



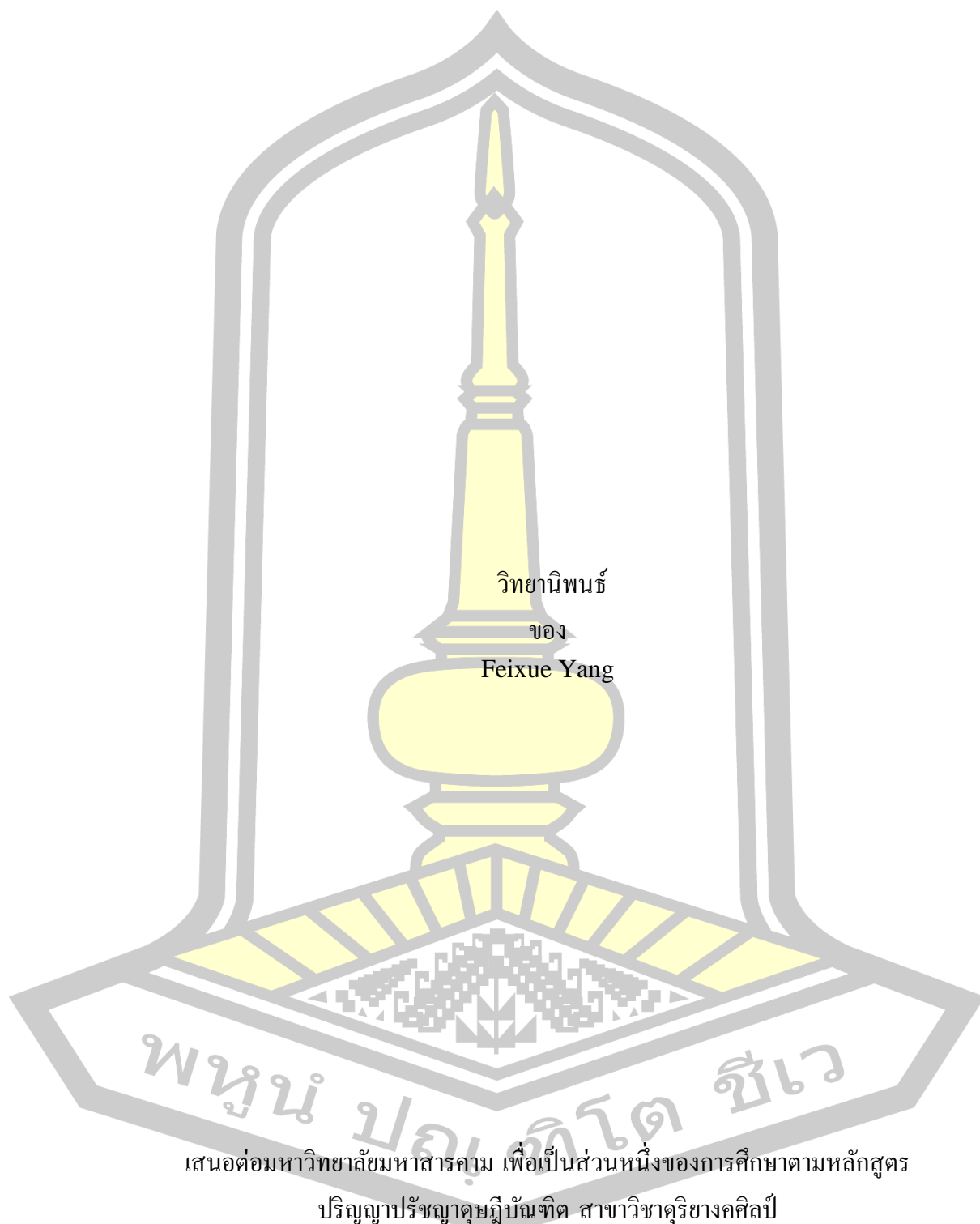
Zhuang Tianqin Ceremony: Music ritual in Guangxi, China

Feixue Yang

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of Requirements for
degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Music
March 2025

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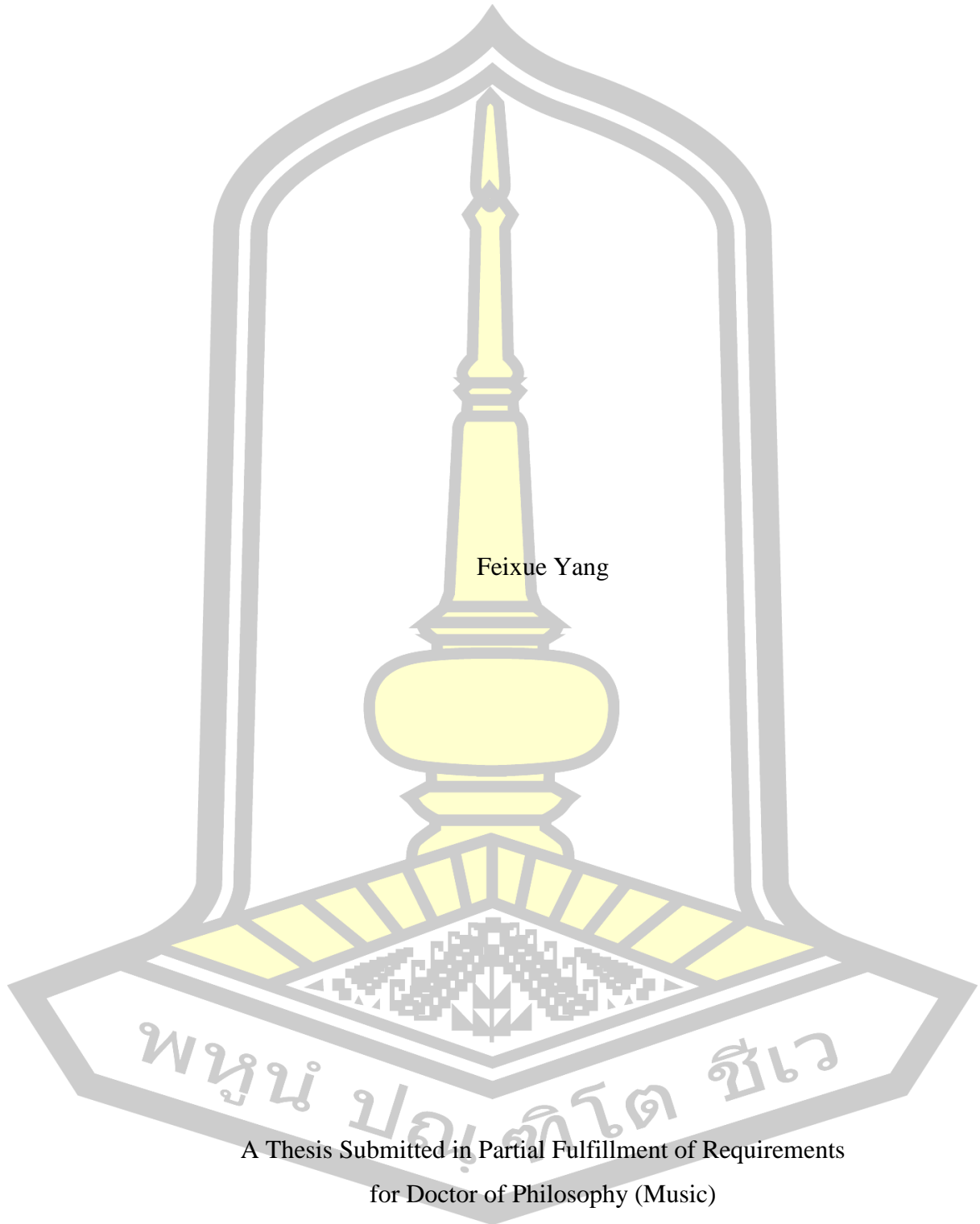
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March 2025

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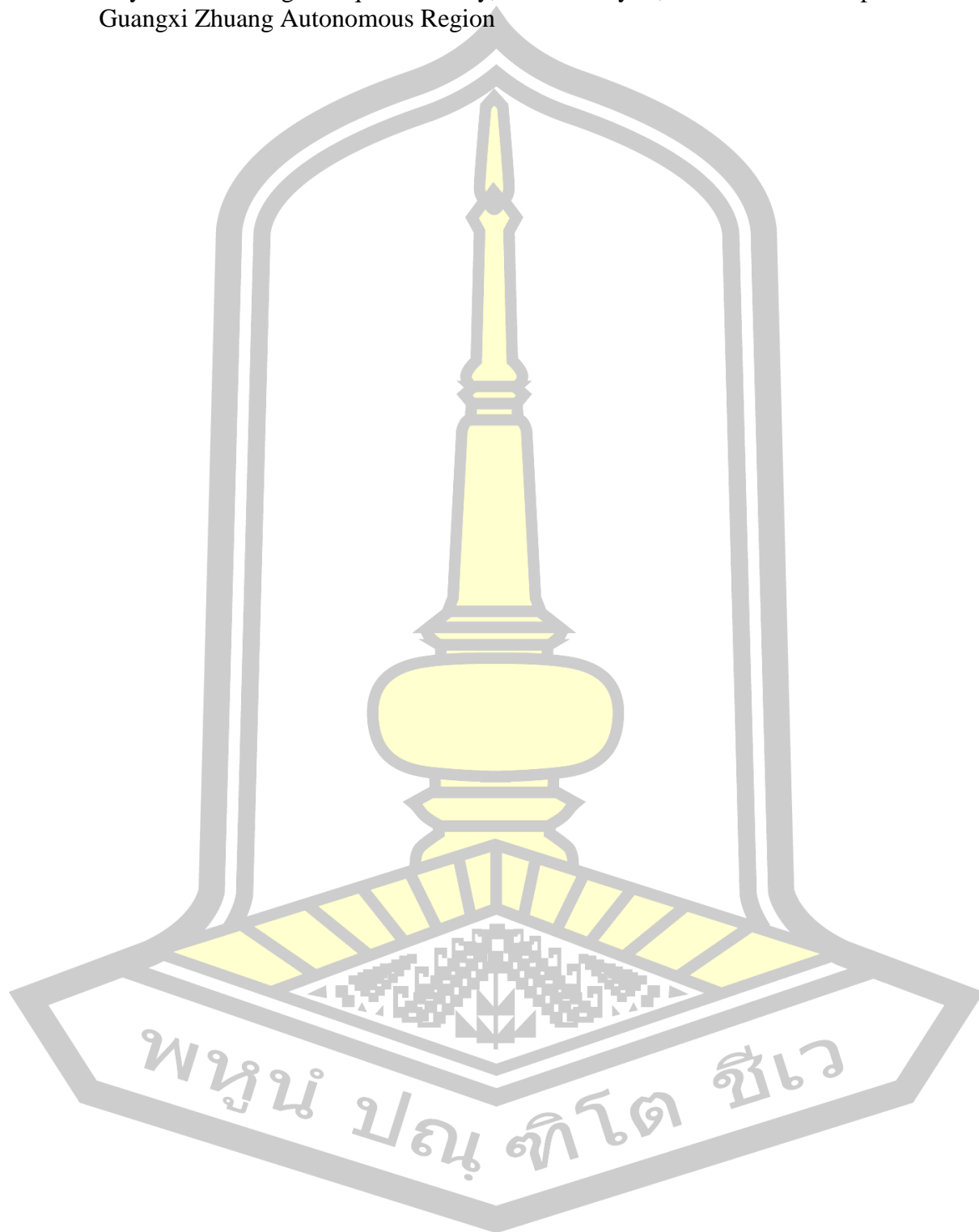
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ABSTRACT

This dissertation takes Zhuang Tianqin ceremony music in the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region of China as the research object. The research objectives of this Research are: 1)To explore the current status of the Zhuang Tianqin Ceremony in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region,China.2)To analyze the music characteristics of the Zhuang Tianqin Ceremony in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region,China.3)To study the preservation and transmission of the Zhuang Tianqin Ceremony in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region,China.This research adopts a qualitative research method, applying theories such as ethnomusicology theory, musicology theory, anthropology theory, and music analysis theory. Key informants working on the ground were interviewed, and a large amount of data was collected. Subsequently, the data from the field investigation were classified and analyzed.

The results of this study indicate that:1)By sorting out the development of the Zhuang Tianqin ceremony in four periods. It was found that the Zhuang Tianqin ceremony evolved from the development of witchcraft. Went through a period of name change and form determination. It also experienced a stable period of gradually enriching forms and changing social functions. Finally, under the vision of intangible cultural heritage protection, a stable transmission system and specific regional symbols have been formed. 2) The Zhuang Tianqin Ceremony the five songs in "Ruji" are respectively "Qingshen diao", "Shanglu diao", "Paoma diao", "Fangyan diao" and "Songshen diao". Combing through the unique musical characteristics of the five songs in terms of melody, rhythm, musical form and instrumental features, Tianqin ceremong music successfully supported the emotional expression of the ceremony and cultural transmission through its melodious and quiet melody, stable and flowing rhythm, concise and rich levels of musical forms, and played an indispensable role in strengthening community unity and spreading faith. 3) Master and apprentice transmission,education transmission of Zhuang Tianqin gradually won the general recognition of the outside world. The government, communities and Tianqin cultural centers have made important contributions to the preservation of Zhuang Tianqin ceremony.Under the mainstream impact of the big era, it is necessary to maintain its original essence and characteristics, but also to integrate diverse cultures, open up a unique mode of communication, and let the art of Tianqin truly pass from generation to generation and continue.

Keyword : Zhuang Tianqin ceremony, Music analysis, Transmission and preservation, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region



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My sincere thanks also goes to leaders, Transmitter, folk artists, teachers and students who have helped me with my field research. Without their precious support it would not be possible to conduct this research.

Last but not the least, I would like to thank my family: my parents , my husband and my son for supporting me spiritually throughout writing this thesis and my life in general.

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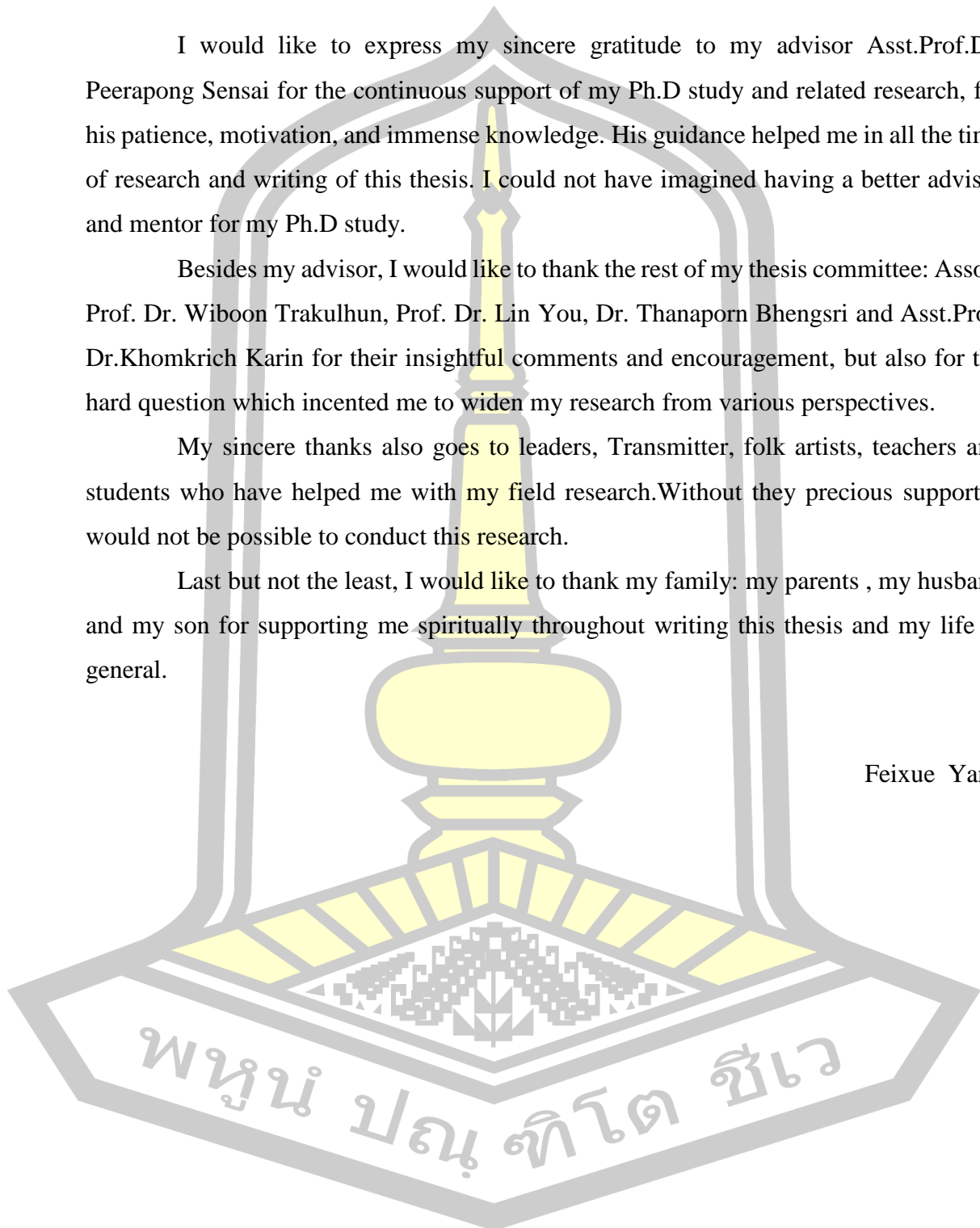


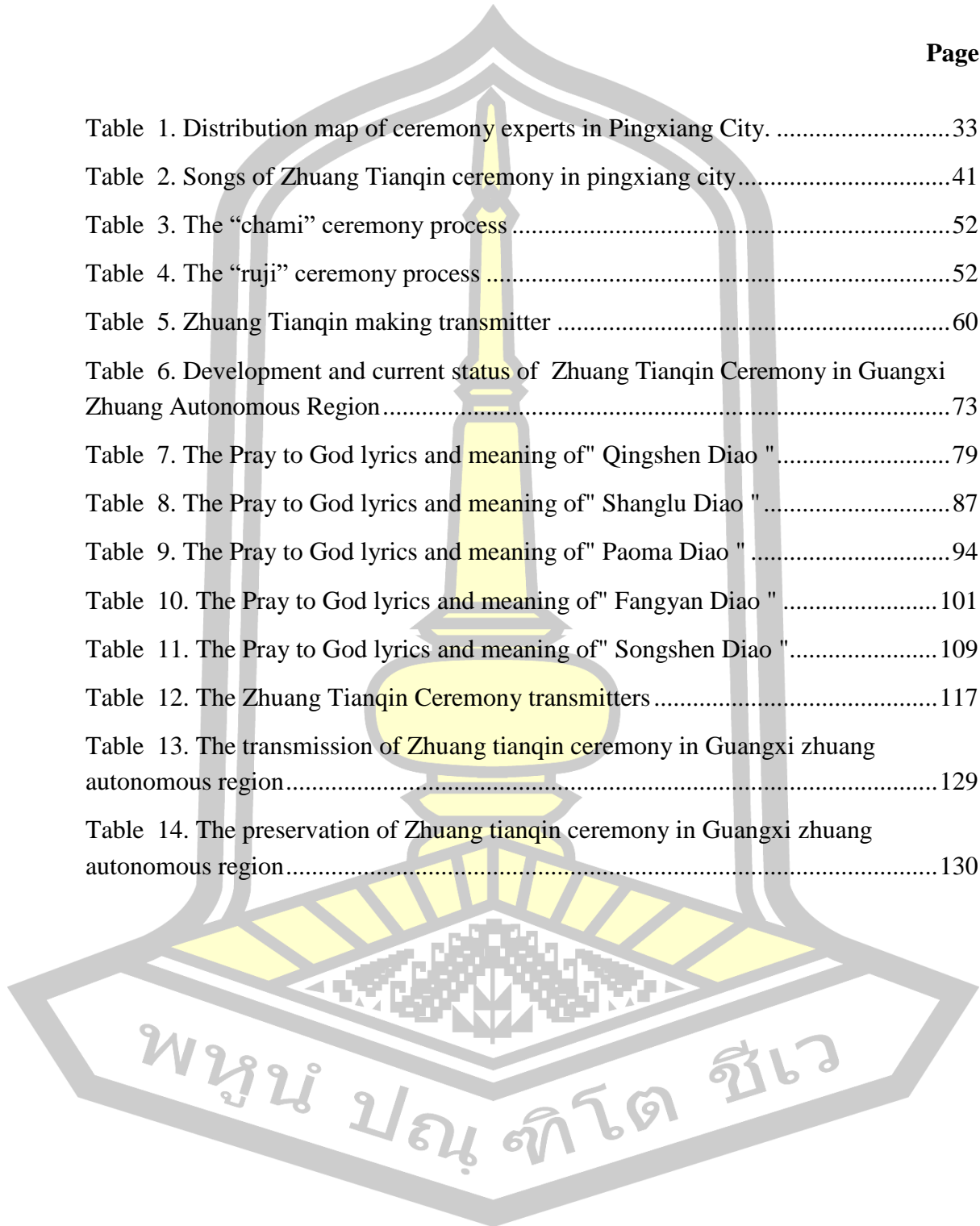
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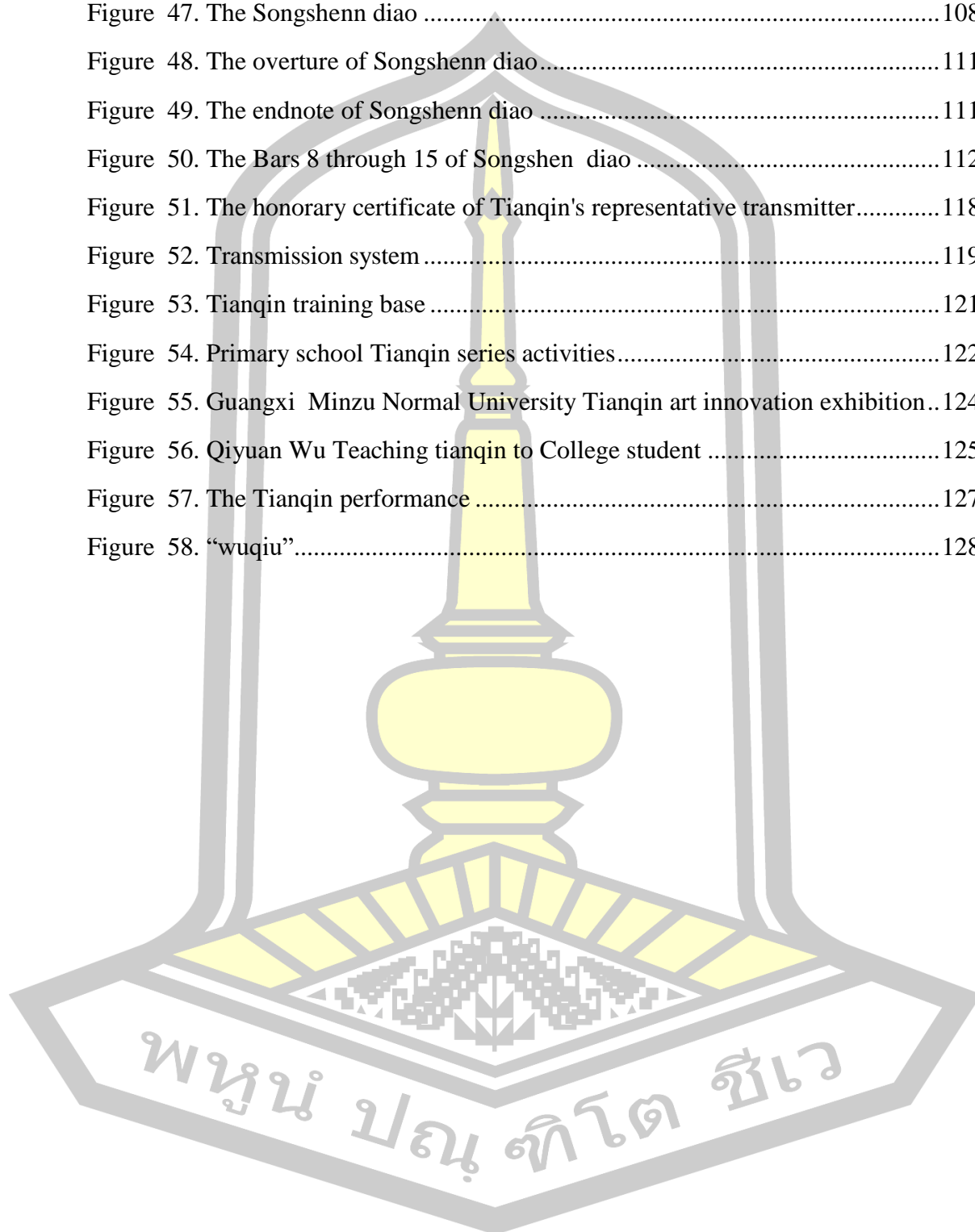


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CHAPTER I

Introduction

1. Research Background

The ceremony music of the Zhuang people group in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, China is characterized by the coexistence of diverse beliefs, including studies on witchcraft music and Shigong ceremony music from different perspectives of faith. Tianqin ceremony music of the Zhuang people is a form of witchcraft music. The performer communicates with spirits by playing the Tianqin instrument to seek relief from disasters and hardships. Despite the rapid development of modern society, the practice of using Tianqin ceremony for blessings remains popular in villages such as Longzhou County and Pingxiang City in Chongzuo, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, China. (Huang Yan, 2019)

“Tianqin,” a plucked string instrument among the Zhuang people group, also referred to as “ding” (叮) or “ding” (鼎) in dialect, is handed down in areas along the Sino-Vietnamese border in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, such as Longzhou, Pingxiang, Fangcheng, and Ningming. It is closely associated with local folk sacrifices and shamanistic activities. In different regions of Guangxi, there are slight differences in Tianqin ceremony music, but the general performance remains essentially consistent. The ceremony music itself and the playing techniques are relatively simple. Primarily, there are rich musical elements in the vocal part. Closely related to religious ceremonies, the musical range is not broad, with the mid-low vocal range mostly utilized. Except for the distinctive melodic character in the Ban Chi area, the melodies are generally smooth. The shaking of the copper ring strings, with the meaning of “simulating the feeling of horse riding,” is present in all three locations (Cao J& Pan L Z, 2007). In the Pingxiang region, a three-string Tianqin is used in the ceremony, while a two-string Tianqin is employed in other areas. Additionally, in terms of performance, the copper ring strings in Pingxiang are accompanied by dance during the climax of the ceremony, also referred to as “Wuqiu.” (舞求) In contrast, dance does not occur in other regions. (Chen Z H, 2023)

As a ceremonyized specific symbol, Zhuang Tianqin art puts its significance and function within specific ceremony structures and institutionalized, standardized behaviors. During folk belief ceremonies such as the Nongdong Festival and the Ordination Ceremony, Zhuang Tianqin art constructs specific symbolic representations through the “near-far” belief sound and highlights its specific significance and function within “people-instrument-deity” relationships. During these ceremonies, the Tianqin art of Zhuang people is embedded in various ceremony segments in the forms of “Tian Ge” (天歌), “Tian Wu” (天舞) and “Tian Yue” (天乐). With these forms, Tianqin performers utilize sound within the ceremony as a symbolic medium to achieve the ceremony purpose of “spiritual communication.” The cultural core of belief centred around “heaven” is fundamental to the reproduction of the Tianqin art culture of the Zhuang people. It is also the prerequisite for the stable relationship between the formal functions of instruments as both religious artifacts and performance arts as expressions of faith. (Wang J B, 2023)

In its early stages, the Tianqin of the Zhuang people was mainly used in folk ceremony activities as a tool for communication between the Zhuang people’s ancestors and spirits. It evolved from the ritualistic actions of ancient Luoyue people in the Zuo River Basin, who conducted religious ceremonies to worship heaven and deities. Its initial purpose was to implore celestial beings to help alleviate disasters. It gradually evolved into a form of folk art for the Zhuang people that integrates plucking, singing, and dancing. When performing the Tianqin art of Zhuang people, artists sit on a thick wooden bed about 3.5 meters long, wide, and about 1 foot high. They hold the instrument with their left hand and pluck it with their right hand while singing. They sometimes shake a string of Malings rhythmically with their thumbs. The content of the songs often centers around peace, blessings, familial and friendly relationships, joyous occasions, and ethnic unity. The major festival for Tianqin art of the Zhuang people is held during the first month of the lunar calendar. Artists from various villages gather to celebrate, and some even perform the “zuo ci chai” (坐刺柴) (sitting on a large bundle of wild thorns, reportedly without feeling any prick) to hope for a rich harvest and livestock in the coming year. (Xie T, 2021)

Strides have been made in the performance of Tianqin art of Zhuang people in recent years, along with notable enhancements in stage presentation. Tianqin

instruments are now created with high-quality materials for the neck and gourds for resonance chambers, and they are adorned with well-carved dragon and phoenix motifs on the head. They produce crisp and melodious sounds distinctly ethnic in character. With its traditional function of spirit entertainment, the Tianqin art of the Zhuang people has also acquired a cultural function of entertainment for people. Since the 21st century, the artistic presentation and the physical design of Tianqin instruments have been refined. As a result, the public began to re-appreciate this art form. Tianqin art is created by the people and passed down through generations. It integrates instruments, music, singing, playing, and dancing into a cohesive artistic expression. In the 2024 CCTV Spring Festival Gala, the Tianqin art performance of “My Hometown, My Song” graced the stage. People across the nation and the world gain a deeper understanding of Tianqin art. Tianqin art has transitioned from its original function of calling for the divine to entertainment for people. It evolves from a religious artefact to a musical instrument in stage performances. At present, Tianqin in Guangxi serves both religious and musical purposes.

The Zhuang Tianqin ceremony embodies a deep-rooted tradition, while staged performances of Tianqin art represent innovative adaptations. Consequently, our research must encompass both traditional and contemporary dimensions. Field observations indicate a significant decline in the transmission of the traditional Tianqin ceremony within the context of rapid societal transformation. This decline can be attributed to two primary factors: (1) the transmission of the Tianqin ceremony relies solely on a master-apprentice model, in which the selection of successors is dictated by fate rather than individual willingness; (2) young individuals, constrained by demanding schedules and influenced by external cultural forces, often exhibit skepticism toward folk religious ceremonies. As a result, even in regions such as Pingxiang, where regional-level intangible cultural heritage transmitters are present, the challenges associated with the preservation and continuation of this tradition remain substantial.

Moreover, an in-depth examination of the musical dimension of the Tianqin ceremony is imperative. While previous studies have predominantly focused on its cultural and functional aspects, there has been a relative lack of scholarly attention to its musical analysis. Given that Tianqin ceremony music is inextricably linked to its cultural context, research should prioritize a comprehensive musical analysis that

integrates specific cultural elements. A nuanced understanding of Zhuang Tianqin ceremony culture necessitates a focus on its musical structures and characteristics rather than an exclusive emphasis on its broader cultural dimensions.

2. Research Objectives

2.1 To explore the current status of the Zhuang Tianqin Ceremony in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, China.

2.2 To analyze the music characteristics of the Zhuang Tianqin Ceremony in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, China.

2.3 To propose the guidelines to transmission and preservation of Zhuang Tianqin Ceremony in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, China.

3. Research Questions

3.1 What is the current status of the Zhuang Tianqin Ceremony?

3.2 What are the characteristics of the music of the Zhuang Tianqin Ceremony?

3.3 What are the guidelines to transmission and preservation of the Zhuang Tianqin Ceremony?

4. Research Benefits

4.1 We can understand the current status of the Zhuang Tianqin Ceremony.

4.2 We can learn the course of the Zhuang Tianqin ceremony.

4.3 We can understand the musical characteristics of the Zhuang Tianqin Ceremony.

4.4 We can know the guidelines to transmission and preservation of the Zhuang Tianqin Ceremony.

5. Research Definitions

5.1 Zhuang

The Zhuang refer to one of the ethnic minorities in China with a unique history, culture and tradition. Zhuang is short for the Zhuang nationality. In this study, Zhuang refers to the Zhuang people living in Pingxiang City, the China-Vietnam border in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region.

5.2 Zhuang Tianqin Ceremony

Zhuang Tianqin Ceremony refers to a folk religious activity. In the ceremony, the ritualists use Tianqin as a tool to communicate with heaven in the form of playing and singing the Tianqin, so as to pray for God's blessing, maintain peace, eliminate disasters, and bring good weather. This study mainly discusses the whole process of Tianqin ceremony in Pingxiang area, including the ceremony sound, ceremony personnel and ceremony process.

5.3 Current status

The current status refers to the development and current status of the Zhuang Tianqin ceremony from 1903 to 2024. The current status is illustrated from the types of ceremony, transmitter of ceremony, musical instrument of ceremony and procedures of the ceremony.

5.4 Music Characteristics

Music characteristics refers to the describe five songs in the Zhuang Tianqin ceremony. They are: Qingshen Diao, Shanglu Diao, Paoma Diao, Fangyan Diao and Songshen Diao. Five songs appear in the second, third, fourth, eighth, and twelfth steps of the ceremony's 13 steps. The musical context mainly the musical form, melody, rhythm and instrumental characteristics of the five songs.

5.5 Transmission

Transmission refers to how to make better use of the means of master and apprentice transmission to maximize transmission, and how to pay attention to the transmission of traditional Tianqin ceremony while treating the transmission of stage art Tianqin performance, which can be spread through three channels: master and apprentice, education and society.

5.6 Song of praise and sing

Song of praise and sing refers to two forms of the voice of the bearer in the Tianqin ceremony, some forms of chanting in the steps without the instruments is like speaking softly to someone. Singing is the production of beautiful sounds in a cadential tone, a form that appears in the rhythmic steps of the Zhuang Tianqin ceremony.

6. Research Conceptual Framework

This table presents the conceptual framework of the Zhuang Tianqin Ceremony research.

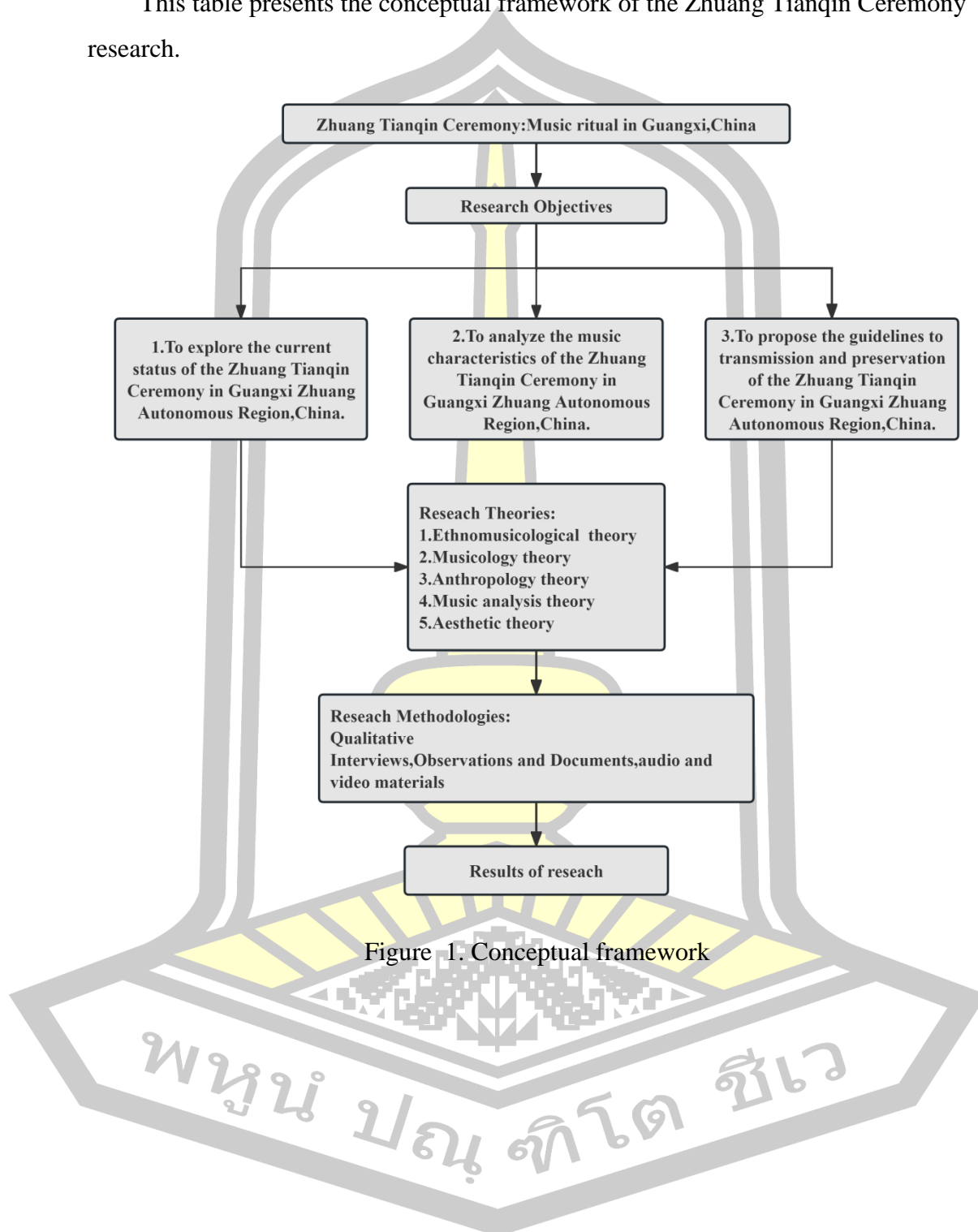


Figure 1. Conceptual framework

CHAPTER II

Literature review

The research topic for the Zhuang Tianqin Ceremony is music rituals in the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, China. The researchers consulted the literature to obtain the most comprehensive data for this research.

The various literatures are reviewed according to the following topics:

1. General Knowledge of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, China.
2. General Knowledge of Zhuang Tianqin Ceremony in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, China.
3. The theory used in this research.
4. Research related.

1. General Knowledge of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, China

1.1 The Knowledge of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, China

Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region derives its abbreviated designation “Gui” from its historical association with Guilin County, which was established during the Qin dynasty’s unification of Lingnan. The region’s capital is Nanning, and it is administratively organized into 14 prefecture-level cities and 8 county-level cities, with the latter being subordinate to the former. Notably, Guangxi is one of China’s five ethnic minority autonomous regions and the nation’s sole coastal autonomous region.

