

Comparison between Taiwan Hakka Music and Meizhou Hakka Music

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Abstract: By analysing the differences and commonalities between Hakka music in Taiwan and Hakka music in Meizhou, the musical forms, tunes, lyrical themes, and singing styles, as well as the inheritance and innovation of the two, are analysed in depth. These findings allow for a better understanding of the development trajectories of these two types of Hakka music in different geographical and cultural contexts. The results help deepen the knowledge of Hakka cultural diversity and provide valuable references for cultural preservation, inheritance, and development. Despite some limitations of the study, it provides a basis for future research to explore Hakka music in depth.

Keywords: Hakka Music; Musical Forms and Tunes; Lyrical Themes; Singing Styles; Inheritance and Innovation.

1. Introduction

Hakka culture, as one of China's rich and diverse cultural systems, has always had a unique trajectory of development in different regions since ancient times. Taiwan and Meizhou, as two major regions where Hakka people live, have each nurtured a unique Hakka culture, of which music is essential. With the development of society and cultural exchanges, Hakka music in Taiwan and Meizhou may show differences in musical forms, lyrical themes, and singing styles. At the same time, there may be some commonalities. Therefore, a comparative study of Hakka music in these two regions can help to gain a deeper understanding of the diversity of Hakka culture and promote cultural inheritance and development. In addition, the global spread of Hakka culture is also a topic of great concern. Through a comparative study of Hakka music in Taiwan and Hakka music in Meizhou, we aim to dig deeper into the characteristics of Hakka music in these two regions and to provide new perspectives and theoretical support for cultural research, inheritance and development[1]. This study has positive theoretical and practical significance in promoting the exchange and development of Hakka culture and the study of cultural diversity.

2. Background

Through the systematic comparison of Hakka music in Taiwan and Hakka music in Meizhou, we will understand the differences and commonalities between Hakka music in the two regions regarding musical forms, lyrical themes, singing styles, inheritance and innovation. Studying the differences between Hakka music in Taiwan and Hakka harmony in Meizhou promotes communication and understanding between the Hakka cultures of the two places. It provides new ideas for the cultural inheritance of Hakka people in different regions. This is significant to the preservation and heritage of Hakka music and other traditional cultures[2]. These can be reflected in the following aspects:

1) Theoretical Support for Cultural Diversity: The research in this thesis contributes to better academic support for the concept of cultural diversity by demonstrating, through specific musical and artistic examples, how cultures

are diverse within the same ethnic group in different geographic areas due to geographic, historical and other factors

2) Practical guidance on cultural heritage and development: The study's findings can provide substantive advice on cultural heritage and development in the regions concerned and help formulate more targeted policies and measures.

3) Promotion of Hakka culture globally: Comparing Hakka music in Taiwan and Hakka music in Meizhou helps to spread and promote Hakka culture throughout the globe and facilitates the recognition and development of Hakka culture globally.

4) A bridge for cultural exchange: This study can serve as a bridge to promote Hakka cultural exchanges between Taiwan Meizhou and other regions, providing Hakka people in the different areas with more opportunities to learn more about their cultural characteristics and promoting the global dissemination of Hakka culture.

3. Research Methods

This paper adopts the literature review research methodology by extensively collecting and reading academic literature in related fields, including studies on the history, geography, and social background of Hakka music and culture. This helped establish a comprehensive understanding of the context of Hakka music's development and cultural connotations.

4. Overview of Hakka Music

4.1. Characteristics of Hakka Music in Taiwan

4.1.1. Musical Forms and Tunes

Taiwan Hakka music is known for its diverse musical forms. Songs, mountain songs, and Hakka operas are rich and varied in shape, and the tunes include fresh and lyrical melodies and cheerful and enthusiastic tunes, demonstrating the diversity of Hakka culture in Taiwan [3].

4.1.2. Lyric Themes

Taiwan Hakka music's lyrical themes cover topics such as trivialities of life, love and separation, and farming culture. The form of Gezi opera even expresses social phenomena and

life situations through lyrics [4].

