



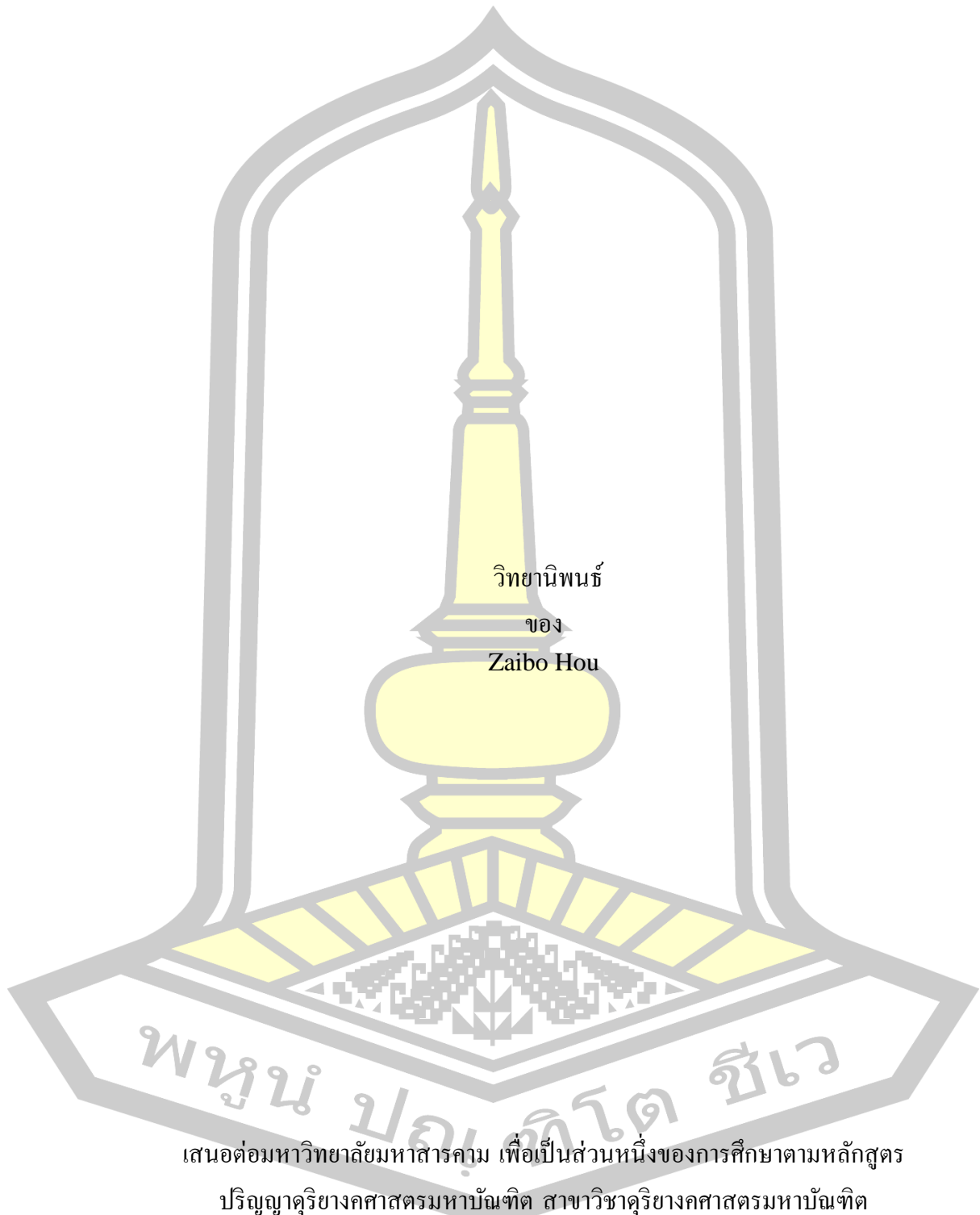
The Analysis of Miao Love Songs of Zimei festival, Guizhou Province, China

Zaibo Hou

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

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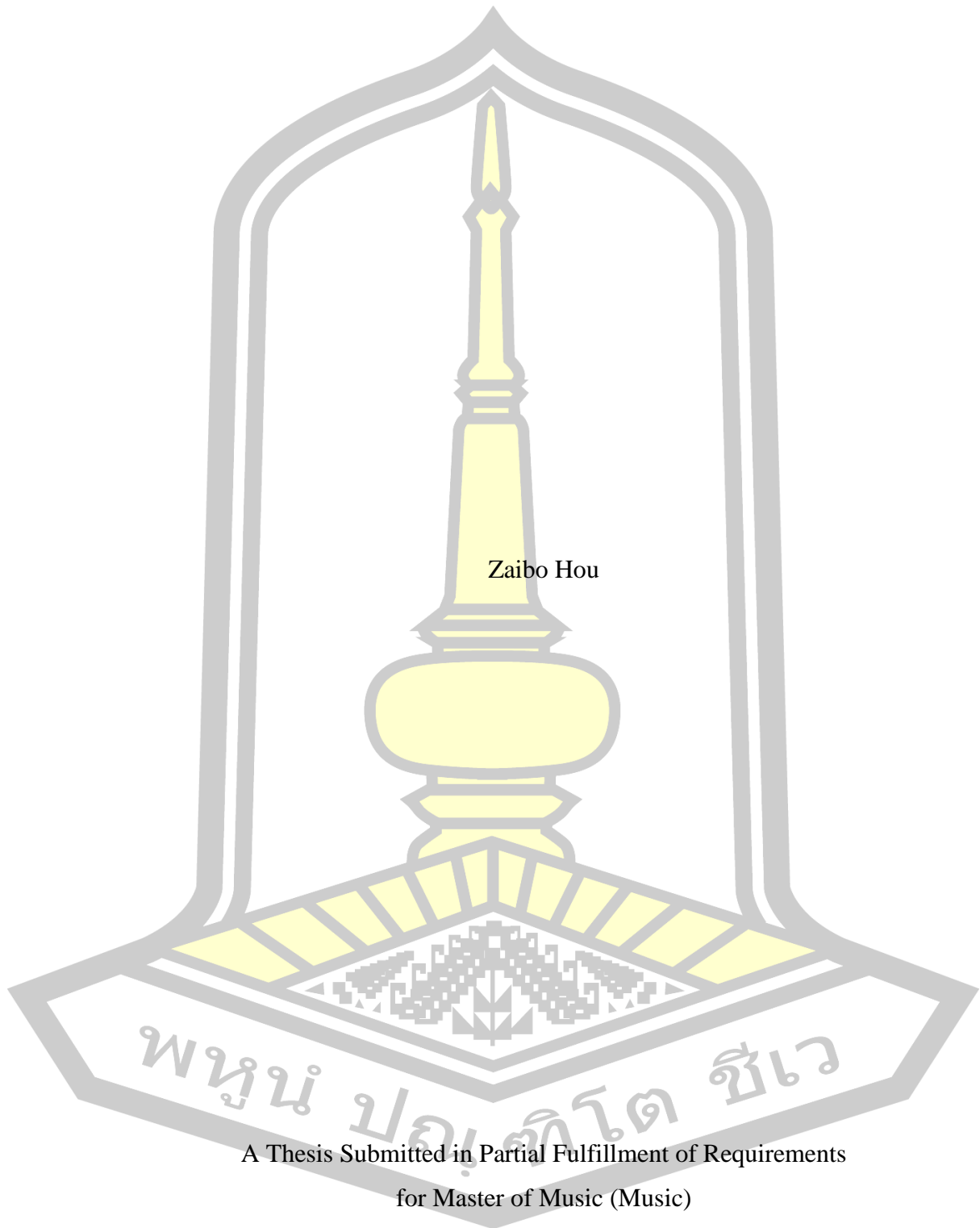
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A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of Requirements
for Master of Music (Music)

March 2025

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ABSTRACT

The objectives of this research were to: 1) To investigate the development of the Miao Love Song Zimei Festival in Taijiang County, Guizhou Province, China. 2) To analysis the musical characteristics of Miao Love Songs from the Zimei Festival, Taijiang County, Guizhou Province, China. The Zimei Festival of Miao Love Songs in Taijiang County, as a traditional Miao festival, boasts unique cultural connotations and musical characteristics. Qualitative research methods with interview and observation forms are adopted as research tools. Collect data on-site through interviews with two key informants and classify and analyze the collected data.

1. In terms of development stages, it originated in ancient times and has gone through the Tang and Song dynasties, the Ming and Qing dynasties, the modern and contemporary periods, and the modern development period. Through the changes of time, influenced by factors such as social changes, ethnic migrations, and cultural exchanges in different historical periods, its forms and contents have been continuously enriched.

2. Regarding the musical characteristics of Miao love songs, their melodies are mostly based on the pentatonic scale, with a moderate range but significant undulations. Through unique grace notes such as slides and trills, the melodies become more graceful and lively. In terms of rhythm, syncopation, dotted notes and other rhythm patterns are often used, creating a strong sense of rhythm. When sung in the Miao dialect, the lyrics often employ figures of speech like metaphor and exaggeration to express delicate emotions. All these elements showcase a distinct national style and regional characteristics, carrying the emotional memories and cultural heritage of the Miao people.

Keyword : Chinese folk songs, Miao love songs, Zimei festival

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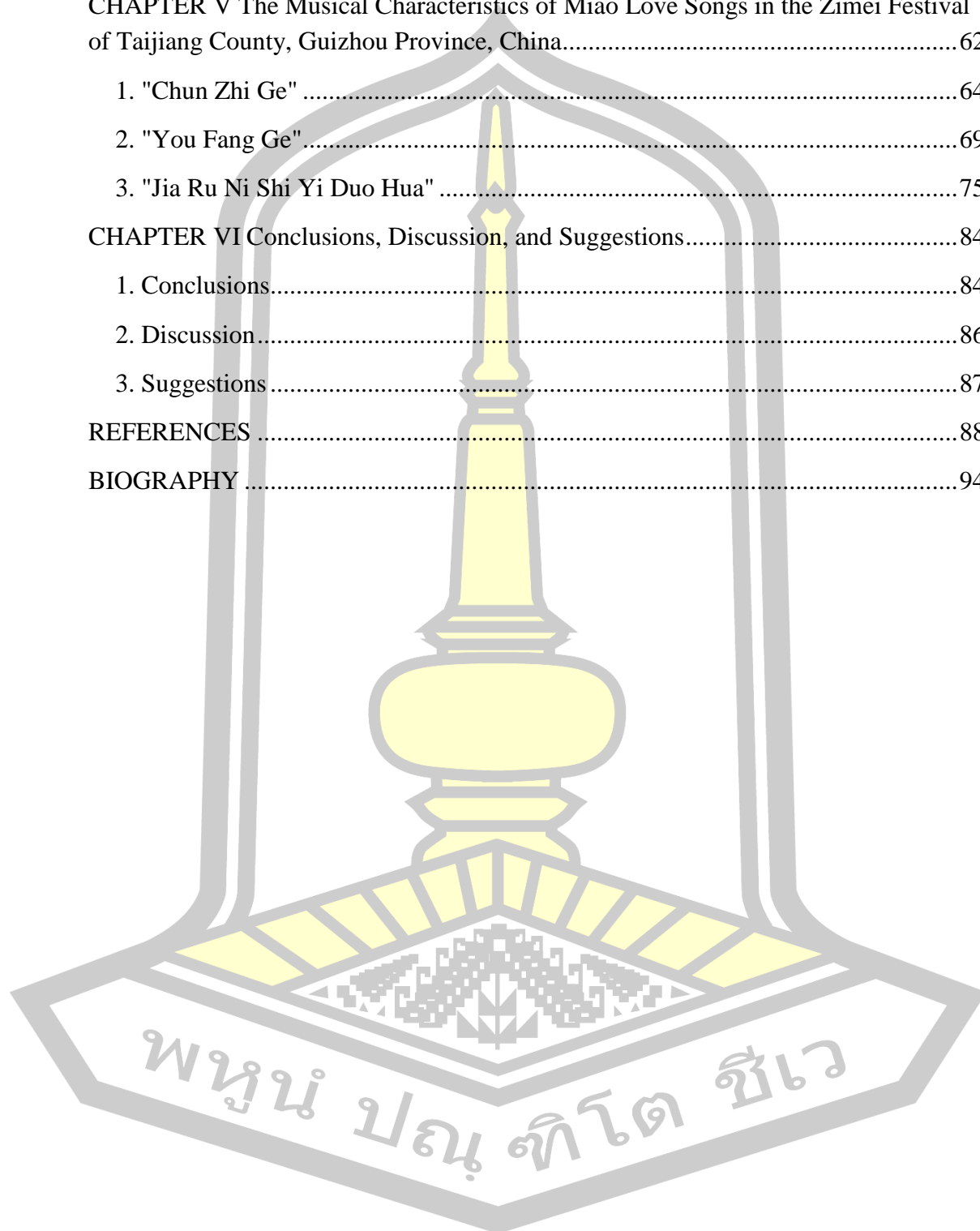
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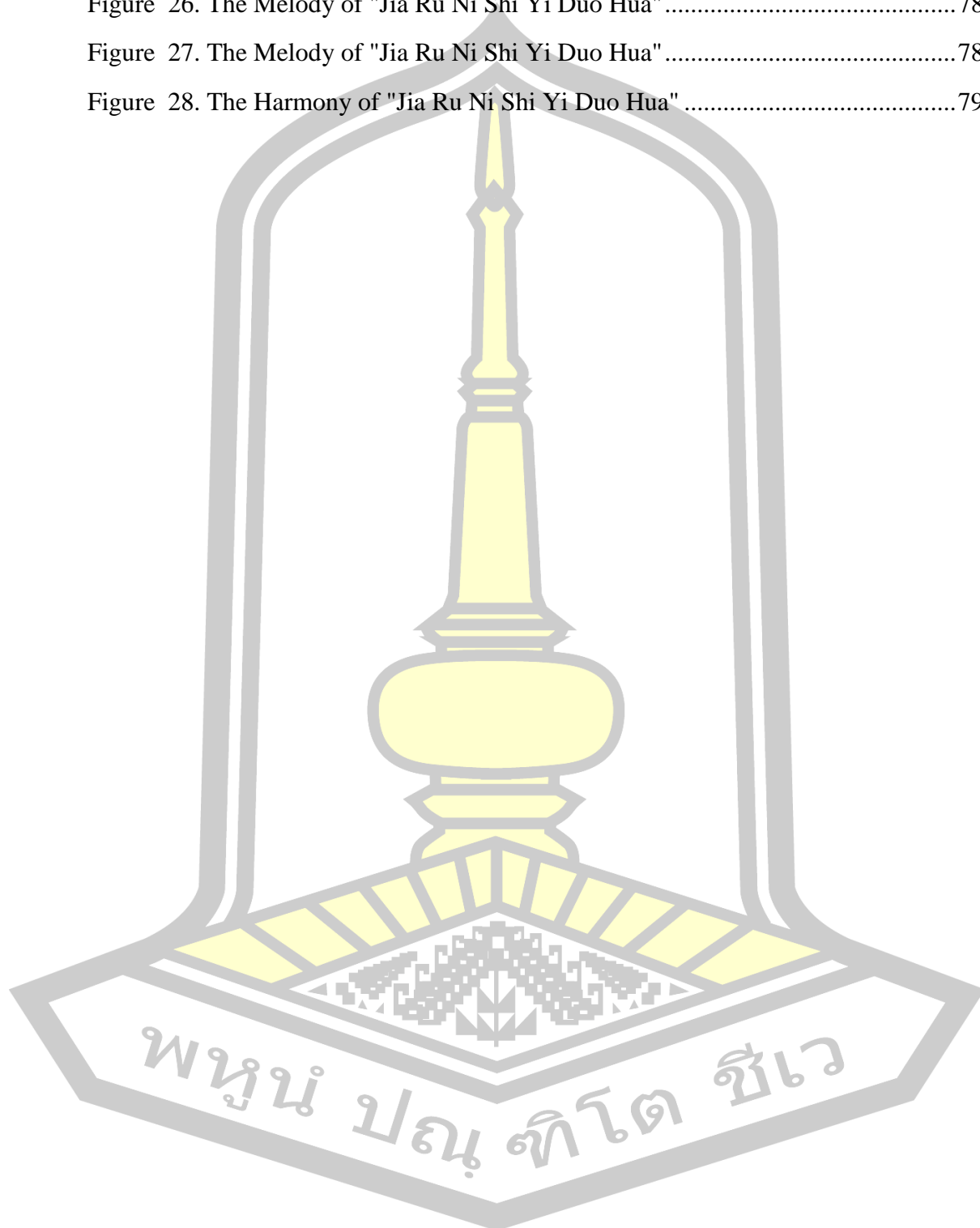
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1. Background and Problems of the Research

The geographical conditions in the southeast of Guizhou are diverse, shaped by mountains and valleys. The unique geographical advantages, climatic landscapes, and historical and cultural elements of this region have had a significant impact on the customs and love songs of the Miao people in this area. The Miao people rely on nature for their growth, and they also incorporate their love and understanding of nature into their love songs. The humid and rainy climate of southeast Guizhou, with distinct seasons, provides the Miao people with rich materials for folk stories, historical tales, and other creative emotions, which become important materials for expressing human emotions in Miao love songs. This not only reflects the Miao people's love for labor and nature and their rich emotional characteristics but also perpetuates the rich emotional culture of the Miao people and their strong desire for better emotional pursuits. (Wen Y, 1996).

The Miao people are a migratory nation that migrated to settle in southeast Guizhou during the Tang and Song dynasties. According to the unique "son inherits father's name" system of the Miao people, young men and women here are separated by mountains, making it difficult to meet, so they can only convey their yearning through sonorous and melodious songs, gradually forming a unique multi-voice love song melody and singing style. Miao love songs are generally sung with a certain degree of formalization. Emotions between men and women are conveyed through methods such as conveying affection through objects, expressing emotions through scenery, and expressing feelings through others. "Love" becomes the core content of the lyrics and the center of expression for singers. Men and women use heartfelt songs to communicate thoughts and feelings, express their admiration and longing for each other. Sometimes, men and women also use it to play with and tease each other, fully reflecting the wisdom and humor of both parties. Sometimes, the singing of love songs also has a certain degree of improvisation, and the singer can only respond cleverly based on the content expressed by the other party on the spot, reflecting the

singer's inner world and emotions through the lyrics and phrases of the song. The lyrics are profound in meaning and rich in ideological content, generally in a five-word form, emphasizing rhyme without rhyming.

The love songs of the Miao people in Guizhou are rich in content and diverse in artistic forms, serving as an important way for the Miao people to express love and carrying the cultural traditions and national sentiments of the Miao people. Firstly, Miao songs are usually sung in three different tones: "light tone," "slow tone," and "fast tone." Secondly, different tones and inflections also reflect the Miao people's grasp of emotions and emotional expressions. For example, a "slow tone" often expresses happiness, joy, and a sense of well-being, while a "fast tone" is often associated with sadness, melancholy, but can also express intense emotional colors. Finally, different modes and tones have different emphases when expressing different emotions .(Long F.L, 2014)

The Miao love songs in Taijiang, Guizhou, are unique in their cultural connotations. As an important way for the Miao people to express emotions, the characteristics of Miao love songs lie in their themes of love, marriage, and family bonds, which blend the rich cultural and emotional connotations of the Miao people. These rich emotional connotations not only express the Miao people's desire and cherishment for love but also convey the entire nation's aspirations and pursuits for beautiful feelings and life. In addition, Miao love songs have a unique passion and warmth in emotional expression, which also reveals the positive and unfettered personality and characteristics of the Miao people. This unique emotion is more likely to touch the hearts of listeners and evoke resonance.

Taijiang County is known as "the No.1 Miao County in the World". With a large Miao population and profound Miao cultural heritage, it is one of the important birthplaces of the Miao Zimei Festival. The Miao Zimei Festival is not only celebrated in Taijiang County but also has a tradition in Jianhe County. However, Taijiang County is more well - known in the inheritance and development of the Miao Zimei Festival. Since there are nine branches of Miao costumes in Taijiang County, each branch retains unique traditional cultural elements such as Miao costume making techniques and forms of song and dance performances, providing a solid foundation for showcasing the rich and colorful Miao culture during the Zimei Festival.

Moreover, Taijiang County actively promotes the inheritance and protection of Miao culture. It integrates Miao cultural courses into school education, cultivating a large number of inheritors. At the same time, it encourages family inheritance, enabling the traditions of the Miao Zimei Festival to be passed down from generation to generation. Meanwhile, the Taijiang County government attaches great importance to the Miao Zimei Festival. The first "Zimei Festival" was held in 1998, and the "Nonggaliang" activity was officially named "Zimei Festival". By continuously standardizing and enriching the activity content, the influence of the festival has been enhanced. In addition, Taijiang County has increased its publicity and promotion efforts for the Zimei Festival. Using modern media and online platforms, it has promoted the Zimei Festival to the whole country and even the world, attracting the attention of a large number of tourists and the media.

This study aims to supplement academic research by documenting the development of the Miao Zimei Festival of Love Songs and the musical characteristics of Miao love songs. By researching the historical development and evolution of the Miao Zimei Festival of Love Songs and analyzing Miao love songs, it deepens the understanding of Miao music culture and the musical characteristics of Miao love songs, promotes cultural exchanges between ethnic minorities and various regions, and introduces nationalized music to the world. At the same time, this will also enhance researchers' new understanding of Miao music.

From reason above all, researcher wants to study this topic, to investigate the development and analyze the music characteristics of Miao love song in Taijiang county, Guizhou Province, to ensure that this music culture can continue

2. Research Objectives

2.1 To investigate the development of the Miao Love Song Zimei Festival in Taijiang County, Guizhou Province, China

2.2 To analysis the musical characteristics of Miao Love Songs from the Zimei Festival, Taijiang County, Guizhou Province, China

3. Research Questions

3.1 What is the development of Miao Love Songs from the Zimei Festival, Taijiang County, Guizhou Province, China ?

3.2 What are the musical characteristics of Miao Love Songs from the Zimei Festival, Taijiang County, Guizhou Province, China?

4. Research Benefit

4.1 We can understand the development of Miao Love Songs from the Zimei Festival, Taijiang County, Guizhou Province, China

4.2 We can know the musical characteristics of Miao Love Songs from the Zimei Festival, Taijiang County, Guizhou Province, China

5. Definition of Terms

5.1 Miao love songs refer to the Miao love song from Zimei Festival, Taijiang County, Qiandongnan Miao and Dong Autonomous Prefecture, Guizhou Province, China.