Geographically, Guangxi is located in the western part of South China. It is bordered by Guangdong to the east, Hunan to the northeast, Guizhou to the north, and Yunnan to the west. Its southern coastline along the Beibu Gulf faces Southeast Asia, and the region shares a border with Vietnam to the southwest. This strategic maritime positioning affords the most convenient passage in southwest China, thereby playing a pivotal role in facilitating economic exchanges between China and Southeast Asia. Moreover, Guangxi serves as the host for the China-ASEAN Expo.

The region is characterized by its remarkable ethnic diversity, comprising the Han, Zhuang, Yao, Miao, Dong, Jing, Hui, and other ethnic groups. Its linguistic landscape is equally varied, featuring Chinese dialects such as Cantonese, Southwest Mandarin (Guiliu), Hakka, Pinghua, Xiang, and Min, alongside both northern and

southern dialects of the Zhuang language. Minority languages, notably those of the Miao and Yao peoples, further contribute to Guangxi's rich cultural and linguistic mosaic. (As shown in Figure 2 and 3)

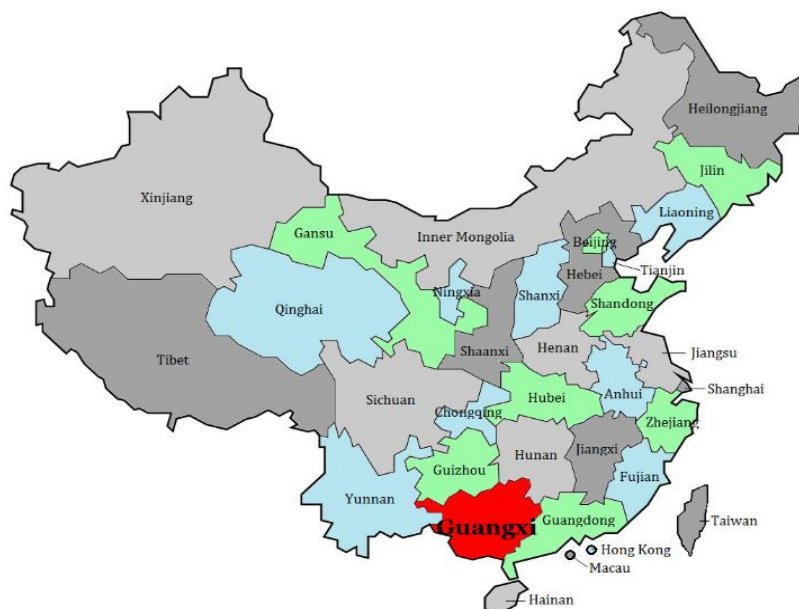


Figure 2. Location on the map of China

Source: Chinafolio



Figure 3. Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region
China map at <https://www.google.com/maps/place>

1.2 The Knowledge of Pingxiang City

Pingxiang City, a county-level city in the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region and administered by Chongzuo City, is situated in southern China bordering the Lang Son Mountains of Vietnam. Known as the “South Gate of the Motherland,” it is the Chinese international city nearest to the ASEAN countries. The city, comprising four towns and covering an area of 650 square kilometers, has a population of over 100,000 residents. It is located 160 kilometers away from both Nanning, the capital of Guangxi, and Hanoi, the capital of Vietnam, via expressway.

To the southwest, Pingxiang adjoins Vietnam’s Liangshan Province along a 97-kilometer border. This border region is distinguished by its robust port infrastructure, which includes two national first-class highway ports, Pingxiang Port serving as a railway port, one second-class port, and five border exchange points—the most extensive and diverse array of ports in Guangxi. As a result, Pingxiang is recognized as the largest border port city in the region and represents the most convenient overland route linking China with Vietnam and Southeast Asia.

In June 1992, the State Council approved Pingxiang as an open city along the border, underscoring its strategic importance in regional economic and cultural exchanges (Government of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, 2024). (As shown in Figure 4)



Figure 4. Guangxi pingxiang city
map at <https://www.google.com/maps/place>

1.3 The Administrative division of Pingxiang city

In 1997, Pingxiang City covered an area of 650 square kilometers and had a population of 91,000. At that time, its administrative structure comprised five towns under the jurisdiction of the city government. Specifically, Pingxiang Town (Pingxiangzhen) administered five neighborhood committees — Pingshan, Nanda, Beida, Lion Mountain, and Xinhua—and five village committees—Liuban, Nanshan, Qianjin, Lianquan, and Zhushan—with the Nanshan Martyrs Cemetery serving as a notable memorial site. Youyi Town oversaw seven village committees (Kafeng, Pass, Lida, Nanshan, Liuban, Zhaohua, and Qianjin) and was home to significant commercial infrastructure, including the Puzhai International Commercial City and the Nongyao Sino-Vietnamese Border Trade Point. Shangshi Town had jurisdiction over nine village committees (Shangshi, Lianjiang, Banwang, Youai, Yan'an, Matong, Bailong, Xiaao, and Pudong), while Baiyun Town managed eight village committees (Yingyang, Craftslong, Pingshan, Lianquan, Zhushan, Sanlian, Pingand, and Songcheng) and was the site of the Longtangtun gold mine. In 1996, the merger with Pingxiang Town was revoked, and Xiashi Town was established to administer ten village committees (Xiashi, Xinming, Naalou, Shaoping, Liu Li, Banren, Pumen, Baima, Fengle, and Xiatong).

By 2003, the administrative configuration of Pingxiang City had been reorganized into four towns — Pingxiang, Friendship, Xiashi, and Shangshi — comprising 33 village committees, 8 neighborhood committees, and 260 natural tuns, with the total population exceeding 150,000. Under this new structure, Pingxiang Town was responsible for five neighborhood committees (Peking University, Nanda, Lion Mountain, Pingshan, and Xinhua) and five administrative villages (Lianquan, Liuban, Nanshan, Qianjin, and Bamboo Mountain). Friendship Town administered nine administrative villages, namely Zhaohua, Licha, Pass, Carfeng, Yingyang, Sanlian, Pingand, Songcheng, and Smith Long. Shangshi Town maintained jurisdiction over nine administrative villages (Shangshi, Bailong, Yan'an, Ao, Matong, Lianjiang, Youai, Banwang, and Pudong), while Xiashi Town governed ten administrative villages (Xiashi, Xinming, Nalou, Baima, Shaoping, Liu Li, Fengle, Xiatong, Banren, and Pumen). (Government of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, 2024)

1.4 The ethnic Folk Beliefs of Pingxiang city

In Pingxiang City, diverse folk beliefs are deeply woven into the fabric of local life, reflecting the inhabitants' conceptualization of the world. Among these, the most prominent are practices centered on ancestor worship, nature veneration, land deification, and the belief in the "Hua niang" .(Chen Zhanghao,2023)

2. General Knowledge of the Zhuang Tianqin Ceremony in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, China

Pingxiang boasts a long-established history as a multi-ethnic settlement, predominantly inhabited by the Zhuang people and celebrated for its profound traditional culture and abundant intangible cultural heritage. The Zhuang Tianqin ceremony, which originated during the Northern Song Dynasty, evolved from the ancient Luoyue ceremonial practices of offering sacrifices to the heavens and deities in the Zuojiang River basin. Initially intended to invoke divine intervention for disaster mitigation and problem resolution, this art form gradually transformed into a comprehensive folk performance that integrates instrumental playing, vocal expression, and dance.

In performances of Tianqin ceremony, practitioners typically sit on a slab bed approximately 3.5 meters in length and one foot in height, although they may sometimes perform seated on the ground. The performer holds the Tianqin instrument with the left hand and plucks its strings with the right, delivering a solo performance that is rhythmically supported by assistants who shake Malings on both sides. The lyrical themes predominantly revolve around peace and prayer, happiness and auspiciousness, national unity, and gratitude for life. The first month of the lunar calendar marks the principal festival for the Zhuang Tianqin art, during which artists from various villages gather to perform dance, and some engage in the ritual of "Zuocichai" to secure a bountiful harvest and ensure the prosperity of the animals. Furthermore, the accompanying harp is crafted from high-quality wood, features a resonating chamber fashioned from gourds, and is adorned with a head carved in the form of dragons and phoenixes, emblematic of Zhuang cultural aesthetics.

2.1 Research on the history of Zhuang Tianqin ceremony.

According to the Annals of Pingxiang City, the ritual dance "Wuqiu" is documented as a form of folk witchcraft within the context of the Zhuang Tianqin art tradition. Traditionally, this dance was performed after the autumn harvest—when the grain had been stored and new houses completed—as village witches would congregate to perform the ritual with the aim of securing a bountiful harvest and ensuring the prosperity of the animals in the coming year. Following the establishment of the People's Republic of China, "Wuqiu" was banned as a superstitious practice; although it was revived in 1977, its popularity has since declined. (Pingxiang City Records, 1993)

The "Guangxi Tongzhi: Cultural Records" documents that the original form of the female magical dance performance—which simultaneously integrates Tianqin playing, dancing, and singing—was predominantly disseminated in the Pingxiang region. (Guangxi Tongzhi · Cultural records, 1999)

In the "Annals of Chinese Dance: Guangxi Volume," the dance is locally titled as follows: "By the village witch in the performance of a séance, holding a copper chain while dancing." This practice was once widespread across Longzhou County, Ningming County, Pingxiang City, and Jingxi County, along the border regions of Zhuang ethnic villages. Although the tradition has largely fallen into disuse, a few remnants persist in the border villages of Guanjingtun, Banwentun, and Kafangtun in Friendship Township, Pingxiang. (Chinese Dance · Guangxi Volume, 2004)

2.2 Research on the cultural function of Zhuang Tianqin Ceremony.

Danni Yang argues that the "female taboo" represents a conventional prohibition in which women are designated as objects of restriction or exclusion. In Jinlong Town, Longzhou County, the Zhuang people have long upheld a taboo concerning the transference of roles from male to female with respect to the Zhuang Tianqin, a distinctive minority musical instrument. It is imperative to dismantle this taboo through transparent dialogue and negotiation among multiple stakeholders, while respecting the central roles and agency of local communities, groups, and individuals. Moreover, establishing clear regulations and agreements among the various actors involved, along with addressing potential ethical issues, embodies the core protection principles of intangible cultural heritage—namely, a community-centered approach,

mutual respect, and mutual appreciation—as articulated in the Ethical Principles of Intangible Cultural Heritage.(Yang Danni,2019)

According to Dongliang Ma, the functions of Guangxi minority ceremonial music are multifaceted. First, there is a media function, which comprises serving as a “psychic medium” from the insiders’ perspective and acting as a narrative carrier for outsiders. Second, the control function is evident in the regulation of both the overall structure of the ceremony and the specific movements of the performers. Third, the entertainment function manifests in two forms: “entertaining the divine” and “entertaining the people.” Fourth, an ethnic recognition function is observed, as the ceremonial instruments and melodic forms serve as markers of ethnic identity. Finally, the economic function plays a role by facilitating the development of ethnic minority cultural tourism. These functions demonstrate that the ceremonial practices and music of Guangxi’s minority ethnic groups have historically fulfilled essential roles in addressing the survival and cultural needs of the community. In contemporary contexts, these practices continue to serve similar purposes, albeit in a more open and direct manner, influenced by the dynamics of ethnic cultural tourism.(Ma Dongliang,2010)

Jia Chen wrote the traditional culture of Zhuang nationality in Tongzhong Town, Fangchenggang City, is studied. The typical cultural phenomenon, cultural connotation, cultural characteristics and the concept of openness and inclusiveness of the traditional culture are summarized. This research discusses how the traditional cultures of the ethnic groups in the border areas live in harmony with each other under the modern background. The article holds that the harmonious coexistence of traditional ethnic culture is based on the international exchange of homologous and ethnic culture, and the harmonious coexistence of ethnic groups in the internal cultural atmosphere. The practice of cultural harmony and folk cultural exchange promoted by the government are the important ways to realize the harmonious coexistence of traditional ethnic culture. On this basis, taking the traditional culture of Zhuang nationality in Dongzhong Town as a case, this research discusses and studies the function of ethnic traditional culture in border areas. (Chen Jia,2020)

In 2012, Hongzeng Qin wrote the case of "Tianqin Culture", combined with ethnographic expression, we can discuss the issues of the assimilation and infiltration of national culture transmission in the era of globalization from the perspective of integration of global and local, modern and traditional. Innovation to build an independent national culture system in line with the spirit of The Times is the fundamental premise of national culture transmission, dissemination and sustainability, and to achieve this, we must hold open and adhere to two magic weapons. Only in this way, national culture can consciously multiply and live forever.(Qin Hongzeng ,2012)

In 2013, Scholars Also mention the Globalization and localism go hand in hand. Based on the perspective of culture as a whole, this study analyzes the phenomenon of national culture transmission and identity in the era of globalization through the local transmission of Budai Tianqin culture and the formation of regional cultural space in the China-Vietnam border, and further discusses the theory of regional culture as a whole. First, the definition and composition of cultural regional space; Second, the dynamic nature of cultural regional space; Third, cultural regional space and cultural sharing.(Qin Hongzeng&Song Xiubo ,2013)

Yan Li wrote in Tianqin is one of the unique traditional folk Musical Instruments of Zhuang nationality in southern Guangxi. Its development has experienced a process of evolution from a folk shrine to a modern art palace, and now it has developed into a gorgeous cultural and artistic brand of the Zhuang people, singing the land of China. The Tianqin culture of Zhuang nationality has rich and profound cultural connotation. This research systematically explains the definition of Tianqin culture and its connotation of philosophy, religion, folk custom and aesthetics from the three aspects of materiality, behavior and concept, aiming to enrich, expand and deepen the study of Tianqin culture.(Li Yan,2010)

In 2012, Ruiqun Nong wrote in Seeking affairs is a folk religious activity in Nongdong Festival of Budai Group of Jinlong Zhuang nationality. Through the operation of the elements such as Tianqin, playing and singing sutras and ceremonies, the practitioners convey people's prayers to heaven and realize the will and desire of praying for blessings and eliminating disasters. The ceremony of seeking service is complex and lofty, hidden with rich symbolic meaning and profound cultural connotation.(Nong Ruiqun &Huang Lilin,2012)

The study also mentioned the significance of the ceremony, the specific procedures of the ceremony, and the different deities worshiped by the ceremony. From these aspects of interpretation to explore the positioning of Tianqin culture and cultural function analysis. (Nong Ruiqun & He Mingzhi, 2012)

Yan Li wrote to make a preliminary analysis of the origin and flow of Tianqin based on the literature research, combined with the local folk oral data and field investigation data. This research probes into the origin and flow of Tianqin from the folklore, witchcraft belief, geography and ethnic affinity of different regions. (Li Yan, 2012)

In 2020 the main characteristics of Zhuang Tianqin art are time-honored, regionalism and pluralism. The cultural connotation of Tianqin art contains the thought of "harmony between heaven and man", the thought of people, the thought of opening things into service, and the thought of making contributions, which is the main part of the traditional excellent culture of the Chinese nation. The Zhuang Tianqin art has important historical value, folk value, social value, cultural value and artistic value, and has an important position in the traditional culture of the Chinese nation. (Zhao Minglong, 2020)

2.3 Research on the transmission and development of Zhuang Tianqin ceremony.

Jibo Wang wrote in as a representative item of the national intangible cultural heritage, the Zhuang Tianqin art has changed from the ontological symbol between the instrument, musical instrument gift (or commodity), which marks a dynamic adjustment of its cultural identity psychology under the aesthetic requirements of modernity. As a specific symbol of ceremony, the meaning and function of the Zhuang Tianqin art exist in the specific ceremony structure and the institutionalized and patterned behavior. In folk faith ceremonies such as Nongdong Festival and ordination, the Zhuang Tianqin art constructs symbols with "near-far" faith sounds and reveals its specific meaning and function in the relationship structure of "man-qin - God". In the ceremony, the Zhuang Tianqin art is embedded in each ceremony link in the form of "Tiansong" "Tiandance," and "Tianmusic." Thus, the Luthier realizes the ceremony purpose of "channeling" using the medium symbol of the sounds in the ceremony. Taking "heaven" as the cultural core of belief is fundamental to reproducing Zhuang

Tianqin art and culture, and also the premise of maintaining the stable relationship between the form and function of the instrument as the expression of belief and the instrument as the performing art. With the transformation from traditional to modern culture, the traditional Tianqin gradually transcends the expression of pure belief and forms a musical instrument with both entertainment and aesthetic connotation, becoming a musical symbol of meeting the needs of people's spiritual and cultural life. To adapt to the performance needs on the stage, modern composers integrate the elements of traditional Zhuang Tianqin artistic tunes into modern music creation techniques. Another important manifestation of the reproduction of the Zhuang Tianqin art is its existence symbol as a gift (commodity). As a gift, Tianqin has dual cultural attributes, which have the function of "expressive gift" and the attribute of "instrumental gift." The former takes the local festival ceremony in which Tianqin participates as an example. The music of Tianqin in the ceremony, as a medium of cross-border communication, reflects the interaction and reciprocity between people and their ancestors. The latter took the China-Asean Expo in recent years as an example. Tianqin, a symbol of good-neighborly friendship, became the object of gifts and transnational cultural exchanges between the guests of honor at the China-Asean Expo. (Wang Jibo, 2023)

It is also mentioned that intangible cultural heritage should be passed on in folk life. "Folk life is an activity process in which folk subjects devote their lives to folk patterns. In the process of transmission and protection of intangible cultural heritage, we should pay attention to its real situation in folk life and acknowledge its differences in different regions, time and space so that its own transmission and protection work reflects the willingness to respect the cultural subject, respect the characteristics of cultural diversity, authenticity and integrity, and make intangible cultural heritage including Tianqin art in folk customs Life is endless. Intangible cultural heritage should be spread in a new context. Tianqin art spreads from rural to urban society and from home to abroad. The exhibition is a successful case of its development through innovation. It can be seen that for intangible cultural heritage to obtain a wider range of dissemination on the spatial plane, it is necessary to integrate the factors of The Times into the ontology content and the form of exhibition. At the same time, we should also innovate in the mode of communication and pay attention

to technical communication while inheriting the natural mode of communication. Newspapers, periodicals, television, The Internet, and other mass media are the means of technical communication of intangible cultural heritage. The application of these means of communication is a concrete manifestation of the fact that intangible cultural heritage consciously pays attention to the discourse of The Times in the new context, responds to the trend of The Times, and continues to develop in the era of globalization and information. Attach importance to the protection and training of disseminators of intangible cultural heritage. Suppose intangible cultural heritage is to be passed down from generation to generation and spread widely, In that case, paying attention to the protection and training of disseminators, who are just a medium for dissemination intangible cultural heritage is necessary. The rise and fall of the vitality of intangible cultural heritage is closely related to the rise and fall of disseminators. We should protect the existing transmitters of intangible cultural heritage and train new successors at the same time so that the transmitters of national culture can "understand the historical sources, cultural transmission, national customs, life beliefs, value orientation, etc. so that they can bathe in the cultural atmosphere of the nation from a young age, infiltrate the genetic genes of the national culture in the blood, love the national culture in the heart, and cultivate the people. Family pride. Only by consciously and actively protecting the splendid national culture created and handed down by their ancestors can their national culture survive and develop in the rapidly changing modern society. (Huang Shangmao & Huang Xinyu, 2012)

Xubin Ren Wrote in "In the process of protection and rescue, we should run through the principle of integrity: not only to protect the cultural image itself, but also to protect its source of life; We should not only pay attention to the "past tense" form of culture, but also to its "present tense" form and development. We should not only pay attention to the value of culture and its background and environment, but also integrate and coordinate all aspects' relationship and interest demands. It is also necessary to respect the cultural sharers' value identity and cultural identity. This is an important guarantee for national and folk culture protection and rescue. To make Tianqin culture realize creative transformation and innovation development and promote its prosperity. First it is necessary to deeply explore, survey and discover shared intangible cultural heritage from the perspective of the development of human cultural

history based on cultural sharing to make an overall transmission and innovation strategy that surmounts local cultural differences. Some folk beliefs in Tianqin culture are expressed as the sustenance of human feelings and the pursuit of life, and they have been transformed into folk culture, carrying the profound historical and cultural connotation of the nation and having the role of regulating and educating ethics. We should retain these scientific, civilized and healthy folk beliefs. Folk belief has a broad and profound mass base, has the role of social integration, and will strengthen the Zhuang society in protecting intangible cultural heritage "community," the main work to enhance national identity. Through historical interpretation, critical transmission, comprehensive creation and practical transcendence, the contents of Tianqin culture that are not suitable for today's society can be transformed and transformed into a new discourse that is in harmony with modern civilization and closely related to people's healthy life, which is to supplement, expand and perfect the connotation of excellent traditional culture. Excavating the beneficial cultural value and humanistic connotation of Tianqin, generating new knowledge, realizing the transformation of traditional culture into modern culture and public discourse, enhancing the cultural consciousness of folk transmitters, belief subjects, and folk subjects, and making Tianqin-related folk customs and beliefs an inexhaustible source of cultural creativity, cultural industry and national art creation.(Yang YB,2020) It is also mentioned that the heritage and development of Tianqin have gone through a long process. In the face of great changes in social production and life,the intangible protection of the original soil was lost.It gradually declined with the further development of the society. When people pay attention to it again and protect it because of its decline, it changes its fate, and this change also brings two different ways of development and transmission. The two different development modes also bring about changes in emotional energy between different subjects."High emotional solidarity -- collective excitement -- is short-lived." As intangible cultural heritage, perhaps we need to pay more attention to how to combine the two transmission modes effectively and, at the same time, transform the short-term emotional energy from stage performance to long-term emotional energy so as to play the role of emotional energy in the protection of intangible cultural heritage. (Fen Xubin,2019)

In 2019, Xiang Chen wrote in the perspective of the transmitters of Tianqin in Longzhou, explored the social background and customs of Tianqin of Zhuang people in Longzhou, Guangxi, traced the origin and evolution of Tianqin art, and introduced the style of playing and singing, artistic features and new forms of performance of Tianqin art. The present situation of Tianqin music teaching in primary and secondary schools in Longzhou County is investigated, and the problems such as the lack of popularity of music class, the diversity of teaching content and the importance of educational personality are found in Longzhou Tianqin music teaching classroom, and the solutions are provided from the aspects of teacher training, the integration of Tianqin music teaching resources and teaching. The research also discusses the cultivation of the core music quality of primary and secondary school students in Longzhou County and the protection and transmission of minority music culture using the adaptation of Guangxi folk songs, the teaching of Zhuang native language and the compilation of local music and Orff teaching plans. (Chen Xiang, 2019)

Taking the Tianqin culture of Zhuang nationality as a case study, this research discusses the strategies for building national cultural brands under the background of rural revitalization. It is found that through four basic steps of ritualization and discipline transmission, cultural consciousness and activation and promotion, knowledge and refinement, and brand construction, Tianqin culture has developed into one of the famous cultural brands of Guangxi Zhuang nationality. The brand building process of Tianqin culture shows that The basic strategy of national cultural brand construction is to enhance the cultural consciousness of the main body, meet the market demand, and actively support and guide the government. (Jin Shuyan, 2018)

In 2012, Yan Li wrote in through field investigation, it is found that the transmission and protection of Tianqin culture mainly depends on some social groups such as Tianqin families, folk artists, social groups, schools and government organizations. These groups have indeed played a pivotal role in the protection, transmission and development of Tianqin culture, but there are also many problems, such as: the public's weak awareness of protection; The transmission area is narrow and the spreading scope is limited. Professional Tianqin songwriting talent is scarce; The "original ecological" characteristics of Tianqin performing arts and production techniques are gradually disappearing. The people are more spontaneous about

transmission and protection, and the government takes few measures. The relationship between the protection and development of Tianqin cultural heritage needs to be properly handled. The transmission and protection of Tianqin playing and singing skills and the transmission and protection of Tianqin instrument making. The countermeasures and suggestions for protection and transmission are as follows: to strengthen the source of Tianqin culture and popularize the significance of Tianqin cultural heritage protection, and to pay attention to and protect Tianqin culture from the perspective of cultural security; Encourage the masses to participate consciously in the protection of Tianqin cultural heritage; Strengthen the cultivation of Tianqin songwriting talents; Strengthening the government's support and guiding role; Properly handle the relationship between the protection and development of Tianqin culture.(Li Yan ,2012)

These three studies both consider that it is necessary to spread from transnational channels and at the same time, it is necessary to be good at borrowing new media. Tianqin culture disseminators, communication channels, communication content, and communication significance of four aspects; in the whole, this research analyzes the problems faced by Tianqin culture in the dissemination and puts forward the corresponding countermeasures. The first chapter mainly analyzes the historical significance, development and dissemination of Tianqin culture from three aspects: Tianqin culture rooted in folk, Tianqin culture on the stage and Tianqin culture as intangible cultural heritage. The second chapter analyzes the communication subject, communication channel, communication content and communication significance of Tianqin culture. As Tianqin culture embarks on the road of mass communication, its communication subject is not only Tianqin master and Tianqin artist, but also the audience and media personnel will complete their identity transformation from audience to disseminator in the process of secondary communication, coupled with the development and enrichment of media. Traditional media, new media such as Tiktok short video platform, VR, live broadcasting and other new media technologies and communication forms have played a role in promoting the development of Tianqin culture; The third chapter mainly points out the difficulties Tianqin culture faces in the process of communication from two aspects: vertical and horizontal communication. The fourth chapter mainly discusses the communication strategy of Tianqin culture.

The researcher believes that the communication and transmission of Tianqin culture should be led by the government and cooperate with the folk forces to create a good ecological circle of intangible cultural exchange. At the same time, in today's information age, attention should be paid to the application of new media communication platforms and communication technologies to enrich the communication channels of Tianqin culture and expand the dissemination scope of Tianqin culture.(Li Yanan&Ping Feng,2021)(Deng Yuhan &Zhou Chunchan,2018) (Jiang Da,2021)

2.4 Research on the ethnographic field study of Zhuang Tianqin ceremony.

In 2012 the scholar wrote in Based on field investigation, from the aspects of origin, ritual, book of songs, and identity of "witch", this research systematically analyzes the "zuotian, "making heaven" ceremony, "Heaven Qin" master and practitioners of law in Jinlong Town, Longzhou County, Guangxi Province, China and Vietnam, providing a basic reference for deepening relevant research.(Qin Hongzeng &Mao Shuzhang&Nong Ruiqun,2012)

The study carried out field investigation on the "doing heaven" ceremony in Ningming area of Guangxi, and interviewed five witch instrument practitioners. The unique feature of the "making heaven" witchcraft instrument in Ningming area is that the Tianqin can only be used as a "ceremony instrument". In daily life, the Tianqin cannot exist as a "musical instrument". The ceremony of "making heaven" in Ningming area can be generally divided into three categories: checking jia (asking), solving, making wine, and also mentioned the cultural function of "making heaven" ceremony. In addition, the study has a specific analysis of Ningming's "zuotian" ceremony music, analysis of Tianqin, Maling and other instruments; The music tune is closely combined with the lyrics, the sentence pattern and the melody are relatively fixed, the melody is repeated periodically, and it is a single sentence or an up-and-down sentence style. Although each instrumentalist has its own ostis to form the singing voice, its singing rhythm is in the form of evenly divided rhythm changes, and the score is often recorded by 4/8 and 3/8 changes, and the rhythm changes are presented in various combinations of eighth notes and sixteenth notes, and syncopated rhythms occur occasionally. Because the music part of "doing heaven" is composed of three parts: the singing voice of the bearer, the melody of the Tianqin and the rhythm of the copper horse, the three

are organically combined in a multi-sound way, and the time is in harmony and the time is in harmony.(Song Tang,2013)

Tianqin is a special instrument used in sacrificial activities between Zhuang people and Dai people in the Guangxi section of the China-Vietnam border. The researcher first summarizes the origin and use of Tianqin, then focuses on the comparison and analysis of the similarities and differences of Tianqin and Dai Tianqin, and finally carries on the cultural interpretation of the demonstration of Tianqin ceremony, and draws the conclusion that the belief of Tianqin and Dai people in god comes from ancient legends, and assumes the heavy responsibility of inheriting the original religious ceremony symbols without exception. The "rationality" of the transmission of the Tianqin sacrificial ceremony comes from the believers' belief in life destiny. Primitive religious ceremonies of the two communities. It not only expresses people's warm pursuit and good wishes for a better life, but also becomes an important part of Zhuang culture.(He Mingzhi & Huang Liling,2012)

Jibo Wang wrote the perspective of art anthropology, this research analyzes Tianqin music as a kind of music in culture. Tianqin instrument is widely used in folk sacrifice and religious activities, and has become an important cultural symbol of the native Zhuang ethnic group in Longzhou. Through the investigation and analysis of the form, historical origin and other explicit aspects of Tianqin, this research explains the cultural function of Tianqin to the social activity content and group psychological representation in the ceremony of "making heaven", so as to achieve the purpose of studying the culture in music.(Wang Jibo,2014)

Ling Huang wrote "Under the background of the worldwide cultural heritage movement, it aims to safeguard the cultural diversity of mankind." As a cross-border symbiotic intangible cultural heritage, Tianqin culture not only contains the cultural politics of the nation state and the identity of the community theme, but also reflects the interaction and mutual benefit of the cultural community. Strengthen the innovation and protection of cross-border ethnic culture, and contribute to the protection of cultural heritage in countries along the "Belt and Road".(Huang Ling,2020)

This study is the researcher's record of Longdong Festival in Longzhou County, from the source and region of the festival, the process of the festival and finally the function of the festival. From the whole situation of Longdong Festival activities,

Longtong Festival takes sacrificial activities as the main line, which is the remains of the joint sacrificial activities of the early clans and tribes. Longtong Festival provides a platform for "men and women of the Union" and song to song, becoming the representative of the original form of Zhuang song. With the development of The Times, the religious sacrifice content of Longdong Festival has gradually faded, and the solemnness of sacrifice has been replaced by the revelry of entertainment activities. The connotation of Zhuang culture carried by Longdong Festival has not faded because of the changes of The Times, and the colorful zhuang culture forms presented in the festival make Longdong Festival become an intangible cultural heritage with important value. In contemporary society, Longtong Festival has become more of a spiritual bond and economic exchange platform for inheriting national culture, strengthening ethnic identity, enhancing ethnic communication, and promoting ethnic unity.(Xu Xiaoming,2010)

Fan Cui wrote :Based on the research method of art anthropology, this research conducts field investigation and participant observation on the Tianqin ceremony of Zhuang nationality. The Tianqin ceremony of Budai on the border of China and Vietnam investigated and studied is a cultural representation of art in the folk belief ceremony, and at the same time, it constructs a sacred space for the worship of gods, ghosts and ancestors in the local society. This sacred space guides and standardizes the social life of Budai villages through the ceremonies of local mogong.(Cui Fan,2020)

2.5 Research on the musical instrument of Zhuang Tianqin ceremony.

In 2015,The three scholars wrote Tianqin in Longzhou, Guangxi and Gao Ping, Vietnam as examples, with the help of comparative art Research methods to carry out a comparative study of the two, in order to take this as a breakthrough to find the internal connection and difference between the Chinese and Vietnamese Tianqin.Compared from the five aspects of the relationship between the origin of the sweet and sweet seven years, the shape of Tianqin, the content of Tianqin playing and singing, the method of Tianqin playing and singing and the cultural function of Tianqin, it is concluded that the Tianqin culture of Longzhou and Gaoping is very similar, and the two are homologous, basically consistent in the shape, the content of playing and singing, the form of playing and singing, and the cultural function, but there are some differences. These three ethnic groups are originally "the same roots of

the nation", today still maintain a similar sacrificial culture, close and frequent exchanges, the water and harmony, together writing the song of peace and friendship between the border people in China and Vietnam.(Li Juechen & Li Hao&Liu Dianxia ,2015)

This research discusses the historical sources of documentation and folklore in Longzhou Tianqin traditional craft. The whole process from production selection to production molding; The changing value of triple identity of ceremony instrument, musical instrument and ceremony instrument; The different ways of transmission in urban society and rural society and the traditional culture behind them.(Du Z Y,2013) Also mention the shape of Tianqin is simple, the sound is clear and clear, and it is indispensable when holding folk customs ceremonies in Zhuang area, and it is known as a sacred instrument for communicating with the sky. Analyzing the structure of each component of Tianqin is helpful to trace the connotation of Tianqin. As a folk handicraft in minority areas, Tianqin's triple identity of ceremony instrument, musical instrument and ceremony instrument implies the hidden spiritual and cultural needs of Zhuang people, reflecting their religious belief, ethnic consciousness and artistic aesthetics.(Liu Rui,2013)

Jinlin Wu wrote the cultural identity of Tianqin changed from "artifact" to "instrument" precisely along the way of breaking the primitive thinking mode of "heaven overpowers man" to the "unity of heaven and man" in feudal society. Today, the entertainment identity of Tianqin is more prominent, and the transformation from "entertaining day" to "entertaining people" has crossed a symbolic step, putting the focus of the relationship between "heaven and man" on "people".(Wu Jinlin,2019)

3. The theory used in this research

In the course of research, we can use theories such as ethnomusicological theory, musicological theory, anthropological theory, Vocal Theory, Communication theory, music analysis theory, etc.

3.1 Ethnomusicological theory

Ethnomusicological theory:Ethnomusicology is an important branch in the field of musicology, which integrates multi-disciplinary research methods and perspectives, aiming at a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of human musical

cultural phenomena. It is defined as a holistic investigation of music in its cultural contexts. Combining folklore, psychology, cultural anthropology, linguistics, comparative musicology, music theory, and history, ethnomusicology has adopted perspectives from many disciplines (Hood, 1969).

The researcher uses the theory of ethnomusicology to go deep into the local environment and participate in the Zhuang Tianqin ceremony. Through long-term field observation and experience, detailed records of the specific process of Tianqin ceremony, scene layout, behavior of participants, etc., to obtain the most direct and authentic first-hand information. Conducted in-depth interviews and exchanges with local Tianqin artists, ceremony hosts, and ordinary people. This research studies the historical origin, social function, symbolic meaning of music and religious culture of the Zhuang Tianqin ceremony.

3.2 Musicology theory

Musicology theory: Music is a uniquely human phenomenon, that exists only in terms of social interaction; that is, it is made by people for other people, and it is learned behavior. It does not and cannot exist by, of, and for itself; there must always be human beings doing something to produce it. In short, music cannot be defined as a phenomenon of sound alone, for it involves the behavior of individuals and groups of individuals, and its particular organization demands the social concurrence of people who decide what it can and cannot be. Indeed, John Mueller (1951:286) points out that in our own culture, even the institution of the symphony concert ". . . is not exclusively, nor in one sense primarily, a musical event." Rather, he says, "It is a psychological and sociological truth that music is often secondary to nonmusical considerations." Music is also universal in human culture, though not an absolute, and the fact that it is found everywhere is important in understanding what it is and does for men.

Musicology is the study of the relationship between music and ideology, including music aesthetics, music history, music ethnology, music psychology, music education, etc.; the research on the characteristics of material materials of music includes music acoustics, temperament, musical instrument science, etc.; the research on music form and its composition includes melody, harmony acoustics, counterpoint, and musical form; There are also considerations from the aspect of performance, such

as performance theory, conducting method, etc.

The researcher uses the theory to analyze and study the musical context, musical characteristics form of Zhuang Tianqin ceremony through the theoretical method of musicology.

3.3 Anthropology theory

Anthropology is the study of what makes us human. To understand the full sweep and complexity of cultures across human history, anthropology draws and builds upon knowledge from the social and biological sciences and the humanities and physical sciences. (The American Anthropological Association, 2024)

The researcher uses the theory of anthropology to analyze and study the development history and culture of Zhuang Tianqin ceremony. By combing and analyzing the historical development and cultural heritage of Zhuang Tianqin ceremony, it is beneficial for the researcher to study the music of Zhuang Tianqin ceremony.

3.4 Music analysis theory

Music analysis theory is a theoretical system of systematic research, interpretation and evaluation of music works. It covers a variety of angles and methods, aiming to deeply understand the constituent elements, internal structure and artistic value of music works. Such as music ontology elements analysis - melody, rhythm, harmony and form structure; Musical style and historical background; Analysis of musical expression and emotional transmission.

Researchers use this theory to analyze the melody of Zhuang Tianqin ceremony music and study the melody development techniques. The rhythm is analyzed to study the rhythm type and rhythm type of Zhuang Tianqin ceremony music. Harmonic analysis, analysis and study of chord connection order and law. Mode analysis, studying the changes in the tone of music in different passages, including modulation, off-key and so on. Music structure analysis, analysis of its music development logic and phrase characteristics. This research analyzes the status and function of Tianqin ritual music in Zhuang nationality's religious belief and cultural tradition. The characteristics of Musical Instruments are analyzed, such as the way of picking, the control of strength, the use of glissando, trill and other grace notes.

3.5 Aesthetic theory

Aesthetic theory is a branch of philosophy, examines the nature of beauty, art, and sensory-emotional experiences. It provides frameworks for interpreting how artistic forms evoke meaning, emotion, and cultural significance. Key concepts such as formalism (focus on structural elements), emotionalism (emphasis on affective impact), and symbolism (interpretation of cultural signs) are central to understanding artistic expression.

Researchers use this theory: First, aesthetics emphasizes the ability of music to elicit and communicate emotions. Tianqin ceremony music use vocal timbre, dynamic contrast, and lyrical metaphors (such as natural imagery, ancestral calls) to evoke emotions associated with cultural memories. Second, symbolic interpretation connects musical elements to a broader cultural narrative. In Tianqin ceremony, songs are usually the conduit between the human and the spiritual world. The clanging of the Tianqin may symbolize the voices of ancestors, while the call-and-response pattern reflects a dialogue between the living and the gods. Aesthetic theory helps interpret these symbols, revealing how the music reinforces the belief systems of the participants and legitimizes the sacred purpose of the ritual.

Looking at the above, in the course of research, we can use the theory of ethnomusicological theory and anthropological theory to study the history and development of Zhuang ceremony music, China. We can use the theory of musicological theory, music analysis theory and aesthetic theory to analyze the music characteristic of Zhuang Tianqin Ceremony music, China.

