

THE CULTURAL LOGIC AND RELIGIOUS IMPLICATIONS OF SHAMAN MUSIC IN KOREA AND CHINA: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF ETHNOMUSICOLOGY

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SUMMARY. As a universal music form in the world, shamanic music not only retains its religious (divine) nature in the historical construction but also shows different national characteristics with the embedding of specific cultural scene patterns. Citing the perspective of ethnomusicology, the source of religious consciousness of the current shamanic music object form is explained with “music in culture”, and the dynamic construction of shamanic religious elements is mapped with “culture in music”. Based on the geographical proximity and historical and cultural border exchanges between the two countries, its overall music form maintains the “holistic beauty” of religious attributes, takes “drum” as the core instrument, and the music rhythm and melody serve the expression of the lyric’s language signifier and signified symbol. Based on cultural similarities, the specific shamanic music forms of South Korea and China are different from the Western vertical harmony theory. Both pursue linear expression and form their own unique national modal melody characteristics. Korean shamanic music mainly uses rhythmic forms such as “mixed beats”, “changing beats” and “big beats composed of small beats”, while Chinese shamanic music maintains the early 2/4 single beat form that reflects the sounds of nature. As a subset of shamanic culture, shamanic music has derived differentiated expressions of religious ontology and musical object in the dynamic construction of the overall cultural logic of the two countries.

Keywords: religious; ethnomusicology; Korea; China; shamanic music

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Introduction

As messengers between humans and gods, shamans use music as a tool to achieve the process of descending gods. Based on the mysterious and religious attributes of shamanism, shamanic music is manifested in the form of “supernatural music”, using musical image perception as a carrier to achieve the transformation of the shaman's individual “OSC” ideology to “SSC”³ and the emotional experience of participants' trance consciousness. At present, academic research on shamanic music mainly focuses on a single country or ritual, such as the research on the narrative music characteristics of the Korean Princess Bari and the comparative research on the music of the Horqin Mongolian and the Jiutai Han people. No similar research has been found in the academic field regarding the subject and method of this paper.

As the core component of shamanism, shaman music now includes lyrics, rhythm, melody, and musical instruments. The lyrics are based on myths or fairy tales that have not been consciously processed, representations collectives⁴, which specifically include spells and language forms. Shamans use the dialectical thinking concept of “near music - far language” and “near language - far music” to achieve the transformation of music chanting and singing forms, and between people and gods. Spells are a unique language form of shamans. The corresponding spells are selected according to the gods to be invited, so as to reflect the authority of shamans and the mystery of the rituals of inviting and descending gods. Language is a language symbol used in daily life, and the shaman body is used as a medium to realize the communication of thoughts between participants and the gods to be invited. Shaman music rhythm, as the “bond” connecting language and music, maintains regular dynamic intervals as a whole, and mainly uses the Interval≤3 melody mode to serve the religious expression of the lyrics text, which is specifically manifested in the smooth progress of “one word one sound” or “one word multiple sounds”. Through the signifier and signified of the lyrics text, an aesthetic perception and cognitive process that transcends rationality and logic⁵ is realized, completing the schematic conceptual construction of the unity of God and man.

This paper is based on the thinking concepts of Alan P. Merriam's one-way circular three-dimensional model Cognition→Behavior→Music Sound and

³ Harner, Michael. *The Way of the Shaman: A Guide to Power and Healing*. Bantam Books, New York, 1990.

⁴ Jung, Carl. *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*. Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1969.

⁵ Jinyuan, Jiang. *神话美学与艺术 (Mythological Aesthetics and Art)*. Social Sciences Academic Press, Beijing, 2021.

Timothy Rice's two-way circular three-dimensional model Modeling Ethnomusicology (Cognition Behavior Music Sound) ↔ Social Maintenance (Cognition Behavior Music Sound) ↔ Individual Adaptation and Experience (Cognition Behavior Music Sound), combining with the theories of other ethnomusicologists, the static structural research method of Structural functionalism and the dynamic, open and variable research model of Poststructuralism are formed. Using the field survey method, the Korean shaman rituals of Flower Greeting Ritual (), Gumseongdang Festival () and the hereditary shaman rituals of Gangneung Dano Festival () are investigated respectively; the hereditary shaman teacher Lang, the inheritor of the Manchu "Shaman God Tune" intangible cultural heritage, and the Mongolian shaman teacher Wu, who has been engaged in shaman ritual activities for more than ten years. Due to the antiquity of shaman culture and the diversity of ethnic groups in China, I also conducted field research on the Korean Shaman Museum, the Chinese Shaman Culture Museum and the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region Museum to obtain relevant information needed for the research. Combining the literature review method, music analysis method and comparative research method, the cultural logic and religious implications of the shaman music objects of the two countries are discussed in a qualitative research method.

Materials

Research on Korean Shaman Music Theory

Shamanism is a general form of religion in South Korea, referring to the folk religion with magical nature, including individuals, families and communities. According to the standard of "whether the shaman is a spirit", it is mainly divided into spirit shaman and hereditary shaman. The northern part with the Han River as the boundary is spirit shaman and the southern part is hereditary shaman. Spirit shaman refers to a wizard who becomes a wizard according to the will of God. He is a shaman chosen by God. He is mainly concentrated in Seoul, central and northern regions. To become a shaman, you need to go through three processes: witch disease () → shrine () → witch ritual (). Hereditary shamans inherit shamanism according to blood relations, with certain institutional requirements and a long learning process. They are mainly distributed along the east coast area connected to Busan, (Pohang)\ (Yeongdeok), (Uljin), (Samcheok), (Gangneung), (Goseong-eung), etc. and Jeju Island. The definition of the concept refers to the inclusion of pure

knowledge and empirical knowledge⁶. The former refers to the causal simultaneity of judgments about things, that is, the directionality of causes to results. Empirical knowledge, on the other hand, is a later accumulation of experience, and can never have a truly universal judgment on its own in a strict sense. Therefore, there is a causal and experience-oriented way of understanding the concept of shamanic music. Since the perception of shamanic music representations goes beyond the scope of experience or rationality, it will not be refuted by experience and has the characteristics of metaphysical pure knowledge. Based on the continuous construction of Korean cultural scenario patterns, the cognition of shamanic music concepts is manifested as a historical construction process, which realizes the expression of the “divinity” of the music entity through symbolic ritual performances, and has a binary opposition structure model that transcends the monistic music content and form, and is not simply confined to the perception of music object representation.