4.1.3. Singing Style

The singing style of Taiwan Hakka music is more diversified, which can be solo, duet, or group singing, and even includes opera performances. Performers usually have strong performance skills [5].

4.1.4. Inheritance and Innovation

Taiwan Hakka music focuses on preserving traditional elements in terms of inheritance. Traditional music, such as Hakka mountain songs, has been passed on through oral transmission and family temple fairs. At the same time, some musicians have also injected new vitality into conventional music by incorporating modern elements, such as new arranging methods and musical styles, so that Hakka music has maintained its energy in contemporary times.

Taiwan Hakka music demonstrates the unique charm of Hakka culture in harmony with its rich and varied musical forms, heartfelt and touching lyrics, emotionally charged singing style, and balance of inheritance and innovation. These characteristics have enabled Taiwan Hakka music to play an essential role in cultural heritage and continue to develop in contemporary society.

4.2. Characteristics of Meizhou Hakka Music

4.2.1. Musical Forms and Tunes

Meizhou Hakka music is mainly based on mountain songs, with tunes focusing on freshness and relaxation, retaining the characteristics of traditional Hakka music. Its musical form is relatively conservative, with more emphasis on the inheritance of tradition [6].

4.2.2. Theme of Lyrics

The themes of the lyrics of Meizhou Hakka music are also related to life, family, love, and other aspects, emphasizing the Hakka people's sense of family and country and their admiration for tradition. The lyrics pay more attention to simple and sincere expression.

4.2.3. Singing Style

The singing style of Meizhou Hakka's music is usually fresh, lyrical, and sincere, focusing on expressing emotions in the lyrics. The singing form is relatively more traditional and pays more attention to the transmission of the feeling of the songs [7].

4.2.4. Inheritance and Innovation

Meizhou Hakka music also pays great attention to preserving tradition regarding inheritance and innovation. Traditional Hakka songs are inherited, while some musicians try to incorporate modern elements into the music to suit the taste of contemporary listeners. This balance of inheritance and innovation makes Meizhou Hakka music still vital in the changing times [6,7].

Overall, Meizhou Hakka music is notable for its unique local characteristics, profound cultural heritage, and emotional expression. The outstanding contribution of this regional culture in the field of music can be better understood through the study of musical forms and tunes, lyrical themes, singing styles, and inheritance and innovation.

5. Comparison of Musical Forms and Tunes

5.1. Musical Forms and Tunes of Taiwan Hakka Music

5.1.1. Diverse Musical Forms

Hakka music in Taiwan is known for its diverse musical forms, the most notable of which are the sing-alongs, mountain songs, and Hakka operas. Each state has a unique way of expression, which adds colour to Taiwan Hakka music.

5.1.2. Gezi Opera

Gezi opera is a unique form of performance in Taiwan Hakka music. It usually includes singing, dancing, and theatre elements, and tells stories in a lively performance form. With its colorful melodies and varied tunes, the music of Gezi Opera can profoundly express various emotions [2, 13].

5.1.3. Mountain Songs

Taiwan Hakka mountain songs are one of the region's most traditional forms of music. Simple instruments usually accompany these songs. They are characterized by fresh and lyrical melodies with lyrics that are close to life and express the emotions and life experiences of the Hakka people [14].

5.1.4. Hakka Opera

Hakka opera is a performance form developed under the influence of traditional operas such as the Southern Pipe and the Northern Pipe. It combines singing, dancing, acting, and other elements, and the tunes in the music are rich and varied, showing the unique style of Hakka culture through different performance forms [3].

5.1.5. Fresh and Melodious Tunes

The tunes of Taiwan Hakka music are usually characterized by freshness and relaxation, with an idyllic atmosphere. This style makes Taiwan Hakka music capable of conveying emotions and presenting a tranquil and natural character.