4. Research related

In 1995, Tao Jin wrote, "When doing things, the witch in 'Lingdang Dance'" holds a copper chain, and the witch in 'Tianqin Dance' holds a Tianqin, whose utilitarian purpose is mainly to eliminate disasters for people, reward God for good luck, pray for rain and harvest." Ningming County annals: "Witch common name Kui Po. ... In the name of the devil. To hold as a musical instrument, like a huqin, its name is 'Ding', with iron or copper for training, hand and throw on the bed, so that sound, its name is 'Ma', where the sick people, continue its practice, then hand play its so-called 'ding', and the mouth sings the words of Bi buried... In the middle, they throw copper

and iron, which is called "paoma."The situation of the witch's practice in the "Lingdang Dance" is described here. The form of witch dance and Tu Hui have a unique national style. When performing, the movement changes from quiet and clear to warm and wild, and the emotion changes from delicate and subtle to galloping and fierce, with a strong appeal. The dance posture bends and stretches, soft and rigid, with a distinct charm of Luo Yue. (Jin Tao ,1995)

Yan Huang wrote in the Zhuang ceremony music in Guangxi is characterized by the coexistence of multiple beliefs. This research systematically combs the research achievements of Zhuang ceremony music in Guangxi in the past half century from different perspectives of belief, such as the study of Wuyi music, mono-religious ceremony music and Shigong ceremony music. The research of Zhuang ceremony music started late, and there are still gaps in the research methods and the depth of research results it is far behind the research of Buddhist and Taoist music, which belong to the same research of ceremony music. Its research object and content mainly focus on describing the surface form of ceremony music in a case style, It stresses the cultural function of Musical Instruments used in the ceremony and the study of musical form. There are few research results on diachronic literature, historical distribution and other aspects of deep cultural connotation, system structure, cultural functions and functions of music, and the conceptual relationship between music and faith. (Huang Yan,2019)

Jing Xiao wrote the main body of Tianqin art transmission, that is, the operator of folk legal activities, Buxiang, conducted a zero-distance observation and research, from which he explored the relationship between "human" and "qin". The research analyzed the musical mode and multi-tone structure of Tianqin music. A brief analysis is carried out on the songs of "Changtian Yao" and "Jiemen Qu".(Qiu C ,2018)They also mentioned that four kinds of tunes are used in general ceremonies, namely "Shanglu", "Paoma" and "Fangyan", and they agreed that the four tunes are different and should not be mixed together. Since the playing and singing in the ceremony directly serve the ceremony, each song gong needs to sing the contents of the Sutra according to the ceremony schedule, so the system of each song is relatively large. The "Budai" people divide the music in the ceremony into four kinds according to the ceremony process and music function, which presents the events that occur in the sacred space and the behavior state of the bearer. By starting from the music experience and

combining the subject identification and location discrimination of the music, four pieces of music, four styles, four characters and four speeds can be found. As far as music itself is concerned, its most explicit and direct expression lies in speed and rhythm. (Xiao Jing,2012)

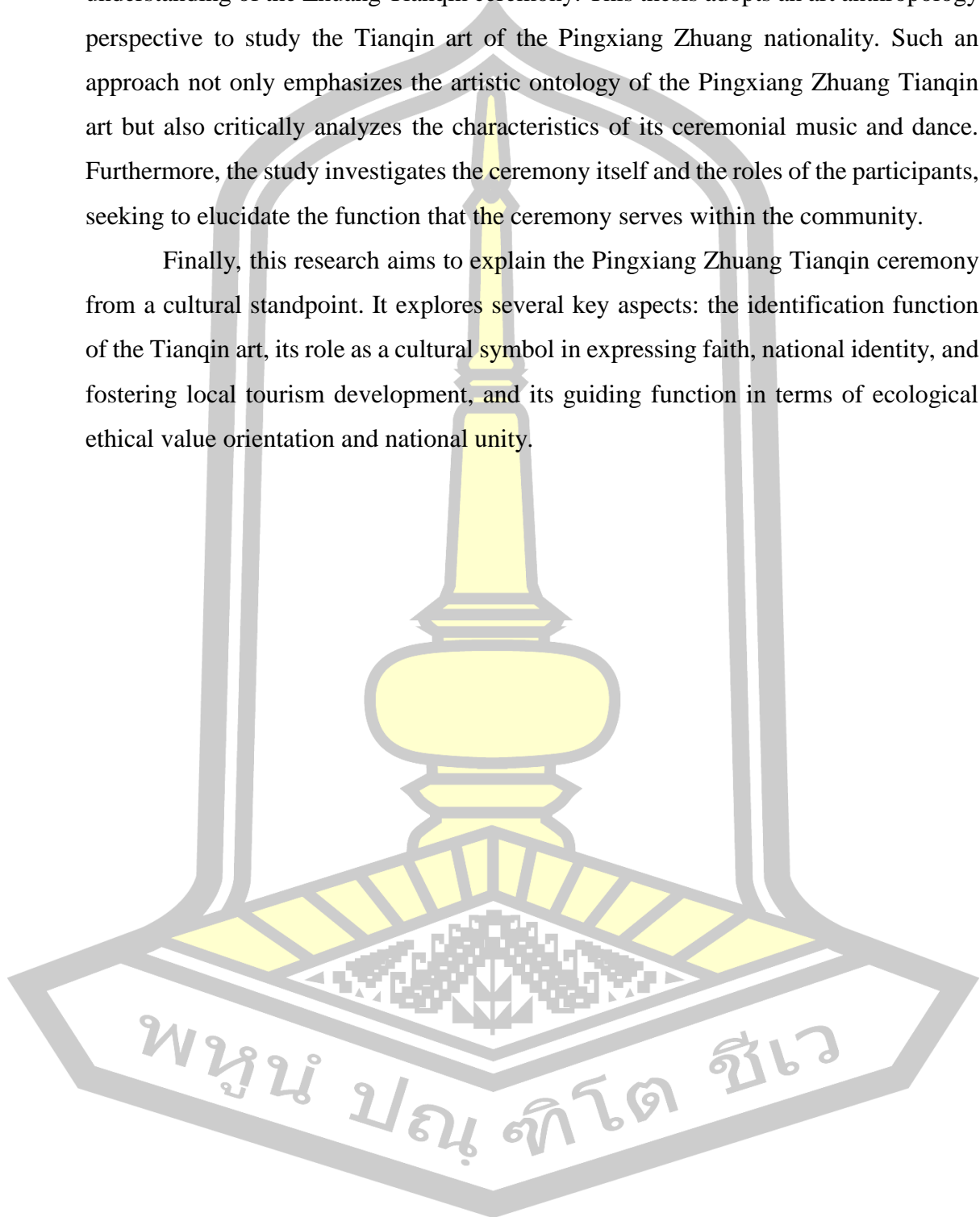
Luo Meng said that:the musical characteristics of Longzhou Tianqin culture are studied based on the musical score arrangement, playing, singing and transmission and innovation of Longzhou Tianqin music. It is believed that the local characteristics of Longzhou Tianqin are unique and representative, and its musical cultural characteristics have the characteristics of the cultural commonality of ethnic Musical Instruments. Starting with the shape and system of Longzhou Tianqin, the research analyzes the characteristics of the musical culture of Longzhou Tianqin, that is, the forms of performance and singing are diverse and the differences in form are stark. Moreover, the analysis of the musical forms of traditional and modern repertoire shows that there are characteristics in common between them. The distinctive rhythms, beats and scales of the two not only retain their own characteristics in terms of expression content and interpretation methods, but also retain their own characteristics. It also absorbed the characteristics of the Vietnamese Nong and Dai ethnic groups and formed a distinctive performance style. (Luo Meng ,2019)

5. Summary

Research on the Zhuang Tianqin ceremony began in the 1980s, marking an early phase in scholarly inquiry. A longitudinal review of previous studies reveals substantial findings in areas such as the art noumenon, cultural functions, and the protection and transmission of the tradition. Notably, most research has focused on the Tianqin ceremony of the Budai ethnic group in Jinlong Town, Longzhou County, with comparatively less attention given to its dissemination in other regions. Moreover, the Zhuang Tianqin art exhibits diverse forms and regional variations, offering fertile ground for further exploration. Rooted in the long developmental history of the ancient Luo Yue ancestors, the ceremony provides critical insights into how these ancestors are understood in the contemporary world. However, current research largely emphasizes aspects of art and communication, often remaining superficial by focusing solely on appearances.

An interdisciplinary approach is therefore essential for a more comprehensive understanding of the Zhuang Tianqin ceremony. This thesis adopts an art anthropology perspective to study the Tianqin art of the Pingxiang Zhuang nationality. Such an approach not only emphasizes the artistic ontology of the Pingxiang Zhuang Tianqin art but also critically analyzes the characteristics of its ceremonial music and dance. Furthermore, the study investigates the ceremony itself and the roles of the participants, seeking to elucidate the function that the ceremony serves within the community.

Finally, this research aims to explain the Pingxiang Zhuang Tianqin ceremony from a cultural standpoint. It explores several key aspects: the identification function of the Tianqin art, its role as a cultural symbol in expressing faith, national identity, and fostering local tourism development, and its guiding function in terms of ecological ethical value orientation and national unity.



CHAPTER III

Research Methodology

This is a qualitative study. The researcher chooses the Zhuang Tianqin Ceremony as his research field. As the Zhuang Tianqin Ceremony is more popular and unique in this area, the researcher chose the shutdown informant as the research clue. Therefore, the process used in this article is as follows.

1. Research Scope
 - 1.1 Scope of content
 - 1.2 Scope of time
2. Research process
 - 2.1 Selection of the research site
 - 2.2 Selection of the key informant
 - 2.3 Selection of the songs
 - 2.4 Research tools
 - 2.5 Data collecting
 - 2.6 Data management
 - 2.7 Data analysis
 - 2.8 Data presentation

1. Research scope

- 1.1 Scope of content
 - 1.1.1 The current status of Zhuang Tianqin Ceremony in Pingxiang City Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region.
 - 1.1.2 The musical characteristics of Zhuang Tianqin Ceremony in Pingxiang City Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region.
 - 1.1.3 The transmission and preservation of Zhuang Tianqin Ceremony in Pingxiang City Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region.

The scope of this study includes Pingxiang City, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region. (As shown in Figure 5,6)

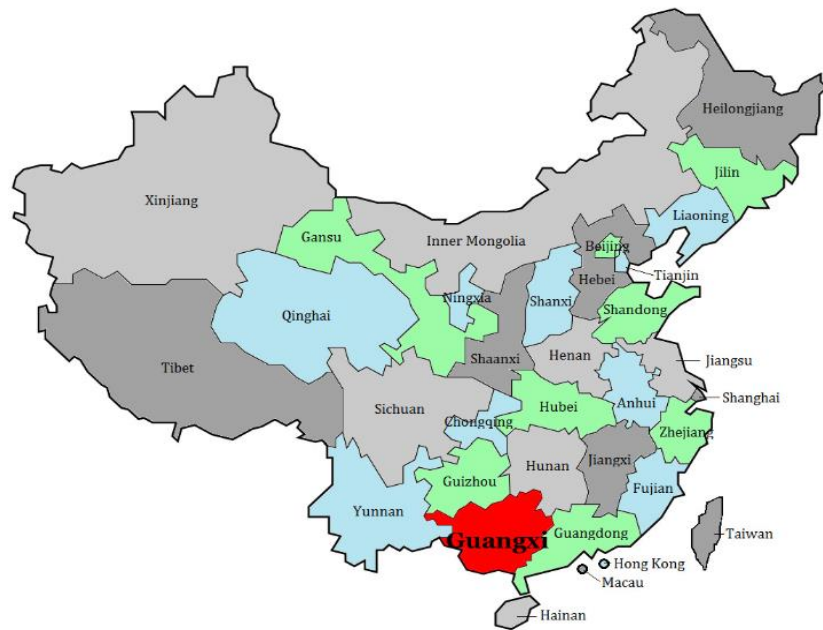


Figure 5. Location on the map of China
Source: Chinafolio

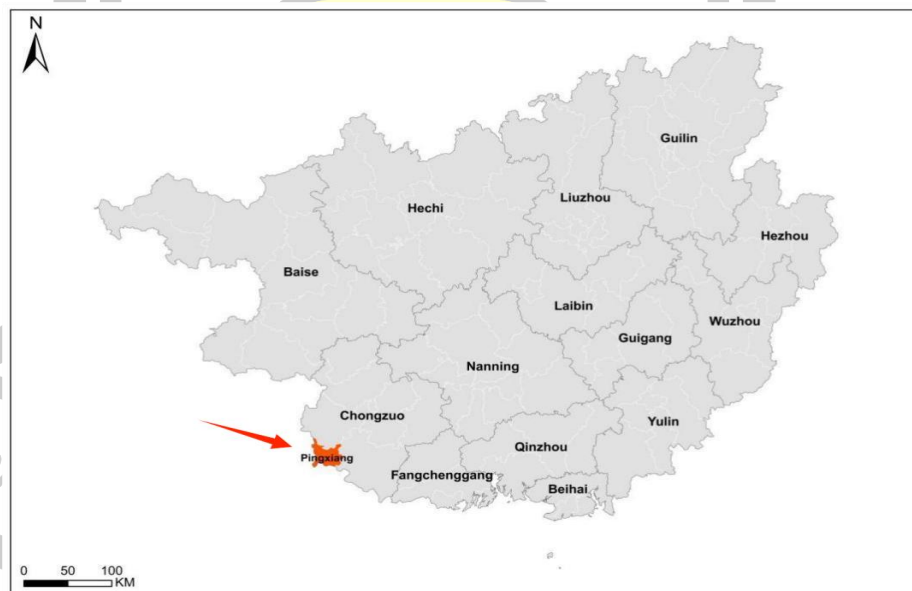


Figure 6. Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region
China map at <https://www.google.com/maps/place>

1.2 Scope of time

September 2023 to December 2024

2. Research Process

2.1 Selection of the research site

The research site of the study is Pingxiang City, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, China.

Because Pingxiang is a place where Tianqin ceremony music is relatively popular, and the local Tianqin ceremony music in Pingxiang is unique and very representative, finally, because there are many ceremony experts distributed in Pingxiang City.

The following table (As shown in Table1) shows the distribution map of ceremony experts in Pingxiang City. In Pingxiang City, there are more than 10 Tianqin artists in Friendship Town, Shangshi Town, Xiashi Town and other places. From the perspective of distribution density, there are more ceremony experts and there are more experts in Nanshan Village and Liupan Village. Therefore, these two places are the main investigation sites chosen by the researcher. In addition, when the ceremony experts of Pingxiang City held a ceremony, the informant would invite the researcher to watch the whole ceremony, record the music and dance in the process for analysis, and interview folk artists .These people who were local villagers, participated in the ceremony. Therefore, the villages with ceremony experts in each town of Pingxiang City are the sites of random investigation by the researcher.

Table 1. Distribution map of ceremony experts in Pingxiang City.

Make: (Feixue Yang,2024)

The Tun	The village	Number of ceremony transmitter
Pingxiang Tun	Xinhua Village	1
	Liuban Village	2
	Nanshan Village	3
Youyi Tun	Pinger Village	2
	Licha Village	1
	Aikou Village	2
Shangshi Tun	Banwang Village	1

	Youai Village	2
Xiashi Tun	Xiatong Village	1
	Shaoping Village	1

2.2 Selection of the key informants

2.2.1 Key informants

The criteria for selecting key informants are:

- 1) They were born and raised in Pingxiang City, Pingxiang City. She has more than 30 years of experience in performing Zhuang Tianqin ceremonys.
- 2) They understand the culture and development of Zhuang Tianqin ceremony music; now, she is the disseminator of the intangible culture of the Zhuang Tianqin ceremony.
- 3) They are the most senior local Tianqin experts or actors, and there are many Tianqin performance students.

Based on the above selection criteria, two key information providers were selected. They are the transmitters of Zhuang Tianqin Ceremony from Pingxiang City, as shown below:

1) Meixiang Li

Meixiang Li , (1960-), a female of Zhuang nationality, has been “Xian” for 38 years and was selected as the seventh batch of Zhuang Tianqin ceremony transmitters of autonomous region-level intangible heritage representative projects in Pingxiang City in December 2021. Meixiang Li is the only transmitter of Tianqin art at the autonomous region level in Pingxiang City. She is the sixth-generation transmitter. (As shown in Figure 7 and 8)

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Figure 7. Meixiang Li

Source: Feixue Yang, from fieldwork in December ,2023



Figure 8. Meixiang Li was awarded by the Culture and Tourism Department of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region as the representative transmitter of Zhuang Tianqin, an intangible cultural heritage project at the autonomous region level

Source: Feixue Yang, in January ,2024

2) Xuehe Liang

Xuehe Liang (1950-), a female of Zhuang nationality, She has been a “Xian” for 42 years, and is the transmitter of Nanshan villagers. Xuehe Liang for the fifth generation of transmitter, in the village is a very famous “Xianpo”, the village has big and small happy events, festivals, for peace will find her to do. Xuehe Liang took on three apprentices, namely Meixiang Li , Meiqiong Fang and Shixue Xie.(as shown in Figure 9)



Figure 9. Xuehe Liang

Source: Feixue Yang, from fieldwork in January ,2024

2.2.2 General informant

The criteria for selecting general informants are:

- 1) He is the transmitter of Tianqin production in Pingxiang area, with more than 30 years of experience in making Tianqin.
- 2) He was born and lives in Pingxiang.
- 3) He is at least 50 years old.
- 4) He is the transmitter of Tianqin production in Pingxiang.

Based on the above selection criteria, a general information providers were selected. He is the transmitter of Zhuang Tianqin production from Pingxiang City Guangxi Autonomous Region, as shown below:

1) Fangang Li

He is the second generation Tianqin ceremony transmitter of Tianqin production lineage in Pingxiang City Guangxi Zhuang . He was born in 1955 and has been the transmitter of Tianqin production ever since.

The Tianqin currently circulating in Pingxiang city is mainly made by Li Fangang family, and the time for Li Fangang family to make Tianqin. It has a history of nearly 100 years from the first generation. Fangang Li is Junming Huang 's live-in son-in-law, according to Fangang Li Just introduced, the Tianqin making skills only passed male not female, and Junming Huang was a daughter at home, so as Live son-in-law, he had the opportunity to follow Junming Huang to learn the production of Tianqin, and finally mastered the production skills of Tianqin Art. Fangang Li has been in accordance with the size and style of the Tianqin provided by Junming Huang, and Junming Huang is based on the lyre used by ceremony experts at the time serves as a reference.(as shown in Figure 10 and 11)



Figure 10. Fangang Li

Source: Feixue Yang, from fieldwork in January ,2024

壮族天琴制作传承谱系				
代别	传承人	性别	民族	出生年月
第一代	黄均铭	男	壮	1908-2005.03
第二代	李凡刚	男	壮	1955.10-
第三代	黄毅成	男	壮	1980.12-

壮族天琴制作艺术群体				
序号	姓名	性别	民族	出生年月
1	李凡刚	男	壮	1955.10
2	黄素平	女	壮	1954.05
3	黄毅成	男	壮	1980.12
4	黄玉娟	女	壮	1984.02
5	黄玉超	男	壮	1988.06

Figure 11. Zhuang Tianqin production lineage

Source: Feixue Yang, from fieldwork in January, 2024

2.2.3 Casual informant

The criteria for selecting casual informants are:

- 1) He or she has studied Tianqin for at least 15 years.
- 2) He or she has written many books and researchs on zhuang tianqin.
- 3) He or she has won many honors.

Based on the above selection criteria, a casual information providers were selected. They are the teacher of related teaching and promotion of Zhuang Tianqin art from Guangxi Autonomous Region, as shown below:

1) Runnqun Nong

Ruiqun Nong(1957-),male, He is a native of Longzhou County. They have published books on Tianqin art and written more than 20 articles on Tianqin art. He is a retired primary school teacher. He is an expert consultant on ethnic work of Chongzuo Municipal Civil Affairs Committee, vice chairman of Chongzuo City Folk Literature and Art Association, and also a representative transmitter of the fourth batch of Guangxi intangible cultural heritage projects. With outstanding contributions to the collection and rescue of endangered ethnic ancient books and the research and development of ethnic culture in our region, in August 2023, Nong Ruiqun was named

the fourth batch of representative transmitters of autonomous region level intangible cultural heritage projects.(as shown in Figure 12,13)



Figure 12. Ruiqun Nong

Source: Feixue Yang, from fieldwork in January ,2023

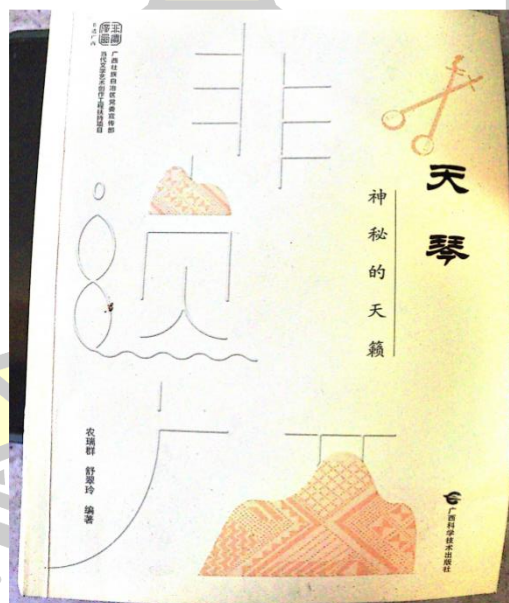


Figure 13. Ruiqun Nong's book, “Tianqin”

Source: Feixue Yang, from fieldwork in January ,2023

2) Qiyuan Yao

Qiyuan Yao , a member of the Communist Party of China, is a young teacher of Art College of Guangxi Minzu Normal University , the head of Tianqin

performance team, and a member of Guangxi native folk song group "Shaoli Group". She has won one national honorary award and eight autonomous region honorary awards. On February 9, 2024, at the stage of the Spring Festival Gala of the Year of the Dragon on the China Media Group, she played and sang "Folk Songs are like Spring River" with the Zhuang Tianqin, presenting the colorful ethnic culture of Guangxi to the world audience.(As shown in Figure 14)



Figure 14. Qiyuan Yao
Source:Qiyuan Yao (2024)

2.3 Selection of the songs

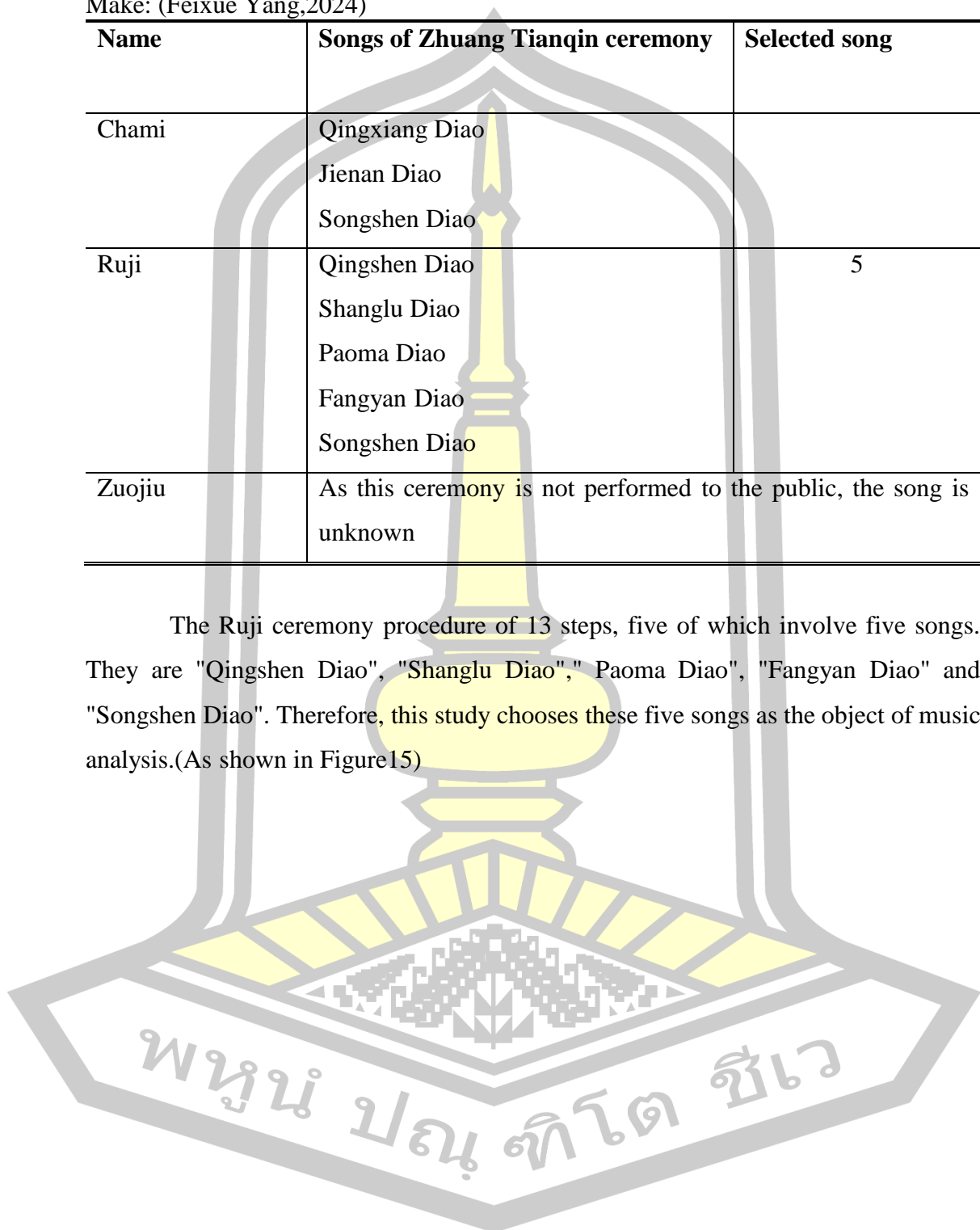
In the Zhuang Tianqin Ceremony, there are different types of ceremonies for different needs, and common Zhuang Tianqin Ceremonies include "chami", "Ruji", and "Zuojiu". Chami is a divination ceremony, ruji is a ceremony for peace, "zuojiu" is a ceremony for "Xianpo" to enhance their magic. Among these three common ceremony, the steps and songs of the "Ruji" ceremony are the most numerous, so this study chooses the inbound ceremony as a representative.(As shown in Table 2)

Table 2. Songs of Zhuang Tianqin ceremony in pingxiang city

Make: (Feixue Yang,2024)

Name	Songs of Zhuang Tianqin ceremony	Selected song
Chami	Qingxiang Diao Jienan Diao Songshen Diao	
Ruji	Qingshen Diao Shanglu Diao Paoma Diao Fangyan Diao Songshen Diao	5
Zuojiu	As this ceremony is not performed to the public, the song is unknown	

The Ruji ceremony procedure of 13 steps, five of which involve five songs. They are "Qingshen Diao", "Shanglu Diao", "Paoma Diao", "Fangyan Diao" and "Songshen Diao". Therefore, this study chooses these five songs as the object of music analysis.(As shown in Figure15)



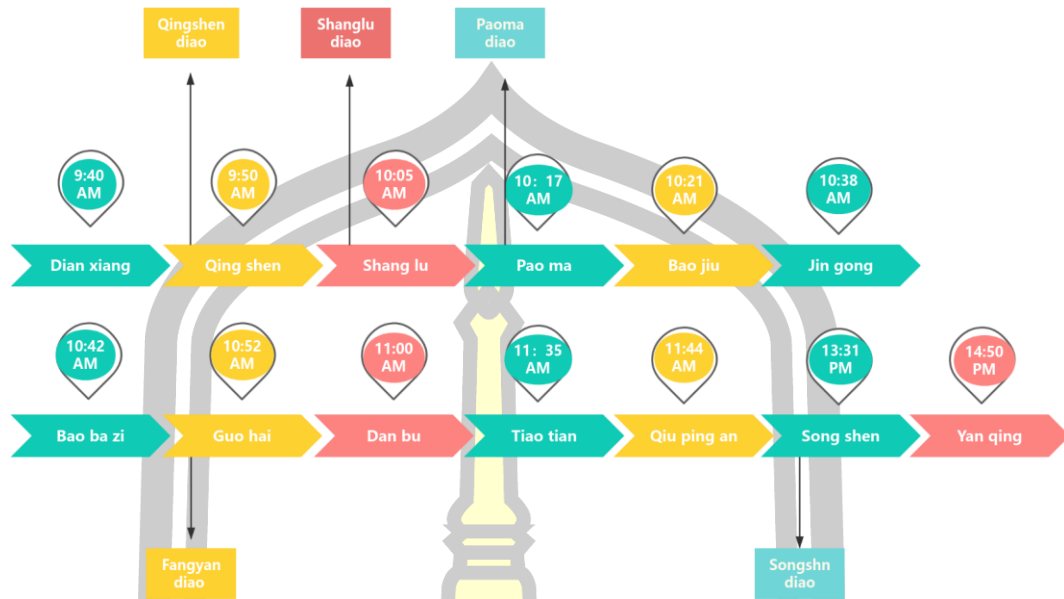


Figure 15. The “Ruji” ceremony procedure

Source: Feixue Ynag (2024)

2.4 Research tools

The research tools used in this dissertation are mainly interview forms and observation forms. The researcher designed the corresponding interview and observation forms according to different interview objects and observation objects.

1) Literature analysis.

2) Field investigation.

3) Interview method.

- Create the interview outline for the transmitters of the Zhuang Tianqin Ceremony.

- Create the interview outline for the Tianqin instrument maker.

- Create the interview outline for the professors.

4) Observation method

- Pingxiang City cultural Center , 2Time

The first time: On January 10, 2024

The second time: On June 26, 2024

- The transmitter's home , 2Time

The first time:On January 11-15, 2024,the researcher went to Li Mei Xiang's house

The second time:On June 27-30, 2024, I went to Li Mei Xiang's house

- A heritage center for musical instrument making,1Time

On January 11, 2024,the researcher went to Li Fanggang's house

- School , 3Time

The first time:On May 16,2024.The researcher went to the Guangxi Minzu Normal University

The second time:On June 6,2024.The researcher went to the Pingxiang City National Hope School

The third time:On June 8 ,2024.The researcher went to the Nanning University East Road primary school

2.5 Data collection

1) The reserarcher went to the pingxiang Library and House of culture in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region,China, to collect and record the historical documents about the Zhuang Tianqin ceremony through a literature review and database search.

2) From January 2023 to December 2024, the researcher conducted a series of field investigations in Pingxiang City through contact information and carried out a series of interviews, observations and other work.

The researchers in Pingxiang City Bannan town Nanshan village informant Xuehe Liang was tracked at her home, and the Tianqin ceremony was recorded. In Chongzuo City, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region,China,, the researcher observed the local situation, felt the local customs, and conducted unstructured interviews with the informants on a series of issues such as the origin of the local Tianqin ceremony music, the content of the ceremony schedule, the situation of the transmitters, the music style and singing characteristics.

The researchers interviewed the informant Meixiang Li , and recorded a video of her holding the "ruji" ceremony.

The researchers prepared a framework of interview questions in advance, interviewed the informants Professor Ruiqun Nong and teacher Qiyuan Yao School education of Tianqin transmission.

2.6 Data management

I get first-hand research data through the field, which must be effectively classified.

- 1) To edit pictures and videos obtained from the fieldwork.
- 2) To record the audios of the field experiments into text data and picture data for Melody, rhythm, singing, and musical form characteristics analysis.
- 3) To build my own database, including sounds, videos texts, pictures and others, and classify the obtained data effectively.

2.7 Data analysis

This research studies the process of folk Tianqin ceremony music through ethnomusicology.

The characteristics of Zhuang Tianqin ceremony songs, including musical form, melody, rhythm and musical instrument characteristics are studied through the music analysis theory and aesthetics theory.

Through religious teaching and ethnological theory, this research studies the meaning, function change and transmission guidance of the Tianqin ceremony.

2.8 Data Presentation

Chapter I : Introduction

Chapter II : Literature Review

Chapter III : Research Methodology

Chapter IV: The current status of Zhuang Tianqin Ceremony in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, China.

Chapter V: The Music characteristics of Zhuang Tianqin Ceremony in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, China.

Chapter VI: The guidelines to transmission and preservation of Zhuang Tianqin Ceremony in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, China.

Chapter VII: Conclusion, Discussion and Suggestions.

CHAPTER IV

The current status of Zhuang Tianqin Ceremony in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region

Zhuang Tianqin Ceremony is a kind of folk religious activity in which the holder of the ceremony has the divine power to pass through the sky to pray for the blessing of the gods, maintain peace, eliminate disasters, and smooth weather. The transmitters called a "Xianpo," and the "Xianpo" calls this ceremony is "Zuotian." The Tianqin ceremony has been popular among the people in Pingxiang City, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, China for many years. This chapter summarizes the current status of the Tianqin ceremony from several aspects: The origin and history of the Tianqin ceremony and the current status of the Zhuang Tianqin Ceremony.

The main research and analysis in this chapter:

1. The origin period of Zhuang Tianqin Ceremony (1880-1903)
2. The development period of Zhuang Tianqin Ceremony(1903-1980)
3. The Stable period of Zhuang Tianqin Ceremony(1980-2007)
4. The protection and transmission period of Zhuang Tianqin Ceremony(2007-2024)
5. The process of Zhuang Tianqin ceremony--"Ruji" (2024)
6. Summary

1. The origin period of Zhuang Tianqin Ceremony(1880-1903)

There are many theories about the origin of the Zhuang Tianqin ceremony. Among them, the most important ones are "foreign" and "domestic".

In Xifan Liu's "Ling Biao Ji Man"(As shown in Figure16), Xifan Liu mentioned a kind of witch in the border area called "xianpo". They use the gourd as a musical instrument with the same shape as the Hu Qin, called "Ding," which is Tianqin. The bell is called "Maling" in the mouth of ceremony experts in Pingxiang City. While conducting the ceremony, the "Xianpo" usually shakes the Maling with her hand, so that the Maling makes a sound in contact with the hand. In the early days, Tianqin was believed to have healing properties, and these immortals performed ceremony as witch doctors to heal and

save people. These “Xianpo” wives do not have a fixed repertoire, and the lyrics are usually improvised. From their accents, we can see that Annam is the ancient name of Vietnam, and this name comes from the Tang Dynasty. Annam has been part of China since the Qin Dynasty in the 3rd century BC, until the Wu Power ceded Annam during the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms, and until the complete independence of Annam during the Xuande reign of the Ming Dynasty. Since then, Vietnam has been a vassal state of China for a long time, so there is a saying that Tianqin originated in Vietnam.

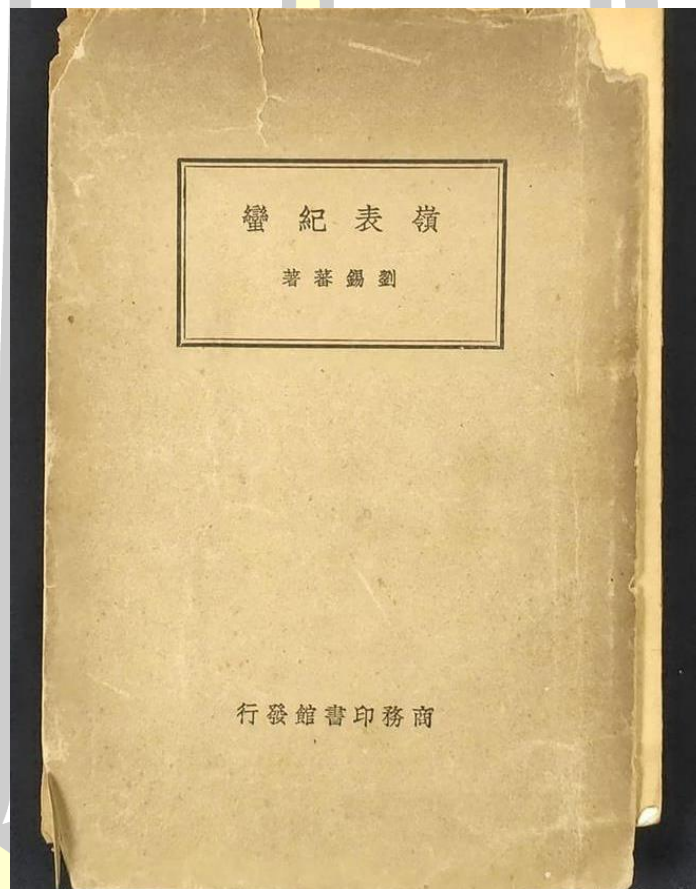


Figure 16. The book of “lingbiaojiman”

Source: Feixue Yang, from fieldwork in January, 2024

"Domestic" believes that Tianqin originated in China. Through the worship of ghosts and gods, and the function of Tianqin for divination and prediction of good and bad luck, we can know that the Yue people have a certain origin with the Zhuang Tianqin art. At that time, there was the custom of Yue people believing in ghosts and worshipping ghosts in most of their ancestral halls. It is also mentioned that the king of East Ou

"respected ghosts" and therefore lived a long life, but later generations' belief in ghosts became less strong, and the final life expectancy became shorter. It can be seen that witchcraft played an important role in the Western Han Dynasty.

Among the two arguments, the researcher more recognized the argument that Tianqin originated in China. Pingxiang Zhuang Tianqin functions as a ceremony instrument to communicate with the gods, and is used for offering sacrifices to ghosts and gods, weddings and funerals. Its birthplace should be in Jinlongdong, that is, today's Jinlong Town, Longzhou County, from the local shaman's sacrificing tool "Ding", from the Song Dynasty to the early 19th century, has been spread to Pingxiang, Ningming, Fangcheng and other places, after the Sino-French War spread to the northern Vietnam adjacent to Guangxi.

From the structure of these origin legends, they are on the nodes of difficulties or important events, Get fairy guidance from dreams or reality. According to the fairy's guidance, the story structure of Tianqin was made. In general, these legends are inseparable from "heaven" and "earth", but no matter what kind of explanation, they combine local knowledge and express local demands. In general, no matter what the origin of the legend about the origin of Tianqin, all express the yearning and expectation of the ancestors of the Zhuang people for a happy and happy life, and use the religious belief and ethnic spirit closely related to the daily life of the local people to set off the legend of gods. At the same time, Tianqin as a medium to convey the wishes of the gods, hoping to be protected and rescued. The statements about the origin of Tianqin all indicate that during the long-term interaction and contact between Luoyue ancestors and the nature and the surrounding world, Tianqin became a kind of accumulation and psychological manifestation of their emotions and perceptions, reflecting the primitive imagination and good wishes of the ancestors, and an interpretation of life, life and survival.

2. The development period of Zhuang Tianqin Ceremony (1903-1980)

The state presented in this period mainly lies in the determination of the name of the Zhuang Tianqin ceremony and the prevalence of religious functions.