Figure 1



**Hereditary shaman. This photo was taken by myself
at the Gangneung Dano Festival in 2024.**

⁶ Kant, Immanuel. 纯粹理性批判 (*Critique of Pure Reason*). Translated by Xiaomang, Deng, People's Publishing House, Beijing, 2004.

The content of hereditary shaman music is more secular and entertaining. According to my field research on the Gangneung Dano Festival shaman ritual, its overall form focuses on dramatic expression, or it can be said that the entire ritual process is composed of many difficult songs and beautiful dances, such as the Figure 1.

Korean shamanism is an empirical existence in early society. Humans transform the vague representations of social and natural scattered emotions into a collection of experiences⁷, forming the current collective form in the process of historical construction. The perception of every moment in the present will re-encounter or reproduce past forms and heritage, involving the dominance and influence of deep cultural norms and social structures. The development of shamanism has experienced a historical stage of transition from the fishing and hunting era to the farming era. According to the research of No Taedon (), During the fishing and hunting and gathering period of the Neolithic Age, the shaman culture with the concept of life and death as the spiritual medium has been formed⁸. The unknown of mysterious nature and the change of farming lifestyle formed the prototype of the early thinking concept of shaman music - harmonious view of the universe and nature and ancestor worship. The concept of shaman music was formed in the dynamic construction process of integration with other religious cultures. Goguryeo was first introduced to Buddhism by Daosun in 372 AD. Unified Silla attributed the reason for the unification to the power of Buddhism and built the Korean Peninsula into a Buddhist power. During the Joseon Dynasty, Confucianism was set as the ideological theory to guide the country, forming the coexistence and interaction of shamanism, Buddhism and Confucianism, and evolving into the current music concept that integrates multiple ideological elements.

The concept of shamanic music determines the attitude and values towards music. The concept must be transformed into various behaviors to become a musical form recognized by a specific culture. Early music evolved from instinct and natural perception to practical musical behavior, rather than a deliberate "music for music's sake" musical style. During the Three Kingdoms and the unified Silla and Goryeo eras, there was a cultural fusion of shamanism and Buddhism. During the Silla period, the "Hwarangdo" organization was specially established. As shamans with a high status, Hwarang used entertaining singing

⁷ Lévi-Strauss, Claude. 结构人类学 (*Structural Anthropology*). Translated by Zujian Zhang, China Renmin University Press, Beijing, 2006.

⁸ Taedon, No. (Ancient History of Korea). Gyeongsewon, Seoul, 2014.

and dancing to dispel all evil spirits and seek the help of benevolent gods⁹. In the later development and evolution, dramatic musical performances such as singing and dancing gradually formed. After the Goryeo Dynasty, the musical instruments and music forms used in shamanic rituals have gradually formed¹⁰. Through the supplementation and improvement of Buddhist doctrines and Confucian rituals, the practice of musical behavior has become more sacred and standardized. For example, during my field research on the Hwanghae Province shamanic ritual Flower Greeting Ritual () on April 14, 2024, the incense burner and beads in the hands of the shaman Hyekyung Min() embodied many Buddhist elements, as shown in the Figure 2. The Confucian ritual performance accompanied by music by the director of the Korean Shaman Museum, Jongseung Yang (), was performed at the “Gumseongdang Festival” on April 27, 2024, as shown in the Figure 3.

Figure 2



Hyekyung Min. This photo is the cover of the Flower Greeting Ritual show program, taken by myself in 2024.

⁹ Hyunkey, Kim. *Korean Shamanism and Cultural Nationalism*. Jimoondang Publishing Company, Gyeonggi, 1999.

¹⁰ Yongshik, Lee. “Comparative Study of Asian and Korean Shamanisms Based on Organology”, *Journal of Korean Shamanism Studies*, vol. 20, no. 1, 2010, pp. 143-167.

Figure 3



**Jongseung Yang. This photo was taken by myself in 2024
at the Korean Shaman Museum.**

Regarding the sound of shamanic music in the “historical construction”, a broad definition is adopted, including both “instrumental sound” and “human voice”¹¹. Instrumental sounds refer to the “sounds of ritual instruments” with specific ritual meanings and the “sounds of musical instruments” shared by folk activities. They are usually accompanied by musicians (Hwarang) and sung by shamans to form an overall sound. The Janggu () is the core instrument in Korean shamanic music. The word first appeared in the records of “Goryeo History” and was classified as Tang music (music introduced from China, not local music). The performer of the Janggu is called a Janggu professional. In the process of development, the Janggu was used not only in the court and the countryside to play Korean and Chinese music, but also in farm music or shamanic music. It is struck on both sides with a wooden stick to produce a louder sound. In the late Goryeo Dynasty, Buddhism (Lamaism) and Tang musical instruments were introduced to the Korean Peninsula from the Yuan Dynasty. Many Lamaist musical instruments such as Kkwaenggwari (), Hojok (), Bara (), Gyeongsoe ()/Yoryeong (), Jing () and Tang musical instruments Ivory Zither (), Thin Waist Drum (), Waist Drum () were introduced to the Korean Peninsula during this period¹². Together

¹¹ Benzhi, Cao. *思想-行-礼: 仪式中音声的研究 (Idea-Behavior: Theoretical Concepts and Methodologies of Ritual Music Studies)*. Shanghai Conservatory of Music Press, Shanghai, 2008.

¹² Yongshik, Lee. , , (Folklore, Culture, and Music). Jimmundang Publishing, Seoul, 2006.

with traditional folk musical instruments such as Piri (), Daegeum (), Gayageum (가야금), and Haegeum (), they formed the “instrumental sound” combination of modern shaman music, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Spirit Shaman Instruments	Janggu	Hojok	Jing	Bara	Gayageum	Ivory Zithe
	Daegeum	Yoryeong	Piri	Haegeum	Daegeum	
Spirit Shaman Instruments	Janggu	Hojok	Jing	Bara	Kkwaenggwari	

Shaman instrumental sound

Cultural memory is an invisible behavior and language stored in memory or cognitive thinking habits¹³. In specific shamanic rituals, lyrics and musical instruments related to Buddhism, Confucianism, etc. are introduced to form the current hybrid shamanism and musical object form that focuses on dramatic performance.