5.2 Zimei Festival refers to the festival hold by the local Miao people, Taijiang County, Qiandongnan Miao and Dong Autonomous Prefecture, Guizhou Province, China.

5.3 Historical development characteristics refer to the origin of the Miao love songs in Taijiang County, Qiandongnan Miao and Dong Autonomous Prefecture, Guizhou Province, China (from 2500 BC to 2024 AD) and their evolution process with the development of the times.

5.4 Musical characteristics refer to the musical features of the Miao love songs at the Zimei Festival in Taijiang County, Qiandongnan Miao and Dong Autonomous Prefecture, Guizhou Province, China. These characteristics include lyrics, rhythm, melody, harmony and singing styles.

6. Conceptual Framework

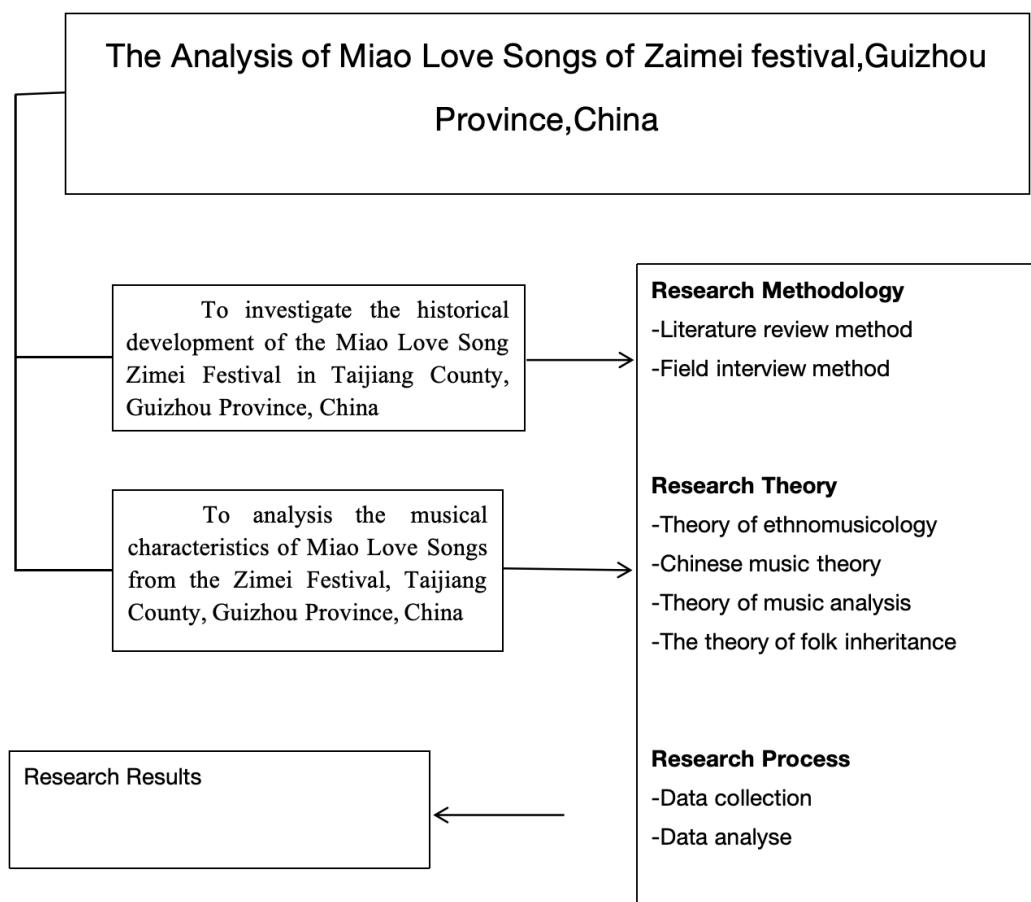
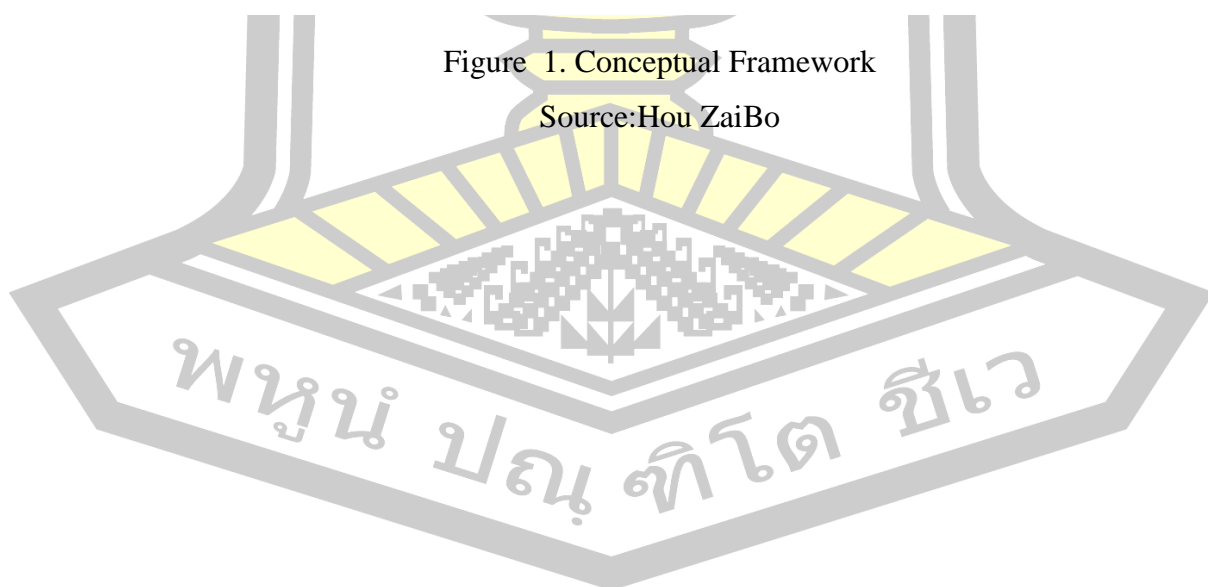


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Source:Hou ZaiBo



CHAPTER II

Literature Review

This chapter takes the theme of the Miao love songs in Guizhou Province as its material, conducting in-depth field investigations and fully obtaining important information about the Miao love songs. First, it examines the geographical and cultural overview of Taijiang County in Guizhou Province.

1. General Knowledge about Taijiang County, Guizhou Province, China
2. General Knowledge about Music Culture of the Zimei Festival in Taijiang County, Guizhou Province, China
3. General Knowledge about Miao folk song in China
4. Theories used in the research
5. Documents and Research Related

1. General Knowledge about Taijiang County, Guizhou Province, China

Taijiang County is located in the southeast of Guizhou Province, in the middle of Qiandongnan Miao and Dong Autonomous Prefecture, close to the border of Guizhou, Guangxi, and Hunan provinces. It is located at 26°24'26°53' north latitude and 108°03'108°31' east longitude, bordered by Qingshui River in the north, adjacent to Huangping and Shibing, west to Kaili, southeast to Jianhe, and southwest to Leishan, with a total area of 1,108 square kilometers. As of May 7, 2024, the total population of Taijiang County was 173,782, including 92,820 males, accounting for 53.41% of the total population, and 80,962 females, accounting for 46.59% of the total population. Taijiang County is a county inhabited by ethnic minorities, with 15 ethnic groups such as Miao, Dong, Tujia, and Buyi. Among them, the Miao people account for more than 98% of the population, earning it the reputation of "the first Miao county in the world." (Xiong X.L. 2012).

Taijiang County is located in the northern section of Miaoling mountainous area. The mountain range is generally distributed from northeast to southwest, constrained by geological structures, strata, and rocks. The overall terrain slopes from

southwest to northeast (Qingshui River). The landforms include three distinct types of areas: denuded and eroded mountains, dissolved mountains, and river valleys. In Miao language, Taijiang is called "Fangni," which means "a place as beautiful as gold and silver." During the Qing Dynasty, it was established as Taigong Hall. In the second year of the Republic of China (1913), it was changed to a county. In the 30th year of the Republic of China (1941), Dankiang County was abolished, and the area east of the Danjiang River was merged into Taigong County. The two counties took one character from their respective names to form Taijiang County. In May 1962, Taijiang County was restored. Taijiang County boasts a well-preserved ethnic culture with nine distinctive sub-branches of the Miao people. It has 14 national intangible cultural heritage items, including the Miao Zimei Festival, the Sidong Solitary Dragon Boat Festival, and the Fanpai Wooden Drum Dance. The county's ethnic culture includes Miao silver ornaments, Miao ancient songs, Miao embroidery, silver-decorated costumes, dragon dances, and flute and drum dances. In 2007, Taijiang was listed by the United Nations as one of the world's top ten humanistic tourist attractions for "returning to nature and simplicity." It has won various titles such as the World's Famous Cultural Tourism County, China's Green Famous County, China's Top Ten Most Original Ecological Tourism Counties, and the Hometown of Chinese Miao Embroidery.

1.1 Geographic and Historical Environment

On June 27, the 30th year of the Republic of China (1941): Danjiang County was abolished, with the Danjiang River and Yangpai Creek serving as the eastern boundary along the mountains. The northeastern region was incorporated into Taigong County. Taking "Tai" from Taigong and "Jiang" from Danjiang, the county was renamed as Taijiang County. At the same time, the territory was adjusted, and the interlocking areas were delineated. The areas of Ge Yi, Lengxi, Da Heizhai, Baiyanjiao, Wanrenkeng, Xinzhai, Houshao, Jiusi, Sixin, Tunsang, and Ge Yi Dazhai from Huangping County, as well as Pingzhao, Jingdongtang, Jingdongao, Maobi Ridge, Zhima Village, and Xinzhai from Shibing County, were all annexed to Taijiang. However, parts of Taijiang County, including Wucha, Chuandong, Dalao, Gan'e, Zhai Zhang, and Tunzhou, were transferred to Jianhe, while Pingdiying, Shidongbao (present-day Mahao), and Ganyingtang were ceded to Shibing. The

county was divided into five districts, 17 joint security units, 106 security units, and 1108 groups. By the People's Republic of China period - January 14, 2016: The People's Government of Guizhou Province approved the adjustment of the administrative divisions of certain towns in Taijiang County. After the adjustment, Taijiang County included Tai Gong Street, Cui Wen Street, Shi Dong Town, Nan Gong Town, Ge Yi Town, Fang Zhao Town, Pai Yang Township, Tai Pan Township, and Lao Tun Township, comprising 2 streets, 4 towns, and 3 townships .(Li H.Y, 2021).

Within the territory of Taijiang County, rivers such as the Qingshui River and the Baluo River flow through. The Qingshui River has clear water and gentle currents, with beautiful scenery along its banks. These rivers not only provide abundant water resources for the local area but also nurture a unique aquatic ecosystem. Taijiang County has a high forest coverage with a diverse range of vegetation. There are large areas of virgin forests, secondary forests, and man-made forests. The forests are home to numerous rare tree species, such as fir, pine, and nanmu. In addition, there is a rich variety of wild plant resources, including various wildflowers and medicinal herbs. The vegetation displays different colors and landscapes in different seasons, with blooming flowers in spring, lush green trees in summer, red leaves covering the mountains in autumn, and snow-covered landscapes in winter. Due to its favorable natural environment, Taijiang County is home to a rich variety of animal resources. There are common wild animals such as wild boars, rabbits, and pheasants, as well as rare and protected animals like macaques, pangolins, and giant salamanders.

1.2 Socioeconomic and Cultural System

The economy of Taijiang County is primarily based on agriculture, mainly involving the cultivation of crops such as rice and corn, while also developing some specialty agricultural products. In 2023, the added value of the primary industry, agriculture, reached 1.021 billion yuan, accounting for 21.29% of the gross domestic product. In terms of crop cultivation, there is a certain scale of food crops, and the cultivation of economic crops such as oil-bearing plants and vegetables is also widespread. Moreover, the county is rich in forestry resources, providing a foundation for the development of the forestry industry. Data on afforestation areas and seedling production areas also reflect the sustained development trend of the forestry sector.

Animal husbandry also holds a certain proportion in the agricultural economy, with a significant scale and output in the breeding of cattle, sheep, pigs, and poultry. Subsequently, the secondary industry, industry, has steadily grown, with an increase of 34.7% in the added value of industrial enterprises in 2023. Manufacturing, as well as the production and supply of electricity, gas, and water, have all experienced growth to varying degrees. The development of industry has provided an important impetus for economic growth. Following that, the tertiary industry, particularly the continuous development and rise of the tourism sector, reached 1.982 billion yuan in 2023, accounting for 41.34% of the total. Traditional service industries such as wholesale and retail, accommodation, and catering have developed relatively steadily, with a vibrant consumer market. At the same time, with the rise of tourism, related service industries have also been continuously developing, gradually strengthening their economic pull .(Gong, Q., Tan, X., & Shao, L. 2024).

Taijiang County is equipped with cultural facilities such as a cultural center, public library, and museum, providing residents with a wealth of cultural activity venues. Among them, the Miao Embroidery Museum and the Fangwa Miao Folklore Museum showcase the unique Miao culture of Taijiang, playing a significant role in protecting and inheriting ethnic culture. Additionally, traditional Miao festivals such as the Zimei Festival and the Single-Log Dragon Boat Festival are not only important cultural events for local residents but also attract a large number of tourists, becoming cultural calling cards for Taijiang County. Furthermore, the development of media such as radio and television has also provided strong support for local cultural dissemination.

1.3 Cultural Environment

Taijiang County is a predominantly Miao ethnic group county, where Miao culture has a long and splendid development. The Miao language, clothing, songs and dances, customs, and other cultural elements constitute the rich and colorful ethnic cultural landscape of Taijiang County. The Miao language, as an important carrier of ethnic culture, preserves an ancient and unique charm. It is not only a tool for daily communication but also a significant means of passing on ethnic development, values, and wisdom of life. Miao clothing is renowned for its vibrant colors and exquisite craftsmanship. Miao women skillfully embroider various beautiful patterns, and the

colorful garments showcase the Miao people's aspirations for a beautiful life and their reverence for nature. From traditional formal attire to everyday casual wear, each piece of clothing is imbued with profound cultural significance. Miao songs and dances are a major highlight of Taijiang County's culture. Forms such as the Miao reed-pipe dance and the wooden drum dance are characterized by their brisk rhythms and elegant movements, full of vitality and appeal. The melodious love songs of the Miao people have a melodious melody and simple lyrics, expressing the emotions and lives of the Miao people. These songs and dances are not only performed spectacularly at major festivals and celebrations but also widely spread in daily life, becoming an important way for the Miao people to express joy and convey emotions.(Liao, N.P. 2024). .

From the geographical and historical environment, researcher understands that Taijiang County is located in the Qiandongnan Miao and Dong Autonomous Prefecture, historically a region of migration and integration of multiple ethnic groups. The development of Taijiang can be traced back to the ancient "Panhu culture," a cultural site that proves the early human activities in this area. From the socio-economic environment, it is understood that agriculture is the backbone of Taijiang County's economy, mainly cultivating crops such as rice, corn, and wheat. These resources provide an important foundation for local economic development. From the cultural environment, it is understood that Taijiang County is one of the main habitats of the Miao ethnic group, with rich and diverse cultural traditions. The Miao people have unique customs, festivals, and handicrafts, especially Miao silver jewelry. In summary, Taijiang County has undergone many changes in the course of development, with its socio-economic environment based on agriculture and actively promoting diversified development. The cultural environment, with its rich ethnic characteristics and traditions, is a significant cultural asset of the region.

2. General Knowledge about Miao Music Culture in Taijiang County, Guizhou Province, China

The traditional Zimei Festival activities mainly take place between young men and women from villages where marriage is allowed, and it is closely related to the traditional marriage system and customs of the Miao ethnic group. Through a series of

activities such as cooking Zimei Rice, wandering, fishing, and drum-stepping, it demonstrates the charm of the Miao people's social interaction, singing and dancing, clothing, and food cultures. The Zimei Festival activities are mainly prevalent in Miao villages along the mid-to-upper reaches of the Qingshui River, with the largest and most distinctive ones in the areas of Taijiang, Shibing, and Jianhe in Guizhou Province. Taijiang, located in the center, is considered the earliest active center of the Zimei Festival and the central area for the origin and evolution of its legends. There are various legends about the origin of the Zimei Festival that have been passed down to this day. Yanagita Kunio believes that "legends are originally people's 'conviction' that certain events did occur in their locality in ancient times, and from this perspective, they are themselves a kind of development." In Taijiang County, the central area where the Zimei Festival is prevalent, the legend that is relatively most in line with the view of "conviction" that it did occur locally is the "Legend of Yuejiu and Yingjiu," which is prevalent in the Liangtian Village area of Shidong Town, Taijiang County, Qiandongnan Miao and Dong Autonomous Prefecture .(Liu, B., & Gu, D. 2023).

The Miao Zimei Festival is a traditional grand festival in the Miao areas of Guizhou. During the festival, Miao girls wear their finest Miao costumes and all the silver jewelry from their homes, inviting men to join in singing, dancing the Lusheng Dance, and eating Zimei's Rice to seek marriage partners. In 1998, the Miao Zimei Festival was listed by the National Tourism Administration as one of the 23 major ethnic tourism festivals in the "China 1998 Rural-Urban Tourism" program, and it began to be protected and managed by the government. With the government's involvement in promotion, many travel agencies in China and even Japan have launched experience routes for the Miao Zimei Festival in Guizhou, attracting many Japanese tourists who are fascinated by the Miao costumes and the culture of the festival. According to data from the representative office of the National Tourism Administration in Japan, in 2015, about 200,000 Japanese tourists visited China every month, ranking second only to South Korea. In the context of accelerating the promotion of ethnic minority cultures, it is crucial to find ways to promote them internationally. Taking the Miao Zimei Festival as an example, examining its translation and dissemination process in Japan can help analyze the impact of

different historical backgrounds and translation paths on its dissemination, and provide useful suggestions for better disseminating the festival culture of the Miao Zimei Festival and other ethnic minority cultures .(Hu, S. 2018)

The Zimei Festival is one of the most grand and solemn festivals of the Miao people in Taijiang County, Qiandongnan Miao and Dong Autonomous Prefecture, Guizhou Province. In Miao language, it is called "Luga Liang", which means eating Zimei's rice. The legend of the Zimei Festival comes from the Miao national narrative poem "E Jiao and Jin Dan". According to legend, although E Jiao and Jin Dan belong to the same ethnic group, their blood relationship has become distant over time. They fell in love through "Youfang" (a traditional Miao courtship custom), but their relationship was opposed by the old forces and torn apart by the pressure of the uncle's authority. Later, although E Jiao was forced to marry into her uncle's family in a distant place, she did not give in and continued to struggle with her uncle's family. Finally, her uncle's family had no choice but to carve a bamboo tube for her to return home. After returning home, E Jiao reunited with Jin Dan and fell in love again, but they were once again opposed by the old forces. However, their love conformed to the wishes of young men and women, and everyone rallied to support them. The old forces were forced to give in and proposed buying a white ox to offer sacrifices to ancestors and open up new branches of the family. In order to break through the barriers of the old system, E Jiao and Jin Dan overcame these difficulties and finally found a white ox and became husband and wife. Because E Jiao secretly brought rice hidden in her bamboo basket of needles and threads to Jin Dan to eat during their secret meetings, the story of "Zimei's rice" came into being. (Yang Mingfang, 2011)

The etiquette of the Miao Zimei Festival is simple and unique, with strong ethnic characteristics, and it is one of the most important festivals for the Miao people in Taijiang County.



Figure 2. A hundred pairs of newlyweds pledge their love in Taijiang.

Source: Xinhua News Agency ,

From figure 2, Show that the Originally organized spontaneously by local Miao people, it has now developed into a large-scale festival event that not only provides a good cultural and living platform for local people, but also attracts many tourists from other places to experience and visit. In the 1980s and 1990s, the traditional Miao Zimei Festival still maintained its original meaning in the cultural life of the local people and occupied an important position. In the 21st century, with the development and changes of development, the Taijiang Miao Zimei Festival has gradually adapted to the development of social economy and transformed towards modernity. The opening ceremony of the 2016 Chinese Miao Zimei Festival was scheduled for 9:00 am on March 14th and was held in the Zimei Square in Taijiang County, lasting for about an hour. After the opening ceremony, a grand parade of thousands of Miao people in traditional costumes was staged between the Zimei Square and the Xiumei Square. In the afternoon, a collective wedding ceremony for "one hundred newlyweds in Taijiang" was held (.Hu, S. 2016).

The origin of the Miao Zimei Festival is passed down through folk stories and songs. The most widely circulated is the story of "Yuejiu and Yingjiu," mainly about the two Zimeis from Jiu Zhai in Shidong Liangtian Village who could not bear to be

separated after marriage. They proposed to help the young people of the village find marriage partners and meet at their hometown every March 15th of the lunar calendar, which led to the "Eating Zimei Meal" activity .



Figure 3.The activity of eating Zimei Rice
Source:Xinhua News Agency,

From figure 3 ,Show that the activity of eating Zamei Rice, The Miao language calls it "Nongx Gad Liangl," translated as "Eating Zimei Meal". The name of the Zimei Festival is not only found in Guizhou but also in places such as Guibei and Xiangxi, though the festival's connotations and functions differ. In Taijiang County, Guizhou, the Zimei Festival is mainly distributed in Shidong and Laotun. The Miao people there usually live in clusters but have the marriage principle of not marrying within the same clan. Due to the mountainous terrain and inconvenient transportation, young people do not interact much, so they hope to increase the opportunities for people from nearby villages to gather during the festival, allowing

men and women to meet and fall in love and get married. Therefore, it can be said that the primary function of this festival is to assist in the marriage and love function. Over time, the festival has specific participants and procedures, mainly involving young women, with men and women gathering and expressing their feelings through songs, making it a social festival that encompasses various Miao cultures, including marriage, clothing, singing, and eating cultures. Initially, the Miao Zimei Festival in different villages of Taijiang County was held at different times, generally in the second or third lunar months (Zhao ,Y. 2022).