2.1 Determination of the name of the Zhuang Tianqin ceremony

The name changed from "Ding" to "Tianqin" in 1903, mainly because the famous Zhuang musician Fan Ximu discovered the instrument in the 1980s while investigating the minority music in the Zuojiang Valley and named it "Tianqin". The origin of the name "Tianqin" is closely related to the ceremony used. In the "Guangxi Minority Musical Instruments", the "Ding Ding" (that is "Tianqin") spread in Fangcheng County and Ningming County at the southern foot of Shiwan Mountain is recorded as: "(Tianqin) for solo and accompaniment, is the only indispensable instrument in the" Tianqin "cultural and entertainment activities of the Zhuang people. The so-called "Tianqin" is a general term for various forms of entertainment with Tianqin solo or accompaniment. It was originally performed by witches as a religious practice called "zuotian" to pray to the gods to keep peace, eliminate disasters, and herald good years." Therefore, from the above point of view, the use of Tianqin is mainly in the ceremony related to heaven, and the name "Tianqin" is more appropriate. The Tianqin ceremony has been spread in the Zuojiang River basin for a generation, and is still spread in Pingxiang, Longzhou, Ningming and other areas.

2.2 The Zhuang Tianqin ceremony evolved from witchcraft

It evolved from the witchcraft of the ancient Luoyue people in the Zuojiang Valley, and was a religious ceremony to worship the gods, the initial purpose of which was to ask the gods to help eliminate disasters and solve problems. At first, the name of this instrument was not called "Tianqin", but named "ding" according to the sound it makes. In Pingxiang City, local people call the action of playing Tianqin "dingding", "ding" is the vernacular pronunciation, that is playing, "ding" or "ding" is also the name of Tianqin. There is a record in "Lingbiaojiman": "Pao as a musical instrument, shaped like a Hu qin, and named Ding." "Pao" is a variety of calabash, like calabash, the gourd can be used for the production of daily articles such as ladles because the shell becomes hard after the fruit is old and ripe. Here it is also said that the shape of Tianqin and Huqin also have some similarities, the rod is slender, the front of the cylinder is round, which is a description of the appearance of the "ding" this instrument. As for the definition of "ding" (叮) or "ding" (鼎), when the researcher conducted an investigation, ritual experts said that it was the sound made when playing similar to "ding" (叮) or "ding" (鼎) that got the name. Since ancient times, there are not a few ethnic Musical Instruments named after onomatopoeic words, such as the Ding Dong of the Li nationality, which is

made of two wooden heads about two meters long, as thick as a bowl. When playing, holding two chasing sticks to knock on different parts of these two thick pieces of wood, the sound generated under the knock is the origin of the name "Ding Dong".

By 1903, a wealth of records existed documenting the various rituals performed in Tianqin. Owing to the ethnic beliefs and folk culture of local minorities, the Tianqin ceremony gradually became a popular means for praying for favorable weather and an improved quality of life. Belief folklore—which encompasses the diverse forms of divine worship concepts and ritual norms that have emerged and accumulated over the course of human history—underpins these practices. These folk customs, rooted in belief-based activities such as offering sacrifices to deities, praying for blessings, engaging in witchcraft, and observing taboos, exhibit strong regional characteristics. For example, the Butu people incorporate beliefs in the goddess of flowers, the goddess of tea, and practices related to armor and winemaking into their rituals, within which the figure of Tianqin art is discernible.

Hua Po belief is a widely held spiritual tenet among the Zhuang people. In the context of Pingxiang's Zhuang Tianqin ceremony, one of the principal deities of the ceremony—the Hua po, or the virgin of the King of Flowers—assumes a central role. As noted, the Huapo are regarded as custodians of human life, a significance that is vividly reflected in the ceremonial singing. The practice of Pingxiang Zhuang Tianqin art is deeply rooted in faith, with rituals ranging from smaller-scale “chami” to larger ceremonies such as “Zuojiu” to address issues of filial piety. These rituals collectively express the community's aspiration for an ideal state of life, where living a balanced and orderly life through all stages is paramount.

Importantly, while locals assert that they possess faith, this belief is characterized by a nuanced ambivalence. They may not be entirely convinced by any single explanation or its absolute validity; rather, they tend to question explanations while ultimately accepting them. This suggests that the evolution of belief is less about the degree of faith and more about the manner in which faith is practiced. The inherent ambiguity, uncertainty, and multiplicity of interpretations allow individuals to adjust their psychological outlook and behavior, ensuring compliance with established social norms and the maintenance of social order.

3. The Stable period of Zhuang Tianqin Ceremony(1980-2007)

Since 1980, improvements in social development and the enrichment of spiritual life have fostered a diversification in both the functions and forms of the Tianqin ceremony. In addition to its traditional roles in sacrificial prayer and cultural identification, the ceremony has evolved into a locally recognized emblem and brand, symbolizing national identity. Concurrently, the entertainment function of Tianqin art has expanded rapidly, transforming it into a popular medium for social interaction and leisure among the Zhuang people. As one might argue, "man creates culture, and culture creates man," emphasizing that human existence is both the subject and product of cultural expression. In this symbolic world—comprising behaviors, instruments, and ideas—people derive the means to survive and flourish. The Tianqin art of Pingxiang City, as a unique cultural symbol, has been reinterpreted into a dance program that embodies national artistic characteristics. Local governmental initiatives have further leveraged this symbol to stimulate cultural tourism and economic development. Moreover, in everyday life, the Pingxiang Zhuang Tianqin art subtly enforces social norms through its embedded belief systems. Originally, national art forms like this were developed by specific communities to fulfill their unique production and lifestyle needs. Today, however, the ritual not only preserves its historical and cultural significance but also adapts to contemporary societal trends, thereby continuing to serve as a vital tool for cultural expression and social cohesion.

Within this framework, the Zhuang Tianqin ceremony manifests in three distinct contexts: the traditional folk religious environment, the folk entertainment environment, and an innovative stage transformation. Although the functions and performance fields are expanding, the sacrificial function of Zhuang Tianqin ceremony in villages has never weakened, and villagers in various villages in Pingxiang City still pray for vision through the form of “Xianpo” making heaven. There are three common types : “chami” , “ruji”, “zuojiu”.

3.1“Chami”(查米)

"Chami"(查米) is one of the most basic ceremony in Pingxiang Zhuang Tianqin, and the so-called "Chami" means calculation Life. In the view of the fairies,

rice is closely related to human life, so the ceremonies related to life such as "Zuohua" (做花), "Tianliang" (添粮), etc. In "Chami," after the ceremony expert obtains the inquirer's birth date, Go to the celestial realm and ask about this man's past and present lives. After calculation, the solution is given accord. The "Chami" is performed by a ceremony expert and lasts about an hour.

In the "Chami", the acts of the goddess include burning incense, chanting, ringing bells, kneeling, etc. Before the ceremony, We must first place offerings and burn incense, which is the preparatory work in the early stage, in order to purify the space and place of communication between man and God. Secondly, by chanting and shaking the Maling, they separated themselves from the secular world, adjusted their state to conform to entering the sacred space where the spirit of God resides, and obtained the right to dialogue with the gods. There is a clear line between the sacred and the profane. Within the boundary is the place for the manifestation of the gods, and the communication between man and God is possible in this space. Holy outside the space, is the nature of the different secular space. Without the permission of the Divine, or without performing certain ceremonies a mortal in a secular space cannot enter a sacred space.

Therefore, after the Xianpo (仙婆) obtains soldiers and horses through "Qingxiang" (请香), she can start from the earth. In the process of "Shanglu", the ringing of the Maling symbolizes whether the earth enters the sky or not. The ringing of a Maling means that it is still in the world; The Maling stops, signifying the official entry into heaven. After entering the sacred space, the fairy woman's kneeling behavior represents the affirmation and prayer for the "God". "Jienan" as the core process of "Chami", uses chanting as a symbol to convey people's wishes to the gods and under the guidance of the gods Reach man and thus complete man's communication with God. The task of going to heaven is achieved, and the fairy's kneeling action to the pedestal is a sign of the imminent return to the earth. The return to the earth is symbolized by the Maling, and the suspension of the Maling represents the return to the earth.

With a series of symbols, the fairy wife constructed a channel from the secular to the sacred, and from the sacred back to the secular. At this point, from the "The world

-Heaven - The world" of the second dimension of the journey to the end of the Xianpo also in the "human - God - human" identity to complete the transformation.

Table 3. The "chami" ceremony process

Make: (Feixue Yang,2024)

Ceremony process		Musical instrument in ceremony	Sound form	Symbolize
Qing xiang	Pao ma shang lu	Maling	Song of praise	The world
Jing shen	Jie (解)	Tianqin	Sing	Heaven
Fan hui	Song shen	Maling	Song of praise	The world

3.2 "Ruji" (入寄)

The "Ruji" ceremony is a ritual in which a child's soul is placed in the home of a fairy wife. In the eyes of the local people, as long as the children are easy to hurt, naughty, easy to get sick or always see "unclean" things, they will go to the home of the ceremony experts to hold such a ceremony.

In each stage of "Ruji", the change of music plays a different role. The process of "Ruji" according to the researcher can be summarized as a three-stage structure of "invitt God - godliness - Send to God" after consolidation and classification.

Table 4. The "ruji" ceremony process

Make: (Feixue Yang,2024)

Ceremony process		Musical instrument	form	Song
Beginning	Dian xiang		/	/
Invite God	Qing shen	Tianqin	Sing	《Qingshen Diao》
	Shanglu	Tianqin	Sing	《Shanglu Diao》
	Pao ma	Tianqin and Malin	Sing and dance	《Paoma Diao》

	Bao jiu	Tianqin	Chant	/
	Jin gong	Tianqin	Chant	/
	Bao ba zi	Tianqin	Chant	/
Godliness	Guo hai	Tianqin	Sing	《Fangyan Diao》
	Dan bu	Tianqin	Chant	/
	Tiao tian	Tianqin and Maling	Sing and dance	《Fangyan Diao》
	Qiu ping an	Tianqin and Maling	Sing and dance	《Fangyan Diao》
Send to God	Song shen	Tianqin	Sing	《Songshen Diao》
Finish	Yan qing	/	/	/

In the ceremony, there is no fixed singing book for the "xianpo" group. Therefore, the content of the singing depends on the personal ideas of the fairy, such as the "Qingshen Diao" and "Shanglu Diao" sung in the process of inviting the God, they only tell the ancestors and gods through the rhythm of the music, so the content of the chanting is more random. For example, when singing "ruji," the content needs to include personal information about the "sender" and some words praising the gods. It is generally five or seven words, and the sentences do not need to be aligned neatly. "Qingshen Diao" and "Shanglu Diao" similar music melody, the rhythm is slightly faster than "Qingshen Diao". Because the fairy is in charge of thirty-six troops and horses, some soldiers and horses need to be counted in this process, and if the fairy is in a hurry, it can speed up the chanting speed.

"Paomashanglu", in order to show Xianpo at this time to ride troops to fairy realm. Therefore, while playing the harp, the fairy woman shakes the Maling, symbolizing riding forward until the palace where the gods are located, the Maling can

stop. The process of communication and dialogue with the gods is the process of "Zuoxian", in which the "Xianpo" needs to sing solving difficulties, the name of this emphasis is also named after the content of the ceremony, and the child's soul is fostered to the name of the grandfather, this process is also a kind of "Jie". According to the researcher's observation, compared with the music of the prayer session, although the lyrics are still more arbitrary, the rhythm of the music of "Jienan" in the worship session changes from slow to fast, giving people a kind of a more serious feeling.

After the Xianpo "Ruji" is completed, she returns to the earth, and repeats the music of the road on the return journey, and the rhythm is basically the same as that of the previous journey. The brass ring stops, indicating return to earth. Next, the fairy lady needs to send the thirty-six troops back to the master, repeat the "Paoma", count the soldiers and horses back to the master, and thank the master.

The use of ceremonial instruments, the change of tone, as a sign of travel from the earthly world to the celestial world, and from the celestial world back to the earthly world. In the process, sound acts as a medium, regulated by ceremony procedures. At the same time, all the sounds developed around this prescribed ceremony procedure, which played a role in promoting the ceremony process.

3.3 "Zuojiu"

"Zuojiu" is a ceremony that every "xianpo" needs to perform at a certain stage. There is no fixed time for the ceremony, mainly to increase their own troops and horses, and enhance their own magic. Every time at this time, fairies will invite their friends who are also fairies to "support" themselves, and some friends who are not fairies will also participate.

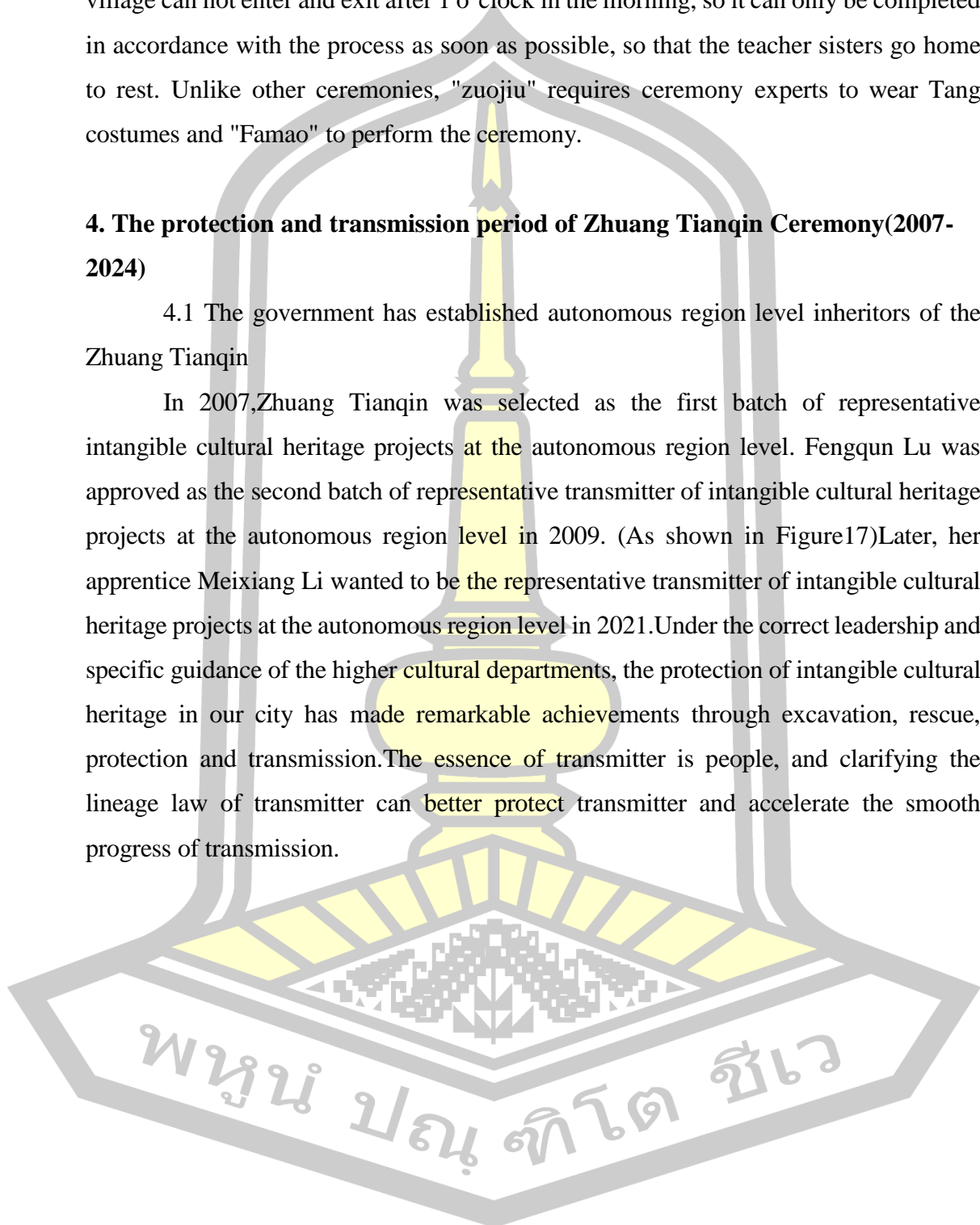
There were four immortals in the wine making ceremony that the researcher participated in, all of whom were Master Huang's schoolmate sisters. They are two fairies from Friendship Town Li, Mo from Zhushan Village, Zhou from Licha Village, and in addition, there are two daughters of the same village as Master Huang as helpers. Due to the small number of participants in this ceremony, the whole process of the ceremony was compressed to one day for various considerations. Master Huang introduced that because he had not "Zuojiu" for nearly a year, and generally held at least one ceremony a year, if he did not do it, the magic would disappear. Therefore, it can only be a good day to ask the same master sister to help. Generally, "Zuojiu" needs

to last three days and two nights, there are about ten people involved in the fairy, the village can not enter and exit after 1 o'clock in the morning, so it can only be completed in accordance with the process as soon as possible, so that the teacher sisters go home to rest. Unlike other ceremonies, "zuojiu" requires ceremony experts to wear Tang costumes and "Famao" to perform the ceremony.

4. The protection and transmission period of Zhuang Tianqin Ceremony(2007-2024)

4.1 The government has established autonomous region level inheritors of the Zhuang Tianqin

In 2007,Zhuang Tianqin was selected as the first batch of representative intangible cultural heritage projects at the autonomous region level. Fengqun Lu was approved as the second batch of representative transmitter of intangible cultural heritage projects at the autonomous region level in 2009. (As shown in Figure17)Later, her apprentice Meixiang Li wanted to be the representative transmitter of intangible cultural heritage projects at the autonomous region level in 2021.Under the correct leadership and specific guidance of the higher cultural departments, the protection of intangible cultural heritage in our city has made remarkable achievements through excavation, rescue, protection and transmission.The essence of transmitter is people, and clarifying the lineage law of transmitter can better protect transmitter and accelerate the smooth progress of transmission.



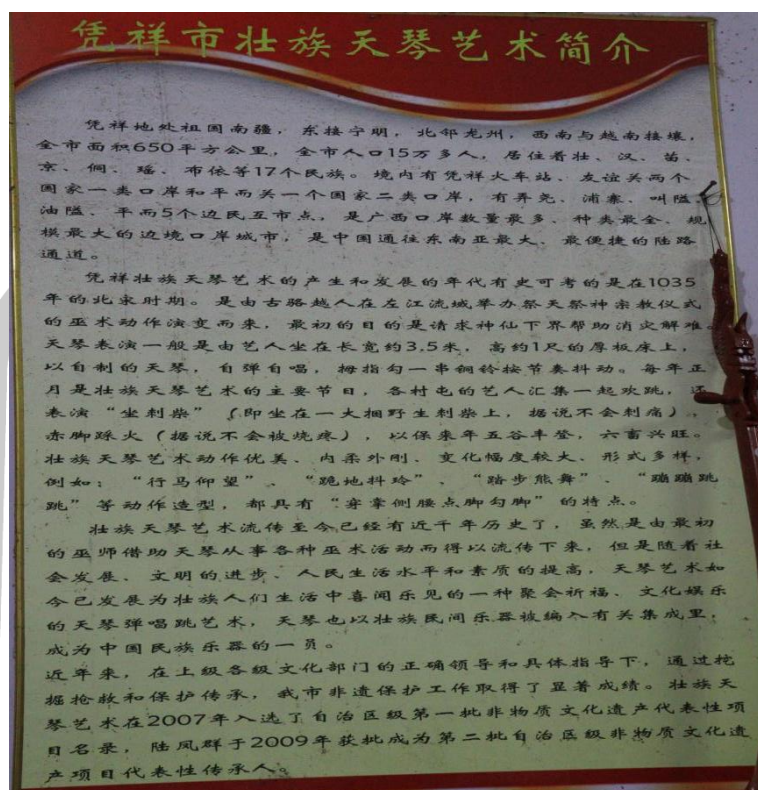


Figure 17. The Pingxiang City Zhuang Tianqin heritage base plaque, on the face of the first generation of transmitter to introduce

Source: Feixue Yang, from fieldwork in June, 2023

4.2 The Tianqin has changed from a ceremonial instrument to a local cultural symbol

In recent years, with the development of society, the progress of civilization, and the improvement of people's living standards and quality, Tianqin art has now developed into an art of gathering people to pray for good luck and cultural entertainment for the purpose of Tianqin performance, singing and dancing. Tianqin, as a Zhuang folk instrument, has also been included in related ensembles and has become a member of China's national instruments.

4.2.1 Tianqin

From the shape of Pingxiang Tianqin, Pingxiang Tianqin body length is short, the length of the rod is 6 and a half to 7 catch, the length of the harp body is about 100 cm, and the total length of the harp body spread in Longzhou is about 110 cm, which is relatively long. Compared with the Tianqin spread in Longzhou, the biggest

difference lies in the number of strings. The Tianqin spread in Longzhou is a double-string Tianqin, and there are occasionally three-string Tianqin in a few occasions such as stage performances, while the Tianqin used in Pingxiang City so far is a three-string Tianqin. From the production materials and crafts, Pingxiang City spread Tianqin traditional rod material by peach wood, mulberry wood. However, due to the low hardness of these woods, it is easy to deformation, for this reason, in recent years, the Northeast pine wood, which has high hardness and light weight, has been used to make the rod of the Tianqin. The material for making the cylinder is a gourd, which is generally medium in size. Small gourd cavity small, high sound; Large gourds have large cavities and low sound, and medium-sized gourds are most suitable for making Tianqin. In addition, a small number of people use coconut shells to make Tianqin barrels. The strings of the Tianqin are made of cotton and twine, but for durability reasons, they have been replaced with fishing line or steel wire without affecting the timbre. The panel of the cylinder is the same as the rod, the use of thinner northeast pine plate, in the review of information, in the 2021st century and 1980s, a part of the cylinder panel used material for snakeskin, because the price of snakeskin is expensive, the production process is more complex, not easy to store, so no one has used snakeskin to make the cylinder mask. (As shown in Figure 18)

Through field investigation, the researcher found that the size of Pingxiang Zhuang Tianqin is relatively uniform, and most of them are made by the same family. The decoration of the body is closely related to the local beliefs. The gift of Pingxiang Zhuang Tianqin through the ceremony has the attribute of a gift. With the frequent cultural exchanges between regions, Pingxiang Zhuang Tianqin has become a handicrafts through the improvement of materials at the official demand, and is used to present visiting guests. From the perspective of the structure of Tianqin circulating in Pingxiang City, most of the currently used Tianqin are disassembled. Disassembled Tianqin,. There are two reasons for the popularity of disassembled Tianqin in the local area: First, according to Fangang Li , the master of the instrument, Pingxiang is mountainous, and the ceremony experts need to travel long distances to the master's home to perform the ceremony. Because the disassembled Tianqin is easy to store, local ceremony experts prefer to use the disassembled Tianqin. Second, for historical reasons, according to Xie Tao, director of Pingxiang Cultural Center, during the

"Cultural Revolution" period, the Zhuang Tianqin ceremony was labeled as "feudal superstition" , so that the Zhuang Tianqin ceremony in Pingxiang had to be carried out in secret for a long period of time, and the disassembled Tianqin could be better hidden.



Figure 18. The Tianqin

Source: Feixue Yang, from fieldwork in January ,2024

4.2.2 Maling

As a significant magical artifact of the Bearer and a symbolic representation of soldiers and horses, the Maling plays an essential role in ceremonial practices. The Xianpo (ritual leader) constructs the Maling by linking copper bells into a chain. This chain consists of 5 to 9 bells of varying sizes, materials, and tonal qualities, all of which share a fundamental structural similarity. These bells are then suspended from a copper plate, crafted in the shape of a horse's mouth, to create a unified ensemble.

The performance of the Maling follows a rhythmic structure, wherein the Xianpo shakes the bells in a coordinated manner. Additionally, auxiliary bearers and devoted participants may assist in shaking the bells, generating a large-scale, synchronized, and rhythmic ringing. This collective resonance enhances the ceremonial atmosphere, reinforcing the spiritual and symbolic significance of the Maling within the ceremony. (As shown in Figure 19)



Figure 19. The Maling

Source: Feixue Yang, from fieldwork in January, 2024

4. 3 The transmitter of Tianqin production in pingxiang city

The Tianqin currently circulating in Pingxiang City is mainly made by Fangang Li's family, who have been making Tianqin for nearly 100 years since the first generation. Fangang Li is Junming Huang's live-in son-in-law, according to Fangang Li, the original Tianqin making skills only passed male not passed female, and Junming Huang was a daughter at home, so as a live-in son-in-law, he had the opportunity to follow Junming Huang to learn to make Tianqin, and eventually mastered the production skills of Tianqin. Fangang Li always made the instrument in accordance with the size and style provided by Junming Huang, who was based on the Tianqin used by ceremony experts at the time. The following picture shows the lineage of Zhuang Tianqin production in Pingxiang City. At present, Fangang Li's family has been designated as a demonstration household of Zhuang Tianqin production by Pingxiang City Culture and Tourism Bureau.

Table 5. Zhuang Tianqin making transmitter

Make: (Feixue Yang,2024)

Generation	Name	Sex	Nation	Date of birth
First generation	Junming Huang	male	Zhuang	1918.08—2005.03
Second generation	Fangang Li	male	Zhuang	1955.10—
Third generation	Yicheng Huang	male	Zhuang	1980.12—

5. The process of Zhuang Tianqin ceremony--“Ruji” (2024)

The Tianqin ceremony is a distinctive folk religious ritual primarily practiced in the border regions between China and Vietnam. Through a combination of music, dance, and religious rites, the ceremony serves as a medium to communicate with deities, aiding the master family in dispelling misfortunes and ensuring the safety and well-being of its members. The ceremony's context holds particular significance, as it addresses the occurrence of paranormal phenomena within the household and the corresponding religious beliefs and practices that seek to resolve these disturbances.

At the heart of this ceremony is a family troubled by the presence of "Tian" in their home, particularly affecting the granddaughter, whose illness is attributed to Tian's interference. In search of a solution, the family decides to entrust the granddaughter's soul to the Xianpo, effectively making her the Xianpo's spiritual daughter. This act is intended to harness the Xianpo's magical abilities to protect the granddaughter's health and peace while also expelling Tian from the household. According to traditional folk beliefs, Xianpo wives are regarded as possessing the ability to communicate with deities and exorcise malevolent spirits, making this ritual a natural choice for addressing the family's plight. After nearly a year of spiritual protection and care, the granddaughter's condition significantly improves. As an expression of gratitude and to ensure the granddaughter's soul returns home safely, the family decides to hold a Tianqin ceremony. The core objective of this ceremony is to sacrifice a chicken for

"Zuo Pingan", thereby inviting the granddaughter's soul back home. This ritual not only serves as an offering of thanks to fairies and deities but also seeks to resolve lingering ominous influences within the family, ensuring peace and safety for the future.

By conducting the traditional Tianqin ceremony, the master family not only resolves a pressing issue but also upholds and transmits the cultural and religious heritage of their ancestors. This ritual reflects the enduring strength of folk beliefs and their role in maintaining harmony and spiritual well-being within the community.

5.1 The person performing the ceremony

In the "Ruji" ceremony, the person performing of ceremonies is called a Xianpo. So ceremony key informant: Xianpo--Meixiang Li and her apprentices Xiaoling Huang and Yuemei Li . And then there's the ceremony participants, the main family blood relatives and other relatives and other more than 10 people and researcher.

Reasons for choosing the "Xianpo" for the ceremony:Meixiang Li has been "Xianpo" for 38 years and was selected as the seventh batch of Zhuang Tianqin ceremony transmitters of autonomous region-level intangible heritage representative projects in Pingxiang City in December 2021. Meixiang Li is the only transmitter of Tianqin art at the autonomous region level in Pingxiang City. It is very famous in the area, so the supplicants came to Meixiang Li and wanted to do the related ceremony.

5.2 The process of the "Ruji" ceremony

Date: January 11, 2024

Location: Pingxiang County, Chongzuo City, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, China

1) Dian xiang (点香) 9:40 AM

The first step of the ceremony is the lighting of incense, marking the official beginning of the whole ceremony. (As shown in Figure 20) In traditional Chinese culture, incense is regarded as a medium that can connect people and gods, and the curling up of incense symbolizes that wishes and prayers rise with the smoke and are conveyed to the ears of gods. Lighting incense is not only a tribute to the gods, but also a purification of the ceremony space. The process of lighting incense is usually carried out personally by the main bearer, Mei Xiang Li , who holds three incense sticks, faces the pedestal, respectfully lights the incense sticks, and then inserts the incense into the incense burner. This action is symbolic of reporting the beginning of the ceremony to

the gods and asking for their attention and protection. While the incense is lit, the surrounding participants will remain quiet to show respect for the gods and attach importance to the ceremony. This session helps to focus the participants' attention on the ceremony that is about to begin, creating an atmosphere of solemnity and sanctity. The rise of cigarettes also adds to the mystery of the ceremony, making the participants more devout to the blessings and ceremonies that follow.



Figure 20. Meixiang Li 's apprentice is lighting incense. In the far left of the picture is Yuemei Li .

Source: Feixue Yang, from fieldwork in January ,2024

2) Qingshen (请神) 9:50AM

Following the lighting of incense, the ceremony proceeds to the Call to God, a distinctive ritual performance combining music and chanting. The primary objective of this ritual is to invite multiple deities to witness the ceremony and convey the wishes and needs of the master family (As shown in Figure 21). The Qingshen Diao (请神调) is traditionally performed by a ceremonial expert, who simultaneously plays the Tianqin and chants the invocation. As the central musical instrument in the ceremony, the Tianqin's crisp and resonant tone is believed to capture the attention of the gods. While playing the lyre, the main officiator calls upon and appeals to the deities through a distinctive singing mode, a process imbued with an aura of mystery and solemnity. An essential element in this ritual is the folding fan, which plays a crucial role in the invitation of the gods. Beyond serving as a symbolic ceremonial tool, the folding fan

also functions as a rhythmic aid. During the performance of the Qingshen Diao, the officiator skillfully uses the folding fan to synchronize with the rhythm of the Tianqin, thereby enhancing the expressive quality of the music. The rhythmic movement of the folding fan serves to direct the attention of participants, helping them focus on the ceremonial proceedings. Furthermore, the use of the folding fan reflects the deep-rooted traditions and cultural significance of the Tianqin ceremony, reinforcing its connection to ancestral heritage and spiritual practice.



Figure 21. Meixiang Li is in the process of Qingshen in the “ruji” ceremony, In the picture, Meixiang Li is playing and singing a “Qingshen Diao”

Source: Feixue Yang, from fieldwork in January, 2024

3) Shanglu (上路) 10:05 AM

Following the completion of the prayer, the ceremony transitions into the Journey, a pivotal stage that marks the initiation of communication with the ancestors. This phase involves a ritual in which the incense master is urged to seek guidance from the ancestors, symbolizing the formal establishment of a spiritual connection. During this stage, the technique of playing the Tianqin follows specific requirements. The officiator must use the right index finger to pluck the strings while holding the rod with the left hand to ensure a smooth and continuous flow of music. The thumb secures the stick, while the remaining four fingers are responsible for plucking the strings. This

playing technique not only maintains the harmony and fluidity of the music but also serves as a symbol of respect and devotion toward the ancestors. The significance of the Journey lies in its role as the formal stage of ancestral communication within the ceremony. Through the melodious tones of the Tianqin, the officiator conveys the prayers and requests of the master family, seeking the blessings and protection of the ancestors. This phase is not only an act of homage to ancestral spirits but also represents one of the most central components of the entire ceremony. The solemn rhythm and evocative melody of the music immerse participants in an atmosphere of sanctity and reverence, strengthening their faith and sense of piety.

4) Paoma (跑马) 10: 17 AM

"Paoma" refers to the ringing of the Maling, which is a unique form of music and dance used to indicate that the ancestors of the Lord have arrived soon. In this section, the performance of the harp, the singing of the voice, and the ringing of the horse Maling are complemented by some body movements of the main bearer to show the solemn moment of the ancestor's coming. (As shown in Figure 22) Li Meixiang's legs will move with the rhythm of "Paoma diao" showing the vitality and solemnness of the ceremony. The tune has an obvious sense of rhythm, and through the combination of "Tianqin - voice - Maling", a dynamic and mysterious atmosphere is created.

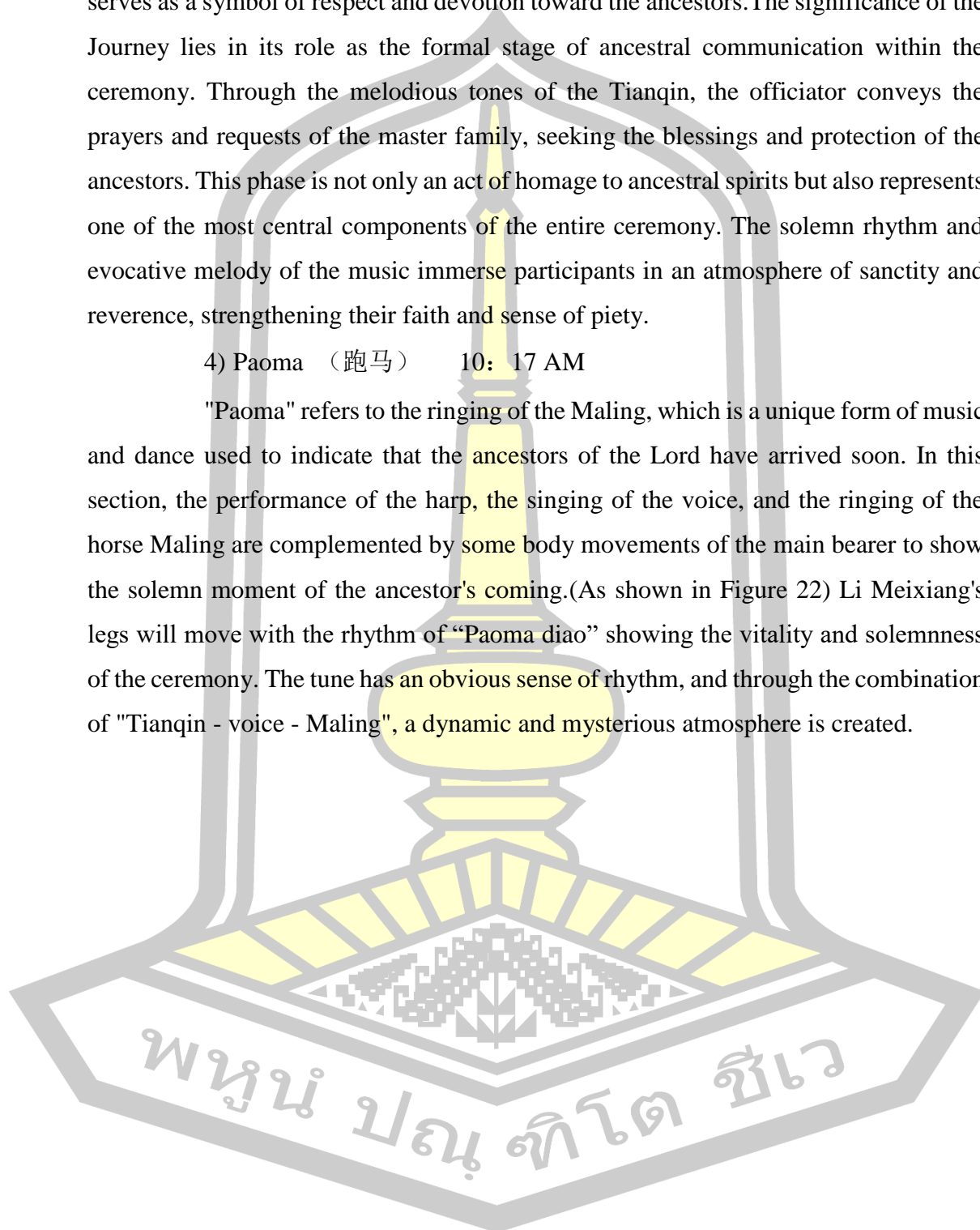




Figure 22. Meixiang Li is in the process of Paoma in the “ruji” ceremony, In the picture, Meixiang Li is playing and singing the “Paoma Diao” and her apprentice shakes the bell to match the rhythm, called “Paoma”

Source: Feixue Yang, from fieldwork in January, 2024

5) Baojiu (报酒) 10: 21 AM

In the “Baojiu”, the main bearer needs to report to the gods what they are going to do that day, urge the incense master to make up some incense, and also light incense to the most important tribute, “chicken.” This part further clarified the purpose and process of the ceremony through the way of incense burning and reporting. Lighting incense is not only a tribute to gods and ancestors, but also a purification of the ceremony space. The process of reporting wine was full of solemnness and piety. Meixiang Li made clear the steps and requirements of the ceremony by reporting to the gods and the master to ensure the orderly progress of the ceremony. The importance of wine reporting is that it strengthens the organization and management of the ceremony, making the participants more clear about the process and significance of the ceremony. Through the lighting of incense and reporting, respect to the gods and ancestors is expressed, while also ensuring the solemnity and sanctity of the ceremony.

6) Jin gong (进贡) 10: 38 AM

The Jin gong is mainly made up of two parts: offering tribute and burning paper money. Before the tribute, the ceremony experts sprinkle each tribute with peach leaves (and sometimes grapefruit leaves) dipped in water, and then offer it to the ancestors. The cleansing of tributes symbolizes the respect and purity of ancestors, as well as the purification of the ceremonial space. The process of offering tribute is full of piety and respect, and the officiant expresses gratitude and respect for the ancestors through this process. After offering the tribute, the bearer will burn paper money to the ancestors to show respect. Burning paper money is an important ceremony in traditional Chinese culture, symbolizing sacrifice and gratitude to ancestors. Through the burning of paper money to convey respect and gratitude to the ancestors, but also pray for the protection and blessing of the ancestors. This part is not only a tribute to the ancestors, but also a deepening and supplement to the ceremony.

7) Bao ba zi (报八字) 10: 42AM

In the Baobazi, the main bearer will report the location of the main family and the date of birth to the gods in detail, make it clear which believers need protection, and then report the disasters that may occur this year to the gods, praying for the gods' protection and elimination of disasters. Through this stage, the undertaker conveys to the gods the specific situation and wishes of the master's family, hoping to eliminate and send away the disaster. The process of reporting the eight characters is full of solemnity and piety, and the undertakers and participants express their respect and trust to their ancestors through this link, and also hope that through the blessing of their ancestors, the master family can survive various disasters safely. This part is not only a tribute to the ancestors, but also the care and protection of the master's family, which enhances the faith and piety of the participants.