Research on Chinese Shaman Music Theory

In the early days of Chinese shamanism, the form of “witch” was used, and “witch music” was the form of early shaman music. The earliest record of the word “shaman” in ancient Chinese books is found in the Jurchens' “Huan Man”. Xu Mengxin's “Sanchao Beimeng Huibian” in the Song Dynasty recorded: “Wu Shi was cunning and talented. ... He was called Huan Man. Huan Man is a Jurchen word for witch. Because of his ability to change like a god, no one from Nianhan on down could compare to him”¹⁴. The text defines shaman as a cunning but talented person who can change like a god.

In specific rituals, the shaman achieves the process of descending the spirit by beating drums, swinging bells and percussion instruments on his body, and chanting/singing, using the shaman's body to convey people's wishes and God's will. Due to the special natural environment of northern and northeastern China and the social and cultural environment of exchanges between Siberia and the border of the Korean Peninsula, it has become a gathering place for ethnic groups believing in shamanism in China today, concentrated in the

¹³ Kluckhohn, Clyde. *Culture and Behavior: Collected Essays of Clyde Kluckhohn*. Free Press of Glencoe, New York, 1962.

¹⁴ Mengxin, Xu. 三朝北盟會編 (*Sanchao Beimeng Huibian*). Ancient Books Publishing House, Shanghai, 1987.

Manchu, Xibe, Hezhen, Oroqen, Ewenki of the Tungusic language family, and the Mongolian, Daur and other Altaic language ethnic groups of the Mongolian language family. Female shamans are more common in northern China and Siberia, so the shamanism of the northern Chinese ethnic groups may have originated in the middle or late period of the matriarchal society¹⁵. The historical construction of the concept of music has experienced the natural worship, totem worship, animal worship, and ancestor worship that are awe-inspiring due to fear of the natural environment, and the ancestor worship that is awe-inspiring due to love for a certain trust in human power, and then formed the cultural metaphorical expression of symbolic objects in rituals, such as gods of heaven, mountain gods, animal husbandry gods, fertility gods, ancestral spirits, heroic gods, etc. Through the ritual processes of inviting gods - offering food to gods, descending gods - calling the invited gods with drum language and expressing the arrival of gods, leading gods - the shaman expresses on behalf of gods after the gods possess the body, realizing the wishes of the tribesmen (participants) and offering blessings, and sending gods - sending gods away (leaving the shaman's body), etc., the expression of musical behavior is realized, and the perception of the representation of symbolic elements is realized to realize the process of cultural belief worship → ritual music behavior → emotional schematization concept cognition, which helps humans adapt to the actual needs of the natural and social environment.

The understanding of different ethnic music needs to be examined based on the social culture of the insiders¹⁶. Shaman music is both a musical performance art and a language performance art¹⁷. Music is used as a medium to realize the cognitive enlightenment of the language signifier and signified symbol system (activating the participants' conscious and subconscious emotions and cultural memory, forming the reorganization and construction of thinking cognition) and educational functions. Its musical experience is not a simple music and language cognitive process, but the perception of specific language symbols and musical behaviors. Shamans use language forms such as Special Codes, Figurative Language, Parallelism, Special Paralinguistic Features, Special Formulae, Appeal to Tradition¹⁸ to complete singing and chanting expression in the form of speaking and singing, singing and speaking, and speaking and singing.

¹⁵ Songlin, Wang. *远去的文明: 中国萨满文化艺术* (*The Fading Civilization: Artistic Expressions of Chinese Shamanic Culture*). Heilongjiang People's Publishing House, Harbin, 2011.

¹⁶ Nettl, Bruno. *The Study of Ethnomusicology: Thirty-one Issues and Concepts*. University of Illinois Press, Champaign, 2005.

¹⁷ Changjiang, Gao. *萨满神歌语言认知问题研究* (*Linguistic and Cognitive Perspectives on Shamanic Ritual Songs*). Jilin University Press, Changchun, 2020.

¹⁸ Bauman, Richard. *Verbal Art as Performance*. Waveland Press, Illinois, 1983.

As an auxiliary means of transmitting information of the initial postures and gestures, sound gradually forms a specific symbolic direction under the influence of habit¹⁹. The shamanic music sound was created by early shamans who collected and transformed the objects used for entertainment and entertaining gods in their daily lives and applied them to specific shamanic rituals to achieve the conceptual expression of symbolic symbols. According to archaeological research on the earliest cultural relic site in Northeast Asia, the “Ushiki Site in the Southern Kamchatka Peninsula”, various shapes of stone ornaments and stone pendants from the Paleolithic (barbaric) era were found in the unearthed cultural relics there. By wearing or hanging them, the sound was used to scare wild beasts. The emergence of pottery marked the completion of the transition of mankind from the barbaric era to the civilized era, and the invention and creation gradually shifted from the simple practical purpose in the early days to the aesthetic direction. According to the exploration and excavation of the “Zhaoyuan Baijinbao Site” by the Heilongjiang Provincial Institute of Archaeology, the pottery of this period had ring ears and decorative accessories. For example Figure 4, the pottery deer pattern rubbings showed realistic deer textures of lifelike type; the geometric bird pattern rubbings showed²⁰.

Figure 4



Bird and deer pattern rubbings. This figure is quoted from the book Zhao Yuan Bai Jin Bao: Bronze Age Sites in the Bohai Bay Region.

With the development of the Bronze Age and the Iron Age, shamans began to use bronze and iron instruments to replace early wooden, bone, and stone instruments. The sound was louder and less prone to wear and tear. For example, the photo of the shaman mummy I took at the Xinjiang Uyghur

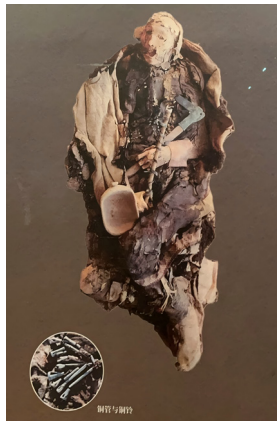
¹⁹ Morgan, Lewis H. *Ancient Society or Researches in the Lines of Human Progress from Savagery through Barbarism to Civilization*. Charles H. Kerr Publishing Company, Chicago, 1910.

²⁰ Zhongpei, Zhang. 肇源白金宝:嫩江下游一处青铜时代遗址的揭示 (Zhaoyuan Baijinbao: A Bronze Age Site Discovered in the Lower Reaches of the Nenjiang River). Science Press, Beijing, 2009.