5.2. Musical Forms and Tunes of Meizhou Hakka Music

5.2.1. Mountain Songs as the Main Form of Music

The main form of Hakka music in Meizhou is the Shan Song, which is a traditional and essential form of Hakka music. It often accompanied by simple instrumental music, the songs are characterized by fresh, lyrical melodies rich in local characteristics [8].

5.2.2. Fresh and Simple Tunes

The tunes of Meizhou Hakka music are usually fresh and straightforward, reflecting the clear and hardworking attitude of the Hakka people. This style of music focuses on melodiousness and expresses the Hakka people's feelings about their hometowns, life, and love through simple but heartfelt melodies.

5.2.3. Musical Instrument Accompaniment

In Meizhou Hakka music, common instrumental accompaniments include the liuqin and banhu. These traditional instruments add a unique flavor to the music and strengthen the close connection between the music and the local culture.

5.2.4. Folk Song Characteristics

Most mountain songs in Meizhou Hakka music belong to folk songs, with lyrics that are close to life and express feelings for their hometowns, families, and love. The songs are usually sung in dialect, promoting the tradition of the

Hakka language.

5.2.5. Family, Love, and Farming as Common Lyric Themes

The lyrical themes of Meizhou Hakka music usually revolve around family, love, and farming life. Through the lyrics, singers express their attachment to their hometowns, their cherishing of family love, and the inheritance of farming culture [8].

Comparative analyses show that Meizhou Hakka music emphasizes traditional, fresh, and straightforward music forms and pays more attention to the emotional expression of hometown and life. In contrast, Taiwan Hakka music is more diverse, with more dramatic musical arrangements and a more comprehensive range of lyrical themes, which reflects the cultural diversity and complexity of Taiwan's historical development. The respective characteristics of these two provide different perspectives and rich expressions for the musical inheritance of Hakka culture. These differences reflect the influence of regional culture and social environment, which make both present their unique characteristics in musical expression.

6. Comparison of Lyric Themes

6.1. Lyric Themes in Taiwan Hakka Music

6.1.1. Social Issues and Historical Stories

The lyrics of Gezi Opera, a performance form of Hakka music in Taiwan, often deal with social issues, historical stories, and reflections on social phenomena. Singers express their concerns and thoughts on social issues through their lyrics. Some songs may recount stories of historical inheritance through their lyrics, including veneration of ancestors and reenactment of historical events, making music a medium for transmitting historical memories [15,16].

6.1.2. Love and Family Life

The lyrics of Taiwan Hakka music also often involve the depiction of love. Singers express their longing for love and deep confessions of love through the lyrics, making the songs more emotionally resonant. Some lyrics also reflect aspects of family life, including family trivia and expressions of affection, making the songs have a homely and warm atmosphere [4].

6.1.3. Hakka Culture and Language Expression

The lyrics of Taiwan Hakka music express the love and pride of Hakka culture, emphasizing the inheritance and cherishing of traditional culture. Some songs will be sung in the Hakka language to promote the Hakka language tradition through the lyrics' linguistic expression [3].

6.1.4. Praise for the Natural Environment:

The lyrics depict Taiwan's natural environment, including mountains, rivers, and botanical landscapes. Such depictions make the songs more regional. Some songs express appeals for environmental protection through their lyrics, emphasizing the harmony between man and nature.

6.1.5. Life and Philosophy of Life

The lyrics reflect the various aspects of life, including the hardships, joys, partings, and other emotions and experiences. Some songs express the exploration of the philosophy of life through lyrics, emphasizing the thinking and understanding of life.

6.2. Themes of Meizhou Hakka Music Lyrics

6.2.1. Family and Hometown Sentiments

Hakka mountain songs often involve family reunion and deep affection; singers convey their attachment to their families through their lyrics. The lyrics often show love for the beautiful scenery and long history of the Meizhou region, and the singer's longing for his homeland runs through the songs [7].

6.2.2. Beautiful Yearning for Love

The lyrics of Meizhou Hakka music often depict the beautiful yearning for love, and singers express their deep affection for their lovers through the songs. The lyrics describe the sweetness and sourness of love through vivid language and touch the listener with sincere emotions.