8) Guo hai (过海) 10: 52 AM

In Guo hai, the performance of the Tianqin and the voice are combined again, indicating that the Lord of the land has come down. (As shown in Figure 23)The main officiator will show the magical scene of soldiers and horses crossing the "Tianhai", and also invite the god and show the arrival of the god to the participants, enhancing the sense of sanctity and solemnness of the ceremony. The “Fangyan diao”, through the

combination of Tianqin and voice, express the arrival of the Lord of the land and the blessing of the master's family. This part is not only the performance of the ceremony music, but also the symbol of the arrival of the Lord of the land. Through this process, the participants feel the proximity of the land, and thus their inner piety and respect are enhanced. The combination of music and dance makes the ceremony more vivid and appealing, and enhances the ceremony experience and emotional resonance of the participants.



Figure 23. Meixiang Li is in the process of guohai in the “ruji” ceremony, In the picture, Meixiang Li is playing and singing the “Fangyan Diao” and her apprentice shakes the bell to dance, called “Guohai”

Source: Feixue Yang, from fieldwork in January, 2024

9) Dan bu (蛋卜) 11: 00 AM

Dan bu, as the name suggests, is a judgment link of divination with eggs. This link is an important part of the ceremony. The main officiator plays and sings the Tianqin after reciting the scriptures to the eggs. The egg is used as a divination tool to determine whether the ghost of the granddaughter of the master family is coming or not through the upside down or falling of the egg, so as to perform a disaster relief ceremony. The divination of eggs is not only the respect and communication of the dead souls, but also the protection and blessing of the master family. In the process of egg divination, the playing of the Tianqin and the chanting of scriptures combined to create a mysterious and solemn atmosphere. Through this link, the undertaker conveys the

prayers and requests of the master family to the dead soul, hoping that through the blessing of the dead soul, the master family can survive various disasters safely. The combination of human voice and Tianqin playing and singing makes this part more vivid and appealing, and enhances the faith and piety of the participants.

10) Tiao tian (跳天) 11: 35AM

The "Tiaotian" is one of the most important forms of dance and musical expression in the whole ceremony. In this session, the auxiliary officiators Xiaoling Huang, Yuemei Li and Meixiang Li jointly expressed their respect and blessing to Shentai through dance and music. (As shown in Figure 24) The dance movements and musical interactions in this section are closely integrated to form an atmosphere full of sacred and ritualistic feelings. In the "Tiaotian" segment, the auxiliary attendants express their respect and blessing to the gods through a series of complex and symbolic dance moves. The movements of shaking Maling and jumping into the sky are not only the forms of dance, but also important symbolic movements in the ceremony. Shaking the Maling movement is mainly completed by shaking the hand, which means seeking peace and taking good luck down, and bless everyone's peace. The action of jumping into the sky symbolizes praying for protection and blessing to the gods, reflecting people's respect and dependence on the gods.

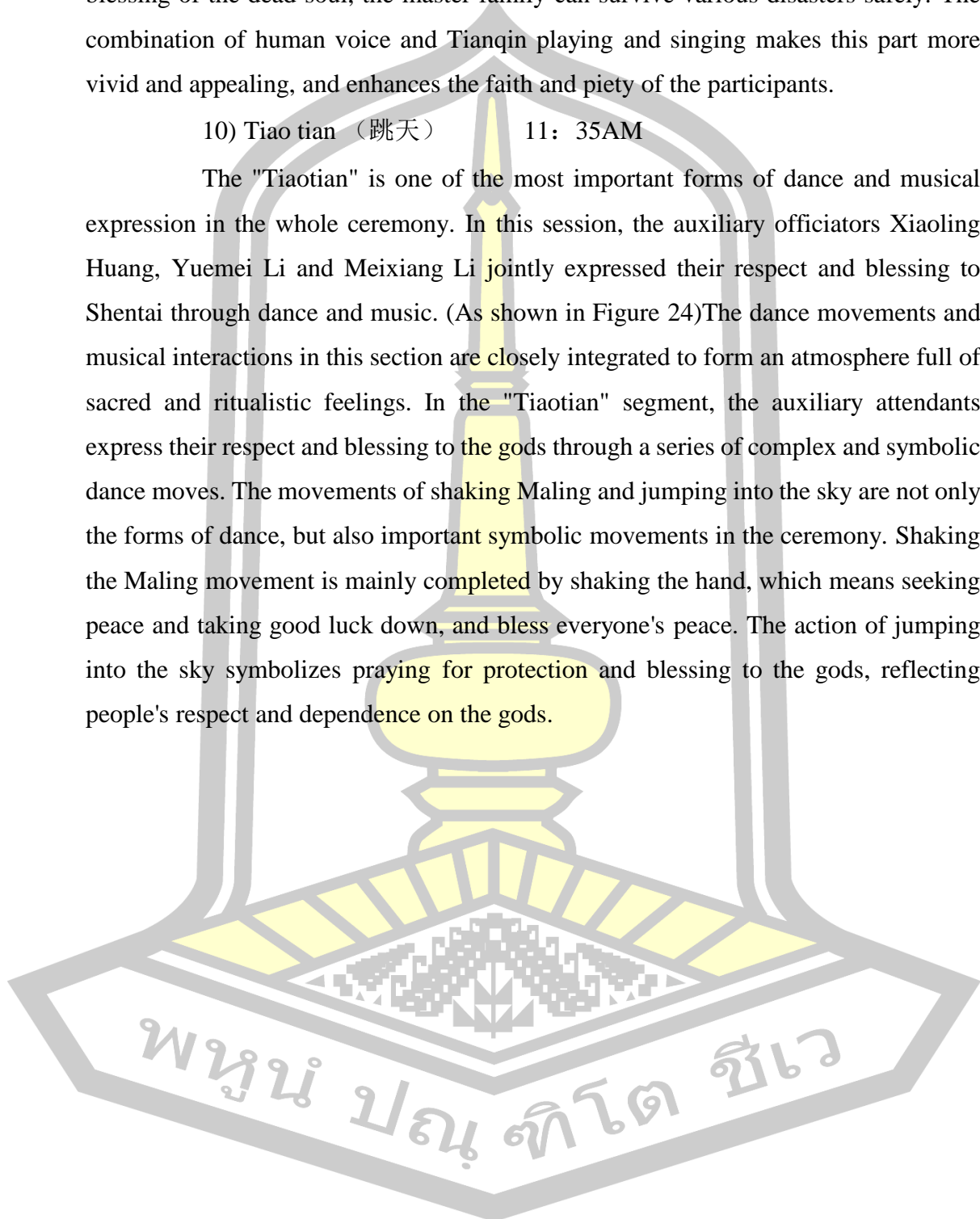




Figure 24. Meixiang Li is in the process of Tiaotian in the “ruji” ceremony, In the picture, Meixiang Li is playing and singing the “Fangyan Diao” and her apprentice shakes the bell to dance, called “Tiaotian”

Source: Feixue Yang, from fieldwork in January, 2024

11) Qiu ping an (求平安) 11: 44 AM

In the process of Qiu ping an, Meixiang Li can play the Tianqin, sing and make simple movements. The process of seeking peace is full of piety and respect, and the host expresses his prayers to the gods through this link, hoping that through the blessings of the gods, the master family can survive various disasters safely. The combination of music and dance for peace, showing respect and blessing to the gods, enhances the faith and piety of the participants. Through “Danbu” and “Paoma”, to ensure that the granddaughter of the main family’s soul can safely pass the gate of death, to eliminate disasters and solve the ceremony. “Danbu” as a divination tool, through the egg upside down or fall to determine whether the spirit of the dead is coming, so as to carry out the disaster relief ceremony. The melody and rhythm of Paoma Diao are combined with the Tianqin and dance to show the protection and blessing of the granddaughters of the master family. In the segment of passing the death penalty, the host prayed for the blessing and protection of the gods through “Danbu” and playing and singing, so that the granddaughter of the master family could safely survive various

disasters. This link is not only to respect and communicate with the souls of the dead, but also to protect and bless the master's family, enhancing the faith and piety of the participants. In one session, all the ancestors arrived, cleaned up the work and prepared to kill the chickens, telling the ancestors that the matter had been solved and the granddaughters of the master family had returned home safely. Through the combination of Tianqin performance and dance, the second riding session showed respect and gratitude to the patriarch. Through this link, the host reported the completion of the ceremony to the master and expressed gratitude and respect for the master.

12) Gong shen (送神) 13: 31 PM

Song shen is basically the last process of the main ceremony, its purpose is to send the gods on their way home, the bearer needs to bring soldiers and horses to escort. First of all, the master should hold the chicken and worship the master master and kill the chicken after Sendai to express their respect and gratitude to the master. The combination of music and dance to 《Songshen diao》 shows respect and gratitude to the gods, enhancing the participants' faith and piety. In the process of sending the gods, the host expressed his wishes and thanks to the gods through the combination of playing the Tianqin and dancing, and prayed for the gods' blessing and protection. It is not only the performance of music and dance, but also the respect and gratitude to the gods, which enhances the sense of sanctity and solemnization of the ceremony. During this period, Researcher also recited the information of the believers again by taking incense ash rice, reported it to the patriarch, and burned paper money to get rid of evil spirits. By burning paper money and reciting the information of the believers, Researcher expressed my respect and gratitude to the Xianpo, and also prayed for the protection and protection of the Patriarch. The process of eliminating evil spirits is full of piety and respect. Through this link, the host conveys the message of the followers to the Patriarch, praying for the Patriarch's blessing and protection, so that the believers can survive various disasters safely.

13) Yan qing (宴请祖先) 14:50 PM

In the Yan qing, the ancestors were invited to eat chicken, wine, candy, and poured wine in the process to show their respect and gratitude to their ancestors. (As

shown in Figure 25) Through this session, the host expressed gratitude and respect for the master's family to the ancestors, and also prayed for the protection and blessing of the ancestors. It is also the meaning of rewarding the soldiers and horses. The process of chicken banquet is full of piety and respect, which makes the ceremony more vivid and appealing, and enhances the faith and piety of the participants. After the ceremony, the ancestors were sent home by burning paper money to express gratitude and farewell to the ancestors. Through this session, the host expressed gratitude and respect for the master's family to the ancestors, and also prayed for the protection and blessing of the ancestors. The process of burning paper money is full of piety and respect, making the ceremony more vivid and infectious, and strengthening the faith and piety of the participants.



Figure 25. The last step in the “ruji” ceremony- “Yanqing”

Source: Feixue Yang, from fieldwork in January, 2024

Make: (Feixue Yang, 2024)

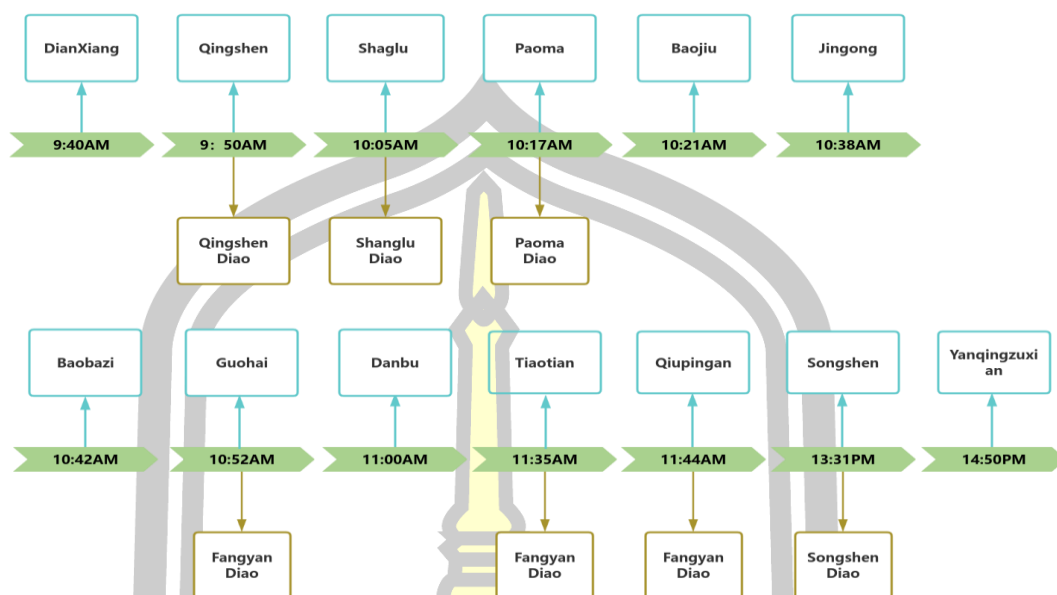


Figure 26. The flow chart of Zhuang Tianqin ceremony--“Ruji”

6. Summary

The origin of the Zhuang Tianqin ceremony comes from witchcraft, which was recorded in the 1880s, which is also consistent with the ancient theory of ghosts and gods, and has become the spiritual sustenance of the people in life. In 1903, the ethnomusicologist Ximu Fan intervened and changed its name from "ding" to "Tianqin" according to its meaning, which is still used today, so the Zhuang Tianqin ceremony got its name. With the development of society, the progress of civilization, and the improvement of people's living standards and quality, Tianqin art has now developed into an art of gathering people to pray for good luck and cultural entertainment for the purpose of Tianqin performance, singing and dancing. As a unique way of local prayer, Zhuang Tianqin ceremony has not changed much in form, but with the passage of time, Zhuang Tianqin ceremony will expand greatly in the field of performance and social function, and its social function has also developed from a single religious sacrifice to entertaining gods and people. After 2007, under the correct leadership and specific guidance of the higher cultural departments, the protection of intangible cultural heritage in our city has made remarkable achievements through excavation, rescue, protection and transmission. The common types of Tianqin ceremonies and the genealogy of transmitter have also been sorted out and excavated accordingly.

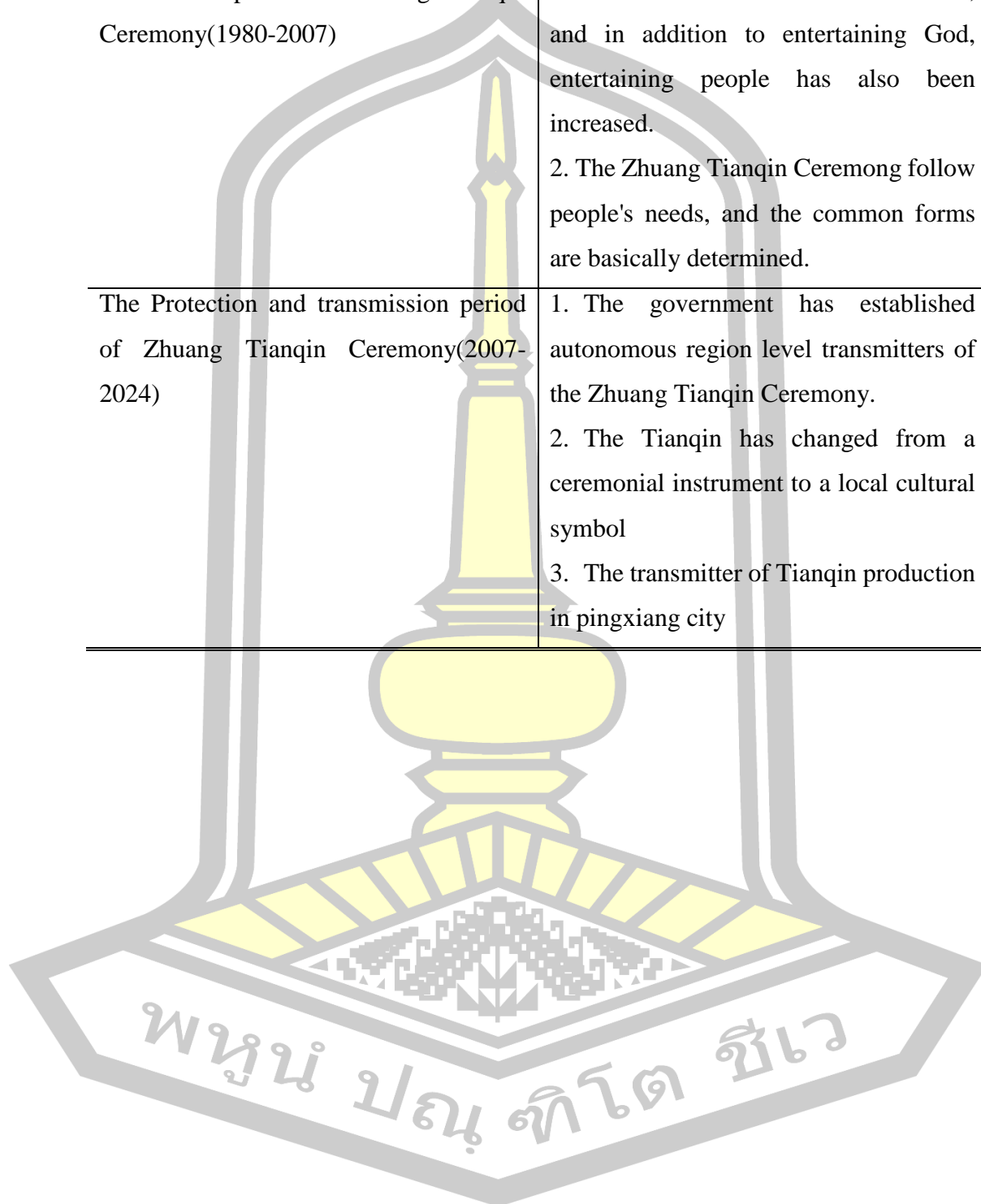
The Zhuang Tianqin ceremony has experienced four stages of origin, development, stability, protection and transmission. In the long-term development process, it has slowly transformed into two modes of tradition and innovation. For Tianqin ceremony of folk praying for blessings, its change is not great, at present, "Chami", "Ruji" and "Zuojiu" are still the most common; transmitters have also experienced the development of six generations and nine transmitters. Under the background of intangible genetic protection, the Zhuang Tianqin ceremony has also received more attention, thus developing the phenomenon and momentum of cultural symbols and economic development driven by Tianqin. At the end of this chapter is a detailed record of one of the ceremonies, which provides clues for the analysis of the music in the next chapter. The "Ruji" ceremony consists of 13 process, five of which include songs. Through the detailed description of each process of Tianqin ceremony, researchers can see that each step has profound symbolic significance and specific ritual flow. Props such as Tianqin, Zheshan and Maling played an important role in the ceremony, helping to create atmosphere, channel emotions, control time, manage processes, express and display faith, and ultimately enhance community unity and the spread of faith. This series of ritual activities is not only the embodiment of religious belief, but also the transmission of traditional culture and the bond of social cohesion.

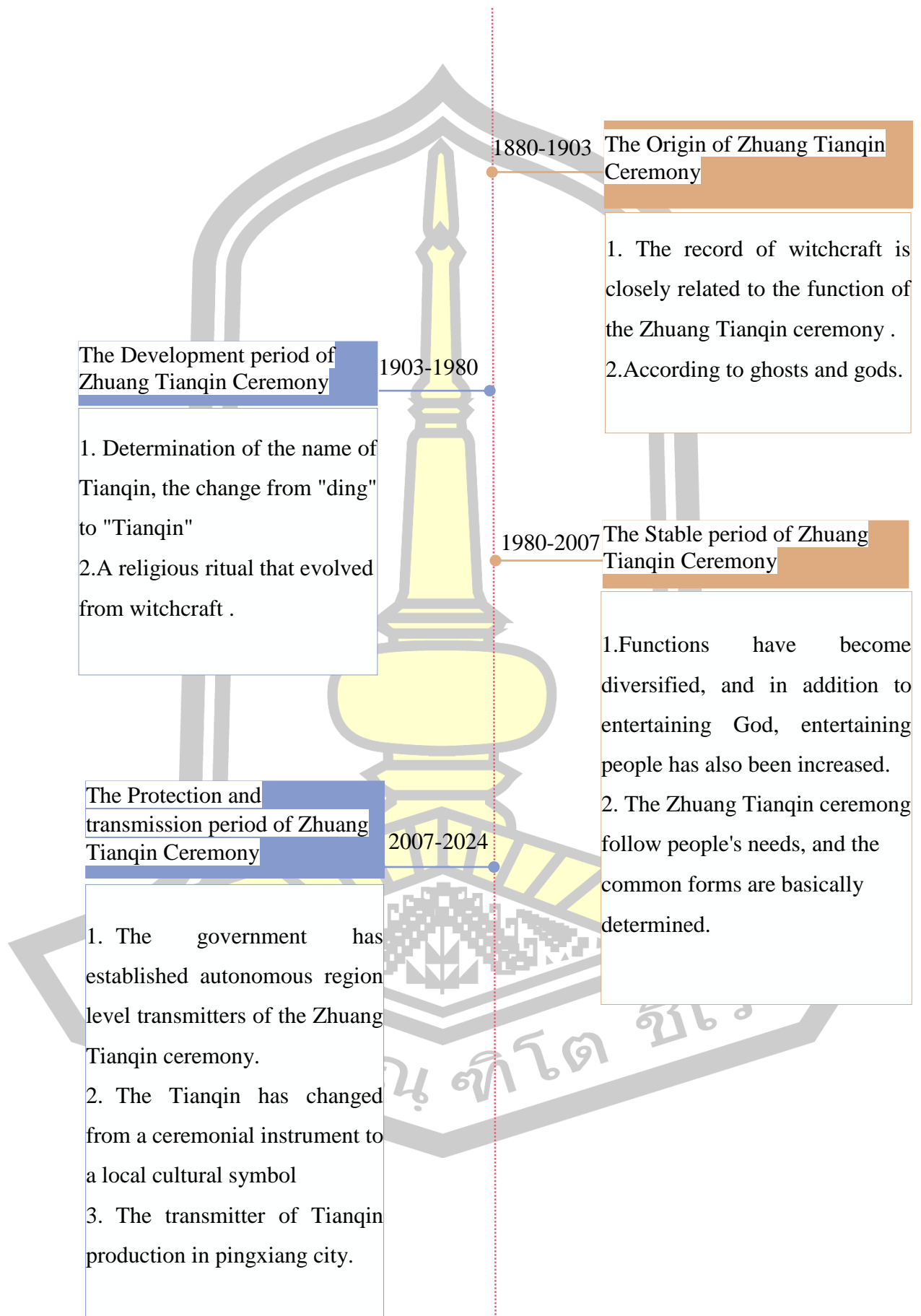
Table 6. Development and current status of Zhuang Tianqin Ceremony in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region

Make: (Feixue Yang,2024)

Development and current status of Zhuang Tianqin Ceremony in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region	The change of Zhuang Tianqin Ceremony in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region
The Origin period of Zhuang Tianqin Ceremony (1880-1903)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The record of witchcraft is closely related to the function of the Zhuang Tianqin Ceremony . 2. According to ghosts and gods.
The Development period of Zhuang Tianqin Ceremony(1903-1980)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Determination of the name of Tianqin, the change from "ding" to "Tianqin" 2.A religious ritual that evolved from

	witchcraft .
The Stable period of Zhuang Tianqin Ceremony(1980-2007)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Functions have become diversified, and in addition to entertaining God, entertaining people has also been increased. 2. The Zhuang Tianqin Ceremong follow people's needs, and the common forms are basically determined.
The Protection and transmission period of Zhuang Tianqin Ceremony(2007-2024)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The government has established autonomous region level transmitters of the Zhuang Tianqin Ceremony. 2. The Tianqin has changed from a ceremonial instrument to a local cultural symbol 3. The transmitter of Tianqin production in pingxiang city





CHAPTER V

The Music Characteristics of Zhuang Tianqin ceremony in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region

The Zhuang Tianqin ceremony Music is a musical form with rich national characteristics and cultural connotations. By analyzing the melodies of the "Qingshen diao" , the "Shanglu diao" , the "Paoma diao" , "Fangyan diao" , and the "Songshen diao" in the Zhuang Tianqin ceremony, we can sort out its unique musical features in terms of melody, rhythm, and form, and at the same time show its musical function and significance in the ceremony. Its main features are functional, symbolic, fixed, repetitive, and live. Music itself is a way of expressing emotions, and it has different functions and meanings in different ceremonies, mainly creating atmosphere, emotional guidance, time control, process management, belief expression, belief display, and social cohesion. Ceremony music has diverse forms and contents in different cultures and religions, but its core function is to enhance the influence of the ceremony and the experience of the participants through the power of music. Zhuang Tianqin ceremony Music plays an indispensable role in the "Mie Xian" belief in the border areas of China and Vietnam. This music is not only an artistic expression form, but also a ceremony tool with profound cultural and religious significance.

1. Qingshen Diao
2. Shanglu Diao
3. Paoma Diao
4. Fangyan Diao
5. Songshen Diao
6. Summary

พหุ ม ประ โท ชี เว

1. Qingshen Diao



“Qingshen Diao”

Voice :Meixiang Li
Musical notatioo:Jianting Huang

Voice

Tianqin

10

youx na di___gw_ gvaq cib_ rungh gouj dat_ mbouj

17

nyangz ha le mak ha_ biz ha baz liux na_gvaq cibrungh gou bya ga youx noix hoi_ mbouj

25

nyangz va lij noix liux_ ha gvaq cib rungh gouj dat mbouj nyangz ha

33

le mak ha leix ha cei_ liux boj li na_gvaq cib_mbanj gouj haw ga___ youx noix

2

42

nauq_nyangz beix ok_ rogliu____ youx na di gw hoi_ fwn yaek doek

49

caemh rox youx yaeklumz caemh rox ni youx yaek ha_limz camh ha liu rox na fwn yaek doek le bumz

55

ga youx noix hoi youx yaek ha lumz yiengh gagliub big gyei rox lie youx

62

Figure 27. Qingshen Diao

Source: Feixue Yang, in March, 2024



Table 7. The Pray to God lyrics and meaning of" Qingshen Diao "

Make: (Feixue Yang,2024)

	The Zhuang language in phonetic alphabets	The meaning
The topic	“请神调” “Qingshen Diao”	Pray God
The Pray to God lyrics	youx na di gw gvaq cib rungh gouj dat mbouj nyangz ha le mak ha biz ha baz liux na gvaq cibrungh gou bya ga youx noix hoi Mbouj nyangz va lij noix liux ha gvaq cib rungh gouj dat mbouj nyangz ha le mak ha leix ha cei liux boj li na gvaq cib mbanj gouj haw ga youx noix nauq nyangz beix ok rogliu youx na di gw hoi fwn yaek doek caemh rox youx yaeklumz caemh rox ni youx yaek ha limz camh ha liu rox na fwn yaek doek le bumz ga youx noix hoi youx yaek ha lumz yiengh gagliub big gyei rox lie youx	The invocation of the gods of heaven and earth to descend upon the world embodies a devout prayer, expressing reverence for the divine and admiration for nature. The lyrics convey a heartfelt wish for favorable weather and abundant harvests, paying homage to the wisdom of the ancestors and expressing gratitude for the blessings of daily life. They serve as a spiritual call, anticipating the arrival of the gods to bestow strength and blessings upon the people. Each verse reflects the Zhuang people's deep faith and longing, their aspiration for a harmonious and prosperous existence, and their profound respect for the natural order of the universe. Through the melodious strains of the Tianqin, these simple yet

	<p>profound words convey the Zhuang people's sincere emotions toward the world and their ardent yearning for a better life.</p>
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The entire work is simple and lively, full of rich ethnic flavor, and it is intoxicating. Whether it is the performance of the Tianqin or the singing, it reflects the unique cultural heritage and musical tradition of the local area. This rich ethnic flavor not only makes the music more closely related to the theme of the ceremony, but also allows participants to feel the profound cultural transmission and belief power in the music. Through this musical form, the Xianpo conveys the wishes and needs of the host family to the gods and spirits, and prays for their descent and protection. Music, as an important part of the ceremony, not only has aesthetic value, but also carries profound religious significance and social functions. In "Qingshen Diao," every note and melody of the music is conveying people's respect and prayers to the gods, and at the same time, it is arousing the inner belief and emotional resonance of the participants. "Qingshen Diao" plays a crucial role in the Zhuang Tianqin ceremony. Its unique melody, rhythm, and structural design not only create a sacred ceremony atmosphere, but also convey profound religious significance through music expression. Through the analysis of this piece of music, we can not only have a deeper understanding of the musical characteristics of the Tianqin ceremony, but also feel the rich cultural and belief connotations behind it. The power of this music lies not only in its beautiful melody, but also in its ability to touch people's hearts and arouse people's inner reverence and devotion to the gods.

1.1 The Musical form of Qingshen Diao

The "Qingshen Diao" is the first section of the Zhuang Tianqin ceremony, playing an important role in opening the entire ceremony. It is skillfully composed of human voices and Tianqin parts, creating a sacred and serene atmosphere through unique melodies and rhythms, allowing participants to more easily enter the ceremony state and enhance their emotional experience and sense of ceremony. The music begins with a solo part for the Tianqin in F major, laying a warm atmosphere for the subsequent

human voice melody.(As shown in Figure 28) The choice of F major conveys a sense of warmth and stability, setting a peaceful and sacred tone for the beginning of the ceremony.



Figure 28. The opening Tianqin solo of Qingshen diao

Source: Feixue Yang, in March ,2024

Starting from the 12th measure, the human voice melody joins in, then turns to E-flat major, lasting for four measures before cleverly turning to D-flat major and maintaining this key. This frequent change of key not only adds layers to the music, but also conveys a sense of devotion and respect to the deities through the changes between different keys. In particular, the use of E-flat major and D-flat major adds a touch of mystery and grandeur to the music while maintaining harmony and fluidity.(As shown in Figure 29)

9

After the vocals appear, it shifts to E-flat major and then to D-flat major

16

Figure 29. The Bars 12 through 23 of Qingshen diao

Source: Feixue Yang, in March ,2024

The Zhuang Tianqin ceremony music is characterized by its distinctive national features and rich cultural heritage, which exhibits unique artistic charm in terms of melody, rhythm, and structural patterns. The smooth and beautiful melody line is based

on the simplicity of the natural scale, enhancing the music's communicability and inheritability. The serene and melodious melody is skillfully expressed through the repetition and variation of phrases, expressing rich emotions and the sacred atmosphere of the ceremony. In terms of structural patterns, the simple and straightforward multi-part structure and alternating performance of vocals and instruments make the music rich in layers and expressive, further enhancing the ceremony's sense of ritual and emotional depth. (As shown in Figure 30) These musical features jointly create a sacred and solemn ceremony atmosphere, providing participants with profound emotional experiences and cultural enjoyment, and effectively supporting the conduct of the ceremony and the transmission of traditional culture.



Figure 30. The Bars 16 through 23 of Qingshen diao

Source: Feixue Yang, in March ,2024

The form structure of Zhuang Tianqin ceremony music is often simple , but full of connotation. The melody of each phrase continues the theme of the previous phrase while adding new elements to form a rich sense of hierarchy. For example, the Tianqin solo section at the beginning of "Qingshen Diao" lays the foundation for the subsequent vocal melody, and in the process of modulation, each melody is independent and interrelated, forming a complete and varied musical structure.(As shown in Figure 31)

พหุ ประถมศึกษา

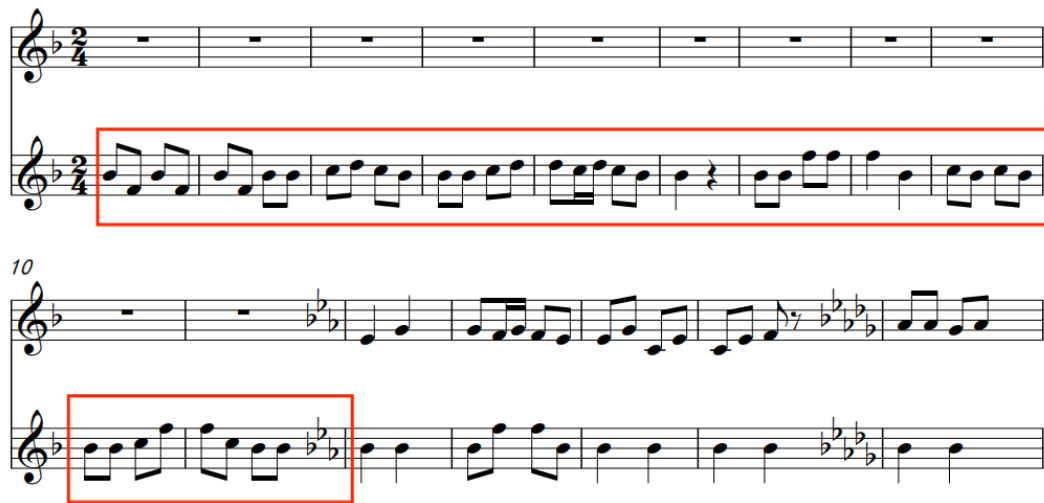


Figure 31. Tianqin solo at the beginning of "Qingshen Diao"

Source: Feixue Yang, in March ,2024

1.2 The Melody of Qingshen Diao

The music of the Tianqin Ceremony often takes the form of a multi-part structure, with each section presenting a different emotional and atmospheric quality. For example, in the "Qingshen Diao," the music is composed of multiple segments, and the different moods and ceremonial ambiance are presented as the melody and rhythm change. The multi-part structure not only enriches the expressiveness of the music, but also makes the entire ceremony process more diverse and layered. The changes and transitions between each section are different expressions of emotions and ceremony intentions, enhancing the narrative and emotional impact of the music.

In Zhuang Tianqin ceremony music, simple counterpoint is often used in the interaction between the voice and the Tianqin. For example, the voice and the melody of Tianqin with each other, forming a tacit dialogue, such as in the melody of God, since the 12th bar, (As shown in Figure 32) the melody of the human voice is added and formed a counterpoint with the melody of the Tianqin, which enhances the complexity and expression of the music, making the music more hierarchical and three-dimensional.



Figure 32. The Bars 12 through 15 of Qingshen diao

Source: Feixue Yang, in March ,2024

1.3 The rhythm of Qingshen Diao

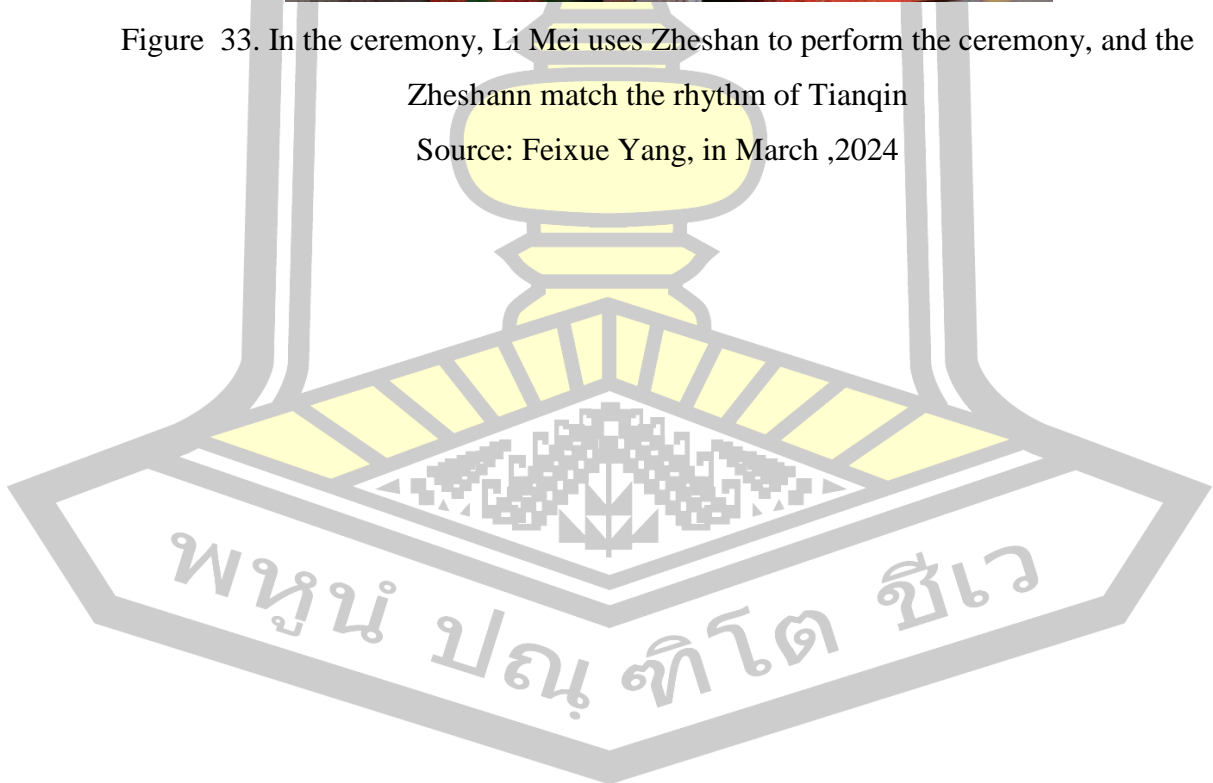
The rhythm of the music is relatively simple, with double eighth notes and post-sixteenth notes throughout the rhythm, and there is no complicated rhythm change. This simple rhythm design makes the music more pure and focused, highlighting the solemnity and solemnity of the ceremony.

1.4 The Musical instrument characteristics of Qingshen Diao

Qingsheng Diao is usually played by the Tianqin and chanted by ceremony experts. The Tianqin, as the main instrument in the ceremony, has a clear and crisp tone that can draw the attention of the deities. The Xianpo plays the Tianqin while using a unique singing style to call and invite the deities, making the process full of mystery and solemnity. In the Qingsheng Diao, the Zheshan plays an important role. The Zheshan is not only a symbolic tool in the ceremony(As shown in Figure 33), but also has a rhythm-assisting function. When she sings the Qingsheng Diao, she uses the fan to coordinate with the rhythm of the Tianqin, enhancing the expressiveness of the music. The movement of the Zheshan can guide the attention of the participants, making them more focused on the progress of the ceremony. At the same time, the use of the Zheshan also reflects the tradition and cultural connotation of the ceremony.