Autonomous Region Museum Figure 5. In the later development, bells (sacred bells) and mirrors (toli) were added. Shamans shake their bodies to make iron/bronze percussion instruments, sacred bells, and bronze mirrors (sacred mirrors) collide to produce an overall non-rhythmic sound, which together with the mouth harp, shaman drum, and songs form an overall sound form, helping the shaman enter a trance state and the advent of the gods. Shaman drums are the core instruments in shaman rituals. The single-sided drums used by Altaic peoples include the grasping type “grabbing drum” and the holding type “single drum”. The former has no handle and a gripper is set in the center of the drum circle, while the latter has an iron drum handle with a drum tail set under the drum circle. There is no essential difference between the two except for the shape. Based on the development and evolution of society and culture, shaman music has been continuously added and deleted in the process of historical construction to form the current shaman music object form.

The shaman ritual scene is the basis of emotional endowment and intuitive representation of the aesthetic perception of shaman music. Unlike the Korean shaman who continues to play music after intermittent shoulder shaking after the descent of the spirit, the Chinese shaman will suddenly fall to the ground and stop the music to achieve the mysterious expression of descent that transcends the secular world and time and space. Shaman music maintains the early musical form of Siberia, with the drum as the core instrument. In specific rituals, the shaman will simulate natural sounds such as human shouting, animal calls, storms and thunder, reflecting the early religious essential attributes of “animism”.

Figure 5



Shaman mummy. This photo was taken by me at the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region Museum, and the mummy is from Tomb 21 of the Turpan Yanghai Cemetery in Xinjiang.

Methods

Analytical Study of Korean Shamanic Music

As a form of religious music, Korean shamanic music is different from the Western vertical harmony system and the mathematical determinism of chord length ratio and vibration frequency. It is fixed by custom and mainly pursues linear expression. Since the Middle Ages (when the Goryeo Dynasty was established), Korean folk music has been roughly divided into two major systems: Jeongak (Gagak, Tangak, and Hyangak) and folk music. In the process of social and historical development, the relationship between shaman music and folk song²¹ arose, forming a musical mode with regional distribution characteristics. The term “tune” in Korean folk music originated from China, including melody, pitch, and musical form. Today, Korean scholars use *tori* (토리) to accurately summarize the melody and mode of music based on the two major categories of *Pyeongjo* (평조) and *Gyeongmyeonjo* (경명연조). Korea uses *Janggu* as the core instrument of shamanic music. Its rhythm is closely related to the Korean language (without articles and prepositions). It usually emphasizes the sequential beat and leads to the next beat. The overall music beat includes two types: chapter type and single chapter type. Shamans sing or chant by adding ancient Korean, obscure language, spells and other forms to modern Korean to show the mystery of shamanic rituals and the authority of descent of spirits.

As one of the most representative shamans in the central region, Hwanghae Shaman is now distributed in Gyeonggi Province and Incheon. Based on the need for comparison with Chinese shaman music, the relevant recording materials were obtained through field research on the performance of Flower Greeting Ritual by the intangible cultural heritage inheritors of Hwanghae Shaman rituals, Min Hye-kyung and Kim Gye-sun (김계선), and the analysis and score were made. The Flower Greeting Ritual shaman ritual is a kind of title of *Jinjeokgut* (진제옥gut), which means that the shaman restores the power of the gods (all gods) and confirms the connection with the believers through regular performances. Flower Greeting Ritual is an important shaman ritual in Hwanghae Province. In the actual stage performance, Min Hye-kyung and Kim Gye-sun condensed the longer ritual procedures and maintained the core part of the Hwanghae Shaman ritual as a whole.

²¹ Sahoong, Jang, and Manyeong, Han. *國樂概論 (Introduction to Gugak: A Comprehensive Study of Korean Traditional Music)*. The Korean Gugak Society, Seoul, 1975.

Cheering () is a song to pray to the gods. It is usually sung at the beginning of the ceremony. The theme is longevity. According to the E.g. 1, the singing of Min Hye-kyung consists of five notes: G#, A#, C#, D#, and E#.

E.g. 1

모 십 니 다 - 모 십 니 다 온 산 - 신 령 님 을 모 십 - 니 다

아 - 아 헤 헤 - 아 - - 모 십 - 니 다

아 - 아 헤 헤 - 아 - - 사 월 압 니 다

Cheering. The song was analyzed by me based on Min Hye-kyung's singing and organized into a score example.

The lowest note is G# and the highest note is E#. Judging from the melody scale p4 (G#-C#) + M3 (C#-E#)²² and the ending notes C# and G#, this song belongs to the flat-tune type Jin'gyeong tori () melody mode. Through the multiple steps of D#-C# and A#-G# in the score, it can be concluded that the scales D# and A# have a tendency to resolve to the main notes C# and G#. According to the characteristics of the melody mode and the comparison and analysis of the recording data of the field research and the standard pitch: D# and A# are lower than the pitch value of the equal temperament, E# is higher than the value of the equal temperament, and the D# sound between C# and E# has a shaking characteristic. The melody of the first bar consists of three parts: E#-D#-C# step down, C#-G# p4 down, G#-A#-G# step up and down. The melodic progression of p1 and M2 at the end of this bar is a smooth resolution of the p4 jump melody progression, and the similar melody progression is used to repeat and emphasize the “. In the second bar, the progression of C#-D#-E#-D#-C# and C#-A#-G#-A#-C# forms two groups of “U” shaped melodies, focusing on musical singing expression. In the third bar, the singing of the witch has the characteristics of Call & Response in folk songs () music, and the religious (divine) expression is expressed in the chanting of C#-D# (shaking sound)-E#-D# (shaking sound)-C#. The fourth bar is similar to the second bar, with two groups of “U” shaped melodies for musical singing expression. The overall melody scale of the song is mainly in the form of ascending and descending steps, and the melody progression has the expression of combining religious chanting with musical singing.

Most Korean traditional music accompanists do not play the basic drum pattern, but make unlimited changes within the overall rhythm range to adapt to the rhythm of the melody or to express rhythmic techniques. The Hwanghae Province shaman rituals are usually accompanied by musicians. Shamans believe that if they play the long drum for accompaniment, their effectiveness will be reduced. This problem is in stark contrast to the Chinese shamans who regard the single-sided drum as a magical tool and play it personally. According to the analysis of the basic accompaniment rhythm pattern Janggu and the Jing of the beat rhythm modification in the E.g. 1, the overall rhythm is composed of 3+2+3+2 small beats in ten beats. This mixed beat type has a very complex Nongak () rhythm feature²³. The shaman musician's long

²² Bohyung, Lee. “The Concepts of Tori and Mode Signified by Jo (調)”, *The Journal of Korean Music Research*, vol. 51, no. 1, 2012, pp. 245-271.

