sung by a girl named Duna in Di Zhengdang village, encouraging people to be brave when love comes.

(7) Function: Personal expression.

4. Xiong ba men zhu

Singer: Li Wenshi (Di zhengdang Village)
 Transcription notation: Liu Tong
 Audio recording: Zhu Dingyu

♩=52

a nu na yo yo yo yo, a yo na yo
 ti gai na gai gang he yo yo, ya na na len

4

yo yo yo yo, a yo yo yo yo yo
 gon gon na niu, a yo yo yo yo yo

7

na nen na nu ga ga lie he, shen men na men dai hu yo la,

11

bei bei la ga dai gu men dai, so go de he da no.

Fig.7 Xiong ba men zhu notation

- (1) The mode adopts five tones scale.
- (2) Rhythm: The beat is 2/4 throughout the piece, the stress is obvious, and the second beat of 2/4 beat is little heavier.
- (3) The song is a binary form; the song text has two paragraphs. Each paragraph is divided into three or four phrases (separated by commas and periods). The song has been repeated many times. Each one is slightly different, sometimes three phrases and sometimes four. The above score example shown only the first three paragraphs. The first two paragraphs has three phrases and the third paragraph is four phrases.
- (4) The melody of the song is beautiful and euphemistic, with a strong sense of rhythm. This song could be sung and dance at the same time.
- (5) Main idea of lyrics: When he first fell in love, his lover went to the mountain to collect herbs and didn't come back for a long time. He missed his loved one very much. He whistled for her on the side of the mountain, and she whistled in response to him on the other side of the mountain. He especially missed her and didn't want to do anything.
- (6) Function: Personal expression.

5. Ao li tuo di ya tuo

Singer: Tai Jie, Li Wenshi (Di zhengdang Village)

Transcription notation: Liu Tong

Audio recording: Zhu Dingyu

$\text{♩} = 116$

ao ao yo ao ni wa dei san nei yo a yo wa ou ou ra,

10 a yo ao bei ga niun zen nia qi ou men bei nia zo na bei

18 dao la wa mo ao li niu zenm。

22 ao lang wa mo li show yo ao ben re di mo mo,

30 a li roun roun n mon ba xie yo gela la bro wuan mo gi yo,

38 lang la buyo ang mon gi。

Figure 8, Ao li tuo di ya tuo notation

(1) The scale is E and feather the pentatonic mode.

(2) This song is shown multiple tempo alternated with 3/4 and 2/4, featuring three kinds of notes, i.e. dichotomous, quartile and octave, are used. The beat stress is obvious, and the beat and triple beat are used alternately.

(3) The music is a single form undulating melodic contour, with four sentences alternating and repeating. The melody fluctuates little, mainly in the interval of two or three degrees. However, the third sentence is very special. The melody is continuously, and the range is 11 degrees between high and low pitch, which transition.

(4) Main idea of the lyrics: The woman didn't listen to her parents' matchmaker, refused the engagement ceremony, pursued free love, and finally married her favorite husband.

(5) Function: Personal expression.

6.Coax the child to sleep

Singer: Tai Jie (Di zhengdang Village)
 Transcription notation: Liu Tong
 Audio recording: Zhu Dingyu

The musical score is written in treble clef with a key signature of three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat) and a tempo marking of quarter note = 48. The piece is divided into six systems of music, each with a corresponding line of lyrics in Chinese. The systems are labeled with measure numbers: 1-7 (A), 8-13 (A'), 14-18 (A''), 19-24 (A'''), 25-30 (A''''), and 31-36. The lyrics are: 'a lei lei yo lei yo lei, a lei lei yo lei yo lei, a nun ma nun bomem sei, ao mei bei na nun nun he wan men dou ei, ao dei dei la bo bo hou wan men dou ei, a lei lei yo lei yo lei, en len bo jiu ei len dei min bo bei bo ren na, ren sin ma wa bo ren, ren mei ma wa bo ren ren, ga la fu go gai bei bo lang rua, ren sin bo bo ba ren rao, ren ma bo bei bo ren rao, sen na bulen bei sa na a, ne wuo an yo zen bei show la ga ba mei da ra, a lei lei yo lei yo lei, a lei lei yo lei yo.' The score includes various rhythmic values such as quarter notes, eighth notes, and sixteenth notes, along with rests and dynamic markings.