Figure 33. In the ceremony, Li Mei uses Zheshan to perform the ceremony, and the Zhesann match the rhythm of Tianqin
Source: Feixue Yang, in March ,2024



2. Shanglu Diao



"Shanglu Diao"

Voice: Meixiang Li
Musical notation: Jianting Huang

Voice

youx na di gw hoi_ youq gyae rox faz_ mbanj mak nganxhenj li linz lo mak nganz

Tianqin

Maling

8

hahenj ha li liux linz na youq gyae rox faz gim yeak mbin mbouj miz fwed_

13

yaek bwet mbouj mizrengz youq gyae rox faz bengz gen yaeuj ga mbouj hwnq

Figure 34. The Shanglu diao

Source: Feixue Yang, in March ,2024



Table 8. The Pray to God lyrics and meaning of" Shanglu Diao "
 Make: (Feixue Yang,2024)

	The Zhuang language in phonetic alphabets	The meaning
The topic	“上路调” “Shanglu Diao”	Set out
The Pray to God lyrics	youx na di gw hoi youq gyae rox faz mbanj mak nganxhenj li linz lo mak nganz hahenj ha li liux linz na youq gyae rox faz gim yeak mbin mbouj miz wed yaek bwet mbouj mizrenz youq gyae rox faz bengz gen yaeuj ga mbouj hwnq	The lyrics are imbued with prayers, worship, and gratitude, profoundly expressing reverence for the natural world and deep admiration for the divine. Within them, one hears heartfelt wishes for a safe journey and a smooth life, along with an ardent yearning for a brighter future. They serve as expressions of gratitude for nature’s gifts and the protection of the gods, invoking guidance and blessings along life’s path. Through these words, the lyrics

	earnestly pray for favorable winds and rains, a life of harmony, and enduring happiness.
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2.1 The Musical form of Shanglu Diao

"Shanghadio" is Cyclic Form . It shows the characteristics of simplicity without loss of change in the form structure. The first half of the music is dominated by the alternating performance of Tianqin and voice, which gradually enhances the sense of rhythm and movement of the music through the addition of horse bells and the gradual change of rhythm.

The second half, through the pause of the music and the continuous playing of the horse bell, cleverly creates a quiet and tense atmosphere. This structure not only reflects the hierarchy of the music in time, but also gives the entire ritual music an internal sense of logic and order.

2.2 The Melody of Shanglu Diao

The melodic scale of Tianqin singing is within the mode, without additional variations and overtones. This rigorous scale arrangement makes the music more harmonious and reflects the rigor of folk music. In Tianqin singing, sometimes there will be a phenomenon of single or two tone repetition. This unique singing technique adds charm to the music and makes people impressed. (As shown in Figure 35) The melody is simple, and there are not too many gorgeous skills. The singer pays attention to the expression of emotions and moves the audience with sincere feelings. This simple singing style makes Tianqin music more amiable and makes people feel the purity and beauty of folk music.

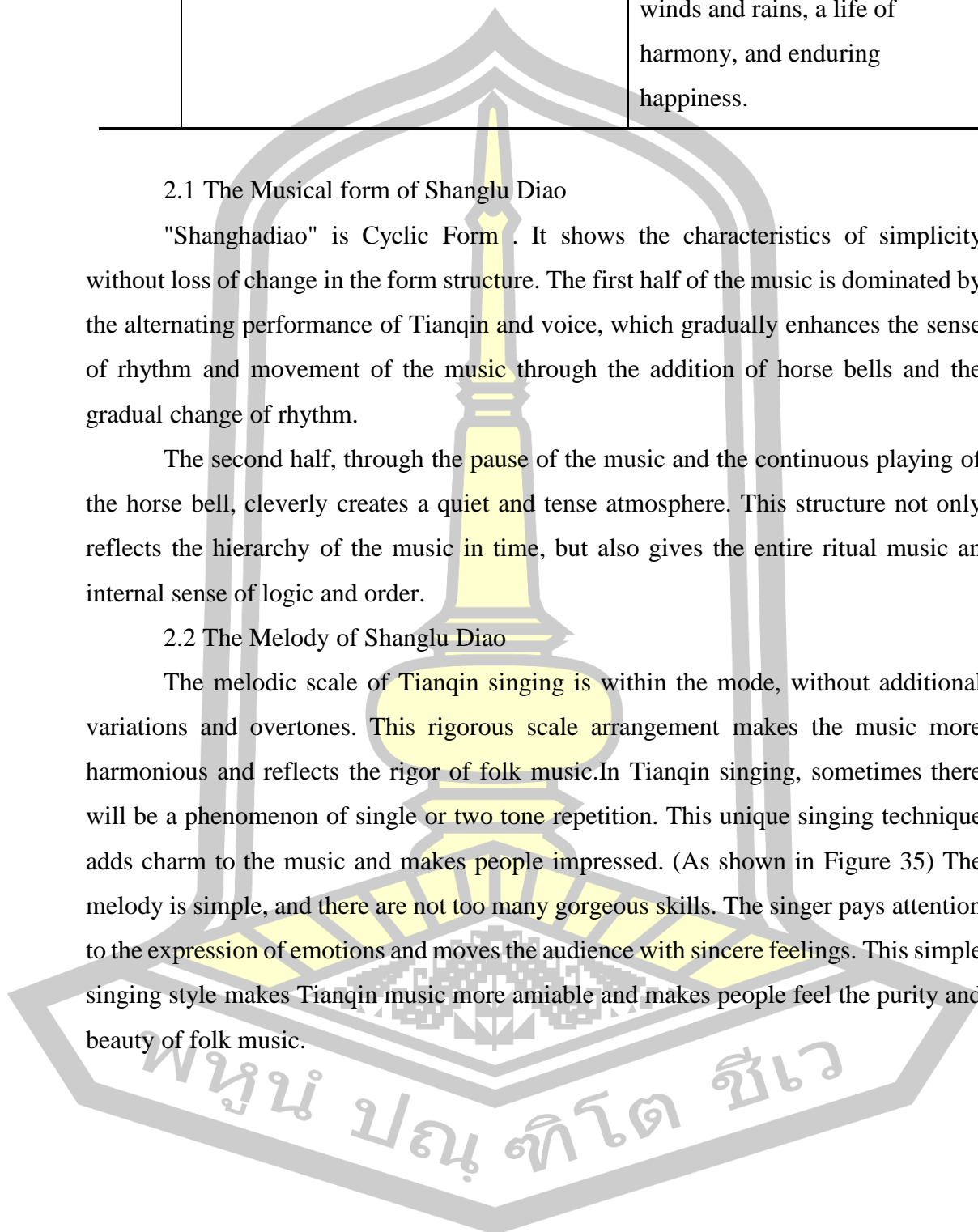




Figure 35. The Bars 8 through 13 of Shanglu diao

Source: Feixue Yang, in March ,2024

Singing plays a crucial role in the ceremony, it is not only a form of musical expression, but also the core of the ceremony atmosphere construction and spiritual transmission. Through the close integration with the instrument, the clever variation of the melody, the simple timbre expression, the interaction of the ritual sense, and the standardized scale arrangement, Shanglu Diao the unique charm and profound heritage of folk music. The importance of this art form is reflected in that it is not only the carrier of national emotion and historical memory, but also occupies an irreplaceable position in the Zhuang Tianqin ceremony, which has far-reaching significance for the in-depth study and transmission and development of national music culture. The unique position of the singing sky in the ceremony makes it an important bridge connecting the past and the future, national emotions and cultural transmission.

During the singing, the singer often intersperses some dialogue with the helper performing the ritual. This interaction not only enhances the ritualistic feel of the music, but also allows the listener to better engage with the musical situation. Through dialogue, the singer conveys national beliefs and emotions, making the music more meaningful. We can also observe this feature in the field recording videos, which show the original ecological features of Tianqin singing, providing valuable materials for us to study folk music, so that we can better understand and respect this traditional art form.

2.3 The rhythm of Shanglu Diao

As an important part of the ceremony, the Shangluo Diao appears before the Paoma Diao, showcasing its unique musical structure and rhythm changes. The piece is based on a 2/4 time signature in E flat major, with the Maling leading the melody through the Tianqin's singing and playing. The opening of the piece features a solo performance by the Tianqin, with the addition of the bell in the fourth measure adding a new dynamic element to the music, enhancing the rhythm and layering of the piece. The Maling's performance gradually transitions from quarter notes to dotted eighth notes. (As shown in Figure 36)

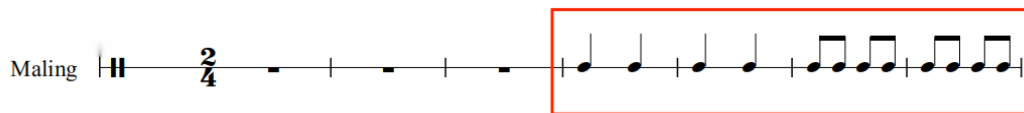


Figure 36. The Bars 1 through 7 of Maling of Shanglu diao

Source: Feixue Yang, in March ,2024

The rhythm in ceremony music is often symbolic. For example, in the Shanglu Diao, changes in rhythm symbolize different stages of the ritual, with quickening or slowing of the rhythm corresponding to the climax or calm part of the ritual. Through the change of rhythm, the music not only guides the emotions and behaviors of the participants, but also enhances the sense of ritual and sacredness of the ceremony. Similar to the rhythmic motifs in Western music, these rhythmic patterns have specific symbolic significance in specific rituals.

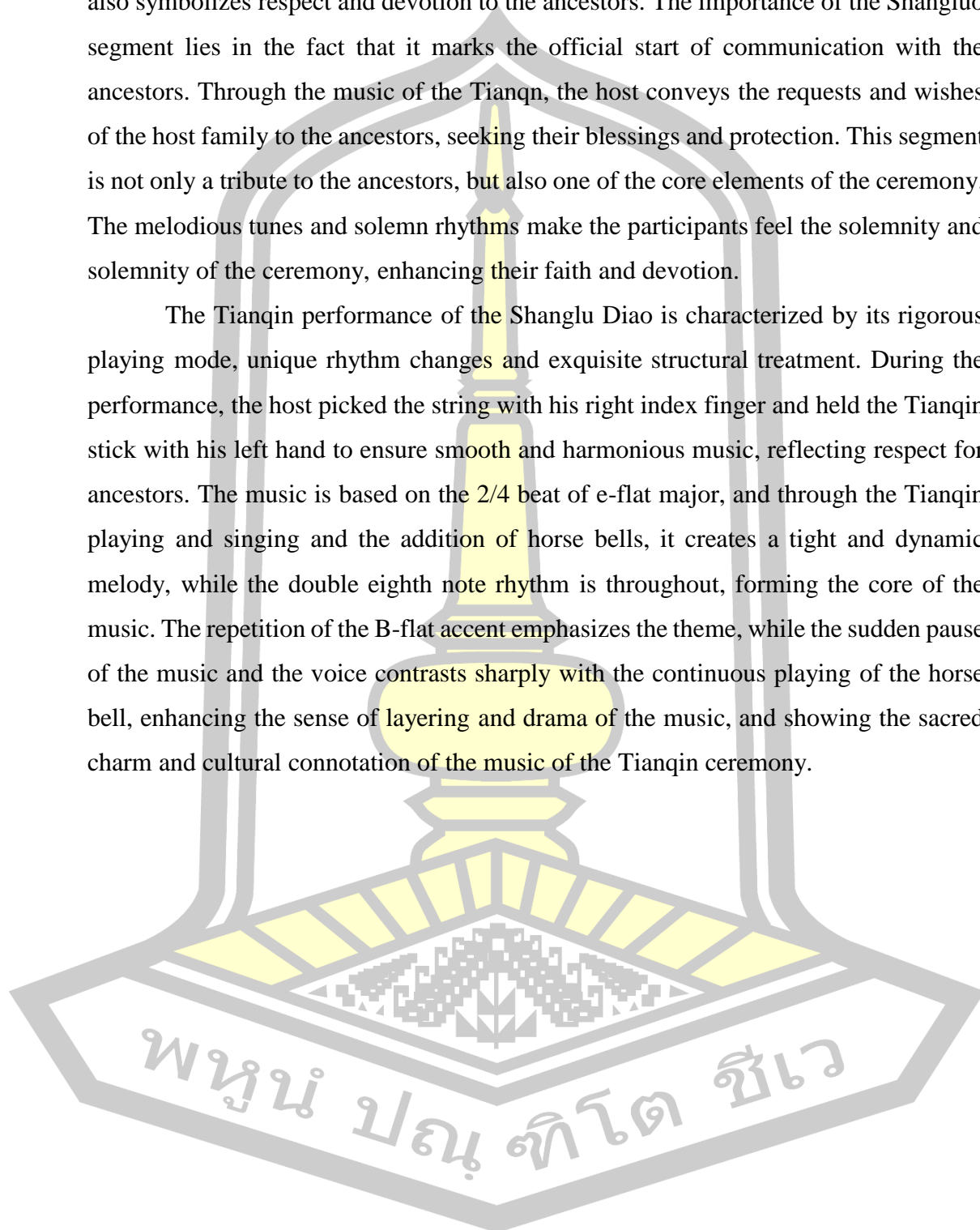
"Shanglu Diao" shows the unique charm of Zhuang Tianqin ceremony music with its rigorous structure and unique rhythm changes. Through the exquisite treatment of rhythm, melody and structure, the music successfully sets off the sacred atmosphere of the ceremony, demonstrating the profound cultural connotation and artistic value of traditional Chinese music.

2.4 The Musical instrument characteristics of Shanglu Diao

The playing style of the Tianqin in the Shangluo Diao has specific requirements, where the host needs to pluck the strings with the index finger of the right hand and hold the neck with the left hand to ensure the smooth flow of the music. During the glide playing, the thumb holds the neck while the other four fingers pluck the strings.

This playing style not only ensures the harmonious and smooth flow of the music, but also symbolizes respect and devotion to the ancestors. The importance of the Shangluo segment lies in the fact that it marks the official start of communication with the ancestors. Through the music of the Tianqin, the host conveys the requests and wishes of the host family to the ancestors, seeking their blessings and protection. This segment is not only a tribute to the ancestors, but also one of the core elements of the ceremony. The melodious tunes and solemn rhythms make the participants feel the solemnity and solemnity of the ceremony, enhancing their faith and devotion.

The Tianqin performance of the Shangluo Diao is characterized by its rigorous playing mode, unique rhythm changes and exquisite structural treatment. During the performance, the host picked the string with his right index finger and held the Tianqin stick with his left hand to ensure smooth and harmonious music, reflecting respect for ancestors. The music is based on the 2/4 beat of e-flat major, and through the Tianqin playing and singing and the addition of horse bells, it creates a tight and dynamic melody, while the double eighth note rhythm is throughout, forming the core of the music. The repetition of the B-flat accent emphasizes the theme, while the sudden pause of the music and the voice contrasts sharply with the continuous playing of the horse bell, enhancing the sense of layering and drama of the music, and showing the sacred charm and cultural connotation of the music of the Tianqin ceremony.



3. Paoma Diao

"Paoma Diao"

Voice: Meixiang Li
Musical notation: Jianting Huang

1

Voice

o ou hai yoi loeg vek_ a youq gwnz ndoi ya oi yoi ha le ndoi ci leu

Tianqin

Maling

7

ci mbouj ya leu mize i yoi lo moiz nanz doj ci go oi le moiz nanz doj xi go oi_ oi

13

hae yoi caep nuengx a youq gyang loh ya oi yoi ha le lo ci go leu ci mbouj ya leu lox ei yoi

2

19

lo coh nanz cam ci go oi le coh nanz cam ci go oi oi le le__ ye ba mbouj bij mbun

25

sang go ci bij mbun shang lo meh go mbun gvangq lo langxlangx boh meh aen lo cingz

31

gvangq ye beimuengz ei gvangq langx go ci aen cingz gvangz lo aen cingz gvangq gvaq lo

37

mbun ba mbouj bij mbun sang go ci bij mbun sang lo meh go mbugvangq lo langx

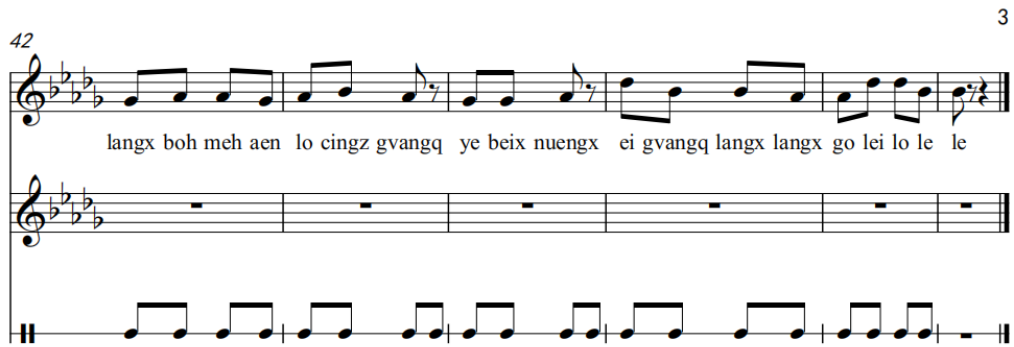


Figure 37. The Paoma diao
Source: Feixue Yang, in March ,2024



Table 9. The Pray to God lyrics and meaning of " Paoma Diao "
Make: (Feixue Yang,2024)

	The Zhuang language in phonetic alphabets	The meaning
The topic	“跑马调” “Paoma Diao”	Galloping horse
The Pray to God lyrics	o ou hai yoi loeg vek a youq gwnz ndoi ya oi yoi ha le ndoi ci leu ci mbouj ya leu miz ei yoi lo moiz nanz doj ci go oi le moiz nanz doj xxi go oi__oi hae yoi caep	This song depicts a ritual procession moving slowly along a rural path, accompanied by the rhythmic sound of horse bells. The crisp ringing of

<p>nuengx a youq gyang loh ya oi yoi ha le lo ci go leu ci mbouj ya leu lox ei yoi lo coh nanz cam ci go oi le coh nanz cam ci go oi oi le le__ ye ba mbouj bij mbun sang go ci bij mbun shang lo meh go mbun gvangq lo langxlangx boh meh aen lo cingz gvangq ye beinx muengz ei gvangq langx go ci aen cingz gvangz lo aen cingz gvangqgvangq gvaq lo mbun ba mbouj bij mbun sang go ci bij mbun sang lo meh go mbugnvangq lo langx langx boh meh aen lo cingz gvangq ye beix nuengx ei gvangq langx langx go lei lo le le</p>	<p>the bells, interwoven with the steady cadence of footsteps, echoes through the tranquil natural surroundings, as if extending an invitation to the ancestral gods dwelling between heaven and earth. The lyrics of Please Ancestors Home serve not only as a reverential tribute to the ancestors but also as a profound invocation of family history and tradition. The music is imbued with deep respect for the natural world and a solemn devotion to traditional rituals.</p>
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3.1 The Musical form of Paoma Diao

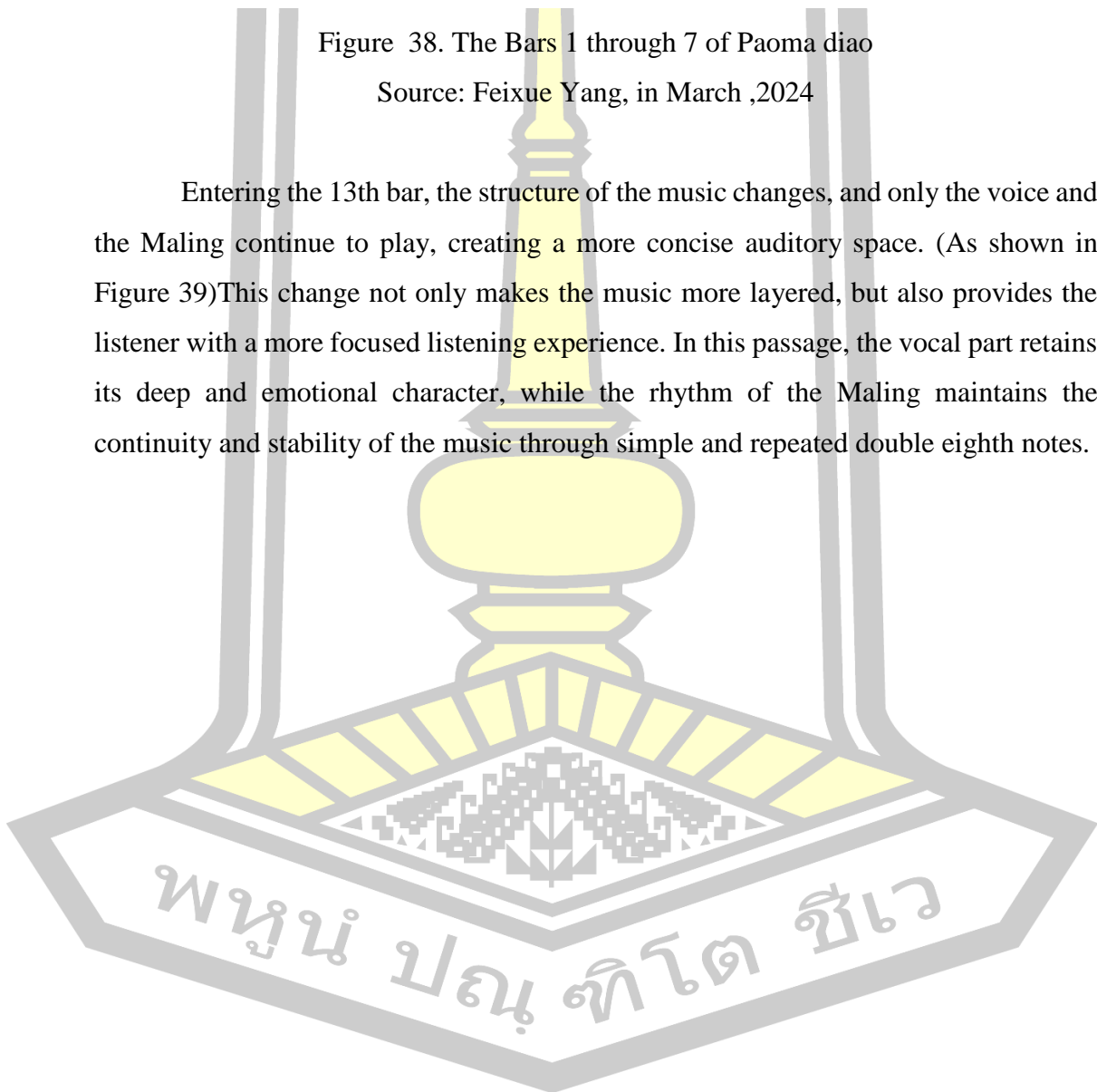
As an important musical chapter in the middle of the Tianqin ceremony, "Paoma Diao" creates a vivid ceremony atmosphere with its unique three-part composition -- voice, Tianqin and Maling. The vocal part of the alto solo, with its deep timbre, lays a solid foundation for the music. The whole piece adopts the key of D-flat major. From the first bar, the voice, Tianqin and Maling are played in sync, showing the harmony and unity of the music. The choice of D flat major gives the music a solemn and mysterious atmosphere, which makes the whole music more dignified and solemn in the tone. From the beginning of the music, the human voice, the Tianqin and the Maling are used simultaneously, and this three-part coordination shows the harmony and unity of the music.(As shown in Figure 38)



Figure 38. The Bars 1 through 7 of Paoma diao

Source: Feixue Yang, in March ,2024

Entering the 13th bar, the structure of the music changes, and only the voice and the Maling continue to play, creating a more concise auditory space. (As shown in Figure 39) This change not only makes the music more layered, but also provides the listener with a more focused listening experience. In this passage, the vocal part retains its deep and emotional character, while the rhythm of the Maling maintains the continuity and stability of the music through simple and repeated double eighth notes.



The Tianqin suddenly stops, creating a simple listening space

Figure 39. The Bars 8 through 21 of Paoma diao

Source: Feixue Yang, in March ,2024

3.2 The Melody of Paoma Diao

The melody is mainly composed of two degrees and three degrees of progression, which is relatively stable, with occasional small jumps such as four degrees, and the overall smooth and natural. The melody of some bars is repeated, such as the pattern of the up and down lines has a certain regularity, which enhances the memory point of the melody.

"Paoma" refers to the ringing of the Maling , which is a unique form of music and dance used to indicate that the ancestors of the Lord have arrived soon. In this section, the performance of the harp, the singing of the voice, and the ringing of the horse bell are complemented by some body movements of the main bearer to show the solemn moment of the ancestor's coming. Meixiang Li 's legs will move with the rhythm of the horse melody , showing the vitality and solemnness of the ceremony. The melody

of the Paoma Diao has an obvious sense of rhythm, and through the combination of "Tianqin - voice - Maling", a dynamic and mysterious atmosphere is created.

3.3 The rhythm of Paoma Diao

The rhythm is mainly concise and bright, with a sense of rhythm. The rhythm characteristics of Tianqin ceremony music contain rich emotions and symbolic meanings in the concise and bright. Through the wide application of basic rhythm patterns such as double eighth notes and post-sixteenth notes, Tianqin music creates a flowing and orderly rhythm, ensuring the coherence and unity of the music. The single and stable rhythm of the horse bell provides a solid rhythmic skeleton, while the close combination of rhythm and emotion enhances the sense of hierarchy and emotional expression of the music. The symbolic and rhythmic changes of the rhythm not only guide the emotions and behavior of the participants, but also enhance the sacredness and sense of ritual of the ceremony. The application of compound rhythm and periodicity makes the music more vivid and expressive, and enhances the visual and auditory effects of the Zhuang Tianqin ceremony. On the whole, Tianqin ritual music successfully achieves a high degree of integration of music, emotion and ceremony through concise and bright rhythm characteristics and rich rhythm changes, showing its unique musical charm and cultural value. (As shown in Figure 40)

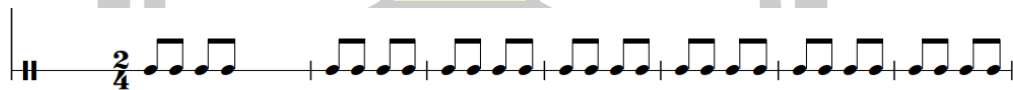


Figure 40. The Bars 1 through 6 of Paoma diao

Source: Feixue Yang, in March, 2024

Double eighth notes and post-sixteenth notes: This rhythmic form is widely used in the Tianqin ritual music, such as in the Requiem Key and the Horse Key, where the rhythm of double eighth notes and post-sixteenth notes is used throughout. This rhythmic form gives the music both a sense of flow and a certain compactness, creating a smooth and orderly rhythm that helps guide the progress of ceremonies and the expression of emotions. The use of double eighth note rhythm gives the music a certain

dance movement, while the sixteenth note adds a delicate and tight emotional expression.

Rhythmic patterns and periodicity of rhythm: Rhythmic patterns and cyclic patterns common in Tianqin ritual music help to enhance the sense of continuity and structure of the music. For example, certain rhythmic patterns occur repeatedly, forming a periodic structure that allows listeners to find empathy and comfort in familiar rhythms. The repetition and periodicity of this rhythmic pattern is similar to the "cyclical form" in Western music, which enhances the coherence of the music through repetition and variation.

A single and steady rhythm: In the Paoma Diao, the rhythm of the Maling is kept single, repeated in the form of double eighth notes, (As shown in Figure 41) and this steady rhythm provides a clear rhythmic skeleton, ensuring the coherence and unity of the music. The rhythm of the horse bell not only provides a solid rhythmic basis for other voices, but also reflects the solemnity and order of the ritual music, and enhances the sacred sense of the ceremony. This rhythmic treatment is similar to the "pulse rhythm" in Western music, which creates a solid and sustained auditory effect through constant rhythmic repetition.

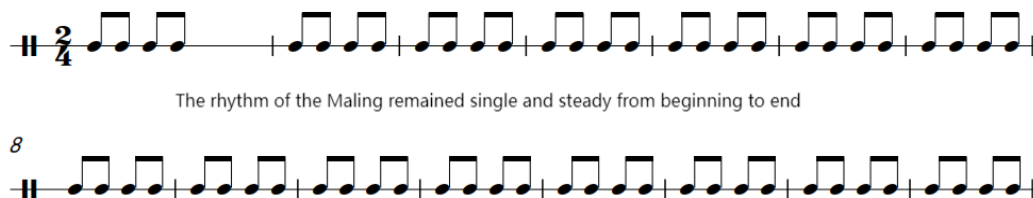


Figure 41. The rhythm of the Maling

Source: Feixue Yang, in March ,2024

3.4 The Musical instrument characteristics of Paoma Diao

The Tianqin performance of the Paoma Diao is characterized by its vivid sense of rhythm and rich voice levels. Through the close coordination of voice, Tianqin and Maling, a lively and solemn ceremony atmosphere is created. The Tianqin performance is concise and full of rhythm, which echoes with the deep solo of the voice, enhancing the dynamic sense and expressive force of the music. The steady double eighth note rhythm of the Maling provides a clear rhythmic skeleton for the piece, reinforcing the

sense of sacredness and order of the ceremony. On the whole, with its simple musical structure and emotional expression, the Paoma Diao shows the unique charm of folk music, enhancing the ritual experience and emotional resonance of the participants.

4. Fangyan Diao

"Fangyan Diao"

Voice: Meixiang Li
Musical notation: Jianting Huang

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

Voice

Tianqin

Maling

ruz hwnj laeghwnj lienz na leu ruz hwnj laeg lienz he ruz hwnj cien na sw ga a ha

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

Voice

Tianqin

Maling

hwnj le fanh le le sw ga he leu le... hwnj sam fanh duj va ne le ra bae daengz a sw ga ha

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

Voice

Tianqin

Maling

ha laemz le fongx le le sw ga he leu raruz mbouq raen ruz ruz bae

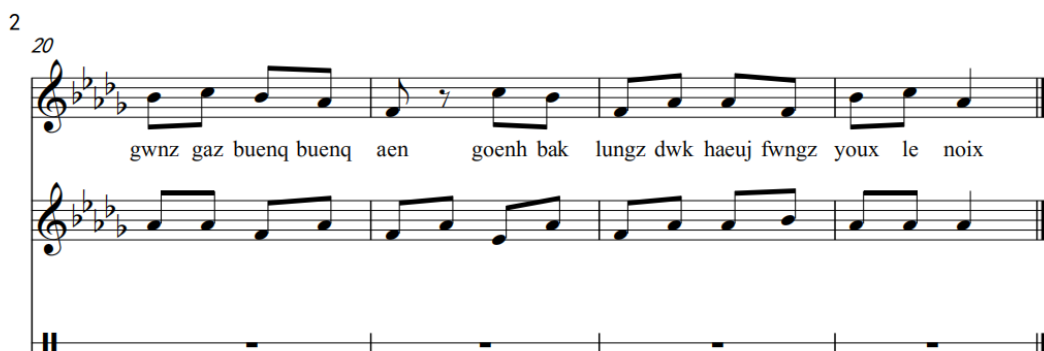


Figure 42. The Fangyan diao
Source: Feixue Yang, in March ,2024



Table 10. The Pray to God lyrics and meaning of " Fangyan Diao "
Make: (Feixue Yang,2024)

	The Zhuang language in phonetic alphabets	The meaning
The topic	“放雁调” “Fangyan Diao”	Sent by wild geese to pray
The Pray to God lyrics	ruz hwnj laeghwnj lienz na leu ruz hwnj laeg lienz he ruz hwnj cien na sw ga a ha hwnj le fanh le le sw ga he leu le hwnj sam fanh duj va ne le ra bae daengz a sw ga ha ha laemz le fongx le le	The song depicts a ceremony that simulates the scene of wild geese transmitting messages, thereby channeling the participants' admiration and longing for their ancestors through these

<p>sw ga he leu raruz mbouq raen ruz ruz bae gwnz gaz buenq buenq aen goenh bak lungz dwk haeuj fwngz youx le noix</p>	<p>birds. In this process, Fangyan Diao not only encapsulates the remembrance of forebears but also serves as a form of spiritual sustenance, conveying the health, happiness, and prayers of family members to their ancestors to secure blessings and ensure that future generations remain safe, healthy, and prosperous. This ritualized expression exemplifies the profound academic value and social significance of ancestor worship in Chinese folk beliefs.</p>
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4.1 The Musical form of Fangyan Diao

Although the overall structure of Fangyan Diao is simple, it has distinct layers. The music is composed of three parts: voice, Tianqin and Maling, showing rich acoustics. Each voice part is independent and responds to each other, creating a sacred and solemn ceremony atmosphere. The vocal part brings strong emotional expression and humanistic color through deep solo singing; The Tianqin part adds fluidity and spirit to the music through its unique melody and rhythm. Although the rhythm of the horse bell is single, its continuous double eighth note rhythm provides a stable rhythmic basis and a sense of ritual.

Based on diatonic, simple and beautiful. (As shown in Figure 43) The melody of Tianqin mostly adopts diatonic scale, which makes the music have a pure and simple

aesthetic feeling, which is in line with the aesthetic orientation of traditional Chinese music. The simple structure of the diatonic scale is easy to remember and sing, which enhances the transmission of music.

The image displays musical notation for the Fangyan diao melody. It consists of two staves of music in 2/4 time with a key signature of three flats. The second staff has three phrases highlighted with red boxes. Below the staves, the text "Whole tone" is written, followed by a rhythmic diagram showing a sequence of notes and rests.

Figure 43. The Fangyan diao
Source: Feixue Yang, in March ,2024

The harmonic structure of the Tianqin is usually relatively simple, relying mainly on the flow of melody lines to convey the emotion of the music. In the orchestration, the voice and Tianqin complement each other, and the voice part is mainly dominated by the alto solo, the timbre is deep and infectious, and the high range of Tianqin is in sharp contrast to enhance the expression of music. In "Fangysn Diao", the addition of Maling adds a hint of liveliness and agility to the music, making the overall rhythm more rich and providing a variety of colors for the construction of the ritual atmosphere.

4.2 The melody of Fangyan Diao

Repetition and variation: The repetition of phrases often occurs in the melody of Tianqin, for example, in the "Fangyan Diao", the melody of Tianqin is repeated with two tones F and A flat as the core (As shown in Figure 44). This repetition not only enhances the music's memory points, but also makes it easier for listeners to immerse themselves in it. At the same time, there are also changes and modulation in the melody, such as the shift from F major to E-flat major and then to D-flat major in the "Qingshen Diao", which increases the sense of layering and dynamics of the music. Through the repetition and change of phrases, the music not only maintains coherence, but also rich in change, so that people

always keep fresh. The use of modulation makes the music without losing the original style, increase the diversity and complexity, and enrich the hearing experience.



Figure 44. The Bars 8 through 15 of Fangyan diao

Source: Feixue Yang, in March ,2024

Repetition and variation: Especially in the passage after the 17th bar, the melody of Tianqin is simplified and concentrated on the two notes F and A flat, and through repeated processing, it creates a simple and mysterious sound effect. This melodic change not only brings a new level of structure to the piece, but also emotionally leads the listener into a more introspective and reverent state.(As shown in Figure 45)



Figure 45. The Bars 17 of Fangyan diao

Source: Feixue Yang, in March ,2024

Rich emotion, national characteristics: Tianqin singing emotion is rich, melody ups and downs. The singers convey their love for life, faith and nature through music,

showing the charm of folk music. Tianqin singing has strong national characteristics and is an important part of Zhuang Tianqin ceremony music.

4.3 The rhythm of Fangyan Diao

In the three-part segment, the voice and the rhythm of the Tianqin echo each other, dominated by the rhythm of double 8th notes and post-16th notes, and this similarity of rhythm enhances the connection and interaction between voice parts. In particular, the performance of Tianqin, by echoing the rhythm of the human voice, increases the dynamic sense and layer sense of the music, making the whole music more vivid and expressive. Among them, the rhythm of the Maling remains single, repeated in the form of double eighth notes. (As shown in Figure 46) This steady rhythm provides a clear rhythmic framework for the music, but also reflects the solemnity and order of the ceremony music. The rhythm of the Maling, though simple, plays a crucial role in the whole piece, not only providing a stable rhythmic basis for the piece, but also strengthening the sense of the sacred and ritual through its continuous and regular tapping.



Figure 46. The Bars 1 through 6 of Maling of Fangyan diao

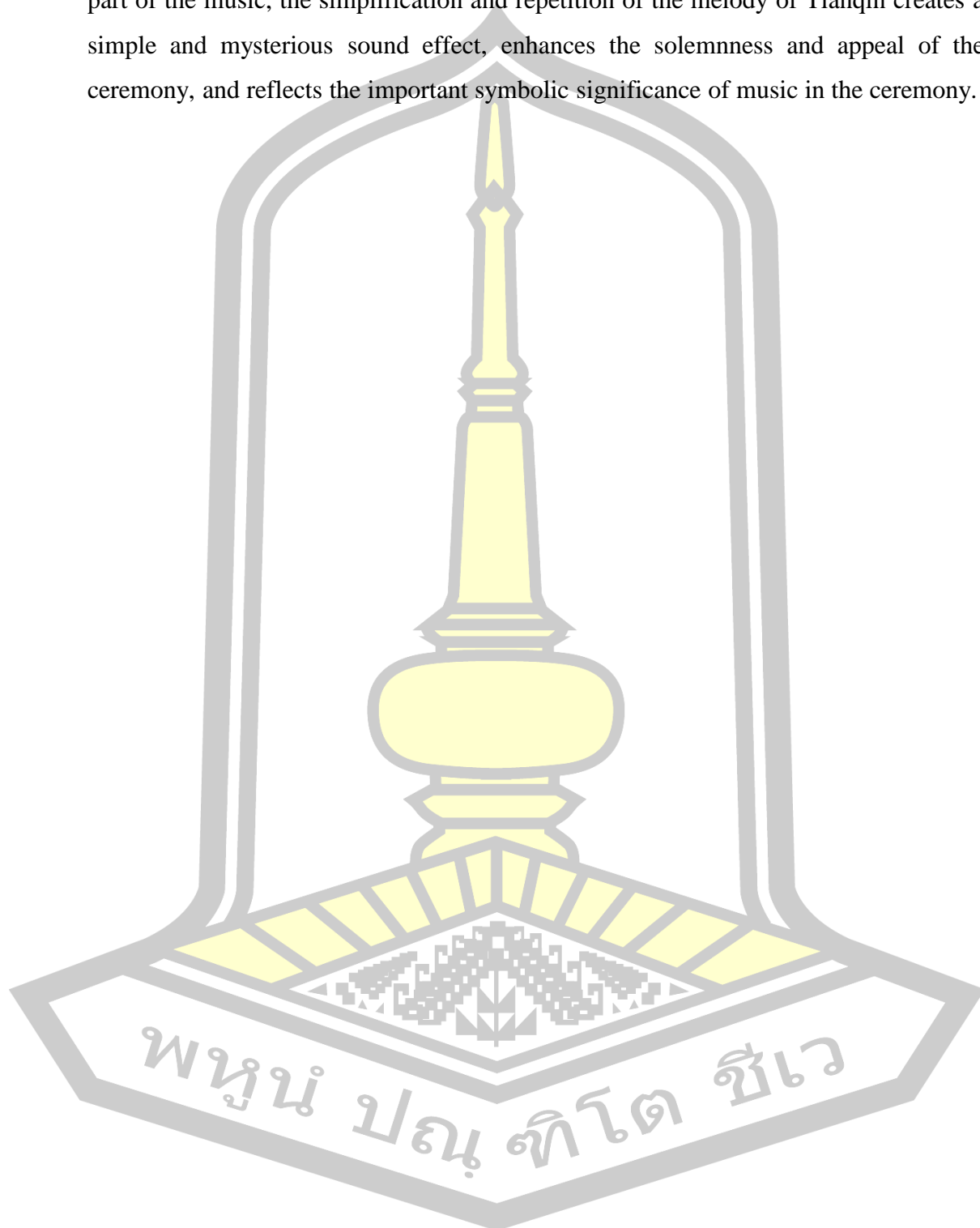
Source: Feixue Yang, in March ,2024

On the whole, the rhythmic characteristics of Tianqin ceremony music are concise and bright, which contains rich emotions and symbolic meanings. It not only maintains the coherence and unity of the music, but also makes the music more hierarchical and dramatic through the use of rhythm changes and compound rhythms, which enhances the emotional resonance and ritual sense of the ceremony.