²³ Sahoong, Jang, and Manyeong, Han. 國樂概論 (*Introduction to Gugak: A Comprehensive*

drum accompaniment is based on the changes in the shaman's singing, and the overall rhythm framework still maintains a 5+5 ten-beat progression.

The lyrics and the rhythm of the long drum keep a correspondence of one and a half beats, one beat, two beats or more beats. The lyrics repeatedly appear “ ” (summon many gods) and “ ” (in April), emphasizing the theme of summoning many gods in April. The perceptual experience impulse of myth cognition is not about the expansion of the dimension of existence, but the impulse of concentration. Through the repetitive emphasis of the lyrics, the participants are mobilized to concentrate their perceptual impulses to achieve the optimal acceptance of the lyrics. The lyrics are sung in the form of chorus, which symbolizes the “acceptance” of the shaman singing text. According to the view of Teahan Hong (), this way of singing in front and behind may have originated from the early rituals of praying for victory in war. After the general gave the order, the soldiers repeated the order according to the rhythm points of the same speed. In the later development, it gradually formed a way of modern shaman music²⁴.

Hereditary shamans are mainly concentrated on the east coast and the area south of the Han River. Those who play musical instruments are called Jaebi () or Hwarang (). Unlike the shamanic music rituals, the music performance forms include not only the shaman's solo singing but also duets with Hwarang. The female shaman and the male musician (Hwarang) are usually married couples. Although the hereditary shamanic music rituals have religious forms, they are more like dramatic music performances²⁵, pursuing the game and entertainment characteristics of the ritual.

During my field research on the shamanic ritual of the Gangneung Dano Festival on June 11, 2024, their group more closely resembled a family-like ritual performance. Members within the group engaged in joyful interactions and mutual assistance, distinct from the clearly defined roles and “hierarchical master-apprentice system” between the spirit-possessing shaman and the assistant shamans. Although their performance has a religious form, it more closely resembles a theatrical musical performance. The content and form of the ritual focus more on musicality expression, pursuing the gamified and entertaining characteristics of the ritual.

Study of Korean Traditional Music). The Korean Gugak Society, Seoul, 1975.

²⁴ Teahan, Hong. “The Study of the Shamanic-songs in Hwanghawgut”, *Journal of Korean Shamanism*, vol. 16, no. 1, 2008, pp. 7-29.

²⁵ Mikyung, Park. “Musical Value and Meaning of Jindo Ssikkimgut”, *Journal of Korean Shamanism*, vol. 26, no.1, 2013, pp. 57-82.

Due to geographical differences, the shamanic music of this region is characterized by the melodic modes of Dongnae tori (). Its rhythmic structure features both single section () and segmented forms. The percussion instrument Kkwaenggwari is prominently used to enhance the vibrant atmosphere of the ritual, while traditional wind and string instruments are used less frequently. For example, based on my field research on the Flower Greeting Ritual () and the Gumseongdang Festival, aside from the shared use of the Janggu, the primary instruments used are the Jing, Daegeum , Piri, and Gayageum, while the Kkwaenggwari is notably absent. The overall musical style more closely resembles jeongak (court music) and serves as a medium for expressing religious (divine) emotions associated with inviting, receiving, entertaining, and sending off deities. The musical form follows a strictly formulaic structure. Research on shamanic music in the East Coast region primarily employs literature review and music analysis methods, with representative examples of shamanic music selected for integrative analysis.

Bangogu () is found in the southern regions of Korea's East Coast, including cities such as Busan and Ulsan. It is performed by female shamans who wear floral headpieces and remain seated while striking a Janggu, presenting rituals such as Baridegi Puri () and Ogu Daewang Puri (). Bangogu is also known as Bangshim Gut ().

E.g. 2



Bangogu Song. The score is quoted from the book *The East Coast of the Dead Wedding Goods IV* re-scored.

The first half of the song recounts the life of Ogu Daewang (), while the second half tells the story of Princess Bari (). The music as a

whole belongs to the genre of Seosa Muga (서사무가). A partial score of the song is provided in E.g. 2.

The lowest pitch of the song is B \flat , and the highest is E \flat . The intervallic structure from low to high consists of p1, m3, and p4. The melody primarily progresses in smooth, stepwise motion both ascending and descending, with the final cadential pattern being E \flat —D \flat —B \flat . The identification of the song's tori requires determining its melodic central tone, which can be inferred from the initial and final pitches as well as the overall melodic contour. Based on the starting tones E \flat and D \flat , the ending tones E \flat , D \flat , and B \flat , and the final melodic pattern 'E \flat —D \flat —B \flat ', the melodic central tone is identified as B \flat . This reflects the modal characteristics of Menari tori (메나리토리), which belongs to the Gaemyeonjo (개미연조) type. The overall melodic scale consists of B \flat —D \flat —E \flat —G \flat —A \flat , with B \flat and E \flat serving as the primary tones. According to the E.g. 2, the rest symbols in the Janggu performance section correspond to the notes below, with the "o" section of the Janggu indicating a 2+1 beat pattern. The overall rhythm of the song is 3 small beats 8 beats. The lyrics of Bangogu (방구구) primarily follow a "one syllable per beat" correspondence with the measure beats, although there are also instances of multiple beats per syllable and extended rests with long note values. In comparison to the shamanic music of the Hwanghae Province, the alignment between lyrics and rhythm in this piece is more flexible, placing greater emphasis on the improvisational nature of the musical performance. According to E.g. 2, the melodic progression of the entire song is mainly characterized by stepwise ascending and descending motion. Consequently, the vocal delivery of the lyrics closely resembles spoken language, blending elements of speech and singing to create a narrative musical expression.