Figure 4. Miao girls by the banks of the Qingjiang River

Source: Xinhua News Agency ,

From figure 4 The Zimei Festival, held around the 15th day of the third lunar month every year, is the most important few days in the lives of the Miao people in Taijiang County, Guizhou Province. During these days, the young Miao girls living along the Qingjiang River put on their most magnificent Miao costumes, holding bamboo baskets filled with colorful glutinous rice, also known as Zimei Rice, and join the young men from other villages in excursions, drum dancing, and singing duets. If a girl finds a young man to her liking, she will present him with a basket of Zimei Rice containing various objects to convey her affection. From figure 5 this is known as "eating Zimei Rice," and these days are thus called the Zimei Festival.



Figure 5. The Five-colored Zimei Rice
Source: Xinhua News Agency ,

The Zimei Festival is known as "the festival hidden in the flower buds" and "the world's oldest Valentine's Day." Unlike Western Valentine's Day, the Zimei Festival is a grand matchmaking event that fulfills the social function of bringing young Miao people in the Qingjiang River area together to get to know and fall in love with each other. In Guizhou, people describe their living environment with sayings like "The sky is rarely sunny for three days, the ground is rarely flat for three feet, and people rarely have three pieces of silver" and "It's hard to walk five miles with one step, but you can reach the sky with your hand." According to Miao legends, the Zimei Festival was established due to the mountainous geography of Guizhou, which made it difficult for people to interact and hindered marriage and love. Legend has it that there was a large Miao village in Taijiang with seventy beautiful Zimeis. They went up the mountains to pick fruit and worked in the fields, spun yarn, wove brocade, and embroidered flowers. The cloth they wove was so abundant that it could not be contained in boxes, and the colorful brocade they wove was even more beautiful than the clouds in the sky. The flowers they embroidered attracted bees and butterflies, but the seventy Zimeis still felt something missing, and their hearts were not at ease, for they had reached the age of marriage. So the Zimeis invited each other

to open up new fields, and they chose a place with abundant water sources to turn their attention to farming. They worked hard and opened up a vast paddy field, so vast that the ridges on one side were invisible from the other. They raised many fish in the field, and when spring came, they sowed glutinous rice seeds. When autumn arrived, they harvested glutinous rice that filled warehouse after warehouse and brewed vat after vat of glutinous rice wine. With food, drink, and clothing taken care of, the Zimeis still felt something missing, and there was little singing and laughter. The elders saw through the Zimei hearts and came up with a good idea. They suggested that the Zimeis save the leftover glutinous rice and rice wine and, when spring came again, use the fine rice to make glutinous rice meals, catch fish, shrimps, and snails from the field, and hold a banquet to invite young men from afar to come and eat Zimei Rice, drink wine, dance, socialize, and choose spouses. The next year, indeed, through this method, some of the Zimeis found their ideal partners and happily got married. From then on, the time for eating Zimei Rice became a specific festival known as the Zimei Festival (Chen ,Z. 2022).

Therefore, researcher has gradually recognized the Taijiang Miao Zimei Festival as the oldest Valentine's Day of the Miao people, reflecting the traditional customs and culture of the Miao people for thousands of years. The Zimei Festival is a search for love through festival rituals and the musical practice of "Qingchun Qingchun" (songs). This festival not only celebrates national unity and friendship but also conveys and promotes the essence of national culture. Here is more like a necessary place to showcase the love songs of the Miao people.

3. General Knowledge about Miao folk song in China.

Historical tracing of the Miao folk song music culture. According to the miscellaneous records of the customs of ethnic minorities in southwest China during the Qing Dynasty, "Dongxi Xianzhi", it is said, "The Miao people have books, but they are neither the ancient Chinese writing system nor the tadpole script. It is unknown who the author is." It is recorded in the folklore and ancient songs of the Miao people that they originally had their own writing system, but only a few scattered cultural relics such as Miao inscriptions on stone tablets remain, which are insufficient for systematic linguistic research. Therefore, Miao music is not just music

in the ordinary sense but a carrier of Miao development and folk customs, and all its characteristics are of high research value. Miao folk songs embody the essence of Miao music culture and possess unique humanistic and artistic values (Yang ,L. 2023).

The development of Miao traditional music dates back thousands of years, evolving alongside the changes in Miao society, culture, and development. The Miao people are a nation with rich cultural traditions, and their musical forms, as an essential part of their culture, record and reflect the historical evolution of the Miao people. The historical evolution of Miao music can be roughly divided into several stages. In the initial stage, Miao music was mainly focused on religious rituals and productive labor, reflecting the awe and adoration of the Miao ancestors towards nature. The musical style of this period was characterized by simplicity and naturalness, with straightforward and lively rhythms and melodies. In the middle stage, Miao music gradually expanded from religious rituals to various aspects of daily life, such as weddings, funerals, festivals, and other activities. The content of music became more abundant, and the forms more diverse, with traditional folk songs, dance music, and instrumental music emerging and continuously improving. The oral tradition of the Miao people also developed significantly during this period, greatly enriching the expression and connotation of music. With the development of development, especially in modern times, Miao music has been influenced and impacted by foreign cultures but has also gained new developments. Ethnic fusion and cultural exchanges have brought new musical elements and production techniques, and Miao music has attempted to integrate new melodies and rhythms while retaining its traditional characteristics. Musical works of this stage have not only continued to spread among the people but have also begun to enter a wider range of cultural and commercial fields, gaining wider dissemination and recognition. The historical evolution of Miao traditional music reflects the development process of Miao society and is a development of national cultural inheritance and innovation. Its development process is also a true portrayal of the Miao people's living conditions, values, and social relations (Wei, K. 2024).

Miao traditional folk music has a wide range of themes, rich associations, sincere emotions, and covers various aspects such as historical culture, folk customs,

thoughts and feelings, moral beliefs, and life attitudes. It is a living fossil that records the cultural development of the Miao people. Chapters 2 to 6 of the book conduct in-depth research on the ancient songs and flying song music culture, bronze drum music culture, wedding music culture, and golden pheasant dance music culture of the Miao people. Representative examples and corresponding specific analyses can not only vividly present the lively folk customs in the southwestern Miao folk songs to readers but also allow readers to deeply feel the unique artistic appreciation value and positive national spirit embodied in Miao folk music culture (Ma, H. 2023).

The research on the musical form of Miao folksongs, namely the study of music ontology, includes the form and function of melody, embellishment, singing style, and filler words and characters, which are used to distinguish it from other ethnic folksongs. For example, "Introduction to Miao Folk Songs" by Wang Yiting, "On Three Stylistic Modes of Miao Folk Songs - Taking the Form of Miao Songs in Mixed Residential Areas as an Example" by Pu Hengqiang, "Characteristics of Miao Folk Songs and Singing in Western Hunan" by Yin Jianguo, "Research on Filler Words and Embellishment of Miao Folk Songs in Western Hunan" by Hu Yuanhui, "A Brief Analysis of the Characteristics of Miao Folk Songs" by Wang Fang, "Research on the Singing Art of Miao Folk Songs in Western Hunan" by Lei Huiling, "Analysis of the Musical Style of Miao Folk Songs in Western Hunan" by Tang Yinling, and "Research on Miao Folk Songs in Rongshui" by Wu Shuang. These articles showcase the charm of Miao folksongs in terms of form, singing style, and function.

Generally speaking, the rhythmical characteristics of folksongs are related to the use of filler words and characters, changes in sentence structure, syllables, and tones. Words and characters are combined into sentences, and there are variations in the emphasis and pace of the connection between sentences. All of this follows the principle of being natural and smooth. The formats of "two-two-two-one" and "two-two-one-two" are relatively common. In translating Miao folksongs, the dialect should be handled naturally and smoothly, requiring the singer to be familiar with the language habits of the dialect. Only those who understand the dialect can appreciate its subtleties, while those who do not often only feel the fluency produced by rhyming.

The degree of rhyme strictness at the end of sentences varies among the folksongs of southern ethnic minorities, with double-sentence rhyming, sentence-by-sentence rhyming, or alternate-sentence rhyming being common. For Miao songs, they can be divided into two categories for discussion. One category is Miao folksongs primarily sung in Chinese dialects, which have a much stricter rhyme than those sung in Miao dialects. They are similar to the rhyming of poetry. The other category is Miao folksongs translated from Miao to Chinese, which should be returned to their original Miao singing form. The fluency brought by tone rhyming can be perceived by those who do not understand Miao, that is, "In the Miao folksongs of Qiandong dialect, the final syllable of the lyrics must have the same tone, and the rise and fall of the pronunciation must be exactly the same. The occurrence of tone is not restricted by prosody."

The musical research on Miao songs places great emphasis on the metrical patterns of folksongs. "The metrical patterns of folksongs generally refer to the linguistic format and phonetic variation rules of lyrics, including the number of sentences in the lyrics, the number of syllables in each sentence, and the matching rules of these syllables' prosody or tone... Each ethnic group's folk songs have their own metrical patterns, which are the result of mutual communication, learning, and influence among various ethnic groups' folk songs during their long historical development." In comparison, the development of Miao folksongs from multi-sentence structures with variable word counts to the common two-sentence, four-sentence, seven-character format was primarily influenced by the creations of Han literati. The sentence patterns have become increasingly complex, with five-character, seven-character, and mixed-character sentences gradually increasing. (Chen, R. 2014)

The Miao songs in western Hunan have a long development, dating back to ancient times. With the evolution of the times, they gradually evolved from the original sounds of nature and animals into the basic tunes of modern Miao songs. The original Miao songs in western Hunan, called "Sa" in Miao language, have strong regional characteristics, rich tunes, unique styles, and lyrics with strong improvisation. Singing Miao songs is a popular form among local people and an indispensable part of daily entertainment and major festivals. It is also an effective way of cultural exchange, thought transmission, and emotional transmission between

men and women. The forms can be solo, duet, and chorus. In 2008, it was selected as the second batch of national intangible cultural heritage in China. With the rapid changes in cultural development, fewer and fewer people can sing Miao songs, and the issue of inheriting Miao songs is becoming increasingly severe. This ancient culture and art of Miao songs is gradually disappearing. In many Miao settlements, less than 20% of people can sing Miao songs, and even fewer can deeply understand the essence of Miao songs and master the core skills. (Tao, G. (2023)).

Miao music reflects the scenes of Miao people's life, production, labor, and other aspects, and is a true portrayal of Miao people's life. Miao music contains the national spirit of Miao people's perseverance, bravery, optimism, unity, and mutual assistance. Whether it is the pursuit and praise of love in love songs, or the reverence and worship of ancestors and gods in sacrificial music, Miao music is an important form of expression of Miao people's emotions and beliefs, reflecting their profound spiritual world and unique cultural psychology. (Zuo, S. 2017)).

The Miao people are a warm and hospitable nation, and everyone is good at singing and dancing. Their songs are as clear and pure as Miao silver. From the composition of Miao's singing and answering songs, in addition to literacy songs, love songs, and labor songs, there are also riddle songs, custom songs, etc. Usually, when working in the fields, grazing, or cutting firewood, labor songs are mainly used for mutual communication, teaching production skills, and expressing inner feelings. However, singing and answering songs are almost regardless of occasion, location, characters, and day and night. If strange guests or merchants mistakenly enter the Miao village, the Miao people will determine whether to pass or release them through singing and answering songs. Generally, four sentences form a combination, that is, the host sings four sentences first, and then the guest sings four sentences. Each sentence can be five or seven words, but the ending of the four sentences must be added with a suffix of "Ai... Wei". The content of singing and answering songs is not limited, and the forms are diverse, but they must have the original life sentiment and strong regional flavor. Among the singing and answering songs of the Miao people, the disc song is particularly common and popular. Young men and women of suitable age will come to the hillside bamboo forest or green water stream to sing aloud to

express their mood and affection. One sentence after another, each sentence echoes and harmonizes with each other, sometimes lasting for hours. (Xi, Y. 2022).

In the Miao music culture of Guizhou, researcher can see from the perspective of Miao historical culture and Miao folk song types that Miao music culture is truly rich and colorful. Miao culture is a reflection of national spirit. We should cherish, care for, and attach importance to our national folk music culture as we cherish our own eyes. We must strengthen the excavation and protection of national culture, take effective bars to ensure the sustainable development of Miao traditional folk music culture, and make our music culture prosperous and passed down from generation to generation.

1. Theories Used in the research.

This study will apply Western musicology theories, Chinese ethnomusicology theories, music analysis theories, and folklore inheritance theories, and combine them with on-site investigations and interviews to conduct an in-depth study of the historical development and musical characteristics of the Miao Love Song Zimei Festival in Taijiang County.

1.1 Western musicology mainly conducts scientific research on the ethnic music of countries and regions with different social systems and development levels. China's traditional music has a long history, rich content, and distinct styles. Due to regional differences, as well as variations in factors such as dialects and aesthetics, when the same piece of music spreads to different regions, it forms its own unique style. Even in the same region, with the way of oral transmission from generation to generation, there are relationships regarding the cultural inheritance and mutual reference of music. The music of each place has its own independence, and the inheritance of music can continue this independence. However, in the process of inheritance, it is inevitable to draw on other cultures, thus undermining this independence. (Liu, S. 2012)

China has 56 ethnic groups, and the western region is particularly rich in ethnic minorities. There are significant differences in the ways of thinking, ethnic customs, and living characteristics of ethnic minority students compared with those of Han students. Nowadays, the diversified development of music culture and the recognition of multiple values in music have become a common understanding among

people. The drawbacks caused by the standardized and homogenized models of education have also prompted people to reflect. Under such a general trend, developing ethnic music education can change the unitary pattern existing in the music of ethnic minorities. (Xu, Y. 2002)

Compared with the situation in the 1920s when music publications were rare and the social music atmosphere was not good, in the early days of the founding of the People's Republic of China, publications on Western musicology theories were no longer uncommon in China. Mr. Feng Zikai carried out fruitful explorations in aspects such as national music education, the dissemination of Western musicology theories, and the practice of the Sinicization of Western musicology theories, and published "Eighteen Lectures on Music Knowledge". Its content includes the characteristics of musical art, the origin and development of music, the completion of music scores, the structure of scales, the study of intervals, an overview of harmony, the basics of composition, vocal music and singing, musical instruments and instrumental music, orchestral ensembles, the forms of musical works, the content of musical works, ancient and medieval music, modern music, operas, music dramas and oratorios, music concerts, and music learning methods. Among them, the basic musicology theoretical knowledge contents such as the completion of music scores, the structure of scales, operas, music dramas and oratorios are similar to those in works like "Common Sense of Music" and "Introduction to Music". However, the characteristics of musical art, the content of musical works, ancient and medieval music, modern music, etc. have already covered the categories of Western music history and basic musicology theories. These contents are theoretical expansions and deepening based on the original music publications. (Liu, J. 2020).

The musical characteristics displayed by the Miao love songs in Taijiang County are also very unique, benefiting from the local special geographical and cultural characteristics. The local love songs have a very rich variety of expressions. Taking the melody and melodic characteristics of Taijiang Miao love songs as an example, the tunes of Miao love songs usually express emotions in a soft and melodious way. The love songs depict many touching love stories, while also emphasizing the roles of Guizhou ethnic men and women in society. For instance, men are often portrayed as brave and resolute figures in love songs, representing

family responsibilities and the role of a man; while women are depicted as gentle and kind, taking on the responsibility of caring for the family and loved ones. This division of social roles reflects the gender division of labor and traditional family concepts in Miao society, while also highlighting the unity and belief of the Miao people. Moreover, the Miao love songs emphasize a deep affection and love for the homeland's mountains and rivers, as well as respect and inheritance for elders and family. These unique social roles and ethnic identities highlight the cultural confidence of the Miao people, while also emphasizing the cohesion and continuity of the Miao community, family, and society (Pan, X. 2023).

The theories of Western musicology provide a theoretical foundation for the comparison and communication between the Miao Love Song Zimei Festival and other musical cultures. Through the comparison with Western musical cultures and the musical cultures of other regions, we can have a clearer understanding of the uniqueness and value of Miao love songs. The concepts and methods regarding the protection of musical cultural heritage in Western musicology theories prompt researchers to re-examine the historical memories of the Miao Love Song Zimei Festival. In the research process, instead of solely relying on the traditional linear historical narrative, attention is paid to the diverse memories and interpretations of the history of the Zimei Festival by different groups. Through interviews and studies of groups with different ages, genders, and social statuses within the Miao community, those details and stories overlooked by the mainstream historical narrative are excavated, so as to write a more comprehensive history of the Miao Love Song Zimei Festival.

1.2 Chinese music theory

The Miao ethnic group is a nation with a long history, and Miao people are scattered all over the world. According to the data of the sixth national population census in 2010, the population of the Miao ethnic group reached more than 9.42 million, making it the fourth largest ethnic minority in China. According to historical records, the ancestors of the Miao people first lived in the middle and lower reaches of the Yellow River, and their ancestor was Chi You. In history, the Miao ethnic group was once called Jingchu, Jingman, Nanman, etc. It was not until the Song Dynasty that the name "Miao" was given, separating it from the mixed appellation of

"Man" for several ethnic groups. Guizhou has long been valued by domestic musicology scholars because of its extremely rich local music resources. Guizhou University is located in the uniquely advantageous region where ethnic minorities in Guizhou gather. As early as the 1950s, it began the work of collecting, sorting out, analyzing, and publishing local folk music.(He, X. 2016).

In the long course of development, the development of ethnic minority music mainly bears the changes of ethnic culture and spirit. There are many similarities between the development of ethnic music and the formation of traditional music. In terms of expression forms, it is mainly expressed through singing and dancing, as well as musical instruments. However, a small part of ethnic music contains the local language characteristics. The ethnic music in China at the present stage has strong ethnic characteristics. The main reason is that ethnic music carries the unique culture and spirit of an ethnic group, and it fully reflects the unique customs of an ethnic group. It is a cultural treasure passed down from generation to generation within an ethnic group. With the development of music, the style of ethnic minority music has changed. It mainly involves the effective integration of the characteristic cultures and spirits of different ethnic groups, which promotes its own development. Thus, when studying Chinese traditional music, it is necessary to attach importance to the theoretical research of ethnic music. This is not only a study of ethnic music itself, but also requires an in-depth study of ethnic characteristic cultures.(Yu, W. 2018).

In addition to a few scholars who study foreign cultures' music, most scholars in China's ethnomusicology are studying the music culture of their own ethnic groups, including the music cultures of various ethnic minorities in China. The reason for this is that the purpose of establishing China's ethnomusicology at the beginning was to establish a musical theoretical system for the Chinese nation, which shows the characteristic of convergence. Chinese scholars often study the music culture of their own ethnic groups with both an insider's and an outsider's identity, because they not only grew up in the music culture they are currently studying since childhood, but more importantly, they conduct research from the perspective of a professional scholar. (Zhang, Y. 2019).

The disciplinary construction of musicology in contemporary China has developed rapidly under the impetus of reform and opening up. Numerous

musicology researchers are based on the forefront of academic research, always adhere to the concept of humanities, actively pay attention to the theoretical research and construction of the discipline of musicology, and have published *Contemporary Musicology in China*. It provides an overview of the general theory of music acoustics, conducts research on five aspects including the history of Chinese music acoustics, temperamentology, musical instrument acoustics, singing acoustics, and music hall acoustics, expounds on some subjective evaluations in music acoustics, computer music, the establishment of research institutions, and academic exchanges, and gives an overview of music morphology.(Zhang, J. 2015).

Chinese music theory has concepts of pitch systems, scale patterns, and musical symbols that are different from those of Western music theory. Most of the Miao love songs in Taijiang are based on the pentatonic mode of Chinese national tonality, with gong, shang, jiao, zhi, and yu as the main pitch series. The application of the Chinese pentatonic scale gives the Miao love songs a strong national style and regional characteristics, making them sound cordial and natural and conforming to the aesthetic habits of the Miao people. (Duan, W. J. 2016)

Chinese musicology theory is different from Western music theory. Chinese music theory has concepts of tonality systems, scales, patterns, and musical symbols. It mainly includes Chinese traditional music theory and Chinese traditional aesthetic theory. Chinese music has a long history. In this long history, many excellent musical works have emerged, and a relatively complete musical theoretical system has gradually taken shape. Based on Chinese music theory, researchers will conduct in-depth studies in Chapter 4, "The History of the Miao Love Song Zimei Festival," and Chapter 5, "The Musical Characteristics of Miao Love Songs." By combining the background of Chinese music culture and national aesthetic habits, they will explore the historical, musical, and aesthetic characteristics of Miao love songs.

1.3 Music analysis theory

Music analysis theory is the discipline that studies musical structure, analyzing from the aspects of melody, intervals, rhythm, and harmony of a piece. The melodic intervals of Miao folk songs are quite diverse. Sometimes there are small interval progressions, such as stepwise movements, which make the melody delicate

and gentle, expressing the tender emotions between young Miao men and women well, giving a sense of closeness; at the same time, there are also some larger interval leaps, such as fourths, fifths, or even octaves, which give the melody a unique style. There are often techniques of repetition and sequence; repetition can deepen the listener's impression of the melody, strengthening the expression of emotion, such as certain representative rhythmic patterns or melodic fragments that appear multiple times in the song; sequence is the repetition of similar musical material at different pitch levels, giving the melody both unity and variability. Additionally, the melodies of Miao folk songs have characteristics of circling back and echoing, with a certain connection and response between the phrases, making the melody of the entire song more coherent and flowing (Wang Qi, 2021).

Youfang is different from general love activities in that it is carried out when people don't know each other. It is not appropriate to directly express words of love, so people can only use the means of antiphonal singing to ask and answer each other. The content of the antiphonal singing during the Zimei Festival is bold and unrestrained, covering various aspects such as introducing oneself, whether one already has a lover, and how to treat each other if they fall in love, etc. The music generally uses the zhi mode, which is related to the hearty and free character of the zhi mode and also to the content that people want to express. The melody scale mostly uses the three notes G, A, and C. The combination of these three notes constitutes intervals such as the stepwise major second, minor third, and the leaping perfect fourth, perfect fifth, and major sixth. The melody has large leaps, vividly expressing people's sincere and excited feelings. There are often ornamental appoggiaturas between musical phrases, and it mostly ends with the long note G. Falsetto is often used in the singing style, and the tunes of the two parties in the antiphonal singing are roughly the same. (Chen, Z., & Li, R. 2018).

When singing Miao folk songs, the voice production mainly uses the chest voice (true voice), combined with the falsetto. The abdominal breathing method is used, with the middle and low sounds produced by the chest cavity and the high sounds resonating in the head cavity. The lyrics of Miao folk songs are basically in five-character rhythms and rhyme in terms of tone. Due to the differences between the Miao language and the Chinese language, in Chinese, the last character of each

sentence rhymes in terms of "rhyme and tone", while in the Miao language, the last letter of each character rhymes in terms of "foot tone". Miao folk songs basically have a one-character-one-note relationship between the lyrics and the melody. The mode that does not end with the tonic is a major characteristic of the mode and tonality of Miao music. (Zhang, J. 2019).