6.2.3. Traditional Culture and Inheritance

The lyrics express pride in Hakka culture, and the singer conveys admiration for Hakka traditions and a sense of responsibility to pass them on through the songs. Some songs refer to ancestors' wisdom, and singers use this to express their respect for traditional knowledge and cultural traditions.

6.2.4. Portrayal of Life Trivia

Lyrics often incorporate some trivialities of life, and through the realistic portrayal of daily life, singers show their love for ordinary life. Through the lyrics, the singer conveys a sense of satisfaction with everyday life and transforms everyday life into beautiful emotions in the song [9].

6.2.5. Local Flavor and Natural Scenery

The lyrics often reflect the unique local customs of Meizhou places, and depicting local characteristics makes the songs more regional. Some songs praise the natural beauty of Meizhou through their lyrics, enabling the listener to feel a strong sense of local flavor [10].

6.3. Comparative Analysis

6.3.1. Breadth of Lyrics Themes

The themes of Meizhou Hakka music are focused on family, hometown, love, and traditional cultural inheritance, emphasizing the love of conventional life and attachment to the hometown. In contrast, the themes of Taiwan Hakka music are more diverse, including social issues, historical stories, and concern for the natural environment, and the song form focuses more on reflection on social phenomena and historical inheritance.

6.3.2. Emotional Expression

The emotional expression of Meizhou Hakka music is more simple and sincere, with lyrics that are usually straightforward and emotionally sincere, emphasizing the emotional expression of family, hometown, and love. Taiwan Hakka music may be more dramatic in the form of Gezi, and the manifestation of emotion is richer and more complex, with lyrics showing emotion through more dramatic elements.

6.3.3. Inclusion of Social Issues and Historical Elements

Meizhou Hakka music mainly focuses on traditional culture, family, and personal life, with relatively little coverage of the social problems and historical aspects. Taiwan Hakka music deals more with social issues and historical stories in forms such as Gezi opera, making the lyrics more narrative and dramatic.

6.3.4. Differences in Language Expression

Meizhou Hakka music uses the Hakka dialect, emphasizing the heritage and use of the Hakka language. Taiwan Hakka music may contain more Mandarin songs, but the more

traditional Hakka language may be used in opera.

6.3.5. Concern for the Natural Environment

Meizhou Hakka music usually involves depictions of local flavors and natural scenery in Meizhou, making the music more regionally specific. Taiwan Hakka music reflects concern for the natural environment and environmental protection in Taiwan, making the lyrics more socially caring.

These comparisons reflect the regional cultural differences and artistic expression of the themes in the lyrics of Meizhou and Taiwan Hakka music. Meizhou Hakka music emphasizes the inheritance of traditional culture and the manifestation of family emotions. In contrast, Taiwan Hakka music is more diversified, focusing on social issues and historical elements while presenting more dramatic presentations through forms such as opera.

7. Comparison of Singing Styles

7.1. Singing Styles of Taiwan Hakka Music

7.1.1. Singing Style of Gezi Opera

Gezi Opera is a unique form of performance in Taiwan Hakka music, and the singing style usually exhibits a strong stage presence. Singers do not only sing songs in their performances but also include elements of dance, movement, and expression, presenting a more dramatic effect. Singers in Gezi Opera usually have to cope with a wide range of voices, with both high and passionate parts and soft and lyrical parts. This requires singers to have high singing skills [5,16,17].

7.1.2. Singing Style of Shan Songs

Shan songs are a traditional form of Hakka music in Taiwan, and their singing style is usually more straightforward and harmonious. Singers express the emotions in the songs through fresh melodies, emphasizing the natural and idyllic atmosphere. Simple musical instruments like erhu and liuqin usually accompany Shan songs. When singing, singers may play and sing alone or in an ensemble with musical instruments, presenting a spontaneous and refreshing musical effect [15,16].