4.4 The Musical instrument characteristics of Fangyan Diao

The performance of Tianqin in "Fangyan Diao" is characterized by its harmonious and solemn melody in D-flat major, and the exquisite coordination between the voice, Tianqin and Maling. The music begins with the ensemble of human voice and Tianqin, creating an ethereal and sacred atmosphere, followed by the addition of Maling to add liveliness and agility to the music. The rhythm of double eighth notes makes the melody smooth and elastic, and the rhythmic similarity and melody of the

Tianqin and the voice are intertwined to form a tacit dialogue. Especially in the latter part of the music, the simplification and repetition of the melody of Tianqin creates a simple and mysterious sound effect, enhances the solemnness and appeal of the ceremony, and reflects the important symbolic significance of music in the ceremony.



5. Songshen Diao

"Songshen Diao"

Voice: Meixiang Li
Musical notation: Jianting Huang

Voice

Tianqin

youz_na_ di_ gw_ hoi giuz yaek rack le rack

8

raeuz caiq ha_ le le caep ha giuz ha_ moq ha liux na_ raeuz_

16

caiq doq_ giuz goz_ bae haw moz coj_ seiq bae.ndwen

24

ngeih cib_ gouj bae ndij youx yiuq bauq va ga_ yuox noix hoi_ bauq sa_ hongz

32

mbouj duenh rumz liengz daengz vih vaek yo yi_ zong bo hei ni ha liux



2

39

le rumz baek daengz fi feih li si go lei bo hei ma a leu rumz liengz daengz vihvaek wa a_

46

rumz baek daengz a fi fi feih go rumz bae rih baz naz a rumz bae

53

ra a youx o noix go_ rumz baz rih_ baz_ naz_ a_ le rumz bae_ ra a youx o_

61

noix go_ le_ liux rumz bae_ ra_ a yiux o_ noix go_ lei_ leu

69

73

Figure 47. The Songshenn diao

Source: Feixue Yang, in March ,2024



Table 11. The Pray to God lyrics and meaning of " Songshen Diao "
 Make: (Feixue Yang,2024)

	The Zhuang language in phonetic alphabets	The meaning
The topic	“送神调” “Songshen Diao”	Send to God
The Pray to God lyrics	youz na di gw hoi giuz yaek raek le raek raeuz caiq ha le le caep ha giuz ha moq ha liux na raeuz caiq doq giuz goz bae haw moz coj seiq bae ndwen ngeih cib gouj bae ndij youx yiuq bauq va ga yuox noix hoi bauq sa Hongz mbouj duenh rumz liengz daengz vih vaek yo yi zong bo hei ni ha liux le rumz baek daengz fi feih li si go lei bo hei ma a leu rumz liengz daengz vihvaek wa a rumz baek daengz a fi fi feih go rumz bae rih baz	After reviewing the text, here is a revised version in polished academic English while maintaining the original meaning: This song articulates both gratitude for the gods' blessings and the melancholy of their departure, while simultaneously expressing hope for a brighter future. The lyrics extol the grace and majesty of the divine, offering prayers for continued blessings of global peace and abundant harvests. Furthermore, they convey a commitment to

<p>naz a rumz bae ra a youx o noix go rumz baz rih baz naz a le rumz bae ra a youx o noix go le liux rumz bae ra a yiux o noix go lei leu</p>	<p>following the gods' teachings, emphasizing diligence and virtuous living in the hope that the gods will return to bestow further blessings upon the people.</p>
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As the closing music of the ceremony, "Songshen Diao" brings the whole ceremony to a successful end with its warm D-flat major. Through the interweaving of the two parts of the Tianqin and the voice, the piece shows the harmonious integration of music and ceremony, providing a profound emotional experience for the participants.

At the beginning of the music, Tianqin leads with two bars of prelude, paving the way for the following melody of a quiet atmosphere. This prelude is simple and beautiful, creating a serene and sacred atmosphere through a slow rhythm and soft timbre. The first part of Tianqin mainly adopts the rhythm form of double eighth notes and post-sixteenth notes, which makes the melody line smooth and elastic. In the third bar, the voice is added to make the music more emotional. The melody of the vocals continues the quiet atmosphere of the prelude, and conveys a deep emotion through the ups and downs of the melody and the change of rhythm. The rhythm of the piece is dominated by double eighth notes and post-sixteenth notes, creating a flowing and orderly rhythm. This choice of rhythm not only makes the melody dynamic, but also enhances the sense of hierarchy of the music.

5.1 The Musical form of Songshen Diao

Prelude and finale: The Zhuang Tianqin ceremony music usually contains a prelude and finale, which not only adds integrity to the music, but also creates an atmosphere for the opening and ending of the ceremony. For example, in "Songshen Diao", Tianqin leads with a two-bar prelude, paving the way for a peaceful atmosphere, and then ends with a melodious finale, adding a sense of holiness and ritual to the whole piece. The existence of prelude and epilogue makes the function of music more prominent in the ceremony, playing a guiding and concluding role, and enhancing the integrity and coherence of the ceremony. (As shown in Figure 48.49)



Figure 48. The overture of Songshenn diao

Source: Feixue Yang, in March ,2024



Figure 49. The endnote of Songshenn diao

Source: Feixue Yang, in March ,2024

The alternations of voice and instrument: The alternations of voice and instrument often occur in Tianqin ceremony music, which not only enhances the sense of hierarchy of music, but also improves the expressiveness. For example, in the song "Sendshen Diao", the method of stopping the voice and playing the Tianqin alone is used for many times, which enhances the contrast and layering of the music and makes the emotional expression of the ceremony more rich and delicate. The alternations of voices and instruments are not only a musical dialogue, but also an emotional and religious interaction between the participants in the ceremony.

5.2 The melody of Songshe Diao

Variation on the basis of melody repetition: Sung melody is rich in variation on the basis of repetition. While maintaining the basic melodic framework, the singers skillfully integrate various grace notes and rhythm changes to make the music full of vitality. This change not only reflects the singer's musical accomplishment, but also shows the unique charm of folk music.

Emotional expression: The melodic lines of Tianqin are often full of emotions, expressing different emotions and artistic conception through the fluctuation of pitch

and the change of rhythm. In "Songshen Diao", the human voice is interwoven with the melody of the Tianqin, adding a touch of silence and contemplation to the end of the ceremony through the emotional tones. The timbre of the Tianqin is delicate and soft, and the fluctuation of pitch can accurately convey the emotion in the music. The change of rhythm provides more possibilities for the emotional expression of melody, and makes the music more expressive and appealing by means of fast and slow alternations and strong and weak contrast.

5.3 The rhythm of Songshen Diao

The combination of rhythm and emotion: The change of rhythm in Tianqin ceremony music is often combined with the expression of emotion, such as in "songshen Diao", the simplicity of rhythm and the application of post-16 minute notes enhance the sense of layering and emotional expression of the music. The concise rhythm not only highlights the beauty of the melody, but also makes the emotional expression more direct and strong, and the audience can feel the emotional atmosphere of the ceremony more deeply. In addition, changes in rhythm are often used to emphasize specific parts of the ritual, making the whole ceremony more dramatic and emotional.

5.4 The Musical instrument characteristics of Songshen Diao

Integration of Musical Instruments, collaborative interpretation: The biggest feature of singing days is the close integration with Musical Instruments. In the singing process, the Tianqin players usually do not sing alone, but perform together with the instrument, making the music more colorful. This kind of singing is unique in Chinese folk music, showing the charm of national music.(As shown in Figure 50)



Figure 50. The Bars 8 through 15 of Songshen diao

Source: Feixue Yang, in March ,2024

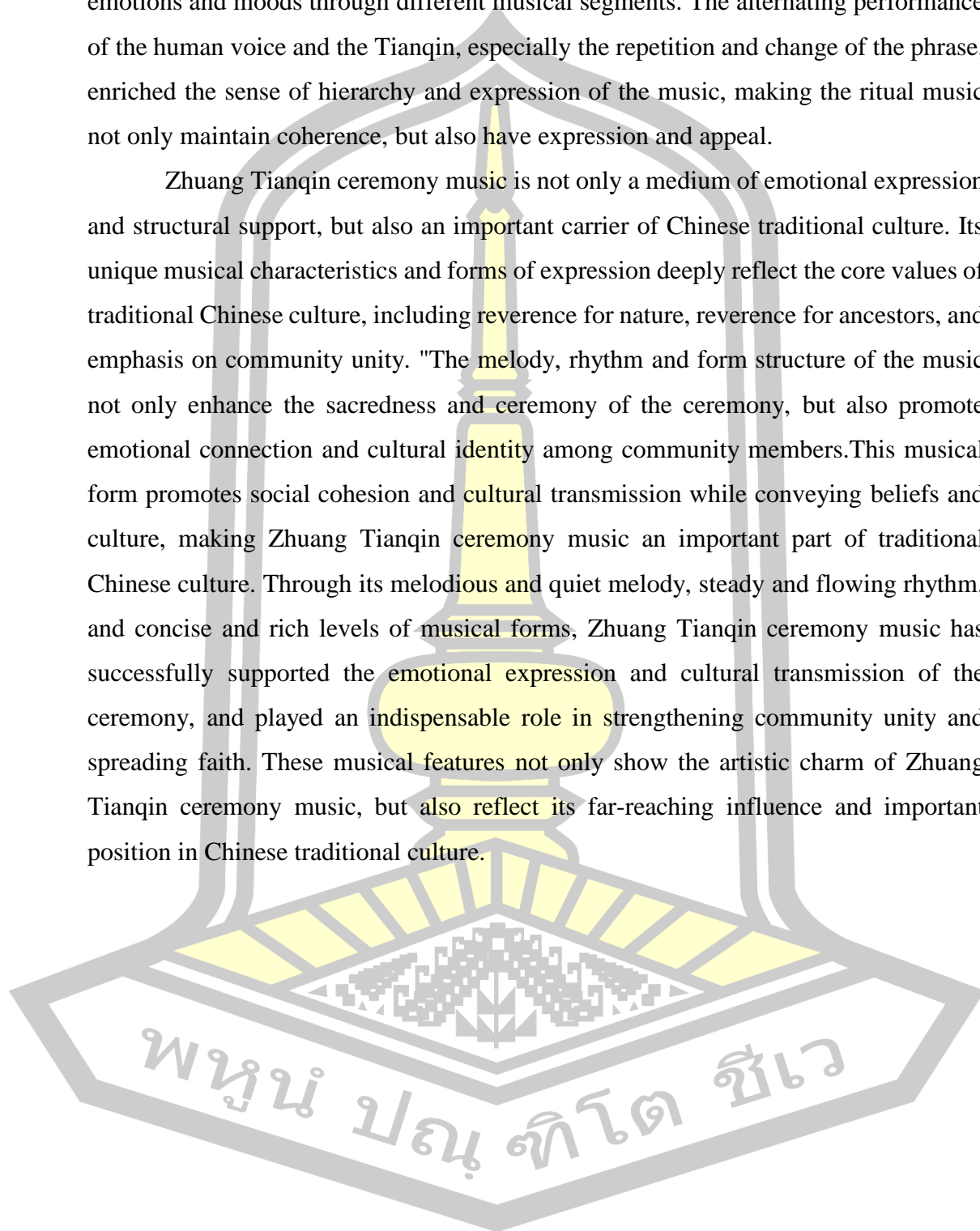
The performance is characterized by its warm and soft melody in D-flat major, as well as the interwoven interaction between the Tianqin and the voice, creating a quiet and sacred atmosphere at the end of the ceremony. With simple musical language and smooth rhythm, the music shows the elasticity and movement of the melody through the rhythm form of double eighth notes and post-sixteenth notes. Tianqin's solo passing through the door and the pause of the voice enhance the sense of layering of the music, while the melodious melody of the finale slowly guides the audience to withdraw calmly from the ceremony atmosphere, reflecting the sublimation and purification of the music in the emotional expression and the end of the ceremony.

6. Summary

Through the analysis of the Zhuang Tianqin ceremony music, such as "Qingshen Diao", "Shanglu Diao", "Paoma Diao", "Fanyan Diao" and "Songshen Diao", we can clearly recognize the unique characteristics of Chinese Zhuang Tianqin ceremony music in terms of melody, rhythm and musical form, as well as its multiple functions and far-reaching significance in the ceremony. The melodic lines of Tianqin ceremony music are smooth and rhythmical, often based on the diatonic scale, which has a deep-rooted influence in traditional Chinese music. The use of diatonic scales is not only simple and clear, but also conforms to the aesthetic pursuit of natural harmony in Chinese music. Melodious and serene melodies, such as those found in "Qingshen Diao" and "Fangyan Diao", create a sacred atmosphere suitable for entering the ritual state. The repetition and change of phrases add layers and dynamics to the music, making the audience better immersed in the ritual atmosphere, and strengthening the depth of emotional expression; The rhythm of Zhuang Tianqin ceremony music is mainly based on double eighth notes and post-sixteenth notes, which is widely used in "Qingshen Diao" and "Paoma Diao". The stability and fluidity of this rhythm not only provides a solid rhythmic skeleton for the music, but also reflects the solemnity and order of the ceremony. The combination of rhythm and emotion, such as the simplicity of rhythm and the application of post-16 notes in "Songshen Diao", enhances the sense of hierarchy of music and makes the audience feel the emotional atmosphere of the ceremony more deeply; The form structure of Zhuang Tianqin ceremony music is usually simple but varied. For example, the prelude and finale of the song add integrity

and a sense of ritual to the music, while the multi-segment structure shows a variety of emotions and moods through different musical segments. The alternating performance of the human voice and the Tianqin, especially the repetition and change of the phrase, enriched the sense of hierarchy and expression of the music, making the ritual music not only maintain coherence, but also have expression and appeal.

Zhuang Tianqin ceremony music is not only a medium of emotional expression and structural support, but also an important carrier of Chinese traditional culture. Its unique musical characteristics and forms of expression deeply reflect the core values of traditional Chinese culture, including reverence for nature, reverence for ancestors, and emphasis on community unity. "The melody, rhythm and form structure of the music not only enhance the sacredness and ceremony of the ceremony, but also promote emotional connection and cultural identity among community members. This musical form promotes social cohesion and cultural transmission while conveying beliefs and culture, making Zhuang Tianqin ceremony music an important part of traditional Chinese culture. Through its melodious and quiet melody, steady and flowing rhythm, and concise and rich levels of musical forms, Zhuang Tianqin ceremony music has successfully supported the emotional expression and cultural transmission of the ceremony, and played an indispensable role in strengthening community unity and spreading faith. These musical features not only show the artistic charm of Zhuang Tianqin ceremony music, but also reflect its far-reaching influence and important position in Chinese traditional culture.



CHAPTER VI

The Guidelines for the transmission and preservation of Zhuang Tianqin Ceremony in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region

Only when human culture is passed on from generation to generation can it continue to enrich and develop. The essential attribute of intangible cultural heritage is transmission, which is also the way and means for its continuation, protection and development. It is its core and the product of human groups, which can strengthen group consciousness and unity. As an intangible cultural heritage, Tianqin not only represents the lifestyle and attitude of the “Butu” ethnic group, is a symbol of the “Butu” ethnic group, but also a tool to “entertain heaven and people”. However, it also faces the problem of transmission, but how to inherit it is worth thinking about.

As a part of the material cultural heritage with a long history, the development of Zhuang Tianqin ceremony music has also ushered in a good survival situation with China's in-depth promotion of the protection of intangible cultural heritage. This chapter discusses from the following aspects.

- 1.The transmission of Zhuang Tianqin Ceremony in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region.
- 2.The preservation of Zhuang Tianqin Ceremony in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region.
3. Summary

1. The transmission of Zhuang Tianqin Ceremony in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region.

The most important factor in transmission is the transmitter. Only through human transmission, possession, continuation and development can the traditional culture be handed down and protected. The transmission mechanism of Tianqin culture includes the transmission in nature and the transmission under the modern system. transmission in nature is the transmission of social origin, mainly in the way of karma, with secrecy and relative stability.

1.1 Traditional transmission mode: Master and apprentice

1.1.1 Transmission system

The transmission of Zhuang Tianqin ceremony of Pingxiang city is the group of ceremony experts who conduct ceremony. Locally, these instrument experts are called "xianpo", who are the medium between man and God, and the Xianpo who use Tianqin are all women. In Ningming County records: "witches are mostly women, men are very few, their practices are different." (Ningming County Annals Compilation Committee: Annals of Ningming County, Beijing: Central Institute for Nationalities Press, 1988)"Xianpo" is the appellation of ceremony experts, who perform ceremony with Tianqin and generally only do Happy occasion; "Daogong" is the name given to ceremony experts who are responsible for Funerals and happy events .In the history of mankind, the social identity of women has been closely linked with religious culture since ancient times. In the ancient matriarchal society, totem worship became the primitive religious form, and women became the objects of worship because they shouldered the sacred mission of procreation. As Friedrich Engels put it, "Among all savages in the lower, and some in the higher, stages of barbarism, women occupy not only a position of freedom, but a position of high esteem." (Selected Works of Marx and Engels 4,, 2012.)In the cultural traditions of Pingxiang City, such as "not leaving the husband's family" or the tradition, women have a high degree of freedom and occupy a higher status. In recent years, the "Xian" group is no longer completely composed of women, there are very few male "Xian", called "xianpo" in Pingxiang City, in the local traditional cognition of Pingxiang City, female ceremony experts are called "Xianpo", and men can only become "Dao Gong", "Daogong" the emergence of this special group is not only because of the "life must become Xian " concept. Objectively the time to hold the ceremony is generally concentrated in the twelfth month of the lunar calendar to the first month, during this period, almost every day someone comes to ask the "Xianpo", so it needs plenty of physical strength to carry out the ceremony. In addition, the high pay has also brought men into this group. These men's clothes are close to women's clothes, which also illustrates the gender characteristics of the "xianpo" profession.

To become a “xianpo” , in their words is to have Special fate, not everyone can be a “Xian” . People who are immortal basically have some experience that is different from ordinary people. For example, Meixiang Li , the fifth generation transmitter and representative transmitter of the autonomous region.

She said:"When I was a child, I always had some strange dreams, my mother always heard me say something inexplicable, and she always said that she could see ghosts, so she took me to see the ” Xianpo” , the “Xianpo” saw my birthday and my mother said that I have to do 'Xian' life, follow the “Xianpo” to learn, and then worshipXuehe Liang as a teacher." I followed her to learn to be a “Xianpo” , at first just to help shake the Maling, occasionally do a slightly simple ceremony like “Chami” , and usually the master would take me to participate in various ceremonies, in 1988 I officially started to help people do ceremonies, and for a long time I was a “ Xianpo ” . Later, my teacher's teacher, Fengqun Lu , was recognized as the representative transmitter of intangible cultural heritage of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, and I followed her to participate in some activities organized by cultural centers and art groups. Gradually, my cooperation with the cultural center and the troupe became more and more close. As long as the leaders came, the cultural center would call me to show, and if there was a "culture to the countryside" activity, they would also call me. In short, 'Xian' I also want to do, I also want to stage. In 2021, I was recognized as a representative transmitterof intangible cultural heritage at the autonomous region level.” (As shown in Figure 51)(Meixiang Li , interviewed,2024)

Table 12. The Zhuang Tianqin Ceremony transmitters

Make: (Feixue Yang,2024)

Generation	Name	Age	Nation	Place of Residence
First generation	Fengqun Lu	/	Zhuang	Ershan street
Second generation	Pan	/	Zhuang	Shangliu village
Third generation	Yejin Lu	/	Zhuang	Banxing village
Fourth generation	Xiurong Huang	/	Zhuang	Bannan village
Fifth generation	Xuehe Liang	75	Zhuang	Bannan village
	Meie Liang(Have	74	Zhuang	Bannan village

	passed away)			
Sixth generation	Meixiang Li	67	Zhuang	Zhongliu village
	Meiqiong Fang	65	Zhuang	Bannan village
	Xue Xieshi	43	Zhuang (Vietnamese)	Banxing village

At present, Xianpo transmitters in Pingxiang City have reached the sixth generation, and there are three transmitters in the sixth generation, (As shown in Table 12) respectively, Meixiang Li, Meiqiong Fang and Xie Shi Xue. Among them, plum fragrance is the most famous. She was named a transmitter of intangible cultural heritage by the Cultural Tourism Department of the autonomous region. Although she is an autonomous region level transmitter, she currently has no apprentices. In the interview, she mentioned to the researcher that she had a disciple, but she gave up on learning, and gave up without a shampoo ceremony, and she thought that becoming a real fairy woman and doing fairies as a career had no way out and could not make money. So I gave up. It can be seen that the transmission and protection of Tianqin ceremony in Pingxiang deserves more scholars' attention and suggestions. (As shown in Figure 52)



Figure 51. The honorary certificate of Tianqin's representative transmitter

Source: Feixue Yang, in January, 2024

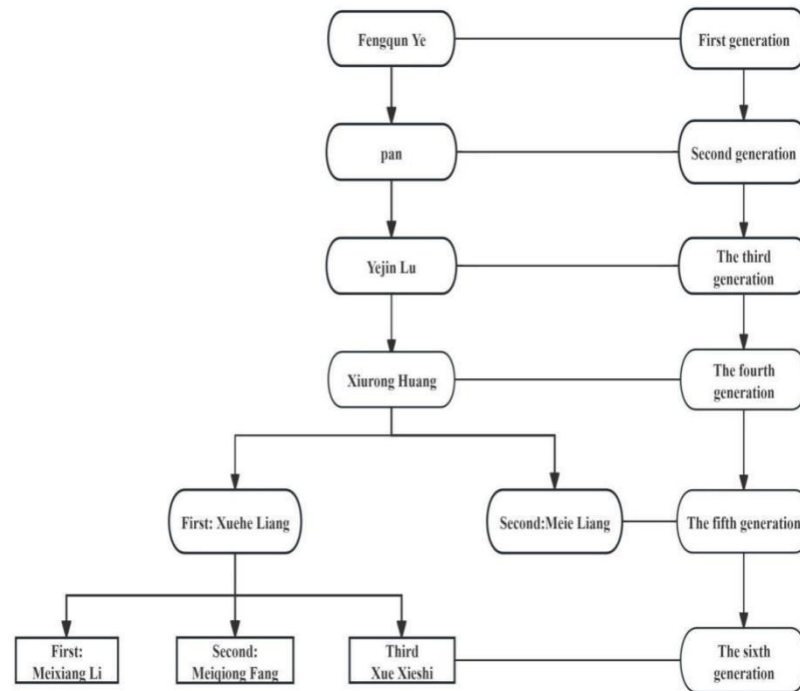


Figure 52. Transmission system

Source: Feixue Yang, Snow was produced in September 2024

1.1.2 Transmission condition

There is a reason why there are so few apprentices, because the conditions required to become an “Xianpo” are very special, according to the “Xianpo”’s own words, in order to become a real “Xianpo”, you must have this life, if the life is not hard enough, it is unbearable. In the interview survey, the researcher confirmed this answer from the “Xianpo” words.

“Some people don't want to do it, and some people aren't tough enough. Talking about his fate with being immortal is also a very magical experience. Young once had a very serious illness, during which you can see the dead relatives talk to yourself, my father was a “Daogong”, heard me say that you can see the ghost must let me do “Xian”, I did not want to do, but then my father gave me a law my illness is better, I had to believe, and then began to do fairy. And I have become the transmitter of the autonomous region here, and now many people come to me to “zuohua”. (Meixiang Li , interviewed,2024)

From the interview can be learned Pingxiang city Tianqin bearer transmission of the dilemma, their acceptance not only depends on personal will, very important reasons to look at fate, the researcher learned through the interview, can become a “Xianpo” people have a wonderful and similar experience.

To sum up, want to become a "xianpo" need to have the following conditions, first hit, life hard enough; Secondly, we must have certain beliefs and interests, first of all, we must believe in ourselves, and at the same time, we must love ourselves; The last transmission is the most traditional transmission method. While protecting such transmission method, relevant music researchers should record the music score passed down orally by the "xianpo" from the perspective of theory and technology, so as to increase the influence and increase the intensity of transmission.

1.2 Innovation transmission model: Education

In contemporary society, cultural transmission is primarily achieved through education—encompassing both formal schooling and broader societal engagement—and is characterized by openness, creativity, and productivity. Although modern methods differ in practice from traditional approaches, they nonetheless retain the essential attributes of systematic cultural dissemination. In particular, school education serves as a vital platform for preserving, disseminating, and advancing the national culture of Tianqin. Consequently, the transmission of Tianqin culture is predominantly realized through both basic and higher education.

1.2.1 Establish Zhuang Tianqin training courses in the schools

In recent years, the Cultural and Sports Department of Pingxiang City, in collaboration with the Education Department, has made significant strides in advancing Tianqin culture. This partnership has involved both infrastructural improvements and the systematic training of Tianqin artists in schools and rural communities through the establishment of specialized art training centers and elective courses. These initiatives have not only broadened and deepened the capabilities of both official and folk Tianqin performance troupes but have also fostered a reserve pool of talent to further promote Tianqin culture.

To further propagate Tianqin culture, primary and secondary schools in Pingxiang City—as well as youth activity centers and institutions in neighboring counties—have set up dedicated training and activity centers. Considerable financial

investments have been allocated to address challenges related to the construction of teaching facilities, procurement of equipment, and overall resource enhancement for Tianqin instruction. Institutions have appointed qualified instructors and regularly invite renowned experts to ensure the smooth operation of these training centers, with well-organized courses scheduled each semester. Moreover, to continuously improve the quality of Tianqin education, detailed work plans and clearly defined teaching objectives are formulated at the beginning of each academic year (As shown in Figure 53), and comprehensive reviews of training activities are conducted at the year's end. Through this systematic approach to evaluating teaching practices, students have consistently demonstrated marked improvements in their Tianqin performance skills.



Figure 53. Tianqin training base

Source: Feixue Yang, from fieldwork in June, 2024

To cultivate and select talent in Tianqin artistry, schools systematically organize Tianqin interest training courses each semester and establish dedicated performance teams. Instructional materials are carefully selected according to different age groups, ensuring targeted pedagogy for talent development. The curriculum encompasses a comprehensive range of topics, including the historical development of Tianqin, the connotation and spiritual essence of its culture, its functional roles and evolution, as well as the instrument's design, structure, and distinctive artistic characteristics. In addition, students are trained in both performance techniques and transmission methods. By integrating a newly curated Tianqin repertoire into the

curriculum, educators actively promote Tianqin art and culture, thereby fostering a strong and enduring student interest in this traditional art form.

1.2.2 To carry out a series of activities of intangible cultural transmission into the school

Relevant departments in Pingxiang City have actively integrated intangible cultural heritage into school campuses, teaching materials, and classroom instruction. For example, “Intangible Heritage into the Campus” training programs have been implemented at institutions such as Pingxiang City No. 1 Middle School, Pingxiang City National Hope School (As shown in Figure 54), and Shangshi Town Central Primary School. These programs were structured into three sessions per school, with each session lasting one week. During these periods, students’ extracurricular time was dedicated to disseminating knowledge of Pingxiang Zhuang Tianqin art and providing practical instruction in Tianqin performance. This initiative has ensured that students of all ethnic backgrounds in Pingxiang have the opportunity to engage with and appreciate their unique cultural heritage.



Figure 54. Primary school Tianqin series activities

Source: Feixue Yang, from fieldwork in June, 2023

1.2.3 The university offers professional courses on Tianqin

With the successful exploration and development of Tianqin culture, the instrument has garnered increasing international recognition. Numerous art institutions have introduced specialized Tianqin courses to advance research on national instruments

and musical traditions, thereby establishing a robust platform for promoting Tianqin performances on public stages. For instance, the Music College of Guangxi University for Nationalities, Guangxi Arts College, Shanghai Conservatory of Music, and the Central Conservatory of Music have all incorporated dedicated Tianqin courses and art interest classes into their curricula. Moreover, scholars from these institutions have frequently visited Tianqin villages along the China–Vietnam border to collect firsthand data, document and validate traditional practices—including playing, singing, and performance evolution—and adapt these methods to enhance their stage appeal.

Case Interview 1 -- Ruiqun Nong , researcher of Tianqin culture.

As a unique musical instrument of the Butu ethnic group, the Tianqin was discovered by the musician Fansim and introduced into colleges and universities, causing great repercussions in the academic circles, literature and art circles. Since then, every year, experts and scholars from inside and outside the district have come to Longzhou and Pingxiang to conduct field research, investigation and practice of Tianqin culture. Among these scholars, some study the historical origin and social background of the production of Tianqin, some study the production method and system of Tianqin, some study the playing style and repertoire of Tianqin, some study the transmission of Tianqin culture, and some study the function of Tianqin culture. Although the research angles, methods and theories applied are different, and the results are also different, but they are all the publicity of Tianqin, which greatly jealous of the popularity and influence of Tianqin and Longzhou. After the investigation in Longzhou, they not only introduced Tianqin, a unique musical instrument and singing method of the Butu ethnic group, to colleges and universities. He was also hired by Pingxiang County government to regularly guide and help the personnel of Tianqin transmission Center in Pingxiang County in terms of performance skills, performance, playing and singing.(Ruiqun Nong, interviewed,2024)

Through the collaborative efforts of the government, scholars, and the Butu ethnic community, the influence of the Tianqin has been steadily expanding. Today, its presence is evident in classrooms, on modern stages, and in international performances, thereby imbuing the traditional Budai culture with renewed vitality. This development represents the construction, innovation, and reproduction of Tianqin culture in a manner that aligns with contemporary societal contexts, integrating traditional cultural resources

with modern educational systems. Ultimately, this transformation not only redefines Tianqin culture but also provides an effective pathway for inheriting, preserving, developing, and promoting minority cultural heritage.

1.2.4 The university established the Tianqin performance team

Since its establishment, the Tianqin team of Guangxi Normal University for Nationalities has enrolled students from the school's music major who are passionate about Tianqin. They learn local culture of Zhuang nationality together and learn Tianqin playing and singing at the same time. (As shown in Figure 55) Ms. Yao Qiyuan is in charge of teaching. The Tianqin team led by her participated in various exhibitions and competitions at the school and provincial and ministerial levels, and obtained excellent results. It has a certain influence in schools, and it is a good practice to spread local folk culture in colleges and universities in ethnic areas.



Figure 55. Guangxi Minzu Normal University Tianqin art innovation exhibition

Source: Feixue Yang, from fieldwork in June, 2023

Case Interview 2 - Qiyuan Yao, a young teacher, ethnic culture communicator and folk singer in Guangxi, Guangxi Minzu Normal University

In order to study and excavate, inherit and protect Guangxi's excellent Tianqin culture, Qiyuan Yao went into the countryside many times, went to the fields and the masses to investigate and learn Guangxi folk songs, exchanged and learned with local folk song transmitters, listened to their stories and cultural connotations behind the folk songs, and took on the burden of inheriting national culture as a young woman, so that

the ancient folk songs could radiate new vitality. At the same time see their own experience and skills professor to the girls of the Tianqin performance team, and regularly ask folk artists to come to teach. (As shown in Figure 56) While learning skills, the school will also set up theoretical courses related to Tianqin art, so that students can strengthen their national knowledge and strengthen their inner cultural identity. In recent years, I have led students to actively participate in more than 20 national unity themed artistic performances such as the 11th China-Asean Technology Transfer and Innovation Cooperation Conference, Chongzuo Zhuang Tianqin Art Week, Tianqin Art Innovation and Creation Performance Evening, and we will continue to inherit Tianqin art more widely. (Qiyuan Yao, interviewed, 2024)



Figure 56. Qiyuan Wu Teaching tianqin to College student

Source: Feixue Yang, from fieldwork in June, 2024

2. The preservation of Zhuang Tianqin Ceremony in Guangxi zhuang autonomous region

2.1 Government Initiatives and Legal Framework

In response to these challenges, the local government has implemented several measures to safeguard and promote Tianqin art. Notably, the "Chongzuo City Zhuang Tianqin Art transmission and Development Regulations" came into effect on January 1, 2023. This legislation provides a legal foundation for the protection and development of Tianqin art in the region.

2.2 Set up a folk performance team of zhuang Tianqin

Folk Tianqin performance teams, formed spontaneously by local villagers, frequently participate in festivals such as the Singing Festival On the third day of the third month of the lunar calendar, as well as in various intangible cultural heritage and folk events. To robustly safeguard intangible cultural heritage, the Pingxiang City Culture and Tourism Bureau and the Cultural Center regularly organize activities—such as the "Strengthening the Protection of Intangible Cultural Heritage and Popularization of National Art" initiative, the 2024 "Cultural and Natural Heritage" Publicity Week, and the "5.23" National Art Exhibition. These events feature performances that integrate dancing, instrumental playing, and singing (As shown in Figure 57).

The composition of these performance teams is notably diverse, including men, women, and children from the community. Within the teams, there are skilled luthiers, enthusiastic learners, and beginners. The teaching and performance structure is divided into two levels. In the instructional phase, younger participants first develop a sense of rhythm and timing—often practicing by ringing a bell with their hands—and typically occupy the front row during performances. In contrast, young and middle-aged performers, whose instrumental and vocal skills are more developed, perform either seated on stools in the second row or standing in the third row.

The Tianqin curriculum adheres to a fixed repertoire and standardized performance formats, with most shows taking place on ad hoc village stages. During major local festivals, these teams perform for large audiences, thereby creating a dynamic platform for the preservation and expression of local folk art.

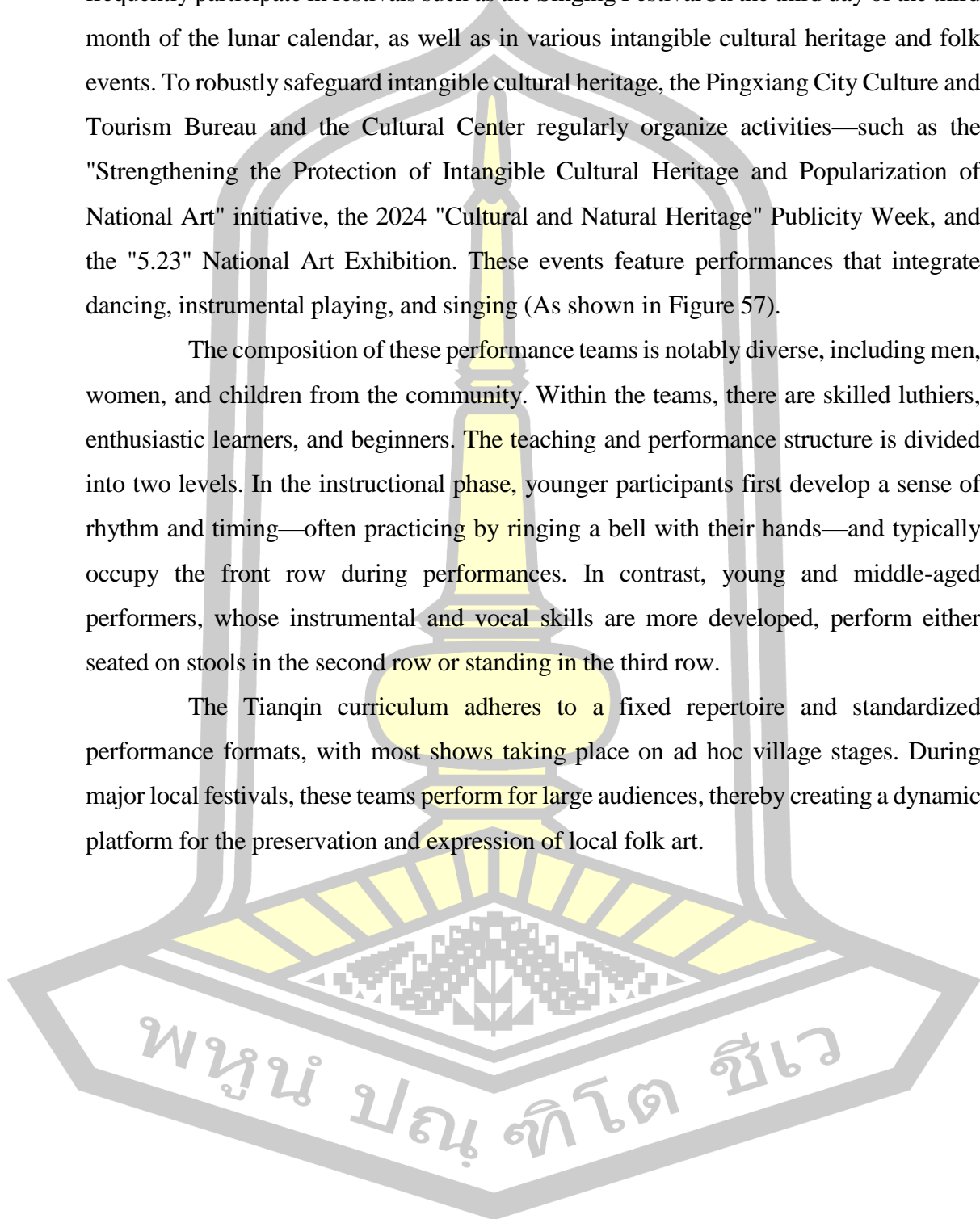




Figure 57. The Tianqin performance

Source: Feixue Yang, from fieldwork in June, 2024

2.3 Cultural Exchange and Promotion

Efforts to enhance the prominence of Tianqin art have encompassed active participation in diverse cultural exchange initiatives. In 2019, the art form was showcased at the second China Intangible Cultural Heritage Spring Festival Gala as well as the "Chinese Nation, One Family" 2019 New Year Concert. These endeavors have significantly contributed to the widespread recognition and appreciation of Tianqin art, both domestically and internationally.