The content of Miao love songs fully demonstrates the love and marriage emotions of young men and women from acquaintance to mutual understanding, falling in love, and making a lifelong commitment to each other. These songs are sung by young men and women during the "xingge zuoye" (singing and sitting together at night) in the dead of night. The lyrics affectionately express the deep love between the two genders. In terms of the singing form, it is composed of the antiphonal singing form between men and women, all sung in the local Caomiao dialect. Although the overall pitch starts relatively high, the melodic pitch fluctuates up and down with the changes in the tones of the Caomiao language. Among them, the part sung by women unfolds within the pentatonic scale with the zhi note as the ending note, while the men's part has the color of the pentatonic yu mode. The rhythm, which is mainly composed of eighth notes and has a non-uniform and gentle rhythm, makes the singing euphemistic and delicate, expressing the mutual love between the two parties. (Liu, F. 2018).

The meter of Miao love songs is relatively free and flexible, unlike the regular meters commonly seen in Western music. This free meter can better adapt to the expression of the lyrics and the outpouring of emotions, allowing the singers to perform according to their own understanding and feelings. Due to the rich variety of rhythmic patterns, various combinations of notes of different lengths are used. There may be continuous short notes, forming a rapid and lively rhythmic effect, showing the enthusiastic interaction between young men and women; there may also be the use of long notes, creating a long and lyrical atmosphere and expressing deep emotions. At the same time, the use of some syncopated rhythms and dotted rhythms increases the dynamic feeling and sense of rhythm of the songs. (Song, Y. 2018).

The application of harmony exists in some Miao love songs. In multi-voice love songs, the harmonic structure is relatively simple but distinctive. Taking the two voices of male and female as an example, when the male voice is the main voice, the

female voice uses praise words and melismas to accompany and form a polyphonic texture; conversely, when the female voice is the main voice, the male voice uses melismas and trills to accompany and form a polyphonic texture. The progression of harmony is usually relatively natural and smooth to match the development of the melody and the expression of emotions. There will be no overly complex and abrupt harmonic changes, but rather it is closely combined with the melody to jointly create a harmonious musical atmosphere. (He, F., & Chen, X. 2011).

During the long process of dissemination, many excellent and classic Miao love song works have been left behind. Through collecting sheet music and singing materials, researchers use music analysis theories to conduct a more scientific and detailed analysis of Miao love songs, and further study the musical structure and characteristics of Miao love songs in Chapter 5.

1.4 Folklore inheritance theory

Folklore inheritance theory is a cultural heritage passed down through development, which records information about the development, culture, society, and economy of a nation or region. The Miao love songs vividly reflect the unique marriage and love customs of the Miao people. In Miao society, young men and women find their beloved through singing love songs to each other, expressing their affection. This method is regarded as a traditional way of courtship, reflecting the Miao people's pursuit and respect for love. For example, during the Miao's "Youfang" activities, young men and women gather in specific places to understand each other and exchange feelings through singing love songs. This activity is not only a form of entertainment but also an important part of Miao marriage and love customs. In traditional Miao society, singing love songs is an indispensable means for young men and women when they are in love. Many of the Miao festivals are closely related to love songs. During traditional festivals such as the Miao Zimei Festival and the (Lusheng Festival), singing love songs is an indispensable part. These festivals provide a platform for young men and women to showcase their talents and exchange emotions, while also passing on the cultural traditions of the Miao people (Yuan Tingke & Wu Zhengbiao, 2015).

2. Documents and Research Related.

Researchers have consulted numerous materials on the Miao ethnic music culture in Taijiang County and the Miao love songs. Their main focus of research is the status of Miao love songs within Miao culture, the role of Miao love songs in Taijiang County, the impact of Taijiang County's geography on Miao love songs, and the development achievements of Miao love songs in Taijiang County.

2.1 The Status of Miao Love Songs in Miao Culture

Miao love songs carry the development, traditions, values, and life experiences of the Miao people. Through the transmission of these songs, Miao culture is passed down from generation to generation, maintaining cultural continuity for the ethnic group. They are a unique channel for young Miao men and women to express affection and exchange emotions. Since the Miao do not have their own ethnic script, cultural transmission mainly relies on oral tradition. As an oral art form, Miao love songs are passed down among generations of Miao people, carrying important information about Miao development, culture, and values. Through the singing of love songs, Miao traditional culture is sustained and inherited. As young Miao people learn and perform these songs, they gradually understand and identify with their own ethnic culture, which strengthens their ethnic pride and cohesion. Love songs have become a spiritual bond connecting the Miao people, allowing Miao culture to be preserved and passed on among different regions and branches of the Miao community. Within Miao society, love songs are not just a simple expression of love but a profound form of spiritual communication and emotional exchange. During various Miao festivals, gatherings, and social occasions, singing love songs to each other is often a significant part of the activities. It promotes interaction and communication among people, enhancing ethnic cohesion and social ties.

As a treasure of musical art, Miao love songs possess a unique musical style and artistic charm. Their melodies are beautiful and pleasing to the ear, with rich variations in melody, free and flexible rhythms, and a heavy use of embellishments such as long notes, rising glissandos, falling glissandos, and vibratos. These elements express delicate emotions and showcase the artistic creativity and aesthetic tastes of the Miao people, making them a significant representative of Miao folk art. In the marriage system and customs of the Miao, love songs play an indispensable role. From the initial meeting and falling in love to the engagement and marriage, love

songs are woven throughout, becoming an important ritual and symbol in the marriage process. In terms of performance, there are various forms such as solo singing, duet singing, and chorus, enriching the expressiveness of the music. The lyrics of love songs are poetic and literary, employing various rhetorical devices such as metaphor, personification, hyperbole, and parallelism, vividly expressing emotions and artistic conceptions. The content of the lyrics is rich and colorful, involving aspects of Miao development, legends, customs, and natural landscapes, making them an important part of Miao folk literature. They are one of the distinct symbols of Miao culture.

2.2 The Role of Miao Love Songs in Taijiang County

As the premier Miao county in the world, Taijiang County plays a significant role in Miao culture, carrying the historical memories, customs, traditions, and values of the Miao people in Taijiang. Miao love songs are an essential component of Taijiang Miao culture, which, through oral transmission, carry cultural information such as Miao development, legends, and values. Through the passing down of love songs from generation to generation, Miao cultural traditions are sustained and inherited, allowing the younger generation to understand and recognize the cultural roots of their ethnicity. For example, love songs may involve stories of Miao ancestors and experiences of migration, which are important elements of Miao historical culture.

For the Miao people in Taijiang County, Miao love songs are one of the important symbols of their ethnic identity. Singing and appreciating love songs can enhance the Miao people's sense of identity and belonging to their ethnicity, uniting them more closely. During various traditional Miao festivals and gatherings, the singing of love songs becomes a cultural activity that the Miao people participate in together, deepening emotional connections and ethnic cohesion.

In Miao society in Taijiang County, love songs are an important means for young men and women to communicate and express their affection. Miao youth understand each other's intentions and build relationships through singing love songs to each other. This unique courtship method, using songs as a medium, provides a free and romantic social platform for young men and women. For instance, during the "Youfang (Miao Valentine's Day)" activities, young men and women will sing love

songs to each other in specific places to find their beloved. It serves as an essential medium for social interaction among the local Miao people, offering opportunities for young men and women to meet and get to know each other, and enhancing communication and emotional connections between people.

During various traditional festivals and celebratory events in Taijiang County, the singing of Miao love songs is an indispensable part. Whether it's major festivals like the Miao Zimei Festival and Miao New Year, or smaller gatherings, the singing of love songs adds a joyful and festive atmosphere to the celebrations. Large-scale love song singing events, where thousands gather, showcase the charm of Miao culture and attract many tourists to watch. They have become a typical element of Taijiang's tourism culture, attracting tourists and promoting the development of the local tourism industry, contributing to economic growth. They also inspire creativity: prompting the Miao people to demonstrate unique creativity in music and lyric composition, enriching the local cultural and artistic achievements.

2.3 The Influence of Taijiang County's Geography on the Miao Love Songs

Taijiang County is located on the northern foothills of the Leigong Mountain, the main peak of the Miao Range on the eastern part of the Yunnan-Guizhou Plateau, and is characterized by many mountainous areas. The Miao residents here live relatively dispersed, with young men and women often communicating across valleys and hillsides. This geographical environment necessitates that the Miao love songs be sung in a high and melodious manner, allowing the voices to travel between the valleys and be heard by the other party. The natural landscapes of Taijiang County, such as mountains, rivers, and forests, provide abundant material for the creation of Miao love songs. Singers often express their emotions through the scenery, incorporating praise and love for nature into the love songs, making the content more vivid and expressive. For example, the songs may include descriptions of natural elements like flowers, trees, and birds in the mountains to express a yearning and pursuit for beautiful love.

The climate of Taijiang County is subtropical humid monsoon, with distinct four seasons; winters are long without severe cold, summers are short without extreme heat, the frost-free period is long, and the monsoon climate is evident. The

main wind direction is northwest in winter and spring, and southeast in summer and autumn. The Leigong Mountain range runs northeast and divides the area into two distinct climatic zones at Nan Dao Slope: the southern region has a higher elevation, receives warm and moist air from the south, has a high forest coverage, more precipitation, less sunlight, and often experiences late spring coldness and autumn winds; the northern region has a lower elevation, with the Leigong Mountain blocking the southern warm and moist air, lower forest coverage, less precipitation, more sunlight, and often experiences summer droughts (Liu Hanlin & Zhang Tingting, 2024). This pleasant climate allows the Miao people more opportunities to engage in social and recreational activities outdoors, and singing love songs is one of the important forms. At night, when the climate is cool, Miao young men and women often gather at places like the Youfang field to express their affection through singing. The climate conditions provide a comfortable environment for the performance of love songs. The mild and humid climate makes the lives of the Miao people relatively comfortable, and this state of life is reflected in the rhythm and emotional expression of the love songs. The rhythm of the Miao love songs is relatively free and relaxed, with delicate emotions, which is in harmony with the local climatic characteristics, reflecting the unique emotional world and life attitude of the Miao people formed in this natural environment.

Within the territory of Taijiang County, there are rivers such as the Qingshui River, Baluo River, and Wengmi River, along with their numerous tributaries. These rivers are not only important sources of water for the Miao people's daily life but also serve as a repository for their emotions. In Miao love songs, themes related to rivers often emerge, such as comparing the flowing river water to the continuous extension of love, or setting love stories against the backdrop of encounters by the riverside. The presence of rivers enriches the themes and connotations of love songs, giving them a more regional character. Promoting cultural exchange and dissemination: As significant transportation routes, rivers have historically facilitated cultural exchange between Miao communities in different regions. Miao love songs have spread across various areas with the migration and interaction of people, while also absorbing cultural elements from other regions, continuously enriching and developing. For instance, along the river basins where

Miao people reside, the style and content of love songs may influence each other to some extent, forming characteristics with commonalities.

2.4 development Achievements of the Miao Love Songs in Taijiang County.

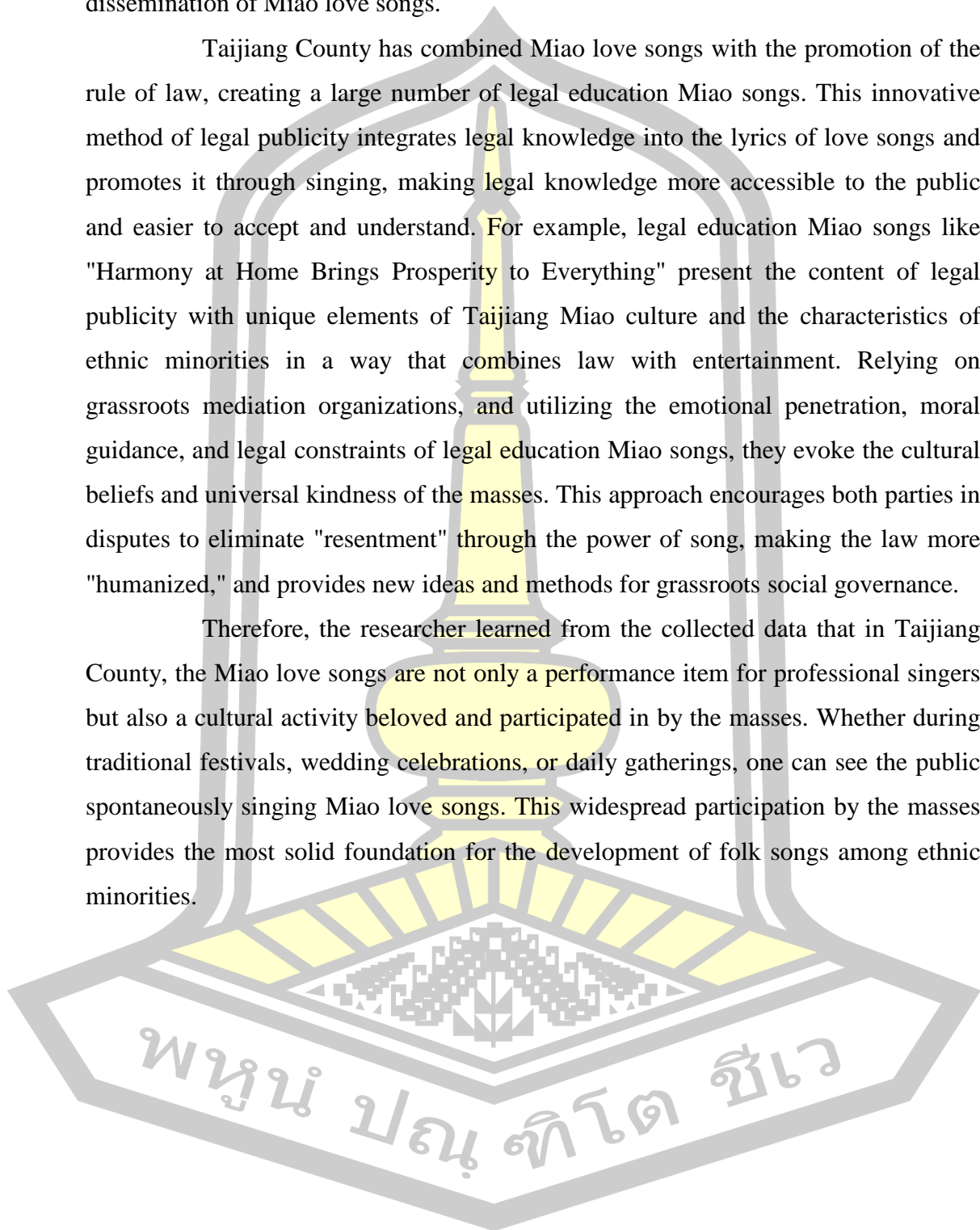
The traditional art of singing Miao love songs has been inherited. Through on-the-ground interviews and practices, the singing methods and melodic characteristics of Miao love songs in Taijiang County have been well passed down among the younger generation through the oral and heart-to-heart teachings of the older singers. Additionally, local schools, music training institutions, music enthusiasts, and cultural workers have continuously innovated and created Miao love songs, incorporating modern musical elements and techniques while retaining their traditional charm, making them more appealing to contemporary aesthetic tastes. University vocal music education has integrated the Miao love songs of Southeast Guizhou into vocal teaching, allowing students to understand and master the essence of Miao love songs during the learning process. University vocal music education is an important way to cultivate musical talents. Integrating the Miao love songs into vocal education can continuously expand and enrich vocal music resources. The rich historical culture and folk customs embodied in the Miao love songs can help students deeply understand the national musical culture and broaden their musical horizons. In this process, universities can establish a database of Miao love songs, collecting, organizing, and preserving these precious musical and cultural materials for future generations (Sun Pengfei, 2023).

The Miao love songs of Taijiang County have participated in numerous cultural exchange activities both domestically and internationally, becoming a bright business card for Taijiang County's external cultural exchanges. Through these activities, the Miao love songs have spread beyond Guizhou, reaching the whole country and even the world, allowing more people to understand and recognize the Miao culture of Taijiang. Taijiang County has combined the Miao love songs with the local tourism industry, arranging love song performances in tourist attractions and folk activities, attracting a large number of tourists to watch. While enjoying the beautiful scenery, tourists can also experience the unique charm of Miao love songs,

which not only promotes the development of local tourism but also facilitates the dissemination of Miao love songs.

Taijiang County has combined Miao love songs with the promotion of the rule of law, creating a large number of legal education Miao songs. This innovative method of legal publicity integrates legal knowledge into the lyrics of love songs and promotes it through singing, making legal knowledge more accessible to the public and easier to accept and understand. For example, legal education Miao songs like "Harmony at Home Brings Prosperity to Everything" present the content of legal publicity with unique elements of Taijiang Miao culture and the characteristics of ethnic minorities in a way that combines law with entertainment. Relying on grassroots mediation organizations, and utilizing the emotional penetration, moral guidance, and legal constraints of legal education Miao songs, they evoke the cultural beliefs and universal kindness of the masses. This approach encourages both parties in disputes to eliminate "resentment" through the power of song, making the law more "humanized," and provides new ideas and methods for grassroots social governance.

Therefore, the researcher learned from the collected data that in Taijiang County, the Miao love songs are not only a performance item for professional singers but also a cultural activity beloved and participated in by the masses. Whether during traditional festivals, wedding celebrations, or daily gatherings, one can see the public spontaneously singing Miao love songs. This widespread participation by the masses provides the most solid foundation for the development of folk songs among ethnic minorities.



CHAPTER III

Research Methodology

The contents of this chapter provide an important premise and lay an important foundation for the research of Miao love songs in Taijiang County, Guizhou Province, China

The research structure 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 key informants
 - 2.3 Selection of Songs
 - 2.4 Research Tools
 - 2.5 Data Collection
 - 2.6 Data Management
 - 2.7 Data Analysis
 - 2.8 Data presentation

1. Research Scope

1.1 Scope of Content

Researcher studied about development and analyze Miao love song in Taijiang County, Guizhou Province, China

1.2 Scope of Time

June 2024 to Feb 2025

2. Research process

2.1 Selection of the Research Site

Guizhou Province, abbreviated as "Qian" or "Gui", is a provincial-level administrative region of the People's Republic of China, with Guiyang as its capital. It

borders Sichuan Province and Chongqing Municipality to the north, Hunan Province to the east, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region to the south, and Yunnan Province to the west. The terrain within Guizhou Province is high in the west and low in the east, sloping down from the center to the north, east, and south, earning it the saying "Eight mountains, one water, and one field." It has a subtropical monsoon climate. The province has a total area of 176,200 square kilometers and is divided into 6 prefecture-level cities and 3 autonomous prefectures. By the end of 2023, the permanent resident population of Guizhou Province was 38.65 million (From Figure 1).



Figure 6. Guizhou Province, China

Source:// chinafolio.com

Taijiang county is located in the southeast of Guizhou Province and the middle of Qiandongnan Miao and Dong Autonomous Prefecture. The county seat is 48 kilometers away from the provincial capital Kaili city and 218 kilometers away from the provincial capital Guiyang city. Taijiang County has jurisdiction over 8 towns and 161 village (residential) committees, with a total area of 1,108 square kilometers and a cultivated land area of 93,195 mu. Highway 65,320 national road line through the county. Under the jurisdiction of the 2 streets, 4 towns, 3 townships (From Figure 2).



Figure 7. Taijiang County, Qiandongnan Miao and Dong Autonomous Prefecture,
Guizhou Province, China
Source:// chinafolio.com

2.2 Selection of key informants

The criteria to select key informants

- 1) Informants must be Miao people who have been living in Taijiang County for ten years or more.
- 2) One must have rich experience in performing Miao love songs.
- 3) They must be representative transmitter of Miao love songs and folk songs who have been engaged in transmission for over ten years and have won awards more than five times.

Tian Zhongming, Miao nationality, born in 1976, from Fangzhao Village, Fangzhao Town, Taijiang County, Guizhou Province, has been the provincial representative transmitter of the national intangible cultural heritage project "Miao Multi-voice Folk Songs". Inheritance skill features: Miao multi-voice love song is spread in tai keung without accompaniment, no command of five vocal scale folk polyphonic music, has obvious national characteristics and regional characteristics, with harmony as the main form of polyphonic music, true and false voice alternately, broad range, deep, free beat, the rhythm euphemism, extensive use of long and on, slide and trill, express exquisite feelings, need high singing skills. (From Figure 3).



Figure 8. Tian Zhiming

Source: Tian Zhiming, 2024

Zhao Mingying, female, Miao, the original town Fang Zhao village, in 2012 by qiandongnan intangible cultural heritage Miao multi-vocal folk song project representative transmission, from 1995 to 2004 to Guiyang red maple lake, Kunming, Yunnan, Shanghai grand view garden during migrant performances, between Guiyang and tae-tae river to participate in each Miao zimei festival of the opening ceremony of the tour and clothing performance activities (From Figure 4).



Figure 9. Zhao Mingying

Source: Zhao Mingying, 2024

2.3 Selection of Songs

Researcher, through interviewed with the informant Tian Zhiming and teacher Zhao Mingying, recommended several representative Miao love songs and songs that

can showcase the unique charm of Miao culture, such as "Chun Zhi Ge", "You Fang Ge", "Jia Ru Ni Shi Yi Duo Hua", etc.

2.4 Research tools

This research used 2 research tools, include interview form and observation form

2.4.1 Interview form

Interview form was used to collect research data through face-to-face conversation between researcher and informants. It is flexible, can ask in depth according to their answers, and can obtain rich and detailed first-hand information.

Process of making the interview form (based on research objective).

- 1) Create a interview form for key informants
- 2) Then submit the file to my advisor for review
- 3) Then hand it over to the key informant to see if the file is comprehensive
- 4) Revise the interview form and make up for deficiencies
- 5) Take my interview form to an expert for review
- 6) Continue to revise the interview form

Finally, this file was used for research tool.

2.4.2 Observation form

Observation form was used to collect research objects through the senses or through certain instruments and equipment, such as mobile phones, cameras and so on, so as to collect research data. The behavior and performance of the study object can be observed directly, the observation result may be influenced by the subjective factors, and the observation scope is limited.