The east coast Siwangtanilgut (시왕탄일гут) is a shamanic ritual that has been adapted and transformed based on the Buddhist belief in Siwang (시왕). Through prayers, the ritual invokes the power of deities associated with the dead to guide the deceased into paradise. The Siwang belief concerning the underworld is a syncretic system that blends elements of Chinese Taoism and Buddhism. In contemporary Korean society, temples commonly feature a Hall of the Underworld and enshrine statues of the Siwang. Cheongbo (청보) is the central song used in gut rituals of the East Coast region and appears in nearly all types of gut. Cheongbo is regionally categorized into Gyeongnam and Gyeongbuk styles. Eotcheongbo (엇청보) is a subtype that belongs to the Gyeongnam category. A portion of the musical score for Eotcheongbo 4, can be found in E.g. 3.

E.g. 3

The musical score is written for a vocal line and two percussion instruments, Janggu and Jing. The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#), and the time signature is 10/8. The score is divided into two systems. The first system shows the vocal line with lyrics '어 열 신 아 박 씨 영 가' and '어 찢 씨 구 나 여 - 룬 아'. The Janggu and Jing parts provide a rhythmic accompaniment. The second system continues the vocal line with lyrics '어 열 신 아' and '아 - - 여 - 룬 아'. The Janggu and Jing parts continue with a similar rhythmic pattern, ending with a double bar line.

Eotcheongbo 4. The score is quoted from the book *The East Coast of the Dead Wedding Goods IV* re-scored.

According to the E.g. 3, the highest pitch of the song is E and the lowest is F#, forming an interval sequence of P1, m3, P4, P5, and m7 in natural ascending order. The melodic progression in Section A begins and ends on C#, with the closing melodic pattern being E—C#. Sections B and D begin on C# and conclude on F#, with the final melodic pattern being B—A—F#. Regarding the final pitch F#: “In terms of menaritori, this is considered a variant of the A-mode, distinguished by the prominent use of the lower register beneath the final note la. Menaritori: E—(x)—A—C—D—E | E—D—C—A—G. In the ascending motion, sol does not appear, and ...”²⁶.

Based on the starting and ending note C# in Section A, the ascending melodic scale C#—E, and the terminal melodic pattern E—C#, this section can

²⁶ Yeongun, Kyeom. Society, Seoul, 2000.

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be identified as exhibiting characteristics of the Menari tori () melodic mode. In Sections B and D, the initial tones are C# and F#, respectively, and the final tone is F#. Given the terminal melodic sequence B–A–F#, the melodic modal characteristics of this melody can be interpreted as a variant of the Menari tori mode.

Due to the instability of the recording source, Section E suffers from audio failure, and as a result, the melody of Section C is not analyzed in detail. In summary, the entire piece features two modal melodies of Menari tori. C# functions as both the central tone and the shaking sound, with C#, F#, and A serving as the primary tones. The melodic movement from B to A reflects a descending tone phenomenon. The scale of this tori appears in two forms when arranged in natural order: C#–E–F#–A–B and C#–B–A–F#–E. Sections A and C are primarily characterized by repetitive melodic patterns based on homophony, with a focus on lyrical narration that reflects the religious nature of shamanism. In contrast, Sections B and D place greater emphasis on melodic chanting, forming descending type () and compound type () melodic patterns (), thereby highlighting musical expression. The rhythm of the music is analyzed mainly through the performance and rests of the Janggu, indicated by symbols such as ‘◎’, ‘|’, and ‘i’, along with the Jing. The measure structure in Sections A and C follows a (J+J.) pattern, while Sections B and D adopt a five-beat structure of (J.+J). A comprehensive analysis of the melodic lines reveals that the shamanic singing follows a 2+3+2+3 pattern, whereas the Hwarang singing follows a 3+2+3+2 pattern, representing two contrasting beat structures used for melodic expression. According to the E.g. 3, the correspondence between the lyrics and the rhythmic units of the Janggu is composed of beat values such as 0.5, 1, 1.5, 2, and 5, arranged in a relatively free and irregular manner within the Janggu rhythms. Various playing techniques are employed in Janggu performance, including the rapid execution of different types of grace notes such as “◎” (gugung) and “①” (gidak). These are performed in ensemble with other percussion instruments like the Jing and Kkwaenggwari, creating a lively atmosphere that enhances the music’s dramatic and entertaining expression.

Analytical study of Chinese shamanic music

Shaman music is not a pure, absolute object. Its music itself has contextual associations²⁷. The development process of Chinese folk music from the early days to modern society is based on dynamic culture. Through the “three-part loss and gain method”, the prototype of the early folk music and scale, the “five-tone twelve-tone scale” was formed. The five-tone scale is naturally arranged as Gong (𪛗)- Zhi (徵)- Shang (商)- Yu (羽)- Jiao (角). In addition to Gong, other scales can also be used as starting notes and arranged according to the principle of fifths. The twelve-tone scale includes the six yang-day scales of Huangzhong (黃鍾), Taicu (太簇), Guxian (姑洗), Ruibin (蕤賓), Yizhe (夷則), and Wushe (無射), and the six yin-day scales of Dalü (大呂), Jiazhong (夾鍾), Zhonglü (仲呂), Linzhong (林鍾), Nanlü (南呂), and Yingzhong (應鍾), corresponding to the 12 months respectively. In the process of cultural and historical construction, today's folk music has also produced three-tone and four-tone scales, seven-tone elegant music, Qingyue (清僞), Yanyue (燕僞) scales, eight-tone scales, and nine-tone scales. The Chinese part selected Lang Wanchun, the inheritor of the intangible cultural heritage of the “Manchu Shamanic Tune”, which has the “Hu Huangxian” (foxes and weasels that have cultivated to become immortals) as its main deity, for field research and produced music scores based on video footage E.g. 4.

The melody scale of this song is composed of four notes: F, B \flat , C, and E \flat . The scale is arranged in a natural order from low to high, forming the interval relationship of p1, p4, p5, and m7. Since there is no M3 interval in the melody scale, this music is a national four-tone mode with three fifths²⁸, rather than a national pentatonic mode with omitted scales. According to the regression solution of the ending note B \flat -F and the ending note F, F is the central tone, and C and B \flat are the functional tones of the F quotient mode. The overall melody of this song is mainly carried out in a smooth manner such as homophonic repetition, stepwise, and m3, which is combined with the rhythm to serve the chanting of the lyrics. Or it can be defined that the rhythm (3\4, 4\4...) and melody (P1, M2, m3...) are derived from the "chanting" behavior. In the lyrics part, the shaman drum is repeated continuously with ♪ as the basic organizational unit, and in the part without lyrics, more complex drum beats and shaking drum ring sounds are used to form the overall sound.