2.4 Tianqin Cultural Heritage Center was established

The Tianqin Cultural Heritage Center, administered by the Pingxiang Municipal Bureau of Literature and Sports, is dedicated to the study, preservation, and performance of Tianqin culture. It operates a specialized Tianqin performance team that actively participates in a range of public events organized by local cultural institutions. For example, the Pingxiang City Cultural Center has hosted "Cultural and Natural Heritage Day" events featuring performances that highlight Pingxiang's intangible cultural heritage, with Tianqin artists as key participants. In addition, as part of the "Culture to the Countryside" initiative, the Pingxiang Intangible Cultural Heritage Center has organized rotating performances of the program "Wuqiu" in various towns. During public awareness activities related to border law, Tianqin artists have been invited to

perform songs that celebrate the stability of the legal system, social harmony, and the well-being of the populace. Through these diverse initiatives, Pingxiang Zhuang Tianqin art has significantly contributed to national unity, ethnic cohesion, and the promotion of social harmony and sustainable development.

Moreover, Pingxiang Zhuang Tianqin art has played an important role in enhancing cultural exchanges among different ethnic groups. Under the "Spring Rain Project"—a cultural benefit initiative led by the Ministry of Culture and the Central Civilization Office—cultural volunteers from Jiangsu Province visited Pingxiang City and witnessed a series of exceptional performances. As part of these cultural exchange activities, the city arranged performances of "Wuqiu" (As shown in Figure 58) and "Walking in the Mountains and Rivers," offering local citizens a unique cultural feast. The "Wuqiu" performance notably secured the second prize in creation and the third prize in performance at the 9th District Dance Competition in 2017, as well as the second "Huashan Award" for literary and artistic creation in Chongzuo City. Given its proximity to the Vietnam border, Pingxiang City frequently engages in cultural exchanges with its neighbors. In 2019, the city hosted the "2019 China-Vietnam (Pingxiang) Folk Culture Exchange and Performance" event at North Railway Station Square, where Tianqin artists from China and Vietnam alternated on stage, thereby strengthening cultural ties and promoting friendship between the border communities of the two nations.



Figure 58. "wuqiu"

Source: Feixue Yang, from Official website, in 2023

3. Summary

Following a series of systematic initiatives—ranging from master-apprentice transmission and formal educational programs to broader community outreach—Pingxiang Zhuang Tianqin art has gradually gained widespread recognition both domestically and internationally. These three modes of transmission have effectively ensured that this traditional art form is passed down from generation to generation. In an era characterized by rapid cultural globalization, it is essential not only to preserve the intrinsic nature and distinctive characteristics of Tianqin art but also to integrate diverse cultural elements to forge a unique mode of communication that secures its enduring legacy.

Addressing these challenges requires a collaborative approach involving government agencies, educational institutions, cultural organizations, and local communities. By cultivating a supportive environment and promoting active engagement, the transmission and protection of Zhuang Tianqin art can be successfully achieved, thereby ensuring its vitality for future generations.

Table 13. The transmission of Zhuang tianqin ceremony in Guangxi zhuang autonomous region

Make: (Feixue Yang,2024)

Category	Traditional Master-Apprentice System	Modern Educational System
Core Drivers	Divine mandate belief ("天命"), oral transmission	Institutional education, standardized curricula
Transmitters	Female-dominated "Xianpo" (ritual specialists), requiring "special fate"	Schoolteachers, university scholars, and performance troupes
Transmission Methods	- Secretive mentorship - Ritual-centric training - Gender/geographic constraints	- Open training bases - Academic courses - Stage adaptations

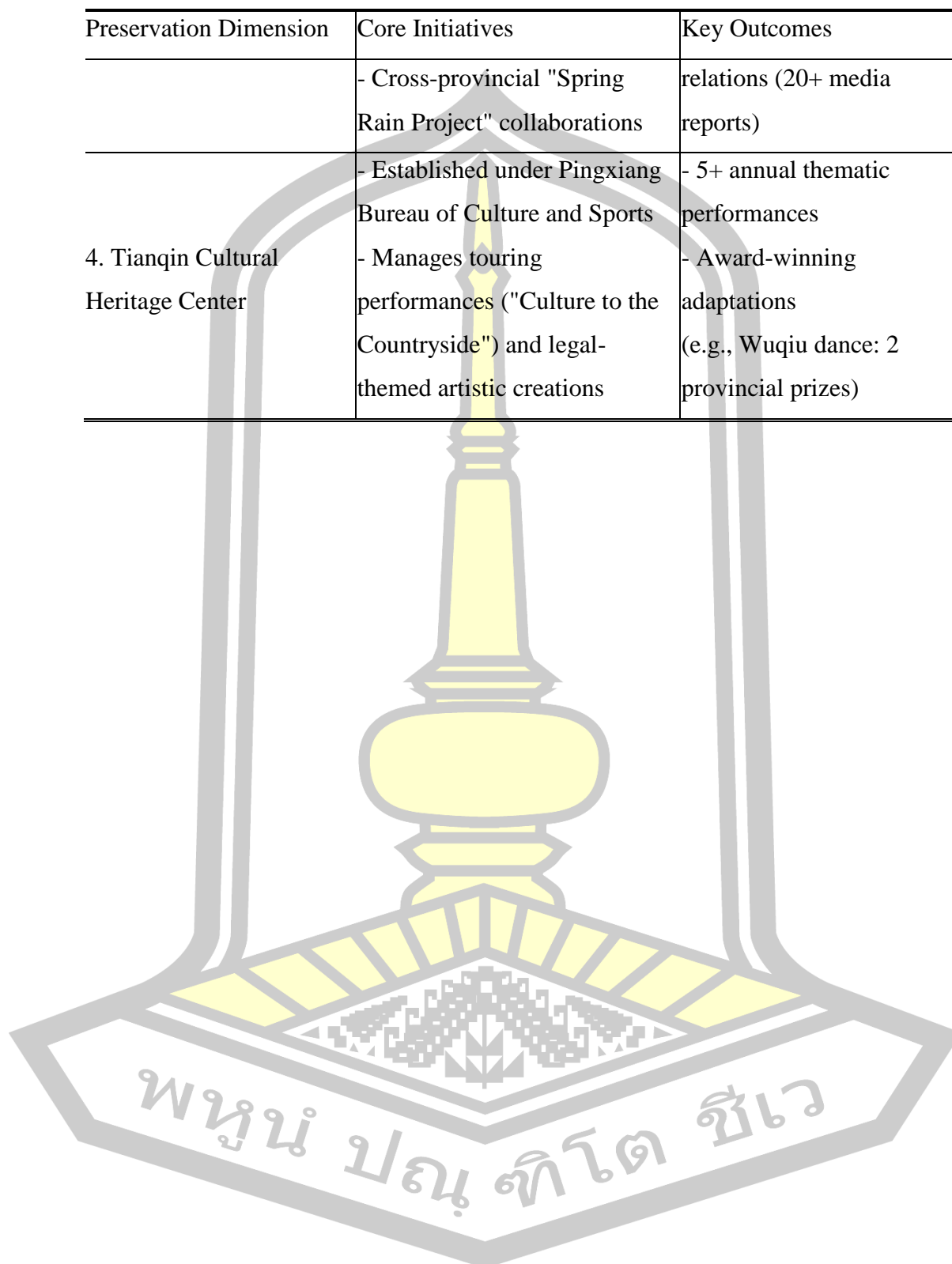
Category	Traditional Master-Apprentice System	Modern Educational System
Key Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Aging transmitters (avg. age 65+) - Declining apprentices due to low income and fading beliefs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Balancing authenticity with modernization - Ensuring cultural depth in standardized teaching
Achievements	Preservation of sacred rituals and oral traditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 200+ students trained annually - 20+ international performances

Table 14. The preservation of Zhuang tianqin ceremony in Guangxi zhuang autonomous region

Make: (Feixue Yang,2024)

Preservation Dimension	Core Initiatives	Key Outcomes
1. Government-Led Legal Framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enacted Chongzuo City Zhuang Tianqin Art transmission and Development Regulations (2023) - Allocated dedicated funding and policy support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Legal safeguards for institutionalized transmission - 10+ annual ICH-themed government-led events
2. Grassroots Performance Troupes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Villager-organized troupes (mixed age/gender) - Tiered training: rhythmic basics for children, advanced for adults 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Revitalized grassroots cultural vitality - Annual outreach to 5,000+ audiences (village stages, festivals)
3. Domestic/International Cultural Exchange	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Featured in 2019 China ICH Spring Festival Gala - 2019 China-Vietnam Folk Culture Joint Performances 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National recognition in mainstream platforms - Strengthened Sino-Vietnamese border

Preservation Dimension	Core Initiatives	Key Outcomes
	- Cross-provincial "Spring Rain Project" collaborations	relations (20+ media reports)
4. Tianqin Cultural Heritage Center	- Established under Pingxiang Bureau of Culture and Sports - Manages touring performances ("Culture to the Countryside") and legal-themed artistic creations	- 5+ annual thematic performances - Award-winning adaptations (e.g., Wuqiu dance: 2 provincial prizes)



CHAPERT VII

Conclusion , Discussion and Suggestions

There are three objectives for the study:

- 1) To explore the current status of Zhuang Tianqin Ceremony in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, China.
- 2) To analyze the music characteristics of Zhuang Tianqin Ceremony in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, China.
- 3) To study the preservation and transmission of the Zhuang Tianqin Ceremony in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, China.

Based on the information including literature, field data and relevant research methods, the results of this study can be summarized as follows:

1. Conclusion
2. Discussion
3. Suggestions

1. Conclusion

1.1 According to the first research purpose, from the Zhuang Tianqin ceremony development and current situation. According to the historical development context, this research divides into four periods: origin, development, stability, protection and transmission of the Zhuang Tianqin ceremony. The results show that the origin and history of Zhuang Tianqin ceremony in Pingxiang city can be traced back to the 1035, and it evolved from witchcraft. At this time, Tianqin was called "ding" because of the sound it made. Ding in the folk has become a medium for people to communicate with the gods, people in order to pray for the vision through the form of "Xianpo" to achieve the purpose of good weather, health and happiness. In the development period, the Zhuang Tianqin Ceremony was renamed "Tianqin" according to the cultural elite's exploration of Tianqin related beliefs and rituals. At this time, the Tianqin ceremony music was officially named, and the form of the Zhuang Tianqin ceremony was gradually recorded, but it was not clear. In 1980, the common form of the Zhuang Tianqin ceremony was basically determined. "Chami" for fortune telling, "Ruji" for

safety, "Zuojiu" enhances the magic of "Xianpo". The researchers summarized the basic steps and meanings of these three ceremony. At the same time, the Zhuang Tianqin ceremony was further expanded in social function, performance field and performance form at this stage. Besides the use of Tianqin as a Musical Instruments used in a Buddhist or Taoist school, the identity of Tianqin as an instrument was further clarified, and Tianqin was included in the folk musical instrument of Guangxi. Tianqin has gradually become a folk symbol of Zhuang nationality in Guangxi, driving economic development. At this stage, Tianqin transmission lineage, Tianqin production and transmission base and Tianqin folk association were formed. With the vigorous development of the government and the local cultural bureau, it successfully applied for the intangible cultural heritage of Guangxi Autonomous Region, and two ceremony transmitter won the title of Tianqin art transmitter at the autonomous region level. At the end of this chapter, through a case record of the Zhuang Tianqin ceremony - "Ruji", the sacred process of the Zhuang Tianqin ceremony is presented to the public, and the 13 of the Tianqin ceremony are presented one by one.

1.2 According to the second research objective, five songs in the 13 links of Zhuang Tianqin ceremony -- "Ruji" are analyzed, which are "Qingshen Diao", "Shanglu Diao", "Paoma Diao", "Fangyan Diao" and "Songshen Diao". Through the in-depth analysis of five songs, It can clearly understand the uniqueness of Zhuang Tianqin ceremony music in terms of melody, rhythm, Musical form, Musical instrument characteristics, and its multiple functions and far-reaching significance in the ceremony. The melodic lines of Zhuang Tianqin ceremony music are smooth and rhythmical, often based on the diatonic scale, which has a deep-rooted influence in traditional Chinese music. The use of diatonic scales is not only simple and clear, but also conforms to the aesthetic pursuit of natural harmony in Chinese music. Melodious and serene melodies, such as those found in "Qingshen Diao" and "Fangyan Diao", create a sacred atmosphere suitable for entering the ceremony state. The repetition and change of phrases add layers and dynamics to the music, making the audience better immersed in the ceremony atmosphere, and strengthening the depth of emotional expression; The rhythm of Zhuang Tianqin ceremony music is mainly based on double eighth notes and post-sixteenth notes, which is widely used in "Qingshen Diao" and "Paoma Diao". The stability and fluidity of this rhythm not only provides a solid rhythmic skeleton for the

music, but also reflects the solemnity and order of the ceremony. The combination of rhythm and emotion, such as the simplicity of rhythm and the application of post-16 'notes in "Sogshen Diao", enhances the sense of hierarchy of music and makes the audience feel the emotional atmosphere of the ceremony more deeply; The form structure of Tianqin ceremony music is usually simple but varied. For example, the prelude and finale of the song add integrity and a sense of ceremony to the music, while the multi-segment structure shows a variety of emotions and moods through different musical segments. The alternating performance of the human voice and the Tianqin, especially the repetition and change of the phrase, enriched the sense of hierarchy and expression of the music, making the ceremony music not only maintain coherence, but also have expression and appeal.

1.3 According to the third research objective, through the analyze the transmission of Zhuang Tianqin Ceremony in Guangxi, China. It can be summarized as follows: The transmission mainly explores the transmission status of Zhuang Tianqin ceremony at this stage through three channels of tradition and innovation. Master and apprentice transmission is still the main form of transmission, and it is also the only communication channel for the development of "Xianpo". Although the traditional transmission form retains the original nature and religious function to the greatest extent, the transmission speed of Zhuang Tianqin ceremony is stagnant due to the restrictive attitude. In this case, innovative ways of transmission emerged - educational transmission and social transmission. Although this way will weaken its original nature to a certain extent, this way can greatly promote the spread and development of Zhuang Tianqin . At present, through these three complementary forms of communication, the Zhuang native art can be effectively and widely transmitted from generation to generation. Under the mainstream impact of the big era, it is necessary to maintain its original nature and characteristics, but also to integrate multi-culture, so that the Zhuang Tianqin can truly spread between generations and continue.

The researcher believes that the future research trend of Zhuang Tianqin ceremony music should revolve around: 1. How to better protect the method of living art, and record the oral ceremony music. 2. Combine traditional transmission methods with modern transmission methods. 3. The development of related industries of Tianqin art

should be closer to the traditional Zhuang Tianqin ceremony music, and its national character cannot be changed in the creation itself.

2. Discussion

2.1 According to the first research objective, the current status of Zhuang Tianqin Ceremony in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, China. Through literature review, it is found that in Zhuang Tianqin ceremony Chen, Z.H.(2023) analyzed the origin and development of Zhuang Tianqin ceremony in Pingxiang area, and classified and described the functions and types of Tianqin ceremony. However, the article does not divide the development course of Zhuang Tianqin ceremony on the historical vertical line. (Chen Z.Z.2023) Huang,S.M.(2011) studied the development and changes of Tianqin, and analyzed the function changes, performance field changes and performance forms changes of Zhuang Tianqin ceremonies. It bears the relevance of the Zhuang Tianqin ceremony between culture and art. But there is little research on ritual music. (Huang,S.M, 2011)

The researchers in this research divided the development process of the Zhuang Tianqin ceremony into stages and clarified the key changes of the Zhuang Tianqin ceremony in each historical period. The content can not only clearly understand the development of the Zhuang Tianqin ceremony from the historical longitudinal line, but also clearly describe the types of the Zhuang Tianqin ceremony, the ritual instruments and the ritual process. In particular, this article through a recording of the Zhuang Tianqin ceremony "Ruji". The whole process will be recorded and displayed one by one, which is not seen in previous studies, hoping to provide reference for relevant studies on the Zhuang Tianqin ceremony .

2.2 According to the second research objective, the musical characteristics of the Zhuang Tianqin ceremony . In Xiao Jing's Research on the culture and art of Tianqin of Zhuang nationality in Guangxi, it is mentioned that the music of Tianqin is very rich in content. Xiao Jing made a brief analysis from the existing musical scores in the book "Examination of Minority Musical Instruments", and only analyzed the mode and rhythm of Tianqin solo. (Xiao, J.2012) Chen ,Z.H.(2023) pointed out in “ article on Pingxiang Tianqin Art Research”, that "Ruji" plays a role in promoting the ceremony process through the musical transformation of the ceremony. (Chen Zhanghao, 2023), Qiu Chen's

Study on the Construction and Identification of Zhuang Tianqin Culture recorded and analyzed the "Nongqiao" ceremony and sacrificial music in Fangcheng and Longzhou area. This research focuses on the analysis of the musical structure and style of the Zhuang Tianqin ceremony music.

The researchers in this research, not only extract the five songs of the Zhuang Tianqin ceremony, but also analyze the melody, musical form, rhythm and instrumental features of the five songs one by one. The researchers believe that identifying the tune of each procedure helps analyze the meaning of the corresponding ceremony. In the following research, different types of ceremony music are analyzed one by one, and all songs of Zhuang Tianqin ceremony are recorded, archived and analyzed, which is helpful to better preserve the static data of Zhuang Tianqin ceremony.

2.3 According to the third research objective, the protection and transmission of the Tianqin ceremony of Zhuang nationality is studied. Huang, S.M. (2011). Qiu,C. (2019) two scholars have sorted out the expert system in Longzhou region to a certain extent, but in Pingxiang region, only Chen ,Z.H. (2023) has made a certain introduction to some transmitters, including two "Xianpo", and has not sorted out the pedigree of the existing "Xianpo". (Chen Hongwei, 2019) conducted in-depth interviews with several domestic communicators to help readers understand the mysterious "Xianpo" group and put forward relevant transmission and development measures.

The researchers in this research agree with the above scholars' views. However, researchers believe that the combination of tradition and innovation transmission mode can give full play to the effect of $1+1>2$. Although the transmitter form of Zhuang Tianqin ceremony is divided into two modes of traditional innovation, the balance and symbiosis between tradition and innovation is a problem that needs further research. Tianqin culture itself is constantly changing to the society. The form and content of its transmission must be changed accordingly to meet the requirements of modern society for cultural transmission. From the perspective of the traditional education transmission of Tianqin culture, neither the transmission of master and apprentice nor the transmission of education can meet the original intention of modern society to transmission and protect national culture, because its single transmission path and scope cannot play a good role in protecting and inheriting Tianqin culture. With the acceleration of the process of modern society, if the traditional culture is not effectively

inherited and protected, the national culture will face extinction. Therefore, national culture should carry on cultural transmission, and the combination of national culture and school education is the most ideal model.

3. Suggestions

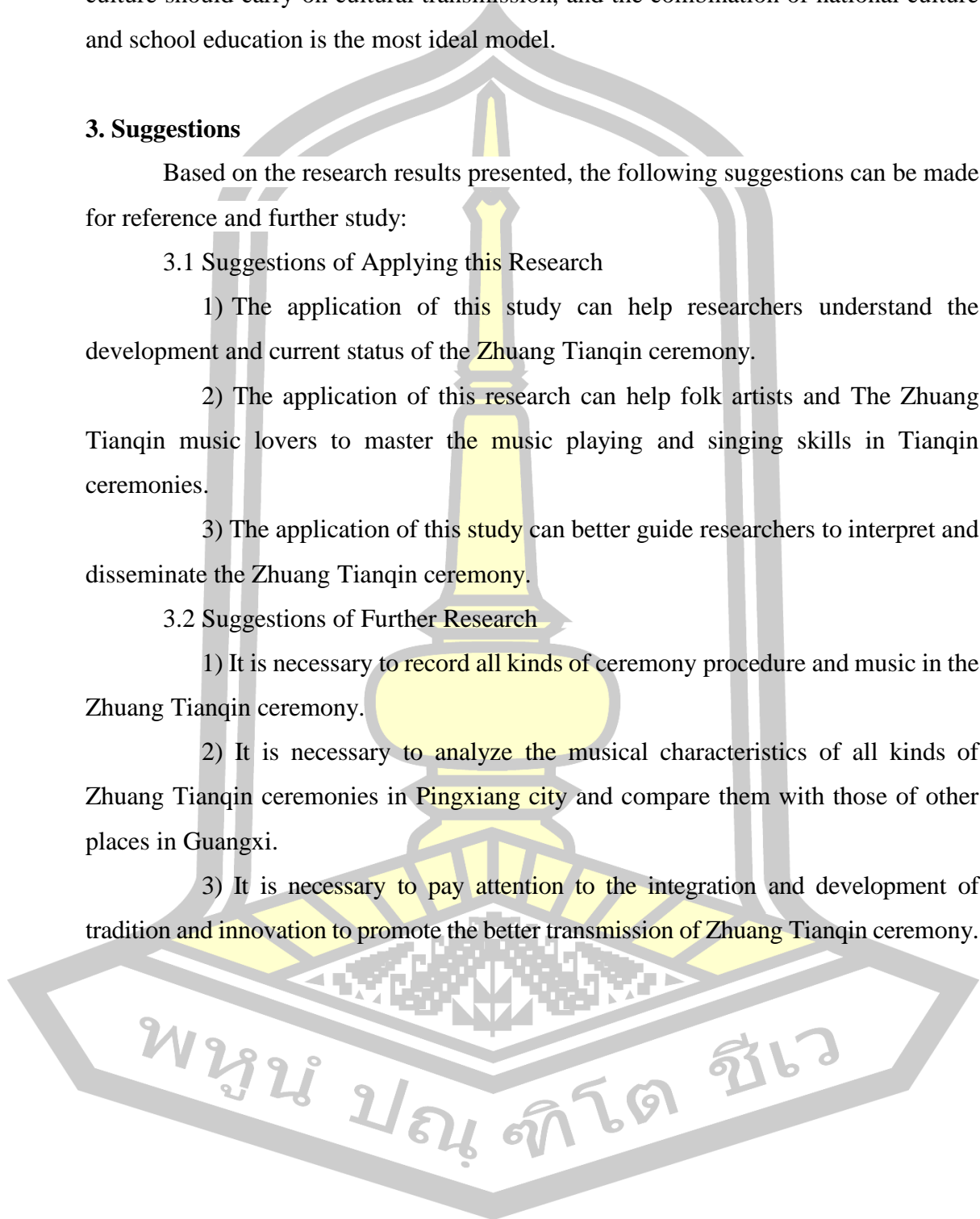
Based on the research results presented, the following suggestions can be made for reference and further study:

3.1 Suggestions of Applying this Research

- 1) The application of this study can help researchers understand the development and current status of the Zhuang Tianqin ceremony.
- 2) The application of this research can help folk artists and The Zhuang Tianqin music lovers to master the music playing and singing skills in Tianqin ceremonies.
- 3) The application of this study can better guide researchers to interpret and disseminate the Zhuang Tianqin ceremony.

3.2 Suggestions of Further Research

- 1) It is necessary to record all kinds of ceremony procedure and music in the Zhuang Tianqin ceremony.
- 2) It is necessary to analyze the musical characteristics of all kinds of Zhuang Tianqin ceremonies in Pingxiang city and compare them with those of other places in Guangxi.
- 3) It is necessary to pay attention to the integration and development of tradition and innovation to promote the better transmission of Zhuang Tianqin ceremony.



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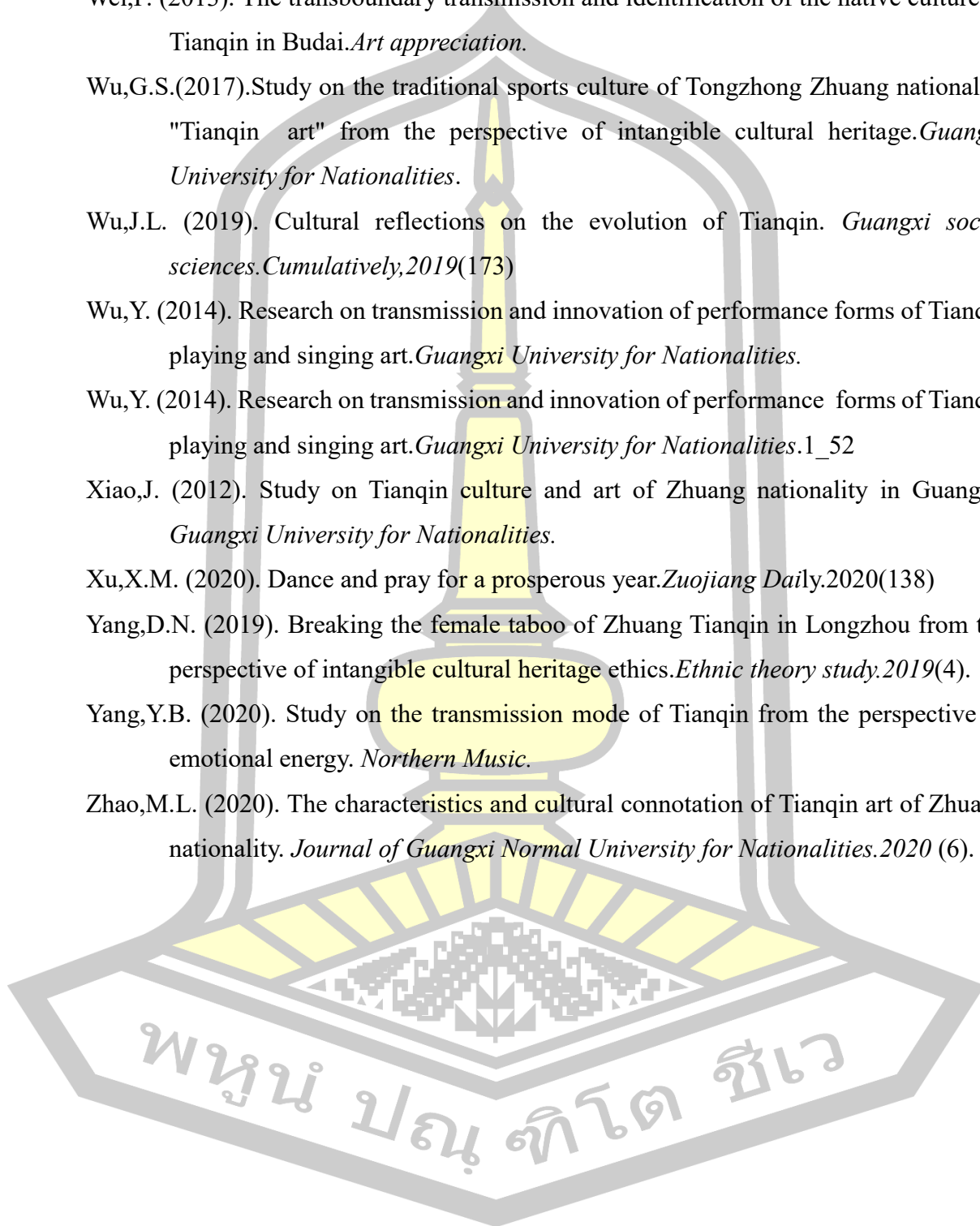
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APPENDIX

APPENDIX 1

1. “Qingshen Diao”

“Qingshen Diao”

Voice :Meixiang Li
Musical notatio:Jianting Huang

Voice

Tianqin

10

youx na di___gw_ gvaq cib_ rungh gouj dat_ mbouj

17

nyangz ha le mak ha_ biz ha baz liux na_gvaq cibrungh gou bya ga youx noix hoi_ mbouj

25

nyangz va lij noix liux__ ha gvaq cib rungh gouj dat mbouj nyangz ha

33

le mak ha leix ha cei_ liux boj li na_gvaq cib_mbanj gouj haw ga___ youx noix

2

42

nauq_nyangz beix ok_ rogliu_ youx na di gw hoi_ fwn yaek doek

49

caemh rox youx yaekumz caemh rox ni youx yaek ha_limz camh ha liu rox na fwn yaek doek le bumz

55

ga youx noix hoi youx yaek ha lumz yiengh gagliub big gyei rox lie youx

62



2. "Shanglu Diao"



"Shanglu Diao"

Voice: Meixiang Li
Musical notation: Jianting Huang

Voice

youx na di gw hoi_ youq gyae rox faz_ mbanj mak nganxhenj li linz lo mak nganz

Tianqin

Maling

8

hahenj ha li liux linz na youq gyae rox faz gim yeak mbin mbouj miz fiwed_

13

yaek bwet mbouj mizrengz youq gyae rox faz bengz gen yaeuj ga mbouj hwnq



3. "Paoma Diao"

"Paoma Diao"

Voice: Meixiang Li
Musical notation: Jianting Huang

Voice

o ou hai yoi loeg vek_ a youq gwnz ndoi ya oi yoi ha le ndoi ci leu

Tianqin

Maling

7

ci mbouj ya leu mize i yoi lo moiz nanz doj ci go oi le moiz nanz doj xi go oi_ oi

13

hae yoi caep nuengx a youq gyang loh ya oi yoi ha le lo ci go leu ci mbouj ya leu lox ei yoi

2

19

lo coh nanz cam ci go oi le coh nanz cam ci go oi oi le le__ ye ba mbouj bij mbun

25

sang go ci bij mbun shang lo meh go mbun gvangq lo langxlangx boh meh aen lo cingz

31

gvangq ye beimuengz ei gvangq langx go ci aen cingz gvangz lo aen cingz gvangq gvaq lo

37

mbun ba mbouj bij mbun sang go ci bij mbun sang lo meh go mbugvangq lo langx

4. "Fangyan Diao"

"Fangyan Diao"

Voice: Meixiang Li
Musical notation: Jianting Huang

Voice

ruz hwnj laeghwnj lienz na leu ruz hwnj laeg lienz he ruz hwnj cien na sw ga a ha

Tianqin

Maling

8

hwnj le fanh le le sw ga he leu le... hwnj sam fanh duj va ne le ra bae daengz a sw ga ha

15

ha laemz le fongx le le sw ga he leu raruz mbouq raen ruz ruz bae

20

gwnz gaz buenq buenq aen goenh bak lungz dwk haeuj fwngz youx le noix

5. "Songshen Diao"

"Songshen Diao"

Voice: Meixiang Li

Musical notation: Jianting Huang

Voice

Tianqin

8

16

24

32

youz_na_ di_ gw_ hoi giuz yaek rack le rack

raeuz caiq ha_ le le caep ha giuz ha_ moq ha liux na_ raeuz_

caiq doq_ giuz goz_ bae haw moz coj_ seiq bae.ndwen

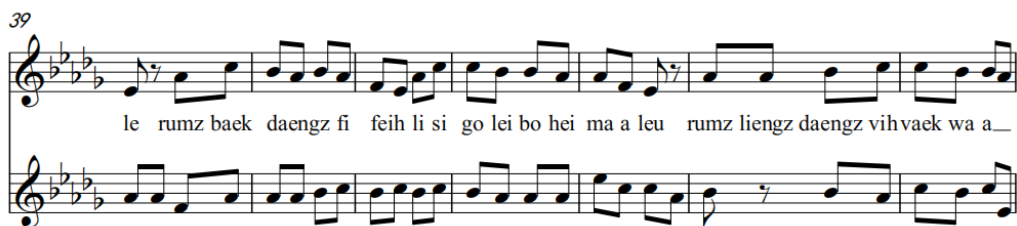
ngeih cib_ gouj bae ndij youx yiuq bauq va ga_ yuox noix hoi_ bauq sa_ hongz

mbouj duenh rumz liengz daengz vih vaek yo yi_ zong bo hei ni ha liux



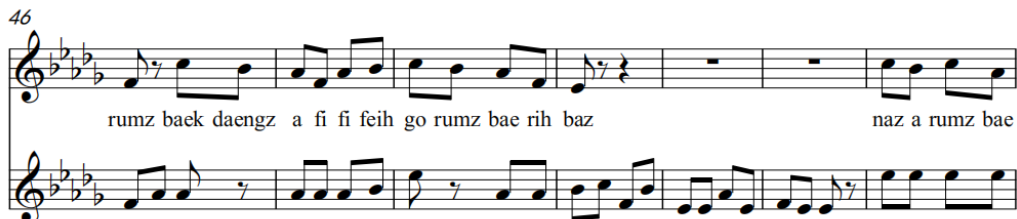
2

39



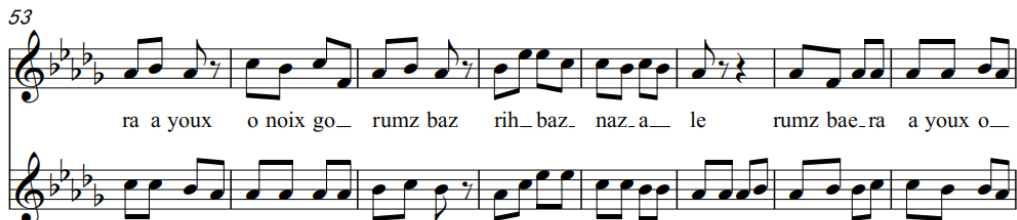
le rumz baek daengz fi feih li si go lei bo hei ma a leu rumz liengz daengz vihvaek wa a_

46



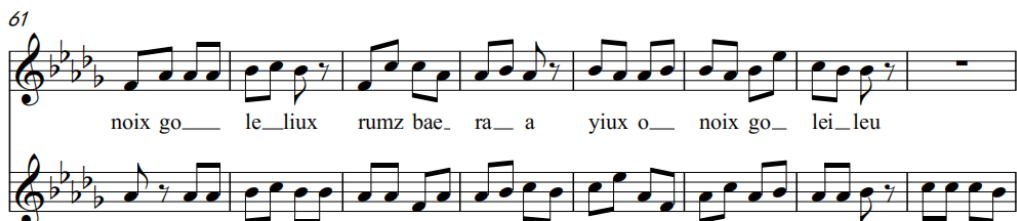
rumz baek daengz a fi fi feih go rumz bae rih baz naz a rumz bae

53



ra a youx o noix go_ rumz baz rih_ baz_ naz_ a_ le rumz bae_ ra a youx o_

61



noix go_ le_ liux rumz bae_ ra_ a yiux o_ noix go_ lei_ leu

69



73



APPENDIX 2

Interview Questionnaire

1. Time

September 2023 to June 2024

2. Site

Pingxiang city, Guangxi

Questionnaire of Zhuang Tianqin for Key Informants

Part 1 General Information

Name	Age	Gender	Interview date	Site

Part 2 Interview outline of Zhuang Tianqin ceremony for transmitter

1	How many years have you been a “Xianpo”?
2	How did you become a “Xianpo”? What does it take to be a “Xianpo”?
3	What generation are you from?
4	The local influence of the Zhuang Tianqin ceremony?
5	How many types are there in general?
6	Under what circumstances do people come to a fairy to be a fairy?
7	How are the singing and playing techniques in the Zhuang Tianqin ceremony learned?
8	What is the meaning of Zhuang Tianqin ceremony?
9	What role did “Xianpo” in the process of Tianqin ceremony?
10	In the process of Zhuang Tianqin ceremony, are the tunes and lyrics fixed?

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Part 3 Interview outline of Zhuang Tianqin for producer

1	How long have you been making the Tianqin?
2	What generation are you from Tianqin?
3	Are all the Tianqin used by "Xianpo" in Pingxiang City made by you?
4	What are the characteristics of Pingxiang Tianqin?
5	What improvements and improvements has Tianqin made since the first generation?
6	What is the reason for Tianqin's improvement?
7	What materials are used to make Tianqin? Any special requirements?
8	What is the purpose of the Tianqin besides the use of "Xianpo"?
9	What is the size of the Tianqin?
10	How did you learn how to make the Tianqin?

Part 4 Interview outline of Zhuang Tianqin for teacher

1	How many years have you been performing the Tianqin?
2	How many years have you been teaching Tianqin?
3	How many years have you studied Tianqin culture?
4	What is your perspective on the development and transmission of Tianqin?
5	What contributions have you made to the transmission of Tianqin?
6	What is the difference and connection between Zhuang Tianqin ceremony and Tianqin performance?
7	What are the measures of Pingxiang Municipal government for Tianqin transmission?
8	Has Tianqin received much attention from scholars?
9	What is the bottleneck of Tianqin transmission?
10	What are the prospects for the development of Tianqin art?



APPENDIX 3
Fieldwork picture



Figure1: Meixiang Li received the certificate of representative transmitter
Source: Feixue Yang (2024)



Figure2: Meixiang Li received the certificate of representative transmitter
Source: Feixue Yang (2024)



Figure3: Researchers and transmitter Meixiang Li

Source: Feixue Yang (2024)



Figure4: The researcher interviews Meixiang Li , the "ruji" Zhuang Tianqin ceremony music

Source: Feixue Yang (2024)



Figure5: The researcher interviews the transmitter Xuehe Liang

Source: Feixue Yang (2024)



Figure6: Pingxiang City cultural Museum director Tao Xie (Second row, second from left), The researcher (Second row, fourth from left) and four "xianpo"

Source: Feixue Yang (2024)



Figure7: Tianqin maker Li Fangang tells about the fourth generation Tianqin improvement

Source: Feixue Yang (2024)



Figure8: Photo taken with Fangang Li (middle of the picture), the transmitter of Tianqin production

Source: Feixue Yang (2024)

BIOGRAPHY

NAME	Feixue Yang
DATE OF BIRTH	March 13, 1990
PLACE OF BIRTH	Xianyang, Shaanxi
ADDRESS	112 Dongge Road, Qingxiu District, Nanning City, Guangxi
POSITION	Chongzuo City, Guangxi
PLACE OF WORK	Guangxi Normal University for Nationalities
EDUCATION	2008 - 2012 Bachelor of Arts in Dance Studies, Guangxi Normal University 2012 - 2015 Master of Education, Curriculum and Teaching Theory (Dance Teaching), Guangxi Normal University 2022 - 2025 (Ph.D.) College of Music at Mahasarakham University