Process of making the observation form

- 1) Create an observation form for key informants based on the related research questions
- 2) Then submit the file to my advisor for review
- 3) Then hand it over to the key informant to see if the file is comprehensive
- 4) Revise the observation form and make up for deficiencies

5) Take the observation form to an expert for review

6) Continue to revise the form

Finally, this file will be used for research tool.

2.5 Data collection

Data collection is an initial understanding of the relevant information through the interview and observation methods, enabling researcher to gain basic insights into this topic.

For objective 1, researcher collected data based on document from internet and library and interview the key informants based on filed work

For objective 2, researcher collected data through observing and interviewing the key informants to record the music.

1) Interview: through the design interview questions, and the local intangible Miao love song inheritance face to face conversation, and recording collection, main purpose is to collect and analyze several non genetic bearing their personal experience in the field of music, achievements, consulting their understanding of Miao love songs and rich singing experience, share the development, connotation, and singing skills, etc.

2) Observation: through some of the Miao traditional festivals often have Miao love song singing activities (such as zimei festival) and the villagers in their leisure spontaneous singing love songs daily party of Miao village, observe the singer expression, action, singing style and the audience reaction and interaction, researcher can directly use mobile phones, notebook, camera video shooting, as much as possible detailed record everything observed.

2.6 Data management

For objective 1, researcher grouped the collected data based on the objective.

For objective 2, researcher transcribed the sound of music to notation by using musical application.

Data management content is critical, in data collection, to ensure the accuracy and integrity of the data. The recording of the interview is timely transcribed into a text document and stored in a computer or cloud storage device. Use of professional transcription software to improve efficiency and accuracy. Organize the photos, videos and other multimedia materials taken, mark the time, location and content of

the shooting, and store them in a special folder. Classification was classified according to the type of interviewees and data content collected. The transcribed text data, photo description, video annotation and so on are coded one by one for subsequent review and analysis.

2.7 Data analysis

Through the analysis of the collected relevant materials, researchers can have a more comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the Miao Love Song Zimei Festival.

1) Analysis of Objective 1: During data collection, through observation, it was found that the singing occasions of Miao love songs mainly concentrate on the Miao traditional festival, the Zimei Festival. The Miao Love Song Zimei Festival is expounded from different historical stages, including ancient times, the Tang and Song Dynasties, the Ming and Qing Dynasties, modern times, and the contemporary era. From its initial budding in ancient times, through growth in the Tang and Song Dynasties, expansion in the Ming and Qing Dynasties, transformation in modern times, to prosperity in the contemporary era, its evolutionary process carries the profound emotions and wisdom of the Miao people and reflects the diverse aspects of the development of the Miao society. From the cultural history of the Miao people, it is discovered that in these occasions, Miao love songs are not only a form of entertainment but also a way of cultural inheritance and communication. Miao love songs have a long history and rich cultural connotations. They are not only a way for young Miao men and women to express their love but also reflect the lives, customs, and values of the Miao people.

2) Analysis of Objective 2: In the data analysis, researchers selected Miao folk singers, Miao cultural researchers, and elderly Miao residents as the interviewees. By designing targeted interview questions, they obtained information about the lyrics, rhythm, melody, harmony, and singing characteristics of Miao love songs. Generally, the lyrics of Miao love songs follow a five-step, seven-character rhyme scheme, and usually take nature, love, labor, etc. as their themes, expressing the Miao people's yearning for and pursuit of a better life. The rhythm and meter lay a solid rhythmic foundation for Miao songs, and the melody is the core element in constructing the musical form of Miao love songs. Through techniques such as repetition, varied

repetition, and contrast, different musical phrases and sections are formed, and then a complete musical form structure is constructed. Harmony adds rich layers to the single melody of Miao love songs, playing a role in supplementing and deepening the melody and enriching its connotation. The singing characteristics showcase the unique vocal techniques and national style of the Miao people. Through these analyses, it is beneficial for researchers to have a better understanding of the original ecological music of Miao love songs.

2.8 Data presentation

Chapter I Introduction

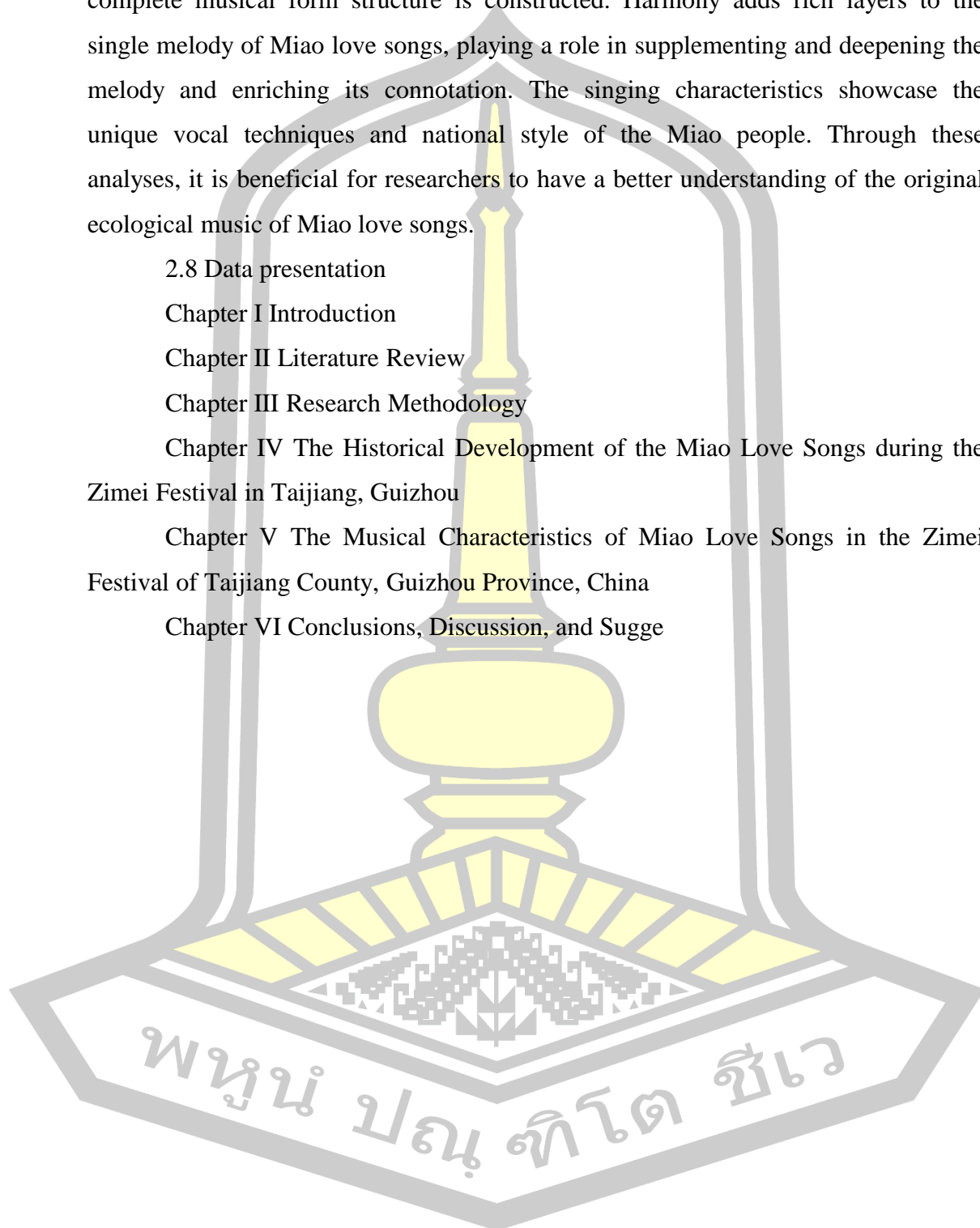
Chapter II Literature Review

Chapter III Research Methodology

Chapter IV The Historical Development of the Miao Love Songs during the Zimei Festival in Taijiang, Guizhou

Chapter V The Musical Characteristics of Miao Love Songs in the Zimei Festival of Taijiang County, Guizhou Province, China

Chapter VI Conclusions, Discussion, and Suggest



CHAPTER IV

The Historical Development of the Miao Love Songs during the Zimei Festival in Taijiang, Guizhou

This chapter comprehensively analyzes the historical development and evolution of the Miao Love Song Zimei Festival. By combining the information obtained from on - site interviews with Informant 1 and Informant 2 regarding the origin, stable period, expansion period, post - crisis transformation, and the prosperous period up to now of the Miao Love Song Zimei Festival in Taijiang County, Guizhou Province, and with reference to a large number of books and relevant documents for data collection. It elaborates on the content development of Miao love songs and the development of the Zimei Festival from different historical stages. Now, the specific content of the historical development stages of the Miao Love Song Zimei Festival is summarized as follows:

1. Origin in ancient times (around 2500 BC)
2. Stable development during the Tang and Song dynasties (618 - 1279 AD)
3. Expansive development during the Ming and Qing dynasties (1279 - 1912 AD)
4. Crisis - transformation development in modern times (1912 - 1949 AD)
5. Prosperous development in contemporary times (1949 - 2024 AD)

1. Origin in ancient times (around 2500 BC)

In ancient times, the Miao people lived in tribes. They settled by mountains and rivers, leading a primitive farming life of slash - and - burn cultivation. In such a social form, the relationships among members within the tribe were close and harmonious. The common labor and daily life led to frequent emotional exchanges among people. The Miao people held deep awe and worship for nature. They believed that all things had spirits, and natural elements such as mountains, rivers, and trees were endowed with mysterious powers. This primitive nature - worship permeated every aspect of their lives. In such a cultural environment, the artistic forms of the Miao people began to gradually sprout. Art forms such as music, dance, and poetry

became important ways for the Miao people to express emotions, record life, and inherit culture. The Miao love songs emerged in this context. Initially, they might just be tunes hummed casually by people in the fields or after work. The lyrics were simple and plain, yet full of love for life and yearning for beautiful emotions.(Ma, S. 2010).

Regarding the origin of the Miao Zimei Festival, there are many touching legends circulated among the Miao people. One widely - spread story goes like this: In ancient times, the ancestors of the Miao people lived in a beautiful valley. One year, the men in the tribe went out hunting and didn't return for a long time. The women were very worried, so they got together to discuss how to find their relatives. They weaved exquisite flower belts with colored threads, embroidered their yearning and blessings on them, and then set off on the journey to find their relatives with these flower belts. During the search, the women encountered many difficulties and dangers, but they never gave up. Eventually, they found their relatives in a distant place. To celebrate the reunion, the women made delicious Zimei rice, and everyone sang and danced, celebrating for three days and three nights. Since then, at this time every year, the Miao girls would make Zimei rice and hold grand events, which is the origin of the Zimei Festival.

In the Zimei Festival of ancient times, Miao love songs played a crucial role. When the Miao girls prepared the Zimei rice, dressed up in their finest clothes, and came to the appointed place to participate in the celebration, love songs became an important means of communication between them and the young men. At the event site of the Zimei Festival, the girls would sing out their heartfelt feelings with sweet voices, expressing their longing for love and aspiration for a better life. Their melodious singing echoed among the valleys. After hearing the girls' songs, the young men would respond one after another, showing their courage and talent through their own singing. The two sides got to know each other and deepened their affection through the way of antiphonal singing.(Zeng, X., & Gu, X. 2017)

As time passed, Miao love songs and the Zimei Festival continued to develop under mutual influence. On the one hand, the Zimei Festival provided a broad stage and rich materials for the development of Miao love songs. During the activities of the Zimei Festival, young Miao men and women continuously innovated and enriched

the lyrics and tunes of love songs through antiphonal singing. They integrated every bit of life, insights into love, and visions for the future into the love songs, making the content of the love songs more colorful. On the other hand, Miao love songs added a romantic atmosphere and profound cultural connotations to the Zimei Festival. Love songs became the soul of the Zimei Festival, making the Zimei Festival not just a simple celebration but an important moment for young Miao men and women to express love and pursue happiness. Accompanied by love songs, the activities of the Zimei Festival became more colorful and attracted more and more people to participate.

2. Stable development during the Tang and Song dynasties (618 - 1279 AD)

During the Tang and Song dynasties, the areas where the Miao people lived in compact communities were relatively stable, mainly distributed in present - day Hunan, Guizhou, Guangxi and other regions. Politically, although the central government's control over these areas gradually strengthened, the Miao society still maintained a certain degree of autonomy, with its own tribal organizations and social order. Agricultural production witnessed significant development during this period, gradually transitioning from slash - and - burn cultivation to intensive farming. The cultivation of crops such as rice and corn became more widespread, laying a material foundation for the prosperity of the Miao society.(Jiang, H. 2000).

Culturally, the Miao people accumulated rich cultural connotations through long - term production and daily life practices. They had unique religious beliefs, with the concept of animism deeply rooted in people's hearts. The worship of nature and ancestors permeated their daily lives. Meanwhile, the artistic forms of the Miao people flourished. Besides music and dance, handicrafts such as embroidery and batik also reached a relatively high level. This strong cultural atmosphere provided fertile ground for the development of Miao love songs and the Zimei Festival.

The content of Miao love songs was greatly enriched. In terms of expressing love, it was no longer limited to simple admiration, but more exquisitely depicted the complex emotional process of young men and women from acquaintance, understanding to falling in love. At the same time, love songs also began to incorporate reflections on social life and descriptions of labor scenes.(Li, Z. 2000).

With the passage of time and cultural exchanges, the tunes of Miao love songs also underwent significant evolution during the Tang and Song dynasties. Based on the original pentatonic scale, they absorbed elements of the music of surrounding ethnic groups, such as some grace notes and rhythmic changes in Han music, making the tunes more diverse. In some areas, the melodies of Miao love songs showed undulating changes, enhancing the emotional expressiveness. For example, in some Miao - inhabited areas in Guizhou, the tunes of love songs became more melodious and tactful, with a broader vocal range. Through the ingenious combination of high and low notes, they could express emotions that were either affectionate or passionate.

During this period, the singing forms of Miao love songs were no longer limited to solo and antiphonal singing. In some important festivals and gatherings, the form of chorus emerged. Young men and women were divided into two groups and held chorus competitions in the form of antiphonal singing, creating a very lively scene. In addition, the form of accompaniment singing also appeared. When a singer sang a love song, the people around would accompany in the form of harmony, enhancing the musical layers and appeal.

The festival rituals of the Miao Zimei Festival gradually became standardized. The festival time, process and related activities had relatively fixed patterns. Generally, the Zimei Festival would be held in a specific season each year and last for several days. At the beginning of the festival, a solemn sacrifice ceremony would be held. The Miao people would offer sacrifices to ancestors and gods, praying for favorable weather and the prosperity of humans and livestock. After the sacrifice ceremony, it would enter the colorful celebration activity stage.

During this period, the activity content of the Zimei Festival was greatly enriched and expanded. Besides traditional activities such as making Zimei rice and antiphonal singing, many new items were added. For example, dance performances became one of the important activities of the Zimei Festival. The Miao people, dressed in their finest clothes, danced merrily. In addition, some competitive activities also emerged.(Wu, X. 1999).

As time went by, the social functions of the Zimei Festival in the Miao society were gradually strengthened. It was not only an important occasion for young men and women to court, but also an important bond for the Miao people to strengthen the

connections between families and tribes. During the Zimei Festival, people from various families and tribes would gather together to participate in the festival activities, enhancing their mutual affection and communication. At the same time, the Zimei Festival also became an important platform for the inheritance of Miao culture. Through various activities in the festival, the traditional culture of the Miao people was passed down from generation to generation.

3. Expansive development during the Ming and Qing dynasties (1279 - 1912 AD)

During the Ming and Qing dynasties, the central dynasties further strengthened their rule over the areas where the Miao people lived in compact communities, implementing a series of policies such as "replacing native chieftains with appointed officials". Politically, this broke some of the original Tusi (native chieftain) governance patterns of the Miao people, making the connections between the Miao areas and the outside world increasingly closer. In the economic field, the advanced farming techniques of the Han people gradually spread in, significantly promoting the agricultural production of the Miao people. The area of cultivated farmland expanded, and water conservancy facilities were also improved.

With the increase in business exchanges, the commodity economy in the Miao areas began to sprout. Some Miao people engaged in commercial activities, and their economic exchanges with the Han people and other ethnic groups became more and more frequent. Culturally, Confucian culture gradually infiltrated, yet the Miao people still adhered to their own traditional culture. In the process of interaction and collision, Miao culture presented the characteristics of both maintaining ethnic features and absorbing elements of foreign cultures. (Li, Y. 2024)

At this time, the content of Miao love songs became more diverse. Besides expressing the love between men and women, it also incorporated reflections on all aspects of social life. Influenced by the concept of "love for the country and hometown" in Han culture, some love songs expressed the love for the hometown and the nation. Meanwhile, with the rise of commercial activities, some love songs depicted the trading scenes of the Miao people in the market, showing the new changes in economic life at that time.

In the expression of the love theme, Miao love songs became more delicate and nuanced. There were not only sweet depictions of passionate love but also portrayals of complex emotions such as separation and yearning in love. For example, "My dear brother travels far beyond the mountains, while I, the sister, guard the home with tears wetting my shirt. I gaze to the end of the horizon, longing for your return. Endless lovesickness makes it hard to fall asleep." These lyrics vividly presented the joys and sorrows of young Miao men and women in love.

During this period, there were some changes in the form of Miao love songs. In terms of the tune, influenced by the folk music of the surrounding Han people and that of other ethnic minorities, the melodies of Miao love songs became more diverse. Some originally simple tunes were added with new grace notes and rhythmic changes, enhancing the musical expressiveness.

In terms of the rules of the lyrics, certain changes also occurred. Although still maintaining the traditional rhyming methods of the Miao people, some love songs borrowed the antithesis techniques of Han poetry, making the lyrics more neatly structured and rhythmic in form. From the perspective of the singing style, due to increased cultural exchanges, the singing style of Miao love songs was no longer limited to the traditional simple and bold style. In some areas, a gentle and delicate singing style began to emerge, and different styles blended with each other.

With the deepening of exchanges between the Miao people and other ethnic groups, the spread of Miao love songs was further expanded. Besides being passed down orally within the Miao people, some Han people and people of other ethnic minorities also began to come into contact with and appreciate Miao love songs. In some areas where multiple ethnic groups lived together, Miao love songs became an important carrier of cultural exchanges among different ethnic groups.

In terms of the inheritance method, in addition to the traditional way of the elders passing it on to the younger generation, some Miao villages began to have specialized "song masters". These song masters had a high singing level and a rich reserve of lyrics, and they were responsible for teaching the younger generation to sing love songs, making the inheritance of Miao love songs more standardized and systematic.(Wu, X. 1999).

The festival rituals of the Miao Zimei Festival continued to be enriched and improved based on inheritance. The preparations before the festival became more elaborate. During the process of making Zimei rice, in addition to the traditional dyeing methods, some new patterns and shape designs were added, making it more ornamental. In terms of the sacrifice ceremony, influenced by the Han sacrifice culture, the ritual process became more standardized and solemn.

People would place sumptuous offerings in a specific sacrificial place, and the sacrifice activities would be presided over by the respected elders in the village, praying for ancestors to bless good weather, the prosperity of humans and livestock, and the happiness of young men and women in love. The activities during the festival also became more diverse. Besides traditional activities such as antiphonal singing and courtship, some competitive activities were added, such as Miao martial arts performances and archery competitions. These activities not only increased the fun of the festival but also demonstrated the bravery and strength of the Miao people.

As time went by, the cultural connotation of the Miao Zimei Festival was further enriched and sublimated. During the Ming and Qing dynasties, the Zimei Festival was not only a festival for young men and women to court but also an important platform for the Miao people to showcase their ethnic culture and inherit their national spirit. During the festival, the Miao people would dress up in their finest clothes and display exquisite traditional handicrafts such as Miao embroidery and batik. The patterns and designs on these handicrafts contained rich historical and cultural information of the Miao people. At the same time, various activities in the Zimei Festival also reflected the national spirit of the Miao people, such as unity, friendship, diligence, and bravery. (Long, Y., & Yang, D. 2015).

Due to its gradually expanding social influence, in the Miao - inhabited areas, the Zimei Festival became an annual grand festival, attracting Miao compatriots from surrounding areas and people of other ethnic groups to participate and watch. With the increase in exchanges between the Han and Miao people, some Han literati also began to pay attention to the Miao Zimei Festival and record it in literary works and local chronicles, which further increased the popularity of the Miao Zimei Festival. Meanwhile, the Zimei Festival also promoted the economic development of the Miao areas. During the festival, a large number of people flocked in, driving local

commercial activities and bringing certain economic income to the Miao people. In addition, the Zimei Festival strengthened the cultural exchanges and integration between the Miao people and other ethnic groups, promoting mutual understanding and unity among different ethnic groups.

In the Miao Zimei Festival during the Ming and Qing dynasties, Miao love songs were always an indispensable and important element. Young men and women expressed their love and looked for their beloved ones through antiphonal singing during the festival. The melodies and lyrics of the love songs created a strong romantic atmosphere for the Zimei Festival, making the whole festival full of youth and vitality. The Miao Zimei Festival provided an important platform and opportunity for the inheritance and development of Miao love songs. During the festival, young Miao people from different regions gathered together, bringing their unique love songs and exchanging, learning from, and drawing on each other. This kind of exchange promoted the innovation and development of Miao love songs in terms of content and form. At the same time, the traditional customs and cultural connotations of the Zimei Festival also provided rich materials for the creation of Miao love songs. Singers incorporated what they saw, heard, felt, and thought during the Zimei Festival into the love songs, making the love songs more full of life flavor and cultural heritage.(Guo, Y. 2023).

4. Crisis - transformation development in modern times (1912 - 1949 AD)

From 1912 to 1949, Chinese society underwent earth - shattering changes, from the end of the feudal autocratic monarchy to the warlord scuffles, followed by the War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression and the Liberation War. During this eventful historical period, the areas where the Miao people lived in compact communities were inevitably impacted by the tide of the times. As important symbols of Miao culture, Miao love songs and the Zimei Festival not only inherited the ancient traditions but also quietly changed during this period, serving as a unique window to study the development of Miao culture and social changes.

The 1911 Revolution overthrew the rule of the Qing Dynasty. However, China did not usher in true peace and stability. Warlords carved up the country and fought among themselves, causing social disorder. Although the Miao - inhabited areas were

located in remote places, they could hardly stay out of it. Frequent wars greatly affected the lives of the Miao people. Agricultural production was damaged, and many Miao villages faced difficulties such as food shortages and population displacement. (Wen, Y. 1996).