²⁷ Ridley, Aaron. *The Philosophy of Music*. Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 2004.

²⁸ Songguang, Zhao. 論五度相生調式體系 *The Pentatonic Modal System Based on the Cycle of Fifths*. Shanghai Culture Publishing House, Shanghai, 1964.

E.g. 4

走上了近前 要请安

5

先施礼 后问安 不知各位师傅吃没吃饭抽没抽烟

10

各位师傅一步 落下来坐

13

回给老佃头 立了大规矩

**Invocation Song. Score production by myself
based on Lang Wanchun's singing.**

Deer Spirit (跳鹿神) is a shamanic ritual of vow fulfillment held annually by the Haozhe ethnic group in the spring (February and March) and autumn (July and August). It is performed by villagers who had previously made vows during earlier rituals—such as those who recovered from illness or successfully conceived a child. New participants also take part in the ceremony, during which the shaman conducts rites to dispel misfortunes and pray for blessings for his family and the villagers. A “divine team” composed of the shaman and villagers visits various households, in a practice reminiscent of the grain-begging (乞粒) tradition in Korean shamanic rituals. During the procession, the shaman sings the Bird Spirit Song (鳩神歌), whose lyrics express the hope that the divine bird will guide the shaman on his journey. The performance begins with a solo by the shaman, followed by a choral response from the crowd. For specific musical notation, refer to E.g. 5.

E.g. 5



Bird Spirit Song. The score is quoted from the book *The Hezhe Tribe of the Lower Songhua River* re-scored.

The melody of the song consists of five pitches: E, F#, C#, A, and B. The scale follows a natural ascending order, forming the intervallic structure of p1, M2, M3, p4, p5, and M6. The melody begins with the notes E and A and concludes with C# and A. Based on the opening and closing notes, along with the M3 interval, the melody is identified as being in the A Gong pentatonic mode. The overall melodic structure is characterized primarily by repeated tones and stepwise motion.

In the first measure, the melodic movement from E to C# reflects a progression from the dominant to a color tone, suggesting a tendency toward unstable resolution. In the second measure, the motion from B to A represents a stable resolution from a color tone to the tonic.

E.g. 6

Song of the Returning Deity. The score is quoted from the book *The Hezhe Tribe of the Lower Songhua River* re-scored.

After completing the “village walking” ritual, the shaman sings the Song of the Returning Deity (歸來神歌) on the way back. The song is performed while walking briskly in the manner of a limping person, using the same style as the Bird Spirit Song. Based on Ling Chunsheng's textual materials, I have reorganized the musical notation accordingly, see the E.g. 6.

In Measures 1–3 of the score excerpt, the melodic scale is composed of five pitches—C, D, E, G, and A—arranged in ascending order as P1, M2, M3, P5, and M6. Based on the initial pitches C, G, and A, the concluding pitches G and C, and the intervallic structure involving the major third (M3), the scale can be identified as the C Gong pentatonic mode. In this mode, G functions as the central tone, while A serves as the principal tone. The melody primarily progresses in a stable manner through repeated notes, stepwise motion, and ascending or descending thirds.

Sections 4–5 of the melody consist of the pitches A, B, and C#, arranged in an ascending natural order that outlines the intervals of a P1, M2, and M3, beginning on C# and concluding on B. The melodic motion features repeated notes and stepwise progression, highlighting the narrative quality of the lyrics. Based on the M3 interval, the melody does not follow a triadic mode but instead reflects a pentatonic scale with the omission of the E (徵) and F# (羽) tones. Therefore, given the resolution tendency in the final melodic segment A–B, B serves as the tonal center, with C# and A functioning as color tones, indicating a Shang-mode pentatonic scale centered on B. The melodic scale in Sections 6–7 consists of six pitches: A, B, C#, D, E, and F#. Arranged in natural ascending order, these pitches form the intervallic structure of P1, M2, M3, P4, P5, and M6. Based on the initial tones D and A, the concluding tones C# and A, the repeated emphasis on A, and the cadential figure B–A, the scale can be identified as a six-note A mode with an added Qingjue (清角) D. The melodic motion is primarily stepwise, with A functioning as the central tone, and D and E serving as functional tones.

In addition to the analysis of the musical scores of the Manchu shamanic music, this paper analyzes the shamanic songs of the Hezhen, Oroqen, Ewenki, Xibe, Mongolian, Daur and other ethnic groups in combination with relevant literature and draws up a Table 2.

Table 2

Ethnic Group	Ethnic Group	Meter	Mode
Manchu	Python Spirit Song	2/4+3/4	F monophonic Yu tetratonic mode
Hezhen	Bird Spirit Song	4/4	A Gong pentatonic mode
	Returning Deity	4/4	C Gong / B Shang / A Gong hexatonic
Oroqen	Yagou Chant	2/4	C Yu pentatonic mode
Ewenki	Yaowai Wuwai	2/4	F Gong pentatonic mode
Xibe	Suoli Yangke	2/4	F Gong pentatonic mode
Mongolian	Zhenzhe	2/4+3/4	C Zhi pentatonic mode
	Spirit Invocation	2/4+3/4	A Yu pentatonic mode
Daur	Buryat Chant	2/4	E Yu pentatonic mode
	Healing Spirit Song	4/4	E \flat Yu pentatonic mode

Characteristics of Chinese Shamanic Music. The production of this table is based on references to Chunsheng²⁹; Xiaoyun³⁰; Guiteng³¹ literatures.

Discussion: Summary of Comparative Studies

Based on the religious attributes of shamanism, both Korean and Chinese shamanic music use drums as core instruments. Korean musicians () play drums, and on this basis, they also use body-sounding instruments such as Bara, Jing, Kkwaenggwari, Yoryeong, air-sounding instruments such as Hojok, Piri, Daegeum, Haegeum, and string-sounding instruments such as Gayageum, Ajaeng to form the overall instrumental sound, focusing on the dramatic expression of music; Chinese shamans regard drums as tools for implementing magic and play them themselves, and on this basis, they also use body-sounding instruments such as copper bells, waist bells, copper mirrors (silver mirrors) and air-sounding instruments such as mouth harps to form the overall instrumental sound, focusing on the mysterious religious expression of the carrier of shamanic music. The two also show different differences in specific forms, please refer to Figure 6 and Figure 7.