7.1.3. Singing Style of Hakka Opera

Hakka opera is a form of performance developed by the influence of traditional operas such as the southern and northern pipes. The singing style includes traditional opera performances such as dance and movement in addition to singing. Singing in Hakka opera is usually accompanied by varied changes in pitch, and singers can flexibly use pitch to express plot development and character emotions.

7.1.4. Diverse Singing Forms

There are both choral and solo performances in Taiwan Hakka music. Choral singing is usually found in sing-alongs, while solo singing is more common in mountain songs and Hakka operas. In performance forms such as zongzi opera, there is typically a pairing of male and female voices, making the singing more layered [14,15].

7.1.5. Focus on Stage Performance

In Gezi opera and Hakka opera, singing is often accompanied by elaborate movements and expressions, which express the emotion and storyline of the song comprehensively through stage performance. The costumes and make-up of actors in Gezi and Hakka operas are also essential interpretive elements that can convey the identity and emotions of the characters [14,16].

7.2. Singing Styles of Meizhou Hakka Music

7.2.1. The Lyrical Simplicity of Mountain Songs

Hakka mountain songs are typical representatives of Hakka culture, carrying the Hakka people's history, religious beliefs, economical ways, and behavioral habits, revealing a solid identity [11]. The mountain songs in Meizhou Hakka music are mainly musical and rich in local characteristics. This style makes the songs more melodic and able to express deep nostalgia and emotions, and its singing style focuses on simplicity and naturalness.

7.2.2. Refreshing and Affectionate Expression

The singing style of Meizhou Hakka music emphasizes fresh and simple tones and expresses the singer's feelings about life, family, and love through simple and heartfelt melodies. Singers often show sincere emotions, allowing listeners to feel the deep emotions embedded in the songs [10].

7.2.3. Use of Dialect

In singing, Meizhou Hakka music usually adopts the Hakka dialect, emphasizing the heritage and use of the Hakka language. This language makes the singing more localized and reinforces the close connection between the music and the local culture [11].

7.2.4. Simplicity of Instrumental Accompaniment

In Meizhou Hakka music, common instrumental accompaniments include traditional instruments such as liuqin and banhu. These instrumental accompaniments are usually simple and plain, complementing the singer's singing and highlighting the uniqueness of conventional music [9, 10].

7.2.5. Sincere Singing Style

Singers often show a deep commitment to the song's emotion when singing, making the piece more infectious. The expression of emotion in singing is a significant characteristic of Meizhou Hakka music.

The comparative analysis of singing styles shows that Taiwan Hakka music pays more attention to stage performances, emphasizing theatricality and sociality through forms such as opera. In comparison, Meizhou Hakka music pays more attention to the simple emotions of the mountain songs and the expression of the local culture of Meizhou, highlighting the locality through the use of the Hakka dialect. Each form of music reflects the unique characteristics of its regional culture, historical heritage, and social background.

8. Comparison of Inheritance and Innovation

8.1. Inheritance and Innovation of Hakka Music in Taiwan

8.1.1. Inheritance

In terms of inheritance, Taiwan Hakka music focuses on preserving and passing on the traditional elements of Hakka culture, including language, musical forms, and opera. This inheritance gives Taiwan Hakka music a deep historical and cultural heritage. Some families or groups play an essential role in music inheritance, passing musical traditions from generation to generation and maintaining the continuity of musical forms through the legacy of family traditions [17].

8.1.2. Innovation

Taiwan Hakka music has also innovated based on inheritance by incorporating modern elements, such as combining elements of popular music and introducing new musical instruments, making the piece more contemporary

and attractive. Some Taiwan Hakka musicians have made cross-border innovations through cooperation with musicians from other regions or countries, blending musical features from different areas to form new musical styles.

8.1.3. Participation of the Younger Generation

Hakka music in Taiwan focuses on training younger musicians to maintain the vitality of the musical heritage. Music schools, training courses, and community activities have become important ways to cultivate young musicians. The younger generation makes innovative attempts based on inheritance and injects new vitality into Taiwan Hakka music through new musical elements and forms of expression.