Subsequently, the aggression of Japanese imperialism brought heavy disasters to China, and the Miao areas were also drawn into the upsurge of the War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression. Many young Miao people joined the anti - Japanese forces and contributed to the defense of the motherland. At the same time, with the influx of a large number of refugees and the launch of anti - Japanese publicity activities, the exchanges between the Miao - inhabited areas and the outside world increased day by day, and new ideas and concepts began to spread here.

During the Liberation War, the social situation remained turbulent. The Miao people strived to seek survival and development in the difficult life, and their cultural traditions continuously adapted to new changes during this process.

During this period, the content of Miao love songs was no longer limited to the traditional love theme. With social changes and the introduction of new ideas, many elements reflecting the historical background and social reality were integrated into Miao love songs. Facing the pain brought by the warlord scuffles, some love songs sang, "The flames of war disturb our homeland, and my dear brother joins the army and goes far away. My sister at home is deeply worried, hoping for your safe return." It expressed the Miao people's aversion to war and their longing for their loved ones.

During the War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression, Miao love songs became a powerful tool for promoting the resistance. Some young Miao people with patriotic feelings created many inspiring songs, such as "Miao sons and daughters are firm - willed, and the flames of the anti - Japanese war burn across the mountains and rivers. Drive away the Japanese invaders and protect our homeland. The dignity of the nation cannot be violated." These love songs inspired the patriotic enthusiasm of the Miao people and encouraged them to join the anti - Japanese struggle. At the same time, the pursuit of freedom and equality began to appear in Miao love songs. With the influence of the New Culture Movement gradually deepening, young Miao people reflected on the traditional marriage concepts and social hierarchical systems, and

they expressed their yearning for free love and equal marriage in love songs.(Li, Z. 1993).

In terms of form, influenced by modern music culture, the singing forms of Miao love songs became more diverse. In addition to the traditional solo and antiphonal singing, the form of group chorus began to appear in some Miao areas. In places such as schools and barracks, group singing of Miao love songs became a common cultural activity. This form not only enhanced the appeal of the songs but also promoted the unity and cohesion among the Miao people.

In terms of musical style, although Miao love songs still retained a strong ethnic flavor, they also began to absorb some elements of modern music. For example, simple harmonies were added to some songs, making the music more rich and full. At the same time, some new musical instruments gradually spread to the Miao areas, such as harmonicas and accordions. These instruments combined with traditional Miao instruments such as lusheng (a reed - pipe wind instrument) and leaves, adding new colors to the performance of Miao love songs.

With the gradual development of transportation and communication, the dissemination methods of Miao love songs also changed significantly. In the past, Miao love songs were mainly passed down orally within the ethnic group. During this period, due to the emergence of modern media such as newspapers and radio, Miao love songs began to have broader dissemination channels. Some newspapers in Miao areas started to publish the lyrics of Miao love songs, and radio stations also broadcast the performances of Miao singers. This made Miao love songs not only well - known in the Miao - inhabited areas but also gradually understood by the outside world.

In addition, with the popularization of school education, Miao love songs entered the campus. In some schools in Miao areas, teachers used Miao love songs as music teaching materials and taught students to sing them. This not only cultivated the younger generation's love for their own ethnic culture but also trained reserve forces for the inheritance of Miao love songs.

Despite the social unrest, the Miao Zimei Festival, as an important traditional festival of the Miao people, still continued during this period. During the festival, the Miao people still held traditional sacrifice ceremonies, praying for ancestors to bless

good weather, the prosperity of humans and livestock. However, due to the war and the hardships of life, some festival rituals had to be simplified.

In terms of activities such as courtship and antiphonal singing, although they were still important parts of the Zimei Festival, the number of participants and the scale of the activities might be affected to some extent. Some young men could not participate in the Zimei Festival on time because they joined the army or went out to make a living, making the Zimei Festival less lively than before.

During this period, the cultural connotation of the Miao Zimei Festival was further deepened and expanded. Facing social changes and life challenges, the Miao people cherished the reunion and joy brought by the Zimei Festival even more. The Zimei Festival was not only a festival for young men and women to court but also an important moment for the Miao people to comfort each other and enhance national cohesion in difficult times. At the same time, with the spread of new ideas, some new elements began to be integrated into the Miao Zimei Festival. For example, in some activities of the Zimei Festival, content such as promoting the anti - Japanese war and advocating gender equality was added. Through these activities, the Miao people were actively adapting to the development of the times while inheriting the traditional culture.

Against the backdrop of a turbulent society, the social functions of the Miao Zimei Festival were strengthened and transformed. On the one hand, the Zimei Festival became an important way for the Miao people to inherit their national culture and maintain their national identity. In the face of increasing external cultural impacts, the Miao people adhered to their cultural traditions by holding the Zimei Festival, enabling the younger generation to remember their ethnic identity and cultural roots. On the other hand, the Zimei Festival also began to play a certain social - educational function. During the festival, elders would tell the younger generation about the development, legends, and traditional customs of the Miao people, and impart production and life skills, cultivating their national pride and sense of responsibility. At the same time, through various activities in the Zimei Festival, such as antiphonal singing and dancing, the Miao people were constantly entertaining themselves and adjusting their mentality to relieve the pressure and pain in life.(Xiang, X. 2019).

5. Prosperous development in contemporary times (1949 - 2024 AD)

In the early days of the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, although the Miao areas underwent a huge change in social system, the Miao Zimei Festival, as an important part of ethnic culture, still continued among the people. During this period, the Zimei Festival still retained its ancient and traditional celebration methods. For example, the girls carefully prepared colorful Zimei rice, and the young men invited the girls by blowing leaves and whistling in the "Youfang" (courtship) area. However, as the society as a whole was in the stage of construction and development at that time, the economy of the Miao areas was relatively backward, and transportation was inconvenient. The Zimei Festival was mostly passed down and celebrated within the ethnic group and was little known to the outside world. (Peng, X. 2015).

From the 1980s to the end of the 20th century, with the advancement of reform and opening - up, the economy of the Miao areas gradually developed, and exchanges with the outside world increased day by day. The Miao Zimei Festival began to receive more attention. Some scholars, artists, and tourists came to the Miao - inhabited areas one after another to explore this unique ethnic festival. The local government also gradually realized the importance of the Zimei Festival for the inheritance of Miao culture and the development of the local economy, and began to increase the publicity and protection efforts for the Zimei Festival. In 1998, Taijiang County held the Zimei Festival for the first time in the way of "private - run with public assistance", which gradually expanded the influence of this festival and attracted more people to participate. (Wang, J., & Huang, X. 2017).

Entering the 21st century, the Miao Zimei Festival was listed in the first batch of representative projects of national intangible cultural heritage, which provided more powerful guarantees for its inheritance and development. During this period, while maintaining traditional customs, the Zimei Festival began to integrate modern elements, such as holding bonfire parties and Miao cultural performances, making the festival activities more colorful. At the same time, with the booming development of tourism, the Miao Zimei Festival became an important local tourism brand, attracting a large number of tourists to come for sightseeing and experience, bringing

considerable economic income to the Miao areas and also promoting the exchange and integration of Miao culture with other ethnic cultures.(Yu, Y., & Tian, Z. 2007).

After 2013, with the continuous improvement of transportation and infrastructure, the economy of the Miao areas developed rapidly, and every household gradually got out of poverty. This made the Miao people more enthusiastic about participating in the Zimei Festival, and the scale and quality of the activities were continuously improved. During the Miao Zimei Festival in 2024, the number of tourists received in Taijiang County reached 869,100 person - times, and the comprehensive tourism income exceeded 1.042 billion yuan. At the same time, the popularity of ethnic cultural activities such as "Village BA" also made the Miao Zimei Festival sought after by audiences from all over the country. The Miao Zimei Festival has not only become an important carrier for the inheritance of Miao culture but also driven the development of related industries such as local ethnic music and dance, and the production of ethnic silver jewelry and embroidery handicrafts, cultivating batches of talents for cultural inheritance and tourism services in the Miao areas. Taking the activities of the "Miao Zimei Festival" in Taijiang, China in 2024 as an example, see Table 1 for details.

Table 1. Schedule of the Series of Activities of the 2024 "Miao ZiMei Festival" in Taijiang, China

Name of the Activity	Time of the Activity	Activity Content	Activity Location	Activity Location
Opening Ceremony	April 20th	19:00-22:00	Taking strengthening the sense of community for the Chinese nation as the main line, with the love story of Jin Dan and A Jiao in the Miao ZiMei Festival as the theme, and using songs, dances, scene collection performances and other forms as carriers, singers such as Li Yugang, Zhang Yingxi, Kong Kongcheng, Zhuang Xinyan and Meng Ran are invited to help present a grand event where ethnic cultures belong to the whole world and the Miao people have a joyous gathering, comprehensively showcasing the new image of Taijiang and stimulating new vitality in Taijiang.	ZimeiSquare in the Miao Region

Name of the Activity	Time of the Activity	Activity Content	Activity Location	Activity Location
Parade in Traditional Costumes:	April 21th	10:00-12:00	Taking the traditional costumes for important occasions and daily life of the Miao people from the nine branches in Taijiang County as the main elements, a collective parade with 10,000 people in traditional costumes will be formed. It will highlight the local ethnic culture and the characteristics of the costumes, and display the cultural charm of the Miao people as well as the prosperity and peace of the country.	Avenue in the Miao Region
Sing Miao songs.	April 22 nd	9:30-11:30	More than 10,000 male and female song and dance enthusiasts from the nine branches of the Miao ethnic group in Taijiang County gathered on the banks of the Wengni River to sing antiphonal Miao folk songs and love songs.	Banks of the Wengni River
		20 : 30-24 : 00	On the night of love songs during the Zimeifestival, guests from all directions gathered together to dance to the beat of drums and the sound of reed pipes, while singers sang antiphonal love songs and flying songs.	
Taste Miao feasts.	April 20th - May 4th	11:30-13:30	The long-table banquet is a gathering form and grand etiquette of the Miao ethnic group, expressing the warm hospitality of the Miao people. Along the banks of the Wengni River, guests can share the delicious food of the Miao region and experience the unique charm of the Miao ethnic group. With the "Six Sours of the Miao Region" as the main courses, it is paired with local specialty foods. There will be a 200-meter-long table banquet set up along the banks of the Wengni River to welcome guests from all over the world.	Both banks of the Wengni River, Zimeistreet
		17 : 30-19 : 30		

Source:Hou ZaiBo ,

5.1 On the evening of April 20th at 19:30, the opening ceremony of the 2024 Zimeifestival in Taijiang County, Guizhou Province was held at the Miaojiang Sisters Square in Taijiang County. It kicked off with the Miao situational song and dance "Butterfly Mother" performing the love myth of "Jindan and A'jiao", showcasing the profound cultural heritage and romantic sentiment of the Miao people. The story of Jindan and A'jiao was presented, accompanied by songs like "Ten

Thousand Reluctances" to enhance the emotional expression of the story and the stage appeal. There was "Miao Charm · Zimei Blossoms" that demonstrated the charm of Miao women, as well as "Deep Sisterly Affection · Shēng (reed - pipe wind instrument) and Drum Resounding Together" that reflected the deep bond among sisters and the joyous atmosphere. These programs presented the cultural characteristics and amorous feelings of the Miao people from different perspectives. Singers gave wonderful performances, such as classic tracks like Zhuang Xinyan's "Strangers After Goodbye" and Li Yugang's "The Drunken Concubine (New Version)", which resonated with the audience. There was also a dance medley like "Intangible Cultural Heritage of China · Dancing Taijiang", integrating various dance elements to showcase the vitality and innovation of intangible cultural heritage. At the end of the opening ceremony, a grand fireworks show pushed the on - site atmosphere to a climax. The fireworks set off against the ethnic cultural elements of Taijiang. The whole audience joined in the Miao - style disco, allowing them to personally participate in the festival revelry, experience the unique charm of Miao culture, enhance interactivity and a sense of participation, and bringing a visual feast to the audience. (Xinhua News Agency. 2024).

5.2 From figure 10 the Grand Costume Parade took place from 10:00 to 12:00 on April 21st. It mainly featured the grand costumes and daily - life - related costumes of the nine branches of the Miao ethnic group in Taijiang County. The nine representative teams of the Miao ethnic group branches from Taijiang County and representative teams of the Miao ethnic group from all over the country jointly participated, forming a collective parade of 10,000 people in grand costumes. The Miao people were dressed in colorful traditional costumes. The women wore exquisite silver headdresses and other silver ornaments, with their entire bodies adorned with silver trinkets. Some elderly women had their heads full of silver ornaments and even decorated with colorful feathers. The men's costumes also had their own characteristics, reflecting the styles of different branches. The Miao people stepped to the rhythm of the drums and danced the Miao dance. The silver ornaments on their bodies jingled pleasantly as they moved. They performed while marching, showcasing

the art of Miao songs and dances. Through this parade, the essence of the unique and diverse costume culture of the Miao ethnic group was displayed, presenting the daily life atmosphere of the Miao people in all aspects, demonstrating the splendid original - ecological ethnic cultures of different branches of the Miao ethnic group, and highlighting the humanistic charm of the Miao ethnic group.(Tencent News. 2024).



Figure 10. Nine Miao sub - ethnic groups in Taijiang County hold a grand parade in their traditional finery.

Source:Taijiang County Media Center ,

5.3 From figure 11 the Miao Song - singing event was held from 9:30 - 11:30 in the morning and 20:30 - 24:00 at night on April 22nd, by the Wengni River in Taijiang County. More than 10,000 people participated, including Miao people from the nine Miao branches in Taijiang County, primary and middle school students. Among them were 70 - year - old master singers and 7 - year - old children. It was carried out in the traditional way of antiphonal singing. Tens of thousands of people sang antiphonally across the river, one group after another. There were classic Miao songs like "Chun Zhi Ge", as well as Miao feige (a kind of Miao folk song with a high - pitched and clear - toned style) and love songs. The nine Miao branches presented the original - ecological Miao feige and love songs with different singing methods,

demonstrating the richness and diversity of Miao folk songs.(Taijiang County Media Center. 2024).



Figure 11. Nine branches of the Miao ethnic group are singing antiphonal Miao songs on both sides of the river.

Source:Taijiang County Media Center ,

This time, with the Zimei Festival as the core, Taijiang County fully demonstrated the profound heritage and unique charm of Miao culture through a rich variety of activities. Taking the consciousness of forging a strong sense of community for the Chinese nation as the main line, through activities such as the opening ceremony, the ten - thousand - person grand costume parade, and the ten - thousand - person Miao song - singing event, cultural elements such as Miao songs and dances, costumes, and intangible cultural heritage skills were perfectly combined with modern stage design, lighting, and audio technology, comprehensively displaying the colorful culture of the Miao ethnic group and promoting the inheritance and exchange of ethnic cultures.

To sum up, the Miao Love Song Zimei Festival originated from the chaos of ancient times. The Miao ancestors, living in tribes, began a difficult yet hopeful life among the mountains and rivers. They practiced slash - and - burn cultivation, coexisted with nature, and their awe of animism was deeply ingrained in their bones.

This primitive belief laid the foundation for Miao culture. The Miao Love Song Zimei Festival quietly emerged in such a cultural environment.

During the Tang and Song dynasties, the Miao society was relatively stable, and agricultural development provided material support for cultural prosperity. During this period, the content of Miao love songs became increasingly rich, and the rituals of the Zimei Festival gradually became standardized. The time and process were fixed, and the solemn sacrifice ceremony at the beginning of the festival expressed respect for ancestors and gods, praying for favorable weather, and the prosperity of humans and livestock.

By the Ming and Qing dynasties, with the strengthening of the central dynasty's rule, the Miao areas had frequent exchanges with the outside world. Profound changes took place in the inheritance of Miao love songs and the Zimei Festival. The content of Miao love songs was further expanded. Influenced by Han culture, it incorporated feelings of patriotism, love for the hometown and the nation. The rituals of the Zimei Festival became more abundant and perfect. The craftsmanship of making Zimei rice became more refined, and the sacrifice process became more solemn and standardized.

Then, in modern times, Chinese society was in turmoil. The content of Miao love songs was innovated, reflecting the lives and emotions of the Miao people against the backdrop of warlord scuffles, the War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression, etc. Although some rituals of the Zimei Festival were simplified and the participation scale decreased due to the war and the hardships of life, it still survived.

Finally, after the founding of the People's Republic of China, Miao love songs and the Zimei Festival were closely linked and mutually promoted, bringing the Miao Love Song Zimei Festival to its most prosperous peak. Having come a long way from ancient times, the Miao Love Song Zimei Festival has traversed thousands of years of time and space, continuously evolving and developing in different historical periods, and always maintaining a strong vitality. It is not only the sustenance of the emotions of the Miao people and the inheritance of their culture but also a dazzling pearl in the treasure trove of Chinese national culture.

CHAPTER V

The Musical Characteristics of Miao Love Songs in the Zimei Festival of Taijiang County, Guizhou Province, China

This chapter explores the musical characteristics of the Miao love songs at the Zimei Festival in Taijiang County, Guizhou Province, China. Through in - depth interviews with two informants, the researchers collected a large amount of video and audio materials. For further analysis and study of the musical characteristics of the Miao love songs, the researchers will conduct research from the main components of Miao love song music, including beat and rhythm, melody, harmony, and singing characteristics. The following three songs will be analyzed for this study:

1. "Chun Zhi Ge"
 - 1.1 lyrics
 - 1.2 rhythm
 - 1.3 melody
 - 1.4 harmony
 - 1.5 singing styles
2. "You Fang Ge"
 - 2.1 lyrics
 - 2.2 rhythm
 - 2.3 melody
 - 2.4 harmony
 - 2.5 singing styles
3. "Jia Ru Ni Shi Yi Duo Hua"
 - 3.1 lyrics
 - 3.2 rhythm
 - 3.3 melody
 - 3.4 harmony
 - 3.5 singing styles

In Miao love songs, the lyrics generally follow a five-step, seven-character rhyming pattern. Each line of the lyrics has a rhyme, also known as "four rhymes" and "seven rhymes". The "four rhymes" refer to the five tones, six tones and seven tones. The first character of each line of lyrics starts with the rhyme, the rhyme head of the second character is within the rhyme, and the rhyme of the third character is divided into two parts: the first and second voices are the first tone, that is, the first and second tones; the third and fourth voices are the second tone, that is, the third and fourth tones; the fifth and sixth voices are the third and fourth tone segments, that is, the fourth, fifth and seventh tone segments. Each line of lyrics has two rhymes, which forms the basis of the five-step, seven-character rhyming pattern. In Chinese folk songs, each line of lyrics has a one-seventh rhyme, which is the Miao's five-step, seven-character rhyming pattern; the five-step, seven-character rhyming pattern of Miao songs is all four tones and five steps. The structural form of the five-step, seven-character rhyming pattern is adapted to the traditional culture of the Miao ethnic group, and its characteristics are as follows: the first and second lines are the main sentences; the third and fourth lines are the subordinate sentences; the fifth and sixth lines are the beginning parts; the seventh character is composed of the first two steps and continues without interruption.

In the melody of Miao songs, some musical phrases have four tones, and some musical phrases are divided into four voices. When the Miao people sing, they all have to follow the mode sung in the lyrics. In singing, Miao songs are usually sung in three or four tones. The three tones are "level", "oblique" and "sliding". "Level" is the first character of the level-rhyme pattern, and "sliding" is the last character within the rhyme. The four tones are four musical phrases such as "mode", "beginning", "entering" and "unable to pronounce". If according to the structure of five-step, seven-character verses, generally there are three lines in one song, while the two-part musical phrases of Miao songs are also divided into three lines in one song and four lines in one song. The singing methods of three or four tones in the melody of Miao love songs can help us understand the characteristics of the melody structure of Miao love songs to a certain extent. In addition, since Southeast Guizhou is one of the important concentrations of ethnic minorities in Southwest China, its unique cultural environment and lifestyle also have a certain impact on Miao love songs.

In terms of timbre change and flavor: From the perspective of timbre, "modulation" is the most prominent feature. Generally, sharp and flat signs should not appear in the mode. Without flat signs in the mode, it is impossible to carry out modulation between sharp and flat. Folk artists in the Miao area of Southeast Guizhou will not use sharp and flat signs when singing, because they think that "sharp" and "flat" cannot be used simultaneously. In Miao folk songs, there is often a sound similar to the character "wu" - that is, raising or lowering a tone to replace the absence of a certain tone, but using this character or note to represent it, for example, "raising without sharp" is sung as "lowering without flat".

1. "Chun Zhi Ge"

"Chunzhi song" is a love song sung by the Miao people in spring and is a representative work of Miao love songs. The first four lines describe the scenery, depicting spring from different angles: feeling that the weather is getting warmer; seeing the leaves stretching out, the water in the fields rippling, and hearing the insects chirping continuously. The fifth line shifts from the scenery to people. Facing such a beautiful spring scene, people's hearts are pounding with joy. The following lines advise people to cherish spring, hurry up to work in the mountains, and create a happy life with their hardworking hands, and then come to the Youfang (a traditional activity for young people to meet and court) during the slack farming season or on festivals. The first five lines of the lyrics use the rhetorical device of repetition to enhance the expressive effect. The repetition of "h x e d l o l" writes about the increasingly warm weather in spring; the repetition of "t a d w e n l" depicts the situation where the curled tender leaves are gradually stretching out; the repetition of "s e i d y o l" shows the continuous sound of insects chirping; the repetition of "d l o d b o l" presents the momentum of the water in the fields with one wave pushing another; the repetition of "h x u d z a n g l" highlights people's joy. Among them, verbs like "t a d" and "d l o d" are used very accurately and ingeniously. The full score and video are in the appendix 2.