Figure 9, Coax the child to sleep

- (1) The mode adopts F feather five tones, and there is no "sign" sound.
- (2) Rhythm: The beat is mainly 2/4 beats, and occasionally 3/4 beats are used alternately. The rhythm is very characteristic. It uses a weak start, and a large number of rhythm types with a dot octave and a sixteenth note are used, just like a mother gently patting her child to sleep.
- (3) The musical form is a single part, each paragraph is composed of three sentences, all of which adopt the same weak rising rhythm type. It has been repeated five times (as shown in the figure), with slight changes. The second time, the first sentence has been repeated one more time to become four sentences. The melody is slow and has little fluctuation.
- (4) Main idea of lyrics: This is a baby's lullaby song, meaning of the song text is; you must go to sleep, mom and dad has to go out to work, and you'll see them back when you wake up.
- (5) Song background: At the time when *Dulong* children were taken care by the elderly, and young people gone out to work in the farm.
- (6) Function: Personal expression for lullaby the children.

Discussion

The traditional folk songs of the Dulong nationality bear the memories of the generation who lived and experienced the old-style society, and it faces a great inheritance crisis:

For different cultural backgrounds: The content of traditional *Dulong* folk songs is mainly about emotion and life in primitive society, which is different from the words used by *Dulong* people in modern society. Some of the language vocabularies in traditional folk songs cannot be understood and explained directly by young people only after the singers translate orally so they can roughly understand the meaning of the song text (Li, 2014:7).

Time-consuming. It takes two-five minutes to sing a single complete *Dulong* traditional folk song. The way of learning is by oral tradition, learning by heart or heart to heart sentence by sentence. Older people often say it takes several nights to learn a song. In those days, there was no electricity, and singing around the bonfire in the evening was the leading entertainment. Nowadays, it is an era of science and technology, and the entertainment life of young people is rich and colorful. It is not easy to spend a long time learning a traditional *Dulong* folk song.

Age gap: The leading singers of *Dulong* traditional folk songs are about 50-100 years old. The intangible cultural heritage inheritors of *Dulong* traditional folk songs are over 60 years old. More inheritors and learners of *Dulong* traditional folk songs need to be under 40 years old.

Recommendation

Theoretical Recommendation

The existing traditional folk songs have decreased. The researcher once looked for the inheritors according to a list of inheritors of *Dulong* folk songs and found that some older people have passed away, and the traditional folk songs that the living older people can sing are also decreasing due to the decline of memory.

Therefore, if the traditional *Dulong* folk songs are worth inheriting, we can first save the materials in audio and video to buy time for subsequent research and inheritance.

Dulong folk songs have three forms of expression. In *the Dulong* language, the first kind is *Menzhu*, the general term for folk songs. It accompanies no dance, but the singer generally sits by the bonfire alone and hums the song while working. The second kind is called *Pu*, which usually accompanies the dance. The singer could sing and dance. Generally, one person will lead the singing, and everyone will sing afterward in unison. The third kind is called *Achangqiao*. This is a form of ballad dedicated to the dead person of the deceased. Such folk songs are often named after people, and the word *Qiao* is attached to the song's title, meaning remembrance of the dead person.

Practical Recommendations

In terms of *Dulong* traditional folk songs, every key informant said that the *Menzhu* is a nationality of *Dulong*, and this song is only for singing, not for accompanying the dance. A person's name could be added after the title of the song. Most of the folk songs they sang were in the form of ballads, and one was about to dedicate to the dead people for remembrance, and in practical found in fieldwork, the word *Qiao* was not attached to the title of the song, as mentioned in the book. This kind of ballad is different from the *Achangqiao* recorded in the literature, too, only the words attached to the song name are different, and the rest are the same.

The title of Dulong traditional folk songs has some features: It is often named after a person. The common forms are: (1) who is the first to sing with whose name, (2) who is the party to the event and whose name is sung (3) whose daughter (son). "Men Zhu" (Dulong language: ballad) is sometimes added to the end of the song title. For example, Notation 2.7 Bon sai nan men zhu (Bon is her father's name and Sai Nan is her daughter's name); Notation 2.9 Gui za bu son men zhu (Gui za father's name, Bu son's singer's name). Notation 2.11 Ge lu du nan men zhu (Ge lu's father's name, Du nan's fourth daughter). Notation 2.12 Bon nang Nen Nang men zhu (Grandpa Bon Nang's name, Dad Nen's name, Nang's daughter's name).

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