8.1.4. Use of Digital Media

Some Taiwan Hakka music groups and musicians use digital media, such as online platforms and social media, to promote traditional music to a broader audience, making it better adapted to modern society. In the digital age, Taiwan Hakka music has expanded the transmission channels through online performances and music teaching, making it possible for more people to learn and appreciate this traditional culture.

8.1.5. Promotion of Internationalisation

Some musicians have actively participated in international music exchange activities and gone global to promote Taiwan Hakka music. This internationalization drive helps more people to understand and appreciate Taiwan Hakka music. In international exchanges, Taiwan Hakka music can merge with other cultures and create unique cross-cultural musical works.

8.2. Inheritance and Innovation of Hakka Music in Meizhou

8.2.1. Inheritance

Family tradition plays a vital role in Meizhou Hakka music. Music is usually passed down from generation to generation within the family, from the eldest to the next generation, creating a continuation of the musical tradition. Traditional Meizhou Hakka music is usually passed on by word of mouth, or "oral-heart teaching," emphasizing the master-apprentice system and hands-on teaching to ensure the accurate transmission of musical traditions. In the Meizhou region, some communities regularly organize various cultural activities, including musical performances, competitions, and festivals, to promote the message of Meizhou Hakka music. These activities provide opportunities for showcasing and learning and help to promote the music culture. Meizhou Hakka music combines traditional events such as local cultural festivals and temple fairs. Through participation in these events, the heritage of Meizhou Hakka music is passed on while promoting local cultural traditions [11].

8.2.2. Innovation

Some Meizhou Hakka musicians try incorporating modern elements, such as new musical instruments and recording techniques, to create more modern musical works. Such innovations help attract the younger generation and keep Meizhou Hakka music alive in contemporary society. Some Meizhou Hakka musicians have attempted to fuse Meizhou Hakka music with other musical styles to create unique musical forms, facilitating the exchange of Meizhou Hakka music with diverse cultures.

8.2.3. Digital Dissemination

Taking advantage of the development of the Internet, Meizhou Hakka's music has been digitally disseminated through online platforms and social media. This has made Meizhou Hakka music more accessible and widely distributed

and has provided new channels for transmitting the music. Some musicians teach Meizhou Hakka music performance skills and theoretical knowledge through online teaching platforms, such as Bilibili, Jitterbug, Shutterbug, and other short-video platforms, which promote the learning and transmission of music.

8.2.4. Development of Cultural and Creative Industries

Some Meizhou people have promoted the commercial development of Meizhou Hakka music by developing cultural and creative products such as music albums and concerts and providing economic support for music inheritance. By combining Meizhou Hakka music with tourism, some regions have promoted the heritage and development of Meizhou Hakka music through music tourism activities.

The comparative analysis of inheritance and innovation shows that Taiwan Hakka music emphasizes connecting with internationalization and integrates modern elements and cooperation with other music styles. In comparison, Meizhou Hakka's music puts more emphasis on the combination of local culture and tourism. It promotes the commercialization of the piece by developing cultural and creative industries. The social cultures and historical legacies of different regions, as well as the innovative styles of musicians are reflected in these two modes of music inheritance and innovation.

9. Conclusion

Through a multi-dimensional comparative study of Taiwan Hakka music and Meizhou Hakka music, their similarities and differences are discussed in depth from various perspectives, such as musical forms and tunes, lyrical themes, singing styles, inheritance, and innovation. In this process, we understand the unique characteristics of the two types of music and appreciate their rich connotations regarding regional culture, historical inheritance, and artistic development. Music, as a carrier of culture, not only carries regional culture and historical heritage but also innovates and evolves in the changing times. In the course of their respective development, the Hakka music of two different regions, each with its characteristics, has inherited the rich cultural connotations of Hakka culture while simultaneously searching for a path to adapt to contemporary society in the process of innovation. Overall, this study provides insights into the plurality of Hakka music, promotes understanding of the diversity of Hakka culture, and offers substantive suggestions for cultural heritage and development in the relevant regions.

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