1.1 Lyrics

<p>Chinese lyrics:</p> <p>天气渐渐暖和， 树叶慢慢舒展； 虫儿吱哟吱哟叫， 田水后浪推前浪， 人心喜得怦怦跳。 快扛起钉耙锄头， 上山去干活； 农时不可误， 别再来这里游方。 等到农闲和节日， 阿妹再来这里陪阿哥， 阿哥再来这里陪向妹； 要来陪， 莫疏远。</p>	<p>Miao language lyrics:</p> <p>Dol ghab waix hxed laol hxed laol Dol ghab nex tad wenl tad wenl Dol gangb genx seid yol seid yol Dol nongs genx fad laol fad laol Dol ed lix dlod bol dlod bol Dol hvib naix hxed dlenl hxed dlenl Bib mongl dangt diangb zax hsod mil laib Jet ghab vangx hud bal At gheb nex yat nil laib At gheb nex yat dieel Xit xangs yol nex jol leil Xit xangs yol nex jol ob daib</p>	<p>English lyrics:</p> <p>The general meaning of the lyrics: The weather is getting warmer and warmer. The leaves are slowly stretching out. The insects are chirping chirpily. The water in the fields is pushing wave after wave. People's hearts are pounding with joy. Quickly pick up the rake and hoe, And go to work in the mountains. Don't miss the farming season. Don't come here to Youfang anymore. When it's the slack farming season and festivals, Sister will come here to accompany Brother again, Brother will come here to accompany Sister again. Come to accompany, Don't be estranged.</p>
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Figure 12. The Lyrics of "Chun Zhi Ge"

Source: Hou ZaiBo ,

From figure 12 this song first depicts the scene when spring arrives, such as the warming of the weather, the unfurling of leaves, the chirping of insects, and the surging of the water in the fields. It showcases the vitality of spring and, at the same time, reflects the joyful mood of people due to the arrival of spring. Then, it urges people to shoulder the rakes and hoes and hurry up the mountain to work, emphasizing that the farming season should not be delayed and that it is not appropriate to engage in social activities (Youfang) at the moment. Finally, it makes an appointment that when there is leisure time after farming and during festivals, the young men and women will get together and accompany each other, pouring out their hearts to each other, and reminding each other not to grow apart.

1.2 Rhythm

"Chun Zhi Ge" It often adopts relatively brisk beats, such as 2/4, 3/4, 4/4, etc.

9 1
dol eb lix dlod bol dlod bol, dol hvib naix

13 2
hxud zangl hxud zangl. 3
Bib mongl dangl diangb zax hsod ghongl(ani ghai),

Figure 13. The Rhythm of "Chun Zhi Ge"

Source:Hou ZaiBo ,

The beats marked in Figure 13 lay the foundation for the lively and bright tone of the song. The regular strong-weak relationship of the 2/4 time signature at the place marked as 1 gives the music an obvious danceability. It seems as if one can see the cheerful scene of the Miao people singing and dancing in spring. Each beat is like the brisk footsteps of the dancers. The strong-weak-weak relationship of the 3/4 time signature at the place marked as 2 features a clear alternation between the strong beat and the weak beats, driving the overall rhythm of the song and endowing it with a strong sense of rhythm and a dynamic feeling. The strong-weak-secondary strong-weak relationship of the 4/4 time signature at the place marked as 3 makes people feel physically and mentally delighted once they listen to it and immerses them in the vibrant atmosphere similar to that of spring.

This song skillfully incorporates dotted-note rhythm patterns.

9
dol eb lix dlod bol dlod bol, 12
dol hvib naix

Figure 14. The Rhythm of "Chun Zhi Ge"

Source:Hou ZaiBo ,

From figure 14 the dotted notes in the 9th bar and the 12th bar marked in the picture, by extending and shortening the duration of the notes, set off the layers and

changes of the rhythm of this song, making the music more elastic and dynamic. Just like the changeable climate and the vigorously growing everything in spring, they showcase the unique charm and rich expressive power of the rhythm of Miao music, vividly depicting the colorful and vibrant scene of spring.

1.3 Melody

Figure 15. The Melody of "Chun Zhi Ge"

Source:Hou ZaiBo ,

The dotted notes in the places marked as 1 and 2 in the musical score of Figure 15, as well as those that repeatedly appear later, all involve leaps in the minor third interval. The melody is characterized by bright and expansive interval leaps, often featuring jumps in intervals such as the minor third and the perfect fifth, which makes the melodic line full of tension as it rises and falls. Additionally, in the places where what is marked as 3 in the musical score repeatedly appears, there are progressions in the perfect fifth interval. These leaps are like the warm spring sun piercing through the clouds, instantly illuminating the earth, conveying a positive, upbeat, and joyful mood. They highlight the Miao people's joy at the arrival of spring and their yearning for and praise of a better life, endowing the song with a broad and hearty auditory experience, much like the bright scenery of the Miao mountain villages in spring.

During the intervals between the interval leaps, the melody transitions through stepwise progressions. For example, in the place marked as 4 in the musical score, there is a progression in the major second interval. The smooth progression of the major second interval makes the melodic line more fluent, graceful, delicate, and soft. This kind of stepwise progression is like a gurgling stream in the mountains, bringing

gentle comfort after the vibrant leaps. It delicately expresses the softness and warmth contained in the revival and vitality of all things in spring. Cooperating with the interval leaps, it presents the rich emotional layers of spring and the unique aesthetic feeling of the Miao music melody in a way that combines hardness and softness.

1.4 Harmony

1 Dol fangb waix hxed lol hxed lol 3 ob daib, dol ghab nex

5 tad wenl tad wenl; 4 dol gangb grmx seid yol seid yol,

9 2 dol eb lix dlod bol dlod bol, 5 dol hvib naix

Figure 16. The Harmony of "Chun Zhi Ge"

Source:Hou ZaiBo ,

The harmonic framework is constructed based on the pentatonic scale of traditional Miao music, and ingeniously makes use of chord combinations with ethnic characteristics. At the beginning of the song, the places marked as 1 and 2 in Figure 16 are both minor third leaps of dotted notes. These leaps are just like the warm spring sun piercing through the clouds and instantly illuminating the earth, conveying positive, cheerful and pleasant emotions. During the Zimei Festival, two people take the lead in singing, and the people behind softly echo. The places marked as 3, 4 and 5 in Figure 16 are where the chorus is carried out at the last word of each musical phrase, achieving the effect of extending the duration. This shows the Miao people's joy at the arrival of spring, which is just like the bright scenery of the Miao villages in spring.

1.5 singing styles

When singing, the singer should pay attention to the smooth use and precise control of breath to ensure the coherence and integrity of the melody. In dealing with long notes, the end of the third and sixth bars in the song are long notes, and the end of each subsequent phrase is also extended with a long note. Therefore, when singing, the singer needs to rely on stable and continuous breath support to make the voice full and elastic, like a long - drawn - out flute in spring, conveying a melodious and soothing emotion. In the sections with a faster rhythm, the singer should flexibly use rapid breath conversion and control to ensure that each note is clear and bright, demonstrating the briskness and liveliness of the song. The ever - changing vitality of spring is vividly expressed through the voice, enabling the audience to feel the vitality and energy of spring rushing towards them.

In conclusion, the lyrics of "Chun Zhi Ge" often revolve around the Miao people's perception and emotions towards spring, and are full of descriptions of natural images and life scenes. The rhythm is usually lively and brisk, which is in line with the vibrant atmosphere of spring. The melody is beautiful and smooth, with a distinct national style. It is mostly constructed based on the traditional five-tone scale of the Miao nationality, with a moderate range, making it easy to sing. In terms of harmony application, it may retain the characteristics of traditional Miao music, mainly using simple and plain harmonic progressions, emphasizing the clarity and prominence of the melodic line. The singing style is highly characteristic of the nation, often using a singing method mainly based on the natural voice. The voice is simple and resonant, showing the straightforwardness and enthusiasm of the Miao people.

2. "You Fang Ge"

"You Fang Ge" is one of the important representatives among Miao love songs and is deeply rooted in the traditional culture and lifestyle of the Miao ethnic group. The Miao people have a unique "Youfang" custom, which is a social activity for young men and women to freely fall in love. At specific times and places, young Miao men and women dress up and gather together to communicate their feelings and look for partners through singing antiphonal songs. "You Fang Ge" came into being and developed precisely under such a background. In the past, the Miao society was relatively closed and traditional, and marriages were often restricted by factors such

as families and regions. However, "Youfang" and "You Fang Ge" provided an opportunity for young Miao people to choose their partners independently and express their emotions. The content of the song usually revolves around the theme of love, including the praise of the beloved, the outpouring of lovesickness, and the longing for a better life in the future. The lyrics are often vivid, simple and poetic, using a large number of rhetorical devices such as metaphors and symbols to convey emotions in an implicit and affectionate way. The full score and video are in the appendix 2.

2.1 Lyrics

<p>Chinese lyrics: 快来我们游方吧, 要是我们等到了来生, 我们变成蚊子飞走了, 再也不会相遇来谈心. 上山只是几步路, 下山也是短路程; 有心成双就过来, 无心成双就离分. 苦闷得要死啊, 阿妹死去口重生; 就像久旱的干田, 没有沟水引进来.</p>	<p>Miao language lyrics: Dax bib hxed xut niongl, (nei) ob daib, (a) (0) (o) (i) (nei) ob daib, (ai)(ai)(heidei)niangxghangb diangd leit lol, (hei dei) jangx gangb yud yangt mongl, (hei dei) ax jas xud lot yel, (xi) ob daib. (hei dei) Jit bil (lai) ob bib diex, vuk diongl (lai) ob bib sangx; (hei dei) hot senl (lai)ghail nongf dax, hot dol (lai) ghailnongf niox. (hei dei) Hot das dail das dail mait das fal das fal; (hei dei) liet laib lix das gil, ait eb ax yongs lol, (xi) ob daib, (xi) ob daib!</p>	<p>English lyrics: The general meaning of the lyrics: Come and let's go to the Youfang together. If we have to wait until the next life, We will turn into mosquitoes and fly away, And will never meet again to have a heart-to-heart talk. It's just a few steps to go up the mountain, And it's also a short distance to go down the mountain. If you have the intention to be a couple, then come over. If you don't have the intention to be a couple, then just part ways. I'm so depressed that I'm almost dying. Sister has died and come back to life again. Just like the dry fields in a long drought, Without the water from the ditches flowing in.</p>
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Figure 17. The Lyrics of "You Fang Ge"

Source:Hou ZaiBo ,

At the beginning of this song, it passionately calls for people to come to the social gathering (Youfang) quickly, emphasizing that if they wait until the next life and turn into mosquitoes and fly away, they won't be able to meet and talk heart to heart again, highlighting the preciousness of the present reunion. Then it mentions that neither the journey up the mountain nor down the mountain is far, and it admonishes those who have the intention of becoming a couple to come over, while those without the intention should part ways. After that, it describes that the young girl is in extreme distress, just like a dry field without ditch water being channeled in

during a long drought, suffering as if between life and death, expressing the pain and longing caused by emotional problems.

2.2 Rhythm

Figure 18 shows a musical score for "You Fang Ge" with alternating time signatures. The first two measures are in 3/4 time, followed by two measures in 2/4 time, and this pattern repeats. The lyrics are: (ai), (hei dei)niangx, ghangb, and diangd leit.

Figure 18. The Rhythm of "You Fang Ge"

Source:Hou ZaiBo

The rhythm of the "You Fang Ge" has distinct characteristics. It adopts the alternating use of the 2/4 time signature and the 3/4 time signature, as marked in Figure 18, presenting the feature of the mutual echo between the free rhythm and the regular time signature. In the beginning part of the song, the rhythm is relatively free, as if imitating the natural and casual state of young Miao men and women when they first meet in the Youfang field. There is no restraint of a fixed time signature, and the duration of the notes stretches freely according to the needs of emotional expression, just like a mountain stream meandering downwards, giving people a sense of leisurely freedom. As the song progresses, relatively regular time signatures are gradually introduced. The 2/4 and 3/4 time signatures in the song provide a stable rhythmic foundation for the free expression of emotions in the song.

Figure 19 shows a musical score for "You Fang Ge" with syncopation. A red arrow points to a bar line at measure 13. Red boxes highlight syncopated rhythms in measures 13-14 and 17-18. The lyrics are: lol, (hei dei) jangx gangb yud yangt, and mongl, (hei dei) ax jas xud lot.

Figure 19. The Rhythm of "You Fang Ge"

Source:Hou ZaiBo

The ingenious use of syncopation rhythm in Figure 19 adds a lively and playful feel to the song. Syncopation rhythm is often employed in the stressed parts of

the lyrics or where emotions need to be emphasized, breaking the regular strong-weak pattern of the common time signature. It creates unexpected pauses and emphases in the rhythm, instantly catching the listeners' attention and enhancing the dynamic and appealing nature of the music. From bar 13 to bar 16 and from bar 17 to bar 20 in Figure 18, the same rhythmic pattern appears, resulting in a contrast in the duration of the notes. This enriches the rhythmic and melodic layers, making the melody more vivid and bouncy. It seems as if one can see the cheerful dance steps and agile postures of the young Miao people during the Youfang activity, vividly expressing the joyful atmosphere of the Youfang scene and the youthful vitality of the young people.

2.3 Melody

The figure shows a musical score for the song "You Fang Ge". It consists of three staves of music in a 3/4 time signature. The first staff (bars 1-4) has a red box around the first two bars, labeled '1', and a red box around the next two bars, labeled '2'. The second staff (bars 5-8) continues the melody. The third staff (bars 9-12) has a red box around the first two bars, labeled '3'. The lyrics are: 'gid gid nenk', 'Dax bib h̄xet xut niongl, (nei) ob daib, (a) (o)', '(o) (i) (nei) ob daib, (ai)', '(ai) (hei dei) miangx ghangb diangd leit'.

Figure 20. The Melody of "You Fang Ge"

Source:Hou ZaiBo ,

In terms of the melody, it is not a single straight-line type but features rich ups and downs. Such undulations may involve a large span in pitch. Through the alternation of high and low notes, the beginning of this song starts with two repeated notes at the place marked as 1 in Figure 20. At the place marked as 2, the melody begins to ascend, showing an upward trend. After the end of the first musical phrase, it is sung with a low pitch. At the place marked as 3 in the figure, the melody starts to descend, presenting a downward trend. There are often some core motives or fragments in the melody, which are repeated to strengthen the theme and emotions.

Figure 21. The Melody of "You Fang Ge"

Source:Hou ZaiBo ,

After the end of the first musical phrase in this song, as can be seen from the bar numbers marked in Figure 21, from bar 10 to bar 23, it has been repeatedly sung with a stepwise progression in the third interval. From the place marked as 1 to the place marked as 2 and until bar 23, it is all carried out with parallel musical phrases that have the same beginning and the same end. Subtle changes are made on the basis of repetition to avoid monotony and increase the musical interest and attractiveness. Then, at the place marked as 3 later, it starts again with two repeated notes. This delicate way of handling the melody perfectly presents the subtle yet passionate emotional changes of the young Miao men and women during the Youfang activity.

2.4 Harmony

Figure 22. The Melody of "You Fang Ge"

Source:Hou ZaiBo ,

The harmony of "You Fang Ge" is filled with a rich ethnic flavor. It constructs a harmony system based on the pentatonic scale of traditional Miao music, avoiding the complex chord structures and dissonant intervals in Western music, and creating a simple, pure and harmonious harmonic atmosphere. As shown in the two places marked in Figure 22, its harmonic configuration is very brief. It is just a soft echo at the beginning of each musical phrase. This kind of harmonic style is simple yet full of charm, conforming to the simple life emotions of the Miao people, emphasizing the ethnicity and originality of the music, and enabling the audience to deeply feel the unique charm of Miao music culture. It's as if they are in an ancient Miao village, listening to the love ballads passed down by their ancestors.

2.5singing styles

When singing the "You Fang Ge", the singer needs to skillfully employ the technique of falsetto - chest voice transition to enrich the expressiveness of the song. In the middle and low registers, the true voice is usually used to show the simple and mellow emotional characteristics of the Miao people. The voice is solid and full, allowing the audience to clearly feel the emotional details and story scenes described in the lyrics. For example, when narrating the Youfang scenes and the emotions of the characters, the use of the true voice makes the song more realistic and approachable. In the high register, especially in the parts expressing strong emotions, the singer will smoothly switch to the false voice. The ethereal and bright characteristics of the false voice sublimate the emotions of the song, as if taking the audience into a higher and purer emotional realm. The use of grace notes is a highlight in the singing of "You Fang Ge". The ingenious use of grace notes such as glides, trills and mordents adds a strong ethnic style and delicate emotional charm to the song. The natural sliding of glides between notes simulates the tone change characteristics of the Miao language, making the melody more melodious and full of ethnic characteristics. Trills add delicate emotional fluctuations to long notes through the slight vibration of the voice, as if it were the slight trembling of emotions deep in the heart, vividly expressing emotions such as shyness and excitement during the Youfang process. The embellishment of mordents makes the melody more lively and playful, showing the youthful vitality of young Miao people. The delicate performance of these grace notes makes the song more vivid and full of artistic charm during the singing process,

allowing the audience to deeply feel the unique charm of Miao music culture and the profound emotions contained in "You Fang Ge".

In conclusion, The lyrics of the "You Fang Ge" are a vivid record of the emotional exchanges between young Miao men and women, full of a strong flavor of life and national customs. Most of the lyrics use straightforward and simple language to pour out their love, longing, and yearning for beautiful love. In terms of rhythm, the "You Fang Ge" is lively and full of changes. It often adopts irregular rhythmic patterns, with syncopation and dotted notes appearing frequently, breaking the sense of stability of the regular beat and endowing the song with a lively and playful rhythm, just like the joyful mood of young men and women during Youfang activities. The melody is the core manifestation of the charm of the "Youfang Song", which is melodious and full of lingering charm. In terms of harmony, the "You Fang Ge" usually maintains a relatively simple style to highlight the dominant position of the melody. In traditional interpretations, the harmony is mostly based on the natural overlay of human voices, emphasizing the harmony and unity among the voices, creating a pure and simple auditory experience, just like the simple and innocent emotions of the Miao people. Singers mostly use their natural voices to sing, with their voices being simple and resonant, having a strong penetrating power and being able to be clearly transmitted in the mountains and fields. During the singing process, attention is paid to the use of characteristic techniques such as glissandos and trills. Glissandos make the transition of the melody more natural and smooth, adding a sense of mellowness; trills, on the other hand, strengthen the expression of emotions, allowing the audience to more deeply feel the deep affection in the song.

3. "Jia Ru Ni Shi Yi Duo Hua"

"Jia Ru Ni Shi Yi Duo Hua" is a multi-voiced love song of the Miao ethnic group. It is a love song popular in Taijiang County, with strong regional characteristics and unique harmonies. This is a lyric song themed around the image, charm, and beauty of women. The full score and video are in the appendix 2.

3.1 Lyrics

<p>Chinese lyrics:</p> <p>可惜你是个姑娘， 可惜你是个哥郎； 假如你是一朵花， 哪怕开在悬崖上； 拿起钩儿去钩住， 伸手把花摘下来。 我把花儿摘到手， 把它插在额头上， 和你成双我心才欢 畅。</p>	<p>Miao language lyrics:</p> <p>Dib pob dax diot hvit mul diangs! Nil jox hvib nongtxangs. (u)(ju o) (dei o) Nongf ait diangb niangx nil, (o) (din u) (na u) Nongf ait diangb niangx nil, (o) nongf ait diangb liex dial, dlab ait laib bangx bel, (ju o) (dei o) dlab ait laib bangx bel, (o) niangb diot ghab vangx nangl,vib ghat ghib nenx lol, (ju o) (dei o) ghob vit ghongb dliangx bil. Liuk dot laib bangx lol, (u) (u)(ju0) (dei0) liuk dot laib bangx lol, (yi) (u) tik diot ghab bax mangl, senl sat hvib naix liangl. (u) (u) (hao) (hse dei ei hse dei ei) Xongd nes jent, (o) xongd nes (o) jend. (o) (ei hu ei hu ei hu hu)</p>	<p>English lyrics:</p> <p>It's a pity you're a girl, It's a pity you're a boy; If you were a flower, Even if it bloomed on a cliff; I'd pick up a hook to catch it, Reach out and pluck the flower. Once I get the flower in my hand, I'd put it on my forehead, Only then would I be happy to be with you as a pair.</p>
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Figure 23. The Melody of "Jia Ru Ni Shi Yi Duo Hua"

Source:Hou ZaiBo ,

This song first reveals a bit of regret caused by gender with the lyrics "It's a pity that you are a girl (brother Lang)". Then, it compares the other person to a flower blooming on a cliff. The actions of longing to obtain this flower are described by lyrics such as "Pick up the hook to hook it" and "Reach out and pick the flower". Finally, the lyrics "Stick it on the forehead, and I will be joyful only when I'm with you as a couple" directly express the beautiful wish of hoping to be with the other person as a pair and the inner satisfaction, showing the admiration for the beloved.

3.2 Rhythm

Figure 24. The Rhythm of "Jia Ru Ni Shi Yi Duo Hua"

Source:Hou ZaiBo ,

From figure 24 "Jia Ru Ni Shi Yi Duo Hua" adopts the common 4/4 time signature. The 4/4 time signature means that a quarter note is counted as one beat, and there are four beats in each bar. Its strong - weak pattern is usually "strong, weak, moderately strong, weak", and this stable and orderly beat lays a solid rhythmic foundation for the song. In terms of auditory perception, the stable 4/4 beat is like a steady heartbeat, giving people a sense of peace and stability. The rhythm is relatively free, just like boys blowing on leaves to call girls out, and girls coming gracefully with high enthusiasm.

The image shows a musical score for the song "Jia Ru Ni Shi Yi Duo Hua". It consists of two systems of music, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment line. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The lyrics are written in Chinese characters with phonetic annotations in parentheses. The score includes dotted notes, which are highlighted with red boxes in the original image, indicating their function of extending the duration of the preceding note by half. The lyrics for the first system are: (jī o) (deī o) Nongf ait diangb niangx nil, (o). The lyrics for the second system are: nongf ait diangb liex dial. dlab ait laib bangx bel. (ju o) (deī o). The lyrics for the third system are: nongf ait diangb liex dial. dlab ait laib bangx bel. (din u) (na(u)).

Figure 25. The Rhythm of "Jia Ru Ni Shi Yi Duo Hua"

Source: Hou ZaiBo ,

In addition, dotted notes frequently appear in the song. The function of the dotted notes marked in Figure 25 is to extend the duration of the preceding note by half. In this song, at the end of each phrase, dotted notes are used for extension. Their application makes the rhythm more varied and elastic. With the addition of dotted notes, the rhythm of the song can be compact at times and leisurely at other times, just like the mood in love, sometimes full of excitement and sometimes as tender as water.