²⁹ Chunsheng, Ling. 松花江下游的赫哲族 (*The Hezhe Tribe of the Lower Songhua River*). Institute of History and Philology Academia Sinica, Nanjing, 1934.

³⁰ Xiaoyun, Guan, and Honggang Wang. 鄂伦春族萨满教调查 (*Investigations of Oroqen Shamanism*). Liaoning People's Publishing House, Liaoning, 1998.

³¹ Guiteng, Liu. 中国萨满音乐文化——以东北阿尔泰民族为例的地方叙述 (*Shamanic Music Culture in China: A Regional Ethnography of Altaic-Speaking Ethnic Groups in Northeast China*). Central Conservatory of Music Press, Beijing, 2007.

Figure 6



**Chinese shamanic drums. This photo was taken by myself in 2024
at the Chinese Shaman Culture Museum.**

Figure 7



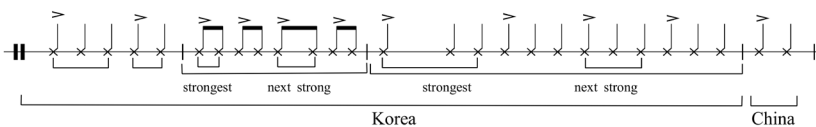
**Korean shaman drum. This photo was taken by myself
in 2024 at the Korean Shaman Museum.**

Based on the boundaries communication in the process of cultural dynamic construction, the modal systems of Korean and Chinese shamanic music have incorporated elements of national modalities. Both countries produce basic scales based on the principle of “fifths”, but due to the differences in “main tones” (functional tones) in the specific melody composition, Korea has formed Pyeongjo () and Gyeomyeonjo (), while China has produced three-tone, four-tone, five-tone, six-tone, and seven-tone national modes. Korean shamanic music as a whole maintains the regional melody mode tori (), while Chinese

shamanic music as a whole maintains the use of national pentatonic modes. In the process of specific melody scale composition, Korean shamanic music uses composition techniques () such as shaking sound (), sliding retreating sound (), and microtones (higher or lower than the Western prescribed pitch $+1/4$, $-1/4$), reflecting the language characteristics of the lack of Korean articles and prepositions and the emotional expression of the “hate” element in national culture. Chinese shamanic music follows the principle of “fifths coexisting” and is composed of a central tone, functional tone, and color tone to form an overall melodic scale without “microtones” or shaking sound and retreating sound phenomena.

The melodies of Korean and Chinese shamanic music mainly adopt the method of homophonic repetition and progression. The overall melody scale maintains a smooth progression of $\text{Interval} \leq 3$, and the ending note tends to be resolved smoothly. The overall melody progression maintains the characteristics of “language narrative”, and realizes the religious functional value through the signifier and signified of language. Based on the concept of beat, Korean shamanic music mostly uses mixed beats, changing beats, and small beats to form a large beat, and rarely uses a single beat form. Chinese shamanic music maintains the early 2/4 form that reflects the sounds of nature. The “rhythm structure” of the shamanic music of the two countries is compared horizontally. The mixed beats commonly used in Korea will cause the beat stress to switch continuously within the entire measure, and the changing beat will cause the beat stress to switch continuously between measures. The large beat form composed of small beats has both the stress law of the large beat and the characteristics of the small beat stress within the large beat range, forming a horizontal expansion of the “dissonant rhythm”³². The horizontal progression of the “rhythm structure” of Chinese shamanic music is mainly based on single beat (2/4), which is expressed as a single, stable “harmonious rhythm”. For details, please refer to Figure 8.

Figure 8



Rhythm comparison. The figure was created by me based on the research needs of the thesis.

³² Yeston, Maury. *The Stratification of Musical Rhythm*. Yale University Press, New Haven, 1976.

According to the longitudinal comparative study of “rhythm structure”, percussion instruments and Korean shaman singing are unified, providing a rhythmic basis for music and creating an entertaining atmosphere. Different melodic instruments (such as , , 가 ..) maintain rhythmic independence, forming multiple sets of dynamic rhythmic lines, imitating sounds and calling the soul³³ in musical dramatic expression. Chinese shamans mainly swing their bodies to make “iron/bronze percussion instruments, sacred bells, bronze mirrors (sacred mirrors)” ring or collide to produce arrhythmic sounds, which together with the shaman drum rhythm (♩) form a single musical expression.

The lyrics of Korean and Chinese shamanic music both include modern/ancient languages and spells. Korean shamans mainly learn through oral transmission from shaman masters, while Chinese shamans learn through a combination of shaman masters and dreams. The lyrics and melody scales of the shamanic music of the two countries mainly adopt the correspondence method of “one word one sound” and “one word multiple sounds”, and the expression of divinity and the construction of collective (community) consciousness are completed in the form of shaman solo or shaman and assistant shaman (tribesman) Call & Response singing.

Conclusion

By introducing the perspective of ethnomusicology, the cultural connotation and religious implications of Korean and Chinese shaman music are discussed from the perspective of “music in culture” and “culture in music”. The musical modal system derived from the national culture is integrated into the object form of shaman music in both countries. The body-sounding instrument “drum” is used as the core instrument. On this basis, Korea adds membrane-sounding instruments, string-sounding instruments, air-sounding instruments and other musical instruments to form the overall instrumental sound. In shamanism, Buddhist and Confucian scriptures and musical instrument elements are integrated to form a mixed religious (musical object) form consistent with the dynamic construction of the overall culture. The specific ritual behavior focuses on the dramatic expression of music. Modern Chinese shaman music maintains the overall instrumental sound composed of the unrhythmic impact of the relatively single shaman drum, mouth harp, “iron/bronze sounding instrument, bell, bronze

³³ Howard, Keith. *Korean Musical Instruments*. Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1995.

mirror” in the early Siberian region, and maintains the early shamanism (musical object) form, using a single musical object form as a carrier for inviting gods to realize the religious expression of “all things have spirits”. The melodic progression of the shamanic music of the two countries mainly adopts a steady progression with Interval ≤ 3 , such as homophonic repetition and progressive progression, and adopts the corresponding methods of “one word one sound” and “one word multiple sounds” with the lyrics text, serving the language narrative of the signifier and signified of the lyrics text and maintaining its religious characteristics. Due to the wide scope of this paper, the overall conclusion is drawn by qualitative research, and the content of quantitative research on specific music analysis needs to be further supplemented and improved.

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