3.3 Melody

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Dib pob dax diot hvit mul diangs! Nil jox hvib nongt xangs. (u)

Figure 26. The Melody of "Jia Ru Ni Shi Yi Duo Hua"

Source:Hou ZaiBo ,

The melody of "If You Were a Flower" has a rich Miao ethnic style, which is gentle and melodious. The vocal range of the song is moderate. As can be seen from Figure 26, the pitch of the melody of this song is neither too high nor too low, making it suitable for most people to sing. The overall pitch of the song is in the middle register. This moderate vocal range enables the song to be widely sung among the people. Whether in the fields or by the campfire in the village, people can easily hum this moving melody. The moderate vocal range also makes the song closer to life and easier to express people's true inner feelings.



1 2 3

9 nongf ait diangb liex dial, dlab ait laib bangx bel, (ju o) (dei o)

nongf ait diangb liex dial, dlab ait laib bangx bel, (din u) (na)(u)

14 4

dlab ait laib bangx bel, (o) niangb diot ghab vangx nangl,

dlab ait laib bangx bel, (o) niangb diot ghab vangx nangl,

Figure 27. The Melody of "Jia Ru Ni Shi Yi Duo Hua"

Source:Hou ZaiBo ,

The melody line of this song is beautiful. At the place marked as 1 in Figure 27, there is a third - interval sequence. The second voice repeats by shifting upwards while maintaining the original structural features. At the place marked as 2, a sixth - interval sequence is carried out using the same technique. Appoggiaturas appear at the place marked as 3 in the figure, making the melody of the song more winding and full of charm. The ups and downs of the melody are closely combined with the emotional expression of the lyrics, and each note seems to be tailor - made for the lyrics. At the place marked as 4, it progresses with the unison interval. In this song, the same interval is often used to extend the ending note of each phrase, making the melodies of the two voices end on the same note, which sounds even more pleasant.

3.4 Harmony

Figure 28. The Harmony of "Jia Ru Ni Shi Yi Duo Hua"

Source:Hou ZaiBo

"Jia Ru Ni Shi Yi Duo Hua" is the most typical two - part love song in Taijiang County. In this song, the harmonic texture is rich and diverse. There is both a harmonic progression mainly in the chordal style. This kind of harmonic texture enables each voice part to blend with one another, forming a solid and full harmonic foundation, providing stable acoustic support for the song. At the same time, there are imitative polyphonic voices. The pitch difference between the two voices is a fifth. The voices carry out interval sequences in terms of melody, chasing each other, creating a musical effect of ebb and flow, which enhances the fun and interactivity of

the song. The diversity of this harmonic texture makes the song more colorful in terms of auditory experience, avoiding monotony and dullness. The harmonious cooperation between the two voices is the key to the harmony of this song. Each voice part is both independent and interdependent in terms of melody, rhythm, and pitch, jointly forming a harmonious and unified whole.

3.5 singing styles

In "Jia Ru Ni Shi Yi Duo Hua", we can notice that the "throat trill" is the most fascinating. It requires controlling rhythmic trills through breathing. When singing, the throat should remain natural, and with the singer's emotions and breathing, a uniform and resonant vocal line can be produced. One of its characteristics is combining the true voice and falsetto. When singing, the singer needs to concentrate all their strength, push their throat forward, and make the mid - low notes as loud and powerful as possible to create a rough and thick feeling. When reaching the high notes, falsetto can be used to set off the low notes, thus eliminating the monotony of the true voice in the mid - low range. This song is one where it's difficult to distinguish between true and false voices. The Miao people adjust their voices according to their own ideas and experiences, and use the relaxation and tightening of their bodies and waists to control and stabilize their breathing, so that their voices don't feel loose. The singing of the song attaches great importance to the expression of emotions. Through a deep understanding of the lyrics and a delicate grasp of the melody, the singer vividly interprets the love story between young Miao men and women. During the singing process, the singer flexibly uses elements such as the strength, speed, and pitch of the voice according to the emotional changes of the song, showing the emotions of joy, shyness, and longing in the song one by one. Every note and every line of the lyrics are full of the singer's deep affection, allowing the audience to deeply feel the sincere emotions contained in the song.

In conclusion, The lyrics of "Jia Ru Ni Shi Yi Duo Hua" are full of poetic and romantic colors. With a unique perspective and delicate brushstrokes, they construct a world full of love and imagination. The rhythm is a major highlight of this song. As a whole, it is lively and light, full of vitality. It usually adopts a relatively brisk rhythmic pattern, skillfully combining syncopation and dotted notes to break the smoothness of the conventional rhythm and create a lively and playful atmosphere, as

if symbolizing the heartbeat and throbbing in love. The melody is beautiful and melodious, flowing nimbly like a mountain stream. From the affectionate foreshadowing in the lower register to the passionate expression in the higher register, the transition is natural and smooth, fully demonstrating the delicate changes in the emotions of the song. In terms of the application of harmony, it maintains the characteristics of harmony and simplicity in Miao music. It mainly uses simple and pure harmonic progressions, emphasizing the harmony and unity among various voices, and does not pursue complex harmonic effects, thus highlighting the dominant position of the melody. During the singing process, the skills such as glissandos and trills are used with great proficiency. The ingenious handling of glissandos makes the melody more melodious and smooth, as if a gentle breeze is caressing the flowers; trills, on the other hand, enhance the depth of emotions, expressing the deep affection contained in the song to the fullest.

Conclusions : the Miao songs from Guizhou, "Chun Zhi Ge", "You Fang Ge", and "Jia Ru Ni Shi Yi Duo Hua", showcase the unique charm of Miao music, each having its own characteristics yet sharing commonalities in rhythm, melody, harmony, and singing techniques.

In terms of rhythm, syncopation and dotted notes are extensively used. For example, the syncopation in "You Fang Ge" and the frequently - used dotted notes in "Jia Ru Ni Shi Yi Duo Hua" enhance the rhythm and danceability. They create a lively and dynamic atmosphere when young Miao men and women engage in antiphonal singing. These rhythm elements make the stress accents variable, break the regular strong - weak pattern of the meter, endowing the songs with a strong sense of movement and vitality. This highlights the passionate and unrestrained character traits of the Miao people, allowing the audience to feel the unique rhythm charm as if they were in the midst of the Miao people's joyous singing and dancing.

Regarding the melody, it mainly adheres to the pentatonic scale with a moderate vocal range. The melody line of "Chun Zhi Ge" is beautiful and smooth. The interval span is not large, yet it is melodious and graceful, mainly featuring step - by - step progressions and small - interval leaps. It conforms to the tone undulations of the Miao language, making the song easy to sing. Moreover, the melodic direction

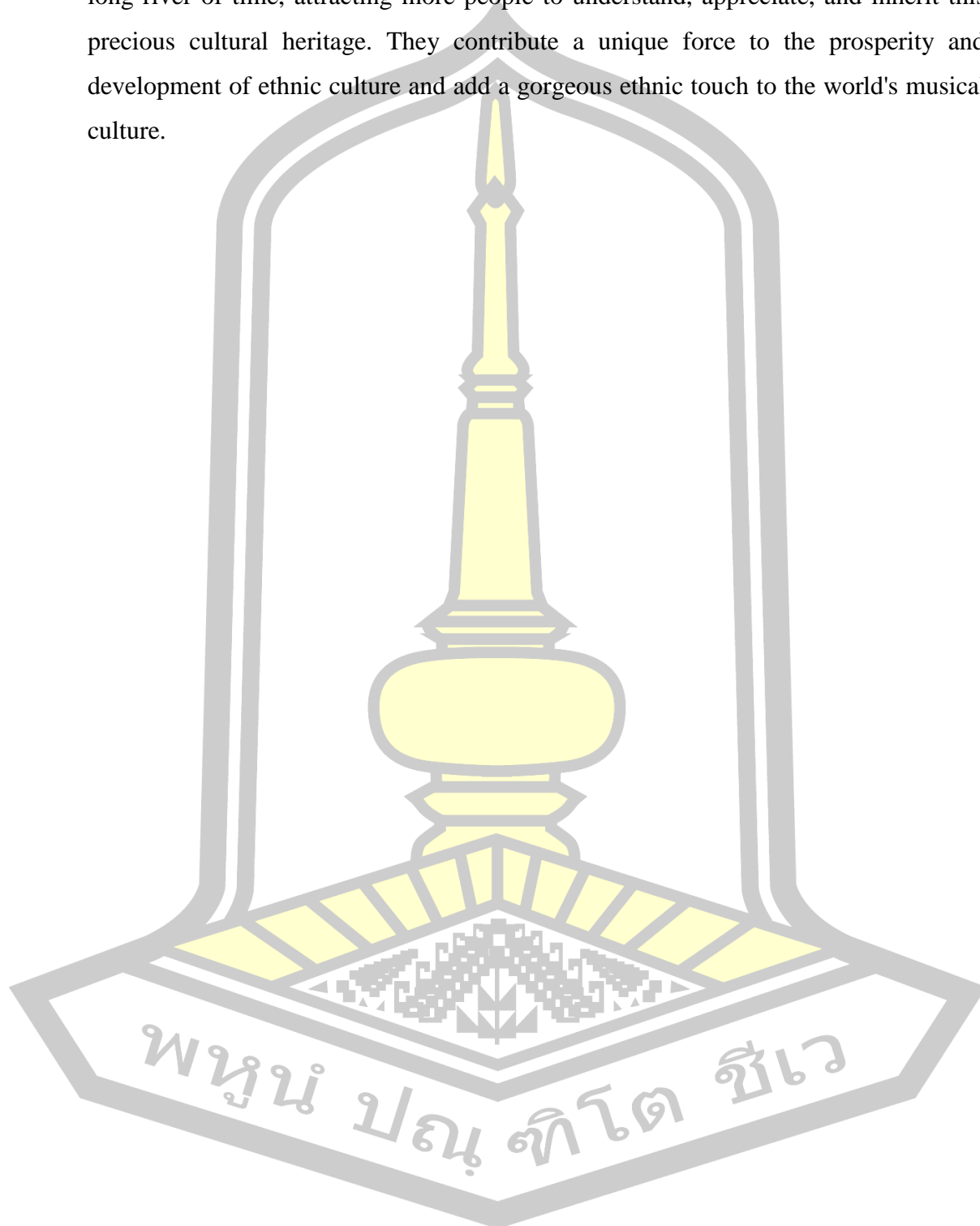
is closely linked to the emotional expression of the lyrics. Through pitch changes, it vividly depicts the beautiful scenery of spring and the simple emotions of the Miao people, enabling people to deeply experience the delicate emotions and natural beauty in the melody of Miao music.

In terms of harmony, although the complex Western harmonic system is not adopted, through the simple interval coordination among musical instruments, such as the performances of Lusheng and Muye in the "Youfang Song", the application of intervals creates a unique harmonic effect. It not only maintains the original flavor of ethnic music but also enhances the richness and harmony of the music, making the melody more full and vivid. As one of the typical two - part love songs in Taijiang County, the harmonious alternation of male and female voices in "If You Were a Flower" is the most wonderful. The interweaving of multiple voices creates a rich texture and diverse color changes. The tacit cooperation among each voice part not only enhances the layering and three - dimensional sense of the music but also reflects the musical wisdom and unity and cooperation spirit of the Miao people.

In terms of singing techniques, they mainly use true voice with a small amount of falsetto, all singing with natural voices. For example, the glissando in "Chun Zhi Ge" makes the song more playful and lively, the trill makes the long notes more melodious, and the mordent makes the melody more vivid. These techniques enrich the auditory effect and strengthen the emotional expression, demonstrating the colorful emotional world and musical expressiveness of the Miao people. "You Fang Ge" is usually sung with true voice to showcase the simple and mellow emotional characteristics of the Miao people, with a firm and full - bodied sound. "Jia Ru Ni Shi Yi Duo Hua" combines true voice, throat trill, and a singing method where it's hard to distinguish between true and false voices. Through the emotional changes contained in the song, these are expressed through the voice.

These Miao songs, with their dynamic rhythm, beautiful and smooth melody, simple and harmonious harmony, and rich and diverse singing characteristics, jointly form the unique artistic style of Miao music. They carry the cultural traditions and national spirit of the Miao people, becoming a bright pearl in the treasure trove of Chinese national music. They not only have extremely high artistic appreciation value but also play an important role in inheriting ethnic culture and condensing national

emotions. They make the musical culture of the Miao people shine brightly in the long river of time, attracting more people to understand, appreciate, and inherit this precious cultural heritage. They contribute a unique force to the prosperity and development of ethnic culture and add a gorgeous ethnic touch to the world's musical culture.



CHAPTER VI

Conclusions, Discussion, and Suggestions

1. Conclusions

1.1 The development of the Miao Love Song Zimei Festival in Taijiang County, Guizhou Province.

1.2 Characteristics of Miao love songs in the Zimei Festival in Taijiang County, Guizhou Province.

2. Discussion

3. Suggestions

3.1 Suggestions for Applying Research Results

3.2 Suggestions for Further Research

1. Conclusions

1.1 The development of the Miao Love Song Zimei Festival in Taijiang County, Guizhou Province.

The Miao Love Song Zimei Festival is like a grand epic slowly unfolding in the long river of history. It germinated and began to bloom in the chaos of ancient times when the Miao ancestors, living in tribes, embarked on a difficult yet hopeful life among the mountains and rivers. During the Tang and Song dynasties, the Miao society was relatively stable, and the development of agriculture provided material support for cultural prosperity. Then, during the Ming and Qing dynasties, with the strengthening of the central dynasty's rule, the Miao areas had frequent exchanges with the outside world, and profound changes took place in the inheritance of Miao love songs and the Zimei Festival. The content of Miao love songs was further expanded, incorporating feelings of patriotism and love for the hometown and the nation under the influence of Han culture, and the rituals of the Zimei Festival became more abundant and perfect. Secondly, in modern and contemporary times, as Chinese society was in turmoil, the content of Miao love songs was innovated to reflect the lives and emotions of the Miao people against the backdrop of warlord scuffles, the War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression, etc. Although some rituals of the

Zimei Festival were simplified and the participation scale decreased due to the war and the hardships of life, it still survived. Finally, after the founding of the People's Republic of China, Miao love songs and the Zimei Festival were closely linked and mutually promoted, bringing the Miao Love Song Zimei Festival to its most prosperous peak. Having come a long way from ancient times, the Miao Love Song Zimei Festival has traversed thousands of years of time and space, continuously evolving and developing in different historical periods, and always maintaining a strong vitality. It is not only the sustenance of the emotions of the Miao people and the inheritance of their culture but also a dazzling pearl in the treasure trove of Chinese national culture.

1.2 Characteristics of Miao love songs in the Zimei Festival in Taijiang County, Guizhou Province.

The Miao love songs in Guizhou showcase the unique charm of Miao music, with each having its own characteristics yet also sharing commonalities in terms of lyrics, rhythm, melody, harmony, and singing techniques. The lyrics of Miao love songs are like vivid epic poems of life, covering all stages of love and delicate emotions. In terms of rhythm, syncopation rhythms and dotted notes are widely used, presenting the lively and agile atmosphere when young Miao men and women engage in antiphonal singing, making the rhythmic accents changeable, breaking the regular strong-weak pattern of common time signatures, and endowing the songs with strong dynamic vitality. In terms of melody, pentatonic scales are mostly adopted, and the vocal range is moderate. In terms of harmony, although complex Western harmonic systems are not used, the application of intervals creates a unique harmonic effect. In terms of singing techniques, the singing mainly uses the chest voice with a small amount of head voice mixed in, all performed with pure and natural voices. These Miao songs, from the dynamic vitality of the rhythm, the beautiful smoothness of the melody, the simple harmony of the harmony to the rich diversity of the singing characteristics, jointly constitute the unique artistic style of Miao music, contributing a unique force to the prosperity and development of the ethnic culture.

2. Discussion

A large amount of data collected through on - site interviews, observations, and literature reviews provides a rich and complex exploration of the cultural, historical, and social aspects that have shaped this unique musical tradition in the Miao love songs of the Zimei Festival in Taijiang County, Guizhou Province.

Through the research and analysis of the development of the Miao Love Song Zimei Festival in Taijiang County, along with the historical changes of the Miao ethnic group, the Miao love songs have undergone historical evolutions in several stages and been preserved to this day. Just as the scholar Wei, K. (2024) wrote, new musical content was added at each stage of development, thus promoting the spread and development of Miao musical culture.

The Taijiang Zimei Festival, as a dazzling pearl in the feast of Miao culture, is just like what scholar Hu, S. (2018) wrote. The Zimei Festival is even more one of the most important festivals in Taijiang County, Guizhou Province, and the Miao love song culture contained therein shines even more brightly. This festival not only celebrates the unity and friendship of the ethnic group but also conveys and promotes the essence of ethnic culture. It is also a necessary venue for demonstrating Miao love songs. It not only provides a good cultural life platform for the local people but also enables more people to understand the Miao music culture.

When Miao love songs are sung during the Zimei Festival, just as scholars Liu, B., & Gu, D. (2023) wrote, the mountains, rivers, flowers, birds, fish and insects depicted in the lyrics are all vivid portrayals of the life of the Miao people and are also the crystallization of their emotions and wisdom. These lyrics have been passed down from generation to generation and have continuously evolved over the long years, thus preserving the social and cultural environment of the Miao ethnic group.

From the perspective of musicology, just as scholar Wang, Q. (2021) wrote, the melody and rhythm of Miao love songs have unique charm. The melody of Miao love songs also has the characteristics of recurrence and echo. There are certain connections and echoes between the preceding and following phrases, making the melody of the whole song more coherent and smooth. However, surrounded by modern music elements, on the basis of maintaining its original flavor, appropriate

innovation and integration should be carried out to attract more young listeners and make this ancient music form radiate new vitality in the new era.

In terms of inheritance and protection, just as scholars Yuan, T., & Wu, Z. (2015). wrote, there are already quite a number of bars, such as carrying out Miao music culture in campuses and cultivating inheritors of intangible cultural heritage. A more complete and sustainable inheritance system should be constructed to ensure that Miao love songs will continue to be sung in the years to come and will not be submerged by the torrent of time.

3. Suggestions

3.1 Suggestions for Applying Research Results

3.1.1 Incorporate the Miao Zimei Festival of Love Songs into local school curricula to ensure that the younger generation can be exposed to and appreciate their cultural heritage.

3.1.2 Utilize modern technology and digital platforms to record, preserve, and share Miao love song music, enhancing its accessibility and preservation.

3.1.3 Encourage the government and non-governmental organizations to organize, support, and sponsor Miao love song competitions and the promotion of the Miao Zimei Festival, so as to increase the awareness of the Miao Zimei Festival of Love Songs.

3.2 Suggestions for Further Research

3.2.1 Should be explore conducting comparative research on the Miao Zimei Festival of Love Songs with those in other regions.

3.2.2 Should be investigate the influence and role of modern music on the Miao Zimei Festival of Love Songs.

3.2.3 Should be explore the impact of global modernization on the inheritance and preservation of the Miao Zimei Festival of Love Songs.

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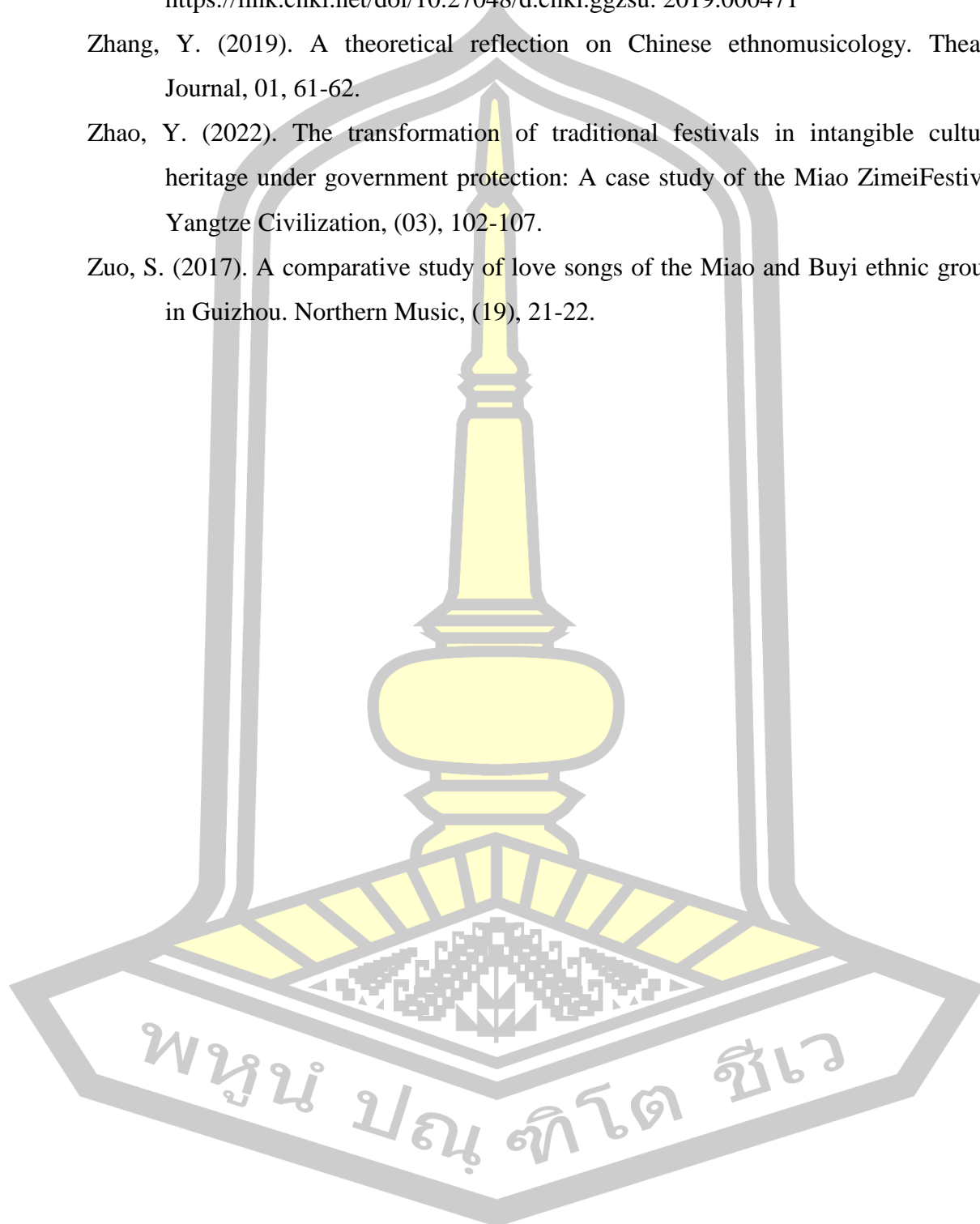
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